



"The enemy is in front of us. The enemy is behind us. The enemy is to the right and to the left. They can't get away this time!"
—Douglas MacArthur

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The Truth About Deception (Part Two)

As we saw last time, the New Testament is replete with warnings about converted members of God's church being deceived. If one of the elect leaves himself open to deception—a possibility for us all—the father of lies will begin to lead him away. We may not be fully ignorant of his devices ([II Corinthians 2:11](#)), but we are still susceptible to them.

We know that carnal human nature is a combination of the spirit in man that [God](#) bestows on each human and the spirit that emanates from [Satan](#), since we live in his realm. Thus, when we see the deceptions that mankind uses or the strategies that men devise to achieve their selfish ends, we know that these reflect the ruler of this world. Satan, however, is far more deceptive and capable of much greater complexity than man is. Still, we can envision how Satan deceives by considering some of the strategies we see employed in [the world](#) around us.

In the aftermath of World War I, the French Minister of War advocated defending against future German aggression by building a line of concrete fortifications, tank obstacles, and other defenses along his nation's borders with Germany and Italy. The French concluded from what had occurred in

WWI that static, defensive combat was the key to success, so Andre Maginot designed and built a static border defense system to "guarantee" that France could not be invaded from the east.

As the Maginot Line was considered a work of genius, France felt confident that it had neutralized the German threat. Yet, when the Nazis mobilized for war against France, they did not attack her directly. Instead, they invaded France's neighbor, Belgium, and then entered France *through Belgium*, entirely bypassing the useless Maginot Line. Within six weeks, France had surrendered. *The French thought they knew where the enemy would come from*, and staking their security on that assumption, they were defeated.

Great Britain during this same period serves as another example. Throughout the 1930s, Winston Churchill repeatedly warned about Hitler's intentions, German rearmament, and Britain's weakness. His warnings fell on deaf ears. When Neville Chamberlain became Prime Minister in 1937, he believed Berlin could be appeased. The German threat was obvious to Churchill and others, but Chamberlain did not take it seriously. Instead, he believed in his own ability to make Germany behave through offering Germany some of its former territory.

When he addressed Britain after getting Hitler to sign the Munich Agreement, he boasted: "My good friends, for the second time in our history, a British Prime Minister has returned from Germany bringing [peace](#) with honor. I believe it is peace for our time." The next day, the Nazi army invaded the Sudetenland, and in less than a year, the whole continent was embroiled in World War II. *Chamberlain's confidence in his own abilities allowed him to be deceived*, and Great Britain paid a profound price in human life.

A third example comes from Edgar Allen Poe, a writer with a dark imagination. One of his best-known stories is *The Purloined Letter*, an early work of detective fiction. As the title suggests, the story is about a valuable letter that has been stolen. After stealing it, the thief outsmarts the police investigators by anticipating their intelligence. He utilizes their assumption that he would do something clever and elaborate to hide the letter, so he

instead leaves it in plain sight. The solution to its whereabouts is simple, yet *the self-confident inspectors deceive themselves*. As they ratchet up their own cleverness, they wander further from the truth.

As a final example, a strategy various scam artists use today is known as a "long con." This is an attempt to defraud a person or group after first gaining their trust, but it involves a long-range goal so grand that the con man will pass up opportunities for easier and quicker payouts. It may even involve great personal sacrifice to convince the target to trust the con artist. He builds up layers upon layers of deceit and exercises great [patience](#) to reach the final, big payoff.

Thus, as in the [Parable of the Wheat and the Tares](#) ([Matthew 13:24-30](#)), we need to realize that *even some of those growing with us may not be what they appear*. All of the New Testament writers warn about false ministers, and some caution about false brethren—characters who may not even realize that they are pawns in a great game of deception!

The examples we can draw from are practically endless because Satan has been broadcasting to mankind for some 6,000 years. Though we can recognize some of his patterns and devices, we must remember that, on our own, we are no match at all for his power, subtlety, patience, shrewdness, or his malevolent brilliance. If we believe that we have outsmarted Satan because we can recognize *some* of his deceptions, we are deceived!

There is a question we can ask ourselves to help stay on track and keep the right perspective regarding deception, as well as our susceptibility to it: How are we different from those who fellowshiped with us in the past yet have fallen away from the truth? In other words, how do we know that at some point in the future we will not also follow a path of deception and eventual apostasy? We might subconsciously shake our heads and say, "That won't happen to me"—but where does that confidence come from? We will consider this question in Part Three.

- David C. Grabbe

From the Archives: Featured Sermon

[The False Christ Deception](#)

by Martin G. Collins

Because of lying and spiritual deception, the Globalists' control of the media has posed major problems for those seeking or living by the truth. Instead of letting Israel know about their faults, the prophets or religious leaders have 'plastered over' with untempered mortar the sins of the nation. A new archeological lie spawned by the Globalist media about an alleged tomb of the remains of Jesus, Mary Magdalene, and their son Judah (substantiated by 'scientific DNA evidence') threatens to undermine the faith of many professing Christians, making them soft targets for the coming False Prophet, who will probably claim to be a descendant of the tomb's inhabitants. Indeed, if Christ has not risen (as was alleged by the Pharisaical contemporaries who tried to bribe soldier 'witnesses' to spread the story that they had taken the body away), there is no point to adhering to the faith. If the apostles had not seen the resurrected Christ, they would not have endured martyrdom. Like the spurious documentary on 'The Lost Tomb of Christ,' the foundation of all lies or prevarication and falsehood is grounded in self-deception.

From the Archives: Featured Article

[Deceptions of the End Time](#)

by Richard T. Ritenbaugh

Our world is full of lies and liars, and many in God's church are ignorant of just how much deceit is out there. Jesus tells us, however, that the best way to resist deception is being convicted of the truth.

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