

How Can I know the Truth?

July 19, 2015

Throughout the Bible, there are many warnings about deception. In first 2 chapters of the book of Genesis, you will find the true character of Satan. He is crafty, the father of lies, and a master deceiver. His goal is to destroy God's creation and his prime target is God's people. 1 Peter 5:8. The Bible warns over and over "Be not deceived". Yet even people who are close to God, chosen of God and those desirous to follow the commandments of God must be on guard lest they fall into the traps set for them by Satan.

In the book of Joshua, chapter 9 we find some interesting details about deception. It can happen to anyone. Joshua had led his armies into multiple victories and word had spread about the power of the living God who destroyed the enemies of the Israelites wherever they fought. The people of Gibeon knew that they were no match for the Israelites as far as military power was concerned so they came up with another strategy that would give them a chance to survive.

They had heard that Joshua had defeated Jericho and Ai and the only thing they could think to do was to trick the Israelites into signing a peace treaty with them.

They gathered old sacks and old leather wine bags that were cracked and mended and they put them on some donkeys. They changed their nice sandals into worn out ones. They clothed themselves well worn clothing and lastly they made sure they had some old, dry moldy bread to take along. They went to Joshua's camp in Gilgal and spoke their mission. "We have travelled from a far away country," they said. "Make a peace treaty with us." The Israelites said to them, "Maybe you live near us. How can we make a peace treaty with you?" The Hivites answered, "We are your servants." Joshua asked, "Who are you and where do you come from?" The men explained that they were the Israelites servants who had come from a far country because they had heard about the fame of the LORD their God. They had heard what God had done for the Israelites and everything he did to Egypt. They heard he had defeated the 2 kings of the Amorites from the east side of Jordan River, the Sihon King of Heshbon and Og King of Bashan who ruled Ashtaroath. The men continued by saying, "So our leaders and our people told us to take food for our journey and go and meet the Israelites and tell them that we are their servants and make a peace treaty with them." They then showed the Israelites the moldy bread and lied saying that the bread was warm and fresh when they left home to begin their journey. They claimed that the leather bags were new and filled with wine at the onset of their trip, but now they were cracked and old. They pointed out that their clothes and sandals had gotten worn and tattered from the long journey. The men of Israel tasted the bread but they didn't ask the Lord what to do.

So Joshua agreed to make peace with the Gibeonites and the leaders of the Israelites swore with an oath to keep the agreement. Three days later, the Israelites learned that the agreement was made with Gibeonites who lived close by. They went to the cities where

they lived but didn't attack them because they had made a promise before God and they would be held accountable for their actions.

Joshua asked the leaders why they had lied to them. The people were afraid for their lives and were willing to be slaves to the Israelites rather than risk being defeated in war. They were made to be wood cutters and water carriers, but they were satisfied with that.

A year ago, I watched a video taken from a camera that was recovered from the Sewol ferry that had sunk in the Yellow Sea in April of 2014, claiming 304 people many of whom were high school students out celebrating their graduation on a class trip. When the problem was discovered, the people were told repeatedly to stay right where they were and they would be rescued soon. Many of them listened to the instructions and remained in place. As the ferry tilted sideways, water seeped in and objects in the ship toppled over, injuring people and blocking their way out. I watched the script as the young people giggled, making jokes about the Titanic, while waiting to be rescued. They believed what they had been told until the reality of their situation slowly began to dawn on them. Those children became hysterical with crying, others stayed calm trying to comfort each other and slowly they all realized that help was not coming. The camera continued recording the events until it disappeared in the water. The captain was unconcerned about those who were trapped. He had deserted the ferry leaping into the arms of the Korean Coast Guard while hundreds remained trapped in the vessel. The vessel remains at the bottom of the sea. The ferry was loaded double to its capacity and its cargo wasn't secured properly throwing the ship off balance as the containers tumbled. The crew was inexperienced and the ship had been redesigned to handle more passengers and cargo causing it to be unsafe. The tragedy was virtually caused by corruption, irregularity and blinded eyes. In July, the body of a billionaire Yoo Byung Eun, who was believed to have connections to the company that owned the ferry was found decomposing in a plum field.

True messengers of God speak the truth of God's word regardless of how the people respond. Many false teachers are watering down the truth and salving people's consciences by claiming that holiness is not necessary to enter the kingdom of God. Don't be deceived. The Bible says, "Without holiness, no man shall see God." Hebrews 12:4.

True servants who love the souls of men and fear God will sound the alarm against the lies that Satan uses to destroy God's creation. The Bible says that Jesus is the same yesterday, today and forever. His word has not changed and his truth is forever settled in heaven. People, for the love of money and success, will conform to the world and its values even to the point of making fools of themselves. They have fallen into the sewer of delusion and they will accept a lie and be destroyed. 1 John 3:7

No one who abides in Him sins; no one who sins has seen Him or knows Him. Little children, make sure no one deceives you; the one who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous; the one who practices sin is of the devil; for the devil has sinned

from the beginning. The Son of God appeared for this purpose, to destroy the works of the devil....

1 Corinthians 6:9, 1 John 4:17, 1 John 2:26, Galatians 6:7, James 1:22

People have strayed from the truth because they have not hid the word of God in their hearts. King David said, "Thy word have I hid in my heart that I might not sin against you." Psalms 119:11. Don't be conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Romans 12:2, Matthew 24:24

We are to be a light and salt to the world. Will you stand up for truth and live a life that will guide others into the kingdom of God? I pray that we will commit our lives to the task of reaching the lost for the cause of Christ.