

OCTOBER

DEALING WITH DECEPTION THAT ENDANGERS DESTINY

In Joshua chapter 9 we have an account of a major deception perpetrated by the enemy against God's chosen people, Israel. Prior to entering the Promised Land, Israel was warned to eliminate all of the evil heathen nations that resided there. When news of what happened at Jericho and Ai spread throughout the land, one group of residents--the Gibeonites--came up with a deceptive plan to protect themselves:

And when the inhabitants of Gibeon heard what Joshua had done unto Jericho and to Ai, They did work wilily, and went and made as if they had been ambassadors, and took old sacks upon their asses, and wine bottles, old, and rent, and bound up; And old shoes and clouted upon their feet, and old garments upon them; and all the bread of their provision was dry and mouldy. And they went to Joshua unto the camp at Gilgal, and said unto him, and to the men of Israel, We be come from a far country: now therefore make ye a league with us. And the men of Israel said unto the Hivites, Peradventure ye dwell among us; and how shall we make a league with you? And they said unto Joshua, We are thy servants. And Joshua said unto them, Who are ye? And from whence come ye? And they said unto him, From a very far country thy servants are come because of the name of the LORD thy God: for we have heard the fame of him, and all that he did in Egypt, And all that he did to the two kings of the Amorites, that were beyond Jordan, to Sihon king of Heshbon, and to Og king of Bashan, which was at Ashtaroth. Wherefore our elders and all the inhabitants of our country spake to us, saying, Take victuals with you for the journey, and go to meet them, and say unto them, We are your servants: therefore now make ye a league with us. This our bread we took hot for our provision out of our houses on the day we came forth to go unto you; but now, behold, it is dry, and it is mouldy: And these bottles of wine, which we filled, were new; and, behold, they be rent: and these our garments and our shoes are become old by reason of the very long journey. And the men took of their victuals, and asked not counsel at the mouth of the Lord. And Joshua made peace with them, and made a league with them, to let them live: and the princes of the congregation sware unto them. (Joshua 9:3-15)

The deception of the Gibeonites worked. Joshua failed to consult the Lord regarding their proposal, and he made a league with them. Israel was already in their promised land when they encountered the Gibeonites. When you have reached your promised land, you must carefully guard against the deceptions of the enemy, for if he cannot prevent you from reaching your destiny, then he will try to abort it through deception.

You have studied about several hindrances to achieving destiny including disobedience, negative words, the world, the flesh, and the devil. This month, you will focus on the deceptions of the enemy that can endanger your destiny.

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OCTOBER 1 RECEIVING A REVELATION

For years, many believers have ignored Satan, afraid to talk about him, and afraid to recognize his existence. But refusing to acknowledge the enemy's existence does not make you a good spiritual warrior. That would be like a soldier facing a battle and refusing to admit there was an armed foe whose goal it was to defeat him.

Some believers have not ignored Satan, but they have perceived him to be a strong, formidable being possessing complete dominion over the earth. They have looked upon the horrors of sin, sickness, death, perversion, terrorism, and crime and have felt powerless. Because of their lack of knowledge, they have become victims instead of victors.

“Where there is no vision, the people perish...” (Proverbs 29:18). More than likely, you have heard this familiar verse quoted many times. One meaning for the Hebrew word for “vision” is “revelation.” For a lack of revelation concerning our adversary, many believers have been taken captive and are bound by Satan’s power and are still struggling with addictions, bad habits, and negative emotions.

One of Satan’s key strategies is to keep believers in spiritual ignorance. The Apostle Paul warned that we should not be ignorant regarding his schemes, lest he get an advantage of us (2 Corinthians 2:11). That is why, during the next few weeks, we will expose Satan’s lies, reveal the truth, and learn how to act upon that truth. You will receive a new revelation--a drawing away of the veil of darkness--concerning Satan's strategies. and your authority over him and his evil forces. Head knowledge is not enough. You must have a revelation that leads to acting with the authority God has given you over all the powers of the enemy.

You must have a revelation where you will not be satisfied until you see the powers of darkness pushed back and his power broken over you, your family, and your ministry. You must have a revelation of yourself as God intends you to be--victorious over all the power of the enemy.

The Bible reveals that in the end-times, the deception of the enemy will increase (Mark 13:5-6). As spiritual warriors, we must take our rightful position in these final, closing hours of time before Jesus returns. We must march into the battlefield of this world armed and dangerous spiritually. In order to do that, we need a revelation of truth that will totally dismantle the lies and deception of the enemy.

OCTOBER 2

WE ARE AT WAR

One of the first lies we must confront is the misconception that when you become a believer in Jesus Christ you will cease to have battles in life. That is not true. We are at war!

We are involved in deadly combat with a merciless enemy who is driven by an all consuming, burning hatred of God, His people, and all that is pure and holy. Paul told the Corinthians:

For we are not wrestling with flesh and blood--contending only with physical opponents--but against the despotisms, against the powers, against (the master spirits who are) the world rulers of this present darkness, against the spirit forces of wickedness in the heavenly (supernatural) sphere. (Ephesians 6:12, AMP)

Paul compared our spiritual conflict to wrestling. Wrestling is close combat which involves two opponents, each exerting force and strength against the other. In a wrestling match, each opponent enters the arena and the clang of a bell sounds to indicate the beginning of the match. The wrestlers grab hold of one another, each striving to gain an advantage over his opponent. They struggle. They fight. They choke. They throw one another to the floor. Round after round, they wrestle until one is declared the winner.

The moment you were born into the Kingdom of God, you entered the arena of spiritual warfare and the spiritual wrestling match began. Unlike wrestlers in the natural world who can see their opponent face-to-face, you are wrestling with spiritual forces that you cannot see, touch, or feel with your natural senses. Paul told the Ephesians, "...we are not wrestling with flesh and blood."

Some people are so deceived that they are not even aware that a spiritual battle is going on! They are unable to detect the strategies of Satan and to use the powerful weapons God has given them to fight the enemy. As a result, they are living in spiritual defeat.

As a believer, you are involved in an unseen war that is raging all around you. Satan and the forces of darkness are not figments of your imagination, they are real! Satan has developed strategies to discourage, tempt, deceive, and defeat you. The major goal of his schemes is to rob you of your inheritance as a child of God. He wants to abort your destiny through deception.

You must realize that you are not wrestling with flesh and blood. You are wrestling against principalities, powers, and spiritual wickedness. It is an ongoing battle, but one in which you will prevail because you are supernaturally equipped for the battle.

OCTOBER 3 WILL YOU USE IT?

One of the powerful strategies Jesus used to defeat Satan was that He faced the enemy from a position of knowing. Jesus never wavered. He never faltered. He never retreated. He recognized the power of the enemy and He knew that He had been given power over him. He faced the enemy knowing that He had been sent to destroy the works of the devil (1 John 3:8).

God has planned for you to face your trials, temptations, and circumstances—and every attack of the enemy—from this same powerful position of knowing. Satan's deceptive strategy is to keep you in a position of spiritual ignorance. He will do everything possible to stop you from knowing the truth and recognizing your position of power and authority over him. Through these deceptive strategies, he will attempt to stop you from reaching your divine destiny.

Jesus gave His twelve disciples power and authority over “all devils” (Luke 9:1). He appointed seventy disciples and gave them power over all the power of the enemy (Luke 10:19). When the disciples returned from their first mission they were rejoicing, saying, “*Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name*” (Luke 10:17). They were amazed that they had power over evil spirits.

Jesus told these disciples: “*Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the over of the enemy...*” (Luke 10:19). Satan was not in control. God was in control. The disciples were given supernatural power over all the power of the enemy.

Jesus was anointed by the Holy Spirit, He was given authority over Satan, and He delegated that same power to His followers. He confronted sickness, deformity, sin, and death with the power of Almighty God. You have that same authority to confront all the power of the enemy!

Through the power of the Holy Spirit, Jesus took authority over the enemy. He rebuked the power of Satan and cast out devils simply by speaking the Word. He spoke, and devils trembled and fled. The people did not understand how a man could have such authority and they actually accused Jesus of casting out devils by Beelzebub, the chief of devils.

Jesus never begged God for power to confront evil forces, nor did He pray long prayers. He took authority over the works of the enemy. Jesus has given you this same amazing power and authority over the enemy. The only questions is: Will you use it?

OCTOBER 4 SATAN'S PROPAGANDA

During the Yom Kippur War in 1973, Israel's armies were the victims of a surprise attack by the nation of Egypt. The major strategy that the enemy used was to feed Israel misinformation. Through a series of press interviews, Egyptian leaders claimed they were unprepared for war, describing the poor maintenance of their equipment and their lack of readiness for combat.

At the same time they were making these claims major warfare exercises were underway in Egypt, but Israeli military personnel were deceived into thinking that they were nothing more than simple maneuvers. These military exercises were actually part of the Egyptian plan of deception and were so successful they not only deceived Israel but many other countries, including the United States.

Early on the morning of October 6, 1973, the enemy struck. They had selected that day because it was one of Israel's holy days—Yom Kippur, the Jewish Day of Atonement—and they felt Israel's defenses would be lowest at that time.

Egypt's strategy is considered one of the most deceptive plans in the course of military history. Had the Israeli army been prepared--had they known the power of their enemy and their defense systems been fully operational--the attack might have been prevented and many lives spared.

All truth is parallel, meaning that what happens in the natural world has spiritual parallels. For years, Satan has succeeded in getting many believers to deny his existence. He has also distorted his image, causing people to perceive him with horns, a tail, carrying a pitchfork, and confined to the flames of hell.

In addition, the church has been fed propaganda concerning Satan's power and how he operates. Satan has planted fear in the hearts of many believers, causing them to think they are powerless against his attacks on their bodies, their finances, and their loved ones. They believe that Satan is in control of the world and their personal circumstances.

It is time for God's people to rise up in power! It is time for you to expose Satan and his deceptive strategies. Right now, think about any deceptions the enemy has planted in your mind: Fear of the future, regret over the past, worry, anxiety, etc. Perhaps you have discounted Satan's power or felt you were a helpless victim of his attacks. Rebuke these deceptions in the name of Jesus. Take authority over Satan's propaganda.

OCTOBER 5 THE EARTH IS THE LORD'S

There are five basic facts you must understand in order to successfully confront the deceptions of the enemy.

1. Satan is not in control over the earth.
2. Satan's power is limited.
3. Satan has no power over you except what you permit him to have.
4. You are not exempt from his attacks.
5. You have power over all the power of the enemy.

A major deception--the first on our list--is that Satan has control over the earth. There are many believers who have been deceived by this lie. They think that when Adam and Eve sinned, God turned the earth over to Satan. They base their belief on Satan's claim to power when he tempted Jesus in the wilderness.

During the temptation of Jesus, Satan took Him up to a high mountain and showed Him the kingdoms of the world. He told Jesus: *"...All this power will I give thee, and the glory of them: for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it. If thou therefore wilt worship me, all shall be thine"* (Luke 4:6-7). Satan's claim was that all the kingdoms of the world were his to give.

This was a lie! God never relinquished control of the earth to Satan and He never will. The **first** fact you must understand is that Satan is not in control over this planet. The earth does not belong to him--it belongs to God: *"The earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein"* (Psalm 24:1).

If you are a born-again believer, Satan is not in control of your life. He is not in control of your family or your ministry. He is not in control of your destiny. He is not in control of the circumstances of your life.

This earth and everything therein belongs to God—including you, your friends and family, your possessions, your circumstances, and your destiny! You may experience trials, but this is not because Satan is in control. Satan is not in control. God is in control. There is nothing that can touch your life without God's permission (Job chapters 1-2.).

Just because you are a believer does not mean you are immune from Satan's lies, temptations, and attacks however. Even Jesus faced the deceptions of Satan during His temptation in the wilderness. Jesus emerged victorious over all the deceptions of the enemy as He met every attack with the truth of God's Word. You can do the same!

OCTOBER 6

SATAN IS LIMITED

We are meditating on five basic facts that will prevent deception by the enemy. The first is to recognize that Satan is not in control over the earth. The **second** fact is that Satan's power is limited. Satan wants you to believe that he has been given unlimited power, but he is a liar. Satan is not a free agent. God has not freed him to do whatever he desires to do.

God is in control, not Satan. God has a Master Plan that consummates in the creation of a new heaven and a new earth where all things are brought together in one under Christ (Ephesians 1:10). Within God's plan and purpose for man, He has given Satan limited power and a limited amount of time to work.

When Satan tempted Jesus in the wilderness, he did not do it without God's knowledge. It was not a chance meeting. Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness. Jesus was tempted in all points, just as you are, so that you could have a faithful High Priest Who is touched by the feeling of your infirmities (Hebrews 4:15).

Satan did not have the power to take Jesus' life from Him. God planned to give His only begotten Son as a sacrifice for the sins of the world. God allowed Satan, working through men, to crucify Jesus. Satan was not in control. God allowed the crucifixion, knowing that Jesus would complete the atonement for the sins of mankind, rise from the dead, break the power of sin and death, and return to Heaven. It was His divine destiny.

When the Jewish leaders and soldiers came to arrest Him, Jesus told them, *"When I was daily with you in the temple, ye stretched forth no hands against me: but this is your hour, and the power of darkness"* (Luke 22:53). This was the appointed hour when God permitted Satan to work through these men to bring Jesus to death on the cross. It was not because God could not prevent this from happening. Jesus told them, *"Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then shall the scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?"* (Matthew 26:53-54).

At Jesus' trial when He refused to answer Pilate's questions, Pilate asked Him: *"Don't you realize I have power either to free you or to crucify you?"* Jesus answered, *"You would have no power over me if it were not given to you from above"* (John 19:10-11, NIV).

Satan's power is limited. He has been given certain boundaries set by God and he cannot go beyond these boundaries. Satan is working throughout the world today, but God has placed limits on him concerning his attacks on believers. Satan's power against you is limited by the almighty power of God.

OCTOBER 7

YOUR POWERFUL WILL

Satan is not in control over the earth and his power is limited. These are two important facts to stop deception by the enemy. The **third** fact that will enable you to counteract Satan's deception is that he has no power over you except what you permit him to have.

Satan cannot make you sin. He can lie, deceive, and tempt you to sin, but he has no power over your will. One of the most powerful things God has given you is your will. Unless you yield your will to Satan, he cannot have any power over you. He cannot make you lose your temper. He cannot make you steal. He cannot make you commit adultery. He cannot make you sin against God. He cannot blot your name out of the Book of Life.

When you were born again, you were delivered out of Satan's dominion and you are now living in the Kingdom of God. God has *"...delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son"* (Colossians 1:13).

As the ruler of darkness and the god of this world, Satan controls unbelievers who yield their wills to him. They are taken captive by him at his will (2 Timothy 2:26) and he blinds their minds to the Gospel: *"...the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them"* (2 Corinthians 4:4).

But Satan does not have power over you, as a believer. You are no longer under Satan's dominion. He has no power over you unless you yield your will to him. Paul told the Romans:

Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness...even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness. (Romans 6:16-19)

Your will is a strong force given you by God. One of Satan's major strategies is to attack your will, take control of it, and then cause you to yield to his plans instead of doing God's will. You yield to Satan--he does not seize control. You are not his helpless victim. You must willingly yield yourself to him in order for him to seize control.

But no longer will you fall prey to this strategy. You now know that he has no power over you except what you allow him to have.

OCTOBER 8 NO EXEMPTION

You have learned three facts that will prevent deception by the enemy: Satan is not in control over the earth. His power is limited. He has no power over you except what you permit him to have.

The **fourth** fact you must understand in order to prevent deception is that you are not exempt from the attacks of Satan. Jesus told His disciples:

A servant is not greater than his master--is not superior to him. If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you; if they kept My word and obeyed My teachings, they will also keep and obey yours. But the enemy will do all this to you--inflict all this suffering on you--because of (your bearing) my name, and on My account, for they do not know or understand the One Who sent Me. (John 15:20-21, AMP)

Jesus also warned His disciples:

In the world you have tribulation and trials and distress and frustration; but be of good cheer--take courage, be confident, certain, undaunted--for I have overcome the world. I have deprived it of power to harm, have conquered it (for you). (John 16:33, AMP)

Christians are not exempt from the attacks of the enemy. You will be tried and tested. You may have already faced times of severe testing where your faith has been tried through difficult circumstances. You may be going through a time of testing right now. You may be facing persecution and great losses.

Your position during times of difficulties should not be one of fear, panic, discouragement, or retreat. You are to resist--to stand against and oppose Satan--to stand firm knowing that Christ will make you victorious. Peter said: "*And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast*" (1 Peter 5:10, NIV).

These four words -- "restore, strong, firm, and steadfast" -- describe what God has promised to do for you during times of difficulty. The word "restore" means to "perfect" or "make complete." God uses every situation to perfect you. As you submit to Him and resist Satan, God will "make you strong." The original Greek translation of this phrase means "to strengthen one so he can stand fast in persecution." God will make you "firm and steadfast," which means "to be put on a firm foundation."

This promise is your guarantee: "The God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will restore you and make me strong, firm, and steadfast." You are not exempt from spiritual battles, but there is a divine purpose in what you are experiencing.

OCTOBER 9

YOU HAVE THE POWER

The **fifth** biblical truth to prevent deception by the enemy is that you have power over all the power of the enemy. Paul told the Ephesians not to “*give place to the devil*” (*Ephesians 4:27*). In the New International Version this is translated, “*do not give the devil a foothold.*” A “foothold” is a position that can be used as a base for further advance.

Your position as a believer is not one of running or hiding from the enemy. It is standing firm, not giving Satan a place in your life that will enable him to enter in and eventually defeat you. Permitting spiritual ignorance to remain regarding the enemy, his power, and the plan of God for your life allows Satan to get a strong foothold. It gives him an opportunity to operate and attack you.

Your solution is to put on the mind of Christ. Paul told the Philippians, “*Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus*” (*Philippians 2:5*). Do not allow your life to be ruled by your natural mind. Your natural mind cannot comprehend the things of the Spirit. Paul told the Corinthians:

But the natural, nonspiritual man does not accept or welcome or admit into his heart the gifts and teachings and revelations of the Spirit of God, for they are folly (meaningless nonsense) to him; and he is incapable of knowing them – of progressively recognizing, understanding and becoming better acquainted with them because they are spiritually discerned and estimated and appreciated. But the spiritual man tries all things-(that is,) he examines, investigates, inquires into, questions, and discerns all things... (1 Corinthians 2:14-15, AMP).

You must fill your mind with the knowledge of the Lord. You must come to know Christ intimately so that His thoughts and purposes become your thoughts and purposes. There is no excuse for spiritual ignorance. You must understand spiritual warfare. There is no excuse for not knowing the Word of God. There is no reason you should not know the truth concerning the enemy and your position of power and authority over him. There is no excuse for not knowing how to defeat the enemy.

God has equipped you with the all-powerful Word of God which gives you detailed instructions on how to fight and win spiritual battles. God is not sending you out into battle empty-handed. He has given you all the knowledge and spiritual arsenal you need to win the war. Use it!

Here is a summary of the five truths to prevent deception upon which we have meditated during the past few days:

1. Satan is not in control over the earth.
2. Satan's power is limited.
3. Satan has no power over you except what you permit him to have.
4. You are not exempt from his attacks.
5. You have power over all the power of the enemy.

OCTOBER 10

KNOW THAT YOU KNOW

God has placed pastors, teachers, evangelists, and preachers in the Body of Christ to train, teach, and equip you with a knowledge of the Word of God. They are God's gifts to you. But God does not want you to build your life on what other people believe. You must personally know that you know! You must have your own faith.

Can you imagine a soldier out on the battlefield fighting in one-on-one combat telling the enemy, "You wait right here while I go ask my sergeant what to do to win this battle." The enemy would conquer him the minute he turned his back!

During a battle, when you are face-to-face with the enemy, you do not have time to try to find someone who can tell you what to do. You need to know what God's Word says and how to use the truth to defeat the deception of the enemy.

God has placed the Holy Spirit within you to give you understanding of the Word of God:

But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him. (1 John 2:27)

Head knowledge is not enough. You cannot win a battle using head knowledge. Begin to exercise spiritual discernment which looks beyond what you see in the natural world to the reality of the spiritual world. Function by faith, not by intellect.

If you are a member of an athletic team, you must know the rules and strategies of the game. You must understand the moves that will defeat your opponent. You cannot stop the game and run to the coach for advice when the ball is in play.

The same is true in the spiritual world. You are a member of God's team and the Word of God is your playbook. Study it so you will be ready for action. If there is something that you do not understand in the scriptures, ask the coach--the Holy Spirit--to reveal it to you. Seek the Word as you would seek for valuable treasure:

My son, if thou wilt receive my words, and hide my commandments with thee; So that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom, and apply thine heart to understanding; Yea, if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding; If thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures; Then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God. For the Lord giveth wisdom: out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding. He layeth up sound wisdom for the righteous: he is a buckler to them that walk uprightly. He keepeth the paths of judgment, and preserveth the way of his saints. (Proverbs 2:1-8)

OCTOBER 11 STANDING AND OPPOSING

Have you ever been at a place in your life when it seemed as if you were being attacked on every side? Did you whine and complain about how Satan was attacking you? Did you know that is exactly what he wants you to do? He wants you to keep on believing and confessing that he is more powerful than you.

Words of defeat have no place in your mouth. The devil has no power and authority over your life or your circumstances except what you allow him to have. If you don't give him a place, he doesn't have it. He cannot take a place. You must give it to him. That is why Paul declares under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, "*Neither give place to the devil.*" (Ephesians 4:27).

Can you imagine Jesus, as He was being tempted by Satan, saying "The devil is really after me. He's been attacking me from all sides. I don't know what to do." No, of course not! Likewise, do not give Satan a foothold in your life by making such confessions.

Your position in times of battle is to stand with your feet firmly planted, rooted in the infallible, impregnable Word of God, unmoving and steadfast—regardless of the trials, testing, or persecution the enemy may bring your way. Peter told believers:

*Be self-controlled and alert . Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kind of sufferings. And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm, and steadfast.
(1 Peter 5:8-10, NIV)*

In these verses, Peter was writing to Christians who were facing severe persecution. They were being tortured, imprisoned, thrown to the lions, and burned at the stake. Satan thought he could destroy them through persecution. Peter warned them to be alert, to be aware of their enemy, and to resist him. The position of the early Church in the midst of this severe persecution was not retreat but resistance.

The word "resist" in the original Greek is "lianthistemi" which means "to stand against and to oppose." This is the position you must take in spiritual combat.

OCTOBER 12

A DEFEATED ENEMY

God wants you to be prepared for the end-time season into which we are entering. Believers who are not prepared will be shaken. Many will fall if they don't understand that God is still in control and that the church of the living God will not be defeated. This difficult end-time is your hour of destiny! Like Queen Esther, you have come into the Kingdom for such a time as this!

In Revelation 12, God gives an overview of the end-times. During this season Satan will intensify his deception throughout the world. The Bible warns:

*...Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time.
(Revelation 12:12)*

Satan, knowing his time is short, will pour out his wrath upon the earth. Daniel warned us of the enemy attempting to wear out the saints of the Most High (Daniel 7:25). Jesus warned about challenging end-time conditions in Matthew 24:9-25.

- There will be persecution of believers.
- There will be wars and rumors of war.
- There will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes.
- False prophets will arise and deceive many.
- Iniquity will result in the love of many waxing cold.
- There will be tribulations like no others ever known.

God has revealed to you His end-time plan for a purpose. He does not want you to be scared. He wants you to be prepared. Not only has He revealed how Satan will work on the earth in the last days, He has shown you that believers will be victorious. We will overcome by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of our testimony (Revelation 12:11). We will be raptured from this world and will later return with the heavenly host to defeat the enemies of God. Eventually, the enemy will be eliminated forever (Revelation 19:20).

You are facing an enemy who is doomed for destruction. Once you have a revelation within your spirit:

- ...That Satan is not in control over the earth.
 - ...That his power is limited.
 - ...That Satan has no power over you except what you permit him to have.
 - ...That you are not exempt from his attacks.
 - ...That you have power over all the power of the enemy.
- ...then you will be prepared to face every attack, every testing, and every trial in total victory. Satan is an already defeated enemy.

(For further study of the end-times, see the Harvestime Legacy Bible Outlines and commentaries on the books of Daniel and Revelation available at <http://www.harvestime.org>.)

OCTOBER 13

SIFTED LIKE WHEAT

The Apostle Peter was not deceived concerning Satan. He knew what it meant to wrestle with the powers of darkness. He knew what it was like to be tested and tried. He knew what it was like to be involved in one-on-one combat with the enemy.

Jesus warned Peter, *“Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has demanded permission to sift you like wheat; but I have prayed for you, that your faith may not fail; and you, when once you have turned again, strengthen your brothers”* (Luke 22:31-32, NAS).

Jesus cautioned Peter saying, “Satan has demanded permission to sift you like wheat.” Although Peter was forewarned, he was not prepared for his encounter with the enemy. He was filled with pride and overconfident in his own strength. Pride is one of the main strategies Satan uses to deceive believers. You think you can stand in your own strength.

Peter declared, “Lord, I am ready to go with you to prison and to death.” Jesus answered, *“I tell you, Peter, before the rooster crows today, you will deny three times that you know me”* (Luke 22:33-34, NIV). You know the story--Peter failed and suffered a major setback. He denied the Lord and refused to stand with Him in His greatest hour of need. Peter lost a battle, but he did not lose the war. He eventually repented and rose up from failure to become a key leader in the early church.

You may feel like you are being “sifted like wheat.” Perhaps the very foundations of your faith are being tested. You may feel weak and on the verge of giving up. Do not do it! Right now, in the Name of Jesus, resist Satan. You have the power and authority to do so. Do not rely on your own natural strength. God has placed the Holy Spirit within you, giving you power over all the power of the enemy. Draw upon that tremendous spiritual strength right now.

Your position during every test, trial, and temptation should not be one of fear, discouragement, or weakness. Your position in every circumstance should be one of power, confidence, and victory knowing that as you submit to God and resist Satan, he will flee from you (James 4:7). Jesus resisted Satan in the wilderness temptations and was one hundred percent victorious. That same power is resident within you. That is why you can say with confidence, “Get behind me, Satan!” and he will flee from you.

Do not succumb to the deception of the enemy. You are not to be fearfully hiding or running from Satan. He is supposed to be fleeing from you! Satan wants to sift you like wheat, but Jesus has already prayed for you to be an overcomer: *“I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine...I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil”* (John 17:9 and 15).

OCTOBER 14 THE STRONGER MAN

Jesus taught that: *“When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace: But when a stronger than he shall come upon him, and overcome him, he taketh from him all his armor wherein he trusted, and divideth his spoils” (Luke 11:21-22).*

In these verses, Jesus compared Satan to a strong man guarding his palace. From the time of Adam and Eve until Jesus came to earth, Satan--the strong man--held mankind in his powerful grip, bound by chains of sin. But now, a stronger one than Satan had come. This one could bind the strong man, set men free from his power, and divide his spoils.

As Jesus was preparing to lay down His life to redeem mankind and restore us to fellowship with God the Father, He declared: *“Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the Prince of this world be cast out” (John 12:31).*

Jesus destroyed the works of the devil. The power of sin, sickness, and death has been defeated. Satan is a liar! He never has been, nor will he ever be, in control of the kingdoms of this earth. His power has been broken!

Before Jesus ascended into Heaven He told His disciples: *“All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost” (Matthew 28:18-19).*

As a follower of Jesus, all power is given to you also. Jesus has given you authority over all the power of the enemy. He has given you the ability to go forth and spread the Gospel to all nations. If you have "all power", then that means that the enemy has no power great enough to abort your destiny. All means all.

Like a mighty conqueror, Jesus ascended into Heaven in great triumph: *“Therefore it is said, When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive—He led a train of vanquished foes—and He bestowed gifts on men” (Ephesians 4:8, AMP).* Throughout the Word, the phrase “led captivity captive” refers to a victory procession after a great battle has been won. The conquering king leads a procession of captives he has taken, along with the spoils of war, back to his own kingdom.

Jesus broke the power of sin, sickness, and death Satan had held over mankind, *“And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross” (Colossians 2:15, NIV).*

At Calvary, Christ disarmed the authority of the enemy. The Stronger Man has broken every stronghold of the strong man.

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OCTOBER 15 TAKING CAPTIVITY CAPTIVE

When Jesus arose from the grave and ascended into heaven, He disarmed evil powers and authorities, including Satan and all the wicked spiritual forces of this world. The Greek word for “disarmed” means “stripped.” Like a conquered army being stripped of its weapons and armor, Satan, his horde of demons, and spiritual rulers of darkness were stripped of their power over true believers in Christ.

Then, having disarmed Satan and his evil forces, Jesus made a public spectacle of them. Like a general leading a victory procession, Jesus ascended into Heaven leaving behind Him a defeated enemy. Satan, and all the powers and rulers of spiritual darkness, were displayed before the entire universe as the spoils of battle. Jesus led captivity captive! Those powers that once held man captive—sin, sickness, and death—were taken captive.

Today, Jesus is seated in Heaven in a position of supreme power where He has been exalted and given a Name that is above every other name.

*God has highly exalted Him and has freely bestowed on Him the name that is above every name, That in (at) the name of Jesus every knee should (must) bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, And every tongue (frankly and openly) confess and acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.
(Philippians 2:9-11, AMP)*

In this exalted position, Jesus has been given power over all principalities and dominions in heaven, on earth, and under the earth. God has exalted Him: “*Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also that which is to come: And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all*” (Ephesians 1:21-23).

The works of Satan--sin, sickness, and death--have been destroyed. Satan has been bound, defeated, and stripped of his power. One of Satan’s main strategies against believers has been to deceive us and keep us in spiritual ignorance concerning these facts. But now, in these end-time hours, the Church of Jesus Christ is rising up to embrace truth in the power of the Holy Spirit. The truth that we are delivered from sin! The truth that we are healed by the power of the cross--whether in this world or as we overcome death and enter eternity. The truth that a true believer will never die, but will live eternally in the presence of God.

As part of the Body of Christ, you must enter into the arena of spiritual warfare, take the authority that God has placed in your hands, and use it to tear down Satan’s strongholds.

OCTOBER 16

A STRUGGLE FOR PURPOSE

There was a man in Old Testament times who experienced a tragic defeat due to the deception of the enemy. His name was Samson. His dramatic and true story is recorded in the Bible in Judges chapters 13-16. Read these chapters before proceeding with the next few meditations.

Samson was born at a time when Israel needed a deliverer. In fact, he was born for that very purpose. His birth itself was miraculous in that it was an answer to prayer by his mother, who was barren. It also was in response to the pleas of the people of God who had been under the rule of the Philistines for forty long years.

From the beginning, this man was a chosen instrument of the Lord and his parents were instructed to raise him as one separated unto the Lord. A razor was never to touch his head because his long hair was a sign of his separation unto God.

As Samson grew and God blessed him, he began to be moved by the Holy Spirit to do mighty works of God. When a lion came against him, Samson took it and slew it with his bare hands. On another occasion, when the Philistines thought they had Samson securely locked in the city of Gaza, this superman of God took hold of the gates of the city and the two posts and carried them off to the top of a hill. Another time, he slew one-thousand Philistines using the jawbone of a donkey as his only weapon.

This was Israel's deliverer! This was God's man of the hour! This was God's chosen instrument! But within the heart of this man—anointed and used of God, separated unto God before his birth—a spiritual battle raged.

Satan began his deception through Samson's fleshly passions. Samson saw a beautiful woman of the Philistines, heathen people God had warned Israel to avoid. He began to desire the woman and he eventually began to think he was invincible and above the laws of God. Satan deceived Samson through his fleshly appetites until we see this man of God disregarding his spiritual heritage and going into the camp of the Philistines to indulge in sinful pleasures (Judges 16).

God had set a standard of holiness to which Samson was to adhere. God wanted Samson to keep himself holy, to obey the Word, and to fulfill his divine destiny. God wanted him to be a servant separated unto God, a man anointed with the power of the Holy Spirit. Satan's purpose, however, was to destroy Samson's effectiveness for God.

Do not be deceived by the enemy. The battles you are facing today are struggles between the purposes God has for you and the purposes Satan has for your life. Like Samson, you have a divine destiny and Satan wants to deceive you in order to hinder you from fulfilling it. It was when Samson was already walking in his destiny--doing great things for God--that the spirit of deception came against him.

OCTOBER 17

YOUR WEAKEST POINT

God had a divine purpose for Samson's life, but Samson's sinful appetites led him to abandon his calling. His rebellion caused him to turn his back on God. When God said, "Don't do it!" Samson stubbornly declared, "I will do it!" The battle was on, and Samson played right into the hands of the enemy.

This is what the battle of life is all about. It is a battle between truth and deception, rebellion and obedience. The battle is not between God and Satan, for there is no power great enough to threaten God. The struggle occurs between the law of God and the law of man's sinful nature which rises up and says "I will" when God has said, "Don't do it."

This is what sin is--the exercising of your will to deliberately disregard God and His divine destiny for your life. Satan's sin involved a whole series of "I wills": I will ascend into heaven I will exalt my throne above the stars of God, I will sit on the mount of the congregation, I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High (Isaiah 14:12-14)

Satan usually does not attack in areas where you are strong. He usually attacks at your weakest point. Lust was Samson's main weakness. Your weakest point may be the same as Samson's or it may be drugs, the occult, stealing, lying, cheating, etc. Satan targeted Samson's weakness and tempted him to lust after Delilah.

What are your weaknesses? It is important for you to recognize and acknowledge these so that you can successfully deal with them through the power of the Holy Spirit. If you don't recognize and admit that you have a weakness, then how can you deal with it?

The example of Samson illustrates another important point. A person does not usually turn his back on God all at once. A girl does not suddenly decide to become a prostitute. A person experimenting with drugs does not get up one day and decide to become an addict. People dabble with sin. They enjoy what the world calls pleasurable until they are suddenly no longer playing with sin, but sin is controlling them. They are in bondage and cannot escape without the delivering power of an Almighty God.

The enemy Philistines noted the relationship between Samson and Delilah. They offered her rewards to "...find out the secret of Samson's strength so we can defeat him once and for all." "I'll find out," she promised.

Perhaps you are in deep bondage to sex, drugs, alcohol, etc., and cannot seem to break your addictions. You did not get in that condition all at once. First, the appeal of these things entered your mind and attacked you at your weakest point. As these lusts absorbed more and more of your thinking, you began to yield to temptation. You began to dabble in sin, and it soon seized control. Today is the day to break the cycle.

OCTOBER 18 PLAYING WITH SIN

The story of how Delilah discovered Samson's secret of spiritual strength is told in Judges 16. The first time Delilah asked about the secret of his strength, Samson lied to her. "Bind me with seven fresh cords which have been dried," he told her. The next time she asked, he lied again, "Tie me with new rope." The third time she asked, he said, "If you take the locks of my hair and weave them together, I will be as weak as any other man." All three attempts failed. Three temptations, three opportunities to escape.

The Bible says, "*To whom you yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey*" (Romans 6:16). If you play with sin, you break the spiritual laws of God and you soon become a slave to sin. That is what happened to Samson. Samson had gone down to the camp of the enemy to enjoy sensual pleasure and he was hooked. He became a slave to his own passion. He was playing around with sin, teasing, deceiving, and being deceived.

God had a tremendous destiny for his life, but Samson was allowing Satan to abort that purpose. Samson was no longer an anointed judge and leader in Israel. Instead, he groveled at the feet of sin.

Samson finally gave in to Delilah's demands and disclosed the secret of his strength, admitting that "If you were to cut off all my hair, I would be as weak as any other man." Samson was a Nazarite since birth and a razor had never touched his head. He had been set aside by God for divine destiny and his long hair was a symbol of his spiritual strength and separation to God.

As Samson slept with his head on Delilah's lap, she called for a man to cut off his hair. Snip. Snip. Snip. Bit by bit, Samson's spiritual strength was lost. Then Delilah said, "*The Philistines be upon thee, Samson. And he awoke out of his sleep and said, I will go out as at other times before and shake myself. And he wist not that the Lord was departed from him*" (Judges 16:20).

The Bible says Samson arose and shook himself as he had at other times. But something was different this time. The power and presence of God had departed, and he did not even realize it! The power of God that had enabled Samson to be successful when he battled the Philistines; the power that enabled him to carry away the gates of the city; the power that was upon him when he was attacked by a lion; the anointing of God to do great exploits—it was all gone.

What have you lost through the deception of the enemy? What are you considering doing that will cost your anointing and your spiritual destiny? You cannot play with sin and retain the anointing of God upon your life and ministry. Playing with sin leads to spiritual bondage and blindness.

OCTOBER 19
GOD MEANS WHAT HE SAYS

Samson played around with sin until he was taken captive by it. Then the time came when Samson desperately needed the power of God, but it was gone.

How about you? Have you been playing with sin, continuing bad habits, and walking in rebellion against God? If your sin has not yet been exposed, this is only because of the mercy of God. If you continue on your present path, there will come a time when you will reach out for the anointing of God and you won't be able to find it. You will cry out for the presence of His Spirit, but find that the feeling has departed. You will be taken captive by the enemy and your defeat will be publicly disclosed for all to see, as was Samson's.

Proverbs describes such a dreadful condition:

I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh; When your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you. Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me: For that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the Lord: They would none of my counsel: they despised all my reproof. Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices. (Proverbs 1:26-31)

What a sad picture! The devil will try to tell you that this will not happen to you, that you are safe in your sin and that you will never be found out. Do not be deceived! God says, "*Be sure your sin will find you out*" (Numbers 32:23). The Bible also warns, "*For whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap*" (Galatians 6:7).

The devil's plan is to make you think that God does not mean what He says. That is how he convinced Eve to commit the first sin in the garden. "You shall not die," the enemy claimed, when tempting her to partake of that which God had forbidden.

Belshazzar, a king who reigned during Daniel's time, also thought God did not mean what He said--that is until during a lavish feast a hand appeared seemingly from nowhere and began writing on the wall. The message was: "*Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting*" (Daniel 5:27). That night Belshazzar lost the kingdom and died.

Church members Ananias and Sapphira did not think God meant what He said either. They tried to deceive the disciples, lied to the Holy Ghost, and were struck dead (Acts 5).

God means what He says! Do not wait another day. Ask God to forgive your secret sins. Repent of your rebellion and ask Him to place within you the spirit of obedience.

OCTOBER 20

THE GOD OF ANOTHER CHANCE

Galatians 6:7 says, "*Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap!*" That is why Samson was unable to feel the presence of God after he sowed to the flesh for so long. Judges 16:20 says that Samson "*wist not (or knew not) that the Lord was departed from him.*" But he soon found out! The Philistines took him captive, put out his eyes, bound him, brought him down to Gaza, and made him grind at the millstone.

One of the things sin does is to blind you. Sin looks good at the beginning but then, all of a sudden, you are blinded by it. You feel dead spiritually. You don't have any direction. You don't even recognize the deep deception into which you have fallen. You are a prime target for the enemy.

Samson's enemies brought him to Gaza and put him in the prison house to grind, binding him to a stone wheel. There he was, God's man, blind, bound, and grinding day in and day out, week in and week out, month in and month out. Around, and around, and around he trudged.

Samson has plenty of time to think now. He has plenty of time to ponder, "If only I had listened to God!" What thundering, pulsating words--if only! He realizes that the pleasures of sin for a season are not worth the price he is now paying.

Looking at Samson there in the prison house, you would never recognize what God wanted him to be--a prophet of God, a ruler, a judge. But through deception and sin, Satan has reduced him to a slave.

Satan has declared a similar purpose over your life. He wants to reduce you to being his slave, to so humiliate you so that the world sees nothing but a fraud, a defeated person who has no future and no destiny. He wants to keep you in the prison house of bondage. Satan wants you to be chained to the routines of life, going round and around, getting nowhere.

Perhaps you have watched people fall into a trap of Satan. Perhaps you have fallen into one yourself. Thankfully, there is hope! God still has a purpose for your life. He does not want to leave you blind, captive by the enemy, and grinding day after day in the prison house of bondage. God wants you to be restored spiritually and once again empowered to do His work.

Sin may bind, blind, and grind--but God is able to deliver. Whatever has happened in your life, God can reverse it. You can be restored. Thankfully, He is the God of a another chance.

OCTOBER 21 STEPS TO FREEDOM

Despite the fact that Samson was bound by the enemy, God still had a plan for him. Despite your failure, God has a plan for you too. If you want to be freed from the bondage of Satan, there are **six important steps** you must take which we will meditate and act upon during the next few days.

First, you must recognize the power of your confession. The Kingdom of God operates on the basis of confession. If you confess Jesus, you are saved. If you confess healing, you will be healed. If you confess negative things, that is what you will get. As you have learned through these meditations, death and life are in the power of your own tongue. Paul explains the importance of confession:

*That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.
(Romans 10:9-10)*

Think of the prodigal son whose escapades are described in Luke 15. His inheritance was a deep well of financial resources that he thought would never run dry. He went out and lived a sinful life, lost everything, and eventually was sitting in a barnyard sharing a meal with pigs. Finally, this young man had ingested one too many pig meals. The Scriptures say, "he came to himself." He was finally willing to admit that he had made a mess of things. He stopped blaming his parents, bad luck, or his friends. He confessed, "I have sinned."

Think again of Samson, whose story we are following in these meditations. He thought he could play with sin and not pay for it. He believed he had his life in control and that he was the master of his own fate. Step-by-step, Samson descended into Satan's deceptive trap until one day, he found himself completely captive by the enemy.

Blinded, bound, and grinding in the prison house, Samson was a slave of the enemy. Where are you today? Are you walking in freedom in Christ advancing towards your divine destiny, the purpose for which you were created? Or are you bound by the enemy, a slave to his purposes?

Things began to change for Samson when he "...called upon the Lord..." (Judges 16:28). If you have been blinded and bound by the enemy and are grinding in the workhouse of sin, it is time to come to yourself and return to the Father's house. It is time for you, like Samson, to call upon the Lord and admit your need. When you confess your need, God will act in your behalf: "*Because of the oppression of the weak and the groaning of the needy, I will now arise,*" says the Lord. "*I will protect them from those who malign them*" (Psalm 12:5).

OCTOBER 22

MORE STEPS TO FREEDOM

You are meditating on six important steps that will free you from bondage and the deception of Satan. The **first** step is to recognize the power of confession. The **second** is to know that God still loves you.

People are so blinded by Satan that they are deceived into thinking that the world can give them a good time with no chafing restrictions. They come to view God as a hard taskmaster who wants to deprive them of joy and pleasure.

In reality, it is Satan who destroys and brings unhappiness and grief, while God brings abundant life: *"The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly" (John 10:10).*

God does not act out of hatred when He judges your sin. Rather, He acts out of great love and compassion in order that you might receive life more abundantly. To those who accept Jesus into their lives, God promises peace, love, joy, prosperity, and health—all that is good. Jesus said you will have tribulation in this world, but that these positive benefits of His promises will remain despite your troubles.

Jesus promises restoration of all Satan has destroyed. Through the death of Jesus Christ, communion between God and man has been restored. The promise of Jesus is, *"Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world" (Matthew 28:20)* and *"I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee" (Hebrews 13:5)*. The Psalmist says that God is *"a very present help in trouble" (Psalm 46:1)*.

If you are to be freed from the bondage of sin, you must come to know that God loves you despite your sin and your failures. He is right there with you in trouble, whether it is caused by your own sin or an attack of the enemy.

The **third** step to be freed from bondage is to break the barrier of sin. You do this by accepting the work of atonement which Jesus accomplished by His death on the cross.

If you are not a born-again Christian, you need to invite Jesus Christ into your heart right now: *"But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name" (John 1:12).*

If you are a believer engaging in known sin, blinded by Satan to your true spiritual condition, you can make it right today. Admit your transgression, ask forgiveness, and then turn away from your sin.

If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (1 John 1:8-9)

OCTOBER 23 ACCEPTING GOD'S AUTHORITY

We are meditating on six steps that will free us from the deception of Satan.

First is to recognize the power of confession.

Second is to know that God still loves you.

Third is to break the barrier of sin.

Are you ready for the next step?

The **fourth** step is to accept God's Word as the authority in your life.

Two basic types of law govern this world--natural laws and spiritual laws. An example of the natural laws that govern our physical world is the law of gravity. This law declares that "what goes up, must come down." You can say you don't believe in that law, but not believing doesn't change the law. The law of gravity exists, regardless of your attitude toward it.

To prove that you do not believe in the law of gravity, you might climb to the top of a tall building and jump off. No matter how much you disavow the law of gravity, there is going to be a bloody mess where you land. Your broken body proves the law of gravity is true. Not believing the law did not nullify it.

The same holds true for the spiritual laws of God. You can say, "I don't believe in God. I don't believe in His laws, especially the law against sin." But, like natural laws, these laws are reality. Their existence does not depend upon you accepting or rejecting them. All you have to do to prove their existence (as is true with the law of gravity) is to violate these laws. Break them, and as surely as night follows day, there will be a price to pay. Sin always brings consequences.

Once you accept Christ's death as the atonement for your past sin, you must accept God's Word as the supreme authority in your life. The laws of God written in His Word are designed to provide parameters within which you can live a happy, healthy, fulfilled life. They are the precepts that will give you power over all the deception of the enemy. They are the guidelines that will direct you to your divine destiny, the purpose for which God created and predestined you.

Accept God's Word for what it says. Do not try to get around the rules, look for loopholes, or ignore its truths. Accept the Word of God as the spiritual mandate for your life. It is the divine manifesto that will guide you to your destiny.

OCTOBER 24

YOUR POWERFUL WEAPONS

We are taking six steps to freedom from the bondage of deception. The **first** step is to recognize the power of confession; **second** is to know that God still loves you; **third** is to break the barriers of sin; and **fourth** is to accept God's Word as the authority in your life. Today, we will take the next two steps.

The **fifth** step is to identify your true enemy. The Apostle Paul declared, *"For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places"* (Ephesians 6:12). Your enemy is not your spouse, your boss, your child, your friend, or neighbor. Your enemy is the power operating behind those who are rising up against you. Your enemy is Satan and his spiritual forces of evil.

The **sixth** step to be freed from the bondage of deception is to learn how to use your spiritual weapons. God will not send you into battle against spiritual armored tanks with a water pistol as a weapon. He will arm you with powerful spiritual missiles against the enemy. God knows that in yourself you are no match for the devil's deception, but He has eliminated this inequality by arming you with His Holy Spirit. Jesus told His disciples, *"But ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you"* (Acts 1:8).

God has also equipped you with the weapons of spiritual warfare listed in Ephesians 6. These include the girdle of truth, the breastplate of righteousness, feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace, the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God.

You also have been given the keys to the Kingdom of God, the power to bind evil powers and release the power of God to operate in any situation. Bad habits, problems, family disorders, spiritual conflicts, and sicknesses--no matter what you are facing, you have the keys to victory:

And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. (Matthew 16:19)

You have the power to bind the power of Satan and overcome his deception. Writing under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, the Apostle John penned these words: *"Ye are of God little children and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world!"* (1 John 4:4).

How could anyone fail with a promise like that? Armed with the Spirit of God, the weapons of spiritual warfare, and the power to bind and loose, you have the ability to come against every evil spirit in the Name of Jesus and execute total victory.

OCTOBER 25 YOU HAVE THE CHOICE

The time has come for you to begin a march on the deceptive tactics of the devil. Today is a good day to start! You must march onto the battlefield of your life and wage offensive warfare against Satan and his powers of darkness. You cannot be victorious just through defensive measures alone.

We know that Satan is defeated and the time will come--and it is not far off--when the whole world will know this. The Prophet Isaiah declared:

How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit. They that see thee shall narrowly look upon thee, and consider thee, saying, Is this the man that made the earth to tremble? (Isaiah 14:12,15-16)

Do not be deceived--in the end Satan loses and those who are on his side will lose with him. God is the winner, and those on His side will win with Him, The Apostle Paul declared, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit: *"In all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us"* (Romans 8:37).

You have the choice. God has given you a free will. He will not violate your will, although He will continually seek by His Holy Spirit to draw you to Himself.

Deuteronomy 11:26-28 defines your choices in this way:

Behold, I set before you this day a blessing and a curse; A blessing if ye obey the commandments of the Lord your God, which I command you this day: And a curse, if ye will not obey the commandments of the Lord your God, but turn aside out of the way which I command you this day.

We have studied how Samson was deceived and taken captive by the enemy. Yet, in the final moments of his life he made a choice to repent and ask for God's strength to once again be manifested in his life. In his death, Samson conquered more of the enemy than he had in his lifetime. He made a choice--and this time it was the right one!

This matter of choosing was clearly given to the people of Israel by Joshua when he said, *"Choose you this day whom ye will serve!"* (Joshua 24:15).

Elijah presented the same choice in his confrontation with the prophets of Baal. *"How long halt ye between two opinions?"* he demanded of the people (1 Kings 18:21).

God is putting that same challenges to you today.

-Choose you this day who you will serve.

-How long will you halt between two opinions?

OCTOBER 26 VICTORY IN EVERY CIRCUMSTANCE

There is no strategy that Satan can devise against you that is powerful enough to defeat you--not one! He cannot ensnare you by deception, because you are learning strategies to combat his lies.

Satan's objective as a deceiver is to convince you that you are going to lose everything you have --your home, your family, your health, your finances, your career, your ministry--everything!

Satan will seize your mind in a vice-like grip of fear, worry, and doubt and try to keep you in a constant state of turmoil. Using your circumstances, Satan will try to wear you down physically, mentally, and spiritually until you are so discouraged and depressed that you are ready to throw your hands up in defeat.

His strategy is to use your circumstances to defeat you. He will create havoc in the circumstances in your life, bringing affliction on your body, attacking your children and loved ones, causing strife in your marriage relationship, and creating problems on your job.

Satan will relentlessly war against you through your circumstances until you become too tired to resist his attacks and you are caught in a vicious cycle that paralyzes you. This deceptive cycle will hinder you from releasing your faith and walking in the victory God has provided for you.

Make no mistake about it, Satan is out to destroy you. But we are disarming his deceptions. We are learning that there is no circumstance, no trial, and no persecution--regardless of how terrible it may--that can defeat you if you are walking in obedience to God.

As the destroyer...

- Satan may wrack your body with pain, sickness, and disease.
- Satan may attack your finances.
- Satan may try to create disharmony in your marriage.
- Satan may try to destroy your children and loved ones through addictions.

...But none of these circumstances--pain, sickness, lack of finances, problems in your marriage and family, persecution, or even death--can defeat you. God has promised victory in every circumstance.

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 8:35-39)

OCTOBER 27
HAVE THE GIBEONITES INFILTRATED?

God called Israel to walk in holiness as a spiritually separated people. That is why they were not to make any covenant with the evil nations around them. Yet, despite God's warnings, they made a league with the deceptive Gibeonites (Joshua 9:3-15).

In the midst of this evil generation, God has called us to walk in holiness before Him. As God's chosen people, we are commanded to be holy even as God is holy: *"But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy" (1 Peter 1:15-16)*. The word "conversation" actually means "conduct," which means that we are to be holy in our behavior.

Jesus is not coming to receive a harlot bride that is committing spiritual adultery with the world. He is not coming for a bride polluted with the sinful lusts and desires of this world. He is coming for a people who have been cleansed and purified, a church without spot or blemish, the Body of Christ, the Bride of Christ.

Jesus came to earth, suffered the shame and agony of the cross, died, and was resurrected so we could be holy and without blemish. Through the blood of Jesus, He made it possible for you to be clothed with His righteousness. He has given you the power to live a life that is holy and blameless before Him:

...Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. (Ephesians 5:26-27)

God has planned for believers to set a standard of holiness that will reflect the light of His gospel to the world. Paul told the Philippians:

That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world. (Philippians 2:15)

Instead of following God's standards, however, many believers are polluted by the world. Instead of speaking out against evil, they have compromised with the world and become comfortable with the sin that surrounds them.

Examine your own life. Have the "Gibeonites" infiltrated? Have you been deceived by the enemy? Are you living comfortably with sin?

OCTOBER 28 ELIMINATING THE GIBEONITES

When we take an honest look at the church today, we can see that sin has so infiltrated many congregations that it is difficult to distinguish true believers from the world. There are many so-called Christians who are professing to live a holy life, but who are fulfilling the lusts of their flesh. These are spiritual Gibeonites. They want to be joined to God's people, but they are not really a part of God's people.

There are many professing believers who go to church and dance, shout, and praise the Lord, but the minute they walk out the door they gossip, criticize, and tear down the pastor or other members of the Body of Christ. Some are bound by lust and involved in adulterous relationships, yet they see nothing wrong with it. They believe they can continue to engage in illicit relationships and still be Christians.

There are so-called Christians who think nothing of lying, stealing, or cheating on their jobs. They take days off and call in sick when they are not really ill. They take supplies home from the office, take extra time for breaks and lunch hours, and pad their expense accounts.

There are some Christian businessmen who lie on their income taxes, cheat their customers, misrepresent the facts, and become involved in questionable business deals.

There are other believers who allow their hearts and minds to be filled with all sorts of evil imaginations, enjoying pornography, dirty jokes, and sinful media.

In many churches today, worldliness is no longer condemned but is encouraged through messages which cause Christians to set their affections on things of this world. We have tried to become "user friendly" congregations instead of God-pleasing churches.

Many churches have an outward form of godliness, but the members are filled with prejudice, hatred, bitterness, unforgiveness, pride, greed, jealousy, and other sinful attitudes. Paul told Titus:

For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world. (Titus 2:11-12)

Peter told believers to “...rid yourselves of all malice, and all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander of every kind” (1 Peter 2:1, NIV).

Make this declaration: “In the Name of Jesus I reject the deception of spiritual Gibeonites in my life. I reject deceptive and sinful alliances. I will live soberly, righteously, and godly in the world.”

OCTOBER 29

AVOIDING UNHOLY ALLIANCES

Just as Israel was called to be separate from the evil nations around them, believers must not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. There must not be any agreement--spiritual, business, or relational--with unbelievers.

The Apostle Paul warned:

Do not be bound together with unbelievers; for what partnership have righteousness and lawlessness, or what fellowship has light with darkness? Or what harmony has Christ with Belial, or what has a believer in common with an unbeliever? Or what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; just as God said, "I will dwell in them and walk among them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Therefore, come out from their midst and be separate," says the Lord, "and do not touch what is unclean." (2 Corinthians 6:14-17, NAS)

This passage does not only apply to marriage, but to all relationships. You should not be close friends with unbelievers. You should not form business partnerships with them. When you do, you are setting yourself up for discord and disharmony.

Friendship with the world is "enmity against God" (James 4:4). The moment you enter into a binding relationship with unbelievers--whether it be a business relationship or as a close personal friend--you become an enemy of God.

God does not want you to make unholy alliances with the world--any type of agreement that links you together with them--because you are a citizen of a different kingdom.

Beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless. (2 Peter 3:14)

Christ's message to lukewarm church members with one foot in the world and one foot in the Church, is...

I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment that thou mayest be clothed and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear... (Revelation 3:18)

There can be no truce with Satan. No compromise with sin. Be alert for Satan's deceptions. Do not isolate yourself from unbelievers, for you must have contact with them in order to share the gospel. The point is, do not make any alliances with unbelievers or spiritual Gibeonites.

OCTOBER 30 NO PART IN THE PLAN

The book of Nehemiah records the rebuilding of the wall around Jerusalem which had been destroyed by enemy invasion. When the enemy heard about Nehemiah's plan to rebuild the walls, they laughed, scorned, and despised it. They said, "What is this thing that you are doing? Will you rebel against the king?" In answer, Nehemiah declared, "The God of heaven will prosper us. Therefore we, His servants, will arise and build. But you have no portion, nor right, nor memorial in Jerusalem." God prospered His people, and despite great opposition they fulfilled their destiny. The wall was built in a matter of days and spiritual reforms were instituted. Years later, after a prolonged absence from Jerusalem, Nehemiah returned to be sure the people were on track spiritually. Fulfilling his destiny was a life-time commitment, as it will be for you.

God's work must be done by God's people according to God's plan. The enemy has no part or right in it. The enemy has no commitment to your destiny. They are critics and trouble-makers. This is why you cannot make a league with spiritual "Gibeonites." They will only cause you trouble in the future because they are not part of your vision.

Just as Nehemiah was called to the work of restoration of a wall, we are called to the ministry of restoration--reconciling lost souls to God:

And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray (2 Corinthians 5:18-20)

Your enemy is no more happy about your mission than Nehemiah's enemies were about his. Anytime you say, "Let us arise and build," expect to be met with opposition. Part of that opposition will be spirits of deception that will try to join with you in your vision, just as the enemy did to Israel and tried to do to Nehemiah.

Nehemiah was attacked by direct criticism (Nehemiah 2:19); ridicule (Nehemiah 4:1-3); false accusations (Nehemiah 6:5-7); diversion (Nehemiah 6:2); popular influence (Nehemiah 6:2); compromise (Nehemiah 5:14-19); threats and fear (Nehemiah 6:5-9); fighting and hindering (Nehemiah 4:8); conspiracy (Nehemiah 4:8; 6:2); discouragement (Nehemiah 4:10-11); dissension (Nehemiah 5:1-19); weak believers (Nehemiah 4:12); religious leaders (Nehemiah 3:5); and false prophets (Nehemiah 6:10-13). Nehemiah realized that his critics were not in the same camp. They didn't even have a clue regarding his divine mandate, nor did they understand what God was doing in him and through him.

Do not accept guidance or criticism from those who have no part in your vision. Do not join yourself to spiritual "Gibeonites" who have no understanding of your divine mandate. Instead, pray the prayer of Nehemiah: *"Now therefore, Oh God, strengthen my hands"* (Nehemiah 6:9),

OCTOBER 31 DISARMING DECEPTION

Israel was deceived by the Gibeonites. Samson was deceived by Delilah. Satan's strategy has not changed after all these years. He has commissioned legions of spirits to infiltrate and attack the Body of Christ through deception. Satan has released spirits of delusion, lying, and seducing spirits that are attacking even Spirit-filled, on-fire, sold-out Christians!

Satan wants you to be lulled into a false sense of security thinking it is impossible for you to be deceived. This is one of the most dangerous spiritual positions a believer can ever be in. If you fail to recognize that there is a possibility of you being deceived, you will become a prime target for Satan. Paul warned: *"Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall" (1 Corinthians 10:12).*

You must recognize Satan for who he is--an imposter. An imposter is "one who assumes an identity or title that is not his own for the purpose of deception." As an imposter, Satan's major strategy is to deceive. Jesus described his true character when he called him "the father of lies" (John 8:44). Just as Jesus manifests truth, Satan manifests deception.

Satan will try to bring deception into your life:

- By trying to weaken the authority of God's Word.
- By working through friends and family who are deceived.
- By working through false teachers, spreading theories and heresies.
- By keeping you ignorant of spiritual knowledge.
- By doctrines of demons.

To wage war and defeat Satan and his army of deceiving spirits, you must...

- Grow up to full spiritual maturity. You do this by continually filling your mind with the truth of God's Word.
- Recognize spirits of delusion, deception, and seducing lying spirits.
- Try every spirit to see whether or not it is from God.
- Hold fast to the truth. Do not allow yourself to be swayed by every new teaching that comes along. Live your life according to what you have tested and proven to be true--the Word of God.

Through the devotional readings this past month you have been armed spiritually against Satan's strategy of deception. Continue to fill your mind with God's Word. Hold fast to His truth so you will be able to recognize deceiving spirits and not fall victim to their tactics.

Remember that this spirit of deception attacked Israel after they had come into their Promised Land. The same spirit will rise up against you when you have entered into your own destiny. Be prepared. If Satan cannot stop you from reaching your destiny, he will try to stop you through deceiving spirits that will hinder the fulfillment of it. Use what you have learned to disarm deception.