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Satan

Another Jesus, another Spirit & another gospel

2 Cor 11:3 But I am afraid that, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds will be led astray from the simplicity and purity {of devotion} to Christ. 2 Cor 11:4 For if one comes and preaches another Jesus whom we have not preached, or you receive a different spirit which you have not received, or a different gospel which you have not accepted, you bear {this} beautifully.

Following words from the Lord who spoke to Saul (Paul) called to open the eyes, to turn from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan. The world is under Satan's dominion. Satan offers many things that are not intended for Spiritual man. We need Holy Spirit to give us light and His grace and wisdom to choose wisely.

Acts 26:18 to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me.

After world and flesh, the third destructive force that could stop us from the freedom and security of the Holy Spirit is Satan. Unless we understand these three well, we may not understand the difficulties in denying our will and doing His will, which is the ultimate calling for the children of God. Let us look at his cunning ways.

We need to approach word with an open heart but carefully examine the spirit behind every message. When one interprets the word, it has to be in tune with the spirit of God. If not, even a minor deviation from the spirit would finally reach a point where it doesn't have any connection with the word of God.

For example, I have heard believers saying (acquired from their spiritual leaders), 'oh that was what Paul said and not Jesus Himself' and they do not consider it is to be taken as seriously as some other verses. What deception. Paul has not said anything contradictory to what God wanted to convey. He has only explained in his own words what Jesus wanted to convey. This is what one has to examine when listening to the word. Is the message in line with the message Jesus gave us? Is it taking us back to old covenant rules or new covenant relationship? Beware dear brethren, there is so much of deception happening and they all utter "in Jesus name"

Ex. I can suggest that it is good to stand up and wish an elderly person coming in front of you. That amounts to being humble, respecting others etc and is in tune with the teachings from Bible. But I cannot add one has to bow down and touch the person's feet as it is not in tune with the spirit - which doesn't want us to worship or idolize anyone. Similarly, if a preacher says, one has to pray in a particular manner only or face eastwards (just an example) when praying, reject it instantly as there is no connection with that and word of God. A minor deviation, addition or omission from the word could have a grave impact on the spiritual life. So stay close to God and His word so that no one can deceive you.

If someone says something intended to make one humble, but is not literally written in the Bible, one can surely accept that as it is in tune to the word that says,

James 4:6 But He gives a greater grace. Therefore {it} says, "GOD IS OPPOSED TO THE PROUD, BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE."

The missing message of the cross

If you carefully look around Christendom, you will realize the one thing most have denied is the message of the cross, the calling to deny self, take up the cross and to follow Jesus. Word has been diluted to an extent it is no more true word of God. Preaching and life doesn't have any connection. Even while talking about eternity and meaninglessness of worldly life (truth) people greedily chase wealth (deception and fraud). Leaders zealously describe the holiness of God and fall into adultery and all kinds of temptations and worldliness.

The reason is that, relationship with God was lost sometime, somewhere resulting in no accountability. They can say anything, distort anything and lead people astray. This is a warning, not judging others. We need to safeguard ourselves in this deceptive era. We need to be wise and sharp to avoid deception of Satan.

Seeking signs and wonders

2 Thess 2:9 {that is,} the one whose coming is in accord with the activity of Satan, with all power and signs and false wonders, 2 Thess 2:10 and with all the deception of wickedness for those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved. 2 Thess 2:11 For this reason God will send upon them a deluding influence so that they will believe what is false, 2 Thess 2:12 in order that they all may be judged who did not believe the truth, but took pleasure in wickedness.

2 Cor 11:14 No wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light.

Satan is a deceiver. He comes in all forms including undercover of a spiritual man. This verse urges us to check the spirit of leaders before blindly following them. There are so many instances where people started spiritual work, later got carried away by a spirit of the world and in turn Satan's. There are many denominations with no Christ in their midst. There are many cults which speak and pray in the name of Jesus. Beware, Jesus Himself had warned us.

Matt 7:21 "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven {will enter.} Matt 7:22 "Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?' Matt 7:23 "And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; DEPART FROM ME, YOU WHO PRACTICE LAWLESSNESS.'

2 Thess 2:9 {that is,} the one whose coming is in accord with the activity of Satan, with all power and signs and false wonders,

Believers really need one of the most important gifts of the Spirit, which is wisdom and discernment. We have to be humble, non judgmental and concerned. But we ought to be sharp so that Satan cannot fool us with his manifestations or miracles or charisma. We need the Holy Spirit to discern the spirit (motivation, intention) of a message or a speaker.

The divisive spirit

Beware of self proclaimed believers (from all denominations) who look down at people, and at other denominations, with their doctrines as the yardstick. But life of self in many case is in flesh and world and hence in such a pitiful condition. There is no calling to lead a holy life, no concern for others and no desire to do His will. But when it comes to certain manifestations of the Holy Spirit like tongues, they are so active and fanatical. This is why we need to look into the purpose or spirit behind word of God in totality. NEVER pick one or two verses from the Bible and make a doctrine of it.

The three types of churches

The following are the three general categories of churches among groups with the right doctrine and teachings). Although there are elements of spirituality in all of them, some are dominated by a spirit which is not godly. This spirit could be the spirit of the world or the spirit of religiosity, both under the control of Satan.

Worldly – Dominated by a strong spirit of the world that has entered the church. They are no different from the world except for the preaching, teachings and a set of religious practices. They are usually groups of affluent individuals. There could be a few lower income persons will be there. They focus on living an extravagant life in the world and satisfy themselves religiously by offering tithes or some charity. Most often a concern for the needy is missing. They enjoy old covenant promises, stories, singing and dancing more than new covenant teachings, denying self, taking up the cross, following Jesus, living unworldly lives etc.

Traditional – A church where holiness is something external like that of the Pharisees. They are full of acts of the flesh as mentioned in Galatians 5. They look down at everyone outside their denomination. They have acquired rituals and practices from their forefathers and are not ready to change them even if it is not according to the Spirit of the word; they misinterpret it, like the Pharisees. For them, detachment from the world means staying away from people of other faiths and denominations. Their judgmental attitude keeps people also away from them!

Spiritual – Very hard to find these days. These churches give utmost importance to living according to His will. To unde

stand His will, they meditate the word in-depth. They preach and teach the way of the cross, following Jesus and growing in Him. The leaders live a simple, holy life and encourage the others also compassionately to do so.

Having said that, I should also add that there could be elements of the above three in most of the denominations. As church is the body of Christ, there could be certain individuals who have become part of His body even in the worst churches. Similarly, there could be some individuals in the best churches too who have no relationship with Jesus. My views are primarily about individuals, including the leadership of the church. Mostly, the damage an unspiritual leader can cause is undermined. It is commonly observed that the qualities of a leader, good or bad are usually passed on to the congregation. So having a spiritual leader who is holy, humble and loving, who is determined to do God's will is very important for the spiritual growth of a congregation.

As we now know the challenges in our spiritual lives, we should also know that God gave us His Spirit to help us win in this tough situation. That is the very purpose of Holy Spirit, to help us deny our will and do His will.

I know I had to go to many topics that would have looked like irrelevant in a study on the Holy Spirit. But the truth is we need to know the various challenges in spiritual life which could only be won by the power of the Holy Spirit.

One thing I wanted to emphasize in this portion is that Satan is a deceiver. He deceives people through various ways, people and systems. The only agenda He has is to take you away from the pure love and devotion for God and thus keeping you under His dominion. Any person, or system that preaches such messages that would shift your focus from eternity to the world, its pleasures etc, is from Satan. There could even be sincere leaders who have fallen prey to this. So beware, take every message to the word and see that it is in line with the message the Holy Spirit is trying to convey.