

JOSHUA 9:14-16
THE AGONY OF DECEIT!
PART 2

Please turn in your Bibles this morning to Joshua chapter 9 as we continue our study through this book the helps us to walk in the Spirit so we can have that victorious Christian life.

And we are in part 2 of a study that I have called *“The Agony of Deceit!”* Let me fill in some of the details of what happened and that will bring us to our study this morning.

First of all, keep in mind that the children of Israel are in the Promise Land, the land of Canaan and God has given them two victories. One against Jericho and the other against Ai.

They are doing what the Lord told them to do back in Deuteronomy 20:10-20, **“When you go near a city to fight against it, then proclaim an offer of peace to it. And it shall be that if they accept your offer of peace, and open to you, then all the people who are found in it shall be placed under tribute to you, and serve you. Now if the city will not make peace with you, but war against you, then you shall besiege it. And when the Lord your God delivers it into your hands, you shall strike every male in it with the edge of the sword. But the women, the little ones, the livestock, and all that is in the city, all its spoil, you shall plunder for yourself; and you shall eat the enemies’ plunder which the Lord your God gives you. Thus you shall do to all the cities which are very far from you, which are not of the cities of these nations. 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. When you besiege a city for a long time, while making war against it to take it, you shall not destroy its trees by wielding an ax against them; if you can eat of them, do not cut them down to use in the siege, for the tree of the field is man's food. Only the trees which you know are not trees for food you may destroy and cut down, to build siegeworks against the city that makes war with you, until it is subdued.

As you read these verses you can see that God told them that those who were living outside the land of Canaan, outside the land that God did not give them, those who lived far away, you shall offer these nations peace. If they take that, great.

But if they reject the offer of peace, then they are to be destroyed!

Now, on the other end of the spectrum where those who lived in the land of Canaan and God told them to utterly destroy them. They were to wipe them out and take possession of the land.

Why did God say that?

Listen to what the Lord told them in Deuteronomy 7:2-6, **“and when the Lord your God delivers them over to you, you shall conquer them and utterly destroy them. You shall make no covenant with them nor show mercy to them. Nor shall you make marriages with them. You shall not give your daughter to their son, nor take their daughter for your son. For they will turn your sons away from following Me, to serve other gods; so the anger of the Lord will be aroused against you and destroy you suddenly. But thus you shall deal with them: you shall destroy their altars, and break down their sacred pillars, and cut down their wooden images, and burn their carved images with fire. For you are a holy people to the Lord your God; the Lord your God has chosen you to be a people for Himself, a special treasure above all the peoples on the face of the earth.”**

The reason is simple. If they allowed them in the land that the children of Israel were living in, they would eventually turn the Jews away from following the Lord and they would follow after these foreign gods!

And the same is true for us. We are a holy people unto the Lord, His special treasure and thus, if we hang out with the unsaved, fellowship with them, we will eventually turn from the Lord and follow after the gods of this world!

It was a warning to them and to us. I am not saying we can't talk with the unsaved, of course we can and should. We should share Jesus with them.

What I am talking about is that close relationship, and that is the warning that God gave the children of Israel. He told them to keep the enemy at a distance, that was okay. But for those that were close, destroy them!

Now, as we saw last time, word was quickly spreading on how the Israelites were conquering cities in the land of Canaan.

Because of that, some of the other nations decided to join together to fight against them. They knew they could not defeat the children of Israel on their own.

As we opened up Joshua chapter 9, we saw that six nations would form an alliance to protect their land.

But there was one city who decided not to fight against the children of Israel because they knew that they would never win. That was the Gibeonites!

And Gibeon was the next city to be conquered after Ai! It was located only some twenty-five miles from Gilgal, that was the base camp for the children of Israel.

Remember, if a city was outside the land of Canaan, then they would be spared if they accepted peace with the children of Israel.

But Gibeon was in the land, they were close by and thus, they were going to be destroyed and they felt the heat and came up with a plan to save themselves!

And as we saw last time, Satan has two main attack strategies. And we see this in the Bible, how Satan is depicted as both a roaring lion and a subtle serpent.

As a lion he comes directly against us using people to attack us openly, to intimidate, to terrorize and persecute us; but as a serpent he uses cunning and deception against us.

Let me first deal with this frontal assault because that is what these six nations were going to do. They were going to try and fight together to save themselves.

And this is pretty easy to spot. Satan comes at us by using things that are right in our face.

But the other strategy is more subtle. We might call it the Trojan Horse strategy. You know the story. The Trojan Horse was a huge hollow wooden horse constructed by the Greeks to gain entrance into Troy during the Trojan War. It was a gift to Troy but inside were soldiers and when it was time, once they were inside the city, they would attack.

Now most believe this never happened but it is a great picture of – ***DECEPTION!***

That is what we see here with the Gibeonites. They were going to use deception to trick the children of Israel into thinking that they came from a faraway country.

Listen to what they did beginning in verse 3 of Joshua chapter 9, **“But when the inhabitants of Gibeon heard what Joshua had done to Jericho and Ai, they worked craftily, and went and pretended to be ambassadors. And they took old sacks on their donkeys, old wineskins torn and mended, old and patched sandals on their feet, and old garments on themselves; and all the bread of their provision was dry and moldy. And they went to Joshua, to the camp at Gilgal, and said to him and to the men of Israel, ‘We have come from a far country; now therefore, make a covenant with us.’”** Joshua 9:3-6

They are really good. They played the part of coming from a far country by making their belongings old, like they traveled a long distance. And they ask for a covenant to be made with them, since they came from a far country!

But the men of Israel were not too sure about this and either was Joshua. He asks them, **“Who are you, and where do you come from?”** Joshua 9:8.

But they assure Joshua and the children of Israel that they are not from the land of Canaan, but from a far country.

And they are really good at this deception.

You see, they tell the children of Israel that they heard of all that God did with them in Egypt, how they defeated the two Amorite Kings that were on the other side of the Jordan River.

The reason they did not speak of what the children of Israel did by defeating Jericho and Ai was that this was a recent event. And since they traveled this long distance, they would not have heard about it yet.

They just spoke about the distant past and what a deception this was!

And they lay it on heavy! They tell Joshua and the children of Israel, **“Therefore our elders and all the inhabitants of our country spoke to us, saying, ‘Take provisions with you for the journey, and go to meet them, and say to them, “We are your servants; now therefore, make a covenant with us.” This bread of ours we took hot for our provision from our houses on the day we departed to come to you. But now look, it is dry and moldy. And these wineskins which we filled were new, and see, they are torn; and these our garments and our sandals have become old because of the very long journey.”** Joshua 9:11-13.

Look how good they are about this deception. I know, I keep saying it, but how true that is!

And make no mistake about it, Satan is that good. That is why it is easy to be deceived, we are gullible.

Now, as we continue on in this study here in Joshua chapter 9, we see the problem and why that problem occurred. Thus, I have broken this section down like this, these are the main points we will be looking at here in Joshua 9:14-16:

THEY DID NOT SEEK COUNSEL FROM THE LORD

THE GIBEONITES LOOKED AUTHENTIC – LOOKS CAN BE DECEIVING

THINGS WERE GOING WELL FOR THEM

NO BIG DEAL MAKING AN ALLIANCE WITH THIS SMALL CITY

WHY NOT?

With that as our background, let’s begin reading in Joshua chapter 9, beginning in verse 14 and see what the Lord has for us this morning as we continue to look at this topic: ***THE AGONY OF DECEIT!***

JOSHUA 9**VERSES 14-16**

This first point is simple and yet so important for us to understand and learn from.

We are told that ***THEY DID NOT SEEK COUNSEL FROM THE LORD!***

I think as we read of this, we wonder what happened to them? This is so obvious, and yet, they did not seek the Lord in this situation.

And we will look at this issue in a few minutes, why they did not seek the Lord because we do the very same thing. So these lessons are so important for us to learn, that in all we do, we bring it before the Lord and seek His direction!

We have been through this verse several times in our study of Joshua and I guess the Lord wants us to pay attention to what this verse tells us.

Remember what Solomon wrote in Proverbs 3:5-6, **“Trust in the Lord with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding; In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths.”**

You see, we need Godly wisdom, Godly instruction in all that we do. God wants to direct our steps if we will only seek Him, acknowledge Him! Don't rely on our own understanding of the situation!

The problem here is really very simple. You see, in the decisions we make, if we depend only upon our five senses, we can be deceived, as we see here with Joshua and the children of Israel!

Remember what Paul said in Ephesians 6:10-13, **“Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.”**

You see, this is a spiritual battle that we are in and we are not wrestling against flesh and blood, with people; but with the Devil and his demonic forces in the spirit realm. And what they do is played out in the real world, but make no mistake about it, this is a spiritual battle!

Thus, when we try to use our human senses to fight this battle, we end up losing. You see, these are inadequate for us to gain proper insight into what is going on before us.

And please understand what I am saying. God did give us five senses to help us in the physical realm and they are very helpful.

Think about it. You go to the gas station and buy some meat, but it is green, it smells bad, what are your senses telling you?

Stay away from that meat, don't eat it, don't even buy it because it is bad! You see, our senses do help us with everyday decisions that we have to make in the physical realm!

But God has given Christians a sixth sense you might say, and that is our spirit and the Spirit of God.

Paul tells us of this in I Corinthians 2:10-14, **“But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God. For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God. These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.”**

You see, for Joshua and the children of Israel, if they brought this situation before the Lord, the Lord would have instructed them that these men were not from a distant land, but they were Gibeonites who lived only some twenty-five miles away!

But they did not seek counsel from the Lord and thus, their senses tricked them into believing that they came from a distant land and thus, Joshua made a peace treaty with them, a covenant to not harm them. They would let them live when they were to be destroyed!

What a warning to us and God did not place this story in here to put down Joshua. He put this story in here so that we can learn from it and apply it to our lives.

I can't tell you how many times over the years God has given me insight in what I needed to do and say.

From a human perspective, I would have done the exact opposite. But God gave me exactly what I needed to do and what I needed to say.

If I was to lean on my own understanding, I may get it right at times and I may get it wrong. Why not go to the One who gets it right every time and wants to let us know what we should do in the various situations we are in so we will not get hurt, we will do what is best!

Let me share these words with you from Bob Hoekstra, who went to be with the Lord several years ago but in this article, he warns about worldly counsel. This is what he wrote,

“**Woe** to the rebellious children,” says the LORD, “Who **take counsel**, but **not of Me**, and who **devise plans**, but **not of My Spirit**, that they may add sin to sin. Who walk to go down to **Egypt**, and have **not** asked **My advice**.” (Isaiah 30:1-2)

Those who want to live by **grace** (living by God working in and through their lives) characteristically depend upon the **counsel** of the **Lord**. Correspondingly, they have a burden to **warn against worldly counsel**, which undermines, or substitutes itself for God’s counsel.

“**Woe** to the rebellious children,’ says the LORD, ‘Who **take counsel**, but **not of Me**.’”

Everyone needs counsel consistently. We all need to find valid guidance and direction through the opportunities and challenges of life. The Lord is to be our constant resource for such counsel. “This also comes **from the LORD** of hosts, who is **wonderful in counsel** and **excellent in guidance**” (Isaiah 28:29).

The counsel of the Lord is wonderful; it is excellent! In fact, when Messiah would come (Jesus, the Christ), one of His descriptive title names would be “**Wonderful Counselor**” (Isaiah 9:6). This wonderful counsel of God comes to us through the word of God. “**Your testimonies** also are my delight and **my counselors**” (Psalm 119:24).

Consequently, those who turn elsewhere for counsel are rebelling (at least, inadvertently) against the Lord. “**Woe** to the rebellious children,’ says the LORD, ‘Who **take counsel**, but **not of Me**.’”

Our God of grace wants to counsel us down His path. He wants to teach us to live by **His wisdom** and **His provision**. When we are formulating our plans, He wants us to allow **His Spirit** to direct us through **His word**.

The only other option is to lean on the counsel of the world: “who **devise plans**, but **not of My Spirit** . . . who walk to go down to **Egypt**, and have **not** asked **My advice**.”

God strongly warned His children of the vanity of seeking the worldly wisdom of Egypt. “You are **wearied** in the **multitude** of your **counsels**; let now the **astrologers**, the **stargazers**, and the **monthly prognosticators** stand up and **save** you from **these things** that shall come upon you” (Isaiah 47:13).

The church world today frequently turns to the contemporary speculations of man. The wisdom of man is a vain help. We would do well to consider Isaiah’s clear warning. “**Woe** to those who go down to **Egypt** for **help** . . . who do **not look to** the **Holy One** of Israel, **nor seek** the **LORD!**” (Isaiah 31:1).

- <http://bit.ly/2H2hVSn>

This was the problem for Joshua and the children of Israel, they did not seek counsel from the Lord.

You see, some things are spiritually discerned and if they had brought it to the Lord instead of just using their human senses, God would have shown them.

And notice what we see in Joshua 9:16, only three days after making this covenant with the Gibeonites they find out that they were neighbors and did not come from a faraway country. In fact, the Gibeonites were only some 25 miles from Gilgal!

It is as the song goes, “Oh what peace we often forfeit. Oh what needless pain we bear. All because we do not carry, everything to God in prayer!”

Again, do not rush into a decision, but seek the Lord, wait for His direction.

If they only waited, they would have found out about these Gibeonites before they made a covenant with them.

In Isaiah 40:31 we are told, **“But those who wait on the Lord Shall renew their strength; They shall mount up with wings like eagles, They shall run and not be weary, They shall walk and not faint.”**

You see, peace, strength as we learn to wait upon the Lord instead of running on ahead of Him and wasting our strength!

Also, Isaiah 30:15-16 we are told, **“For thus says the Lord God, the Holy One of Israel: ‘In returning and rest you shall be saved; In quietness and confidence shall be your strength.’ But you would not, And you said, ‘No, for we will flee on horses’ - Therefore you shall flee! And, ‘We will ride on swift horses’ - Therefore those who pursue you shall be swift!”**

Here in Isaiah we see that God is telling them to repent, to turn back to Him and as they do, they will find rest, peace through the storms of life, the things they were going through.

He wanted them to place their confidence in Him, but sadly, they refused, and verse 16 tells us why they refused to trust in God.

Notice the arrogance of their speech. Instead of resting in the Lord, they were ready to jump on the Egyptian warhorses and defeat the enemy. But God says that they are sadly mistaken.

Instead of pursuing the enemy, the enemy will come after them and they will flee!

So are you going to rest in the Lord and see the victories He will bring or trust in your own strength and be defeated?

And folks, the bottom line is this. We are to be led by the Lord and not by our will or our senses. That is not only important for the leadership here at Calvary Chapel, but for every one of us!

Alan Redpath sums it up for us like this, “Alas, the tragedy is that the Gibeonites have crept into church life and into personal Christian life, into Christian business life and into Christian home life! Satan has come in disguise and he is sapping away the very strength of our witness. Oh, the subtlety of the enemy! But let me point out to you, also, the stupidity of the children of God.

The language of verse 14 in this chapter is very ominous: ‘They did not ask counsel of the Lord.’ Neglect of prayer always suggests pride in our own judgment, which is fatal. Satan as an angel of light is so plausible. The foolish virgins so resembled those who were wise. The tares sown in the field are so similar to the wheat. The voice of the hireling sounds so very much like the voice of the shepherd.

Bypath Meadow runs right alongside the King’s Highway, and there is only a very narrow soft shoulder between the two. It seems to take us a long time to learn the lesson that neglect of prayer always leads to trouble, and destroys the spirit of discernment.”

He goes on to say, “Never, never, NEVER trust your own judgment in anything. When common sense says that a course is right, lift your heart to God, for the path of faith and the path of blessing may be in a direction completely opposite to that which you call common sense.

When voices tell you that action is urgent, that something must be done immediately, refer everything to the tribunal of heaven. Then, if you are still in doubt, dare to stand still. If you are called on to act and you have no time to pray, don't act. If you are called on to move in a certain direction and cannot wait until you have peace with God about it, don't move. Be strong enough and brave enough to dare to stand and wait on God, for none of them that wait on him shall ever be ashamed. That is the only way to outmatch the devil.”

Remember, it only took three days to discover their mistake, but it was a lifetime of living with the consequences of that mistake!

THEY DID NOT SEEK COUNSEL FROM THE LORD!

As we will see now, there were several reasons why they bought into this lie, this deception and these are things that we fall prey to as well.

The first is simple, ***THE GIBEONITES LOOKED AUTHENTIC – LOOKS CAN BE DECEIVING!***

How true that is! The Gibeonites played the part of traveling a long distance. Their bread when they started out was fresh, but now it was dry and moldy. The wineskins were new but now they are old and torn. Their garments and sandals appeared very old.

But this was just a deception on their part to fool the children of Israel and it worked beautifully.

Look at how authentic false doctrine, false teaching appears to be. That is why the church allows it in. It looks so good but there is no seeking counsel from the Lord.

And let me say this. When it comes to false teaching, false doctrine and false teachers, the counsel from the Lord is in accordance with His Word and not apart from it. There are not new revelations from God.

And think about that one. If that were true, that there are new revelations from God, new doctrine, then we would have to accept everything and anything and that seems to be what is happening in the church today!

Let me show you how the church is experience driven today and not led by the Holy Spirit and the Word of God. We are told,

Modern-day Christian culture is obsessed with experience. The Bible has become a footnote.

Truth, we say, is important, but it must come second to our experience. Modern mystics claim, “We owe the world an encounter!” They’re referring to their ability to help people experience a special anointing of God. One of the newest faith healers on the circuit states, “The cross, to me, isn’t a revelation of my sin, it’s a revelation of my value!” He’d prefer we don’t talk about sin.

God’s Word is being grossly misrepresented and instead of challenging the divorce of truth from experience, the church at large has embraced experience as the preeminent proof of spiritual maturity. He who says, “God told me . . .”, wins the crowd. Man-centered experience, and man-centered gospels are sweeping across the landscape of evangelicalism. People are loving it and false teachers are too.

It’s an uphill battle, and a marathon fight, but we must never stop contending for the faith by calling today’s world back to the timeless truth of God’s Word.

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

Remember what I have said, that our senses, our experiences can mislead us but God’s Word, His counsel will never mislead us.

Just because something looks good, just because something sounds amazing, just because whatever you want to put in there, take those **“Just because”** and let the light of God’s Word, His counsel guide you so that you can see if it is of God or not!

Remember, ***THE GIBEONITES LOOKED AUTHENTIC – LOOKS CAN BE DECEIVING!***

Another reason we can find ourselves in trouble is this – ***THINGS WERE GOING WELL FOR THEM!***

Think about it, when things are going well, you got that raise at work, you are going on all kinds of trips, you have this and you have that, what don’t you have time for? ***GOD!***

Thus, you look at a situation, you see things are going well, and thus, this must be of God, right? Wrong!

Think about this with the children of Israel. Things were going well for them. The inhabitants of the land were fearful of them.

Remember when we opened up Joshua chapter 9, six kings were gathering to fight together against the children of Israel because they knew they could never defeat them on their own.

But the Gibeonites knew that even if they joined with this group, they still would not win and thus, they used deception to defeat them, and it did work!

This is important as well. When things are going well, we tend to let our guard down and when we do, we can be overtaken!

Let me show you how important it is to stay focused and not let overconfidence cause you to let your guard down. This is a story about a college runner who celebrates like crazy before the finish line, and then loses the race by a foot!

Over the weekend, University of Oregon steeplechase runner Tanguy Pepiot lost a race in the most unfortunate way possible.

At the Pepsi Team Invitational featuring Oregon, Washington, and Kentucky, Pepiot began celebrating what looked like a victory before the finish line.

As he slowed and waved to the crowd, Washington runner Meron Simon came charging down the finish line and passed him:

It was an extremely close finish. According to the official time, he lost by 0.10 seconds:

Pepiot clearly knew his mistake:

After the race, Runner Space interviewed Pepiot, who said he didn't know how close Simon was behind him.

“I thought I was by myself, like, far in front of the second guy,” Pepiot said. “I saw [Simon] on the screen, I tried to pick up, he just got me on the line. I'm not proud of myself right now, but it's a good lesson for me, I think, not to do this in the future. Next time I'll just run the whole final stretch and celebrate in the victory lap.”

- <http://bit.ly/2H6jv6H>

I think that is what was going on with the children of Israel. No one was going to be able to stop them, but, of course, themselves! And that is exactly what happened here with the Gibeonites!

THINGS WERE GOING WELL FOR THEM – and they let their guard down, they did not stay focused! May we learn that lesson!

Another thing here is that this was – ***NO BIG DEAL MAKING AN ALLIANCE WITH THIS SMALL CITY!***

Here's the thing. It usually isn't the big things that get us because we are praying, we are seeking direction from the Lord. It is those little things or those things that we don't think are that important!

The Gibeonites portrayed themselves as insignificant and thus, were willing to be servants to the children of Israel. It sounded great, this group of people that lived far away were willing to serve them, no battle and thus, they could not be that big, that strong. And yet, they got the children of Israel to not seek the Lord but go by their own feelings, their own experience in this situation. And in the end, they lost out!

Let me show you how easily godly men can fall prey to this deception.

In Matthew chapter 16 we see Jesus asks His men, "**But who do you say that I am?**" Matthew 16:15. He wasn't interested in what other people were saying about Him, He wanted to know what His disciples thought of Him. It is a great question and an important one because our relationship with God is based upon what we believe, not what others believe!

And we are told in Matthew 16:16-19, "**Simon Peter answered and said, 'You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.'** Jesus answered and said to him, '**Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven. And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.**'"

This revelation to Peter came from God the Father to Peter and what an awesome statement this is.

Now I do realize that some have taken this to mean that the church was to be built upon Peter, but that is not what the text is saying.

First of all, who is Jesus speaking to?

His disciples and they are Jewish, keep that in mind.

Now, as you look throughout the Scriptures, when the word “**rock**” is used in a figurative sense, it is never used of man; it is always speaking of God!

That is important. Jesus does not change that here. Thus, what Jesus is saying is that, *“Upon God Himself – upon Jesus, the Son of the Living God – I will build my Church.”*

Please understand that. God does not build His church upon a man but upon Jesus Christ!

This must have been a spiritual high for Peter. And look at what Jesus says next in Matthew 16:21, **“From that time Jesus began to show to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day.”**

And then Peter has to put his two cents in. I mean he just got a spiritual revelation from God the Father and now Jesus is talking about death and resurrection, what is up with that?

Listen carefully to what takes place here because I think Peter felt this was not a big deal. He got the big question right and now this misunderstanding by Jesus Peter will just have to correct!

We are told, **“Then Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, ‘Far be it from You, Lord; this shall not happen to You!’ But He turned and said to Peter, ‘Get behind Me, Satan! You are an offense to Me, for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men.’”** Matthew 16:22-23.

Now as Peter hears Jesus speak of His death Peter counters that and tells Jesus that He has gotten this all wrong, He is not going to die! He is rebuking the Lord. He is saying, ***“No Lord that is not the way we have it planned. Don’t talk so foolishly!”***

As funny as this may sound, we do the same thing. We can’t say to Jesus “No!” and then call Him “Lord!” Those are opposing views. He is either Lord over all or He is not Lord at all in your life!

Again, I think Peter felt pretty good about this and maybe he was waiting for that, ***“Peter great job, flesh and blood did not reveal that to you but my Father in heaven did!”***

That is not exactly what he got.

Jesus said to him, **“Get behind me Satan!”** I wonder if any of the other guys were smirking or laughing at this point.

Why did Jesus say that about Peter? Because Peter was very self-centered, more interested in the things of man. Also, keep in mind that Satan’s plan is to keep people from the cross because it is the only thing that can save them. Peter went along with that plan to keep Jesus from the cross, and if He did, we would still be lost in our trespasses and sins!

And here’s the thing. As much as Peter might have saw this as something small, the Lord already said what was going to happen. Thus, Jesus spoke, and Peter rejected what was said.

We need to be careful here because the Lord knows best!

I don’t care how small of an issue you think it may be. I don’t care if you think you got this right. Bring it before the Lord, seek His counsel, and then obey what He is saying and not what you are feeling. Peter found out that just does not work going by your own feelings!

Nothing is too small to bring before the Lord, and the children of Israel found that out –
NO BIG DEAL MAKING AN ALLIANCE WITH THIS SMALL CITY!

And lastly, to kind of sum this all up, we will look at – ***WHY NOT!***

Why can't we go by our senses, by our feelings, what we think is right?

Because we can be wrong, very wrong!

Listen to this song that Steve Camp wrote called "The Agony of Deceit!" It goes like this,

They are wolves in sheep's clothing
 They will try to seduce your soul
 Teaching doctrines of demons
 For lies are all they know

They are prophets of destruction
 These are New Age heretics
 Saying they'll show the way to salvation
 But their cross is a bloodless stick

This is the agony of deceit
 Promising truth for the lies they teach
 They come in Jesus' name
 But they're sons of Hades
 This is the agony of deceit

They are clouds without water
 They have hearts trained in greed
 They are like wild animals
 And you are the food they eat

Depraved in their minds and deprived of the truth
 They promise prosperity
 Ah, but the cash they steal from you
 Will buy the coffin to seal their defeat

This is the agony of deceit
 Promising truth for the lies they teach
 Oh, they come in Jesus' name
 But they're sons of Hades
 This is the agony of deceit

Beloved, rest in the truth of the Lord
 Hold fast to the faithful Word
 Guard the treasure by the Spirit of God
 The foundation which stands sure

They have eyes full of adultery
 That never cease from sin
 They're exalted in heresy
 Deception is their friend

Speaking out prideful words of vanity
 They entice by fleshly desire
 Like a dog returns to its vomit, you see
 Like a sow mallows in the mire

This is the agony of deceit
 Promising truth for the lies they teach
 Oh, they come in Jesus' name
 But they're sons of Hades
 This is the agony

Oh, the agony of deceit
 Promising truth for the lies they teach
 Oh, they come in Jesus' name
 But they're sons of Hades
 This is the agony of deceit
 Oh, the agony

Trying to seduce you
 Lies are all they know
 Wolves are in sheep's clothing
 The agony

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- <http://bit.ly/2H6pLf1>

How true that is. That is what the Gibeonites were doing. They came in with deceit, and they got the children of Israel to believe them. And they reason they were deceived is because they did not bring it before the Lord! They went by emotions, feelings, they used their senses when they needed to use spiritual discernment that comes from God!

Let me say this. I am not saying that we can't experience God. Of course we can, that is what relationships are all about. But those experiences must be in accordance to God's Word and if they are not, then the experience is not from God.

Today, in the church, we have this feel-good Gospel being preached. It is experience driven. *I feel good! That worship touched my heart! That light show was awesome and then the smoke! I just feel this is right!*

But let me ask you this. How do you know that the feeling you experienced was from God? How do you know that worship was God-centered and not self-centered? Why do I need a light show and smoke to worship God by? How do I know that my feeling that something was right was actually right?

Those are important questions because if you are just going by feelings, then every cult, every religion, every person must be right whether they believe in God or not.

How can I say that? It is really very simple. If it is just the experience or the feeling, how can I say that they are wrong? You see, I am going by my feelings and I am right, and they are going by their feelings and how in the world can I tell them that they are wrong? I can't!

Let me show you how we can know if we are right or we are wrong.

I am sure most if not all of you know what Paul said in Romans 8:28. He wrote, "**And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.**"

Now some of you may be wondering where I am going with this, but hang in there, I will show you what I mean.

Notice what Paul says once again, "***And we KNOW . . .***" That is important. Paul doesn't say, "***And we SEE . . .***" He doesn't say, "***And we FEEL . . .***"

In other words, Paul is not using his senses to decide that all things work together for good!

Why is that? Because we don't always see the good that will come out of a difficult situation. And we don't always feel that what is happening is for our good!

But there are times we feel something is very right and it is very wrong!

Let me give you an example and I have heard this one more than I want to hear it.

The story goes something like this.

The man has been married to a woman for 5 maybe 10 years or more. Things are not going great in the marriage, but they are together.

Then this other woman comes into the picture. Let's say it is someone that they have not seen in a long time and wow, it just happened!

So they go out to eat to share about the old times and they get together to do this and do that! They are spending a lot of time together and before long, things get serious. They are even having sexual relations together.

Now, here is the problem.

If he goes by emotion, feelings, he can come to the conclusion that God must have brought them together. I mean, they haven't seen each other in years and yet, here in this town she shows up. This has to be of God.

And let's face it, when this man married his wife, she was not even a believer at that time. So that marriage was not of God.

What is he basing his decision upon?

His emotions, his feelings and they are not of God.

I know. How can I say something like that, I don't know the situation? Maybe I am getting a little too emotional about how this is wrong and maybe my feelings are wrong!

They are not!

How can I say that?

It is simple. It is not about what I think or what I feel or whatever, it is what the Word of God says!

First of all, regarding having sexual relations apart from marriage, the Bible tells us in Hebrews 13:4, **“Marriage is honorable among all, and the bed undefiled; but fornicators and adulterers God will judge.”**

And, in regard to the marriage covenant, listen to what we are told in Matthew 19:4-6, **“And He answered and said to them, ‘Have you not read that He who made them at the beginning “made them male and female,” and said, “For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh”? So then, they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate.’ They said to Him, ‘Why then did Moses command to give a certificate of divorce, and to put her away?’ He said to them, ‘Moses, because of the hardness of your hearts, permitted you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so. And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery; and whoever marries her who is divorced commits adultery.’”**

And Paul tells us in I Corinthians 7:39, **“A wife is bound by law as long as her husband lives; but if her husband dies, she is at liberty to be married to whom she wishes, only in the Lord.”**

And there are others, but you get the idea. Marriage is until death do we part!

My feelings may say otherwise. My experience may cause me to think otherwise, but the Word of God tells me what is right 100% of the time!

You see, we can **KNOW!** How can we know that all things are going to work together for good? Because this knowledge is rooted in our understanding of God Himself and it is based upon His Word.

But here is the problem in the church today, we are experience driven instead of being led by the Word of God, as I have said! Listen carefully. We are told,

Our adversary's deceptive strategy is to infiltrate our ranks. Like a Trojan horse entering through the city gates, darkness often hides in plain sight. Satan doesn't fight fair and false teachers take no prisoners.

During the 1930's and 40's, millions of Jews were murdered as a result of the Holocaust. Museums like the *Yad Vashemin* Jerusalem have preserved the horrific evidence of how deception played a crucial role in the Nazi plans. The Germans used propaganda to appear as though they were caring for Jews, but millions were being brutally slaughtered. Nazi soldiers were trained to deceive Jews until their death.

In one of the most inhumane acts in world history, countless Jews were told that the concentration camps they were being taken to were communities of safety and rest. Some were shown pictures of a beautiful paradise only to arrive at the sterile barracks confused. At the camp named *Auschwitz*, Jews worked to unknowingly lay the foundation for the very buildings that would be their own "death factories."

Like the ruthless deception and false propaganda used by the Nazi's to execute their evil plan, false teachers and the kingdom of darkness use lies to attempt to bring down the church and destroy the kingdom of God. Discernment is crucial to preventing spiritual casualties. . . .

There is a massive wave of experience-driven theology sweeping over the church. If you find that your church or your favorite ministry uses “expert eye-witnesses” claims in order to propagate things that are contradictory to the Bible, the writing could be on the wall.

As Christians, it’s great to have moments of awe in light of what God is doing in the church. But if those moments are built on the mystical experiences of someone like Jesus Culture’s Kim Walker-Smith claiming that Jesus appeared in a vision and behaved like “Stretch Armstrong,” or Bethel Church’s Seth Dahl (Redding, CA) explaining how Jesus appeared to him in a vision to ask *him* (yes, Seth) for forgiveness, things have stretched into dangerous territory.

Right now our culture is waging war on absolute truth by using subjective experience. People can identify as whatever gender they “feel like” they are, women can kill babies because they “feel like” it’s ok, and gay-marriage is ok in more churches than ever because pastors “feel like” we should just love people and not “judge.”

If our church or our pastor is building on the foundation of experience to define the truth, is that much different than the world? True Christians must be committed to trusting the Word of God as the authoritative and sufficient filter through which every experience must pass through.

. . . The believer equipped with the Word of God has everything needed to stand firm against enemy tactics. God has given us the ability to define deception and enjoy the security of walking in truth.

- <http://bit.ly/2H7qzPi>

What a warning that God has given to us here in Joshua as we see the children of Israel deceived and what a warning to us of the dangers of deception.

Make no mistake about it. Deception is out there, and it continues to grow and come into many churches. But here's the thing. Don't base what you believe on your feelings or experience, ***SEEK COUNSEL FROM GOD AND HIS WORD AND YOU WILL NOT GO WRONG! DO NOT BE DECEIVED!***