

One Way That Satan Can Deceive Us

Psalms 51:5 [NIV] *“Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me.”*

The world we were born into is a society totally influenced by Satan who prompts us to be rebellious against our Creator, and sin.

We are prompted to eagerly seek physical things of **no** real consequence to life as if they were gold.

One false concept we cling to is time.

We think of time as a sluggish river bearing us along, helplessly stuck in it for the duration of our life.

With this false concept we wrongly picture the effect of time on our lives.

We look on time as:-

The revealer of things to come. We say *“time will tell.”*

A benign physician and comforter. We say *“time is a great healer.”*

The mysterious power to perfect human nature.

We say of a foolish young man, *“time will make him wiser.”*

We expect time to bring about Christian maturity.

We say of a new Christian acting like anything but a Christian, *“time will one day turn them into a saint.”*

The truth is that time does not have any power to make changes in our life.

Time will **not** turn fools into wise people.

Time will **not** turn sinners into saints.

God, not time, makes truly wise people or saints.

Let us look at one example of the change being brought about by a direct intervention of God in the life of a violent and powerful man.

Acts 9:1-2 [NIV] *“Meanwhile, Saul was still breathing out murderous threats against the Lord’s disciples. He went to the high priest and asked him for letters to the synagogues in Damascus, so that if he found any there who belonged to the Way, whether men or women, he might take them as prisoners to Jerusalem.”*

Saul used all his authority to persecute Christians who were referred to at first as those who followed Jesus Christ as a “way” of life.

God directly intervened in this great man’s life in a very dramatic way.

Acts 9:3-6 [NIV] *“As he neared Damascus on his journey, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. He fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him, “Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?” “Who are you, Lord?” Saul asked. “I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting,” he replied. “Now get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do.”*

The direct contact of the resurrected Jesus Christ was going to make complete change of direction in the life of Saul.

Acts 9:7-15 [NIV] *“The men travelling with Saul stood there speechless; they heard the sound but did not see anyone. Saul got up from the ground, but when he opened his eyes he could see nothing. So they led him by the hand into Damascus. For three days he was blind, and did not eat or drink anything. In Damascus there was a disciple named Ananias. The Lord called to him in a vision, “Ananias!” “Yes, Lord,” he answered. The Lord told him, “Go to the house of Judas on Straight Street and ask for a man from Tarsus named Saul, for he is praying. In a vision he has seen a man named Ananias come and place his hands on him to restore his sight.” “Lord,” Ananias answered, “I have heard many reports about this man and all the harm he has done to your saints in Jerusalem. And he has come here with authority from the chief priests to arrest all who call on your name.” But the Lord said to Ananias, “Go! This man is my chosen instrument to carry my name before the Gentiles and their kings and before the people of Israel.”*

The one who had persecuted the Christians was to be changed by Jesus Christ to bring many Gentiles to worship the Christian God.

This was not a change brought about by time but by God Himself.

God turned Saul who hated the Christian God into Saint Paul who still, through his writings, is bringing millions to know, worship and love Jesus as their Saviour and Lord.

Thankfully human nature is not fixed, we are all capable of change.

We can become something other than what we are at this very moment in time, but future time cannot produce that change.

By the power of the gospel message Jesus Christ brought from the Father God and the working of the Holy Spirit we can all change for the better.

The covetous person may become generous.

The egotist lowly in his own eyes.

The thief may learn to steal no more.

The blasphemer can fill his mouth with praises unto God.

But it is Jesus Christ who does it all, the passing of time has nothing to do with it.

Too many would-be Christians are putting off the day of committing their lives to Jesus Christ, hoping that “time is on their side”, when actually the likelihood of their change grows less and less every day.

Why?

Because what is happening is a hardening of their will, making it more difficult for them to repent.

Isaiah 55:6-7 [NIV] *“Seek the LORD while he may be found; call on him while he is near. Let the wicked forsake his way and the evil man his thoughts. Let him turn to the LORD, and he will have mercy on him, and to our God, for he will freely pardon.”*

Notice the action, change-promoting words in this warning sacrifice. “Seek ... call ... forsake ... turn.”

John 3:3-7 [NIV] *“In reply Jesus declared, “I tell you the truth, no-one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again.” “How can a man be born when he is old?” Nicodemus asked. “Surely he cannot enter a second time into his mother’s womb to be born!” Jesus answered, “I tell you the truth, no-one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit. **Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit.** You should not be surprised at my saying, ‘You must be born again.’”*

To enter into the Kingdom [created family] of God the change that must take place is a dramatic re-birth.

“Born of water” means the death of our own nature symbolically in the water of baptism.

Romans 6:3-4 [NIV] *“Or don’t you know that **all of us who were baptised into Christ Jesus were baptised into his death?** We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, **we too may live a new life.**”*

This is but the first change of many in our new Christian life.

Our whole new life will be a succession of changes always moving towards spiritual maturity or perfection.

Matthew 5:48 [NIV] *“Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.”*

To achieve these changes the Holy Spirit uses various means, probably the most effective being the writings of the New Testament in the Christian Bible.

Time can only help us if we know that it cannot help us at all by itself.

The change we all need from worse to better is only accomplished by the work of the Holy Spirit in us.