

Do Not Be Deceived My Beloved Brethren - Part 2

Harold Lee

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Well, good afternoon everyone! Well, I began a series of sermons regarding us as the future Bride of Christ, which are the firstfruits, being deceived. And in that sermon which was entitled Do Not Be Deceived My Beloved Brethren - Part 1, we fundamentally asked, studied, and answered two questions.

The first question was “What is being deceived? What does it mean to be deceived?” And from God’s word, we defined the concept and we saw that being deceived is a spiritual seduction by Satan. We read in the Book of Revelation that the firstfruits were referred to as virgins, which means they were undefiled and pure before God, and, because of that, they were acceptable as a bride for Jesus Christ. Remember they’re wearing white.

The second question that we examined was “Is it possible; is it even possible for us with God’s spirit to be deceived?” And we saw that, indeed, it was a possibility that we are under a constant attack by Satan and his demons; that they are continually trying to beset us and to deceive us, or, as I use the term, to spiritually seduce us.

After looking at this subject, I mentioned this would be the first of a series of at least three sermons. I just want to say it will be a series of at least four sermons based on preparing this one, but after us examining our vulnerability to this spiritual seduction in the first one, I said that the second sermon would look at the methods that Satan uses to attempt to seduce us and that will be at least for two sermons. And then, the final one would be to look at the resources that God has provided us to be able to fend off those attacks and to prevail.

I’d like to start in 2 Corinthians chapter 2. We’re going to break into a discourse from Paul, and this was where he was telling the Corinthians to take the man that had been in the incestuous relationship with his stepmother, to take him back because he had repented and his fruits bore that out. I’m going to pick it up in verse 11. It says:

2 Corinthians 2:11. *lest Satan should take advantage of us; for we are not ignorant of his devices. (NKJV)*

And that word, the implication is “to get an advantage” means *to defraud or to make a gain*.

I want to read that out of a couple of translations. The New Jerusalem Bible says:

2 Corinthians 2:11. *to avoid being outwitted by Satan, whose scheming we know only too well. (NJB)*

The Geneva Bible says:

2 Corinthians 2:11. *lest Satan should circumvent us: for we are not ignorant of his enterprises. (GEN)*

His job is right now to try to thwart the plan of God. He has attempted that in the Garden of Eden. He attempted it with Israel. He succeeded in those, at least temporarily. He tried it with Christ and he failed, and he's still attempting it with us.

The New American Bible:

2 Corinthians 2:11. *so that we might not be taken advantage of by Satan, for we are not unaware of his purposes. (NAB)*

The New Living Translation and I thought this was very good. It's just a translation but it says:

2 Corinthians 2:11. *so that Satan will not outsmart us. For we are very familiar with his evil schemes. (NLT)*

Before we get into the meat of the subject that I want, and this is one of the reasons that it's going to extend to at least two sermons because there are some points that I think are very important that I want to make, but I also at the end of last time I said there was a loose end, a back story that I wanted to tie up a loose end.

The first point I want, and it's been said before in many, many different ways but I want to say it again so that it soaks in. And that is: God is the Sovereign Power, the Sovereign Authority that exists and Satan cannot have access to us in any form unless God specifically allows it.

Satan is not a free independent agent that can do anything he desires. He has to go to God (and we're going to see that) and receive permission from Him to test us, to entice us, to buffet us. And for the sake of time, I will refer you to the forty-first chapter of the Book of Job to show that relationship of God and Satan and also Job 1 where God gives very specific information relating to this process.

I'd like to go over to Revelation 12, Revelation 12 and verse 9. We'll pick it up there. It gives us some very specific information regarding Satan and some of his actions. Revelation 12:9, it says:

Revelation 12:9. *So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.*

10) Then I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, "Now salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ have come, for the

accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night, has been cast down. (NKJV)

Have you ever read that and wondered how many times Satan has gone before God with your name on his lips, or my name, or a spouse, or a friend, or a fellow member of the body of Christ, a congregation, that he would be allowed to have greater access to you?

Be turning over to Luke 22 and I'm going to start in verse 21 to pick up the context of this. Keep in mind, as we turn to Luke 22, this was the Passover evening just before Jesus' betrayal and arrest leading to His trial and His crucifixion. I'll pick it up in verse 21. It says, and I'm breaking into it:

Luke 22:21. *But behold, the hand of My betrayer is with Me on the table.*

22) And truly the Son of Man goes as it has been determined, but woe to that man by whom He is betrayed!"

23) Then they began to question among themselves, which of them it was who would do this thing.

24) Now there was also a dispute among them, as to which of them should be considered the greatest. (NKJV)

Those in a way don't seem to fit, but if you could put yourself into the moment, Christ just said, "One of you is going to betray Me." And they're trying to decide and to justify why it wasn't me; why it was somebody else, which naturally led them to explaining their qualities and their devotion to their calling and why it wasn't them. And I suspect, Peter being the most vociferous and that was his nature.

But let's look at this very important verse. Skip down to verse 31.

31) And the Lord said, "Simon, Simon! ... (NKJV)

And that's interesting that He said the word twice, "Simon, Simon!" If you'll remember, he said with Mary, "Mary, Mary." That's a term of endearment. It means like you say to someone, "My son, my son," or something like that, but He was trying to show a love and convey that when He said this.

31) And the Lord said, "Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift you as wheat. (NKJV)

And if you look at that word "you" there, it's plural. He wasn't just saying it to Peter; He was saying "you" plural. Satan goes before God and requests that God let him run Peter, run them through the mill, if you would. And that would be "to sift as wheat" means "Let me grind him down. Let me turn him into powder and then we'll see what he's made of."

Now, did Jesus say, “No way! Not a chance. This is not going to happen on my watch.”? Is that what Christ said? Let’s read on verse 32.

32) But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to Me, strengthen your brethren.” (NKJV)

Christ didn’t say, “It’s not going to happen. I’ve prevented this.” God the Father allowed it and He said, “I’ve asked that God give you the strength. I’ve asked that God give you the faith to prevail. And once you go through this, you’re going to be a better person, better able to serve and I want you to use that lesson that you’ve learned from going through this to be able to help the brethren, to make them stronger.”

We don’t have a detailed interchange that took place between Satan and God as we did with Job, but as we read that Jesus’ prayer was not to prevent it, but to give Peter the tools that he needed to bear up under it, so that as he came through it he would be spiritually stronger. As we can read later, he was to use that trial, that sifting, to provide strength and encouragement to the brethren.

Let me just read this from the Adam Clarke Commentary. It says:

While [you] and the others are contending for supremacy, Satan is endeavoring to destroy you all; but I have prayed for you as being in most danger.

And then further on:

Satan [has] desired you — That is, all the apostles, but particularly the three contenders: the plural noun ὑμᾶς [humas (hoo-mas`), Greek 5209] sufficiently proves that these words were not addressed to Peter all alone. Satan had already got one, Judas; he had nearly got another, Peter; and he wished to have all. But we see by this that the devil cannot even tempt a man unless he receive permission. He desires to do all evil; he is permitted only to do some. (Luke 22:31)

And that’s from a secular Adam Clarke Commentary.

If you wanted to sum it all up, what happens in the spiritual realm concerning us and why God allows the trials, in a very direct, immediate outcome of that trial these two verses convey it. That sort of says it all. Satan goes before God. He makes charges. He makes requests. God allows it as it suits God. Not for our destruction, but for our strengthening and for our spiritual growth to the intent—not just that we get through it—but then we get through it with the ability to serve one another better, to be a better help, a better example to one another.

Brethren, our trials, despite the pain and suffering they bring on us, have a positive effect, not only on our spiritual growth, the self part of it, but our ability to encourage and help and strengthen each other after we go through it. Just that concept, just that idea,

that there's more involved than just us, should make us take a different approach to what God allows and why He's allowing it.

What is our prayer in the middle of this? Not, "God get me out of this!" It should be, "Father, you've allowed this. Please give me the strength and the faith to bear up and to prevail and in doing so to be more pleasing and acceptable to you and to be better able to serve your people.

So the summary of point one, again: Satan does not have unfettered access to any of us, but only when and to the extent that's allowed by God. And it's not for our destruction. It's not for our hurt, but it's for our refining to make us more of what God wants us to be.

The second point that I'm going to make and in doing this I want to issue a very strong warning: We, as God's people, should endeavor to understand the methods that Satan will use to tempt us. We should not be ignorant of his devices. We should understand that, but we should never—and I want to bold and underline "We should never attempt to try to understand Satan."

We should not try to get into his head and to understand where he's coming from. Satan is evil and he's corrupt. And he and his demons should be left alone. Look over in Leviticus 19.

Halloween is one of the most abominable periods of time when a "Christian world" openly celebrates Satan and the demons and the death and the darkness that surrounds it. We live in a very small town here, 950 people. Not many houses. You can go through the town in about five minutes. And I have to tell you the Halloween decorations of graves and hangman's nooses and spider webs and just disgusting stuff far outnumbers in my estimation all the decorations from Easter and from Christmas and all the others. You wonder if they have to rent a storage locker just to keep their Halloween decorations. Right down the street there is a garage and it's painted with teeth with blood dripping off of them. I don't think they have to repaint their garage, but it's just incredible. In fact, here they actually have two nights of trick or treating! And you would think one would be too many, but again, they're all honoring Satan their god and his work.

Leviticus 19 and verse 31, notice what it says.

Leviticus 19:31. 'Give no regard to mediums and familiar spirits; ... (NKJV)

No regard. Don't regard them. Don't wonder about them. Don't try to understand them. Don't try to get in their heads.

31b) ... do not seek after them, to be defiled by them: I am the [Eternal] your God. (NKJV)

Don't dwell on it. Don't try to understand. Don't study it. I will tell you and I have seen it personally, that if a person goes down that path to invite a demon into their lives, the end is a very sad story. And again, I have personally witnessed or been involved in the aftermath of more than one person that has decided to try to understand or look into even the occult and to understand hexagrams and why is Stonehenge shaped the way it is and all of that. It's a very dark road that a person can start down. Now that being said, we should not fear the spirit world including Satan and his demons because, as we just saw, they're minions under God but we should not be curious or try to figure them out. Stay away from it.

It's interesting they call them "familiar spirits." You see, demons want to cuddle up and form a relationship with a person just like a seductress does. Angels don't. That's why they're called familiar spirits. In fact, I can remember many years ago when somebody was suspected of having demon influence, they would say, "They have a 'friend,'" because, again, they are familiar.

An angel that is sent by God is not that way. They will come. They will do what they're told. They'll deliver a message and then they're gone. They're not to be worshipped as you can read in Revelation. Not to be regarded other than they are a messenger from God.

Go over in Acts 12. I just want to show you something about the nature of a true messenger, a true angel from God. And remember an angel is sent by God to deliver a message, to perform something. They do it. They're gone and, in most cases, a person doesn't even realize it until afterwards. Acts 12 verse 7, and this was where Peter was in prison, it says:

Acts 11:7. *Now behold, an angel of the Lord stood by him, and a light shone in the prison; ... (NKJV)*

Now, I want you to notice this. Angels are not even real (and I'm trying to think of the word)...they're not real "social." They're not real up to being social. Again, they are sent on a job. Notice the angel didn't whisper, "Peter, wake up." He slapped him upside the head. It says:

7b) ... and he struck Peter on the side and raised him up, saying, "Arise quickly!" And his chains fell off his hands.

8) Then the angel said ..., "Gird yourself and tie on your sandals"; and so he did. And he said to him, "Put [your garments on] and follow me." (NKJV)

There was not chit-chat. "Have you been eating okay? How's the weather? How's the wife and kids?" It was, "Do this. Do this and do this."

9) So he went out and followed him, and did not know that what was done by the angel was real, but [he] thought he was seeing a vision.

10) When they were past the first and the second guard posts, they came to the iron gate that leads to the city, which opened to them of its own accord; and they went out and went down one street, [Notice!] and immediately the angel departed from him. (NKJV)

God sent him [the angel] on a job. He went there, slapped him upside the head, said, "Put on your shoes. Get up." The chains fell off. "Follow me." Took Peter out and the angel was gone.

You know the account of Gabriel visiting Mary and announcing her being the mother of the Messiah. I'm not going to have you to turn there, but you can read Luke 1 verses 25 through 38. And I'll read verses 37 and 38, it says:

Luke 1:37. For with God nothing [is] impossible."

38) Then Mary said, "Behold the maidservant of the Lord! Let it be to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her. (NKJV)

The angel did not stick around and try to develop a relationship. He came. Again, you can read the account yourself. He was there. He did what he did and he was gone.

I think those of you that know Daisi Swint know that she was in the twin towers. She was up I think on the eighty-something floor when the plane hit. And she went over to the exit. A man came and said, "Follow me," led them down the stairs, out the front door. And she asked another guy, "What happened to that man?" He said, "There was no man with you." She didn't even realize it, but he said, "There was no man with you."

I remember Roz Buchanan in Florida when they were swept out into the water. And someone came out to her and said, "Hold on to this, and she was brought in. She looked and he was gone. And if I remember right, people said, "You were by yourself."

Angels are not social beings. They're on a mission. They'll do it and they will be gone. And, as I mentioned, they'll be gone before you even realize it. I've personally witnessed this myself as well.

So let me just recap these points.

- Satan does not have unfettered access to us, but only when and to the extent that God allows. And it's not for our destruction, but for our refining to make us more of what God wants us to be.
- And, second, while we need to understand Satan's devices and the methods that he uses to seduce us, we should never desire or attempt to try to understand him or his demons. If there was ever playing with fire, that's it.

Look over in Proverbs chapter 6.

I'm going to make a confession to you. At the end of my sermon, I asked you to read Proverbs 7. I'm going to apologize. We're not even going to make it to Proverbs 7 today. There's just so much we have to cover before we get there, but I just want to give you an introduction to that in Proverbs 6 and verse 20. It says:

Proverbs 6:20. *My son, keep your father's command, And do not forsake the law of your mother.*

21) Bind them continually upon your heart; Tie them around your neck.

22) When you roam, they will lead you; When you sleep, they will keep you; And when you awake, they will speak with you.

23) For the commandment is a lamp, And the law a light; Reproofs of instruction are the way of life, (NKJV)

We're going to look at the preceding verses more in depth in the final part of this series because it gives us keys for avoiding the pitfalls that follow. And now, let's go to verse 24 because here are the pitfalls of not following those.

24) To keep you from the evil woman, from the flattering tongue of a seductress.

25) Do not lust after her beauty in your heart, nor let her allure you with her eyelids.

26) For by means of a harlot a man is reduced to a crust of bread; and an adulteress will prey upon his precious life. (NKJV)

And notice the end.

27) Can a man take fire to his bosom, And his clothes not be burned? (NKJV)

Have you ever heard the saying, "Someone is playing with fire"? The other day my granddaughter and I were out in the garden. This was before the freeze came and we have tomatoes out there. And we usually pick them. They're vine ripened. So we usually pick them and bring them in and then Freda will put them into the salad. She wanted to pick some of the tomatoes for our lunch. So, I said, "Go ahead." She had her shirt on and she pulled the tail of it and used it as a basket. And she was picking up and as she came in the house she had these tomatoes in her shirt.

And as I read this, I recalled and thought that how impossible would it have been for her to have picked up coals or something that would hurt her because you carry them next to your bosom! You're holding them close to you and it would be impossible to have that close to you and not get burned. No one would ever consider doing that. No one would ever consider taking their shirt, going over to the barbeque with tongs and start to put the charcoal in your lap.

It just doesn't make sense, but thinking one can sidle up against a harlot and hear flattery and be around for her allure and not be seduced by her is equally ridiculous. The Bible says that. These are not my words. This is what God says. You can't play with fire and not get burned. It's a law. It's like gravity.

Turn over to 1 Corinthians 6 and I'll start in verse 13. It says:

1 Corinthians 6:13. *Food [is] for the stomach and the stomach for foods, but God will destroy both it and them. Now the body is not for sexual immorality but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body.*

14) *And God both raised up the Lord and will also raise us up by His power.*

15) *Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ and make them members of a harlot? Certainly not!*

16) *Or do you not know that he who is joined to a harlot is one body with her? For "the two," He says, "shall become one flesh."*

17) *But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit with Him.*

18) *Flee sexual immorality. Every sin that a man does is outside the body, but he who commits sexual immorality sins against his own body.*

19) *Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own?*

20) *For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's. (NKJV)*

I want to examine the last four verses of Proverbs in more detail and we'll come back to it, but, as I mentioned last time, I want to tie up a loose end from my previous sermon. As I ended the sermon, the last major part that we covered was Numbers 25:18 and that was the incident of the Israelites which had committed harlotry with the women of Moab in the plain sight of the people near the tabernacle. And Phineas, the son of Eleazar, took the javelin in his hand and went into the ten and thrust them through and stopped a plague that had already killed 24,000.

And I said there was a back story to this incident that I would cover during this sermon that has everything to do with the methods that Satan uses to seduce us. You see this incident was not just a happenstance that came about, but it was a very carefully planned and very carefully executed conspiracy to entice the Israelites to sin against God and to incur His anger. Look over in Number 22 verse 1. This is the back story behind what we read last time because it turns out there was a lot more behind it. Numbers 22:1, it says:

Numbers 22:1. *Then the children of Israel moved, and camped in the plains of Moab on the side of the Jordan across from Jericho [which is where they were].*

2) *Now Balak the son of Zippor saw all that Israel had done to the Amorites. (NKJV)*

And he was the king of the Moabites at that time.

3) *And Moab was exceedingly afraid of the people because they were many, and Moab was sick with dread because of the children of Israel.*

4) So Moab said to the elders of Midian, "Now this company will lick up everything around us, as an ox licks up the grass of the field." And Balak the son of Zippor was king of the Moabites at that time. (NKJV)

And it's interesting because Balak means *Devastator, to lay waste*. And, just as an aside, if you consider the children of Israel as a type of what God is doing with us now and on our journey, when Joshua and them crossed over, both Balak and Balaam were killed by them later on. In other words, God allowed them there. He allowed them things, but when He was done with them, they were taken off of the scene. But just as in the future when Christ returns with His army, Satan and his demons are going to be completely neutralized and the armies that oppose Christ are going to be destroyed.

Verse 5:

5) Then he sent messengers to Balaam the son of Beor at Pethor, which is near the River in the land of the sons of his people, to call him, saying: "Look, a people [have] come from Egypt. See, they cover the face of the earth, and are settling next to me!

6) Therefore please come at once, curse this people for me, for they are too mighty for me. Perhaps I shall be able to defeat them and drive them out of the land, for I know that he whom you bless is blessed, and he whom you curse is cursed."

7) So the elders of Moab and the elders of Midian departed with the diviner's fee in their hand, and they came to Balaam and spoke to him the words of Balak. (NKJV)

Now skip down to verse 35.

35) Then the Angel of the Lord said to Balaam, "Go with the men, but only the word that I speak to you, that you shall speak." So Balaam went with the princes of Balak. (NKJV)

In the past, some have wondered if Balaam was a priest of God. The short answer is "No, he wasn't." If you look at Joshua 13:22, he was a soothsayer. He was very covetous. He was a person that was connected with the occult. He would sell blessings and curses for a profit. Just like Satan, Balaam had to get God's permission to act. It didn't mean he liked God. Just as Satan hates God and God set limits with Satan, He set limits with what Balaam was allowed to do. Verse 36:

36) Now when Balak heard that Balaam was coming, he went out to meet him at the city of Moab, which is on the border at the Arnon, the boundary of the territory.

37) Then Balak said to Balaam, "Did I not earnestly send to you, calling for you? Why did you not come to me? Am I not able to honor you?" (NKJV)

Now the back story to this is don't forget the encounter and why Balaam felt so strongly that he couldn't say anything because remember he was almost a dead man had it not been for his donkey. And that preceded this and it was, I believe, a final warning to say, "If you don't do what you're told, you're a dead man." And as covetous as Balaam was, he valued his life more than anything else.

38) And Balaam said to Balak, "Look, I have come to you! Now, have I any power at all to say anything? The word that God puts in my mouth, that I must speak." (NKJV)

Remember God used Cyrus. He used Nebuchadnezzar. He used Satan to fulfill His plans and His purposes and He was using Balaam. And He frustrated the efforts of Balak to have the Israelites cursed. So, did it work? Balak tried to get Balaam to curse Israel three times and God didn't allow it. Just as God allowed the witch of Endor to tell Saul of his demise, just as God allowed the lying spirit to prophesy to Ahab, God allowed Balaam to deliver a prophecy to Balak of their demise at a later time by the Israelites. For the sake of time you can read the prophecy yourself starting in verse 14 of Numbers 24, but let's go to Numbers 24. I want to start in verse 8. This was the prophecy.

Numbers 24:8. "God brings him out of Egypt; He has strength like a wild ox; He shall consume the nations, his enemies; He shall break their bones and pierce them with his arrows.

9) 'He bows down, he lies down as a lion; and as a lion, who shall rouse him?' "Blessed is he who blesses you, and cursed is he who curses you."

10) Then Balak's anger was aroused against Balaam, and he struck his hands together; and Balak said to Balaam, "I called you to curse my enemies, and look, you have bountifully blessed them these three times!

11) Now therefore, flee to your place. I said I would greatly honor you, but in fact, the Lord has kept you back from honor."

12) So Balaam said to Balak, "Did I not also speak to your messengers whom you sent to me, saying,

13) 'If Balak were to give me his house full of silver and gold, I could not go beyond the word of the Lord, ... (NKJV)

And I might add, just as God does with Satan.

13b) ... to do good or bad of my own will. What the Lord says, that I must speak'? (NKJV)

And here's the back story now. God would not allow Balaam to recommend a full assault on Israel. He just wouldn't allow it.

What did He allow? Go over to Revelation chapter 2 and this is the back story to it. You see God said, "You can't curse them. You can't get the armies to go against them," but here's what God did allow. Revelation 2:14.

Revelation 2:14. *But I have a few things against you, ... (NKJV)*

And we're breaking into it.

14b) ... because you have there those who hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the children of Israel, ... (NKJV)

And what is that?

14 continued) to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit sexual immorality. (NKJV)

You see Balaam told Balak, "God will not allow me to directly curse Israel, but here's how you can do it. Take your best looking women and have them seduce the Israelites. Have them introduce them to your worship and entice them to participate. To show you're serious, have the leaders send their daughters as well and make them believe that they're irresistible. If you succeed in this, there's no need to curse them. God Himself will destroy them."

Brethren, do you think that's what God wants to do with us? To entice us to sin because God has not allowed him [Satan] to directly destroy us? As I said in my first sermon, God has put a hedge around every one of us that He will not allow Satan to spiritually rape us against our will, but God will and has allowed Satan to entice us to commit spiritual fornication with him. And we need to be on guard for that.

This is all—I don't know about you—it's very heavy for me to consider. And, as I mentioned before I'm not going to get through all of this today. I want to just digress just to kind of lighten it up because in this whole story there is also a very upbeat and a positive example that will not only point out that God is a rewarder of those who seek Him, to seek to do His will, but that can have a positive impact for many generations to come.

Let's go back to Numbers 25. Again, I'm just shifting gears. This is a point that's outside, but I hope with all of this very heavy information that this will give us hope, will show us why it's worth keeping ourselves for. Numbers 25:11, it says:

Numbers 25:11. *"Phinehas the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, has turned back My wrath ... (NKJV)*

Remember he was the one that went in and actually stabbed the javelin through. And by the way, if you go back and read, Cozbi the woman was actually a daughter of one of the governors that were in Midian. So again, they sent their "A-team" out to try to seduce Israel at this time. It says:

11b) ... because he was zealous with My zeal among them, so that I did not consume the children of Israel in My zeal.

12) Therefore say, 'Behold, I give to him My covenant of peace;

13) and it shall be to him and his descendants after him a covenant of an everlasting priesthood, because he was zealous for his God, and made atonement for the children of Israel.'" (NKJV)

So God, because of what Phineas did, God said, "I'm going to have an everlasting covenant; he's going to have an everlasting priesthood because of his zealousness."

Don't turn there. I think I mentioned this before. Ezra 7 shows, and you can look at it in your own study, that Zadok was chosen by lot during David's reign and was the one that actually anointed Solomon king. And his granddaughter, Jerusha, married King Uzziah and Uzziah and his son were both recorded as doing good, what was right in God's eyes, except in Uzziah's last few years. He let pride get to him, but other than that, he did what was right in God's eyes. Ezra went on to say that the sons of Zadok continue. They were the priests through the rebuilding of the temple and they actually remained as the priests until the second destruction of the temple right after, I think it was around 70 A.D.

So, here's the question. They're gone. Does God remember? Is God faithful to His words? I want to look forward because God said it was an everlasting covenant. Turn over to Ezekiel 44. Ezekiel chapter 40 through the end of the book is a prophecy, a very detailed account after Christ returns, of the rebuilding and the restoration of Jerusalem after He returns. In fact, as you're turning, the Book of Ezekiel ends with this statement; this is Ezekiel 48:35. It says:

Ezekiel 48:35. *All the way around shall be eighteen thousand cubits; ... (NKJV)*

And 18,000 cubits is about 30-35 miles I believe. And in Solomon's time, Jerusalem was about 4 miles. So, it's going to be quite a bit larger than it was.

35b) ... and the name of the city from that day shall be: **THE LORD IS THERE.**" (NKJV)

It's obvious from reading the prophecy that the Levitical priesthood, as we will see, is going to be resumed. Sacrifices are going to be resumed. Physical circumcision will be resumed. And, in my opinion, it implies a physical covenant being re-established—only my opinion.

But let's start in Ezekiel 44 verse 5. It says:

Ezekiel 44:5. *And the Lord said to me, "Son of man, mark well, see with your eyes and hear with your ears, all that I say to you concerning all the ordinances of the house of the Lord and all its laws. Mark well who may enter the house and all who go out from the sanctuary. (NKJV)*

He says, "I want you to take special note of what I'm saying here and who is allowed to go in and out."

6) *"Now say to the rebellious, to the house of Israel, 'Thus says the Lord God: "O house of Israel, let Us have no more of all your abominations.*

7) *When you brought in foreigners, uncircumcised in heart and uncircumcised in flesh, to be in My sanctuary to defile it — My house — and when you offered My food, the fat and the blood, then they broke My covenant because of all your abominations.*

8) *And you have not kept charge of My holy things, but you have set others to keep charge of My sanctuary for you."*

9) *Thus says the Lord God: "No foreigner, uncircumcised in heart or uncircumcised in flesh, shall enter My sanctuary, including any foreigner who is among the children of Israel. (NKJV)*

This is in the future. This is after Christ returns.

10) *And the Levites who went far from Me, when Israel went astray, who strayed away from Me after their idols, they shall bear their iniquity.*

11) *Yet they shall be ministers in My sanctuary, as gatekeepers of the house and ministers of the house; they shall slay the burnt offering and the sacrifice for the people, and they shall stand before them to minister to them.*

12) *Because they ministered to them before their idols and caused the house of Israel to fall into iniquity, therefore I have raised My hand in an oath against them," says the Lord God, "that they shall bear their iniquity.*

13) *And they shall not come near Me to minister to Me as priest, nor come near any of My holy things, nor into the Most Holy Place; but they shall bear their shame and their abominations which they have committed.*

14) *Nevertheless I will make them keep charge of the temple, for all its work, and for all that has to be done in it.*

15) *"But the priests, the Levites, the sons of Zadok, ... (NKJV)*

And again, remember the direct descendents of Phineas who God made an everlasting covenant with:

15b) *... who kept charge of My sanctuary when the children of Israel went astray from Me, they shall come near Me to minister to Me; and they shall stand before Me to offer to Me the fat and the blood," says the Lord God.*

16) *"They shall enter My sanctuary, and they shall come near My table to minister to Me, and they shall keep My charge. (NKJV)*

Does God ever forget His promises? No! Does He keep them down to the very last detail? God's character and His intent are perfect and without a flaw. God has made some tremendous promises to us. And that's why I find this so encouraging. God never forgets. Will He remember the promises that He's made to us? Will God

remember the covenant that we entered into? Brethren, the absolute, stake your lives truth is God is faithful to His word and, yes, He will.

Now let's go back to the subject at hand. Let's go back and specifically look at Satan's devices. Let's go to Proverbs chapter 6. And I just want to zero in on this. Proverbs 6 and verse 24 says:

Proverbs 6:24. *To keep you from the evil woman, ... (NKJV)*

And, as we move forward here, both Proverbs 6 and when we get into Proverbs 7 in the next sermon, we know that this instruction has a physical application and it's really the most common way this scripture is interpreted. If that was the case, once we get past about 30 years old, we could remove ourselves from this study because we're no longer young men and this is specifically talking about young men. So, you make it to thirty and you're Scott free. Wrong. It doesn't include the ladies and let me assure you they're as vulnerable as anyone.

But this scripture, brethren, has a tremendous and potentially more destructive penalty in the spiritual application. And that's what we're going to examine as we move forward. And with that in mind, let's establish that the symbolism of the Bible of a woman can be one of two things. It can be either a religious system or it can represent a governmental structure.

Turn over to Revelation 12. When we think of a religious system and a woman, we usually think of an evil false one, but the Church of God is also pictured as a woman. Revelation 12:1, it says:

Revelation 12:1. *Now a great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a garland of twelve stars.*
2) *Then being with child, she cried out in labor and in pain to give birth.*
3) *And another sign appeared in heaven: behold, a great, fiery red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and seven diadems on his heads.*
4) *His tail drew a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was ready to give birth, to devour her Child as soon as it was born.*
5) *She bore a male Child who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron. And her Child was caught up to God and His throne.*
6) *Then the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God, that they should feed her there one thousand two hundred and sixty days.*
(NKJV)

Skip down to verse 13.

13) *Now when the dragon saw that he had been cast to the earth, he persecuted the woman who gave birth to the male Child.*

14) *But the woman was given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness to her place, where she is nourished for a time and times and half a time, from the presence of the serpent.*

15) *So the serpent spewed water out of his mouth like a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away by the flood.*

16) *But the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed up the flood which the dragon had spewed out of his mouth.*

17) *And the dragon was enraged with the woman, and he went to make war with the rest of her offspring, who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ. (NKJV)*

So a woman is not always as a religious system. The Church of God is also considered as a woman, but let's go over to Revelation 17 now and we will see a great religious system as a woman, as a harlot. Revelation 17:1.

Revelation 17:1. *Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and talked with me, saying to me, "Come, I will show you the judgment of the great harlot who sits on many waters,*

2) *with whom the kings of the earth committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth were made drunk with the wine of her fornication."*

3) *So he carried me away in the Spirit into the wilderness. And I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast which was full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns.*

4) *The woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls, having in her hand a golden cup full of abominations and the filthiness of her fornication.*

5) *And on her forehead a name was written: MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH. (NKJV)*

Notice that this woman had many daughters that were also harlots.

6) *I saw the woman, drunk with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus. And when I saw her, I marveled with great amazement.*

7) *But the angel said to me, "Why did you marvel? I will tell you the mystery of the woman and of the beast that carries her, which has the seven heads and the ten horns. (NKJV)*

And in verse 18, it says:

18) *And the woman whom you saw is that great city which reigns over the kings of the earth." (NKJV)*

It's clearly a false, counterfeit religious system. Now let's go down to Revelation 18 and verse 1.

Revelation 18:1. *After these things I saw another angel coming down from heaven, having great authority, and the earth was illuminated with his glory.*

2) *And he cried mightily with a loud voice, saying, "Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and has become a dwelling place of demons, a prison for every foul spirit, and a cage for every unclean and hated bird!*

3) *For all the nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth have become rich through the abundance of her luxury."*

4) *And I heard another voice from heaven saying, "Come out of her, my people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues.*

5) *For her sins have reached to heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities.*

6) *Render to her just as she rendered to you, and repay her double according to her works; in the cup which she has mixed, mix double for her.*

7) *In the measure that she glorified herself and lived luxuriously, in the same measure give her torment and sorrow; for she says in her heart, 'I sit as queen, and am no widow, and will not see sorrow.' (NKJV)*

Verse 10:

10) *Standing at a distance for fear of her torment, saying, 'Alas, alas, that great city Babylon, that mighty city! For in one hour your judgment has come.'*

11) *"And the merchants of the earth will weep and mourn over her, for no one buys their merchandise anymore: (NKJV)*

Verse 15:

15) *The merchants of these things, who became rich by her, will stand at a distance for fear of her torment, weeping and wailing, (NKJV)*

Verse 23:

23) *The light of a lamp shall not shine in you anymore, and the voice of bridegroom and bride shall not be heard in you anymore. For your merchants were the great men of the earth, for by your sorcery ... (NKJV)*

And that means *by your magic, by your witchcraft.*

23b) *... all the nations were deceived.*

24) *And in her was found the blood of prophets and saints, and of all who were slain on the earth." (NKJV)*

This woman describes a worldwide system of government, a worldwide system of banking and trade, of entertainment as you go on to read. It's the Babylonian system. It's described as a global system and all of the leaders, both governmental and business, are a part of it.

Aren't you glad this doesn't describe the good ol' United States? Or does it? What is the center of commerce and trade? The center of banking? The center of many large corporations? It's our country. Are we not identified by Lady Liberty? Is not our entire legal system depicted by Lady Justice? We cannot by any stretch of the imagination exclude ourselves from, as a nation, our business as a system from this. The entire world has bought into this. It's not something that's happening way over there.

This permeates the earth and we're called to be separate from it. We're called to come out of it. We're called not to involve ourselves in it. And I'll tell you as all of you, it's hard to watch. It's hard and it hurts to see suffering and injustice all around us. But, brethren, God's going to fix it. And God's going to fix it in His way, in His time when it will do the most good. If we could fix it now, all we've done is delay the inevitable because for it to stay fixed, other things—hearts—have to change! And we can't do that. We can only work on the outside. If we become entangled, it clearly tells us, we're going to partake in her punishment. That's not my words. Again, that's directly from God. Reread verse 4 of Revelation 18.

Revelation 18:4. *And I heard another voice from heaven saying, "Come out of her, my people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues. (NKJV)*

We're not to get entangled in it.

I know there are some that have felt that this system includes us, rightly so, but that we should physically get out of this country and move somewhere else. And here's my question: It's a worldwide system! All nations! Where are you going to go?

Joseph and Daniel and Shadrach and Meshach and Abed-nego were in a system. They served in that system, but they were not part of that system. As Christ said, His kingdom isn't of this world. That's our system and, brethren, we should invest our entire lives to becoming part of that.

Let's go back to Proverbs 6 now. It says, verse 24:

Proverb 6:24. *To keep you from the evil woman, From the flattering tongue of a seductress. (NKJV)*

Again, I want to read this out of Jamieson, Fausset and Brown. It says: "... literally, from the flattery of the strange tongue, implying that the strange woman ... is all tongue, and nothing substantial. " It's promises. There's no substance to it.

What can a government, what can a corporation promise us that they can keep? That they can fulfill? It's flattery. It's empty.

It says: "... 'The commandment shall keep [you].'" This one evil-namely, whoredom-is given as an instance to show how the commandment can keep us from all kinds of

departure from God, which is spiritual adultery.” That’s from Jamieson, Fausset and Brown.

Notice this is referred to as “an evil woman.” This is referring to the latter two women that we just read about in Revelation 17 and 18. “The flattering tongue” means there is no substance. You can make all the promises you want, even with the best of intents, but there is so much out of a person’s control.

When Satan seduced Eve in the Garden of Eden, he flattered her by telling her that if she ate of that tree she could be like God. She would be enlightened because she had within herself the ability to know what was right and wrong.

As I said in the first sermon when I read it, it records that Satan was more subtle—cunning, crafty, wily, tricky—than any beast of the field. And the definition of this word was *clever at achieving one’s aims by direct or indirect means*. But let’s raise this pride and arrogance that defines Satan’s character to another level. Again, we know that he, in several instances where it describes Satan, his pride is what brought him down. He is the father of pride as we can read in the Book of Job.

Our Homeland Security System—there’s what? Five level threats. There’s low and guarded and elevated and high and severe. Our Christians walk you know where it says, “Be sober. Be vigilant.” We should always be running at the highest level—the severe—since that’s the consequences if we fall to it, an attack that will overwhelm us.

But this is a higher one on the spiritual realm and that one is called “No hope.” Once you go beyond severe, there’s no hope. One of Satan’s primary targets was to attack and seduce the only being that could provide that hope. Turn over to Matthew 4. Remember as we read this to keep in mind that the same tactics are used on us. Matthew 4, this gives us a very good way of looking at and approaching when we are hit with the fiery darts of Satan. Matthew 4:1.

Matthew 4:1. *Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. (NKJV)*

At this point, after spiritually preparing for the most important battle of His existence and drawing close to God through fasting and prayer, God allowed Satan access to Christ in a greater way than previous. Verse 2:

*2) And when He had fasted forty days and forty nights, afterward He was hungry.
3) Now when the tempter came to Him, he said, "If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread." (NKJV)*

“Show us that You are who You claim to be.” It was the same taunt that was used when He was hanging on the cross at His crucifixion. “Well, if You’re the Son of God, save Yourself! Come on down.” Notice how He answered, verse 4.

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

It says, "He's hungry." Let me quote the entire scripture because Christ's mind was not on Himself that He was hungry that He was trying to satisfy some part of Him that was crying out for food after that fast. Rather it was focused on obeying God. And that quote is directly from Deuteronomy 8:3. Let me just read it to you.

Deuteronomy 8:3. *So He humbled you, allowed you to hunger, and fed you with manna which you did not know nor did your fathers know, that He might make you know that man shall not live by bread alone; but man lives by every word that proceeds from the mouth of [God]. (NKJV)*

He was saying "You're hungry. Turn this into bread." And Christ said, "That's not the food. That's not what we live by," but He didn't argue with Satan. He just quoted a scripture. He hid behind the Bible. We always want to kind of get out and get on our own and go, "Well, I'll show you!" Christ didn't. He just quoted the Bible.

Verse 5 continuing in Matthew 4:

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

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

You see Satan stepped it up a notch. "Well, if He can quote the Bible, so can I." I want you to consider the unmitigated arrogance. Here is a created being so full of himself that he dared stand before the very being that spoke everything into existence, the very author of God's word and quoted to Him in order to try to gain an advantage.

If you really think about that, it's astounding, but it also says, "Satan knows the Bible. He knows the words of the Bible." You don't ever want to try to get into an argument. He quotes it to his advantage and misapplies it. Never forget Satan knows the words of the Bible better than us. God gave us something though that Satan doesn't have and that is His spirit, which He gives to those that are humble and contrite and tremble at His word.

Let me quote Proverbs 11:2.

Proverbs 11:2. *When pride comes, then comes shame; But with the humble is wisdom. (NKJV)*

I do want you to hold your finger there in Matthew. Turn over to 2 Corinthians 11.

Don't ever be drawn into a Bible battle with Satan's ministers. I heard a minister once say, "You aren't going to fool me. I know my Bible." I've actually heard more than one person say that. I will tell you that concept will put a person on a road to pride and arrogance and is a prime candidate for being seduced because then you start trusting in yourself. You start leaning on your own understanding rather than what God says and let it correct you and let it shape you and mold you. "I understand it. I know what this says." It's a very dangerous place to be.

2 Corinthians 11 and I'll pick it up in verse 14.

2 Corinthians 11:14. *And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light. (NKJV)*

In other words: messengers of light.

15) Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works. (NKJV)

Never forget not everyone that keeps the Sabbath, or observes the Sabbath I should say, speaks God's word is a Christian. And not everyone that claims to be a minister is a minister.

Let me tell you discernment comes from humility, from being close to God and to more understand God's word instead of exploring—and I'm just going to call it what it is—instead of trying to go out and pick up every bit of off the wall I'm going to call it "spiritual pornography" trying to learn something new and exciting because it's out there. And if you want to be titillated by some new concept and new ideas, it's out there, but all you have to do is look at the fruits of what that's created.

Has that drawn people closer to one another? Has it brought us together as a body of Christ? Or does it split and divide and create contention? The fruits tell the whole story. We have to be very skeptical and we have to look at the fruits of people's words and the result of their teachings. Do they unify us? Do they teach us? Do they help us in our relationship with God? Or do they split and polarize and divide us?

Things like "Christ is a created being," "Let's get back to our Hebrew roots and let's put on aprons and wear tassels" and "Let's try to learn Jesus' name the way they said it in the Bible days." If we have to have that to be in God's family, then there are a lot of people who have missed out. The Bible has much to say about that and I will just, if you want to do a study, I'll use the term "Jewish fables" and you can look that up in your concordance, but it has much to say about it, but I'll cover that in the next sermon.

Let's go back to Matthew chapter 4 and I'll pick it up in verse 6.

Matthew 4:6. *and said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down. For it is written: 'He shall give His angels charge over you,' and, 'In their hands they shall bear you up, Lest you dash your foot against a stone.'" (NKJV)*

You know Christ didn't take the bait. He didn't argue. He just correctly quoted Deuteronomy 6:16.

7) *[He] said to him, "It is written again, 'You shall not tempt the Lord your God.'" (NKJV)*

He didn't argue. He didn't try to convert him. He just quoted a scripture. He stood behind the Bible.

Satan's last recorded attempt was aimed at allowing Christ to cash-in early—not having to go through all the suffering that was in front of Him. Now, to be sure, He was to be a king, but there was an alternate path Satan was giving Him to the end that He didn't have to go through all the pain and all the suffering and all the death. The only problem with Him giving in would have been a fleeting power and a kingdom that would have ended at the end of His natural life, but it was a sure thing. There was no risk.

Verse 8:

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

I can't know for sure that Christ intimately knew the prophecies in the Old Testament. I don't know for sure, but He did know and we read what the last part of Ezekiel said. Christ knew that and He knew that the glory of the latter was far superior than the glory of the former.

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

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

Again a variant of Deuteronomy 6:13. Verse 11:

11) *Then the devil left Him, and behold, angels came and ministered to Him. (NKJV)*

Where are we on this continuum of being tested by Satan? We have God's spirit, which he didn't have, but they did have God as their teacher. On the other end, we have Christ's example who was perfect, who had drawn close to God by fasting for forty days, who had God's spirit without measure.

I think no one would dare place themselves beyond His abilities—at least by word. But do we sometimes, because of our intellectual curiosity, want to dabble on the edges of truth? To find some hidden thing that no one's discovered yet? I'm going to call it an area that even the angels fear to tread because it has taken some that are a lot smarter than us down. It's divided us. It's allowed some to go off on their own, in their corner, their own personal little doctrines, try to attract others to their ideas and heresies.

The false woman has very alluring eyes and our pride and our vanity and our desire to be looked upon as someone with special discernment and special knowledge, I'll tell you it's a trap with a very fiery outcome.

For a final scripture, let's go back to Proverbs 6:25. I just want to leave with reading this. Proverbs 6:25, it says:

Proverbs 6:25. *Do not lust after her beauty in your heart, nor let her allure you with her eyelids.*

26) For by means of a harlot a man is reduced to a crust of bread; and an adulteress will prey upon his precious life.

27) Can a man take fire to his bosom, and his clothes not be burned? (NKJV)

Brethren, our spiritual purity is something we should guard with all of our being. We have an adversary that is waiting to pounce and to devour us. And we have to realize that we're vulnerable. And we have to ask God to give us wisdom and to give us faith and to give us His spirit to overcome. Remember, brethren, the stakes have never been higher. The rewards have never been greater. We'll continue in the next sermon to examine his devices. And, as you get time, I would say refresh in your minds with Proverbs 7.