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What Is Deception?

Numbers 23:16-20 (NKJV)

¹⁶Then the Lord met Balaam, and *put a word in his mouth*, and said, "Go back to Balak, and thus you shall speak."

¹⁷So he came to him, and there he was, standing by his burnt offering, and the princes of Moab were with him. And Balak said to him, "What has the Lord spoken?"

¹⁸Then he took up his oracle and said: "Rise up, Balak, and hear! Listen to me, son of Zippor!

¹⁹"*God is not a man, that He should lie, Nor a son of man, that He should repent. Has He said, and will He not do? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good?*

²⁰Behold, I have received a command to bless; *He has blessed, and I cannot reverse it.*

The enemy has always found ways to keep God's people from living at the level God wants them to live. The main way the enemy accomplishes this is by confusing their minds and making them believe something that is not true.

2 Corinthians 11:3-4 (NKJV)

³But I fear, lest somehow, as *the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.*

⁴For if he who comes preaches another Jesus whom we have not preached, or if you receive a different spirit which you have not received, or a different gospel which you have not accepted—you may well put up with it!



What is deception? It's similar to lying, but it's a little different though for a reason. *Deception is when someone convinces or influences you to believe something that is not true.* For example, a magician or an illusionist will try to convince you that he really made a rabbit appear out of a hat, but we all know that is not true. It's an illusion. In the spiritual realm, demons have an advantage over us in influencing us because they live in a world invisible to our physical eyes. So, they whisper to us about how things work in the

spiritual realm and trick us into believing and living by principles that are not true.

Verse 3 tells us that "the serpent deceived Eve *by his cunning.*" He didn't just come to Eve and spontaneously tell her what came in his mind. The devil has thought about these things beforehand and planned them.

Christ is simple. God's promises are true. But sometimes they seem too simple to believe. We think they are too good to be true. For those of us who have been in Christ for some time, it is harder for someone to deceive us about the major doctrines of Christianity such as that Christ did not come in the flesh, or that Christ is not really the son of God, or that Jesus wasn't really God but only a man, or that God is actually one person who wears three hats, manifesting in three different ways (Modalism - one of the heresies of the trinity). But there are other doctrines about which we may not know as much, or are more subtle, and in which we may be deceived as Eve was.

Revelation 12:7-9 (NKJV)

⁷And war broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels fought with *the dragon (Who is the dragon?);* and the dragon and his angels fought,

⁸but they did not prevail, nor was a *place found for them in heaven any longer. (That means they were in heaven before)*

⁹So the great dragon was cast out, *that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world;* he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. *(Is this important?)*

Satan's main goal is to deceive you, that is, to make you believe something that is not true and not believe what is true. Verse 9 tells us that Satan was cast down to earth. Is this important? I don't know about you, but I live on earth still, and he is here with us, trying to deceive us

all the time.

1 Timothy 4:1 (NKJV)

¹Now the Spirit expressly says that *in latter times some will depart from the faith (that doesn't mean loss of salvation, but unbelief), giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons.*

Since the book of Timothy was written, I believe that we, more than any other generation, have been living in the last times. Do you know what a doctrine is? A doctrine is a teaching about a certain subject. Doctrines of demons mean teachings of demons.

One of the most effective tools of demons is to get teachers or preachers within Christian churches to teach people the doctrines of demons. Isn't that a huge victory for the devil to get preachers to bring demonic teachings, however small they may be? Of course, if these teachers knew that those were demonic doctrines, they would never preach them. But if they do not know and have been deceived, then they will teach those teachings in the church and in this way they help the devil in his works without realizing it.

The First Trick: Did God Indeed Say?

Genesis 3:1-6 (NKJV)

¹Now 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'?*"

²And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat the fruit of the trees of the garden;

³but 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.' "

⁴Then the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die.

⁵For 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."

⁶So 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.

Sin, death, insecurity, and shame entered the world when Adam and Eve ate from the forbidden tree. Now let's see what are the oldest deception tricks of the devil. The first thing the devil says to the woman is this: Did God really say that? *The first thing the devil tries to do is to get people to question what God has said in His Word.* He also uses phrases like: Is this exactly what He intended to say? If you doubt what God said or meant, then you can no longer stand in faith, you cannot have faith in that thing that was said.

Did Jesus ever say, "Hey, you know what Moses was really thinking when he wrote this and that? How do you know what he meant?" No, Jesus did not do that. The Bible is simple to understand because we have the Holy Spirit teaching us. Yes, it is true that we must study it as best we can, go to Bible schools if we can, especially those who are in the ministry of preaching and teaching others. It is very beneficial to

learn Greek and Hebrew if we can. But the Bible is simple because the Holy Spirit is the One who opens our eyes.

The Second Trick: What God Said Will Not Come To Pass

Let's notice how the devil puts the problem: "Did God say *you must not eat from every tree* in the garden?" Of course God said no such thing. God said *they could eat from all the trees* in the garden except one. But the devil comes and says that God told them *not to eat from all the trees*. But Eve also gave the wrong answer. She added that God would have told them not to even touch the fruit, but He actually only commanded them not to eat of it. But even if she didn't say exactly how she should, if Eve had listened to herself not even to touch the fruit, it would have still been good.

The second trick of the devil is: "You will not die by any means." The woman has just told him that she will die if she eats and the devil tells her: "No, you will not die." The second trick the devil uses is the following: "*What God said or what the Word says will not actually happen because God knows something else. It is not really like that.*"

Notice the devil's reasoning: "You will not die because God knows." The number two trick of the devil is to get you to put your faith not in what God has said, but in what God knows. "God knows something more than He said." How many of us know that God really knows things that He has not written in His Word? Does God know where you live? Can you find this in the Word? No, of course, unless the street you live on is something like "200 Ezekiel street..."

The devil likes to take advantage of your awareness that you may not know all that God has said or knows. He likes to play with it to the max. "Well, I don't really know everything that God knows, God is a big God. He alone knows all things." It sounds humble, but it's not.

Genesis 3:4-5 (NKJV)

⁴Then the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die.

⁵For 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."

Do you agree with me that God has not called us to walk and live by believing what God knows, but by believing what God has said? There is a significant difference here and we need to understand the difference because this is a teaching of demons that is very commonly found in Christian churches. And we can see exactly where it came from. It's one of the enemy's oldest tricks. *You don't know what God knows except what God has said He knows in His Word.* This is the only way you can know for sure what God knows.

It is not possible to walk by faith in what God knows, and you do not know that He knows. You can only have faith in something that you know for sure that God knows. And all you know about what God knows is what He said in His Word. And this teaching with "God knows" is used very often in churches and especially at funerals when someone has died: "We don't know why this person died. She shouldn't have died, it was too early to die, she was a good person, *but God knows better* why He killed her." Do you see it? We are not talking here about what He said, but about what He knows that we don't know. You know what I just said to everyone with this statement that "God knows?" "Well, you can't always rely on what God said, because God knows other things too. And only God knows why."

Have you ever heard someone say, "I believe there is a reason for everything that happens in life"? This statement seems very innocent, and it is really so: there is a reason for everything. But what this statement implies about God is that there is a specific reason why God has not kept His promise in a specific situation in our lives. It also means that God has made the decision to go around and move away from what He said. And this is not true. This is a doctrine of devils. *If we can't rely on what God has said, then what do we have? What is there left for us? We have nothing to put our faith in.* We live a life of only doubt and suspicion. How do you know if you are saved? Only through one way. The Bible says in Romans 10:9-10 when and how you know you are saved. "But is this really what the Bible wants to say? But what does the word 'saved' mean?"

So, the second trick of the devil is: "Yes, I know God said this, but you know how it is, God knows better. And God knows what will happen in the future. Maybe if He heals us this time, who knows maybe in the future we will walk in pride. Maybe He realized that it wouldn't be so good to heal us this time." Yes, it is true that God is sovereign and omniscient. But He did not become sovereign and omniscient after He wrote the Word. He was sovereign and omniscient when He wrote the Word as well, and He did not forget about your specific situation in the future. In all God's foreknowledge and wisdom, He gave us these promises because He knew He could and would keep them. All God's promises are YES and AMEN (2 Corinthians 1:20).

Numbers 23:16-20 (NKJV)

¹⁶Then the Lord met Balaam, and *put a word in his mouth*, and said, "Go back to Balak, and thus you shall speak."

¹⁷So he came to him, and there he was, standing by his burnt offering, and the princes of Moab were with him. And Balak said to him, "What has the Lord spoken?"

¹⁸Then he took up his oracle and said: "Rise up, Balak, and hear! Listen to me, son of Zippor!"

¹⁹"*God is not a man, that He should lie, Nor a son of man, that He should repent. Has He said, and will He not do? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good?*"

²⁰Behold, I have received a command to bless; He has blessed, and I cannot reverse it.

Notice that the passage does not say anything about what God knows, but about what He said. "*Not everything that God has said will come to pass, because He knows...*" it is Satan's oldest trick in the Bible. Eve looked at what she saw, acted on what she believed God knew, and died immediately. Can you imagine Adam saying, as he was thrown out of the garden, "Well, I don't understand why we're being thrown out. I thought God said we were supposed to live in the garden. But there must be a reason. I know God is faithful and He has a reason for it. He knows better."? Of course, He has a reason. The reason is you, Adam! You acted on what God knows instead of what God said.

Do you know what Eve should have said when the serpent told her that God knows? She should have said, "Well, I don't know what God knows and I don't really care, but He told me not to eat from this tree or I would die." Probably the snake would have answered back: "Yes, but God in His sovereign knowledge, He knows...". To which Eve could say: "Yes, you might be right, I'm not saying otherwise, but God told me not to eat. Period!"

How Did Jesus, the Last Adam, Answer?

1 Corinthians 15:45 (NKJV)

⁴⁵And so it is written, "*The first man Adam became a living being.*" *The last Adam became a life-giving spirit.*

The last Adam, Jesus, came to do what the first Adam failed to do, which was to go through temptations and win. The first Adam sinned and went against what God said. Jesus came and went through the same kind of temptations, but He didn't rely on what God knew; he kept to what God said.

Matthew 4:1-11 (NKJV)

¹Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.

²And when He had fasted forty days and forty nights, afterward He was hungry.

³Now when the tempter came to Him, he said, "*If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread.*"

⁴But He answered and said, "*It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.'*"

⁵Then the devil took Him up into the holy city, set Him on the pinnacle of the temple,

⁶and said to Him, "*If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down. For it is written: 'He shall give His angels charge over you,' and, 'In their hands they shall bear you up, Lest you dash your foot against a stone.'*"

⁷Jesus said to him, "*It is written again, 'You shall not tempt the Lord your God.'*"

⁸Again, the devil took Him up on an exceedingly high mountain, and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory.

⁹And he said to Him, "*All these things I will give You if You will fall down and worship me.*"

¹⁰Then Jesus said to him, "*Away with you, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only you shall serve.'*"

¹¹Then the devil left Him, and behold, angels came and ministered to Him.

Please notice in Verse 3 the first thing the devil comes up with: "*If you are the Son of God, then do this. Are you really the Son of God?*"

Jesus and his parents knew very well that He was the son of God since He was 12 years old when He said He was to be in His Father's house and He did not mean the carpenter's house. He already knew that the Old Testament Scriptures spoke of Him. The magi, the shepherds, and the angels who appeared to the shepherds likewise attested to the same thing. Then at the water baptism, God Himself publicly testified from the cloud that Jesus was His beloved son. You mean Satan didn't know He was the son of God? Yes, of course he knew, otherwise he would not have come with such a temptation.

Isn't it interesting that the devil uses food as the first temptation for Jesus as well? If we have an excessive and unhealthy appetite for food, that is a weak point that usually opens the door to other sinful appetites. And we can work on reducing our appetite through fasting. God gave us the antidote. I don't believe that God urges us to fast regularly for nothing, and Jesus began His ministry through fasting. If we win

the battle there with our body, it will show in other areas as well. Regular fasting must become an integral part of the normal life of the believer as well as prayer, worship, and reading the Word.

What did Jesus first answer to Satan? *IT'S WRITTEN!!!* This is what God said: Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God. In Verse 6, the devil comes again with the same card: "If you are the Son of God..." What does Jesus answer? *IT'S WRITTEN!!!*

Do you know that Jesus was the Word made flesh and everything He said was to be red-lettered in the Bible? And yet in that circumstance He quoted exactly what God had already said and was already written. He did not come up with something new, but stuck to what was already written.

Jesus showed us the difference between Adam's failure and His success. The Sword of the Spirit is the spoken Word of God. You do not have a sword of the knowledge of God, but of the Word. When you jump outside of what God has said you will always be confused. Look at Verse 4 what Jesus answered that man will live by every word that comes from the mouth of God, *not from the mind of God.*

When the enemy comes to you and whispers:

- "Did God really say that you are forgiven of all sins, including future ones? Do you think you are really forgiven? Come on, be serious, you already know yourself, I don't think I need to remind you. You blew it this time as well really bad. Do you really feel like you're still forgiven?"

Do you know what you should answer?

- "Well, God said there is no more condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus and if I have confessed my sins, He is faithful and just and has forgiven me of all my sins."

- "Do you really think this is what God meant by those verses? You mean you want to take them literally? There must be some figures of speech there, some Greek words that completely change the meaning. How do you know that's what he meant?"

- "From the Word!"

- "Yes, but God knows you and knows that you have already asked for forgiveness for this sin again and again and you know, there is a limit to God as well. When it gets to that point, even He says it's enough."

- "I don't know what you are saying there, but I know that the Word says I am forgiven."

- "Will God help you in the financial area? As for finances, God knows that you are not very disciplined with your money and that you spend too much."

- "All I know is that God will supply all my need according to His riches in glory (Philippians 4:19)."

- "Yes, but God knows that if he gets you out of debt and blesses you, you will get there again, you will even do other stupid things or you will be proud."

- "I don't know what God knows, but I know this: my God will provide..."

- "What if God heals you? Now you are still excited about the Lord, but remember how you are, look at that bad attitude you had. God knows you're going to walk in unforgiveness, I mean, look at you a bit. God knows that if he heals you, you will go back to your sins."
- "Well, I don't know what God knows, but I know that by his wounds I was healed."
- "Yes? Then how do you explain why this person was not healed?"
- "I don't know why that person wasn't healed, but I know that God is always faithful to His Word."

The Word Settled in Heaven

Psalm 119:89-90 (NKJV)

⁸⁹Forever, O Lord, Your word *is settled in heaven. (unchanged, decided, it stands firm)*

⁹⁰Your *faithfulness* endures to all generations; You established the earth, and it abides.

Let's notice what follows immediately in Verse 90: Your faithfulness, Your fidelity, Lord, to the Word. *God's faithfulness is closely related to God's Word.* You can't be faithful to something if you haven't promised to do something. You can only be faithful in connection with a promise, with a commitment to do something. Verse 89 says that forever, God's Word is established and determined in heaven.

- "You mean it's still valid today even if it was said a long time ago?"
- "Yes, it is still valid today."

Heaven and earth will pass away, but the Word of God will NEVER pass away (Mark 13:31). What does decided or settled mean? It means it is no longer negotiable. It cannot be contested or cancelled. No discussion! It is sealed and signed! Where? In heaven. Let's see where His Word is not settled: on the earth and in our hearts. Here it is constantly discussed, argued, and questioned. Here on earth, we must establish the Word, impose it on the surrounding material reality. In heaven where God lives, His Word is not discussed. Angels do not question the Word. They don't consider otherwise. There is no theological argument.

The more we argue against the Word, the more evidence against the Word accumulates in our lives like a giant pile. New evidence is actually being fabricated. And we come to believe with all our hearts that we are right, but we are wrong. We must change the direction, begin to believe the Word, and increase the pile of evidence in favor of the Word's manifestation.

Proverbs 4:18 (NKJV)

¹⁸But the path of the just is like the shining sun, That shines *ever brighter* unto the perfect day.

We must say: "I refuse to argue with the Word of God. I will dispute my experience, my unanswered prayer, my misunderstanding or lack of understanding, but I refuse to debate the Word." For example, when there is a discrepancy between our budget calculations and what is in

the bank, isn't it very rarely, if ever, that the bank is wrong? Almost automatically we first think that there must be something wrong with our calculations and not with the bank. In the same way, whenever something from the Word doesn't work for us, we must start from the premise that God is faithful and that something is wrong with us, that is, there is still something to adjust to our understanding and knowledge. I am not referring to our sins or our morality. Another important example in this context is the fact that there are many apparent discrepancies between the Old and New Testaments. And we must interpret the Old Testament in the light of the New Testament, that is, the latest revelation gives meaning and understanding or informs the older revelations. Unfortunately, most of the time we interpret the New Testament in the light of the Old Testament, that is, we see God and His nature through the lens of the harsh Law of Moses and not through the life full of love and sacrifice of Jesus, Who was the exact imprint of the Father.

You hear some say, "Yes, God didn't heal me or get me out of a situation, but now I understand why He didn't." And they begin to guess and describe a whole scenario as if God gave them a new chapter of the Bible in relation to their experience. And of course, this gives us some emotional and psychological comfort and a relief from the pressure of giving ourselves and others an explanation as to why the Word was not fulfilled. But what this also does is that it explains a situation by a guess or an assumption that is outside of the Word. And the next time we have to fight in faith for our life or our family in a financial, marriage, children, or ministry situation, we will again start developing all kinds of assumptions because we didn't hold on from the beginning to what God said. But God is decided in heaven. He said what He had to say and it remains so.

Trying to reconcile our life and experience with what the Word says is a difficult and uncomfortable process. But we have to make a decision. It may be better to not understand everything and admit that we don't, than to act like we do and thus change what God has said, and to not see God's promises fulfilled in our lives. If you think that the Word must conform to your current life, or else it is not true, then you will be disappointed, because it is exactly the opposite: your life must conform to what the Word says. Changing the direction of our lives according to what is written in the Word takes time. It doesn't happen overnight. It's a marathon, not a spring. It's like a ship that we steer from the helm, but it takes time for the ship to turn, and we don't even notice very well when it does. But it surely does, if we change the direction of the rudder and keep it changed long enough. This mechanism is best observed when you are on a huge cruise ship. That rudder of the ship of our life is our everyday speech.

James 3:4-6 (NKJV)

⁴Look also at ships: although they are so large and are driven by fierce winds, they are turned by a very small rudder wherever the pilot desires.

⁵Even so the tongue is a little member and boasts great things. See how great a forest a little fire kindles!

⁶And *the tongue is a fire*, a world of iniquity. The tongue is so set among our members that it defiles the whole body, and *sets on fire the course of nature (or the course of existence); and it is set on fire by hell.*

The tongue or the natural fleshly speech of a person with or without Christ is a fire from hell that influences the future events of her life and existence. With our language we project the future and direction of our lives. It is no coincidence that the first thing God did when He sent the Holy Spirit at Pentecost was to send another fire from heaven to take control of our tongue and cancel the fire of hell and the direction of death. This is speaking in tongues which if practiced regularly, unconsciously causes us to live in the perfect will of God in all aspects of

our lives. It leads us in the direction of blessing, success, and victory. Speaking in tongues is a powerful way we design our lives and influence our destiny in a divine way. By speaking in tongues, we will unconsciously bypass the evil events that befall all people and enter the doors of blessing that others do not see.

Proverbs 15:4 (KJV 1900)

⁴A wholesome tongue is *a tree of life*: But *perverseness* therein is *a breach in the spirit*.

When we speak according to God's Word that He spoke over our situations or when we speak in tongues, then we are actually feeding ourselves from the tree of life that was in the Garden of Eden, and we have life. This means a healthy wholesome tongue. But speaking contrary to the Word, that is, natural speaking based on the five senses, or a prolonged lack of speaking in tongues, creates a breach in the spirit, that is, in the spiritual world, regarding our life and the events that happen in our personal world. Our personal world is the set of situations, people, and events that we personally encounter every day. When we place ourselves outside God's Word by our regular speaking contrary to the Word, we are unprotected and experience the same bad things that godless people experience: the same sicknesses, failures, unexpected accidents, poverty, and ultimately premature death at times. But it doesn't have to be like that with us, those in Christ, and the decision to make a change belongs to us, not to God.