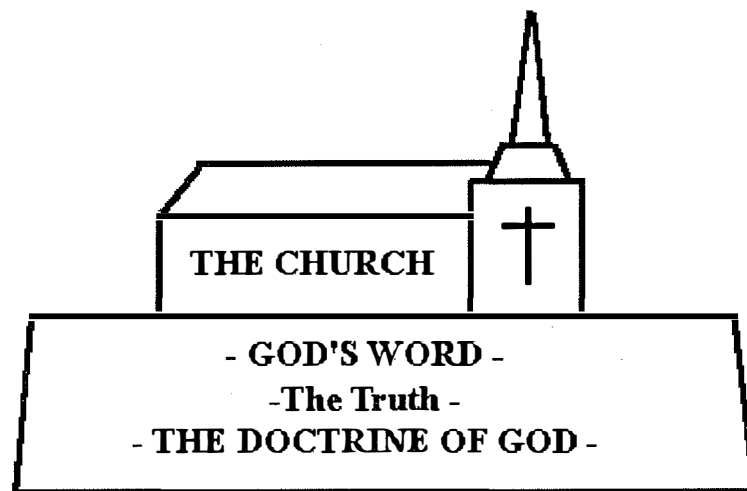


CHAPTER 3

Doctrine Or Delusion?

DOCTRINE

The word DOCTRINE means TEACHING. The Church of Jesus Christ is not built upon the teaching and ideas and opinions and thoughts of men, but it is built upon the TEACHING (doctrine) OF GOD:



↑ Resting on a ↑
SOLID FOUNDATION!

God's doctrine is characterized by the word **TRUTH**. The Holy Spirit (the Teacher of the Church) is called "the Spirit of _____" (John 16:13) and He will guide His followers into "all _____" (John 16:13). He will never teach anything that is false and He will never lead anyone astray.

The Lord Jesus Christ is the **HEAD** of the Church, and He claimed to be the very personification of truth: "I am the way, the _____, and the life" (John 14:6). He will never lead His Church astray.

The Church of Jesus Christ follows one book, the Bible. In this one book we find all the instruction and teaching and guidance and wisdom that the Church needs. Will the Bible ever lead us astray? Jesus said, "Thy Word is _____" (John 17:17). The Bible is called "the word of _____" (2 Timothy 2:15).

As long as believers closely adhere to the **GOD OF TRUTH** and to the **WORD OF TRUTH** they will be safe and they will not go astray.

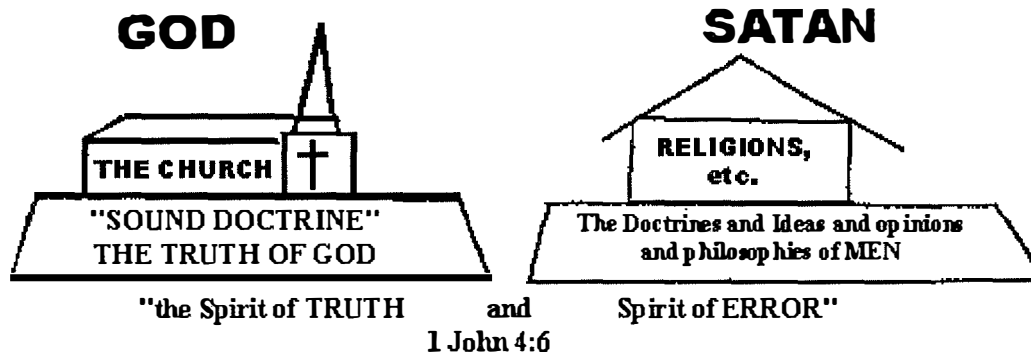
DELUSION

When a person is DELUDED he is deceived or tricked. He has been led away from the truth and he has embraced a lie. In 2 Thessalonians 2:9-12 we learn about people who will live during the time of great tribulation on this earth. Do these people receive or reject the truth (2 Thess. 2:10)?

_____ What do they believe (2 Thess. 2:11)? _____
 Are they DELUDED (2 Thess. 2:11)? _____ What did they refuse to believe (2 Thess. 2:12)? _____
 In contrast to these unbelievers, Paul tells us that true believers are those who believe "the T _____" (2 Thess. 2:13).

Satan is the Master of Delusion. The Lord Jesus described the devil in this way: "He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the _____, because there is _____ in him. When he speaketh a _____, he speaketh of his own: for he is a _____ and the _____ of it." (John 8:44)

Satan wants to lead people and move people away from the truth of God. He wants to delude and deceive and trick. He wants to replace God's doctrine with false doctrine. Instead of "SOUND (healthy) DOCTRINE" (1 Timothy 1:10; Titus 1:9; 2:1), he seeks to delude people into believing poisonous doctrines (to their eternal harm). Satan is waging a never ending war against the truth of God and the battle is taking place in the minds of men and women. **HERE IS THE CHOICE:**



This battle for the minds of men affects every one of us. On what ground are you standing? Are you standing on the truth of God or on the delusions of Satan? **BEWARE**, lest you substitute the ideas and thoughts and opinions of men for the truth of God. It is very easy to be led astray. It is very easy to be deceived. It is very easy to let go of the truth and start clinging to Satan's lies.

Watch Out!

The devil wants to lead people away from the truth of God and the God of truth. The Bible warns us about this in many, many passages.

The Lord Jesus told His disciples to "beware of _____" (Matthew 7:15). A true prophet is God's spokesman or God's mouthpiece. He speaks forth the Word of God. How would you define or describe **FALSE PROPHETS**? Do they **outwardly appear** to be harmful (Matthew 7:15)? _____ Are they **really** harmful? _____ Is Satan successful in deceiving and deluding **MANY** people by using false prophets (see Matthew 24:11,24)? _____ Did Paul warn Titus about **DECEIVERS** (Titus 1:10)? _____

Are there DECEIVERS in our world today? Is DELUSION a problem that we face today? In 2 Timothy chapter 3 Paul told Timothy that in the last days (v.1) "evil men and seducers shall wax _____ and _____, deceiving, and being _____" (v.13). They will deceive others and they will be deceived themselves. They will fool others and they will be fooled themselves. They will trick and be tricked. Are there people like this in our world today? Do any of them write books? Do any of them write articles in magazines? Do any of them speak on the radio or on television? Do any of them stand behind pulpits and preach? [Give some examples if possible.]

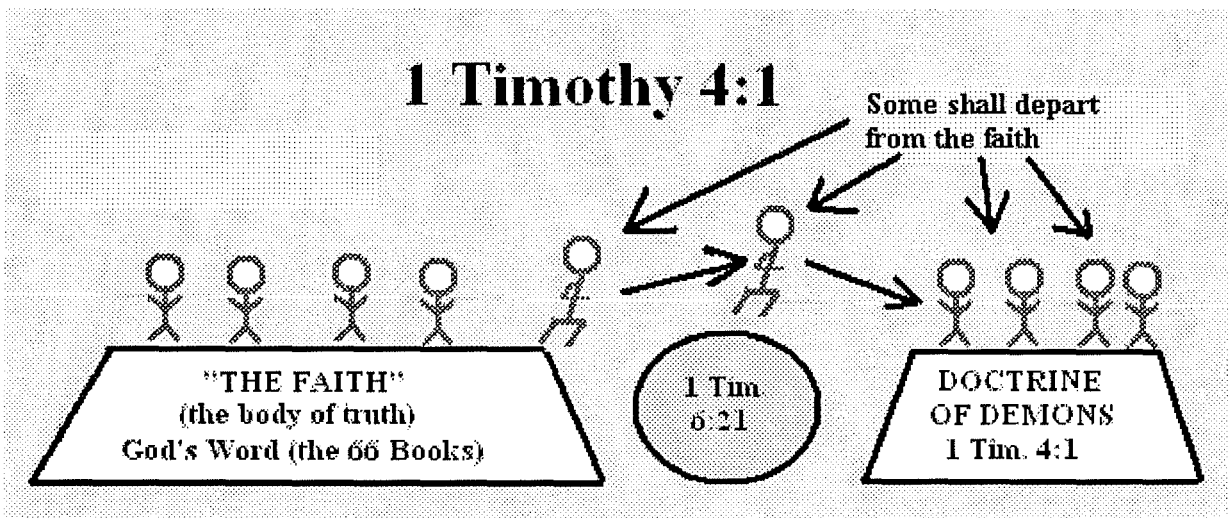
Again and again believers are told to hold fast to sound doctrine. We are never to let go of the truth. We must never move away from the teaching of God. Paul told Timothy to "charge some that they _____ no other _____" (1 Timothy 1:3). Only sound (healthy) doctrine must be taught. Only God's doctrine should be proclaimed. Any other doctrine is false doctrine and poisonous doctrine. Was Paul aware of some who had turned aside from the doctrine of God (1 Timothy 1:6)? _____ What is the **only** kind of words and doctrine that should be taught (1 Tim.6:3)? _____

God's truth must be handed down from teacher to student and from preacher to hearer. Nothing should be added to God's truth and nothing should be taken away. The whole Bible should be taught--nothing more and nothing less. What problem(s) will arise if less than the whole Bible is taught? What problem(s) will arise if more than the whole Bible is taught? Nothing DIFFERENT should be taught. **The SAME truth** (God's truth) and **the SAME Book** (God's Book, the Bible) must be carefully taught and passed down to others (compare 2 Timothy 2:2).

Satan the Deceiver is Busy at Work!

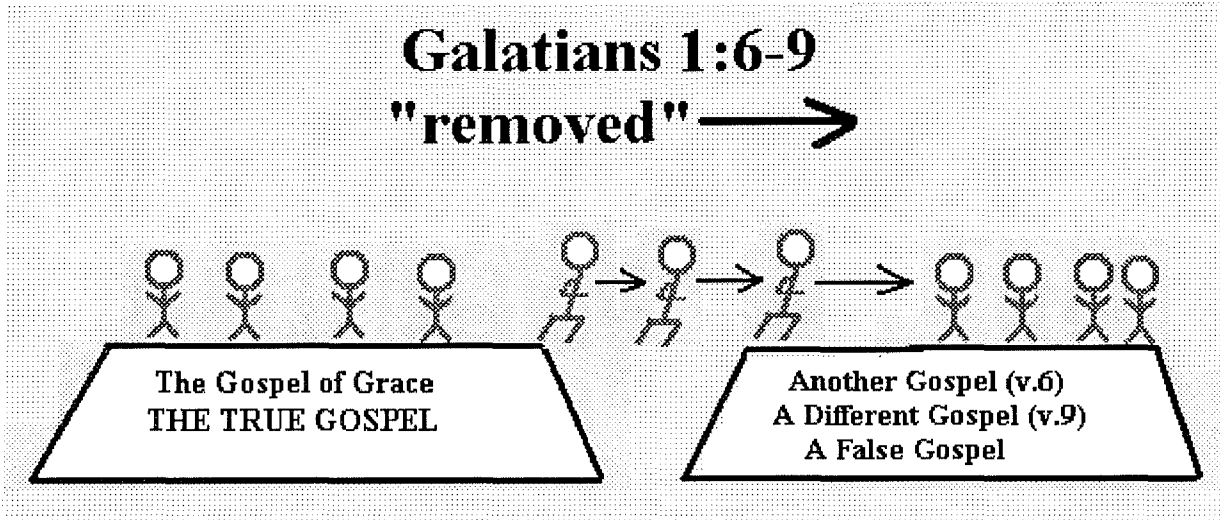
Whom did the devil trick (beguile) in the garden long ago (2 Cor. 11:3)? _____ He has been busy tricking people ever since. He has been very successful! He has many workers (2 Cor. 11:13). He makes error look so good and he makes darkness look so bright (2 Cor. 11:14). Satan's ministers appear to be so righteous (2 Cor. 11:15). Some even have the letters REV. before their name and they stand behind a pulpit every Sunday morning and preach to people. There's only one problem. **THEY DON'T PREACH THE TRUTH!**

Notice carefully the working of Satan as described in 1 Timothy 4:1:



The devil makes his doctrine appealing to man and many fall for his lies. Junk food may be appealing and may taste good but most people will not do very well if they eat nothing but candy and cake. The devil's doctrines may be appealing but they are poisonous. Sound healthy doctrine is found only in God's Word.

In Galatians chapter 1 we learn how Satan successfully led people away from the truth of God and Paul was amazed that it had happened so quickly:

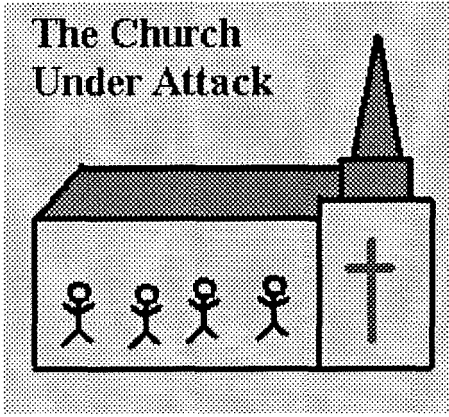


Throughout the New Testament God gives strong warnings to people about the dangers of moving away from God's truth and being tricked into believing Satan's delusions. You will see some of these warnings as you do the following MATCHING problem:

1. _____	There will be certain people who will seek to seduce you (lead you astray).	A. 1 John 2:26 B. Colossians 2:4 C. 2 Peter 3:16 D. Hebrews 13:9 E. 2 Corinthians 2:17
2. _____	There will be those who will seek to beguile you (trick you).	
3. _____	There will be those who will corrupt the Word of God.	
4. _____	There will be those who will wrest or twist the Scriptures for their own purposes.	
5. _____	There will be certain ones who will seek to carry you away with divers (different) and strange doctrines or teachings.	

Paul knew that false doctrine could destroy a local church, and therefore he warned people about this day and night (Acts 20:31). The church must be fed with SOUND, HEALTHY DOCTRINE (Acts 20:28). The church must be fed with the WHOLE BIBLE (Acts 20:27). The church must

be alert to dangers both from WITHOUT and from WITHIN.

<p>Attack from Without (from the outside)</p> <p>WOLVES</p> <p>(False Teachers)</p> <p>Acts 20:29</p>	<p>The Church Under Attack</p> 
<p>Attack from Within (from people within)</p> <p>"of your own selves"</p> <p>(Acts 20:30)</p>	

Paul also describes false teachers in Romans 16:17-18. Do these people teach the TRUE doctrine which they have received from God? _____ As you listen to them, do their words sound real good and do they seem to make some excellent points (v.18)? _____ Do they really serve Christ? _____ Should we follow them (v.17)?

Read the little book of 2 John. Can you find anything in this book about false teachers? What kind of doctrine did these people bring? Should we support such people in any way? Do people ever come to your home bringing false doctrine with them? Do people belonging to cults or false religions ever ring your door bell? What does the Lord Jesus Christ think of false doctrine (Rev.2:15)? _____ Just as arsenic is poison to the body, so false teaching is poison to the soul. It's deadly!

What warning did Peter give about false teachers (2 Peter 2:1)? Did Peter think anyone would follow these false teachers (2 Peter 2:2)? _____ The devil is successful whenever people substitute MAN'S TEACHING for GOD'S WORD (see Matthew 15:9).

Why Do People Fall For False Teaching?

1. Because this is just what they want!

What did Paul tell Timothy to preach (2 Tim. 4:2)? _____ He was to preach the Bible, the whole Bible and nothing but the Bible. In 2 Timothy 4:3 we learn why so many people do not want God's truth (sound doctrine). They want teachers to give them a message that will sound good and feel nice. They do not want to hear anything that will offend them or disturb them. Sometimes the truth hurts (just as sometimes medicine tastes terrible), but we need to hear the truth whether it hurts or not. We may not always like it, but we always need it. God's truth may not always be what people want, but it is always what they need. Can you think of any teaching found in God's Word that is difficult (hard to swallow!) but which is also very true and needful?

2. Because people fail to grow up into Christ!

Consider Ephesians 4:14. These people are carried about by every wind of false doctrine that comes along. They are not stable. These CHILDREN (v.14) need to G_____ UP (v.15)! Those who do not know the truth are leaving themselves open to error. The more we grow in the Lord and learn God's truth, the less danger there is of being deceived and falling into error. What are **you** doing day by day to help you to grow in the Lord and better master God's truth?

Falling Away Even in the First Century

Even in the early days of the church people were being led astray from the truth and falling into false doctrine. The New Testament gives us many examples of this; here are some of them:

1. What false doctrine were some of the Corinthians holding to (1 Cor. 15:12)?

2. What false doctrine was being taught by Hymenaeus and Philetus (2 Timothy 2:17-18)?

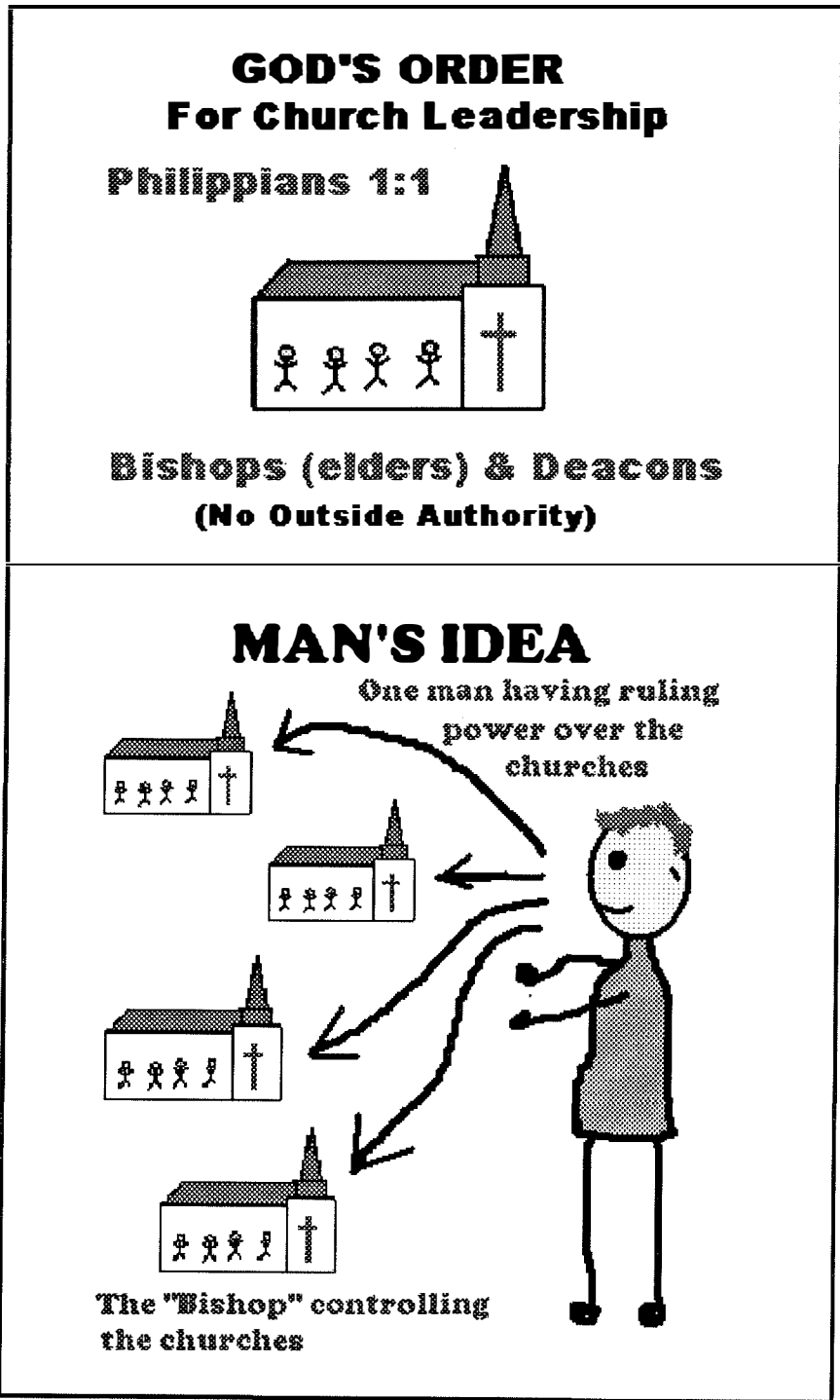
3. The Galatians had turned away from the gospel of God's grace and were teaching a different gospel (Galatians chapter 1).
4. The Colossians had been influenced by false doctrines. They were told that they should worship angels (Col. 2:18). They were following the commandments and doctrines of men (Col. 2:22).
5. The Apostle John warned about those who were teaching that Christ did not come in the _____ (1 John 4:3). They taught that Christ did not have a real body and that He was not really human.
6. In 1 Timothy 4:1-3 we learn of those who taught two wrong doctrines: 1) certain people should not get married 2) certain foods should not be eaten. Can you think of any religious groups who seem to follow these two doctrines?
7. In 2 Thessalonians 2:2 we learn about a letter that was received which contained false teaching concerning the coming of Christ and the day of the Lord.
8. In Jude 4 we learn about certain false teachers who were saying, "since we are saved by God's grace we can live any way that we please." Do any so-called "Christians" hold to this doctrine today?

Early Church History

As we study the history of the early church we soon learn that it did not take long for false teachings to invade and even pervade the church. Here are just some of the false teachings that crept in:

1. Early in the history of the church there were some who taught that water baptism saves a person. This false doctrine is known as BAPTISMAL REGENERATION (to be born again a person must be baptized) and is still taught by many people today.

- 2. Early in the history of the church there were those who taught that Jesus Christ was not God. They said that He was a mere CREATURE, a great angel created by God. This false teaching is still being taught today by those who call themselves Jehovah's Witnesses.
- 3. The Bible teaches that each local church has certain men as leaders and these leaders are called deacons and bishops (elders). See Philippians 1:1. This teaching on leadership was twisted and abused by some in the early history of the church. The "bishop" gradually became more and more powerful and even became the leader over many churches:



Later, one man was given authority over all the churches, and he was later to be called the Pope. Is this what God intended? Who is the only One who is the Head over all the churches (Ephesians 1:22-23)? _____

* * * * *

What is your local church doing to protect itself against false teaching? What are **you** doing to protect yourself? What are you doing to keep yourself from being deceived and deluded and led away from the truth of God? Does the Spirit of truth live in your heart? Are you letting Him be your Teacher? How? Do you open the Word of Truth each day? How important is the Bible to you? Did you do anything with your Bible last Tuesday? Last Thursday? Last Saturday?

Expectancy from Two Churches

