

Lest Ye Be Deceived

Key Scripture:

"For I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy; for I betrothed you to one husband, that to Christ I might present you as a pure virgin, but I am afraid, lest as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds should be led astray from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ." 2 Cor. 11:2-3

Portion for the Journey:

The New Testament was written at a time of incredible moral decay where slavery, immorality, and infanticide were rampant, these issues were never specifically addressed in the New Testament. The early church greatly impacted the institutions of the time, but not by a direct assault. They changed the institutions from the inside out by reaching souls for Christ. The Morningstar Journal explained, "It was not because of negligence or irresponsibility; they had a higher strategy with a greater power. They did not just flail at the branches of human depravity—they put the ax to the root of the tree. ...With focused, unyielding concentration, the apostles of the early church maintained their frontal assault on sin. They drove back the spirit of death by lifting up the Prince of Life." They turned the world upside down!"

Secular historian Will Durant observed, "Caesar tried to change men by changing institutions. Christ changed institutions by changing men." As the Church, the Bride of Christ, we should be making the same impact on the world that we see in the acts of the early Church. We are in a battle with extremely high stakes. Jesus warned, "You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt has become tasteless, how can it be made salty *again*?" (Matt. 5:13) Satan fights relentlessly to keep the Church from fulfilling Christ's commission to make disciples of all nations and to be a light to the world.

A malaise of prayerlessness has overtaken the Church today. Without prayer, we can no longer impact our society or the nation as in previous generations. The church has become complacent about sharing the Gospel and standing against sin and wickedness in our society. Have we become ashamed of the Gospel? Have we lost the sense of power the Truth holds to transform lives and bring salvation? Even within the safe walls of many of our churches, the Word is not being proclaimed and truth is not being upheld against an onslaught of immorality and secularism. Will the LORD Jesus still find faith on this earth when He returns? 2 Tim. 3:5

In 2 Corinthians 11:2-3, Paul expresses a deep concern that Satan had deceived them using the same tactics he used to deceive Eve. This is a concern that is pertinent for the Church today. Have our minds have been led astray from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Jesus? The original sin in the Bible related to the acquisition of knowledge and the temptation to have knowledge apart from God. It is no wonder that Satan continues to use these same tactics as one of his front line battles to deceive and enslave our nation and the world to this day.

It is well worth our time to closely examine Satan's strategies used to deceive Eve, so that we can stand against them ourselves and also so we can pray for the Church. In Genesis 3:1-6, there are seven root lies designed separate man from God. We can see these same seven strategies at work in the current move of Satan in our Churches and in the world today:

1) vs.1 **"And he said to the woman, "Indeed has God said..."** Satan's first tactic was to change, weaken, or eliminate God's Word. In this passage we see Satan's effort to question or directly contradict God's Word. Underlying all of Satan's strategies is a direct challenge to the truth and validity of God's

Word. We see this acted out in our schools and churches today as they have removed God's Word from its place of pre-eminence. The truth of God's word is contradicted through teaching related to evolution, homosexuality, marriage and family. Our nation has embraced the belief that there is NO TRUTH and NO ABSOLUTES. All other deceptions first arise in the absence or distortion of God's truth. Our current system encourages everyone to develop their own personal truths or accommodate new pagan absolutes such as "everything is sacred or all things are interconnected..." Critical thinking skills as taught in the public schools carry with it the question "Indeed, has God said...?" to the extent that children are encouraged to ridicule, reject and replace old values, to criticize and challenge traditional beliefs, values, and authorities. That is why the Belt of Truth is the first and most vital piece of the Christian's armor, all other pieces attach to this.

2) **"Ye shall not surely die."** This is the declaration that we are not accountable to God and will not be held responsible for actions taken in direct disobedience to His ways. This was the attitude of Pharaoh, who said in Exodus 5:2 "Who is the LORD, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know not the LORD, neither will I let Israel go." This attitude that has no fear of the Lord and does not accept His penalty for our disobedience to Him and His ways. Imbedded in Satan's statement, "you shall surely not die." is the direct elimination of the true depravity of sin and the consequences of sin in our lives. Many churches no longer want to make their members uncomfortable by talking about sin. Our sins are referred to as 'mistakes' and forgiveness is offered without repentance. Prominent pastors in the Church today deny the existence of hell.

3) **"Your eyes shall be opened."** Satan makes Eve a promise of enlightenment, knowledge and wisdom. Instead, Adam and Eve received the exact opposite, their eyes were not opened to Truth, but blinded by deception. At whatever point we desire to reject God's Truth, we open ourselves to deception or deluding influences. 2 Thes. 2 speaks of the age of apostasy (which is the deliberate turning away from revealed truth verses 10-12 "...and with all the deception of wickedness for those who perish, because they did not receive a love of the truth so as to be saved. And for this reason God will send upon them a deluding influence so that they might believe what is false, in order that they all may be judged who did not believe the truth, but took pleasure in wickedness." Many Christians are not only no longer obeying the Word, they are not even taught what the Word says and therefore they have little defense against what the Bible has so clearly warned about. "...we grope like those who have no eyes; we stumble at noon as in the twilight...truth is lacking." "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children." Isaiah 59:10; Hosea 4:6 (KJV)

4) **"You shall become gods."** The essence of the false religion of humanism is that all men are gods. Humanism is the religion of man, a supreme faith in our own ability to both rearrange the world of nature and engineer our own future in any way we see fit. Humanism teaches that man is in complete control of his own destiny. As Humanism took root in America, God was removed from government, from schools and the market place. It is time to take an inventory and ask ourselves, "How is that working out for us?" America now ranks below many third world nations in test scores, violence and murder has entered our schoolrooms and children are graduating ill-prepared for survival in a world that is on the brink of chaos.

Romans 1:22, 25 states "professing to be wise, they became fools... who exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshipped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. In the 5th century B.C., during the Golden Age of Greece, learned men taught that reason and philosophy should take the place of superstition and the worship of the old gods. There is an ingrained belief in the humanistic lie that man and society is evolving into a better, more competent order. Traditional

methods and goals are deemed no longer appropriate because society has outgrown them and moved beyond them. There is a determined effort to break down historic ways of thinking. The education system actively opposes Christian values and beliefs. This can be seen in the enemy's strategies to undermine the very definition of family and Biblical principles of child rearing and government. The National Education Association views Christianity as an outmoded superstitious belief that needs to be rooted out of the children of this generation. We are asked to question all of our basic assumptions, all of the fundamental ways of looking at the world. Once all of the moorings are destroyed a feeling of hopelessness, heaviness and despair pervades.

5) **"Good for food"** There is a God-given spiritual hunger that is placed in the heart of each person. Satan's strategy was to tempt Eve to partake of that which had been forbidden by God even though she had an abundance from God. Many Americans have no church background, or have attended a church where their spiritual needs are not met. When the Bible and Christianity is ruled out as a source of nutrition, man will seek nourishment elsewhere. Prov. 27:7 "A sated man loathes honey, but to a famished man any bitter thing is sweet. Satan offers food for the spirit, through false religions, sensual, mystical and occult sources that appear to meet that need.

6) **"That it was pleasant to the eyes."** The lie is introduced that we are to live to please the flesh--if we want it, we should have it. God's laws are removed so that man is free to pursue whatever he or she wants. The world system of today stands against almost any attempt to "suppress" the lusts of the flesh, but instead encourages exploration of their desires. Sex, suicide and drug education often has the effect of causing unthinkable acts to become alluring possibilities. The entertainment industry constantly challenges the jaded conscience of their subjects to push the edges of what is accepted deeper levels of depravity.

This same attitude of heart caused the downfall of Samson. "And Samson went down to Timnath, and saw a woman in Timnath of the daughters of the Philistines. And he came up, and told his father and his mother, and said, I have seen a woman in Timnath of the daughters of the Philistines: now therefore get her for me to wife. Then his father and his mother said unto him, *Is there never a woman among the daughters of thy brethren, or among all my people, that thou goest to take a wife of the uncircumcised Philistines?* And Samson said unto his father, *Get her for me; for she pleaseth me well.*" Judges 14:1-3

"Love not the world, neither the things *that are* in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that *is* in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever." 1 John 2:15-17 (KJV)

7) **"knowing good and evil"** and that it was **"desired to make one wise."** It is an underlying philosophy of the world system that we can have knowledge and understanding apart from God. The whole basis of the occult is actually seeking the wisdom and power of the spirit realm but bypassing God and His ways. This addresses the area of human intelligence and human reason. Prov. 3:7 warns: "Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the LORD, and depart from evil." Isa 5:21 Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight! God restores the lost wisdom man had before the fall through His Word. Pray for the preaching and teaching of God's Word, by which man may learn to truly discern between good and evil. (1 Cor. 3:2; Heb. 5:12-14)

Eve succumbed to these lies of the devil as true and did not question his grounds for making these declarations. She fell into sin and led her husband to follow her. These same strategies are bringing this nation and the Church into deception today. As Eve passively accepted Satan's allegations, believers passively accept new ideas and new teachings without testing against the Word of God.

Most people in the United States do not have a solid foundation in the Truth by which they can evaluate new information and determine its validity. Olga Marshall noted in her article on secular humanism that humanism flourished in times when the common people are ignorant of the Scriptures. She states that presently "There is an absence of sound Scriptural teaching today in the Church and in school. Discussion and the mutual exchange of ideas often take the place of ordered Bible teaching." Many churches have sought to make their services so friendly to newcomers that they no longer teach the Bible or speak of sin. The outcome is that we as a people are being led away from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Jesus.

We have entered an era in this nation where our country is no longer considered to be a Christian nation. Churches are no longer defined by prayer and ministry of the Word. This incredible vacuum in our nation is being filled with a rise in false religions, secular humanism and atheism. It is time for the Church to rise up and pray for the Truth to be lifted up and for hearts to hunger to know the One True God. We need to pray for the strongholds that have been erected against the knowledge of God to be destroyed. We need to pray that the blinders would be removed from the eyes of the unbelieving as God sends His light and Truth to bring revival!

Digging Deeper in the Word:

*"For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh:
(For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal,
but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;)
Casting down imaginations, and every high thing
that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God,
and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ..."*
2 Cor. 10:3-5 (KJV)

Even though Satan is an adversary who has been busily at work, the Word makes it clear that "Greater is He that is within us, than he that is in the world." The LORD has given us weapons that are mighty to the destruction of the lies the enemy has used to deceive and destroy God's children. It is time for believers to pray in faith for revival.

"Scripture References for Meditation and Proclamation" This tool provides prayer responses for the strategies Satan has used to deceive this nation. It includes scriptures to pray for restoration of God's Truth and revive the hearts of His people to the simplicity and purity of devotion to Jesus. God's Word is powerful and active and sharper than a two-edged sword. When we pray and proclaim His Word, He promises it does not return void, but will accomplish the purpose for which it has been sent. Read and meditate on the verses provided. The Lord may lead you to other verses that are also appropriate. Pray specifically for those in your life, your church, schools, community, and nation. Ask the Lord to enlarge your heart and give you faith to believe He is able to tear down these lies and work through the Church to again turn this world upside down!!

What is God speaking to your heart?

Respond to the LORD!