

“THE ART OF DECEPTION”

Delivered to DANVILLE BAPTIST CHURCH

Lord's Day Morning 2016

Elder Jeff E. King TH.M.

Alternative title: Paul's Apology

Paul defends himself against the art of sinful rhetoric:

1 Cor. 2:1-5

¹ And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not **with excellency of speech** or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. ² For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified. ³ And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling. ⁴ And my speech and my preaching **was not with enticing words of man's wisdom**, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: ⁵ That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.

Some of the Greatest Deceivers of all Time:

Augustine- a student and eventually a teacher of **rhetoric** at Carthage. He became chief professor of rhetoric in Milan and a student of philosophy with special interest in Plato. Eventually Augustine found himself residing in Hippo. He and fellow citizens of Hippo became prisoners to a siege laid by barbarians who had invaded Northern Africa across the Strait of Gibraltar. (The invaders were called the **Vandals**) **(one of the 10 horns)**.

Martin Luther- a learned man given to the study of metaphysics. He received his Master of Arts in grammar and **rhetoric**. Best known for his 95 thesis nailed on the door of the Wittenberg Castle church. This was done due to the pope selling “indulgences to absolve sins”. At the time, St. Peter's Basilica (**meaning: kingdom**) was in preparation to be built. Luther states: *Why does not the pope, whose wealth today is greater than the wealth of the richest Crassus, build the basilica of St. Peter with his own money rather than with the money of poor believers?*

John Calvin- At 14 Calvin went to a college in Paris to study seven subjects: grammar, **rhetoric**, logic, arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, and music. In Breen's church history, he writes of John Calvin and the Rhetorical Tradition. Calvin's “magnum opus” was the *Institutes of the Christian Religion*

The Reformation:

* Unquestionably, **Luther and Calvin are credited** for the success of the Reformation Period.

* **Baptist**, however, do not recognize **the evil of it**.

* I know of Sov. Grace Ministers wishing others Happy Reformation Day! -Oct. 31st

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* Beyond this, some of **Baptists greatest commentators** seem to stumble over the seriousness and evilness of this time period.

* Much foolishness has been made of this period of time as well.

* **Some, however misguided**, have the notion that in **Rev. 1-3** each church has a special meaning or representation of future time frames that **include the Period of the Reformation**.

* All of these men have studied and practiced the art of Rhetoric.

Rhetoric: textbook definition is **the art of persuasion**.

Like the word concupiscence (see sermon on Adam's Sin #0030) rhetoric or philosophy can be used in either a good or negative way.

THE ART OF DECEPTION

At the heart of all deception are the words one may use to disguise the truth.

Let's investigate:

Paul used what we will call “innocent rhetoric.”

By innocent, we mean it did not detract from the truth.

Some of you are guilty of not so innocent rhetoric, and you may not realize it.

For example, Did you ever carry a message from your mother to your dad?

Did you ever change any of the words to get the answer you wanted?

Did you ever over emphasis part of the message to get the answer, OK?

If you did, you are guilty of not so innocent rhetoric.

Conclusion: Paul did use rhetoric, for example, rhetorical questions. In Roman 6, “**What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?**” But only under the control of inspiration. Therefore, it would only be a persuasive language invoking truth not error.

The Art of Rhetoric

Decorum (think of it as becoming handsome/beautiful) is **at the heart of rhetoric**.

The rhetorical principle of decorum is appropriateness to time, place, and audience.

Evangelism Explosion infected Baptist at a high rate. It was a book produced by Presbyterian, D. James Kennedy and therefore not an accurate reflection of the biblical concept of evangelism. In the mid 80's, it was introduced to Lexington Baptist College. Over the next few years, when I was preaching in California I found Baptist ministers teaching this book in their

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churches. I was critical and when ask why, my response was basically, a book dedicated to evangelism and it has only one small paragraph dedicated to repentance, is not a sound book.

The “art of deception” comes in various forms.

Most usually, as far as we are concerned, it comes from inept ministers changing the message by including or excluding part of the message. Bent on repeating their personal view or opinions of the scripture rather than the accurate message sent to us by God Himself.

Paul dismisses charge he is guilty of deception:

1 Cor. 1:12

For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world, and more abundantly to you-ward.

Paul indicts others of corruption:

Acts 20:29-31

²⁹ For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. ³⁰ Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. ³¹ Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears.

The finality of this deceptive art:

For it is written, He taketh the wise in their own craftiness. **1 Cor. 3:19**