

אַת־פִּי יְהוָה לֹא שִׁאֵלֹי?

Ask not counsel at the mouth of the Lord?

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Introduction

I believe deception is at its greatest peak from since the beginning of creation. Not only is deception at its peak; it is increasing in cleverness and craftiness. We can see this by the many modes of operation HaSatan is using to destroy the family and separate relationships. I believe the purpose is (1) to destroy something God has designed and (2) to minimize each believer's effectiveness in the world today. While reading through sefer yehoshua (book of Joshua) I was reminded of the deception in this world and the importance of seeking the Lord's counsel in all matters of life. The deception begins with what worldview we hold with respect to how we are to live our lives (including our relationship with the Lord). Everyone has a worldview but sadly there is a rift (a great divide) forming within the gentile church today. The rift deals with what it means to be a believer in Yeshua (Jesus) concerning where ones view of life comes from (i) a biblical worldview/perspective or (ii) a secular worldview/perspective. The bible has become something of ridicule amongst mainstream cultural does and don'ts. This is because the bible has lost its influence in our culture by first losing its influence amongst believers in the gentile church. Something that is central to a truly biblical worldview is having an understanding of the major events of the past and the future which is found in the history of the Bible. Understanding the implications of these biblical events "enables" believers to view the world from a biblical perspective helping to fight off the various deceptions so rampant in this world today, therefore, let's look at the example God gives us in the book of Joshua concerning deception.

Israel has entered into the Promised Land, a land that is full of the sin of the peoples who currently possess the land. Israel has journeyed from a spiritual world, where their every need was provided for by God (i.e. water, manna, meat, etc) and now entering into a material world which leads itself to the desire for material things. The miracle of the manna was given in order to remind us that the material world is not our source of life. Instead, God is our source of life. However, quickly some people become focused upon the material things as is what happened with the children of Israel taking of the spoils of war of the accursed thing bringing a curse upon Israel (see Joshua chapter 7). Some of the congregation of Israel sinned, causing a loss of victory in war with the king of Ai. The sin was found out, and the problem having been solved (the accursed thing was removed), God commanded Joshua to make war against King Ai and thus was victorious. (See Joshua Chapter 8)

This brings us to Chapter 9 of the book of Joshua. The children of Israel were deceived by the inhabitants of Gibeon into making a covenant with them so that they would not be destroyed. The interesting point which we can see from this section of scripture is how the deceivers chose to dress themselves in old clothing, and bring with them moldy bread and wine in old wineskins. (see Joshua 9:1-8). These people craftily deceived the children of Israel by changing their appearance claiming to be from a far place and not their neighbors. Joshua and the princes of Israel chose to make a covenant with the inhabitants of Gibeon in the name of the Lord. By forsaking the counsel of the Lord, they made a bad decision and later on found out these people were from Gibeon, their neighbors.

Joshua

9:9 And they said unto him, From a very far country thy servants are come because of the name of the LORD thy God: for we have heard the fame of him, and all that he did in Egypt, 9:10 And all that he did to the two kings of the Amorites, that were beyond Jordan, to Sihon king of Heshbon, and to Og king of Bashan, which was at Ashtaroth. 9:11 Wherefore our elders and all the inhabitants of our country spake to us, saying, Take victuals with you for the journey, and go to meet them, and say unto them, We are your servants: therefore now make ye a league with us. 9:12 This our bread we took hot for our provision out of our houses on the day we came forth to go unto you; but now, behold, it is dry, and it is mouldy: 9:13 And these bottles of wine, which we filled, were new; and, behold, they be rent: and these our garments and our shoes are become old by reason of the very long journey. 9:14 And the men took of their victuals, **and asked not counsel at the mouth of the LORD.** 9:15 And Joshua made peace with them, and made a league with them, to let them live: and the princes of the congregation sware unto them. 9:16 And it came to pass at the end of three days after they had made a league with them, that they heard that they were their neighbours, and that they dwelt among them. 9:17 And the children of Israel journeyed, and came unto their cities on the third day. Now their cities were Gibeon, and Chephirah, and Beeroth, and Kirjathjearim. 9:18 And the children of Israel smote them not, because the princes of the congregation had sworn unto them by the LORD God of Israel. And all the congregation murmured against the princes. 9:19 But all the princes said unto all the congregation, We have sworn unto them by the LORD God of Israel: now therefore we may not touch them. (KJV)

יהושע

9:9 ויאמרו אליו מארץ רחוקה מאד באו עבדיך לשם יהוה אל ה' כי שמענו שמעו ואת כל אשר עשה במצרים: ואת כל אשר עשה לשני מלכי האמורי אשר בעבר הירדן לסיחון מלך חשבון וילע וגמלך הבשן אשר בעשתרות: ויאמרו אלינו זקנינו וכלי שבי ארצנו לאמר קחו בידכם צידה לדרכך ולכו לקראתם ואליהם עבדיכם ונחנו נעשה פרותינו ברית: זה לחמנו חם הצטידנו אתו מבתינו ביום צאתנו ללכת אליכם ונעשה הנה יבש והיה נקד ים: ואלה נאד ותהיו אשר מלאנו חרשים והנה התבקעו ואלה שלמ ותינו ונעלינו בלו מרב הדרכך מאד: ויקחו האנשים מצידם ואת פי יהוה לא שאלו: ונעש להם יהושע שלום ויכרת להם ברית לחייתם וישבעו להם נשיאי העדה: ויהי מקצה שלשת ימים אחרי אשר כרתו להם ברית וישמעו פי קרובים הם אליו ובקרבו הם יושבו ים: ויסעו בני ישראל ויבאו אל עריהם ביום השלישי ועריהם גבעון והכפירה ובאר ותוקרת יער ים: וכל אהפום בני ישראל כישבעו להם נשיאי העדה ביהוה אל ה' ישראל וילנו כל העדה עליה נשיאי ים: ויאמרו כל הנשיאים אל כל העדה אנחנו נשבענו להם ביהוה אל ה' ישראל ונעשה לא נוכל לגע בם:

Looks can be deceiving! Always take counsel in the Lord by searching the scriptures!

Discussion

The seeds of deception are always at work in this world. God has given us example after example in the Bible concerning the dangers of this world and deception. The present state of twentieth and twenty first century “religious thought” demonstrates this point, by the increase in the thinking that certain apostate practices are acceptable. This is partly due to the apostasy that is occurring in the church today. Most believers today

no longer govern their lives by the biblical standard which was set forth by God. The apostle Paul warned us in 2 Corinthians:

2 Corinthians

11:3 But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.

11:4 For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or if ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with him. (KJV)

This world is very subtle in its modes of deception shown by the example given us back in the days of Joshua. The same subtlety occurs today as well. The scriptures demonstrate to us these things which are most important for our spiritual wellbeing. Few in this world recognize the implication of the unmitigated deception that is occurring today. The gentile church has not seen the necessity to distance themselves from groups that are fundamentally and diametrically opposed to sound biblical principles. The primary reason for this is because the bible has lost its influence amongst believers in the gentile church and the teaching that the Tanach (Old Testament) is no longer valid for us today.

A time has now come where we need a more systematic approach to identifying practices that are more than simply differences in biblical thought or interpretation but that are an entirely other gospel, another spirit, and another Yeshua. We need to begin to really examine ideas, modes of thought, the decisions we make, and all of life in light of the written Word of God. By not examining our lives in light of the written Word of God it becomes easy for us to fall into deception through false doctrine. The classic examples of deception come from what I call “the lazy mans bible school” by taking ones beliefs through television and movies. Most Christians today know so little about the bible, it actually is a problem where it becomes possible to accept and receive doctrine from such unbiblical sources as the da vinci code, End of days, and other movies relating to Satan, the occult, and the Bible. Our primary source for truth is found in the Word of God, not in the television. By relying upon the television to speak to us God’s truth, we are relying upon men to correctly hermeneutically disseminate the truth of scripture to us rather than reading the bible for ourselves allowing God’s holy spirit to do what it was meant to do. Once the bible becomes less of an influence in our lives, other occult activities become acceptable, such as reading ones horoscope, numerology, or some other form of predicting the future through divination or spirit mediums. These things are all Luciferian in origin coming from the spirits of antiquity or fallen angels masquerading as beings of light such as the spirit guides in the new age movement. Just as what happened in Chapter 7 and 8 of Joshua, by playing around with the occult, one brings the accursed thing into their heart, mind and soul, bringing with it damaging results in the life of a believer.

There is a clear and present danger in straying into enemy territory! Even as believers, if we choose to cross enemy lines, this will result in coming under bondage having willfully disobeyed God. Where in scripture does it say we can play with the accursed thing and get away with it? In the book of Joshua, the accursed thing brought immediate failure; the lack of success in battle demonstrated the Lord’s judgment of sin.

Because of God's grace today in Yeshua don't take this as God being slack concerning the disobedience in our lives.

The real battleground is in the heart and in our imagination; this is why God told us to write his words upon our hearts. To begin identifying practices which lead to failure into sin, look first at your heart and imagination. Identifying practices which lead to sin calls for personal reflection upon our spiritual state with respect to the biblical standard. I have talked with a lot of people on this topic, especially online. Most people I have talked to do not believe what we think (imagination) is a problem, as long as we do not act upon our lusts and passions.

Judaism, for example, makes a clear distinction between the imagination and action. In Rambam's discussion on the holy ones this is clearly demonstrated:

וקדושים – And Holy Ones. The term may refer to the angels (lyun Tefillah) or, as most Jewish commentators agree, to Israel (Abudraham). As Rambam defines it (referring to Leviticus 18:1-3), human holiness is measured by how well a person controls his permissible desires. Someone who seeks ways to indulge his lusts and passions without directly violating the law is described as a נבל ברשות התורה (degenerate with the Torah's permission).

According to the Jewish Sage, a person has the ability to think lustful thoughts, as long as he or she does not act upon them, it is ok. This is a serious problem, because God is concerned not only with our actions, but also with our thought life. Everyone who is spiritually in tune with the Lord struggles with this problem of their thought life. This was also a problem when Yeshua walked this earth. Therefore, it is no surprise Yeshua taught halachah (The Way) on the concept of our thought life in the book of Matthew:

Matthew

5:28 But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart. (KJV)

Yeshua is demonstrating the reality of sin, that it is indeed conceived in the heart, in our imagination. This is why God is concerned with the heart of man. For example, there are many instances in the Torah which demonstrated God's concern with our heart:

Genesis

6:5 And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. (KJV)

Exodus

25:2 Speak unto the children of Israel, that they bring me an offering: of every man that giveth it willingly with his heart ye shall take my offering. (KJV)

Deuteronomy

5:29 O that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children for ever! (KJV)

6:6 And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: (KJV)

8:2 And thou shalt remember all the way which the LORD thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep his commandments, or no. (KJV)

There are more verses from the Torah which describe God's concern for our heart but these are sufficient to demonstrate this point. Deception can enter into our hearts because we have not properly fed our spirit with the Word of God. Having a biblical worldview begins in the heart which is why God tells us in the Torah his words shall be written upon our hearts.

Conclusion

Sadly, the history as recorded in the Bible has been attacked by a culture that has become increasingly evolutionized and secularized. Most people today view the Bible as a book that contains many interesting stories and interesting religious teachings. What is worse, even some people who profess to be Christian believers hold the Bible in a minimalist fashion by saying the bible is unnecessary for the life of a Christian. This is how the Bible has become less of an influence in the gentile church today and why our culture is become more and more degenerate. Our purpose is to reach out and touch the lost for Yeshua in our life and our actions according to the biblical standard which demonstrate Yeshua's love living in and through his believers. But sadly the lack of authority of the Word of God in a believer's life today has caused a cultural backlash. On one hand we have people professing to be Christians and yet living like the world (Matt7:16 Matt7:20). On the other hand we have people who are professing to be Christians and are living the biblical standard. This causes a cultural communication problem because on the one hand some are saying by their actions they can live however they choose to live, and the other group says we should live following after Yeshua. Without a clear defining line it becomes difficult to communicate to a culture that sees Christians who have lost touch with biblical truth and believe me, for some, it becomes a point of argument and disbelief in Yeshua as a result.

Summary

- Deception is at its greatest peak but not only is deception at its peak; it is increasing in cleverness and craftiness. HaSatan is trying to destroy the family and separate relationships for the purpose of (1) destroying what God has created and (2) minimizing each believers effectiveness in their testimony for Yeshua.
- Something that is central to a truly biblical worldview is having an understanding of the major events of the past and the future which is found in the history of the Bible. Understanding the implications of these biblical events "enables" believers

to view the world from a biblical perspective, and helps to fight off the various deceptions so rampant in this world today.

- The real battleground is in the heart and in our imagination; this is why God told us to write his words upon our hearts. We need to feed the spirit with God's Holy Word. Identifying practices which lead to sin calls for personal reflection upon our relationships with others, with God, and our spiritual state with respect to the biblical standard.
- Sin is conceived in the heart then sin is given birth in our actions. God considers our "thought life" to be no different than our outward actions according to Yeshua's commentary in Matthew 5:28. This is why God is concerned with the heart of man. The many instances in the Torah demonstrated God's concern without a doubt.

Besides evangelizing the lost and edifying the saved, shouldn't the church also be the conscience for the community/culture? But how can the church be the conscience for the community when its methods, values, and standards are no different from secular society? People need answers in this increasingly deceptive world starting from God's truth found in the Bible. Let us share the Gospel from Genesis to Revelation and give people an understanding of what life is really about. But unless we begin to read the bible i.e. "**asking counsel of the Lord God**," we won't be able to do that.

Questions To Reflect Upon



- **In my spiritual walk with God, how can I reconnect the Bible to the world God created in such a way that his word becomes real to me? Has the Bible lost its influence on me in my life and relationship with God?**
- **Yeshua is called the "Last Adam" (1 Cor. 15:45) meaning the first adam brought death into the world, and the Last Adam (Yeshua) brings eternal life. Have I fully embraced Yeshua in faith unto eternal life?**