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CHAPTER 45

Responding to Truth without Falling for Deception

True worshipers recognize the difference between miracles and mimicry; they embrace spiritual reality with conviction but denounce mystic deception. Our Heavenly Father seeks informed worshipers because they regard Him with decisive affection and demonstrative esteem.¹ Jesus personifies the truth about our Heavenly Father in every way. *“In Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form.”*² With signs, wonders, miracles, and various gifts of the Holy Spirit, He inspires faith, ignites hope, and merits radical reverence.³

Satan also contends for our worship, devotion, and compliance. He exploits misinformed worshipers, nudging them off balance until they falter facedown before idols, demons, and false gods.⁴ As an adversarial angel, Satan conspires with a pair of beasts, a false prophet, and a lawless accomplice to deceive those leaning in a defiant direction.

The first beast, which emerges from an abyss and later from the sea, exercises power and authority derived from the dragon,⁵ aka, *“that ancient serpent called the devil, and Satan”*.⁶ Some individuals will worship the dragon and this beast, after it exhibits an uncanny recovery from a fatal head wound.⁷ The second beast, emerging from the earth,⁸ deceives its inhabitants with miraculous signs.⁹ This

¹ John 4:23-24

² Colossians 2:9 NAS

³ Hebrews 2:4

⁴ Revelations 9:20

⁵ Revelation 11:7 and 13:1 respectively

⁶ Revelation 12:9

⁷ Revelation 13:4,8

⁸ Revelation 13:11

beast “*makes the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first beast*” and “*the image of the beast*”.¹⁰ When a false prophet performs miraculous signs on behalf of the first beast, misguided spectators will bow to worship its image.¹¹

In one of his first epistles, Paul warns of a lawless accomplice to Satan. Though “*doomed to destruction*” this person will exalt himself, herself, or some novel pronoun-self, as God.¹² This person will perform works of power and false wonders to deceive those who are already perishing. Deceived by evil, they refuse to “*receive the love of the truth*”.¹³ Paul prophesied that,

*The coming of the **lawless one** [the Anarchist, MSG] will be in accordance with the work of Satan displayed in all kinds of **counterfeit** miracles, signs and wonders, and in every sort of **evil that deceives** those who are perishing. They perish because they **refused to love the truth** and so be saved. (2 Thessalonians 2:9-10 NIV)*

Paul connects love for the truth with being saved. Writing to the Philippians, he associates love in general with true knowledge and discernment. Paul prayed, “*that your **love may abound** still more and more in **real knowledge** and **all discernment***”.¹⁴ True love relies on accurate information and reliable insight. These qualities enable us to evaluate the source, and identify the motive, behind supernatural feats.

Demonic signs, wonders, and miracles are the work of Satan; they lead to confusion, corruption, and destruction. According to an angel speaking to John in “The Revelation”, everyone that worships the beast and his image, and receives its mark will experience the full wrath of God’s anger—the smoke of their torment will rise forever, and they will not rest day or night.¹⁵ Apart from the power of God applied in Jesus name, supernatural phenomenon invites idolatry, applied with excessive and irrational zeal.

Fake signs, false wonders, and imitation miracles characterize Satan’s scheme to attract misinformed worshipers. As apocalyptic intrigue escalates, God will

⁹ Revelation 13:13-14

¹⁰ Revelation 13:12 and 13:15 respectively

¹¹ Revelation 19:20 and 13:14-15

¹² 2 Thessalonians 2:3-4 NIV

¹³ 2 Thessalonians 2:10 NAS

¹⁴ Philippians 1:9 NAS

¹⁵ Revelation 14:9-11

flood the earth once again, but this time with the true knowledge of His glory.¹⁶ The truth about God always prevails over delusional deities.

In “The Revelation” to John, Satan appears to hold an ominous sway over an unspecified number of deluded worshipers. In a context of global tyranny, persecution, and tribulation, victims are susceptible to demonic deception, coercion, and intimidation. Because some exchange “*the truth about God for a lie,*” they worship and serve “*created things rather than the Creator*”.¹⁷

The French Revolution may foreshadow elements of John’s revelation. Insurgent forces “abolished the Catholic monarchy, nationalized Church property, exiled 30,000 priests, and killed hundreds more.”¹⁸ They eventually demanded strict adherence to the deistic Cult of the Supreme Being. Initially, “The French Revolution began with attacks on Church corruption and the wealth of the higher clergy.”¹⁹ Historian Albert Marrin describes the decadent behavior brandished by religious dissidents and political anarchists.²⁰ Children kicked human heads down the street like footballs. Women pinned severed ears to their dress in support of executioners who dipped their bread in the blood of quivering victims. When human depravity bonds with demonic rage, horrific behavior erupts.

In one way or another, God may allow Satan, the dragon, two beasts, and a false prophet to test humanity’s allegiance with life-threatening ultimatums. According to John, the second beast

...was given power to give breath to the image of the first beast, so that it could speak and cause all who refused to worship the image to be killed. (Rev 13:15 NIV)

Responding with Certitude

Despite satanic pressure to do otherwise, true worshipers articulate highest praise and convey exclusive reverence. They transform the spiritual atmosphere with feats of valiant veneration and dauntless devotion. The truth about God liberates, illuminates, and emboldens indecisive spectators vacillating between life

¹⁶ Habakkuk 2:14

¹⁷ Romans 1:25 NIV

¹⁸ Michael Collins, *The Story of Christianity*, Mathew A Price, Dorling Kindersley, 1999, pp. 176–177.

¹⁹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dechristianization_of_France_during_the_French_Revolution (accessed 11-26-20)

²⁰ Albert Marrin, *Napoleon and the Napoleonic Wars*, Penguin Books, New York, NY, 1991, pp. 27-29.

and death. According to my 5-year-old grandson, “When the Light goes up, darkness goes down”.

Encountering God’s presence activates a decisive tipping point for worshipers. The Truth stimulates their faith and fortifies their courage to oppose satanic censorship and oppression. Accurately informed worshipers resist demonic mandates with intrepid valor. They embrace the Truth with conviction and follow the Holy Spirit where their own strength cannot take them.

Worshippers and Warriors

For thousands of years, worshipers and warriors have laid down their life for a cause. Conflicted by faith and sight, worshipers lay down their life to honor and revere. Conflicted by fear and courage, warriors lay down their life to attack and defend. One proclaims praise and responds with veneration while the other declares war and responds with violence. As devout multitudes generate thanks and praise, committed militants unleash bombs and bullets. Humanity exhibits a vast contrast in behavior from pious devotion to fatal destruction.

Worshippers and warriors both garner the gaze of their Heavenly Father. One delivers what He seeks. The other delivers what He at times commanded. While congregates participate in worship service, combatants participate in military service, and some participate in both. Warriors assemble in strategic bunkers and scenic battlefields, on land, sky, and sea. Worshipers gather virtually or wherever they find themselves in homes, parks, schools, offices, restaurants, chapels, sanctuaries, cathedrals, basilicas, auditoriums, theaters, convention centers, stadiums, arenas, streets, mountains, valleys, in trains, planes, cars, ships, etc.

Radical militants are expanding their ranks at an alarming rate as tyrants and terrorists mass-produce weapons and warriors. Through systematic indoctrination and calculated brainwashing, tyrants and terrorists are grooming candidates from an early age to carry out militant agendas. With a mix of religious coercion and political intimidation, they manipulate vulnerable accomplices. While worshipers of Christ don garments of praise, radical terrorists clothe themselves with deadly explosives.

For perspective, International journalist Arnaud de Borchgrave cites one example of escalating military might. He states that while 99 percent of the world’s Muslim population hold moderate beliefs, 1 percent of 1.6 billion yields 16 million

extreme militants who believe America is the Great Satan, the fount of all evil, to be attacked and demolished.²¹

Homicide bombers of all ages and genders are bypassing conventional warfare for the sake of militant agendas. Combat zones now extend beyond battlefields into everyday venues. Civilian targets include virtually everywhere. In this unconventional war, the line between soldier and civilian no longer exists. Warriors without uniforms have become weapons without conscience. Some shamelessly deploy sons, daughters, wives, and infants as covert explosives. Demonic evil has no regard for human dignity or the sanctity of life.

Knowing the truth about Satan reinforces our need to connect with God for a strong finish. It compels worshipers to distinguish the veracity of God from the mendacity of Satan. Truth defines God. Jesus said, "I am *the way, and the truth, and the life.*"²² Mendacity defines Satan; "*he is a liar and the father of lies.*"²³ Informed worshipers know who they are, and they know whom they worship; Jesus said, "*we worship what we know.*"²⁴

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²¹ The American Conservative, Radical Islam Rising;
<http://www.amconmag.com/article/2003/jan/13/00029/> (Retrieved 9/30/2011)

²² John 14:6

²³ John 8:44 NIV

²⁴ John 4:22 ESV