

SABBATH THOUGHT 2022-05-28—TRUTH

May God bless you on His Sabbath day!

When I think of all the available material pertaining to Biblical doctrine, instructions, prophecies, etc., much, if not most, of it was motivated to counter false teachings, wrong beliefs, and ignorance. There are sermons, books, and booklets that refute the Trinity doctrine, Sunday-keeping, evolution, Christmas, and Easter. Other topics include proving that God's Law and holydays are not obsolete, refuting the many wrong calendars, discounting a Passover 15th date, addressing the heresy of "once saved, always saved," and proving that the ten tribes are not "lost." It seems most of the work goes into defending the truth rather than establishing it. Paul and the other authors of the NT wrote against the false teachings of their day, but most of their writings were about things pertaining to the kingdom and our calling to become God's children.

Believers in times past endured persecutions and martyrdoms. They faced direct and open threats to their physical lives. Deception is designed to destroy the spirit instead of the body. Today's lies are a danger worse than those of the first century Church. Deception does not rely upon fear of physical torture or death. Rather, it comes as smooth words that are designed to kill the spirit.

Without truth, we are lost. Truth is required to be born into God's kingdom. If we do not know the key doctrines, and live by them, then the kingdom is out of reach for us. Doctrines "of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of the resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment" (Heb. 6:2) are absolutely required for salvation. But so is keeping God's Law because it establishes the weekly Sabbaths, Passover, and holydays. By it we also know sin, which is the foundation for the doctrine of repentance and forgiveness made possible by the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

There is a difference between *teaching* and *guarding* God's truth. The former assumes a mind willing to learn whereas the latter is a fight against the works of Satan. As the end of this age approaches, Satan's lust for destruction will turn him into a "a roaring lion, seeking anyone he may devour" (1 Pet. 5:8). As his aggression and anger intensifies, the modern nations descended from Abraham become all the more irrational, angry, hateful, and destructive. Is there any leader, high-ranking official, or wealthy business owner who does not lie these days?

The truth has become scarce. Few tell the truth and even fewer abide by it. Bribes are everywhere. Wealth and power is the ultimate goal of the majority. Gone are the days when judges are honored and leaders are respected. Generals no longer protectors of the nation because they guard their own political bias. Religious leaders preach heresies and many have been caught in adulterous affairs or abuse of children while others own

mansions that are opulent beyond belief. Elijah, John the Baptist, and Paul all lived next to poverty and would absolutely condemn them for plundering God's sheep.

All of this comes at the expense of the general population who are not wealthy or powerful or well-known. There is terrible injustice, oppression, and destruction being inflicted upon the nations whose ancestry extends back to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Were they not to be an example of God's ways to the world?

ZEPHANIAH 3:3-4 Her [Israel's] **princes [rulers]** within her are roaring lions; her **judges** evening wolves. They gnaw bones and leave nothing for the morning. 4 Her **prophets** are proud, men of deceit; her **priests** have defiled the sanctuary; they have done violence to the law.

This is not only a message for today, but it perfectly fits the Israelite nations. Notice also a few words from the prophet Ezekiel:

EZEKIEL 22:25-29 There is a conspiracy of her [*the house of Israel—v. 18*] **prophets** in her midst, like a roaring lion tearing the prey. They have devoured souls; they have taken the treasure and precious things; they made many widows in her midst. 26 Her **priests** have done violence to My law and have profaned My holy things. They have put no difference between the holy and the profane, and have not taught the difference between the unclean and the clean, and they have hidden their eyes from My Sabbaths, and I am profaned among them. 27 Her **rulers** in her midst *are* like wolves tearing the prey, to shed blood and to destroy souls, to get unjust gain. 28 And her **prophets** have covered themselves *with* whitewash, seeing false visions and divining lies unto them, saying, 'Thus says the Lord GOD;' when the LORD has not spoken. 29 The **people** of the land have used oppression and committed robbery, and **they have troubled the poor and needy. Yea, they have oppressed the stranger wrongfully.**

If you read the major and minor prophets in the Bible, God spent a LOT of time describing the evil of today. Yes, God knew it would happen and we are now seeing prophecy fulfilled. Unbelievably, it just keeps getting worse.

One of the most insidious inventions in the last few years is deepfake videos. Basically, this is the ability to manipulate a real video of someone into showing the person saying something they never did—and it cannot be distinguished from reality. Deepfakes can manipulate a person's facial expressions as well as words, adding looks of anger, sadness, or happiness that reflect the scripted words being uttered.

Why would anyone create this? Because it allows the wicked to **LIE** even more convincingly. These are people who "love and **devise** a lie" (Rev. 22:15). It is no longer a matter of promoting lies while ignoring or hiding evidence to the contrary, people are creating ("devising") lies that look and sound incredibly legitimate and truthful. This

allows the wicked to present evil ideas, false accusations and testimonies, and cover up the truth to control anyone who does not support their narrative.

We live in a world where the wicked can truly “call evil good and good evil” (Isa. 5:20). The word “call” means to *declare as an edict*. Who can pronounce an edict? Only a king or leader. Our presidents and prime ministers lie so much that their every word is suspect. Now when the wicked lie, they will be able produce false evidence to back up their egregious words. It has become almost impossible to avoid being deceived.

Jesus Christ gave believers a serious warning against being deceived FOUR times in Matthew 24. The deceptions will be so believable that He said the wicked “*shall deceive many*” of the SAINTS (Mat. 24:5)! Do not let any believer think this refers to someone else. We must acknowledge that the level of deception in the world today could easily lead us astray if we are not utterly reliant upon God. If you think the technology to create deepfake videos is frightful, imagine the kind of deception possible when the False Prophet comes on the scene:

REVELATION 13:13-15 And **he [the False Prophet] performs great wonders**, so that he even causes fire to come down to the earth from heaven in the sight of men. 14 And **he deceives those who dwell on the earth** by means of the wonders that were given to him to perform in the sight of the beast, saying to those who dwell on the earth that they should make an image for the beast, which had the wound by the sword, yet was alive. 15 And **he was given power to give life to the image of the beast**, so that the image of the beast also could speak; and he causes everyone who will not worship the image of the beast to be killed.

This man is under the direct influence of, and receives great power from, Satan. His work will result many being deceived into worshipping the Beast. Who can escape?

2 THESSALONIANS 2:3-10 Do not let anyone deceive you by any means because *that day will not* come unless the apostasy shall come first, and **the man of sin shall be revealed—the son of perdition**, 4 The one who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God, or that is an object of worship; so that he comes into the temple of God and sits down as God, proclaiming that he himself is God. 5 Do you not remember that when I was still with you, I told you these things? 6 And now you understand what is holding *him* back in order for him to be revealed in his own set time. 7 For the mystery of lawlessness is already working; only *there is* one Who is restraining at the present *time* until it arises out of *the* midst. 8 And then the lawless one will be revealed (whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth, and will destroy with the brightness of His coming); 9 *Even* the one whose coming is according to *the* inner working of Satan, with all power and signs and lying wonders, 10 And **with all deceivableness** of unrighteousness

in those who are perishing because they did not receive the love of the truth, so that they might be saved.

Only those who **love** God's *truth* will be saved. How does one love the Truth? Through prayer, study, fasting, keeping God's Law, and having a humble and contrite heart. Solomon describes the heart of a person who does these things:

PROVERBS 3:3, 5-7 **Do not let mercy and truth forsake you**; bind them around your neck; write them upon the tablet of your heart; 5 **Trust in the LORD** with all your heart, and **lean not to your own understanding**. 6 In all your ways **acknowledge Him**, and He shall direct your paths. 7 **Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the LORD and depart from evil**.

There are seven things we are told to do: 1) stay close to God's Truth 2) trust God, 3) rely upon God, 4) learn from God, 5) be humble toward God, 6) revere God, and 6) shun evil. Did you notice the very first one? "Do not let ... **truth forsake you**." Practicing these thing will ensure that the "righteousness [*imputed by God*] of the perfect shall direct [our] way" (Pro. 11:5).

Brethren, God's truth is precious but it is getting harder to find in this world, even among some in the Church of God. The "famine of hearing of words [*of Truth*] of the LORD" (Amos 8:11) has already begun. Doctrines are being perverted, laws of God are being ignored, and people are leaning unto their own understanding. Truth will become so rare that God said to Jeremiah:

JEREMIAH 5:1 "Run to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem, and see now, and know, and seek in her open places, **if you can find a man, if there is one** who does justice, **who seeks the truth**; and I will pardon her."

I said at the beginning of this article that without truth, we are lost. On the other hand, having God's truth will bring us through it all:

2 PETER 1:4 Through which **He [God] has given to us the greatest and most precious promises**, that through these you may become partakers of *the* divine nature, **having escaped the corruption that is in the world** through lust.

In the end, God's Truth will ensure we escape the lies and deception of the world and fulfill the promises of God in us—for all eternity in His kingdom of Truth.

May God's grace and peace be upon you!

Steven Greene

<https://sabbathreflections.org>