

CLOTHES OF DECEPTION

Lesson 2

I. Deception is Satan's Primary and Favorite Tool

A. Mankind was doomed to suffer death because of Satan's deception.

Genesis 3:1-13 – *"Now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said to the woman, 'Has God indeed said, 'You shall not eat of every tree of the garden?'" ² And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat the fruit of the trees of the garden; ³ but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God has said, 'You shall not eat it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die.'" ⁴ Then the serpent said to the woman, "You will **not** surely die. ⁵ For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." ⁶ So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and **a tree desirable to make one wise**, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate. ⁷ Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves coverings. ⁸ And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. ⁹ Then the LORD God called to Adam and said to him, "Where are you?" ¹⁰ So he said, "I heard Your voice in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; and I hid myself." ¹¹ And He said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you that you should not eat?" ¹² Then the man said, "The woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I ate." ¹³ And the LORD God said to the woman, "What is this you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate."*

B. We see that clothing was invented by Adam and Eve when their eyes were open to recognize good from evil.

1. The first evil that they recognized was that they were naked.
2. This was not a problem in their innocence, but the "wisdom" that Eve sought in eating the forbidden fruit made the evil possibilities known to them and they immediately felt guilt which caused them to hide from God.
3. God confirmed that clothing was now necessary by providing them with tunics made of animal skins.
4. This destroys the argument of the "nudists" today. They say that God made Adam and Eve with no clothing, so we don't need them today. If that is so, why did God made them clothing out of more durable material than the simple fig leaves they fashioned?

II. This Brings Us To A Great Deception Used Against The Israelites As They Settled In Canaan.

- A. After forty years of wandering in the desert, all of the disobedient first generation had died except Joshua and Caleb who were two of the original 12 spies sent into Canaan when they left Egypt. (**Numbers 13-14**)
1. Joshua and Caleb believed that God would provide a great victory over all the inhabitants of Canaan.
 2. The other ten convinced the people that the inhabitants in Canaan were giants in fortified cities. There was no way the Israelites could defeat them.
 3. Because the people believed the ten spies and refused to go into Canaan, God made them wander in the desert for 40 years (one year for every day the spies were in Canaan).
 4. Even Moses, Aaron and Miriam were not permitted to enter the land for.
 5. God choose Joshua to take the place of Moses as the leader of the Israelites.

- B. God had given instructions regarding what was to be done when the time came to enter Canaan.

Deuteronomy 7:1-8 – *"When the LORD your God brings you into the land which you go to possess, and has cast out many nations before you, the Hittites and the Girgashites and the Amorites and the Canaanites and the Perizzites and the Hivites and the Jebusites, seven nations greater and mightier than you, ² and when the LORD your God delivers them over to you, you shall conquer them and utterly destroy them. You shall make no covenant with them nor show mercy to them. ³ Nor shall you make marriages with them. You shall not give your daughter to their son, nor take their daughter for your son. ⁴ For they will turn your sons away from following Me, to serve other gods; so the anger of the LORD will be aroused against you and destroy you suddenly. ⁵ But thus you shall deal with them: you shall destroy their altars, and break down their sacred pillars, and cut down their wooden images, and burn their carved images with fire. ⁶ For you are a holy people to the LORD your God; **the LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for Himself,** a special treasure above all the peoples on the face of the earth. ⁷ The LORD did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any other people, for you were the least of all peoples; ⁸ but because the LORD loves you, and because He would keep the oath which He swore to your fathers, the LORD has brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you from the house of bondage, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt."*

- C. The first city to be destroyed in Canaan was Jericho. You are familiar with the elaborate plan that God gave to Joshua for defeating this great walled city. (**Joshua 6**)
1. The Priests and the people walked through the Jordan river on dry land (just as they had walked through the Red Sea when they left Egypt).

2. They marched around the city of Jericho silently once each day for six days.
 3. On the seventh day they marched around the city seven times and when the signal was given they gave a great shout and the walls of the city fell down so that they could walk into the city to capture it.
 4. Joshua gave these instructions for the capture of Jericho:
Joshua 6:18 – ¹⁸ *And you, by all means abstain from the accursed things, lest you become accursed when you take of the accursed things, and make the camp of Israel a curse, and trouble it."*
 5. They were forbidden to take any of the plunder of the city for themselves. Only the vessels made of gold, silver, brass and iron were to be taken into the treasury of the Lord.
 6. However, one man could not resist the temptation and he took some of the accursed things from Jericho, but no one in Israel was aware of his sin.
- D. The next city to be destroyed was Ai.
1. The anger of the Lord burned against Israel because of the accursed things.
 2. Joshua was unaware of the Lord's anger and he sent men to Ai to spy out the land. Their report was that it was a small city and only 3,000 men would be required to defeat Ai.
 3. However, when they went to take the city, they were soundly defeated by the men of Ai.
 4. When Joshua and the elders learned of the defeat, he tore his clothes and asked God why He had brought them to this defeat.
 5. God spoke to Joshua saying,
Joshua 7:11-12 – *"Israel has sinned by taking some of the accursed items. I will no longer be with you until you destroy these items."*
 6. Joshua called all the tribes together and the tribe of Judah was selected, the clan of Judah, the family of Zarahites. Joshua called each man forward until Achan who was identified as the guilty one.
 6. Achan admitted his guilt and told them where to find the items. Then Achan and his whole family were stoned to death. His family and all that he possessed was burned and covered with stones.
 7. Joshua devised a battle plan for defeating Ai and the Israelites destroyed the city and inhabitants except the king, whom they took back for execution.
- E. When the kings of six of the other inhabitants in Canaan heard of the defeat of Jericho and Ai, they joined forces and planned to attack the Israelites together.
1. However, the inhabitants of Gibeon were very cunning. They had a better plan to save their cities:

Joshua 9:3-15 – ³But when the inhabitants of Gibeon heard what Joshua had done to Jericho and Ai, ⁴they worked craftily, and went and pretended to be ambassadors. And they took old sacks on their donkeys, old wineskins torn and mended, ⁵old and patched sandals on their feet, and old garments on themselves; and all the bread of their provision was dry and moldy. ⁶And they went to Joshua, to the camp at Gilgal, and said to him and to the men of Israel, "We have come from a far country; now therefore, make a covenant with us." ⁷Then the men of Israel said to the Hivites, "Perhaps you dwell among us; so how can we make a covenant with you?" ⁸But they said to Joshua, "We are your servants." And Joshua said to them, "Who are you, and where do you come from?" ⁹So they said to him: "From a very far country your servants have come, because of the name of the LORD your God; for we have heard of His fame, and all that He did in Egypt, ¹⁰and all that He did to the two kings of the Amorites who were beyond the Jordan—to Sihon king of Heshbon, and Og king of Bashan, who was at Ashtaroth. ¹¹Therefore our elders and all the inhabitants of our country spoke to us, saying, 'Take provisions with you for the journey, and go to meet them, and say to them, "We are your servants; now therefore, make a covenant with us."'" ¹²This bread of ours we took hot for our provision from our houses on the day we departed to come to you. But now look, it is dry and moldy. ¹³And these wineskins which we filled were new, and see, they are torn; and these our garments and our sandals have become old because of the very long journey." ¹⁴Then **the men of Israel** took some of their provisions; but they **did not ask counsel of the LORD.** ¹⁵So Joshua made peace with them, and made a covenant with them to let them live; and the rulers of the congregation swore to them."

2. In today's society we would probably call a lawyer and sue one who signed a contract with us that was fraudulent. But the Israelites did not have that option – and neither do we if the issue involves a fellow Christians. (**I Corinthians 6:1-8**)
3. Three days after making the covenant with the Gibeonites, the Israelites learned that they were not from a far country, but were inhabitants of Canaan – a three day's journey away.

Joshua 9:16-21 – ¹⁶And it happened at the end of three days, after they had made a covenant with them, that they heard that they were their neighbors who dwelt near them. ¹⁷Then the children of Israel journeyed and came to their cities on the third day. Now their cities were Gibeon, Chephirah, Beeroth, and Kirjath Jearim. ¹⁸But the children of Israel did not attack them, because the rulers of the congregation had sworn to them by the LORD God of Israel. **And all the congregation complained against the rulers.** ¹⁹Then all the rulers said to all the congregation, "We have sworn to them by the LORD God of Israel; now therefore, we may not touch them." ²⁰This we will do to them: We will let them live, lest wrath be upon us because of the oath which we swore to them." ²¹And the rulers said to them, "Let them live, but let them be woodcutters and water carriers for all the congregation, as the rulers had promised them."

4. Let's look at the law regarding keeping an oath:
 - a. **Leviticus 19:12** - ¹² *And you shall not swear by My name falsely, nor shall you profane the name of your God: I am the LORD.*
 - b. **Deuteronomy 23:21-23** - ²¹ *When you make a vow to the LORD your God, you shall not delay to pay it; for the LORD your God will surely require it of you, and it would be sin to you.* ²² *But if you abstain from vowing, it shall not be sin to you.* ²³ *That which has gone from your lips you shall keep and perform, for you voluntarily vowed to the LORD your God what you have promised with your mouth.*
 - c. **Numbers 30:1-2** - *Then Moses spoke to the heads of the tribes concerning the children of Israel, saying, "This is the thing which the LORD has commanded: ² If a man makes a vow to the LORD, or swears an oath to bind himself by some agreement, he shall not break his word; he shall do according to all that proceeds out of his mouth."*
 - d. **Proverbs 20:25** - *"It is a snare for a man to devote rashly something as holy, and afterward to reconsider his vows."*
 - e. **Ecclesiastes 5:1-6** - *"When you make a vow to God, do not delay to pay it; For He has no pleasure in fools. Pay what you have vowed—⁵ **Better not to vow than to vow and not pay.** ⁶ Do not let your mouth cause your flesh to sin, nor say before the messenger of God that it was an error. Why should God be angry at your excuse and destroy the work of your hands?"*
5. Even though the Gibeonites were dishonest and deceitful, the Israelites were bound by the vow they made with those wearing their "clothes of deception".
 - a. While the Gibeonites escaped complete destruction, they were never a free people again.
 - b. They were kept as slaves to the Israelites with specific jobs of cutting wood and carrying water for the house of the Lord – two of the lowest and most time consuming chores to be done.
 - c. The Israelites were forced to use their army to protect the three cities in Gibeon from other heathen nations in Canaan who attempted to blot them out.
 - d. This was a constant reminder to the Israelites of the great mistake they had made by making a covenant without seeking council from God before making such a commitment.
- F. Obviously, keeping one's word is an important part of living a Christian life, just as it was for the Jews. In fact, it is commanded:
 1. **Matthew 5:33-37** – ³³ *Again you have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not swear falsely, but shall perform your oaths to the Lord.'* ³⁴ *But I say to you, do not swear at all: neither by heaven, for it is God's throne;* ³⁵ *nor by the earth, for it is His footstool; nor by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King.* ³⁶ *Nor shall you swear by your head, because you cannot make one hair white or black.* ³⁷ *But let your 'Yes' be 'Yes,' and your 'No,' 'No.' For whatever is more than these is from the evil one."*

2. **James 5:12** – “¹² *But above all, my brethren, do not swear, either by heaven or by earth or with any other oath. But let your "Yes" be "Yes," and your "No" (be) "No" lest you fall into judgment.*”
3. Keeping one's word is one of the best ways to influence those in the world around us. Imagine what a negative influence we would be if we could not be counted on to keep our word while professing that we are disciples of Jesus Christ.
 - a. Paul warned the Jewish Christians in Rome that their hypocrisy was damaging the spreading of the gospel among the Gentiles.
 - b. **Romans 2:24** – “²⁴ *For "the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you," as it is written.*”
 - c. We must never be such poor examples to the world that it would cause the lost world around us to blaspheme the name of God.
4. We should take another important lesson from the Israelites:
 - a. We all have times in our lives when we must make life-altering decisions.
 - b. Before making a commitment that we may come to regret, we should take time to ask God to give us wisdom to make the proper decisions.
 - c. We should take stock of how this decision will affect our spiritual life, more so than how it affects our physical life. Some of those decisions may be:
 - where we will live (or move to)
 - where we will work for a living
 - the daily decisions that are required in raising Godly children
 - what the priorities are in our lives
 - how we budget our money
 - our involvement in the local work of the church
 - d. We must ask ourselves: “Will this make me a stronger Christian or will it serve to weaken me spiritually?”

QUESTIONS:

1. As a foundation for this study, discuss two commands that had been given to the Israelites to govern such decisions:
 - a. Utterly destroy the inhabitants of Canaan (Deuteronomy 7:1-5).
 - b. Do not swear falsely [i.e. keep your vows] (Leviticus 19:12).
2. How did the Gibeonites deceive Joshua and the children of Israel? (Josh. 9:3-5) Why?
3. How were they received by the princes of Israel? (Josh. 9:14-19)
4. Give two reasons why there was a conflict between the princes of the congregation and the people? (Josh. 9:14-15)
 - a.
 - b.
5. It is obvious from reading the account that the Gibeonites lied and purposefully deceived the leaders of Israel. How could Joshua and the elders have known what to do? (Deuteronomy 7:1-5)
6. Once the Israelites realized they had been deceived into disobeying the command of God, what other dilemma did they face? (Joshua 9:19)

Why could they not go back on their word and break the covenant?
(Leviticus 19:12)

RESEARCH QUESTION:

7. Under the Mosaic Law, all vows, covenants, leagues, treaties and promises were viewed as binding. Search the following scriptures to see just how important these were before God:

Leviticus 19:12

Deut. 23:22

Deut 23:21-23

Num. 30:1-2

Num. 30:15

Prov. 20:25

Eccl. 5:1-6

8. Why was Joshua forced to make peace with the Gibeonites? (Deut. 20:10-18)
9. What Gentile lady worked wily (cleverly) to secure safety from being destroyed by the Israelite armies? (Joshua 2:9-14)
10. Did any city or nation make peace with the children of Israel? (Josh. 11:19)
11. How do we know that God was not pleased with what King Saul did against the Gibeonites? (2 Samuel 21:1-9)

What did King David do to make peace with them?
12. How does Jeremiah 18:7-8 apply to this situation?
13. Today in the New Testament, how are covenant breakers described? (Romans 1:28-32)

How will obeying James 1:19 help us to avoid this sin?
14. What is Jesus' admonition? (Matt. 5:33-37)
15. What other principles can be used to govern our decisions? (Proverbs 3:5-6; 20, 27; Hosea 4:6)
16. Why did Paul, with the apostles and elders, ask counsel of the Lord? (Acts 15:1-2; 13-29)
17. What must we remember as we make decisions about things people teach in religion? (Galatians 1:8-9; 1 Corinthians 2:4-5; Philippians 4:6; Ephesians 6:18)

18. Consider the command not to be unequally yoked with unbelievers or to make friends with them. (2 Corinthians 6:14; 1 Corinthians 15:33)

See also: **1 Kings 11** for examples of how Solomon violated this principle. If we make a covenant of marriage with one who has deceived us, do we still have to honor our vows?

CONCLUSION:

What if someone deceives us? How can we know what we should do? Remember the clearly stated problem in Joshua 9:14. “**...asked not counsel at the mouth of the LORD.**” We need to be very careful not to be deceived, by knowing well and seeking out the counsel of the Lord; otherwise we may have to bear some unpleasant consequences.