

# **THE DECEITFULNESS OF SIN**

**Heb.3:13-19**

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## **I. INTRODUCTION**

1. No one enjoys being deceived. We even go to great lengths to guard against it.
2. Of course, we recognize that, in spite of our efforts, we run the risk of being deceived at some time, by someone, or something, for some reason.
3. Satan and his ministers are masters of deception.
  - a. In fact, Satan is said to be: “A liar, and the father of it” (the originator of it), Jno.8:44.
  - b. In Rev.12:9, he is identified as “that old serpent,” and “the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world...”
  - c. 2Cor.11:14,15 say, “Satan himself is transformed into (masquerades as) an angel of light,” and “his ministers also have the appearance of the ministers of righteousness...”
4. Though the inspired scriptures are “profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness,” and “thoroughly furnish us unto all good works” (2Tim.3:16,17); though they enlighten our understanding that we may know the truth in order to avoid being deceived; yet we must constantly be on guard against the danger of the deceitfulness of sin.
5. We are often warned about the danger of the possibility of deception,, 1Cor.6:9,10; 15:33; 2Cor.11:3; Gal.6:7; 2Tim.3:13.
6. This is the reason for our study of our present text, which is Heb.3:13-19.
7. Based on our text, we are vitally interested in and initially concerned about the primary danger or risk to our heart due to the deceitfulness of sin addressed in this text.

## **II. DISCUSSION**

### **A. OUR TEXT BRIEFLY ANALYZED**

1. V.13 of our text exhorts us to a daily duty and warns us of an awful peril due to the deceitfulness of sin.
  - a. The daily duty, V.13a.

- b. The awful peril, danger or risk of which we are warned due to “the deceitfulness of sin,” V.13b.
- 2. Vv.14,15 inform us of the basis upon which “we are made partakers of Christ.” Cf. Heb.2:1-3; 10:35,36; 1Jno.2:24,25.
- 3. Vv.16-19 reveal to us what happened to those who came out of Egypt by Moses who, through the deceitfulness of sin, hardened their hearts.
- 4. In view of this awful peril, danger or risk, due to the deceitfulness of sin, consider the previous verses of the context of Ch.3, Vv.6-12.

**B. IN VIEW OF THE DANGER, THE WORD “HARDENED” AND ITS RELATED TERMS NEED BE DEFINED.**

- 1. Hardened and its related terms are translated from three different Gr. terms: SKLERUNO – sklay-roo-no ( ), POROO – po-ro-o ( ), and POROSIS – po-ro-sis ( ), meaning:
  - a. “to make hard, callous, to petrify...is used metaphorically, of the heart, of dulled spiritual perception.
  - b. “to render obstinate, stubborn”
  - c. “to make the heart dull”
  - d. “to grow hard or callous, become dull, lose the power of understanding.”
  - e. “obtuseness of mental discernment, dulled perception;” the mind of one has been blunted, of stubbornness, obduracy – (reached a state or condition of moral insensibility); the moral susceptibility of the heart being removed, the soul becoming callous so that spiritual things do not impress.
  - f. Considering the fact of the evil itself, we must realize it results from an obstinate refusal to attend to Divine things, which are considered irksome and painful due to the deceitfulness of sin, and the soul is better pleased with those things that are considered more suitable to one’s liking, and that afford one personal pleasure and satisfaction.
- 4. Sin hardens the heart by strengthening the principles and habits of iniquity in one. The restraints of conscience in this way are overcome.

**C. HARDNESS OF HEART OR THE DANGER OF REACHING THE CONDITION OF BEING “PAST FEELING” IS THE RESULT OF TWO PRIMARY FACTORS OR CONSTITUENT ELEMENTS.**

1. The fact that this condition of hardness of heart is generally reached gradually.
  - a. People do not become hardened in sin by one act of wickedness.
  - b. Moral insensibility or hardness of heart or having a seared conscience is the result of a process – a gradual process.
  - c. From the Bible we learn this progress may sometimes be traced, as in the case of:
    - (1) Pharaoh and his hardening of his will against certain Divine commands, Exo.5:2 – or the refusal to do one’s duty to God, whether Pharaoh or anyone else.
    - (2) The Gentiles of Eph.4:17-19 and Rom.1:18-28. The hardening of the entire moral disposition in sin.
      - (a) In this stage the struggle against temptation to sin is renounced, abandoned, and the effort to be and to do God’s will is given up.
    - (3) The unbelieving Jews of Ac.7:51-59 and their hardening of their heart against the influences of Divine grace.
      - (a) In cases like this, and in this stage of hardening of the heart, the offers of the gospel are rejected.
      - (b) Unbelief becomes positive and active against what is right.
    - (4) How inexpressibly terrible is such a condition of soul!
2. The fact that this condition of hardness of heart is due to “the deceitfulness of sin.”
  - a. Sin never approaches the soul in its true aspect or true colors.
  - b. It assumes attractive disguises.
  - c. It propounds plausible reasons.
  - d. It exhibits fascinating yet fictitious prospects. Cf. Satan and Mother Eve in Gen.3:4-6. See 1Tim.2:14; 1Cor.11:3; 2Cor.2:11.

**D. OUR TEXT CONTAINS AN INSPIRED PREVENTIVE AGAINST THE DANGER OF THE HARDNESS OF HEART DUE TO THE DECEITFULNESS OF SIN, V.13a. “Exhort one another”**

1. The nature of this inspired preventive: “Exhort one another”
  - a. The word translated “exhort” indicates two exercises.
    - (1) Admonition to each other.
      - (a) Let Christians, brethren in Christ, warn, admonish each other when they detect impending dangers, and

or seek to strengthen each other to prevent such impending dangers.

- (2) Encouragement of each other.
    - (a) Let Christians endeavor to comfort and inspire their disheartened and troubled brethren with new hope.
    - (b) To keep their eye on the Lord, not the world and worldly things, Col.3:1-5.
  - (3) Of course, exhortation implies instruction as well as warning and reproof when necessary.
  - (4) This exhortation may be either private or public or both.
  - (5) It should be done in the right spirit, humbly, prayerfully, in love.
2. The season or the time for the exercise of this preventive: “Exhort one another daily,” or “day by day.”
    - a. Mutual oversight, concern and help should be continuous.
    - b. Watchfulness and brotherly concern and effort must not be irregular or intermittent, but steady and constant.
    - c. Our brotherly exhortations should not be occasional exercises, but abiding dispositions.
  3. The time limit to the exercise of this preventive measure: “while it is called To day.”
    - a. While you are still living day by day within the limit of its meaning.
    - b. At the time of every possible opportunity; do not procrastinate, or put off till tomorrow what should be done today; tomorrow may be too late.
    - c. Cf. Jno.9:4.
  4. Moreover, there is a preventive mentioned in the preceding verse – V.12 – against this danger which each and every brother and sister in Christ must exercise for himself or herself.
    - a. Each one of us is to “Take heed”, for self; be watchful.
    - b. If first we do not do this, we are in no position to do it for another as V.13 requires.

#### **E. NOW TO BE MORE SPECIFIC ABOUT SIN AND ITS DECEPTIVENESS, OR “THE DECEITFULNESS OF SIN”**

1. Sin is a deceiver (Rom.7:11; Eph.4:22); it distorts the spiritual vision, causes one to take false views of things, to lose one’s clear view of

truth and righteousness, and to practice evil even while agreeing it is evil (Rom.7:13-22).

2. Sin is deceitful
  - a. In its appearances.
  - b. In its promises.
  - c. In its influences.
  - d. In its excuses even after its exposure.
3. Sin is deceptive because:
  - a. It pretends to serve us.
    - (1) It allows to think, or leads us to think, it will satisfy our lusts, our inordinate desires, whatever their nature.
    - (2) But lust is never satisfied; it is insatiable.
    - (3) Sin doesn't serve us; it enslaves us, Jno.8:34; Rom.6:16.
  - b. It offers illusionary benefits. Cf. Gen.3:4-6.
    - (1) It always promises more than it gives, or than it can give; for sin can't give anything but trouble; it takes from us.
    - (2) The only wages sin pays is "death," Rom.6:23.
    - (3) Consider what Adam and Eve had before sin entered compared with what they had afterwards, Gen.2,3.
    - (4) Sin is a robber of benefits, not a giver.
  - c. It can appear to be right and good, Prov.14:12.
4. Sin deceive us by altering the way we think.
  - a. It may cause one to think he is doing God service by putting to death righteous people, Jno.16:1-3; Cf. Ac.26:9-11; 23:1; 24:16; 1Tim.1:12-15.
  - b. Causing one to think he has no sin and is in fellowship with God while walking in darkness, 1Jno.1:6,8,10.
  - c. Causing one to develop false confidence, Gal.6:1-3.
  - d. Causing one to think he can be a hearer only, not both a hearer and a doer, Jas.1:21-25.
  - e. Causing one to think his religion is not vain even though he doesn't bridle or control his tongue, Jas.1:26.
  - f. Causing one to think he can "sow to the flesh" without "reaping corruption," Gal.6:7,8.
  - g. Causing one to think he can hear the word of God but practice worldliness without choking out the word and becoming unfruitful, Mt.13:22; Lk.8:14.
  - h. Causing our thoughts to be drawn away from the thought of God and his grace; from what he had done for us; from what he is willing to do for us; from what we owe to him as his creatures.

- i. Causing one to think the doctrines and commandments of men are acceptable to God (Mt.15:1-9); such as:
  - (1) The doctrine of salvation by faith only.
  - (2) The doctrine of salvation by grace only.
  - (3) The doctrine of salvation by meritorious works.
  - (4) Infant baptism and infant membership.
  - (5) Impossibility of apostasy.
  - (6) Denominationalism.
  - (7) Premillennialism.
  - (8) Divorce for any cause or for a variety of causes.
  - (9) Etc., etc., etc
- 5. Sin prevails in its powerful influence over man and in its ruinous effects in man's life through its deceitfulness.
  - a. Because so often, if not always, in the time of its temptation its deformity and its damaging effects are hidden, at least camouflaged; its true character is veiled.
  - b. Because it is sometimes made to appear to be irresistible; the man says, "I have no power to resist it!"
    - (1) But God says man is "without excuse" for his sin, which is not true if "man has to sin"!
    - (2) See Jas.4:7; 1Pet.5:8,9; 1Cor.10:12,13.

### III. CONCLUSION

1. Note again the brief analysis of our text. See "A" 1,2,3,4. (Pages 1,2)
2. Don't forget, don't overlook, the fact that due to the deceitfulness of sin one's heart can become hardened to the point that it is morally insensitive, or "past feeling" – his conscience can be "seared". Danger!
3. Sin is personified as a deceiver in Rom.7.
4. And the Bible is very specific in its warnings about deception by sin.
5. And, of course, the Bible does not leave us in doubt about Satan, the Evil One, being the power always working behind the scene in order to destroy man by the deceitfulness of sin.
6. But, of course, as Paul tells us, "We are not ignorant of his devices," (2Cor.2:11). Therefore, if he gets the advantage of us, we are at fault; we are without excuse!