Glory be to the name of our Lord Jesus Christ! The Scriptures declare:

> “Jesus said to him, ‘I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.’” *(John 14:6, ESV)*

This makes it abundantly clear: there is no other path to eternal life apart from Jesus Christ. To speak of heaven is to speak of Christ Himself, for He is both the gate and the door to eternal life.

> “I am the door. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture.” *(John 10:9, ESV)*

Therefore, salvation and access to heaven are found in Him alone.

By God’s grace, our focus today is *The Deceptive Truth.* Not every

statement that sounds true is meant to guide us toward righteousness. Some truths are strategically used by Satan to mislead. Scripture warns us:

> “And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light.” *(2 Corinthians 11:14, ESV)*

Thus, there is truth that leads to life, but also “truth” that carries the poison of deception.

Paul and the Spirit of Divination

Consider the story in Acts:

Acts 16:16–18 (NIV)
*“Once when we were going to the place of prayer, we were met by a female slave who had a spirit by which she predicted the future. She earned a great deal of money for her owners by fortune-telling.

She followed Paul and the rest of us, shouting, ‘These men are servants of the Most High God, who are telling you the way to be saved.’

She kept this up for many days. Finally Paul became so annoyed that he turned around and said to the spirit, ‘In the name of Jesus Christ I command you to come out of her!’ At that moment the spirit left her.”*

At first glance, what the girl said was correct: Paul and his companions were indeed servants of the Most High God, proclaiming salvation. But Paul discerned something deeper. The spirit’s intent was not to glorify God but to build credibility for the girl. If Paul accepted her proclamation, people would have looked to the girl for spiritual authority rather than to the apostles.

This aligns with John’s instruction:

> “Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, for many false prophets have gone out into the world.” *(1 John 4:1, ESV)*

Why Paul Rebuked the Spirit

Paul understood three dangers:

1. The danger of misplaced trust
   The people might start revering the girl as the source of revelation. Instead of running to God's servants, they would flock to her. This would shift glory from Christ to the enemy.

2. The danger of pride
   If Paul and his companions had enjoyed her flattery, they could have fallen into pride. Scripture reminds us:

   > "God opposes the proud but shows favor to the humble." *(James 4:6, NIV)*

   Pride opens the door to downfall (Proverbs 16:18).

3. The danger of counterfeit power
   Satan was trying to attach his reputation to the work of the gospel, making it look as though both powers worked together. Yet light and darkness can never mix:

> “What fellowship has light with darkness?” *(2 Corinthians 6:14, ESV)*

Thus Paul, in the authority of Christ, commanded the spirit to leave. The true power of God was revealed, and the false was exposed.

Deceptive Truth in the Bible

This strategy of deceptive truth is seen throughout Scripture.

1. In Eden
   The serpent told Eve:

> “For God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.” *(Genesis 3:5, NIV)*

Indeed, after eating, humanity knew good and evil (Genesis 3:22). But it was a truth laced with death:

> “For in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.” *(Genesis 2:17, ESV)*

Satan used partial truth to achieve total ruin.

2. In the Temptation of Jesus
   Satan quoted Scripture itself!

> “If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down. For it is written: ‘He will command his angels concerning you, and

> they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.’” *(Matthew 4:6, NIV)*

This was a direct quote from Psalm 91:11–12, but twisted out of context. Jesus rebuked him with the Word:

> “It is also written: ‘Do not put the Lord your God to the test.’” *(Matthew 4:7, NIV)*

Lessons for Us Today

1. Not every truth glorifies God.
   Even demons can proclaim truth, but with evil intent.

2. Discernment is essential.
   We are called to examine not just the words, but the spirit behind them.

3. Beware of flattery.

   Satan often uses praise to sow pride. Proverbs warns:

> “A flattering mouth works ruin.” *(Proverbs 26:28, ESV)*

4. Cling to Christ as the only source of truth.

> “Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth.” *(John 17:17, ESV)*

Conclusion

The devil’s strategy is subtle—he often wraps lies in half-truths. But Scripture equips us to discern, resist, and walk in the truth of Christ. As Paul showed in Philippi, the authority of Jesus exposes

deception and protects God’s people.

> “So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.” *(John 8:36, ESV)*

Therefore, test every spirit, measure every teaching against the Word of God, and refuse the deceptive truths of the enemy. Hold fast to Christ—the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

May the Lord bless you and keep you steadfast in His truth.

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