



# GOOD NEWS

for the unsaved WORLD!

(#108)  
Defective faith: Being deceived (1)

## DEFECTIVE FAITH

⇒ Is this my FAITH?

- Genuine fact-based living FAITH is a saving faith.
- But what if my faith is...

	✓ <u>Defective</u> in its FACT foundation?	✓ <u>Defective</u> in its LIVING expression?
TODAY (PT. 1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ <b>False</b> (= deception)</li> <li>✓ Rejected (= unbelief)</li> <li>✓ Missing (= ignorance)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Absent (= "not there")</li> <li>✓ Small (= "little faith")</li> <li>✓ Wavering (= doubt)</li> </ul>

### A FALSE FACT FOUNDATION.

This has to do with deception and error, being led astray, wandering from the truth, etc.

TODAY	1. The causes of deception.	We're <b>NOT</b> referring to mistakes and opinions on day-to-day trivial matters...
	2. The victims of deception.	
	3. The results of deception.	
NEXT TIME	4. Examples of deception.	<p><b>THE MOON IS MADE OUT OF GREEN CHEESE!</b></p> <p>... but matters that can be of <u>serious eternal significance</u>.</p>
	5. Responding to deception.	

### IT'S NOT A HARMLESS "DIFFERENCE OF OPINION"!

Depending on the issue, a false-fact foundation can have a serious effect on your spiritual growth... or even your eternal destiny.

I WOULD NEVER BE INFLUENCED BY FALSE FACTS!

IF IT DIDN'T HAPPEN SO EASILY, SCRIPTURE WOULDN'T HAVE SO MANY WARNINGS!

CAUTION! Quicksand

MY FAITH IS SINKING!!

FAITH

### DECEPTION IS A NATURAL PART OF HUMAN NATURE ...

The heart is **deceitful** above all things and beyond cure.  
Who can understand it?  
Je 17:9 (NIV)

**NATURAL... UNTIL GOD CHANGES THE HEART.**

I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you ...  
Eze 36:26a (CSB)

**ANY DEPARTURE FROM THE FACT BASE THAT MAKES POSSIBLE THE FAITH OF SCRIPTURE... IS DECEPTION.**  
It's only when a person submits to the Good News of the Bible, and lets Scripture change his thinking, that he can begin the journey away from deception.

### SO, WHERE DOES IT START? WHO DOES THE DECEIVING?

★ **The CAUSES OF DECEPTION.** ★

① ⇒ **Spiritual forces of evil.**

It isn't merely a matter of people deceiving people. There are spiritual forces working behind the scenes, promoting deception.

The great dragon ... that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray.  
Revelation 12:9a (NIV)

[Also "the serpent" in 2 Corinthians 11:3.]

[People] will follow **deceptive spirits** and teachings that come from demons.  
1 Timothy 4:1b (NLT)

## ② ⇒ World leaders and religious leaders.

- People who claim to have (or be) the answer to our problems.

For false messiahs and false prophets will appear and perform great signs and wonders to **deceive** ... [Also: Matthew 24:5, 11; Luke 21:8.]  
Mt 24:24a (NET)

Jesus began to say to them, "Watch out that no one **misleads** you. Many will come in my name, saying, 'I am he,' and they will **mislead** many."  
Mark 13:5-6 (NET)

- A future world leader, called the "lawless one" (also called the "antichrist").

The coming of the lawless one ... with every kind of miracle, both signs and wonders serving the lie, and with every wicked **deception** among those who are perishing ... because they did not accept the love of the truth and so be saved.  
2 Thessalonians 2:9-10 (CSB)

(Also: A false prophet who works with the "antichrist" – Revelation 13:14.)

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## ③ ⇒ People who teach what is false or deny what is true.

Now I urge you, brothers and sisters, to watch out for those who create divisions and obstacles contrary to the teaching that you learned. ... They **deceive** the hearts of the unsuspecting with smooth talk and flattering words.  
Romans 16:17a, 18b (CSB)

Many people who **deceive** others have gone into the world. They refuse to declare that Jesus Christ came in flesh and blood. This is the mark of a **deceiver** and an antichrist.  
2 John 1:7 (GW)

[Here, the word "antichrist" refers to a type of person, not a specific end-time leader.]

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## ④ ⇒ Self-deception – whether it involves just one individual, or a group reinforcing each other's deception.

Stop **deceiving** yourselves. [Also James 1:22, 26.]  
1 Corinthians 3:18a (NLT)

People deceiving each other.

Evil people and impostors will become worse, **deceiving** and being **deceived**.  
2 Timothy 3:13 (CSB)

You think people aren't inherently "evil"? Jesus disagrees!  
Matthew 7:11; Luke 11:13.

In addition to spirit forces and people, many "things" promote deception – sometimes directly, sometimes indirectly.

Here are some...

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## ⑤ ⇒ The world's influences.

- The world's ways of thinking – here called "philosophy."

... hollow and **deceptive philosophy**, which depends on human tradition and the elemental spiritual forces of this world rather than on Christ.  
Col 2:8b (NIV)

- "Empty arguments" that downplay the seriousness of sin.

Let no one **deceive** you with empty arguments, for God's wrath is coming on the disobedient because of these things.  
Ephes. 5:6 (CSB); sexual immorality, impurity and greed, mentioned in vs. 3-5.

- Don't make the world's views the basis of your self-evaluation!

Do not **deceive** yourselves. If any of you think you are wise by the standards of this age, you should become "fools" so that you may become wise. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness in God's sight.  
1 Co 3:18-19a (NIV)

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## ⑥ ⇒ Ignorance of the truth.

Ignorance of the truth is often associated with an active rejection of the true (fact-based) faith. Paul was once like this.

... I was once a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent man, ... I acted in ignorance and unbelief.  
1 Timothy 1:13 (NIV)

- Jesus, speaking to some of the Jewish leaders who opposed him:

Jesus answered them, "You are **deceived**, because you don't know the scriptures or the power of God."  
Matthew 22:29 (NET)

- Ignorance of the truth can result in sin being committed unknowingly.

... the sins of the people committed in ignorance.  
Hebrews 9:7b (NET)

(Though not always deliberate and willful, ignorance can still be sin.)

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## ⑦ ⇒ Sin and sinful desires

Sin itself is deceiving. It takes something good (the Law) and uses it to accomplish evil.

For sin, seizing an opportunity through the commandment, **deceived** me, and through it killed me.  
Romans 7:11 (CSB)

- Those just escaping error (deception) may be seduced back into it.

For by uttering boastful, empty words, they seduce, with fleshly desires and debauchery, people who have barely escaped from those who live in **error**.  
2 Peter 2:18 (CSB)

- People tend to think of "sinful desires" in terms of sexual sins. But it also includes a preoccupation with wealth and possessions.

... the worries of this age, the deceitfulness of wealth, and the desires for other things enter in and choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful.

Mark 4:19 (CSB)

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WITH ALL THIS DECEPTION OCCURRING,  
WHO ARE THE ONES BEING DECEIVED?

★ The VICTIMS OF DECEPTION. ★

**THE QUICK ANSWER IS:** "All of us" – every person who accepts the values and ways of the world. (And there are many values and ways to choose from.)

Even saved people were victims of this eternally-devastating deception... before God opened their eyes to the truth of Scripture.

At the same time, it's not that people are passive, helpless "victims." We are often actively involved in the deception.

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① ⇒ The whole world – everyone.

The whole world is under the devil's influence. As the "father of lies" (John 8:44), his primary focus is on deception.

... the whole world is under the control of the evil one.  
1 Jn 5:19b (NIV)

... the ancient serpent, who is called the devil and Satan, the one who deceives the whole world.  
Revelation 12:9b (CSB)

• The above verses are about unsaved people. But...

• All saved people were once in this category.

For we too were once ... deceived ...  
Tt 3:3a (CSB)

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② ⇒ Those who are saved must be constantly on guard.

(It is a constant threat for us, as it is for all people.)

For false messiahs and false prophets will appear and perform signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect. So be on your guard: ...  
Mk 13:22-23a (NIV)

• God provides leaders to teach us and help us to become spiritually mature.

Then we will no longer be little children, tossed by the waves and blown around by every wind of teaching, by human cunning with cleverness in the techniques of deceit.  
Ephesians 4:14 (CSB)

Scripture reminds us that God will protect us from eternal-life-threatening deception. But truly saved people will be willing to oppose it when it comes.

... the one who stands firm to the end will be saved.  
Mk 13:13b (NIV)

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③ ⇒ Deception that is self-reinforced, both individually and as a group.

THIS IS WHY  
PAUL WARNED:

Stop deceiving yourselves.  
1 Corinthians 3:18a (NLT)

(Also James 1:22, 26, as examples.)

[People] deceiving and being deceived.  
2 Timothy 3:13b (CSB)

④ ⇒ Especially vulnerable: Those who aren't expecting it.

(They aren't watching out for it.)

They deceive the hearts of the unsuspecting with smooth talk and flattering words.  
Romans 16:18b (CSB)

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⑤ ⇒ Especially vulnerable: Those who reject "the truth" or "the faith."

Both terms focus on the facts that are the basis of our believing.

... some will turn away from the true faith; they will follow deceptive spirits and teachings that come from demons.  
1 Timothy 4:1b (NLT)

[The lawless one] will use every kind of evil deception to fool those on their way to destruction, because they refuse to love and accept the truth that would save them. So God will cause them to be greatly deceived, and they will believe these lies. Then they will be condemned for enjoying evil rather than believing the truth.  
2 Thessalonians 2:10-12 (NLT)

★ **WARNING:** When people refuse to love the truth, and choose the wickedness that truth opposes, God will let them believe the lie they have chosen to pursue. ★

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DECEPTION IS A SERIOUS MATTER ... BUT SO ARE THE CONSEQUENCES!  
(NO WONDER WE NEED JESUS AND HIS WORD!)

★ The RESULTS OF DECEPTION. ★

① ⇒ For THE DECEIVER, it's "payback" time.

They will be paid back with harm for the harm they have done.  
2 Pe 2:13a (CSB)

Their end will be what their actions deserve.  
2 Co 11:15b (NIV)

• Because they have deceived others with their lies...

[Jesus says] "... their share will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death."  
Revelation 21:8b (CSB)

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② ⇒ **THOSE BEING DECEIVED** are in danger of being trapped in sin and deception.

This is the reason for warnings in Scripture about deception.

But I am afraid that just as the serpent **deceived** Eve by his treachery, your minds may be **led astray** from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ.

2 Corinthians 11:3 (NET)

See to it that no one **takes you captive** through hollow and **deceptive** philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the elemental spiritual forces of this world rather than on Christ.

Colossians 2:8 (NIV)

But encourage each other daily ... so that none of you is **hardened** by sin's **deception**.

Hebrews 3:13 (CSB)

**THESE THINGS HAVE CONSEQUENCES.**

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The end result for those who are: 1) led astray by the serpent, 2) captivated by the world's views, 3) and hardened by sin. (See the previous slide.)

③ ⇒ **THOSE WHO ARE DECEIVED** will perish, if they don't turn (or return) to the truth.

- Because they have chosen to live by a lie (= deceit), they will be excluded from God's eternal city.

Outside [the eternal city of God] are ... everyone who loves and practices falsehood.

Revelation 22:15 (CSB)

- This happens to people who refuse to **love** and **accept** the truth.

[The lawless one] will use every kind of evil **deception** to fool those on their way to **destruction**, because they refuse to love and accept the truth that would save them.

2 Thessalonians 2:10 (NLT)

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**Deception can lead to a defective "un-saving faith."**

⇒ **THIS IS A SERIOUS MATTER!** ⇐  
For both deceiver and deceived.

Scripture tells us that we have an **obligation** to oppose and reject anything that is deceptive and false. We can do this **only** to the extent that our minds are controlled by the **facts** of Scripture.

Do not be conformed to this age, but **be transformed by the renewing of your mind**, so that you may discern what is the good, pleasing, and perfect will of God.

Romans 12:2 (CSB)

[ More about this next time. ]

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- If we **refuse** to love the truth of Scripture, we **cannot** be saved (2 Thessalonians 2:10).
- Regretfully, most people prefer to **suppress** their knowledge of God (Romans 1:18+), and to willfully **ignore** historic fact (2 Peter 3:3-7).

**OUR MISSION: BE DIFFERENT!**

- TAKE DECEPTION SERIOUSLY!** Consider what Scripture says about it.
- PURSUE A TRANSFORMED, RENEWED MIND!** This is the only way a person can accurately recognize deception and oppose it.

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