

## What Do We “Buy Into”?

By Lynn Warner

We live in a time of great deception and are in danger of being misled and deceived in many areas of life, including our faith. How can we see our way in Christ? The hymn “Abide With Me” has been coming into my heart the past few months as a prayer.

1. Abide with me; fast falls the eventide;  
The darkness deepens; Lord with me abide.  
When other helpers fail and comforts flee,  
Help of the helpless, O abide with me.

2. Swift to its close ebbs out life's little day;  
Earth's joys grow dim; its glories pass away;  
Change and decay in all around I see;  
O Thou who changest not, abide with me.

6. I need Thy presence every passing hour.  
What but Thy grace can foil the tempter's power?  
Who, like Thyself, my guide and stay can be?  
Through cloud and sunshine, Lord, abide with me.

As we abide in Christ and He abides in us, He teaches us that abiding in Him means repentance. For example, Jesus states, *“He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day”* (John 6:54 NASB). We are to continually repent and crucify the deeds of the flesh to abide in Jesus. The Bible has several lists containing deeds of the flesh. One list is found in Galatians 5, where the Fruit of the Spirit is also listed. Paul begins by stating, *“Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmities”* (Galatians 5:19-20a) and continues by listing 15 different deeds of the flesh. The deeds of the flesh list contains a lot of “bad fruit.” The flesh loves deception. Jeremiah describes the heart as *“more deceitful than all else and is desperately sick; who can understand it?”* (Jeremiah 17:9) Next, Paul lists the Fruit of the Spirit, which is *“love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control”* (Galatians 5:22b-23a). This fruit, Jesus taught, only grows on one vine, the True Vine, which is Jesus Himself. He declares, *“I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing”* (John 15:5). The Father, who is the Vinedresser, takes away branches that do not bear fruit. The fruit-producing branches are pruned or cleaned so that they will bear more fruit. The Fruit of the Spirit, grown on the vine Who is Christ, is good fruit. Paul says that there is no law against the Fruit of the Spirit. But the flesh that produces bad fruit must be dealt with. He says, *“Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires”* (Galatians 5:24). If the flesh is not pruned or cleaned by the Father, if it is not crucified with its passions and desires, it will hunger and lust to fulfill its desires. This means that it is both deceitful and open to being deceived. The flesh will “buy into” deception.

God has given His people the Spirit of Truth, yet many of us seem to “buy into” deception. Being deceived by different people and ideas has been a challenge in my own life. In Ephesians, Paul speaks of maturing Christians, who are *“no longer to be children, tossed here and there by*

*waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming; but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ*” (Ephesians 4:14-15). Furthermore, Paul told the Corinthians he would not speak to them *“as to spiritual men, but as to men of flesh, as to infants in Christ”* (1 Corinthians 3:1). He asks them, *“Are you not walking like mere men?”* (1 Corinthians 3:3b – the NASB notes “according to man”) Since they are not spiritual but men of flesh, they are not crucifying the flesh with its passions and lusts and maturing in Christ.

Babylon, as described in Revelation, appears to not only be a country but also the World System. God commands us to come out of Babylon, which will be destroyed by God, as we read in Revelation 18:4: *“I heard another voice from heaven, saying, ‘Come out of her, my people, so that you will not participate in her sins and receive of her plagues.’”* Her sins are the same ones we saw listed in Galatians. *“For all the nations have drunk of the wine of the passion of her immorality, and the kings of the earth have committed acts of immorality with her, and the merchants of the earth have become rich by the wealth of her sensuality...for your merchants were the great men of the earth, because all the nations were deceived by your sorcery”* (Revelation 18:3, 23b).

We participate in Babylon’s sins when we sin through immorality, sensuality, idolatries, and are deceived by her sorceries. The merchants are everywhere, buying and selling, including in the Church. Even in Jesus’ time, He cleansed the Temple *“and said unto them that sold doves, Take these things hence; make not my Father’s house an house of merchandise”* (John 2:16 KJV). Deception by sorcery is everywhere and in every field – political, economic, religious, medical, “news” media, all media and entertainment, military, etc. Only as we abide in Christ, asking Him to show us our immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, and enmities, repenting of them and crucifying them, can we “come out” of Babylon.

The walk described as “abiding in Christ” is one of repentance, crucifying the flesh and producing the Fruit of the Spirit on the True Vine, Jesus Christ. In this way, we are less likely to be deceived and fall into deception, because the flesh is being dealt with. It cannot “buy into” deception when it is crucified. Still, one thing is lacking, and that is discernment. The Bible states that discernment takes practice and training, *“for every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil”* (Hebrews 5:13-14).

So, the mature Christian, because of practice, has his senses trained to discern good and evil. He is not only reading and hearing the Word but also practicing abiding in Christ. The Holy Spirit trains and disciplines us in discernment of the truth about ourselves, about God, and about the deceptions in the world. He still shows us why we at times “buy into” deception – that there are passions and lusts of the flesh that must be crucified. His people are in the great exodus out of Babylon into “abiding in Christ and He in us.” The Father cleans or prunes out the bad fruit, so we can produce the good fruit of the Spirit, while abiding in the True Vine, Jesus Christ. As the darkness deepens in our world, only God’s Grace can foil the tempter’s power, as Christ is our guide and stay and will be with us *“even unto the end of the world. Amen”* (Matthew 28:20b KJV).