

**JOSHUA 9:1-13**  
**THE AGONY OF DECEIT!**  
**PART 1**

Please turn in your Bibles this morning to Joshua chapter 9 as we continue our study through this amazing book that shows us how to have that victorious Christian life!

As we have seen, as the children of Israel entered into the land of Canaan, the Promise Land, God was instructing them how they should do battle against the enemies that they were facing.

Their first battle was against Jericho and God gave them very specific and kind of strange plans for this battle. And yet, by being obedient to what God had told them, they gained this victory against a difficult enemy!

From there they were to do battle against the city of Ai. And this was not a very difficult battle, less people and no walled city. And when the spies returned, they communicated this to Joshua.

This battle would be a piece of cake, they would not need all their soldiers, just some 3,000 men.

And we saw that their first mistake was that they did not seek the Lord.

Secondly, there was sin in the camp. You see, one of their men, Achan, had taken some of the spoils of their victory against Jericho, when God specifically said they were not to take any spoils of this victory!

And because they did not seek the Lord in this battle, they went in with their own plans and they were unaware of the sin that was in the camp, and they were not victorious.

In fact, they were not only defeated but some thirty-six men lost their lives in this battle and that was thirty-six more than at Jericho were the enemy was bigger and stronger.

You see, at Jericho they walked in obedience and Ai they did not, and the results of those battles give us the end result of walking either way.

But God shows Joshua that there was sin in the camp and that is the reason they were defeated. And once Joshua dealt with the sin, God gave them the plans for victory against Ai, and that is exactly what happened.

It is after this we see the children of Israel gather in the valley of Shechem, in the heart of the land, just as Moses had instructed them to do.

Remember what took place here.

In this valley the priests stood and on either side of them were the children of Israel. Six of the twelve tribes of Israel stood on Mount Gerizim and six of the twelve tribes of Israel stood on Mount Ebal.

When the priests called out the curses, those on Mount Ebal would say, ***“Amen!”***

Picture in your mind what they saw.

Mount Ebal was a rocky, barren mountain and this is where the altar of sacrifice was set up and the sacrifices made. You see, when there is sin there needed to be sacrifices made for the sin.

And on Mount Gerizim, which was lush, beautiful, this is where the people would call out ***“Amen”*** when the blessings were spoken. You don't need an altar of sacrifice here.

Why did they do this? It was an act of obedience to what the Lord told them through Moses in Deuteronomy before they even entered the land.

And think about it. They did witness what happened when they were disobedient at Ai and now, they were affirming their willingness to be obedient to God's Word.

Again, this is an important lesson for us, that as we obey the Lord there are great blessings that flow and in disobedience there truly are cursings that we will find.

Now as we move into Joshua chapter 9, the children of Israel are back at Gilgal, which is their base camp.

And we know that Satan no longer bothers the children of Israel just like he no longer bothers us, right?

**WRONG!** He never gives up and he will try to tempt us to sin so that he may bring death and destruction to our lives.

And I don't think Satan has that many strategies, you might say. I think he just has a couple.

One of them is the frontal assault, where he just hits us head on and that works at times. But many times, that is very obvious, but it does work.

I think he uses a more subtle approach many times because that tends to catch us off guard just like it will do with the children of Israel.

Remember what Peter said in I Peter 5:8, "**Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.**"

Peter is warning us to be alert, to pay attention, to be on guard, why? Because Satan, the Devil, walks about like a roaring lion and he is looking for people he can devour, people he can destroy!

And don't forget that Satan and his demons as well as his ministers, those false teachers with their false teaching, can transform themselves into an angel of light to deceive us.

Be alert, pay attention, be on guard is the warning and we will see that this morning, if you let your guard down just a little, he will find you and devour you!

Now I am not trying to scare you or make you afraid, but it is a warning to us and, like I said, Joshua and the children of Israel will find this out the hard way!

I have called this message, *The Agony of Deceit*, it was taken from a book I read many, many years ago, back in 1990!

Noah Webster, in his 1828 publication of the American Dictionary of the English Language defined “*deceit*” like this, “Literally, a catching or ensnaring. Hence, the misleading of a person; the leading of another person to believe what is false, or not to believe what is true, and thus to ensnare him; fraud; fallacy; cheat; any declaration, artifice [trick] or practice, which misleads another, or causes him to believe what is false.” (Page 56)

Now some deception may not be that hurtful, it may not be destructive. But, when it comes to spiritual deception, it is all bad!

Just in case you missed that, I will repeat it. ***ALL SPIRITUAL DECEPTION IS BAD, IT WILL BRING ABOUT DESTRUCTION IN OUR LIVES!***

Let me share this with you and keep in mind that this is from 1990, almost thirty years ago and listen to what the warning was all about. We are told,

Of the modern mentality, Chersterton added, “The word ‘heresy’ not only means no longer being wrong; it practically means being clear-headed and courageous. The word ‘Orthodoxy’ not only no longer means being right; it practically means being wrong.” “It means,” he concluded, that “people care less for whether they are philosophically right. For obviously a man ought to confess himself crazy before he confesses himself heretical.”

Indeed, many audiences of today's televangelism are commended by their leaders for having the courage to be at odds with mainstream (including evangelical) Christianity. Standing alone, these souls are convinced that they have discovered (through their prophet) that secret everybody else has missed for nearly two thousand years. It is a powerful feeling – but terribly misleading.

- Michael Horton, *The Agony of Deceit*, pp. 11-12

Because we allowed that heretical teaching into the church back then, today, everything and anything goes! Deception is out there and instead of taking a stand against it, we are embracing it and that is dangerous, it will bring destruction to people and to churches!

And my prayer as we go through this study or these studies here in Joshua, is that you would take heed to the warning and learn from them.

I have broken these verses that we will be looking at this morning into four main points and they are as follows:

***THE FRONTAL ASSAULT – JOSHUA 9:1-2***

***THE ART OF DECEPTION – JOSHUA 9:3-6***

***THE WISDOM OF MAN – JOSHUA 9:7***

***THE DECEPTION – JOSHUA 9:8-13***

With that as our background, let's begin reading in Joshua chapter 9, beginning in verse 1 and let's see what the Lord has for us as we look at the topic of, ***THE AGONY OF DECEIT!***

**JOSHUA 9****VERSES 1-2**

As I have said, this first point deals with ***THE FRONTAL ASSAULT!***

And this is classic, they will try to defeat Israel on the field of battle, a head-to-head competition you might say!

Let me fill in some of the details here and you will see why these enemies of Israel were ready to do battle against them.

Make no mistake about it, word spread very quickly of the victories that the children of Israel had at Jericho and then at Ai!

And as these Canaanite Kings hear of this, they know that they are no match for the children of Israel, and thus, they join forces to defeat them. I guess they figured that there was strength in numbers and there usually is!

Once again, this is a frontal assault by the enemy, pretty straightforward. And, as I have said, and as we have read, remember what Peter told us in I Peter 5:8, **“Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.”**

And listen to how The Amplified Bible puts this verse, **“Be well balanced (temperate, sober of mind), be vigilant and cautious at all times; for that enemy of yours, the devil, roams around like a lion roaring [in fierce hunger], seeking someone to seize upon and devour.”**

Now for some Christians that is as far as they go. They see the enemy as this roaring lion and they are fearful and yet, do nothing. Others are not watchful at all and they can be easily devoured. But Peter does not just tell us about the enemy, but he goes on to tell us where our victory is found as we do battle with this roaring lion, the Devil!

Peter goes on to say in I Peter 5:9, **“Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world.”**

And again The Amplified Bible puts this verse like this; **“Withstand him; be firm in faith [against his onset - rooted, established, strong, immovable, and determined], knowing that the same (identical) sufferings are appointed to your brotherhood (the whole body of Christians) throughout the world.”**

Yes, the battle is intense, but we have the victory as we stand in the faith, as we stand upon God’s Word, as we stand in His strength and not ours.

The children of Israel learned this one, but they were not ready for the subtle scheming of the Devil as we shall see!

And these direct frontal assaults to our faith may not be easy to deal with but they are not that hard to spot. And in reality, they should not be that hard to defend against it, but again, we must look to God to see us through and that goes with any kind of assault we are facing for our faith!

At least these frontal attacks should be obvious to us and yet, many times today, they are not that obvious.

Why is that?

Because we don't know what we believe and as the Mormon comes and shares with some Christians, they see the Mormon as a Christian. Yes, some of their beliefs are not the same, but they are Christians, or so they think.

Mormons are not Christians, they do not believe in the Jesus that is spoken of in the Bible, it is a Jesus that they have made up.

Again, that should be simple, that is a frontal assault upon our faith and yet, we can't defend ourselves. Shame on us.

One writer put it like this, and he does show us how weak we can be when we move away from the truths of God found in the Word of God. Remember, we are to, "**Resist him, steadfast in the faith . . .**"

This is what one writer had to say,

*If anyone were to tell most congregations in the West that the modern church is facing the greatest challenge the church has ever encountered, chances are that he or she would be met with puzzled looks. Like an undiagnosed cancer, the nature and source of the danger we face is not on the minds of most Western Christians.*

How on earth, it is often asked, could German Christians have caved in so weakly to the allure and coercions of National Socialism in the 1930s? The answer is plain: *All too easily, if you understand the temper of the times in which they lived.*

Just so, many Western Christians are caving in weakly before the challenges of our own times, whether through the general seductions and distortions of advanced modernity, the tempting thinking behind the sexual revolution or a failure to understand the significance of the hour and appreciate the implacable hostility of some of the forces against us - and so blunting our witness and betraying the lordship and authority of Jesus.



And all this at a time when momentous events across the world are running at a floodtide.

The present stage of history and the character of the advanced modern world have combined to throw down a gauntlet before the church in the West that is as decisive as Rome's demand that Christians offer incense to Caesar as lord.

As we shall see, the challenge to the Western church is subtle but unprecedented in its scale, and it must be answered with a courageous *no* to everything that contradicts the call of our Lord - whatever the cost and whatever the outcome.

Is Jesus Lord, or are the forces of advanced modernity lord? The church that cannot say *no* to all that contradicts its Lord is a church that is well down the road to cultural defeat and captivity. But the courage to say *no* has to be followed by an equally clear, courageous and constructive *yes* - to the Lord himself, to his gospel and his vision of life, humanity and the future, so that Christians can be seen to live differently and to live better in the world of today.

Christians in the West are living in a grand clarifying moment. The gap between Christians and the wider culture is widening, and many formerly nominal Christians are becoming "religious nones." In many ways we are in the Thursday evening of Holy Week. The cock has not yet crowed, but the angry crowd who would like to see the end of our Lord in the Western world has already seen and heard enough of our early betrayals to believe that it can count on more, and harry us toward ignominious surrender. So this is no time for cowards, for fence sitters or for those who wish to hedge their bets until they hear the judge's verdict on the contest.

We face a solemn hour for humanity at large and a momentous showdown for the Western church. At stake is the attempted completion of the centuries-long assault on the Jewish and Christian faiths and their replacement by progressive secularism as the defining faith of the West and the ideology said to be the best suited to the conditions of advanced modernity.

The gathering crisis is therefore about nothing less than a struggle for the soul of the West and the place of faith - any faith - in the life of advanced modern societies. The crisis can be expressed in terms of the interplay of four sets of challenges.

First, the primacy of the Jewish and Christian faiths as the defining faiths of the West has been weakened and almost overcome by two forces: the assault of progressive secularism and the weakening caused by the shaping power of the world of advanced modernity.

Second, within the West itself the near victory of progressive secularism has opened up a further struggle between two post-Christian forces: on one side, nihilism, degeneration and barbarism, which would spell the decline and fall of the West as it falls apart from within; and on the other, the hubris and soaring self-confidence of progressive secularism or evolutionary humanism, which would overreach in trying to lead the West in an entirely new direction and attempting to open up a stunning *new world* for humanity at large.

Third, the overthrow of the Jewish and Christian faiths as the soul of the West has opened the door at the global level to two powerful post-Christian alternatives vying for dominance in the world at large: aggressive secularism and radical Islam.

Fourth, the overall situation raises a double challenge for all the Christian churches across the Western world: Can Christians so witness to their Lord and live out their faith that Christian faith can prevail over the shaping power of the advanced modern world and its institutions? And can Christians, who in some Western countries are still a substantial majority, overcome the militant assaults and ways of life of progressive secularism so as to remain in a position themselves to contribute decisively to the human future?

Put all these challenges together and take a general's eye view, and the stakes become very clear. For if the anti-Christian forces prevail, they represent nothing less than a return to the philosophy, the ethics and the lifestyles of the pagan world that Christians overcame originally. In other words, today's challenge rivals that of the fateful clash of the early church with the Caesars in the first three centuries and the menace of the sultans of Ottoman Islam in the sixteenth.

- <http://bit.ly/2PLsVHP>

This is a challenge for us to earnestly contend for the faith that has been entrusted to us. You see, like the enemies of Israel who are gathering together to fight against Israel and destroy them, so too are the enemies of God. They are gathering together against Christians and trying to destroy their faith, and this is done as a frontal assault! Stand strong in the faith. God has given to us all that we need to defeat this enemy and we should not be fooled by what they are doing! Be wise in the Lord and see the salvation that He will bring to the battles that we face!

As we read on, we will see the second method of attack that Satan uses against us and that is deceptive alliances, and these are far more subtle and sinister. They are harder to see many times.

We will be looking at the next point in a minute, ***THE ART OF DECEPTION!***

And that is what we will see with the Gibeonites and what they were going to do. It is like the Trojan horse of the Christian life, and once they get in, the battle is over!

### VERSES 3-6

***THE ART OF DECEPTION***, it went on in the days of Joshua, and it continues on today, as we will see!

Keep in mind that the children of Israel were told that they were to wipe out all the inhabitants of the land. It was only those that lived outside the land and wanted to surrender to them who would be spared.

This was the warning that the Lord gave the children of Israel back in Deuteronomy 20:16-18, **“But of the cities of these peoples which the Lord your God gives you as an inheritance, you shall let nothing that breathes remain alive, but you shall utterly destroy them: the Hittite and the Amorite and the Canaanite and the Perizzite and the Hivite and the Jebusite, just as the Lord your God has commanded you, lest they teach you to do according to all their abominations which they have done for their gods, and you sin against the Lord your God.”**

God the Father was trying to protect His children just like He does today by warning us of the dangers that are out there and what we are to do with them, destroy them, not bring them into our lives!

And keep in mind that Gibeon was located only twenty-five miles from the camp of Israel at Gilgal and about 7 miles from the area of Ai.

That means that they were in the land of Israel and they were to be destroyed, completely wiped out!

Because of all that the inhabitants of Gibeon heard regarding the children of Israel, they realized they were no match for the children of Israel, even if they joined forces with the other Kings.

And I think we need to understand that the Gibeonites were not weak people, just a push over. We are told in Joshua 10:2, **“that they feared greatly, because Gibeon was a great city, like one of the royal cities, and because it was greater than Ai, and all its men were mighty.”**

Then why did they not do a frontal assault upon the children of Israel like the other nations were gathering together to do? Because, in a sense, they saw the handwriting on the wall and felt they could only win this war by surrendering to the children of Israel. A kind of ***“Better red than dead”*** mentality!

So these representatives from Gibeon will use deception to fool the children of Israel into thinking they came from a land far, far away!

And make no mistake about it, Gibeon was the next city to be conquered after Ai. And the people of Gibeon knew it! Remember, in Deuteronomy 20:10–20, God had commanded that Israel must destroy all the cities in Canaan.

So the Trojan Horse you might say was this. They pretended to live a great distance outside of Canaan. Why was that so important? If they did that then they could possibly fool Israel into making a covenant of peace with them which they knew was their only hope for survival.

***THE ART OF DECEPTION***, and I know, I have said that a few times, but Christians today seem to be so easily deceived!

The Bible tells us that we as Christians need to be as wise as serpents but as gentle as a dove.

God has given us wisdom and we need to exercise it.

Yes, Satan will use a frontal assault against us, and he will also be subtle and use deception to devour us.

Like I have said, it is a kind of Trojan horse mentality. Outwardly it may look good, but inwardly there is death that will come forth!

In other words, if he can't defeat us by a frontal assault, then he will try with subtle things that cause us to have a false sense of security! And we are not on guard for these things, many times, because we are looking for that frontal assault!

Paul warns the Ephesian elders of this very thing and he is also warning us in Acts 20:29-30, **“For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves.”**

You see, there will be a direct assault upon believers but there will also be a subtle assault from within as leaders bring forth damming heresies into the church!

In II Corinthians 11:13-15 Paul warns us how deceptive the enemy is. He wrote, **“For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ. And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works.”**

Notice the deception as these leaders pretend to be **“ministers of righteousness”** when in reality they are leading people to Hell!

We will spend a little more time with this issue of deception in the church when we get to our fourth point, ***THE DECEPTION!***

But here's the thing and this is important for us to understand. We are to test the things that people teach, what they say, what they want us to believe. And the reason that is so important is because if you bring the teaching before the *TRUTH TESTER*, you will see if it is truth or a lie of the Devil or just bad teaching!

In I John 4:1-6 we are told about our truth tester to see if what someone is telling us is true or not. John tells us, **“Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world. By this you know the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God, and every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God. And this is the spirit of the Antichrist, which you have heard was coming, and is now already in the world. You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world. They are of the world. Therefore they speak as of the world, and the world hears them. We are of God. He who knows God hears us; he who is not of God does not hear us. By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error.”**

Test what is being spoken against the Word of God and with the Holy Spirit's help you will clearly see if it is of God or not!

May we learn the lesson from the Trojan horse incident, that what may look good, look right outwardly may not be good inwardly. It may bring forth death!

VERSE 7

The third point we are going to look at here is simple, ***THE WISDOM OF MAN!***

First of all, let's look at these people that are called Gibeonites, who are they?

We don't have to guess because here in Joshua 9:7 we are told that they lived in the area that were Hivites, that is the group of people that they belonged to.

I know, so what?

Interestingly enough, John Gill, who was a renowned Hebrew Scholar, tells us that the name "Hivite" means "serpent." Isn't that interesting!

Remember what Paul told us in II Corinthians 11:13-15, **"For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ. And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works."**

Make no mistake about it, the Gibeonites were workers of Satan, deceiving the children of Israel.

And yes, we see them question these people, **"Perhaps you dwell among us; so how can we make a covenant with you?"**

Even Joshua questioned them in Joshua 9:8 as he said to them, **"Who are you, and where do you come from?"**

So it seems like they were doing the right thing here. They were checking them out, right?



Think about it, the Jews ask these Gibeonites, these serpents where they dwell, where they come from and the Gibeonites tell Joshua and the children of Israel, ***“You got us! Sorry. We live in the land you are taking possession of. Boy, you guys are good. I thought we had you on that one!”***

That is not what takes place, why? Because Satan and his workers, those who are against God, will use deception to get what they want, and they want to destroy lives!

You see, human wisdom is not going to defeat the enemy or expose the lies of the enemy. These things will be spiritually discerned!

You must bring them before the Word of God and ask the Spirit of God to open them up to you.

Think about the false teachings that have come into the church and the reason they have come in and are coming in is because we are trying to use human wisdom to discern between what is right and what is wrong. And like we see here, it does not work!

And let me say this. If God has placed something in your heart about a situation, listen to Him, don't rush in and make a foolish decision as the children of Israel are about to do! Listen to that still small voice and don't be fooled by the scheming of the Devil!

Don't trust in ***THE WISDOM OF MAN!***

### VERSES 8-13

This fourth point is so important for us to understand – ***THE DECEPTION!***

There was deception in the early church, there was deception throughout church history and there is deception today. That is not the issue. The issue is how do we recognize this deception so we don't fall prey to it. And the answer is very simple, as I have said. You recognize it, you expose it by bringing it before the Word of God and allow the Spirit of God to speak to your heart. God does not want us to be deceived, but if we are unwilling to listen to him, we will be in trouble, we will be deceived!

As you read this you can clearly see that the Gibeonites sense there is some reluctance in Joshua and the children of Israel in believing what they are saying to them. So they pile it on.

***“Look at our provisions, they speak of us being on the road a long time! Look at how raggedy our clothes are, we must have been on a long journey! Hey, smell my clothes, that has to tell you we have been on a long journey. Listen with your ears to what we are telling you. Look with your eyes to what you are seeing. Taste and see that this is true. Touch and feel that we are not lying to you. Smell with your nose and you will see this is true!”***

And make no mistake about it, these guys are good. You see, they don't speak of the victories the children of Israel had at Jericho and Ai, not even their crossing over the Jordan River.

All they talk about is how the children of Israel were delivered from Egypt and defeated the Kings on the east side of the Jordan River. Why was this so important? Because they said they came from a faraway land and thus, this recent news would not have reached their land yet! I told you they were good.

Here's the thing folk's, you can't always trust your human senses. What looks good on the outside may be rotten on the inside.

Look at wax fruit, it looks very good, good enough to eat as you look at it but when you take a bite out of it, well, it is bad!

For the children of Israel, we will see where they failed, where we fail, and may we learn the lesson from this.

And please keep in mind, the Gibeonites were not repenting of their sins, turning to the Lord at this point, but were messengers of Satan who came to influence the children of Israel into making a mistake.

I think this is an important lesson for us to understand, that we don't make a covenant with the enemy.

Paul warns us in II Corinthians 6:14-18, **“Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness? And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever? And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: ‘I will dwell in them And walk among them. I will be their God, And they shall be My people.’ Therefore ‘Come out from among them And be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, And I will receive you.’ ‘I will be a Father to you, And you shall be My sons and daughters, Says the Lord Almighty.’”**

How do we as Christians embrace lawlessness? How do we as Christians commune with darkness? How do we as Christians have unity with the Devil? What part do we as Christians have with those who are not Christian? How do we as Christians embrace false gods?

That is what the Corinthian church was involved in and Paul rebuked them for what they were doing.

Thank God we don't have those problems today! Well, a little sarcasm! That is exactly what is going on in the church today. Let me show you what I mean.

Some of you know of the Christian musician, Matt Maher. This is what Wikipedia says of him, "Matthew Guion Maher is a Canadian *contemporary Christian music artist*, songwriter, and worship leader from Newfoundland, Canada, who lives in the United States. He has written and produced nine solo albums to date."

Nothing wrong with that, right? Wrong! Let me show you the problem that many miss, or they really don't care about.

We are told of Matt Maher,

"Matt Maher is a contemporary worship leader in the Catholic faith. Since most people outside of the Catholic faith find "contemporary worship" and "Catholic" to be two things they would never associate as going together, I asked Matt to describe himself and what he does for me. Here is what he had to say . . .

"I'm a worship leader out of Mesa Arizona. Primarily I work full time at a church. I've done some touring and traveling over the years, but I work 20 hours a week as a worship leader and 20 hours a week as young adult minister. I lead a college Bible study. *It's a Catholic Church*, which kind of surprises a lot of people. The joy that I really feel, as part of my ministry, is that I've been kind of going out more and traveling and working with different people breaking down those stereotypes because people have a lot of Catholic stereotypes. I'm just letting them know that *there is a generation, now rising, of Catholics who recognize the gift of Salvation that's been given* to them and that see the need for a daily relationship with Jesus and pursue it. *And pursue Him actively in His Word, and also pursue it in the Sacrament.* Primarily, I think the way that God has been using me to reach out to people is through worship."

Now, as you read that you may not see anything wrong. He talks about salvation, so he must be a believer even though he is Catholic!

Please understand the salvation for the Catholic is Jesus Christ plus works plus going to Purgatory to atone for your sins, which is more works on our part!

That is not what the Bible says! We are saved by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone and not by any works, no Sacraments!

And here is the big danger. He is touring with Protestant musicians and as they go out, they are showing that there is no difference between the Catholic faith and the protestant faith! Are you kidding me!

What we see happening is the ecumenical movement where we see the religions of the world coming together to form a one-world religion, something the Bible tells us will happen, but it is not of God! And it seems like the Roman Catholic Church and the Pope are working to put this together!

Listen carefully to what he has to say about this. We are told,

Maher calls himself a “musical missionary,” a missionary for Rome, that is. *Christianity Today* says “Maher is bringing his music--and a dream of unity into the Protestant church” (“Common Bonds,” CT, Oct. 27, 2009).

He says, “I’ve had co-writing sessions with Protestants where we had that common denominator, and I’ve seen in a very radical way the real possibility of unity.”

He says, “I look at it like the Catholic church is my immediate family, and all my friends from different denominations are extended family.”

David Wang says Maher is “one of the most successful Catholic artists to cross over into mainstream Christian rock and find an audience among evangelicals” (“Catholic Rocker Matt Maher,” Religion News Service, May 17, 2013).

Maher, who tours with non-Catholics, comments:

“What’s fantastic about it is we’re all Christians from different denominations and we’re learning to understand each other. It just means that we’re writing about mysteries that we don’t fully understand” (“Charismatic Catholic Rocker Finds Crossover Appeal with Evangelicals,” *Charisma*, May 20, 2013).

Maher is happy that other Catholic musicians are coming into the forefront of the contemporary praise movement, such as Audrey Assad, who signed with Sparrow Records, and producer Robbie Seay.

Leaving the Catholic Church is not an option for Maher, because he says, “I love my faith and the expression of it.”

He intends, rather, for his music to be “a bridge.” He says that contemporary worship music is a way to “build relationships with people and link arms with them for the Kingdom.”

He says that touring with people like Michael W. Smith is producing ecumenical unity because people come to the concerts and find themselves standing beside a priest or nun, and they learn that “we’re all in this family together.”

- <http://bit.ly/2PF9PCM>

Isn’t that what the Gibeonites did with Joshua and the children of Israel? You bet they did. It was not a frontal assault, but this Trojan Horse you might say, is what will allow the enemy into our midst and eventually destroy us!

And we can go on with all kinds of things that have crept into the church, be it eastern mysticism, New Age teachings, Yoga, Transcendental meditation, the Hebrew Roots movement, and on and on the deceptions go!

And even in the New Apostolic Reformation, NAR, we see this push for all kinds of false teaching, even the establishment of the Kingdom so Jesus can return.

And the Bible talks about this false church growth. Jesus warned us in Matthew 13:31-32 in the Parable of the Mustard Seed, **“Another parable He put forth to them, saying: ‘The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and sowed in his field, which indeed is the least of all the seeds; but when it is grown it is greater than the herbs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and nest in its branches.’”**

In other words, the church will grow, but it is an abnormal growth, a false growth, as many attach themselves to the church and they are not believers.

Jesus makes that point as He speaks of the birds in this bush that grows into a tree, this abnormal growth, and the birds are represented in the Scriptures as ministers of Satan!

May we learn the lesson from the Trojan horse incident, that what may look good, look right outwardly may not be good inwardly. It may bring forth death!

And it is dangerous out there, as this writer explains. We are told,

Over 40 years ago, Marla and I were mugged at gunpoint as we walked from our car to our apartment in Dallas, Texas. After that traumatic event, I never made that short walk without looking around for potential danger. I often saw women standing near where we were mugged, chatting together without a thought that they may be in a dangerous place. But after we were attacked, I was always alert and on guard. Even to this day, if I venture outside in a public place after dark, I keep my eyes open for possible attackers. If you're unaware of potential danger, you're more likely to fall prey to it.

The problem with spiritual deception is that it's always more subtle and conniving [devious] than an armed, frontal attack. Paul warned that Satan disguises himself as an angel of light and his servants as servants of righteousness (2 Cor. 11:14-15).

Satan doesn't come in a red suit with horns and a pitchfork, laughing wickedly as he promises to take you with him to hell. He comes offering greater "light" on difficult issues. His servants are not outwardly, obviously evil. They pose as servants of righteousness, promising freedom, while inwardly they are enslaved by various lusts (2 Peter 2:18-19).

Jesus warned about wolves in sheep's clothing (Matt. 7:15). Their disguise enabled them to mix among the flock, but their aim was to destroy for their own gain. . . .

Discernment is a scarce commodity in modern evangelical circles. If you advocate discernment, you'll be accused of being judgmental or intolerant.

When I first came here 23 years ago, one of the elders told me that I was arrogant because I had titled one of my sermons, "What the Bible Says About Abortion." When I asked him to explain, he said, "You can't be dogmatic. You can't say what the Bible says about anything. You can only state your opinion, but be open to other views." . . .



In *The Truth War* [Thomas Nelson, 2007], John MacArthur argues that faithfulness to Christ demands that we fight for the truth of the gospel. But the modern evangelical church, swayed by the worldly emphasis on tolerance and “love,” has become apathetic to the whole concept of truth. In the introduction, he states (p. xvii), “Church leaders are obsessed with style and methodology, losing interest in the glory of God and becoming grossly apathetic about truth and sound doctrine.” He adds (p. xviii, brackets in original), “What we desperately need today are ‘shepherds according to [God’s] heart, who will feed [believers] with knowledge and understanding’ (Jeremiah 3:15; Acts 20:28-31).”

- <http://bit.ly/2J2WbIw>

Make no mistake about it, we can’t change the fact that deception will always be out there. Jesus even warned us not to be deceived in the last days, the days we are living in. That is not the issue.

The issue is this. What do we do with the deception that is out there? And the answer is simple, and I have said it a few times already, but we need to be reminded of this and then we need to apply it to our lives.

We need to take all that we hear in regard to the Bible, to how we are to live out our faith, and bring it into the light of God’s Word and ask the Holy Spirit to show us the truth! And He will!

Listen to the warning that Paul gave to the Corinthians in II Corinthians 11:3-4, **“But 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. For 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!”**

Do not fall prey to the deceptions that are out there! Stand doctrinally pure!

Don't be foolish like Joshua and the children of Israel.

I know that may sound harsh but listen to what they did not do, and you will see, it was foolish. In Joshua 9:14 we are told that the men of Israel, “**... did not ask counsel of the LORD.**”

*THE AGONY OF DECEIT* can only get into our lives if we don't seek counsel from the Lord according to His Word. Never forget that!