

**Msg #142 of Scripture Beneath The Surface**  
*“Television: Are Careful Choices Enough?”*

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Hello! Thanks for being with us. Today I'd like to present some questions that have come in and hopefully give some answers along with them. I always like questions. Questions are beneficial to Christians when trying to understand the Bible. Of course, sometimes the questions get overwhelming, but then there are times when the questions bring an answer that gives insight to something we've been struggling with. It's an interesting fact that answering someone else's questions will teach you more than it will teach them. Understanding never comes to the listener until it first comes to the talker. There's an old saying, "A mist in the pulpit is a fog in the pew." This means that if the information is just a little bit unclear to the preacher, then by the time it gets to the ones who are listening it will be really unclear. You can't explain something well if you don't understand it well yourself. So, answering questions is the best way to learn because when you get it straight enough to explain it well to someone else, you'll understand it very well. And, each time you explain it to another person, your personal understanding will increase.

So anyway, the first question for today is concerning television. A listener writes that she is very careful and selective about which TV programs she listens to. And, because she knows how I feel about television and movies because of previous programs she has listened to, she asked for my comments on being selective in the TV viewing process versus not watching TV at all. Well, here's my response.

As for TV, I'm sure there are some programs that are good. However, the point I most want to emphasize isn't that all the programming on television is bad, but that television, and other forms

of graphic presentations that include the spoken voice, are avenues for Satan in regard to his ability to present a social perspective which is contrary to God's perspective. The beast nature, as opposed to the righteous nature of God, is prevalent in society, just in the sense that flesh and blood humans have the beast nature until they become born again Christians and put on the spirit nature of God. The images portrayed on television and movies are opportunities for Satan for his own, shall we say, propaganda.

Television, per se, is not evil in itself. And programs such as cooking shows and documentaries, are not necessarily evil in themselves. But, the point I try to make to Christians is that the images which speak are the fulfillment of prophecy as presented in Revelation 13 where it says that the people of earth, under the urging of the second beast, create an image of the first beast. In this sense, the warning is not the same thing as was the Law of Commandments. If a person watches television, they are not necessarily sinning. The problem with the graphic and audio presentations is not necessarily the programs themselves, but the opportunity for Satan to "teach" a form of social behavior which is contrary to Godliness.

What Satan accomplishes through the tool of television and movies is to establish a subconscious social perspective, or in other words, a worldly view as opposed to a heavenly view. This worldly perspective does not line up clearly with the word of God, but only approximates it, just like all of Satan's lies. Lies are made up with a large element of truth as the basis, and then the truth is distorted. The television and movies of today help Satan to distort God's truth, yet keeping it within the guidelines of man's human nature. The real word of God is distorted just enough to deceive people into thinking that earth's own brand of righteousness is equal with God's brand of righteousness. Here, let me give you an example.

In earlier years we watched, "Leave It To Beaver." What we learned, subconsciously, from this seemingly harmless sitcom, was how the wisdom of Beaver's father was the answer to all things, just like in the program, "Father Knows Best." However, the wisdom never included God or God's word. We also learned how a household of the quote "average" unquote family should look. No it didn't tell us this outright, but just subtly presented it to the general public. We saw the woman of the house wear nice dresses, perfectly styled hair, and high heels just to vacuum the rug or to mop the kitchen floor. However, no one really comprehends how much this affects us until we begin to see how each program brings another aspect to the subconscious instruction. There's a little bit in each program to program us subconsciously.

But, it was "Little House On The Prairie" where God really began to show me the danger signals. When "Pa" slugged a guy because he had taken unfair advantage of his daughter, my wife and my two girls clapped their hands and yelled their approval. I was also watching, but when I saw the response of my family to Pa's actions, immediately the scripture came to mind, "Vengeance is mine, sayeth the Lord." Another scripture also came to mind. It was, "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you." The next verse tells us that the reason we should do this is so that we can be the children of our Father which is in heaven. This concept is largely lost to God's

children, and has been replaced by mankind's own form of dealing with right and wrong. We have gravitated back to the Old Testament principles of an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth instead of following the word of Christ as stated in Matthew 5:38-45 which says, "You have heard that it has been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: 39 But I say to you, Not to resist evil: but whoever smites you on your right cheek, turn to him the other cheek also. 40 And if any man sues you at the law and takes away your shirt, let him have your coat also. 41 And whoever forces you to go a mile, go two miles for him. 42 Give to him that asks of you, and do not turn away from him that would borrow from you. 43 You have heard that it has been said, that you shall love your neighbor, and hate your enemy. 44 But I say to you, Love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; 45 So that you may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he makes his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust."

No, I'm sure this seems to be far out on a limb, but just think of how people react to the command to, "turn the other cheek." It is almost impossible to find a Christian who can respond positively to this concept, and almost without exception they will say something like, "yeah, but, I don't think God wants us to be treated unfairly, or to let people walk all over us, or to let others treat our wives or children unfairly." Yet, how can we escape the condemnation of the Law of Commandments if we continually try to revert back to an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. To actually respond in love to your enemy is a lost concept among Christians.

However, it is my opinion, for what it's worth, that Satan's intention is to cloud the issue just enough to erase God from the picture. He knows he can't beat God up, but he thinks he can get the people of earth to stop thinking about God. He wants to 'paint a picture' which is void of God's word and void of God's righteousness. This is why it warns us in Revelation about this. God knows that if the lies are subtle enough, and told often enough, people will sooner or later believe anything. Of course, Christians can easily recognize the difference between wicked movies and cooking shows. However, the real danger of the image of the beast is that no matter what level of righteousness or wickedness you live on, there is still something in TV and movies for everyone, and everyone, sooner or later, will succumb to the lies if they can just watch and listen long enough.

No, no one has to stop watching TV. However, the warning in Revelation 13 concerning the image of the beast is that this end time tool of Satan is so deceptive that it will be able to reach every kind of person in the world, no matter what social or financial or racial state they live in. TV and movies reach the whole world, and the advertisements are the most devastating. The nightly news is probably second to the advertisements in deception because the form of indoctrination into a godless society is the most subtle. The nightly news is decidedly anti-Christ and anti-God in nature. The only time God is included is when God can be presented in a 'questionable' fashion. And of course, as Satan well knows, it is the introduction of doubts and questions which destroys the righteousness of God's people, just as it destroyed the righteousness of Eve in the Garden of Eden by introducing doubt concerning God's word.

Here's an interesting point. There is an organization in the world today who is attempting to introduce a different christ than Jesus Christ. They call him, Maitreya. When the public relations manager for Maitreya spoke on television and called for people of the earth to accept their "CHRIST" in place of Jesus Christ, he said that in order to bring peace to the world the "media" must contact them and set up a dialog with this christ. When asked why it was the media which must do this instead of the government leaders of the world, he replied that it was the media which was who the people of earth really are.

And this is very interesting. You see, it is the 'media' which establishes who the people of earth really are. It is the media which programs us. It is very subtle, but this is really how society evolves. Each group of people on earth has always had their social system established or altered by other societies of which they come into contact. But, now the contact with one society to another is affected continuously by what we see and hear on the television and in the movies. The programs and commercials on television, and the presentations in movies, present a 'picture', an image, of a godless society in one form or another. It isn't the program itself in every instance, but rather, the clothing worn, the furniture used, the location, the financial element, etc. It is the attitude of the 'stars', and the dialog which do not blatantly speak evil of Jesus Christ, but they ignore any concept of God within the confines of their program. Therefore, the people who watch TV are continually indoctrinated with a Godless concept, and the people who watch begin to look at things as separate from God. They think there is one part of life that includes God, like going to church, and another part of life without God, like enjoying yourself with things that are not sinful in themselves, but which are enjoyed without mentioning God, and without the presence of God. Most of the deception is so subtle that most people miss it. But, no matter what the program is supposed to be about, the underlying suggestions still enter the eyes and ears of people everywhere, but they don't really realize what their eyes and ears are taking in.

Several years ago I read about a study which was done concerning subconscious suggestion. In order to prove how subconscious suggestion affects people, they chose a drive-in movie theater and flashed a message on the screen which said, "eat popcorn." This message only flashed on the screen in increments of less than a second, and the people were not consciously aware of the message. However, their subconscious minds received the subconscious suggestion, and the popcorn stand that night sold out of popcorn completely. This subconscious suggestion is proven to work, and is actually legally outlawed. However, the subconscious suggestion that still works in television and movies is the non-written form, and just presents concepts which are in the form of movement and sound. A proof of this can be seen just by recognizing how much advertisers pay just to have their can of Coke or Pepsi sitting on the desk in a movie scene, or especially if one of the actors can be seen drinking it.

You know, if someone wants to watch television, there is no law from God that says we cannot do it. However, the actual biblical descriptions of end time satanic deception are few. Therefore, if the Bible includes such a strong symbolic warning of the evil which was to come on the world in the last days, then probably it would not be wise to depend on careful observation and careful

choices for your viewing habits? It would be better to avoid taking in the lies in the first place than to rely on sorting them out after they are mixed up in your head.

Yes, it is not a sin to watch television, but I 'choose not to' because God has revealed how subtle the deception is, and how devastating it has become. God's people no longer understand how to align themselves with his word because the social perspective has been so extremely and subtly distorted. Yes, it is good when Christians choose carefully what they watch, but the warning of Revelation's Image of the Beast would not be necessary if Christians can just use care in choosing between what they view as good or evil programming. The warning of Revelation 13 goes further than that, and warns Christians about what is an overall major threat to Godliness. If we can just be 'careful' what we watch, then there would be no reason to warn Christians about Satan's last and greatest attempt to deceive.

My concern with television is not connected to whether the programs are wicked or 'good', but my concern is that the image of the beast is present with us now, and Christians are largely unaware of it. However, every Christian will have to choose for themselves. My responsibility is to spread the warning message of the image that speaks, and hopefully, that some will see the danger and avoid the mine field altogether instead of trying to tiptoe through it.

The question is, is my viewpoint a little bit overboard? Yes, absolutely. I know that. I'm not concerned with whether someone can make a wise choice between programs. You can make wise choices just as well as I can make wise choices. I'm just trying to warn Christians before they get sucked in completely and never realize how Satan is doing it. God just tells me to do what I can to help people get prepared for the return of Jesus Christ. Telling people what the image of the beast is, is what I do. What people do with it is between them and God. Yes, you can choose carefully, but the deception is so great that you will never see all the evil up front. You will only see it after the fact. Hindsight is great, but hindsight only delivers people the second time around. For Christians, there won't be a second time around.

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The real warning message of Revelation 13 concerning the image of the beast is that this image of the beast causes every kind of person on earth to depart from the precepts of God. If Christians can just recognize that the people of earth are born first as humans, and that their first nature is as the animals, then possibly they can begin to see that they are also extremely subject to subconscious suggestion, which encourages them to act within the confines of the beast nature instead of strictly within the confines of God's righteous word. This is why the Bible uses the term beast to describe the evil working of Satan. This is why Revelation 12:4 tells us that Satan accomplished his successful temptation of a third of the angels by drawing them away with his tail. This is why the Bible refers initially to Satan in the book of Genesis as a serpent, and this is also why the Bible describes him in various animal forms such as the beast, the serpent, the serpent in the bottom of the sea, the dragon, the great red dragon, and also Leviathan.

We are all made similar to animals, yet are made just a little higher in the hope that we will realize the truth of God's word and will become born again in spirit. The animal kingdom exists on this earth for a time, and the beast nature is prevalent. It shows itself in the warfare of mankind, and how each nation or group of people wars against their neighbor in order to increase their holdings of land and assets. This has taken place on the earth since the days of the Tower of Babel. The beast nature is prevalent in those people who are base, those people who have no love for their fellow man, and who do things with such selfish motives that they cause untold harm to others. There are probably few woman alive in this world who have not, at one time or another, felt like saying something to a man like, "you beast, you're acting like an animal." Do you get the picture? In God's eyes we all act like beasts until we come into the knowledge of God and the knowledge of Jesus Christ. It is then that we put away the beast nature and begin to act in the nature of Christ and with the love of God.

However, it is the beast nature that Satan continually tempts us with, and it is the beast nature that is presented to us in television and movie form in order to brainwash mankind into thinking along earthly lines instead of along Godly lines. This whole world is about God and about his love, but, mankind has largely destroyed the concepts of Godliness, and have instituted a replacement for it with their own form of right and wrong.

When Christians watch television and movies, they are being programmed into thinking by earthly concepts instead of by Godly concepts. And, because television and movies combine images and sound, the beast nature actually has begun to speak, and the combination is deadly. Speaking images have a tremendous power to manipulate and to establish thought patterns. It is no wonder that television is the prime avenue for political advertisement. A political candidate's future can be either made or broken by the public presentation of television imagery and speech. The media makes or breaks men. Of course, it isn't the television itself. The television is just a box, and the programs are just so much digital recordings. However, the minds behind the scenes are presenting what their minds can conceive, and it is the combined minds of many peoples united which are forming the social consciousness of the world today. And this social consciousness is not the righteous consciousness of God, but the self-righteous consciousness of the beast nature.

Well, that's all we have time for this week. Next week I'll try to present some other questions and hopefully some answers to those questions. Thanks for being with us.