

LETTERS FROM GRANDPA
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Dearest grandchild,

Today's letter will deal with a phrase Paul wrote to the Galatians: **“You foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you?” (Gal. 3:1)**. Their conduct was so abnormal and unreasonable that Paul assumed they were “bewitched”.

On at least three different occasions I have seen people hypnotized. First, when I was a small child my father took me to see the Great Franquin. He hypnotized a man and programmed him to stop and say something as he passed the third row on his way back to his seat. Even though the man seemed to be in his right mind, he did precisely what he was programmed to do. The second instance occurred at the Kiamichi Men's Clinic where a hypnotized man stood before an audience of hundreds of men but believed he was by himself fishing in a river. He was fed a spoon full of mustard and said it tasted like “double chocolate”. The third instance was at a CIY conference where a hypnotized youth minister was dancing was another man but believed him to be a woman.

If human beings can “bewitch” someone, just think what the devil can do.

The Greek word translated as “bewitched” is “baskaino”. This reference in Galatians is the only time it occurs in the N.T. Scriptures. While the devil is not God, he is certainly supernatural. If he could “bewitch” the Galatians, there is the danger that he can also “bewitch” us. We should not be ignorant of his devices (2 Cor. 2:11). There is a sense in which all sin is irrational, yet, paradoxically, “every way of a man is right in his own eyes” (Prov. 21:2). No matter how egregious the sin, at the time we do it, it seems rational. “At the time” it seemed right for Cain to kill his brother. “At the time” it seemed right for Achan to steal those sacred things from Jericho. “At the time” it seemed right for David to commit adultery. “At the time” it seemed right for Judas to betray Jesus. “At the time” these famous Bible characters were “bewitched”.

Take another look at the prodigal son (Lk. 15:11 - 32). He was so “bewitched” that he even resented the love of his father. Under this satanic spell he fled to a far country, wasted his substance in riotous living. As you know, he wound up eating with the pigs. Yet, remember! “Every way of a man is right in his own eyes”. Under this spell the prodigal was probably proud to be the master of his own destiny. Like a hypnotized man eating mustard, his “bewitched” brain may not have computed that he was eating pig's food. He was so happy to be free from his father that even the pig pen could have seemed like a paradise. Then he “CAME TO HIS SENSES” (Lk. 15:17). When the evil spell was broken he awakened to reality. Then it dawned on him that his father's servants were better off than he was. Even though he was still in a far country, being in his right mind gave him the wisdom and courage to go home where he belonged.

One indicator of the change in his life is reflected by what he said when he “left” home, and what he said when he “came” home. When he left he said “give me”, and when he came back he said “make me”. Our Heavenly Father doesn't need to “give” us anything but He does want to “make” us into the likeness of His Son. (Rom. 8:29).

One of the most bizarre illustrations of “bewitching” with which I am personally familiar took place outside of Carl Junction, Mo. Dec. 6, 1987. On that day 19 year old Steven Newberry was bludgeoned to death by three classmates in a Satanic sacrifice. All three of the murderers were excellent students and popular. One was a personal friend and also a student in my Sunday School Class. Your Uncle Paul was in the same class. All three of the murderers were arrested the next day. All three are now serving life sentences without the possibility of parole. There is no rational explanation for why they did what they did. They were “bewitched”. Newspaper reports indicate that their leader said he heard a voice saying “do it now”. They did! Satan promised them power but he is a liar. Now they have “no power”! Now they are “prisoners” for life.

The word translated as “witchcraft” in Gal.5:20 is “pharmakia” from which we get our English word “pharmacy”. The use of drugs is one of the many ways Satan dulls our senses and opens our minds to his evil influence. This was the case with the young murderers mentioned above. They were not only doing drugs but also reading the Satanic Bible. The rest is history.

Someone asked how close you could get to a jet engine without being sucked in? Why ask? What possible benefit is there to being sucked into a jet engine? Jesus taught us to pray “Lead us not into temptation” (Matt. 6:13). That’s good advice! Please stay as far away from temptation as possible. Since sheep have almost no way to defend themselves, they need to stay as close to the Shepherd as possible. So do we!

Please stay close to Jesus!

Grandpa Boyce