

The Spiritual Senses

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There are physical senses that we use for detecting light, color, shape, sound, chemicals, pressure and so on and then there are spiritual senses which we use for detecting things such as good, evil, beauty, and truth, and for receiving communication from God.

Hebrews 5:14 EMTV *But solid food is for the mature, for those because of their practice have their senses trained for the distinguishing of both good and evil.*

The prophets often referred to these spiritual senses as spiritual 'eyes' and 'ears':

Isaiah 6:9-10 MKJV *And He said, Go, and tell this people, You hear indeed, but do not understand; and seeing you see, but do not know. (10) Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their hearts, and turn back, and be healed.*

Isaiah 29:9-10 MKJV *Stand still and wonder! Blind your eyes and be blind! They are drunk, but not with wine; they stagger, but not with strong drink. (10) For Jehovah has poured out on you the spirit of deep sleep, and has closed your eyes; He has covered the prophets and your heads, the seers.*

Isaiah 32:3-4 MKJV *And the eyes of those who see shall not be dim, and the ears of those who hear shall listen. (4) And the heart of the rash shall understand knowledge, and the tongue of those who stutter shall be ready to speak plainly.*

These spiritual senses are our ability to discern God's spiritual truth. When people are in spiritual decline it appears that their spiritual senses are dull, and when people experience revival it appears that their spiritual senses are awakened and made sharp.

The spiritual senses are distinct from the physical senses. The Pharisees seem to have had very good physical vision (particularly for noticing other people's faults) but they were blind to obvious spiritual truth:

Matthew 23:16-17 MKJV *Woe to you, blind guides, saying, Whoever shall swear by the temple, it is nothing; but whoever shall swear by the gold of the temple, he is a debtor. (17) Fools and blind! For which is greater, the gold, or the temple that sanctifies the gold?*

In the next few studies we shall look at the various spiritual senses one by one - but here is a very quick summary:

Eyes: Scan the environment, see the future, see visions, perception of people & events

Ears: Hearing words from God, obedience, servanthood, knowing the will of God

Taste: "Taste and see that the Lord is good" - discernment via experience

Smell: Fragrance of holiness, rapid discernment, "smells funny" / avoids toxic teaching

Touch: Communication of holiness, healing, anointing and spiritual power, also 'touch not the unclean'

The opposite to the spiritual senses are conditions such as spiritual blindness, deafness, returning to one's vomit (dysfunctional taste / smell) and being so insensate that one is unable to know even when one is being beaten (dysfunctional sense of touch e.g. Proverbs 17:10, Isaiah 1:5,6). We also find the prophets referring to maladies such as spiritual drunkenness and spiritual sleep where people lose all judgment and discernment.

Returning to Hebrews 5:14 (above) we find that the spiritual senses enable us to: (a) digest solid spiritual food and (b) discern between good and evil - and that the spiritual senses require constant practice in order to become mature and effective.

So if we are to advance in the Christian life we must constantly exercise our spiritual senses. We cannot be slothful and apathetic. Nor can we be stubborn, hard-hearted or complaining. Rather we are to be alert, watchful, curious, constantly learning from God as eager disciples. In fact those disciples who 'see and hear' are called blessed:

Matthew 13:16-17 MKJV *But blessed are your eyes, for they see; and your ears, for they hear. (17) For truly I say to you that many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which you see, and have not seen them; and to hear what you hear, and have not heard them.*

Matthew 16:15-18 MKJV *He said to them, But who do you say I am? (16) And Simon Peter answered and said, You are the Christ, the Son of the living God. (17) Jesus answered and said to him, You are blessed, Simon, son of Jonah, for flesh and blood did not reveal it to you, but My Father in Heaven. (18) And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.*

So one of the keys to blessing in the spiritual life is to have spiritual senses that understand what God is saying and doing. If we are capable of receiving God's direct revelation then we will be like the apostle Peter: *You are blessed, Simon, son of Jonah, for flesh and blood did not reveal it to you, but My Father in Heaven.*

On the other hand those who fail to perceive obvious spiritual signs are wicked, adulterous, under judgment and headed for destruction:

Matthew 16:1-4 MKJV *The Pharisees and the Sadducees came to Him, tempting Him. And they asked Him that He would show them a sign from Heaven. (2) He answered and said to them, When it is evening, you say, Fair weather; for the sky is red. (3) And in the morning, Foul weather today; for the sky is red and gloomy. Hypocrites! You can discern the face of the sky, but you cannot see the signs of the times! (4) A wicked and adulterous generation seeks after a sign. And there shall no sign be given to it, except the sign of the prophet Jonah. And He left them and went away.*

The spiritual senses act as part of the conscience (discerning good and evil) and are part of our inner world rather than our outer world. A person who is physically blind may have a great sense of spirituality while a person who has 20/20 vision may be completely blind to spiritual truths. This was the case of Jesus' healing of the man born blind:

John 9:39-41 MKJV *And Jesus said, I have come into this world for judgment, that they who do not see might see, and that they who see might be made blind. (40) And those of the Pharisees who were with Him heard these words, and said to Him, Are we also blind? (41) Jesus said to them, If you were blind, you would have no sin. But now you say, We see. Therefore your sin remains.*

Note the puzzling phrase: *and that they who see might be made blind*. There is definitely a 'use it or lose it' aspect to each of the spiritual senses. Both Isaiah and Jesus said that their ministries would make some people spiritually blind and spiritually deaf. In other words, those people who ignore God's appeal in their conscience, over and over again, become hardened in their inner worlds and their spiritual senses become dull and unresponsive:

Matthew 13:9-15 MKJV*He who has ears to hear, let him hear. (10) And the disciples said to Him, Why do You speak to them in parables? (11) He answered and said to them, Because it is given to you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of Heaven, but it is not given to them. (12) For whoever has, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance. But whoever does not have, from him shall be taken away even that which he has. (13) Therefore I speak to them in parables, because seeing they see not, and hearing they hear not; nor do they understand. (14) And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah which said, "By hearing you shall hear and shall not understand; and seeing you shall see and shall not perceive; (15) for this people's heart has become gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and they have closed their eyes, lest at any time they should see with their eyes*

and hear with their ears and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them."

To summarize this study:

- 1) We have distinct spiritual senses which are part of our conscience / inner world
- 2) The spiritual senses are inner senses and are different from our five outer senses
- 3) The spiritual senses enable us to digest "solid food" and to discern good and evil
- 4) The spiritual senses require practice and constant use - "use it or lose it"
- 5) The spiritual senses enable us to receive direct revelation from God
- 6) Good spiritual senses are necessary for Christian maturity and blessing
- 7) The use of the spiritual senses is emphasized by the prophets and by Jesus.

SPIRITUAL SENSES - SIGHT

The spiritual senses are normal parts of the conscience and are standard components of our God-given spiritual sensitivity. We use them for detecting good and evil and for discerning spiritual matters. Thus they are entirely different from occultic powers such as the 'third eye' which are amoral and often immoral. The Christian spiritual senses operate lovingly, ethically, morally and in line with the Word of God. God expects every obedient and mature Christian to have their spiritual senses trained and in good working order.

Hebrews 5:14 MKJV *But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, even those who because of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.*

In this study we will examine the spiritual sense of 'sight':

Matthew 5:8 MKJV *Blessed are the pure in heart! For they shall see God.*

As the conscience is washed by the blood of Jesus and our minds and hearts are purified we are able to 'see God' - not physically because that would kill us, but in our spirit with our spiritual sense of sight. It is the 'pure in heart' that see God and the 'impure' person is quite unable to do this. This is a good argument for holiness of life and conduct.

Indeed when our spiritual sense of sight is properly focused and beholds the Lord then we are transformed from glory to glory by the Holy Spirit.

2 Corinthians 3:18 MKJV *(18) But we all, with our face having been unveiled, having beheld the glory of the Lord as in a mirror, are being changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Lord Spirit.*

Our spiritual eyes can be filled with light or filled with darkness:

Matthew 6:22-23 MKJV *The light of the body is the eye. Therefore if your eye is sound, your whole body shall be full of light. (23) But if your eye is evil, your whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in you is darkness, how great is that darkness!*

The context of the above verse is the Matthew 6 passage on the love of money (Matthew 6:19-34). If the eye of the person is evil, greedy, materialistic and carnal the body will be 'filled with darkness'. But if the eye of faith is on the character of the Lord and His faithful, sovereign provision then the person will be filled with light and revelation. The spiritual sense of sight is aided by having the right objects in view, that is by focusing our lives on the spiritual and not on money or on worldly things.

Another source of spiritual darkness is a murderous spirit of anger, rage or unforgiveness which totally overwhelms our ability to see clearly (in the spiritual sense):

1 John 2:9-11 MKJV *He who says he is in the light and hates his brother is in darkness until now. (10) He who loves his brother abides in the light, and there is no offense in him. (11) But he who hates his brother is in darkness, and walks in darkness, and does not know where he is going, because darkness has blinded his eyes.*

Angry, judgmental people have impaired spiritual vision. They think they can see clearly because they are so good at spiritual nit-picking - but Jesus tells them that they actually have a 'log in their eye'.

Matthew 7:1-5 MKJV *Judge not, that you may not be judged. (2) For with whatever judgment you judge, you shall be judged; and with whatever measure you measure out, it shall be measured to you again. (3) And why do you look on the splinter that is in your brother's eye, but do not consider the beam that is in your own eye? (4) Or how will you say to your brother, Let me pull the splinter out of your eye; and, behold, a beam is in your own eye? (5) Hypocrite! First cast the beam out of your own eye, and then you shall see clearly to cast the splinter out of your brother's eye.*

In fact their judgment is so impaired that they miss the truly large issues while focusing on absolute trivia – they strain out a gnat and swallow a camel!

Matthew 23:23-24 MKJV *Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you pay tithes of mint and dill and cummin, and you have left undone the weightier matters of the Law, judgment, mercy, and faith. You ought to have done these and*

not to leave the other undone. (24) Blind guides who strain out a gnat and swallow a camel!

On the other hand Jesus spiritual sense of sight revealed the Father to Him so that He was able to know the Father's will and to 'see what the Father is doing' :

John 5:19-20 MKJV *Then Jesus answered and said to them, Truly, truly, I say to you, The Son can do nothing of Himself but what He sees the Father do. For whatever things He does, these also the Son does likewise. (20) For the Father loves the Son and shows Him all the things that He Himself does. And He will show Him greater works than these, so that you may marvel.*

John 8:38 MKJV *I speak what I have seen with My Father...*

Jesus saw spiritual things so clearly that He was able to completely understand people:

John 1:46-51 MKJV *(47) Jesus saw Nathanael coming to Him and said of him, Behold an Israelite indeed in whom is no guile! (48) Nathanael said to Him, From where do You know me? Jesus answered and said to him, Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you. (49) Nathanael answered and said to Him, Rabbi, You are the Son of God. You are the King of Israel! (50) Jesus answered and said to him, Because I said to you, I saw you under the fig tree, do you believe? You shall see greater things than these. (51) And He said to him, Truly, truly, I say to you, Hereafter you shall see Heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man.*

Jesus was even able to see the future of cities He beheld - such as Jerusalem:

Luke 19:41-44 MKJV *And as He drew near, He beheld the city and wept over it, (42) saying, If you had known, even you, even at least in this day of yours, the things for your peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes. (43) For the days will come on you that your enemies will raise up a rampart to you, and will surround you, and will keep you in on every side. (44) And they will tear you down, and your children within you, and will not leave a stone on a stone because you did not know the time of your visitation.*

The spiritual sense of sight is so valuable that Paul prays for the Ephesians to be given a spirit of wisdom and revelation, and for the eyes of their understanding to be opened:

Ephesians 1:17-20 MKJV *that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, (18) the eyes of your understanding being enlightened, that you may know what is the hope of His calling, and what is the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, (19) and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us, the ones believing according to the working of His mighty strength (20) which He worked in*

Christ in raising Him from the dead, and He seated Him at His right hand in the heavenlies,

Why don't you pray that prayer for yourself, or for someone else, right now!

We saw that the spiritual sense of sight enables the Christian to be perceptive of spiritual realities and truth and to discern good from evil. The pure in heart behold God (Matthew 5:8) and as they do so they are transformed from glory to glory by the Holy Spirit (2 Corinthians 3:17). This leads Paul to pray for the Ephesian Christians:

Ephesians 1:17-20 MKJV *that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, (18) the eyes of your understanding being enlightened, that you may know what is the hope of His calling, and what is the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, (19) and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us, the ones believing according to the working of His mighty strength (20) which He worked in Christ in raising Him from the dead, and He seated Him at His right hand in the heavenlies.*

Now what does Paul mean when he is praying for the 'eyes of their understanding to be enlightened'? The Ephesians are already Christians - so Paul is not just talking about conversion (though that could also be included). Paul is praying for a growth in spiritual understanding by people who are already believers.

Contrary to popular wisdom our minds are not perfect receptacles of knowledge. They are fallen, darkened and in need of redemption (Romans 8:7, Colossians 1:21, Ephesians 4:17). Many highly intelligent people have tried to study Scripture and come away baffled because the unenlightened natural mind cannot comprehend the things of God:

1 Corinthians 2:14 MKJV *(14) But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.*

Something amazing has to happen if we are to ever be able to grasp spiritual truth! We need to be 'enlightened in our understanding' - even long after we become believers, and this process is called the renewing of the mind (Romans 12:1,2; Ephesians 4:23).

Our mental faculties are renewed as we deliberately admit the Holy Spirit to them. Consecration and devotion lead to renewing of the mind. We need to be 'living sacrifices' devoting time to prayer and meditation and setting our minds on things above. The mind set on the Spirit is life and peace but the mind set on the flesh is death (Romans 8:4-6).

It is not just a matter of knowing more Greek and Hebrew and having better bible knowledge, there needs to be a deliberate opening of the inner mind to God or else it will all just turn into dry scholasticism and arguing over theological sub-points.

Paul tells us that the 'eyes of our understanding' are opened by the Holy Spirit who gifts us with a 'spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him'. So the spiritual gift of sight is related to the gaining of wisdom, revelation and knowledge in the inner portion of a person. The spiritual gift of sight leads to those 'Aha moments' when we exclaim "I see that! I understand that now!" - particularly with regard to Christ and to things of God. The spiritual gift of sight makes the Bible into a living book for the believer.

The word for 'understanding' is the GK. Word "dianoias". This word means 'deep thoughts' or 'imagination' or can even indicate the spiritual part of one's inner being. It is when the deepest part of us comes into possession of the Truth.

Paul mentions three things that are the direct result of this being spiritually enlightened by the Holy Spirit and they are:

- a) Knowing the hope of His calling
- b) Knowing the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints
- c) Knowing the surpassing greatness of His power towards us who believe

You will not learn the hope of God's calling on your life without the Holy Spirit showing it to you! And you cannot behold the benefits or glory of being a Christian unless they are revealed to you from Heaven! And only God can speak quietly to your spirit to show you the greatness of His power and all that He wants to do on your behalf!

On the other hand if the Christian life seems to be hopeless, unprofitable, inglorious, and powerless it is because you have been listening far too much to the spirit of this world and far too little to the Spirit of God! The eyes of your understanding need to be enlightened!

Enlightenment is what happens when you light the lamp, or flick on the switch, or open the shutters, blinds or curtains and finally let light into the room. It is also what happens when dawn comes and ends the dark night. Thus there are two kinds of enlightenment – an external one where God shines light in like the dawn, and an internal one where we finally open the shutters of our previously darkened minds. There is a place for us exercising our will. Which is precisely the point of the commands about living in the light:

Ephesians 5:8-14 ISV *For once you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light. (9) For the fruit of the light consists of every form of goodness, righteousness, and truth. (10) Determine what pleases the Lord, (11) and have nothing to do with the unfruitful works of darkness. Instead, expose them for what they are. (12) For it is shameful even to mention what is done by people in secret. (13) But everything that is exposed to the light becomes visible, (14) for*

everything that is visible is light. That is why it says, "Wake up, O sleeper! Arise from the dead, And Christ will shine on you."

1 John 1:7 ISV *But if we keep living in the light as he himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.*

The spiritual sense of sight is an essential prerequisite to 'living in the light' – that is living an obedient Christian life that is on track with God.

Just to clarify – while some of these terms may sound rather "New Age" it is because they have borrowed Christian vocabulary and not the other way around. I am not advocating New Age mysticism, or hallucinatory ecstatic states, or initiation ceremonies or 'the third eye' or seeing auras around people. I am saying that we need to develop our spiritual sensitivity, our ability to 'see' spiritual truth, and that this is related to the gaining of wisdom, revelation and knowledge through the direct personal ministry of the Holy Spirit.

The spiritual sense of sight is not independent of the Scriptures. Rather our spiritual sense of sight works together with our bible study in order to enable us to behold wonderful truths out of God's Law:

Psalms 119:18-19 MKJV *Open my eyes, so that I may behold wonderful things out of Your Law. (19) I am a stranger in the earth; do not hide Your Commandments from me.*

When the spiritual sense of sight is absent the Bible is a 'closed book' even to the religious leaders of the day:

Isaiah 29:9-14 MKJV *Stand still and wonder! Blind your eyes and be blind! They are drunk, but not with wine; they stagger, but not with strong drink. (10) For Jehovah has poured out on you the spirit of deep sleep, and has closed your eyes; He has covered the prophets and your heads, the seers. (11) And the vision of all has become to you like the words of a book that is sealed, which they give to one who knows books saying, Please read this; and he says, I cannot, for it is sealed. (12) And the book is delivered to him who does not know books, saying, Please read this; and he says, I do not know books. ... For the wisdom of their wise ones shall perish, and the understanding of their intelligent ones shall be hidden.*

Paul knew that the Ephesians needed both the Scriptures and also the spiritual eyes to understand them. Every Christian needs wisdom, revelation and knowledge. Every Christian needs to know Jesus more deeply. Every Christian needs the Holy Spirit to make the Scriptures come alive to them. Every Christian needs the eyes of their understanding to be enlightened.

SPIRITUAL SENSES - HEARING

When Jesus finished teaching a parable or group of parables he would often say:

Matthew 11:15 MKJV *He who has ears to hear, let him hear.*

Jesus is not simply referring to the physical sense of hearing but to the spiritual sense that enables people to understand God's truth in the inner man - thus grasping the meaning of the parable and treasuring its spiritual content.

During Isaiah's vision and call he was called to preach until the people no longer listened. When the spiritual sense of hearing is finally non-functional it is a sign of a terminally ill nation that will soon be plunged into a destructive judgment (Isaiah 6:8-13)

Isaiah 6:8-13 MKJV *And I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then I said, Here am I; send me! (9) And He said, Go, and tell this people, You hear indeed, but do not understand; and seeing you see, but do not know. (10) Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their hearts, and turn back, and be healed. (11) Then I said, Lord, how long? And He answered, Until the cities are wasted without inhabitant, and the houses without man, and the land laid waste, a desolation, (12) and until Jehovah has moved men far away, and the desolation in the midst of the land is great. (13) But yet in it shall be a tenth, and it shall return and be consumed like the terebinth and like the oak being felled, yet has its stump; the holy seed is its stump.*

Jesus applies this exact same devastating prophecy to those who could not grasp His parables:

Matthew 13:10-15 MKJV *And the disciples said to Him, Why do You speak to them in parables? (11) He answered and said to them, Because it is given to you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of Heaven, but it is not given to them. (12) For whoever has, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance. But whoever does not have, from him shall be taken away even that which he has. (13) Therefore I speak to them in parables, because seeing they see not, and hearing they hear not; nor do they understand. (14) And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah which said, "By hearing you shall hear and shall not understand; and seeing you shall see and shall not perceive; (15) for this people's heart has become gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and they have closed their eyes, lest at any time they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them."*

And indeed Israel was destroyed and left devastated by the Romans because of this national failure to listen to Jesus!

Luke 19:41-44 MKJV *And as He drew near, He beheld the city and wept over it, (42) saying, If you had known, even you, even at least in this day of yours, the*

things for your peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes. (43) For the days will come on you that your enemies will raise up a rampart to you, and will surround you, and will keep you in on every side. (44) And they will tear you down, and your children within you, and will not leave a stone on a stone because you did not know the time of your visitation.

On the other hand those who listen to God and grasp the teachings of Jesus are blessed:

Matthew 13:16-17 MKJV *But blessed are your eyes, for they see; and your ears, for they hear. (17) For truly I say to you that many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which you see, and have not seen them; and to hear what you hear, and have not heard them.*

So vital is our spiritual sense of hearing that Jesus warned His disciples:

Mark 4:24-25 MKJV *And He said to them, Take heed what you hear. With that measure which you measure, it shall be measured to you. And to you who hear, more shall be given. (25) For he who has, more shall be given to him; and he who has not, from him shall be taken even that which he has.*

Jesus is telling them that those who truly harken to God will receive more and more revelation while those who are disobedient will lose any knowledge of God that they have. Paul reinforces this when he says to Timothy:

2 Timothy 4:3-4 MKJV *For a time will be when they will not endure sound doctrine, but they will heap up teachers to themselves according to their own lusts, tickling the ear. (4) And they will turn away their ears from the truth and will be turned to myths.*

People will not want truth but will instead want teaching that 'tickles the ear' and gratifies their lusts. Instead of listening to God and the Bible they will turn aside to myths. The harder the heart, the worse the person hears God. Defiantly disobedient people will literally 'stop their ears' (as they did with Stephen) in order to resist God's truth:

Acts 7:51-58 MKJV *O stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears! You always resist the Holy Spirit. As your fathers did, so you do. (52) Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? And they killed those who foretold the coming of the Just One, of whom you have now been the betrayers and murderers; (53) who received the Law through disposition of angels, and did not keep it. (54) And hearing these things, they were cut to their hearts. And they gnashed on him with their teeth. (55) But being full of the Holy Spirit, looking up intently into Heaven, he saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. (56) And he said, Behold, I see Heaven opened and the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God. (57) And crying out with a loud voice, they stopped their ears and ran on him with one accord. (58) And throwing him outside the city, they stoned him. ...*

Jesus even rebuked His disciples severely when they did not understand His teachings:

Mark 8:14-21 MKJV *And the disciples had forgotten to take loaves, and they did not have more than one loaf in the boat with them. (15) And He charged them, saying, Take heed! Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the leaven of Herod. (16) And they reasoned among themselves, saying, It is because we have no loaves. (17) And knowing it, Jesus said to them, Why do you reason that it is because you have no loaves? Do you not yet perceive nor understand? Have you still hardened your heart? (18) Do you have eyes and do not see? Do you have ears and do not hear? And do you not remember? (19) When I broke the five loaves among five thousand, how many hand baskets full of fragments did you take up? They said to Him, Twelve. (20) And when the seven among four thousand, how many lunch baskets full of fragments did you take up? And they said, Seven. (21) And He said to them, How do you not understand?*

Thus the spiritual sense of hearing has to do with understanding the things of God. The disciples were expected to 'get it' when Jesus spoke about the leaven of the Pharisees. The fact they did not understand this mini-parable concerned Jesus so much that He wondered if they had hardened their heart. Jesus was astonished that after the feeding of both the five thousand and the four thousand they would say 'it is because we have no bread'. This is similar to what the Israel in the Wilderness failed to do when they kept grumbling even after God had performed many miracles on their behalf:

Hebrews 3:7-11 MKJV *Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says, "Today if you will hear His voice, (8) do not harden your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness, (9) when your fathers tempted Me, proved Me, and saw My works forty years. (10) Therefore I was grieved with that generation and said, They always err in their heart, and they have not known My ways. (11) So I swore in My wrath, They shall not enter into My rest."*

If we look at the last two examples of the disciples and the people of Israel we find that the lack of 'hearing' came about because they were unable to spiritually connect the dots. They always looked at their current circumstances instead of learning from their spiritual experiences and from the faithfulness of the Lord. They were unable to say "hmm Jesus is easily able to supply bread so bread is not the problem, He must mean something else" or "God brought us this far from Egypt, He will supply water as well."

So hearing God involves arriving at the correct spiritual conclusions – about God, about parables and about life's circumstances, after being given adequate evidence for reaching those conclusions. This is what is called the hearing of faith:

Galatians 3:2-5 MKJV *This only I would learn from you: Did you receive the Spirit by works of the law, or by hearing of faith? (3) Are you so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, do you now perfect yourself in the flesh? (4) Did you suffer so many*

things in vain, if indeed it is even in vain? (5) Then He supplying the Spirit to you and working powerful works in you, is it by works of the law, or by hearing of faith?

Romans 10:17 MKJV *Then faith is of hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.*

The hearing of faith is powerful and results in miracles and in salvation. It connects us with God's transforming power!

The goal of the spiritual sense of hearing is a saving faith that results in holy obedience. We receive the word of God, believe the word of God then build our lives upon the word of God:

Matthew 7:24-25 MKJV *Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on a rock. (25) And the rain came down, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house. And it did not fall, for it was founded on a rock.*

To summarize things so far:

1. There is a spiritual sense of hearing
2. It enables us to grasp spiritual truth such as parables
3. Its absence is a sign of impending doom for the nation (or church)
4. We are to be very careful how we hear or we can lose the knowledge we have
5. It involves reaching proper spiritual conclusions from available evidence
6. When we fail to do this we 'harden our hearts' and this is serious
7. People can go astray listening to myths or blocking out God out all together
8. Proper hearing results in godly faith
9. Such faith results in salvation and miracles and God's transforming power!
10. As we hear God in faith we can build strong spiritual lives 'on the rock'.

Do you want to grow in faith? Then switch on your spiritual sense of hearing:

Romans 10:17 MKJV *Then faith is of hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.*

Galatians even refers to a miracle working 'hearing of faith':

Galatians 3:2-5 MKJV *This only I would learn from you: Did you receive the Spirit by works of the law, or by hearing of faith? (3) Are you so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, do you now perfect yourself in the flesh? (4) Did you suffer so many things in vain, if indeed it is even in vain? (5) Then He supplying the Spirit to you and working powerful works in you, is it by works of the law, or by hearing of faith?*

So we see that salvation, receiving the Spirit, the supply of the Spirit and "working miracles among you" all result from this hearing of faith. This is a key to Christian living if ever there was one! Everything we receive in the New Covenant lifestyle comes through the hearing of faith. We live 'from faith to faith':

Romans 1:17 MKJV *For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith, as it is written, "The just shall live by faith."*

It is not just knowledge of God's Word that saves us, it must be combined with faith:

Hebrews 4:2 MKJV *... But the Word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in those who heard it.*

The hearing of faith is a simple heart response to God and is not a new legalism:

Romans 10:4-9 MKJV *For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness for everyone who believes. (5) For Moses writes of the righteousness which is of the Law, "The man who does those things shall live by them." (6) But the righteousness of faith says this: "Do not say in your heart, Who shall ascend into Heaven?" that is, to bring Christ down; (7) or "Who shall descend into the deep?"; that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead. (8) But what does it say? "The Word is near you, even in your mouth and in your heart"; that is, the Word of Faith which we proclaim; (9) Because if you confess the Lord Jesus, and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved.*

And is available to all: **Romans 10:12-13 MKJV** *For there is no difference both of Jew and of Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich to all who call on Him. (13) For everyone, "whoever shall call on the name of the Lord will be saved."*

Hearing with faith is believing what God says so that you respond in some way such as calling on God or acting in obedience to a command. Jesus does a miracle and you give glory to God and ponder on what the miracle means. Jesus speaks a parable and you ask for the interpretation and 'get it'. The hearing of faith is having the inner conscience tuned to God's wavelength and ready to believe what God says. When the word of the Lord comes to us (via preaching, the Scriptures, our conscience etc) we can respond in a number of ways including the following:

Faith = fully believing what God says will come to pass, and being obedient to it

Doubt = being unsure about the factuality, safety or wisdom of what God has just said

Unbelief = a flat out refusal to believe what God says, foolish mocking, scoffing etc.

Rebellion = deliberately doing the opposite of what God has said

Torpor = being totally asleep spiritually so that God is never heard or perceived at all

Abraham is the preeminent example of the hearing of faith:

Romans 4:18-22 EMTV *who, contrary to hope, on hope believed, so that he should become a father of many nations, according to what was spoken, "So shall your descendants be." (19) And not weakening in faith, he did not consider his own body, already having been worn out (being about a hundred years old), and the deadness of Sarah's womb, (20) he did not waver at the promise of God in unbelief, but was empowered by faith, giving glory to God, (21) and being fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to do. (22) And therefore "it was accounted to him for righteousness."*

Abraham believed God despite all the circumstances around him. He did not waver at the promise of God. God was everything and the difficulties and 'impossibilities' were as nothing. When God spoke Abraham heard deep within his being, so deep that nothing else mattered at all!

Now most of us do not hear God so deeply and absolutely. Like Peter we see the wind and the waves, or like Phillip at the feeding of the five thousand we ask 'what are these few among so many'. Abraham must have been totally unguarded with God. Abraham pinned all his dreams, all his hopes, and even the life of his precious son Isaac on the faithfulness of God.

The hearing of faith is not just intellectual assent to theological propositions. The patriarchs, prophets and apostles were not formally trained theologians. The hearing of faith is believing what God says even when the world, common sense and reason says precisely the opposite. It is deeply agreeing with God in your inner being, in your conscience, in the most fundamental part of who you really are.

The hearing of faith is the sure knowledge that God is true, no matter what appearances might be. It is hearing with your heart. It is staking yourself on the nature and character of God because something tells you, in an undeniable way, that this is where the true Truth is.

Satan tries all that he can to destroy this – through doubt, fear, apathy, hardness of heart, distraction, anxiety and making us forget God's goodness to us in the past.

The parable of the sower - and the seeds that fell on the stony ground, the shallow soil, among the weeds and on good soil give us a clue to the difficulties here. The seed is the word and the soils represent our ability to receive it by faith (the hearing of faith) and hardening, persecution and worldly distraction seem to take out $\frac{3}{4}$ of the seeds. Only the seeds sown among the good soil bear much fruit.

We need to be determined to listen to God with faithful hearts, putting aside all worldly distractions and not being discouraged by life's circumstances. We need to remember God's goodness to us in the past so that we put today's troubles in the perspective of God's forever faithfulness. We need to meditate on His Word and His promises and we need to follow the example of those who have gone before us in the faith.

We need to abandon legalistic striving 'do this, do that' and simply open up to trusting God in all things. Instead of trying to do a bunch of things to please God or to be spiritual we need to just trust God's character moment by moment each day, believing that all things are possible with God. O Lord, help us to hear You and to truly believe!

SPIRITUAL SENSES – TASTE AND SMELL

Hearing and sight are remote senses but tasting is an immediate experience. You actually put the food or drink in your mouth. You may only put a little in at first to test it out, but if it is good you then consume it all. Thus taste has two aspects a) discernment of what is good to 'consume' spiritually and b) full participation in a spiritual reality:

Discernment of Which That is Good

1 Peter 2:2-3 MKJV *desire the sincere milk of the Word, as newborn babes, so that you may grow by it; (3) if truly you have tasted that the Lord is gracious.*

Psalms 34:8 Webster *O taste and see that the LORD is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in him.*

The new believer 'tastes' God in order to ascertain if the Lord is good. When this is of course found to be true then he or she will lap up the milk of the Word. This then results in the new believer increasing in their trust of God and being blessed by Him.

Full Participation in Spiritual Reality

Hebrews 6:4-6 MKJV *For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Spirit, (5) and have tasted the good Word of God and the powers of the world to come, (6) and who have fallen away; it is impossible, I say, to renew them again to repentance, since they crucify the Son of God afresh to themselves and put Him to an open shame.*

Hebrews 2:9 MKJV *But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor, that He by the grace of God should taste death for all.*

Jesus did not just dip His toe into death. He actually died. He tasted death for all. He was immersed in death. His 'tasting' of death was the full experience. He drained the cup of suffering to the last drop.

Those who 'tasted of the heavenly gift' and who 'tasted the word of God' are also partakers of the Holy Spirit and know the powers of the world to come. They are immersed in Christian spiritual experience and are fully in the faith. And when they taste it and reject it they are 'spitting God out' – which is an unforgivable sin. After losing all taste for God they cannot be renewed unto repentance. Thus taste is like the other spiritual senses in that when it is inoperative it results in damnation for the person concerned.

Training Our Taste Buds

The 'spiritual palate' has to be trained to feed on the right food such as the pure milk of the Word. Our spiritual sense of taste needs to desire that which is truly desirable.

Psalms 119:103 MKJV *How sweet are Your Words to my taste! More than honey to my mouth!*

Psalms 19:9-11 MKJV (9) *The fear of Jehovah is clean, enduring forever; the judgments of Jehovah are true and righteous altogether, (10) more to be desired than gold, even much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. (11) And Your servant is warned by them; in keeping them there is great reward.*

John 4:34 EMTV *Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work.*

What the soul enjoys and desires, it seeks to acquire. If we enjoy spiritual things we will go after them. On the other hand if they bore us and are 'tasteless' to us then we will run after the things of this world and this always results in spiritual catastrophe:

Psalms 78:26-31 MKJV *He caused an east wind to blow in the sky; and by His power He brought in the south wind. (27) and He also rained flesh on them like dust, and winged birds like the sand of the sea; (28) and He let them fall in the middle of their camp, all around their tents. (29) So they ate, and were filled to the full; for He gave them their own desire. (30) They were not turned away from their lust, but while their food was still in their mouths, (31) the wrath of God came on them and killed the fattest of them, and struck down the chosen of Israel.*

Taste is important, even in the things of culture. If we enjoy the base and vulgar we will go in that direction. On the other hand we enjoy the good, the noble and the pure, our soul will be lifted up:

Philippians 4:8 MKJV *Finally, my brothers, whatever things are true, whatever things are honest, whatever things are right, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report; if there is any virtue and if there is any praise, think on these things.*

Colossians 3:1-3 EMTV *If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. (2) Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. (3) For you died, and your life has been hidden with Christ in God.*

It takes time to acquire the taste for spiritual things. Television can seem much more interesting than prayer and intercession and a day at the beach much more appealing than going to church. This is why we need to gather together so that we encourage one another to love and good works: **Hebrews 10:24-25 EMTV** *And let us consider one another for the stirring up of love and of good works, (25) not forsaking the assembling of ourselves, just as is the custom for some, but exhorting one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.*

THE SENSE OF SMELL

The sense of smell is related to the sense of taste in that the nose is placed directly over the mouth to control what goes into it. If the milk is off your nose should detect it first and save your mouth from a terrible experience. Just as taste and smell are related in the human body so they are related in the spiritual body. In fact there seems to be a "ministry of sniffing things out..."

1 Corinthians 12:17-18 EMTV *(17) If the whole body were an eye, where would be the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where would be the smelling? (18) But now God has set the parts, each one of them, in the body just as He desired.*

Hounds (such as bloodhounds, basset hounds etc) have exceptional senses of smell and can track people and animals for miles. And few machines can beat a dog at detecting bombs or drugs. Wine connoisseurs can sniff and taste a wine and know which vineyard it came from and which year it was grown. Thus the people with the gift of spiritual discernment could be equated with the 'gift of smell' in the body of Christ.

When the gift of smell is damaged in some way people lead impeded lives and can even poison themselves or make themselves sick on food that should not have ever been consumed in the first place. Thus the spiritual gift of discernment / smell is a protective function that keeps the Church from being sickened by false teaching. People with the gift of discernment help us to spot the 'rotten egg' or the 'rotten apple' before we 'eat' it!

To those with a properly functioning sense of smell Christ is the wonderful aroma of God:

Ephesians 5:2 EMTV *And walk in love, just as Christ also loved us and gave Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a fragrant aroma.*

But to those who are perishing Christ and the gospel 'smell like death':

2 Corinthians 2:14-17 EMTV *(14) Now thanks be to God, who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and making known through us the fragrance of His knowledge in every place. (15) For we are the fragrance of Christ to God among those being saved, and among those perishing. (16) To some we are the fragrance of death leading to death, but to others the fragrance of life leading to life. And who is sufficient for these things? (17) For we are not as the rest, corrupting the word of God; but as of sincerity, but as from God, we speak in the sight of God in Christ.*

To sum up – the spiritual senses of taste and smell are used to discern good from evil so that our Christian lives become focused on the truly worthy things such as the pure milk of the Word. They help us to 'pick and choose' between alternatives in life just as the corresponding physical senses help us to choose in matters of food and drink. The spiritual senses of taste and smell can assist us in avoiding spiritual catastrophe and help us to refine our souls so that we truly desire the things of God.

SPIRITUAL SENSES - TOUCH

The spiritual sense of touch is quite different from the other spiritual senses in that it is not so much used to receive heavenly information or as an aid to discernment but rather as a means of transferring spiritual power. In biblical terms to 'touch' has the sense of 'to link up with'. If the eye is like a camera, and the ear like a microphone then the spiritual sense of touch is more like a cable or a USB port that transfers spiritual energy!

Matthew 14:35-36 MKJV *And recognizing Him, the men of that place sent to all that neighborhood, and brought to Him all who were diseased. (36) And they begged Him that they might only touch the hem of His robe. And as many as touched were made perfectly whole.*

Luke 6:19 MKJV *And all the crowd sought to touch Him, for power went out of Him and healed them all.*

The sense of touch operates by faith (just as all the other spiritual senses do). One day many people were pressing around Jesus but only one was 'touched':

Mark 5:25-34 EMTV *Now a certain woman, suffering from a flow of blood twelve years, (26) and who had suffered many things under many physicians, and who had spent everything at her disposal, and was no better, but rather having become worse, (27) when she heard about Jesus, she came from behind Him in the crowd and touched His clothing. (28) For she was saying, "If only I may touch His clothes, I will be healed." (29) And immediately the flow of her blood was dried up, and she knew in her body that she had been healed from the affliction. (30) And Jesus, immediately knowing in Himself that power had gone out of Him, He turned in the*

crowd and said, "Who touched My clothes?" (31) But His disciples said to Him, "You see the crowd pressing against You, and You say, 'Who touched Me?' " (32) And He was looking around to see her who had done this thing. (33) But the woman, fearing and trembling, knowing what had happened to her, came and fell down before Him and told Him the whole truth. (34) And He said to her, "Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace, and be healed of your affliction."

This incident shows us that there was a substantial change in the nature of the spiritual sense of touch between the Old Testament and the New Testament. To touch a woman with an issue of blood in OT times would have made Jesus unclean until evening (Leviticus 15:19) but instead Jesus was not made unclean – rather the woman was healed! Jesus was also able to touch lepers (Matthew 8:3), and even dead bodies (Matthew 9:25) without being defiled. The sense of touch in the OT was not able to transmit holiness but rather transmitted uncleanness (Haggai 2:11-13). However in the NT the spiritual sense of touch transmits God's power.

Because ritual uncleanness no longer has any power to affect us the whole category of physically unclean objects, things that we are not to eat, drink, taste or touch - is revoked:

Mark 7:18-19 ISV *He said to them, "Are you so ignorant? Don't you know that nothing that goes into a person from the outside can make him unclean? (19) For it doesn't go into his heart but into his stomach, and is expelled as waste." (Thus he declared all foods clean.)*

Colossians 2:20-23 ISV *If you have died with Christ to the basic principles of the world, why are you submitting to its decrees as though you still lived in the world? (21) "Don't handle this! Don't taste or touch that!" (22) All of these things will be destroyed through use because they are based on human commands and teachings. (23) These things have the appearance of wisdom in promoting self-made religion, humility, and harsh treatment of the body, but they have no value against self-indulgence.*

Jesus' power over ritual (external) impurity healed the sick, cleansed the lepers and raised the dead and was passed on to the disciples:

Matthew 10:7-8 MKJV *And as you go, proclaim, saying, The kingdom of Heaven is at hand. (8) Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out demons. You have received freely, freely give.*

The spiritual sense of touch seems to lie behind the doctrine of the laying on of hands which Hebrews considers one of the Christian basics:

Hebrews 6:1-2 MKJV *Therefore, having left the discourse of the beginning ... of the baptisms, of doctrine, and of laying on of hands.*

The laying on of hands imparts the baptism of the Holy Spirit:

Acts 8:17 EMTV *Then they (the apostles Peter & John) laid hands upon them, and they received the Holy Spirit.*

Acts 9:17 EMTV *And Ananias departed and entered the house; and putting his hands on him, he said, "Brother Saul, the Lord has sent me, the One who appeared to you in the way which you were coming, so that you may see again and be filled with the Holy Spirit."*

The laying on of hands (accompanied by faith) also can impart spiritual gifts:

1 Timothy 4:14 EMTV *Do not neglect the gift that is in you, which was given to you through prophecy with the laying on of the hands of the eldership.*

2 Timothy 1:6 EMTV *For which cause I remind you to stir up the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands.*

Jesus give us victory over outward impurity such as blood, leprosy or death – but we need to be very careful about people who are inwardly, spiritually impure.

In the same discourse that Jesus removes outer defilement He says that some people are inwardly defiled::

Mark 7:20-23 ISV *He continued, "It is what comes out of a person that makes a person unclean. (21) For it is from within, from the human heart, that evil thoughts come, as well as sexual immorality, stealing, murder, (22) adultery, greed, wickedness, cheating, shameless lust, envy, slander, arrogance, and foolishness. (23) All these things come from within and make a person unclean."*

Indeed there are some people whom we are not to lay hands on, perhaps because they are impure or sinful:

1 Timothy 5:22 ASV *Lay hands hastily on no man, neither be partaker of other men's sins: keep thyself pure.*

Even Jesus did not lay hands on demon-possessed people but instead used verbal commands 'casting them out with a word' (Matthew 8:16). Thus it seems that we are not to establish a close physical connection with people who are spiritually impure. We also have to be very careful about how we use our bodies, which have become temples of the Holy Spirit:

1 Corinthians 6:15-20 EMTV *(15) Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ and make them members of a harlot? Certainly not! (16) Do you not know that he who is joined to a harlot is one body with her? For "the two," He says, "shall become one flesh." (17) But he that is joined with the Lord is one spirit with Him. (18) Flee fornication. Every sin that a man does is outside the body, but he who commits fornication sins against his own body. (19) Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the*

Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? (20) For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.

So we see that joining with the harlot makes us one flesh and joining with God makes us 'one spirit with Him'. In many ways our spiritual connections define who we are and are to be monitored carefully. There are things we are permitted to reach out and touch and these will heal us, bless us and empower us in ministry. And there are things we should not touch, things which will damage us, defile us and destroy our ministry. These are things which we should be separated from. These include idolatry, immorality, and heresy in the Church:

2 Corinthians 6:14-18 MKJV (14) *Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers; for what fellowship does righteousness have with lawlessness? And what partnership does light have with darkness? (15) And what agreement does Christ have with Belial? Or what part does a believer have with an unbeliever? (16) And what agreement does a temple of God have with idols? For you are the temple of the living God, as God has said, "I will dwell in them and walk among them; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people." (17) Therefore come out from among them and be separated, says the Lord, and do not touch the unclean thing. And I will receive you (18) and I will be a Father to you, and you shall be My sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty.*

2 John 1:9-11 MKJV *Everyone transgressing and not abiding in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ, he has both the Father and the Son. (10) If anyone comes to you and does not bring this doctrine, do not receive him into your house, nor speak a greeting to him. (11) For he who speaks a greeting to him is partaker of his evil deeds.*

Following Christ may even mean leaving some very close relationships behind:

Matthew 10:37-39 MKJV *He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. (38) And he who does not take up his cross and follow Me is not worthy of Me. (39) He who finds his life shall lose it. And he who loses his life for My sake shall find it.*

And of course we are only to marry 'in the Lord':

1 Corinthians 7:39 MKJV *...she is at liberty to be remarried to whom she will, only in the Lord.*

To summarize: The spiritual sense of touch transmits spiritual power and through the laying on of hands we can receive healing, the Holy Spirit and spiritual gifts. In the NT we no longer have to worry about touching blood, lepers or dead bodies or about what to touch, taste, eat or drink. On the other hand we do have to beware of those who are inwardly defiled. We are not to lay hands on them, and we are certainly not to enter into close physical relationships with them. This especially

applies to the immoral, idolaters, heretics, those who are spiritually destructive and to anyone who tries to turn us away from Christ.

THE DECEPTION OF THE SPIRITUAL SENSES

You have probably heard of various New Age practices such as 'channeling' or seeing auras around people - or of occult practices such as divination, soothsaying and such. These are abuses of the spiritual senses. Christians are NOT called to develop a 'Third Eye' or to participate in seances or to engage in astral travel. I have spoken to Christians who had once engaged in these practices prior to conversion and they testified that for years afterward their lives were filled with fear, dread and unusual manifestations.

The final and last verse, after all the curses in Deuteronomy (for worshiping idols, engaging in witchcraft etc) is:

Deuteronomy 29:29 MKJV *The secret things belong to Jehovah our God, but the revealed things belong to us and to our sons forever, so that we may do all the words of this Law.*

We are to walk in God's open revelation and not in the hidden, secret and occult things. There is enough that is known. There is plenty enough to obey. As Mark Twain once said:

It ain't those parts of the Bible that I can't understand that bother me, it is the parts that I do understand.

There are two main ways that the spiritual senses can be deceived:

- i) Not functioning at all: spiritual blindness, deafness, having a seared conscience
- ii) Tuning into Satanic sources e.g. listening to 'doctrines of demons'

The following verses shows how these are related:

1 Timothy 4:1-5 MKJV *But the Spirit expressly says that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and teachings of demons, (2) speaking lies in hypocrisy, being seared in their own conscience, (3) forbidding to marry, saying to abstain from foods which God has created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth. (4) For every creation of God is good, and nothing to be refused if it is received with thanksgiving. (5) For it is sanctified through the Word of God and prayer.*

A seducing spirit convinces someone to believe a demonic lie which they adopt as their own teaching. They then speak this out hypocritically, eventually searing their own conscience, so that they can neither believe or know the truth, and so they depart from the faith.

What are some of the demonic lies that people are seduced to believe? In these verses it is the lie of asceticism, forbidding marriage, and certain foods and holding Creation in disdain. This ancient idea sees the material and sexual as evil and the 'spiritual' as good. It is life-denying rather than life-affirming. As someone has said 'Evil is just live spelled backward'. It is evil because it stops people appreciating each other in marriage and stops people appreciating God's Creation and even such basic activities as eating food.

Spiritual deception often has a beguiling, seductive, 'overly sweet' atmosphere to it. It compels the person capturing their will and eventually bullies them into submission. The person is eventually tyrannized by legalism and by spiritual obsessions and compulsions.

Asceticism is the lie the Devil tells to those who want to 'be spiritual' and is one of his main snares for Christians. But the Devil tells lies in both directions. He also tells lies to the pagan world. These lies concern lack of restraint, lawlessness, immorality and idolatry:

Romans 1:22-25 MKJV *Professing to be wise, they became fools (23) and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man, and birds, and four-footed animals, and creeping things. (24) Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their own bodies between themselves. (25) For they changed the truth of God into a lie, and they worshiped and served the created thing more than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.*

(In Scripture 'the lie' is idol worship). Of course the ultimate demonic liar is the Devil:

John 8:44 MKJV *You are of the Devil as father, and the lusts of your father you will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and did not abide in the truth because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks of his own, for he is a liar and the father of it.*

In the End Times the lawless one will unleash a torrent of lies and false signs and wonders so as even to deceive the Elect - if possible (Matthew 24:24, Mark 13:22).

2 Thessalonians 2:8-12 MKJV *(8) And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the breath of His mouth and shall destroy with the brightness of His coming, (9) whose coming is according to the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, (10) and with all deceit of unrighteousness in those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, so that they might be saved. (11) And for this cause God shall send them*

strong delusion, that they should believe a lie, (12) so that all those who do not believe the truth, but delight in unrighteousness, might be condemned.

These false signs and wonders will assault both the physical senses and the spiritual senses. Only those who firmly hold to the love of the Truth will be saved. Those who are apathetic will believe the lie and those who delight in unrighteousness will be condemned. We must be on our guard.

Colossians also warns us against possible deception via dreams and visions:

Colossians 2:18 ESV *Let no one disqualify you, insisting on asceticism and worship of angels, going on in detail about visions, puffed up without reason by his sensuous mind.*

To sum up:

- a) We can be lied to via our spiritual senses (just as we can be lied to via our physical senses)
- b) These lies come from the Devil and his seducing demons who try to lead us astray
- c) One of the main ways that the Devil lies to Christians is through super-spirituality and asceticism, through false visions and legalism and the worship of angels.
- d) The main way the Devil lies to the world is through lawlessness, immorality and idolatry
- e) The ultimate lie is the worship of idols
- f) These lies cause the person to become a hypocrite and to harden their conscience
- f) These lies will increase in the End Times, and will be accompanied by false miracles.
- h) We must love the Truth if we are to be saved from this flood of deception.

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