

DECEPTION – A FATAL SIN NOT TO BE TAKEN LIGHTLY PART #2

HOW CAN WE AVOID BEING DECEIVED, SINCE SATAN USES DECEPTION TO TRY TO CAUSE US TO FALL AS HE DID WITH:

1. **Adam and Eve** – Driven out of the Paradise Garden (**Genesis 3:4-11**) (Article #1)
2. **Moses** – Who because of his sin, was not allowed to enter into the Promised Land (**Numbers 20:10-11 (NIV)**) (Article #1).
3. **Nadab and Abihu** – Who offered up strange fire, fire that was not authorized and God sent fire from heaven and consumed them (**LEVITICUS 10:1-3**) (Article #1).

TO AVOID BEING DECIEVED WE MUST HAVE A TRUE FAITH, A FAITH UPON WHICH FACTS COME FROM GOD RATHER THAN WHAT WE HAVE BEEN TOLD, OR FROM OUR OWN THINKING.

“There is a way that seems right to a man but the end thereof leads to death.” (**Proverbs 14:12; 12:15; 16:2**). There are many warnings concerning those who claim to teach the truth but who teach error. **2 Peter 2:1 (ASV)** **2** But there arose **false prophets** also among the people, **as among you also there shall be false teachers, who shall privily bring in destructive heresies, denying even the Master that bought them, bringing upon themselves swift destruction.**

True faith is essential if we desire to walk in the light (**1 John 1:6-10**), “And **without faith it is impossible to please God**, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.” (**Hebrews 11:6 (NIV)**). **Faith comes by hearing the word of Christ.**” (**Romans 10:17 (NIV)**). **Faith is not what I think, but what I know and believe from hearing or reading God’s word sent to guide us in doing God’s will.**

Peter, by inspiration, wrote that we have everything we need revealed to us, **3 “His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness.** **4** Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, **so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.** (**2 Peter 1:3-4 (NIV)**).

Whatever We Do Is To Be Done In The Name Of, Or By The Authority Of, Christ.

And **whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.** (**Colossians 3:17 (NIV)**). Read the context (the verses before and after this verse) and see what God is saying to Paul through the Holy Spirit. **Colossians 3: 1- 17** deals with “**Rules for holy living**” according to the caption just before **Colossians 3** in the **New International Version**. Whatever we do in word or in deed concerning our new life in Christ, a life that now belongs to Christ (**Colossians 3:1-4**), is to be done **in the name of Christ (that is, by His authority)**. If Christ doesn’t direct us to do something, we should not do it. Whatever He wants us to do or be, He will reveal and this is what we should follow to keep from being deceived by Satan or man! Peter reveals this in **2 Peter 1:3-4** as we have already mentioned above but look at it closely and think on it! **2 Peter 1:3** “His divine power has given us **everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness.** **4** Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, **so that through them (the things revealed) you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.”**

Whatever does not come from faith, which is clearly revealed in Scripture, is sin.

Even in a matter of whether to eat meat or not eat meat offered to an idol and sold in the market place (**Romans 14:1-22**), the decision must be one of conviction through faith. After explaining that there was nothing wrong with eating meat offered to idols for mature Christians who understood that there was but one God and that the meat had no stigma attached to it, Paul warned that if the weak Christian thought that eating the meat was taking part in idol worship and saw a strong Christian eating it, it might tempt the weak Christian to eat and because they thought of it as worshiping the idol, they would stumble. Some in Paul's day were not really sure about whether it was acceptable or not but went ahead and ate the meat without understanding what was clearly taught, this not coming from faith, was sin. Paul's answer to those who had doubts was; "But **the man who has doubts is condemned if he eats, because his eating is not from faith; and everything that does not come from faith is sin.**" **Romans 14:23 (NIV)**. If God desires us to do something in work or worship, He reveals it in His word (**2 Peter 1:3-4**).

ABRAHAM IS AN ICON OF FAITH BECAUSE HE FOLLOWED GOD'S COMMANDS.

Abraham was told to offer his only son, Isaac, as a sacrifice and given the instructions where, when and how. This seemed to go against everything God ever taught; yet Abraham, having faith, did exactly as He was instructed. When he lifted the knife to kill his son on the altar as God had instructed him, God stopped him and told him to offer the ram with his horns caught in the thicket instead, and Abraham, did exactly that! (**Genesis chapter 22**). This is why Abraham is used in the New Testament as an example of one who had faith in God! He didn't question God, even though the thing God told him to do **didn't seem right, nor had it ever been required by God before.** Abraham completely trusted God, so he followed His commands. The faith and obedience of Abraham is used in the book of James to explain how faith must be accompanied with obedience, or works; **James 2:21-23 (NIV)** 21 **Was not our ancestor Abraham considered righteous for what he did when he offered his son Isaac on the altar?** 22 **You see that his faith and his actions were working together, and his faith was made complete by what he did.** 23 **And the scripture was fulfilled that says, "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness." and he was called God's friend.**

Hebrews eleven is known for its great men and women of faith. Each example recorded is one who believed and obeyed exactly what God commanded without changing or deleting anything they were commanded to do. Abraham is in the list. "***By faith*** Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, ***obeyed*** and went, even though he did not know where he was going. 9 ***By faith*** he made his home in the Promised Land like a stranger in a foreign country; he lived in tents, as did Isaac and Jacob, who were heirs with him of the same promise. 10 For he was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God. 11 ***By faith*** Abraham, even though he was past age—and Sarah herself was barren—***was enabled to become a father because he considered him faithful who had made the promise.*** 12 And so from this one man, and he as good as dead, came descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as countless as the sand on the seashore. 13 ***All these people were still living by faith when they died. They did not receive the things promised; they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance.*** And they admitted that they were aliens and strangers on earth. 14 People who say such things show that they are looking for a country of their own. 15 If they had been thinking of the country they had left, they would have had opportunity to return. 16 Instead, they were longing for a better country—a heavenly one. **Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared a city for them.** 17 ***By faith*** Abraham, when God tested him, offered Isaac as a sacrifice. He who had received the promises was about to sacrifice his one and only son, 18 even though God had said to him, "It is through Isaac that your offspring

will be reckoned.” **19 Abraham reasoned that God could raise the dead, and figuratively speaking, he did receive Isaac back from death. (Hebrews 11:8-19 (NIV)).**

If we are looking forward to being in heaven we, like these faithful ones, will do as they did – look to God and His word as our only source of information. If we don’t, Satan will *deceive* us. We, like Nadab and Abihu, will be deceived into offering up something contrary to God’s will and teaching. If this was displeasing to God with Eve, Adam, Moses, and Nadab and Abihu, it will not please Him today! As Jesus said, “**He who is not with me is against me, and he who does not gather with me scatters.**” (Matthew 12:30 (NIV)). Again, Jesus said, “No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money.” **Matthew 6:24 (NIV).**

Jesus said 22 “**For false Christs and false prophets will appear and perform signs and miracles to deceive the elect—if that were possible.**” **Mark 13:22 (NIV).** Deception is very much a part of Satan’s arsenal to destroy believers!

ONE OF THE MOST OUTSTANDING EXAMPLES OF SATAN’S DECEPTION IS THAT OF A YOUNG PROPHET SENT BY GOD WITH SPECIFIC INSTRUCTIONS AND A SPECIFIC MESSAGE TO DELIVER TO ISRAEL, AT THE TIME OF THE DIVIDED KINGDOM ERA.

A young prophet was sent to Jeroboam, who had stripped 10 tribes of Israel from David’s descendents because of their lack of faith in following God. Rehoboam (a son of David) was rightfully appointed by God as king over all of God’s chosen people. But ten of the tribes were *deceived* by Jeroboam (not God’s chosen king). How were they deceived? Jeroboam knew that the Northern ten tribes would still have a tendency to want to go down to Jerusalem to worship once a year as they had been commanded to do so he set up two cities, Dan and Bethel, in the North, which would be more convenient and much closer for Israel to go to worship (**1 Kings 12:25-33**). Jeroboam knew that if he wanted to remain in control of Israel, he would need to keep the people from going to Jerusalem where they could be influenced by God’s chosen teachers. To get around this he appointed priests of his own choosing rather than having them appointed by God from the Tribe of Levi as God had commanded (**cf. Numbers 3:6; Deuteronomy 21:5; Hebrews 7:5**).

Jeroboam led Israel into idol worship. “**Jeroboam built shrines on high places and appointed priests from all sorts of people, even though they were not Levites, rather than choosing them from the tribe of Judah.**” (**1 Kings 12:31 (NIV)**). The priests God approved were to be exclusively from the tribe of Levi! This was God’s chosen plan. Jeroboam changed the place of worship from Jerusalem to Dan and Bethel. He changed the priests from those who were chosen by God to whomever he appointed.

Jeroboam proved to be one of the most wicked kings in Israel’s history. **Due to Jeroboam’s blatant disregard for the truth, God sent an unnamed prophet, “a man of God” (1 Kings 13:1-10) to prophecy against Jeroboam’s idolatry. This bold prophet journeyed from Judah to Bethel, and met Jeroboam in a tense face-to-face confrontation, and delivered a message of doom and destruction on Jeroboam’s sinful practices.** Angered by the message, Jeroboam motioned for his guard to arrest the preacher. **Immediately, Jeroboam’s hand withered. By this he knew that the prophet was sent from God and asked the young prophet to pray for his hand to be restored. The man of God entreated the Lord and Jeroboam’s hand was made whole.**

Jeroboam invited the young man to his palace, promising to reward him greatly. “**8 But the man of God answered the king, “Even if you were to give me half your possessions, I would not go with you, nor would I eat bread or drink water here. 9 For I was commanded by the word of the Lord: ‘You must not eat bread or drink water or return by the way you came.’” 1 Kings 13:8-9 (NIV).** No amount of argument would persuade the man of God and he left promptly. Why did the **man of God** not bow to the wish of the pseudo

king? Because the **man of God** recognized God as the God of the universe, the one and only authority above all other authority! No one could change the instructions this prophet had been given except God Himself!

In Bethel an old prophet heard what had happened. He rode to meet the young prophet and invited him to his house in Bethel to share a meal. The **man of God** again explained what he had been instructed by God, not to stay in the land, eat bread or drink water but to return a different way than he had come. The old prophet told the young prophet that he himself was a prophet and an angel spoke to him by the word of the Lord saying, “Bring him (the young prophet) back with you to your house, that he may eat bread and drink water.” Regarding the older prophet’s message, the biblical text simply states, **“He was lying to him.” (1 Kings 13:18)).**

As a result of this lie, the brave young prophet ate with the older prophet, trusting that what he said was true since a prophet was to speak only what God revealed. In the middle of the meal the word of the Lord came to the old prophet (1Kings 13:20), and he cried out; “You came back and ate bread and drank water in the place where he told you not to eat or drink. Therefore your body will not be buried in the tomb of your fathers.” 1 Kings 13:22 (NIV). In verse 23 it states, “When the man of God had finished eating and drinking, the prophet who had brought him back saddled his donkey for him. ²⁴As he went on his way, a lion met him on the road and killed him, and his body was thrown down on the road, with both the donkey and the lion standing beside it. ²⁵Some people who passed by saw the body thrown down there, with the lion standing beside the body, and they went and reported it in the city where the old prophet lived. **1 Kings 13:23-25 (NIV).**

God demands obedience from everyone, even those who have been faithful in many things but stumble, fall, or are *deceived* into doing something other than what God commands. The young prophet was deceived into believing a lie. He had confidence in the old prophet because he knew that a prophet was to speak only the things God revealed to him. The young man did not go against the teaching of God by design, he, in good faith, believed a lie the old prophet told him because he trusted the old prophet.

This story was recorded for a purpose! Paul records that the things that happened to the Israelites were recorded for us for a purpose – “For I do not want you to be ignorant of the fact, brothers, that our forefathers were all under the cloud and that they all passed through the sea. ² They were all baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea. ³ They all ate the same spiritual food ⁴ and drank the same spiritual drink; for they drank from the spiritual rock that accompanied them, and that rock was Christ. ⁵ Nevertheless, God was not pleased with most of them; their bodies were scattered over the desert. ⁶ **Now these things occurred as examples to keep us from setting our hearts on evil things as they did. ⁷ Do not be idolaters, as some of them were; as it is written: “The people sat down to eat and drink and got up to indulge in pagan revelry.” ⁸ We should not commit sexual immorality, as some of them did—and in one day twenty-three thousand of them died. ⁹ We should not test the Lord, as some of them did—and were killed by snakes. ¹⁰ And do not grumble, as some of them did—and were killed by the destroying angel. ¹¹ **These things happened to them as examples and were written down as warnings for us, on whom the fulfillment of the ages has come. ¹² So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don’t fall!** (1 Corinthians 10:1-12 (NIV)).**

The events of the young prophet listening to someone other than God also shows how deception and lies of those we trust can bring dire consequences upon us.

Several aspects of the story of how the young prophet was deceived are applicable for us today. The young prophet was truly dedicated to loving, serving and obeying God. He did many of the things he was told to do and it took great courage and faith to do them. He told Jeroboam, King of Israel what God told him to say. He refused to eat bread or drink water with him or

receive the riches offered. He started out on a different route than the one which he came just as God had instructed. **The young prophet made a fatal mistake in *trusting* the old prophet who lied and said God had sent an angel instructing him to bring the young prophet back to his house to eat bread and drink water. *If God wanted to change the instructions He gave the young prophet, He would have sent the angel to the young prophet and instructed him just as he had done initially.*** We can be swayed by those whom we look up to, admire, and whom we think would not lead us astray if we do not go to the word of God and see if the things we are being taught are, in fact, true. We are to guard our hearts (**Proverbs 4:23** (NIV) 23 “***Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life.***”) We are responsible for our own soul and many *deceivers* (false prophets) are wolves dressed in sheep’s clothing (**Matthew 7:15**). Adam believed his wife Eve, rather than remembering what God had commanded! Even those who are closest to us may lead us astray and we need to be so devoted to God that we, in love, correct those who tempt us to stray away from God’s word!

THE EVENTS OF ADAM AND EVE, MOSES, NADAB AND ABIHU ALL SHOW US HOW GOD LOOKS UPON DISOBEDIENCE AND SUBSTITUTION.

Remember, these things were written as warnings for us so that we will not make the same errors in judgment and faith that they made (**1 Corinthians 10:1-12**).

Not only does God want us to remember how people can be deceived, He wants us to remember the consequences of disobeying, changing, or neglecting the clear instructions He has given us in the New Covenant. The consequences are not “fear tactics,” they are the facts of what happens to those who do not have the faith to follow the Almighty God of the Universe!

We need to take the advice of the inspired apostle Paul (**1 Corinthians 2:1-13**) as he encourages the Christians at Corinth, “***Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith; test yourselves. Do you not realize that Christ Jesus is in you—unless, of course, you fail the test?***” (**2 Corinthians 13:5** (NIV)).

If you are religious, thinking you have submitted to the Lord, you too need to examine yourself to see if what you have been taught, believed, and obeyed to become a Christian is, in fact, the Lord’s teaching or the teaching of someone deceived by false teaching. If you find that you have been taught and obeyed something that is not truly from God, you need to repent, submit yourself to the Lord and His truth, laying aside any false teaching and surrender to the truth of the gospel and to the Lord of the gospel so that He can take your sins away just as he did with those who asked what they must do to be saved. In **Acts 2:37-41 (KJV)** it states, ³⁷ “Now when they heard *this*, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men *and* brethren, what shall we do? ³⁸ Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. ³⁹ For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, *even* as many as the Lord our God shall call. ⁴⁰ And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation. ⁴¹ Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added *unto them* about three thousand souls. In **Acts 2:47 (KJV)** the bible records, concerning those who had asked the question and had the faith to obey what they were told; ⁴⁷ “Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And ***the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.***”

What were some of Jesus’ last words to the people just before His ascension? ¹⁵ “He said to them, ‘***Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation. ¹⁶ Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.***” There is only one gospel and anyone who preaches anything other than that one is accursed! ¹⁶ “I am astonished that you are so quickly ***deserting the one who called you*** by the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel— ¹⁷ which is really ***no gospel at all***. Evidently some people are ***throwing you into confusion and are trying to pervert the gospel of Christ. ¹⁸ But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let him be eternally condemned!*** ¹⁹ As we have already said, so now I

say again: ***If anybody is preaching to you a gospel other than what you accepted, let him be eternally condemned!*** (Galatians 1:6-9 (NIV)).