



WHICH IS WORSE —
TO BE INSULTED,
EMBARRASSED OR DECEIVED?

Are You Being Deceived?

Which is worse –
to be insulted, embarrassed or deceived?

by Mike Gendron

If I were to insult you, you'd feel the sting immediately. If I were to embarrass you, you'd be the first to know. But if I were to deceive you...you might never know it!

As painful as being insulted or embarrassed can be, at least you're aware of what's taking place. But deception can be deadly because you don't realize you are being betrayed, misled, seduced or ensnared. It's much more than a clever slight of hand.

Deceived people are not even aware they are being misled unless they are confronted with the truth. Tragically, many go to their graves deceived about their relationship with God.

The Importance of *Your* Source of Truth

What is your source for truth? Is it trustworthy? Will it protect you from the schemes and lies of the master deceiver, Satan?

The biblical prophet Jeremiah gave wise counsel for choosing who to trust. He said if you put your trust in man you will be cursed like a withered bush in a barren desert. However, if your ultimate trust is in God, Jeremiah said you will flourish like a tree planted by the water (Jeremiah 17:5-8).

Still many people today disregard Jeremiah's advice and in their search for truth put their trust in man – religious leaders – instead of God.

Who Will *You* Trust?

Catholics, for example, believe that the pope and Roman Catholic Church teach exactly what Jesus and the Bible teach. But how do we know if the popes' teachings or the dogmas of the Roman Catholic Church are true?

The only way we can be 100% sure is to do what the church of Berea did in New Testament times. They examined the Scriptures to see if what the Apostle Paul taught them was true (Acts 17:11).

We must use the same scriptural standard for the teachings of all religious leaders. Disregarding the objective truth of God's Word in favor of the subjective teachings of men can be a tragic mistake.

The Danger of Deception

Would it surprise you to learn that many religious teachings go against the Bible? Shouldn't that concern you, since your eternal destiny may depend on such teachings?

Here is how Catholic doctrine misleads people about God's plan of salvation:

- All graces needed to attain eternal life can be merited (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 2027).
- Catholics are reborn as sons of God and freed from sin through water baptism (1213).
- Purgatory is a cleansing fire that achieves the holiness necessary for heaven (1030-31).
- Jesus is offered daily as a sacrificial victim on Catholic altars (1367).
- Venial sins are not deserving of hell (1863).
- By performing acts of penance, Catholics can expiate their own sins (1459, 1477).

The Bible says man is saved by believing God's truth (Ephesians 1:13,14). God can never deceive anyone (Titus 1:1,2). But man remains condemned if he continues in deception.

False religious systems hold people in bondage to deception by perverting God's truth and grace. Any religion that teaches its followers that salvation is obtained through human effort and merit is nullifying the grace of God. Yet grace is the only means by which God saves sinners! The Bible says "if by grace, it is no longer because of works; otherwise grace would no longer be grace" (Romans 11:6).

Misplaced Faith

Some people blindly put their faith in religious leaders, assuming that their leaders would never seduce anyone with a false plan of salvation. Yet the Apostle Paul warned that "from your own group, men will come forward perverting the truth to draw the disciples away after them" (Acts 20:30).

Other people simply choose not to respond or conform their lives to truth. Instead they turn away to listen to teachers who say what they want to hear (2 Timothy 4:2-4).

Then there are people who have zeal for God, but not in line with the truth. Many people have been indoctrinated with false teaching and have difficulty believing the truth. They fail because they refuse to let go of unbiblical beliefs.

It was disobedience to God, a lack of faith in His purpose, plan, and word that separated Adam and Eve from Him. Instead, they chose to put their faith in the deceiver, which brought spiritual and physical death to us all.

God uses the very instrument that separated us from Him – faith – to restore us back to Him. By repenting of our dead works and turning to God in faith, we receive spiritual and eternal life: "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not from you; it is the gift of God; it is not from works, so no one may boast" (Ephesians 2:8,9).

God's Truth Determines Destiny

The Bible makes it clear that

- We are either children of the devil (John 8:43-45) or children of God (John 1:12),
- We live as slaves to sin or as slaves to righteousness (Romans 6:16-18), and
- We will spend eternity under the wrath of God or in His loving presence.

“Whoever believes in Him [Jesus Christ] will not be condemned, but whoever does not believe has already been condemned, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God” (John 3:18).

God has revealed that trusting in anything other than Christ and His Word is evidence of deception. Those who choose to follow the traditions, opinions, and philosophies of men will be condemned. Jesus said, “Whoever rejects Me and does not accept My words has something to judge him: the word that I speak, it will condemn him on the last day” (John 12:48).

By contrast, how wonderful are the words, “to those who did accept Him He gave power to become children of God to those who believe in His name” (John 1:12).

Are you basing your life and eternal destiny on the eternal truths of God's Word or on the Catholic traditions added to God's truth? How will you respond to God's truth? Compare these essential teachings of the Bible to the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church:

God and His Word teach...	The pope and his church teach...
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Salvation is only through Christ (Acts 4:12).	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Salvation is through the Roman Catholic Church and its sacraments (846, 1129).
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• You are saved by faith and not by works (Ephesians 2:8,9).	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• You are saved by faith plus works (1815, 1821, 2010, 2027).
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• All who rely on observing the law – commandments – for salvation are under a curse (Galatians 3:10).	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Obedience to the commandments is necessary for salvation (2068).
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Salvation occurs at the moment you repent and believe the gospel (Acts 20:21, Ephesians 1:13).	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Salvation is a process from baptism through purgatory (161, 162, 1254, 1255).
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Only Jesus purifies sin (Hebrews 1:3, Colossians 1:22).	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Purgatory purifies sin (1030, 1031).
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• You can know that you have eternal life (John 10:27-30, 1 John 5:13).	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• You sin if you presume to be saved without merit (2090-2092).
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The sacrifice of Jesus is finished (John 19:30).	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The sacrifice of Jesus continues in daily Mass (611, 1405).

As you can see, these teachings directly oppose each other. One is truth that will set you free. One is deception that will hold you in bondage.

Which teachings will you choose? Choose carefully. In this life you can be wrong about a lot of things and still survive. But when this life is over, if you were wrong about Gods *only* provision for your sins, you will perish in the lake of fire for all eternity.

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COMPLIMENTS OF:

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