LET NO MAN DECEIVE HIMSELF

Intro: As a basis for our study turn to 1 Cor. 3:18 “Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise.” We might be able to deceive many in the world but the greatest deception in the world is self-deception. Sad to say many are guilty of this self-deception.

I. MAN MAY DECEIVE HIMSELF BY MINIMIZING HIS SINS.
   A. 1 John 1:8 “If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.”
      1. Some even believe they have no sin.
      2. It is said that a lady in Forth Worth once said, “I am as good as Jesus Christ and getting better every day.” This is self-deception.
   B. Mat. 7:3-5 “And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother’s eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother’s eye.”

II. WE MAY DECEIVE OURSELVES BY THINKING GOD IS LIKE MAN.
   A. Psa. 50:21 “These things hast thou done, and I kept silence; thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself: but I will reprove thee, and set them in order before thine eyes.”
      1. A common form of idolatry is to make not a metal but a mental image of God to conform to man.
      2. Rom. 1:21, 23 “Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.... 23And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things.”
   B. Examples
      1. Adam and Eve could hide from each other so they thought they could hide from God.
         a. Gen. 3:10 “And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself.”
         b. Pro. 15:3 “The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good.”
      2. Man can bribe man, so he thinks he can bribe God.
         a. This is what Saul tried to do.
         b. 1 Sam. 15:22 “And Samuel said, Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.”
      3. Man thinks one religion is as good as another, so he thinks God feels this way.
         a. Isa. 55:8-9 “For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.”
         b. Mat. 15:13-14 “But he answered and said, Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up. "Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch.”
      4. Man often does not keep his word so he thinks God is like this; 2 Pet. 3:9 “The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.”
III. **One May Deceive Himself by Surmising a Way Is Right When It Is Wrong.**

A. Pro. 14:12 “There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.”

B. A classic example of this form of self-deception is Saul of Tarsus.

1. Acts 23:1 “And Paul, earnestly beholding the council, said, Men and brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day.”

2. Acts 26:9 “I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth.”

IV. **When a Man Attempts to Change the Bible He Has Only Deceived Himself.**

A. Through the years many have requested a perverted word.

1. Isa. 30:10 “Which say to the seers, See not; and to the prophets, Prophesy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophesy deceits:”

2. 2 Tim. 4:3-4 “For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; 4And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.”

B. Through the years many have perverted the word.

1. 2 Cor. 11:13-15 “For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. 14And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. 15Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works.”

2. Gal. 1:7-9 “Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. 8But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. 9As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.”

3. Thus, warnings:

   a. Mat. 7:15 “Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.”

   b. 1 John 4:1 “Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.”

4. Martin Luther

   a. Did not like Rom. 5:1 “Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:” so he added the word “only” to it.

   b. He did not like the book of James so he eliminated it.

5. The denominations have done this for years on many subjects.

6. Today we are faced with a new problem of people changing the Bible in modern day “translations” or perversions.

C. But at the judgment we will be judged by the Bible.

1. Rev. 20:12 “And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.”

2. To change it is mere self-deception.
V. MAN MAY DECEIVE HIMSELF BY THINKING HE CAN SOW ONE THING AND REAP SOMETHING ELSE.
   A. Gal. 6:7-8 “Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. 7For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.”
      1. Reaping what one has sown is a universal law.
      2. It is no less true in spiritual matters.
   B. Ahab thought he could escape reaping what he sowed by disguising himself, but he was deceived.
      1. 1 Kin. 21:19 “And thou shalt speak unto him, saying, Thus saith the Lord, Hast thou killed, and also taken possession? And thou shalt speak unto him, saying, Thus saith the Lord, In the place where dogs licked the blood of Naboth shall dogs lick thy blood, even thine.”
      2. 1 Kin. 22:30-38 “And the king of Israel said unto Jehoshaphat, I will disguise myself, and enter into the battle; but put thou on thy robes. And the king of Israel disguised himself, and went into the battle. 31But the king of Syria commanded his thirty and two captains that had rule over his chariots, saying, Fight neither with small nor great, save only with the king of Israel. 32And it came to pass, when the captains of the chariots saw Jehoshaphat, that they said, Surely it is the king of Israel. And they turned aside to fight against him: and Jehoshaphat cried out. 33And it came to pass, when the captains of the chariots perceived that it was not the king of Israel, that they turned back from pursuing him. 34And a certain man drew a bow at a venture, and smote the king of Israel between the joints of the harness: wherefore he said unto the driver of his chariot, Turn thine hand, and carry me out of the host; for I am wounded. 35And the battle increased that day: and the king was stayed up in his chariot against the Syrians, and died at even: and the blood ran out of the wound into the midst of the chariot. 36And there went a proclamation throughout the host about the going down of the sun, saying, Every man to his city, and every man to his country. 37So the king died, and was brought to Samaria; and they buried the king in Samaria. 38And one washed the chariot in the pool of Samaria; and the dogs licked up his blood; and they washed his armour; according unto the word of the Lord which he spake.”
   C. Poem by John Greenlief Whittier:
      The tissue of the life to be
      We weave with colors all our own,
      And in the field of destiny
      We reap as we have sown.

VI. MANY MAY DECEIVE HIMSELF BY FOLLOWING A LIP RELIGION.
   A. Mat. 15:8 “This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me.”
      1. They had lip religion of ceremonialism which had no heart.
      2. John 4:23-24 “But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. 24God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.”
   B. The Pharisees were deceived in this manner. Mat. 23.

VII. A PERSON MAY DECEIVE HIMSELF BY THINKING HE IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN HE REALLY IS (EGOTISM).
   A. Gal. 6:3 “For if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself.”
   B. The crowd soon detects a phony, he has deceived no one but himself.
VIII. MAN MAY DECEIVE HIMSELF BY PLACING FAITH IN TOMORROW.

A. Jam. 4:13-14 “Go to now, ye that say, To day or to morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain: 13Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.”

B. Felix trusted in tomorrow; Acts 24:25 “And as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled, and answered, Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee.”

C. Saying: “Slaves of tomorrow! Slaves of tomorrow! What a pitiful, hopeless lot they are. Chained to tomorrow, nothing is done; for all good intentions die in the realm of tomorrow.”

IX. MAN MAY DECEIVE HIMSELF BY AN UNBRIDLED TONGUE.

A. Jam. 1:26 “If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiteth his own heart, this man’s religion is vain.”

B. 1 Pet. 3:10 “For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile.”

C. Eph. 4:29 “Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.”