**‘Deception and What We Can Do About It’**

***And the woman said, “The serpent deceived me, and I ate.”*** Genesis 3:13b

The word ‘deceive’ is defined as ***“to mislead by a false appearance or statement.”*** This definition fits exactly what happened in the Garden of Eden. The serpent gave the false appearance/statement that the tree of the knowledge of good and evil was not only harmless but would actually be beneficial to the woman. He also lied when he told the woman, ***“You will not die.”***

Everyone who’s got some knowledge of the Bible and world history knows that the use of deception didn’t end with that first deceptive ploy. The devil hasn’t changed his methods. He still uses the same ones he used in the beginning. He uses them **BECAUSE WE KEEP FALLING FOR THEM!** And what does he use the tactic of deception for? Jesus answered that question when he said, ***“The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy…”*** John 10:10.

What did the devil steal when he deceived the woman? He stole their innocence. The man and the woman’s nakedness didn’t bother them until they ate of the forbidden fruit, and they had not been afraid of God before they ate the fruit. Afterward that was not the case. He also stole the authority God had given the man and the woman over the earth and its creatures.

What did he kill? The Lord God had told the man that eating the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil would bring death to them. We’ve already read how the relationship between the man and the woman changed, AND how their relationship with God resulted in death. Also, has he not been pursuing the deaths of all mankind? He most certainly has. Millions of people have died as the result of the wars which have been fought throughout earth’s history. Millions of innocent people have died in concentration camps, Nazi ovens, and at the hand of brutal dictators. And we dare not forget the millions of babies killed through exposure to the elements (in earlier centuries and cultures), or presently through abortion.

What did he destroy? Has he not “destroyed” much of the earth and countless people as sin multiplied upon the face of the earth? The earth is marred and scarred by war, drought, and disasters of many kinds. These wouldn’t have been part of earth’s history had the woman not fallen for the serpent’s deceptive words. All of these are the marks of the deceiver – the thief, who comes only to steal, kill, and destroy. He hates God. He hates everything God has made, and we have got to be aware of this because he is still very much alive and well in the earth today. He will continue his deceptive ways until God brings this present earth to an end.

When the disciples asked Jesus what would be the sign of his coming, Jesus answered their question with this warning, ***“Watch out that no one deceives you.”***[[1]](http://yourbibleblog.com/2016/12/" \l "_ftn1) Since we know that it was deception that caused mankind to fall into sin in the beginning and that deception will continue the reign in the earth until Jesus returns, how do we arm ourselves so that we do not fall victim to it? First, we must have an intimate relationship with God. He always tells the truth. He CANNOT lie. He was into full disclosure and transparency long before politicians began using the term. Of course God always means what He says. God told the woman the truth about the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. She needed to remain immovably faithful to that Word and to her Creator. Instead she chose to listen to the deceiver, the father of lies.

We also must know God’s Word. Unfortunately, many who claim to be followers of Jesus Christ don’t know that Word. They either neglect to read it or the Church hasn’t been faithful to teach it. The devil knows God’s Word! He will twist it to accomplish his own ends. If we do not know what God’s Word declares from Genesis to Revelation, then we are going to be easy targets for the enemy.

Another thing we have got to do is when we find ourselves in a situation which could be fertile grounds for deception, we have got to go to God and ask Him what we should do. God knows everything. He knows the thoughts and intentions of everyone’s heart. He knows the enemy’s schemes and ploys. He knows how to protect us and keep us from becoming deceived. Let me offer a biblical example of what I mean. The text is Joshua 9:3-15. The context is this: Israel has crossed into the Promised Land, and God has instructed Israel to utterly destroy the inhabitants of the land. *[This Word from God seems a bit extreme to us – but it was judgment upon the inhabitants of the land who were extremely wicked.]* Let’s read what happens…

***3When the inhabitants of Gibeon heard what Joshua had done to Jericho and to Ai, 4they also acted craftily and set out as envoys, and took worn-out sacks on their donkeys, and wineskins worn-out and torn and mended, 5and worn-out and patched sandals on their feet, and worn-out clothes on themselves; and all the bread of their provision was dry and had become crumbled. 6They 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.” 7The men of Israel said to the Hivites, “Perhaps you are living within our land; how then shall we make a covenant with you?” 8But they said to Joshua, “We are your servants.” Then Joshua said to them, “Who are you and where do you come from?” 9They said to him, “Your servants have come from a very far country because of the fame of the Lord your God; for we have heard the report of Him and all that He did in Egypt, 10and all that He did to the two kings of the Amorites who were beyond the Jordan, to Sihon king of Heshbon and to Og king of Bashan who was at Ashtaroth. 11So our elders and all the inhabitants of our country spoke to us, saying, ‘Take provisions in your hand for the journey, and go to meet them and say to them, “We are your servants; now then, make a covenant with us.”’ 12This our bread was warm when we took it for our provisions out of our houses on the day that we left to come to you; but now behold, it is dry and has become crumbled. 13These wineskins which we filled were new, and behold, they are torn; and these our clothes and our sandals are worn out because of the very long journey.” 14So the men of Israel took some of their provisions, and did not ask for the counsel of the Lord. 15Joshua made peace with them and made a covenant with them, to let them live; and the leaders of the congregation swore an oath to them.***

Did you catch why Israel fell for the ploy of those they were supposed to destroy? They fell for the deception of the Gibeonites because they ***“did not ask for the counsel of the LORD”*** (vs 14). Had Israel asked the Lord about these men who supposedly had come from a great distance, the Lord would have told them the truth – that these men were not from far away but were actually near to them.

Deception has been a part of earth’s history since the Fall. As the day of Jesus’ return nears, we must know that deception will keep increasing in the earth. We’ve got to be alert and aware at all times to its possibility. We’ve got to proceed with caution even when faced with situations that seem innocent to us. Proverbs 3:5-6 is a good word for us to remember. It speaks to us about what we should do in every situation and circumstance. There we read, ***“Trust in the Lord with all your heart And do not lean on your own understanding. 6In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He will make your paths straight.”***

*Kathleen*

[[1]](http://yourbibleblog.com/2016/12/" \l "_ftnref1) Matthew 24:4 NIV