

Explanatory Notes:**“ANGEL OF LIGHT”?**

Theme: One of the works of the devil is to make people blind by deceiving them, but the good news of Jesus can open their eyes

Bible Verses: Various. See below.

Introduction:

“If the Christian faith is true, why doesn’t everyone believe it?” This is a natural question for a person to ask. Why does the preaching of the good news of Jesus meet so much unbelief and opposition? If it is such good news, why don’t more people become believers?

This is not just a problem for Christians. If you are not a believer in Jesus and you are listening to this program, you also know what I am talking about. How many times have you said to yourself, “Why do people do what is wrong? Don’t they know better? Why are people so attracted to what is evil and false and turn away from what is good and true? Are they blind?”

The Bible gives us the answer to the question of unbelief. It tells us that there is an invisible army of evil spirits that works tirelessly to defeat God’s plans. One of their main weapons is deception. They tell lies and deceive people so that people will not understand or believe the truth.

Jesus said this about Satan, the head of this army:

[The devil] has always been a murderer and a liar. There is nothing truthful about him. He speaks on his own, and everything he says is a lie. Not only is he a liar himself, but he is also the father of all lies.

John 8:44, CEV

The Apostle Paul, a leader of the first believers of Jesus, said that Satan “tries to make himself look like an angel of light” (2 Corinthians 11:14). Paul calls Satan the “god of this world” who “has blinded the minds of unbelievers” so that they “cannot see the light” (2 Co-

inthians 4:4). Most of all he blinds people to the true nature and meaning of Jesus himself.

John, another early Christian leader, says, “That snake, who fools everyone on earth, is known as the devil and Satan.” (Revelation 12:9).

People are blind and confused because Satan and his army of demons tell them lies to trap them in unbelief. In what ways do they do this? In every way possible! Let’s look at **three principal ways Satan tries to trick people with lies:**

1. He makes people fear his power.

All over the world there are people who live in great fear.

- Many people are afraid of gods, spirits, demons and deceased ancestors. They make idols of these beings and they offer sacrifices to them to appease their anger.
- Many are afraid of witch doctors and the curses and magic spells they send out. They buy amulets and charms to defend themselves from curses.
- Many are afraid of special places—caves, rivers, certain houses—where they think evil spirits live.
- Many think they are trapped by fate.* They think it is useless to change their future or improve their lives.
- Many people are afraid of persecution. They fear what people will do and say to hurt them if they accept the Christian faith.

***Fate:** the belief that our future is determined by uncontrollable forces. People who believe in fate think they can’t change their future.

2. A second way the devil deceives people is that he makes evil look appealing.

As we saw, Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. This means he wants to make what is bad look good. He makes what is good look bad! He wants people to think that following him is more appealing and beneficial than following God.

People tempt us with evil. They say, “Try this. It isn’t bad. Who cares if everyone says it is wrong. It makes you feel good.” This is part of Satan’s strat-

egy.

Satan even tempts people to worship him. Some people are involved in the occult, witchcraft and Satanic worship. These people worship Satan so that he will give them supernatural powers. For a little bit of power these people are willing to forfeit (surrender, lose) their souls.

3. A third way in which Satan deceives people is that **he causes many people to think he doesn't exist.** Probably some of you listening to this message today are laughing in your heart. You are thinking, "All that talk about Satan and demons and evil powers is just superstitious religion. We are more intelligent than the uneducated people of long ago. Now we know that evil spirits aren't real."

But the devil is real. In these messages we have talked about how he is at work in the world. It is important to understand his power and influence.

- **If we don't understand the devil's methods,** we will think that education and political reform are all that is needed to make a better world. **But if we believe in the devil,** we will be more urgent about battling the evil that enslaves people.
- **If we don't understand the devil's methods,** we will treat temptations merely as personal choices. **But if we believe in the devil,** we will see temptations for what they really are: dangerous traps set by a deadly enemy.

Satan doesn't care if people fear him, love him or think he doesn't exist. His main desire is that people will ignore and reject God's Word. His plan is for people to fall into his trap.

But the good news is that the truth, the message about Jesus, is like a bright light. It shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it (John 1:5).

- The light of Jesus exposes the weakness of the things we once feared. We need not fear Satan's power when we live in the light of Jesus.

- Jesus' light also exposes the error of people who teach that good is bad and bad is good.
- Jesus' light also helps us recognize that the devil is active. It helps us see his harmful, dangerous actions against us. Jesus' light illumines a pathway for our feet, so that we can find our way to God and walk on his paths.

“For it is the God who said, “Let light shine out of darkness,” who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.”*

2 Corinthians 4:6, NRSV

*see Genesis 1:3.

Listeners, Satan **PRETENDS** to be an angel of light. But Jesus **IS** the **TRUE** light. He is the very glory of God.

I invite you and urge you to come from the darkness to the light. Don't let yourselves be blinded and deceived by Satan any longer. Discover the truth that will set you free.

[Conclude with an appropriate prayer for God to enlighten the minds of your listeners and free them with the message of the gospel]