

Lesson Two – Do Not Be Deceived

Day One – Testing

Day Two – Past Success of Deception

Day Three – Present Success of Deception-Leaven

Day Four – Present Success of Deception-Balaam

Day Five – Future Success of Deception

Last week we laid down some foundation regarding our adversary, Satan. We learned much about his position of authority—past, present, and future—and why he is so determined to see God’s people be disobedient. There are two main points to carry with you into this week:

- Satan does not want to lose what he currently has, which Christians are currently in line to inherit, and
- Disobedience leads to disqualification from rulership.

This week we will be focusing mainly on Satan’s *tactics* as he battles against us. His weapon of choice is deception, and it is a deception focused around God’s Word. Last week we briefly looked at the incident in the garden between the woman and the serpent, and we saw that Satan was successful in getting the woman, and the man, to disobey God, thus disqualifying them from ruling over God’s newly restored creation.

The key to Satan’s success at this time was in his deception surrounding God’s Word—he questioned the woman, saying, “Indeed, has God said, ‘You shall not eat from any tree of the garden’?” Satan also said to her, “You surely shall not die!” (a blatant contradiction to what God had said *would* happen to them if they disobeyed). Satan’s tactic from the very beginning has been deception. And, it is *deception with a purpose*. Since that day, he has continued in the same manner: deception in relation to God’s Word, with a purpose—to disqualify *us* from ruling with Christ in the heavens, in that coming Seventh Day.

As we continue to look at the overall picture of spiritual warfare, we will continue to lay more and more foundation. Some of this material should be review for you, but there is nothing more useful in the study of the Scriptures than REVIEW, REVIEW, and more REVIEW! Before we get started, let me reiterate the importance of praying each and every day, especially each time you dig into the Scriptures. The Holy Spirit is your teacher, not any man, and your reliance should be on Him and God’s Word. Daily prayer needs to be a desire of your heart! I encourage you to humble yourself to the leading and teaching of the Spirit.

Day One — Testing

Begin today with prayer.

First, we must understand that nothing that Satan does happens outside of God’s Supreme rule. The battle ensues, yes, but with the difficulties of our struggle come countless opportunities to overcome and succeed, and thus to be transformed into the image of Christ. Let’s see how James says it—

James 1:2-4, 12

² Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, ³ knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. ⁴ And let endurance have its perfect result, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing...

¹² Blessed is a man who perseveres under trial; for once he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life, which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.

¹³ Let no one say when he is tempted, “I am being tempted by God”; for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone. ¹⁴ But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust. ¹⁵ Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death. ¹⁶ DO NOT BE DECEIVED, my beloved brethren.

The word “endurance” in vv. 3 and 4 is the same word translated “perseveres” in v. 12; only the grammatical construction is different [noun vs. verb]. Underline those three words.

What is being *tested* by the various trials we encounter?

What does *the testing of our faith* produce?

What does *endurance* do for us?

If we *persevere under the trial/testing*, what will we receive?

Now reread the James passage, and then answer the following question—

If someone does *not* endure through the trials/tests, and does *not* persevere under the trial/test, what does *not* happen and what does he *not* get?

When you think of a crown, what is the picture you get?

In order to get this into the proper context, *when* do you think those who endure will be shown to be “perfect and complete” (v. 4)? (The word “perfect” means “brought to maturity.”)

Read about the timing of this below—

I Peter 4:12-13

¹² Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing (same word translated “trials” in James 1:2 and 12), as though some strange thing were happening to you; ¹³ but to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing; so that also at the revelation of His glory, you may rejoice with exultation.

Romans 8:18

For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us [Lit., the glory which shall be revealed in us].

According to I Pet. 4:13, if you share the sufferings of Christ, when will you “rejoice with exultation”?

Sum up why we are tested, and the results that occur because of it.

Notice what James says about the origins of this testing, and the view we are to have concerning these tests.

James 1:13-16

¹³ Let no one say when he is tempted, “I am being tempted by God”; for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone. ¹⁴ But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust. ¹⁵ Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death. ¹⁶ DO NOT BE DECEIVED, my beloved brethren.

What are we told NOT to say when we are tempted?

Why?

How do temptations start and what is the potential result?

Regardless of the origin of the ordeal that we find ourselves in, we must always look to the Lord and look at it as an opportunity to be faithful, to be obedient, and to overcome.

Let’s briefly look at the testing of two Old Testament patriarchs. Let’s begin with David, who writes—

Psalms 26:1-3

¹ Vindicate (08199) me, O Lord; for I have walked in my integrity: I have trusted in the Lord without wavering. ² Examine (0974) me, O Lord, and try (05254) me; test (06884) my mind and my heart. ³ For thy lovingkindness is before my eyes: and I have walked in Thy truth.

Using your Appendix, look up the definitions for the following words:

1. judge (08199) –
2. examine (0974) –
3. try (05254) –
4. test (06884) –

Now using these definitions, rewrite what David is saying to the Lord in this passage.

David states that he has walked in God's truth, he has trusted in the Lord, and he has been obedient. He tells God to judge him by examining, trying, and testing his heart and mind to see if this is true. We can read of David's life, his trials and his battles, and *his sins*; but he most definitely overcame it all with an attitude of repentance and humility. David never ceased to seek after God.

Oh, that we would have a heart like David!

Let's now look specifically at how Abraham was tested.

Genesis 22:1-2

¹ Now it came about after these things, that God tested (05254) Abraham, and said to him, "Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am." ² And He said, "Take now your son, your only son, whom you love, Isaac, and go to the land of Moriah; and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I will tell you."

This test required that Abraham respond, *through action*, with faith. It was not enough that Abraham simply believed God—in order for Abraham to pass this test he needed to *do something*; he needed to *obey*. AND HE OBEYED. And as a result of his faithful obedience, God responded—

Genesis 22:16-18

¹⁶ "By Myself I have sworn, declares the Lord, because you have done this thing, and have not withheld your son, your only son, ¹⁷ indeed I will greatly bless you, and I will greatly multiply your seed as the stars of the heavens, and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your seed shall possess the gate of their enemies. ¹⁸ And in your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice."

According to v. 18, why will all the nations of the earth be blessed?

In order to bring Abraham's faith (Gen. 15:1-6) to maturity, he had to be tested. This point of faith needed to be brought to its goal. Thus, the test—to offer up your son (Gen. 22:1-2). The result is not only seen here in Genesis 22:16-18, but also in James 2:21-23 and Hebrews 11:17-19.

Genesis 22:16-18 speaks of the very promises that *we* inherit through our faith in Jesus. We shall “possess the gate of [our] enemies.”

Sum up what you have learned about testing, and why it is necessary in your walk with the Lord.

Do you see why Satan wants you to fail these tests?

Think on these things and we'll meet again tomorrow!

Day Two – Past Success of Deception

Yesterday we read about the testing that we all must go through, and the hope that we will be victorious through each circumstance. In upcoming lessons we will study this more in-depth, and hopefully come into an understanding of what this looks like in our life. We also looked at David and his attitude about the various trials that we come up against. Take a minute before you begin your study today and read the following verse about David, and ask the Lord to give you a heart like this man.

I Kings 9:4

“And as for you, if you will walk before Me as your father David walked, in integrity of heart and uprightness, doing according to all that I have commanded you and will keep My statutes and My ordinances...”

Today we'll be taking a closer look at the past success of deception, and the lessons we can learn from studying other people's mistakes.

Let's first take a closer look at the definitions of “deception”:

- The Hebrew words for “deception” are *pathah* (06601), *nasha* (05377), *shagag* (07686), *ramah* (07411), and *'ashaq* (06231). All of these words mean essentially the same thing: to delude, entice, lead astray, beguile, defraud, flatter, or persuade.
- The two Greek words translated as “deception” are *planao* (4105) and *exapatao* (1818). These words mean to cause one to roam or go astray, to cause one to wander, to beguile, or seduce wholly.
- The word “deception” in our English language means a fraud or illusion; it can also mean a false impression.

Let's also look at what can be seen as the flip side of deception—FAITH:

- The word “faith” in Hebrew comes from the word *aman*, which means to trust or to believe.

- The word “faith” in Greek comes from the word *peitho*, which means to be persuaded or to believe.
- In the English language, the word “faith” means to believe, to trust, or to rely on.

Scripturally speaking, being faithful means simply believing what God has said about a matter. Being deceived, on the other hand, means believing something *contrary* to what God has said about a matter.

Let’s see how this deception played out in times past, with the first generation of Israel. It is SO important to study this group of people! As Paul writes—

I Corinthians 10:1-13

¹ For I do not want you to be unaware, brethren, that our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; ² and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea; ³ and all ate the same spiritual food; ⁴ and all drank the same spiritual drink, for they were drinking from a spiritual rock which followed them; and the rock was Christ. ⁵ Nevertheless, with most of them God was not well-pleased; for they were laid low in the wilderness. ⁶ Now these things happened as examples for us, that we should not crave evil things, as they also craved. ⁷ And do not be idolaters, as some of them were; as it is written, “THE PEOPLE SAT DOWN TO EAT AND DRINK, AND STOOD UP TO PLAY.” ⁸ Nor let us act immorally, as some of them did, and twenty-three thousand fell in one day. ⁹ Nor let us try the Lord, as some of them did, and were destroyed by the serpents. ¹⁰ Nor grumble, as some of them did, and were destroyed by the destroyer. ¹¹ Now these things happened to them as an example, and they were written for our instruction, upon whom the ends of the ages have come. ¹² Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall. ¹³ No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, that you may be able to endure it.

The nation of Israel was redeemed out of slavery in Egypt by the blood of the Passover lambs. After they left Egypt, they went through the Red Sea and they all came up on the other side to begin their new life.

All of this was *for a purpose*. Moses was to lead them into the land promised to Abraham and his descendants, in which was to be established a theocratic kingdom, with Israel being for God a kingdom of priests.

(Note: Israel was saved (redeemed) when they left Egypt. They satisfied God’s requirement for a substitutionary death of a firstborn by killing an animal and appropriating the blood. At this point, the nation of Israel gained spiritual life—they were now capable of spiritual discernment and able to be in a position where they could obey God.)

The people, however, began to grumble and complain almost immediately. The Lord, though, continued to lead them toward the land and patiently taught them rules on how to live in this soon-to-be established theocracy. At this point, God not only assured Israel that He would give them the land, He also told them that they would be victorious against its inhabitants. He then promised them that *if* they would obey His commandments, *then* He would make His dwelling among them and would walk among them (Ex.19:4-6).

About eighteen months later, this first generation of Israel arrived at Kadesh, on the precipice of their land and all the blessings God would have for them there. Then, there was a test. Let’s read about it—

Numbers 13:17-20

¹⁷ When Moses sent them to spy out the land of Canaan, he said to them, “Go up there into the Negev; then go up into the hill country. ¹⁸ And see what the land is like, and whether the people who live in it are strong or weak, whether they are few or many. ¹⁹ And

how is the land in which they live, is it good or bad? And how are the cities in which they live, are they like open camps or with fortifications? ²⁰ And how is the land, is it fat or lean? Are there trees in it or not? Make an effort then to get some of the fruit of the land.”

The twelve spies came back—

Numbers 13:27-33

²⁷ Thus they told him, and said, “We went in to the land where you sent us; and it certainly does flow with milk and honey, and this is its fruit. ²⁸ Nevertheless, the people who live in the land are strong, and the cities are fortified and very large; and moreover, we saw the descendants of Anak there. ²⁹ Amalek is living in the land of the Negev and Hittites and the Jebusites and the Amorites are living in the hill country, and the Canaanites are living by the sea and by the side of the Jordan.” ³⁰ Then Caleb quieted the people before Moses, and said, “We should by all means go up and take possession of it, for we shall surely overcome it.” ³¹ But the men who had gone up with him said, “We are not able to go up against the people, for they are too strong for us.” ³² So they gave out to the sons of Israel a bad report of the land which they had spied out, saying, “The land through which we have gone, in spying it out, is a land that devours its inhabitants; and all the people whom we saw in it are men of great size. ³³ There also we saw the Nephilim (the sons of Anak are part of the Nephilim); and we became like grasshoppers in our own sight, and so we were in their sight.”

Then the nation of Israel grumbled against Moses and Aaron—

Numbers 14:2b-4

^{2b} “Would that we had died in the land of Egypt! Or would that we had died in this wilderness! ³ And why is the Lord bringing us into this land, to fall by the sword? Our wives and our little ones will become plunder; would it not be better for us to return to Egypt?” ⁴ So they said to one another, “Let us appoint a leader and return to Egypt.”

But Joshua and Caleb stepped in—

Numbers 14:7b-9

^{7b} “The land which we passed through to spy out is an exceedingly good land. ⁸ If the Lord is pleased with us, then He will bring us into this land, and give it to us—a land which flows with milk and honey. ⁹ Only do not rebel against the Lord; and do not fear the people of the land, for they shall be our prey. Their protection has been removed from them, and the Lord is with us; do not fear them.”

However, the nation of Israel refused to believe (*have faith in*) what God had said about their certain victory in the land. The nation responded by saying that Joshua and Caleb should be killed with stones.

This was a test to see if Israel would believe what God had said about the land. In this last passage, what did Joshua and Caleb say that the Lord would do?

Write down what the other ten spies said about the land.

This entire generation of Israel knew what the Lord said about this land, but instead of believing what the Lord said about it, whom did they choose to believe?

According to Number 14:3-5, what did they want to do?

Do you see the deception involved here? On the brink of inheriting a land *promised*, BY GOD, to them, the majority of God's people chose to listen to ten leaders instead of the two voices reminding them what God had said about it. It is hard to believe that they were that deceived, isn't it? It is really no different than what Satan did in the Garden of Eden, asking the question, "Has God indeed said...?"

Satan, through others doing his bidding, only needed to plant doubt concerning what God had really said about the matter. And the people had two choices: they could either have believed what God had said or believed something contrary to God's Word. It's that simple.

And the consequences at Kadesh were the same as in the Garden—

Numbers 14:30

"Surely you shall not come into the land in which I swore to settle you, except Caleb the son of Jephunneh and Joshua the son of Num."

This first generation of Israel was to become a kingdom of priests and a holy nation in this land, ruling over all other nations with God in their midst, ruling among them. Adam and Eve were to rule over the earth. Neither got to realize this, due to their disobedience.

Let's look at what the author of Hebrews says about this first generation—

Hebrews 3:7-13

⁷ Therefore, just as the Holy Spirit says, "Today if you hear His voice, ⁸ do not harden your hearts as when they provoked Me, as in the day of trial in the wilderness, ⁹ where your fathers tried Me by testing Me, and saw My works for forty years. ¹⁰ Therefore I was angry with this generation, and said, 'They always go astray in their heart; and they did not know My ways'; ¹¹ As I swore in My wrath, they shall not enter My rest." ¹² Take care, brethren, lest there should be in any one of you an evil, unbelieving heart, in falling away from the living God. ¹³ But encourage one another day after day, as long as it is still called "Today," lest any one of you be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.

Verse 11 states again the consequence of the failure at Kadesh. What did they not get to enter?

According to v. 12, what did that generation (a *redeemed* generation) have?

Can a Christian possess that also?

What can we be hardened by?

Do you remember what the *rest* was for Israel (from Lesson One)?

Christians are now being warned of this very same thing. The author goes on to say—

Hebrews 4:11

Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest, lest anyone fall through following the same example of disobedience.

Do you remember what “the rest” is for us?

The message here is clear. That generation was disobedient. They are called “evil” and “unbelieving.” It is possible to be deceived to such a degree that we, Christians, can miss out on the future Sabbath rest. It happened to that first generation of Israel and it CAN happen to us.

God says, “*if* you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s offspring, heirs according to promise” (Gal. 3:29). He promises that we will possess the gates of our enemies in the heavenly realm (*cf.* Matt. 21:43). God says that we *can* stand firm against the devil and we *can* overcome. If we were to see those heavenly spirit beings that we battle against I am sure that they, as in Canaan, would appear as giants to us! But that shouldn’t matter—God has already said that we can take their land. The question is, do you believe it?

See you tomorrow.

Day Three – Present Success of Deception- Leaven

Begin with prayer!

We’ve seen how Satan deceives—he questions God’s Word, “Did God *really* say...?” Many of us would like to think that we have a good knowledge of God’s Word and wouldn’t be easily deceived in this way. However, consider these questions: Do you know what you believe and why you believe it? Do you know, without doubt, what God has to say about any given matter? When asked, “Has God indeed said...?” would you be able to answer, “Yes, He says...” or “No, He didn’t say...” And does your knowledge come from God’s Word, or man’s words?

Today and tomorrow, we will be dealing with two different aspects of the present success of deception. Both have ramifications for the Christian *today*. Both are rampant deceptions that have permeated Christianity, and we will have to study them to get a bigger view of the deception that confronts us.

Leaven is present within the Church today in regards to the message of the kingdom. This is a truth that Christians today need to know; Jesus spoke prophetically concerning the “word of the kingdom”—

Matthew 13:33

He spoke another parable to them, “The kingdom of heaven [Lit., the kingdom of the heavens] is like leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three pecks of meal, until it was all leavened.”

Let’s first gain some understanding as to what leaven is. The Lord spoke about it to Moses, immediately prior to the first Passover in Egypt. This is the first time leaven is mentioned in Scripture, which establishes a pattern for its use throughout God’s Word—

Exodus 12:15

Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread, but on the first day you shall remove leaven from your houses; for whoever eats anything leavened from the first day until the seventh day, that person shall be cut off from Israel.

This is the establishment of the Feast of Unleavened Bread for Israel, to be celebrated directly after the Feast of Passover. What are the children of Israel to do with the leaven?

What are they told NOT to do?

What happens if they do eat leaven?

(Note: the command of ridding themselves of leaven is given numerous times in the Old Testament hereafter. Check Leviticus 2:11; 6:17; 10:12; Num. 28:17; Deut. 16:3; II Chron. 30:21, to name a few.)

Let's read more about leaven in the New Testament—

Matthew 16:6-8,11-12

⁶ And Jesus said to them, "Watch out and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees." ⁷ And they [the disciples] began to discuss among themselves, saying, "It is because we took no bread." ⁸ But Jesus, aware of this, said, "You men of little faith, why do you discuss among yourselves that you have no bread?" ¹¹ How is it that you do not understand that I did not speak to you concerning bread? But beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees." ¹² Then they understood that He did not say to beware of the leaven of bread, but of the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees.

Luke 12:1

He began saying to His disciples first of all, "Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy."

I Corinthians 5:6-8

⁶ Your boasting is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump of dough? ⁷ Clean out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, just as you are in fact unleavened. For Christ our Passover also has been sacrificed. ⁸ Let us therefore celebrate the feast, not with the old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

Using the above verses, how would you describe leaven?

Let's look again at what Jesus said concerning leaven, and how it is impacting us today.

Matthew 13:33

He spoke another parable to them, "The kingdom of heaven is like leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three pecks of meal, until it was all leavened."

The word “parable” is the Greek word *parabole* (3850), which means, “to put near or close to something.” It is a compilation of the words, *para* and *bole*. *Para* literally means “near,” and *bole* comes from the word *ballo* which literally means, “throw” or “lay.” A parable, therefore, is a truth that is laid alongside other truths, thereby painting a more complete picture of the subject at hand.

This parable of the leaven is *laid alongside* three previous parables, and is followed by another three parables. It is essential to understand the progression of the other parables in order to understand the meaning of this particular one.

But first, let’s understand *why* Jesus speaks in parables—

Matthew 13:11-13

¹¹ **And He answered and said to them [His disciples], “To you it has been granted to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been granted. ¹² For whoever has, to him shall more be given, and whoever does not have, even what he has shall be taken away from him. ¹³ Therefore, I speak to them in parables; because while seeing they do not see, and while hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand.”**

Why did Jesus begin to speak in parables?

Jesus begins speaking in parables because the leaders of Israel—the ones who should have understood who He was and what He was doing—were blind and deaf to what Jesus was saying to them *concerning the kingdom*. Jesus’ stated purpose was for this very thing—

Luke 4:43

But He said to them, “I must preach the kingdom of God to the other cities also, for I was sent for this purpose.”

The leaders had attributed the signs and wonders that Jesus was performing *to Satan* (Matt. 12:23-24), thus sealing their fate in relation to His offer (Matt. 21:43). Jesus then told them what the consequence for this stiff-necked refusal would be—

Matthew 12:31-32

³¹ **“Therefore, I say to you, any sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven men, but blasphemy against the Spirit shall not be forgiven. ³² And whoever shall speak a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him; but whoever shall speak against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven him, either in this age, or in the age to come.”**

This sin of unbelief would not be forgiven them in this “age” (Man’s Day, 6,000 years of time). It also would not be forgiven them in the “age to come” (the kingdom age, the future 1,000-year age). The implication is that it *will* be forgiven them for the eternal ages beyond that. Take a moment to reference the timeline labeled “Ages,” found in the Appendix. This will help you see this a bit more clearly.

This particular incident with the leaders of Israel marked the point at which this offer of the kingdom of the heavens was taken from the nation of Israel. Jesus later stated that the heavenly portion of the kingdom would be given to someone else—

Matthew 21:43

“Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you, and be given to a nation producing the fruit of it.”

As we begin to understand more about this offer of the kingdom of the heavens, we must also understand at this point that the “church,” the new nation that is to be the recipient of the offer that Israel forfeited, had not come into being yet. This “church” would be built after Jesus’ death and resurrection; and His “church” is still being built today. This offer—the word of the kingdom of the heavens—is still being offered to Christians *today*. Therefore, we can study the parable of the leaven and know that Jesus is speaking prophetically, even though contextually He is speaking to His disciples.

With that in mind, please go to your Bible and read the first four parables found in Matthew 13:3-33.

Progressively speaking, we see that many hear “the word of the kingdom,” but very few respond in such a way as to produce fruit. The “good seed” are the ones who hear the word of the kingdom of heaven and produce the fruit of it (i.e. wheat). The “good seed” are then put in a field, where the enemy sows in tares among them. Tares look exactly like wheat, but don’t produce fruit. According to Jesus in His explanation of the parable, the tares stay among the wheat until harvest time, which is the end of the age. It is at this time that the separation of the wheat and tares occurs.

Then, this offer of the kingdom of heaven continues like a mustard seed. The mustard seed is planted and it grows, until eventually the mustard seed becomes a “tree.” It is important to note that a mustard plant only gets about six feet tall; it is a thin plant with a base no thicker around than a thumb. Its branches are no longer than a man’s arm and no thicker than your average straw. It moves and sways in the wind and is easily toppled by stepping on it. The mustard plant, at full maturity, is not even comparable to a tree. What we see described in the parable is an *unnatural growth* of the mustard seed that was planted—due in part to these tares that settle in among the good seed. A mustard plant is never meant to become a tree, and when it does, the “birds of the air” (which, from our first parable, are the evil one or those who do his bidding) come in and nest in its branches.

With these parables in place, we then come to the parable of the leaven.

Matthew 13:33

He spoke another parable to them, “The kingdom of [the] heaven[s] is like leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three pecks of meal, until it was all leavened.”

A woman takes the leaven and places it in “three pecks of meal.” Three is the number of *Divine Perfection*. “Three measures of meal” is three measures of ground grain, used to make bread.

What does the meal symbolize? Read on—

Matthew 4:4

But He answered and said, “It is written, ‘Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.’”

John 6:35

Jesus said to them, “I am the bread of life...”

Who is the “bread of life”?

John 1:1-2

¹ In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was in the beginning with God.

John 1:14

And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us...

Jesus, the “bread of life,” is also what?

This meal that is used to make bread is referencing the Word of God, though not the Word in a general sense. Rather, the reference *contextually* is to that “word of the kingdom” that is mentioned in the first parable.

According to our parable of the leaven, what happens to the meal after the woman hid the leaven in it? (Notice that she “hid” it, literally “concealed” it. It was done *secretly*.)

Let’s review what’s been laid out for us in these parables. Almost 2,000 years ago, Jesus spoke prophetically about the chronology of events concerning the “word of the kingdom.” This word would be given to many, but only a few would hear it, *understand it*, and produce the fruit of it. Then, amongst this “good seed,” tares would appear (resembling the wheat in every way, but fruitless) and stay in close proximity to the wheat until the harvest time at the end of the age. Because of these tares, there would be an unnatural growth of the word (of the kingdom), in which the evil one would find a place to nest. Then the leaven, a corrupting agent (doctrine contrary to God’s truth) that was secretly concealed in the word of the kingdom, would stay within the word until it was ALL leavened.

Here are a few personal questions: Do you see the effects of the leaven today in Christianity? Do you see this offer of the kingdom of the heavens being talked about, taught, or even understood in the Church-at-large today?

Satan has been successful. Christians have been deceived and most don’t even know it. I hope that you are beginning to get a grasp on some of these things, for the more you understand about the present condition of Christianity the more prepared you will be to take up your armor and stand firm against your enemy.

Pray on these things and continue to study hard! See you tomorrow.

Day Four – Present Success of Deception—Balaam

Be sure to begin your study time in prayer!

Balaam was a man that God used in a most interesting way. He is called a “soothsayer” (Josh. 13:22) and a “prophet” (II Pet. 2:16). We first read about Balaam in the book of Numbers in relation to the first generation of Israel. He is then mentioned many more times throughout the Bible in a *negative* way, and God saw fit to record several warnings for us about him. Let’s read about him—

Numbers 22:4-6

⁴ And Moab said to the elders of Midian, “Now this horde will lick up all that is around us, as the ox licks up the grass of the field.” And Balak the son of Zippor was king of Moab at that time. ⁵ So 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, “Behold, a people came out of Egypt; behold, they cover the surface of the land, and they are living opposite

me. ⁶ Now, therefore, please come, curse this people for me since they are too mighty for me; perhaps I may 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.”

What did Balak, king of Moab, want Balaam, the prophet, to do to Israel?

Balaam responded by telling these messengers to stay the night while he checked with God about it. Balaam asked God, and God responded—

Numbers 22:12

And God said to Balaam, “Do not go with them; you shall not curse the people; for they are blessed.”

Balaam smartly refused to go and sent the messengers back. However, Balak sent “more numerous and more distinguished” leaders the second time with an offer of honoring Balaam “richly” if he would curse the people of Israel. Balaam went back to God a second time with the same request.

This time, Balaam went to Balak with the messengers, because God had told him to go and to speak the words that God would put in his mouth. So Balaam went:

Numbers 22:22

But God was angry because he was going, and the angel of the Lord took his stand in the way as an adversary against him. Now he was riding on his donkey and his two servants were with him.

The donkey started acting strangely, and Balaam reacted by hitting it and striking it. The donkey then *spoke* and brought attention to the angel trying to stop Balaam. Balaam asked if he should turn around, but the angel said to go, but told him to “speak only the word which I shall tell you.”

When Balaam arrived at Moab, he told Balak to build some altars to God and offer up some sacrifices. Three times Balaam tried to curse Israel, and three times God put blessings in his mouth. Then—

Numbers 24:10

Balak’s anger burned against Balaam, and he struck his hands together; and Balak said to Balaam, “I called you to curse my enemies, but behold, you have persisted in blessing them these three times!”

And then seemingly the story ends, with Balaam going his way and Balak going another.

But the next thing revealed in Scripture is this—

Numbers 25:1-3

¹ While Israel remained at Shittim, the people began to play the harlot with the daughters of Moab. ² For they [the Moabites] invited the people [Israel] to the sacrifices of their gods, and the people [Israel] ate and bowed down to their gods. ³ So Israel joined themselves to Baal of Peor, and the Lord was angry against Israel.

What did the people of Israel do?

God's response is quick, and quite serious—

Numbers 25:5-9

⁵ So Moses said to the judges of Israel, “Each of you slay his men who have joined themselves to Baal of Peor. ⁶ Then behold, one of the sons of Israel came and brought to his relatives a Midianite woman, in the sight of Moses and in the sight of all the congregation of the sons of Israel, while they were weeping at the doorway of the tent of meeting. ⁷ When Phinehas the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, saw it, he arose from the midst of the congregation, and took a spear in his hand; ⁸ and he went after the man of Israel into the tent, and pierced both of them through, the man of Israel and the woman, through the body. So the plague on the sons of Israel was checked. ⁹ And those who died by the plague were 24,000.

Then God told Moses to take vengeance on the Midianites and kill every male, burn their cities, plunder their goods, and capture the women, children, and flocks.

What happened in Moab and Midian? What was Israel thinking, intermingling with other nations? The Lord had expressly commanded Israel not to involve themselves in any way with other nations (cf. Lev. 18:24; Num. 23:9).

Read on—

Numbers 31:15-16

¹⁵ And Moses said to them, “Have you spared all the women? ¹⁶ Behold, these caused the sons of Israel, through the counsel of Balaam, to trespass against the Lord in the matter of Peor, so the plague was among the congregation of the Lord.

Who caused the sons of Israel to trespass against the Lord?

Who counseled them to do this?

What Balaam did is considered such a serious matter to God that we see him mentioned three times in the New Testament.

II Peter 2:13-16

¹³ ...[false teachers] count it a pleasure to revel in the daytime. They are stains and blemishes, reveling in their deceptions, as they carouse with you, ¹⁴ having eyes full of adultery and that never cease from sin, enticing unstable souls, having a heart trained in greed, accursed children; ¹⁵ forsaking the right way they have gone astray, having followed the way of Balaam, the son of Beor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness, ¹⁶ but he received a rebuke for his own transgression; a dumb donkey, speaking with a voice of a man, restrained the madness of the prophet.

According to this passage, what do false teachers do?

In case there is any doubt that Peter is talking about Christians, v. 14 calls them “children.” This is the Greek word *teknon* (5043), which is referencing a birth, both in the natural and figurative sense. All people who put faith in the blood of Jesus Christ become children of God—born from above (cf. Gal. 3:7; Rom.

8:17). And even more specifically, II Peter 2:13-16 is dealing with teachers who bring false teaching to God's people; teachers who "deny the Master who *bought them*" (II Pet. 2:1).

What does Peter mean when he says that they "followed the way of Balaam"?

According to v. 15, what did Balaam love?

Verse 15 begins with "forsaking the right way they have gone astray." This is clearly saying that these false teachers *once knew* the right way. And, the word here for "gone astray" is the Greek word *planao* (4105), which is the same word used for "deceived." With this in mind, in your own words describe these false teachers.

There's more on false teachers in relation to Balaam in the Book of Jude—

Jude 1:3-4,10-12

³ Beloved, while I was making every effort to write you about our common salvation, I felt the necessity to write to you appealing that you contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints. ⁴ For certain persons have crept in unnoticed, those who were long beforehand marked out for this condemnation, ungodly persons who turn the grace of our God into licentiousness and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ. ¹⁰ But these men revile the things which they do not understand; and the things which they know by instinct, like unreasoning animals, by these things they are destroyed. ¹¹ Woe to them! For they have gone the way of Cain, and for pay they have rushed headlong into the error of Balaam, and perished in the rebellion of Korah.

Jude's intention in writing this letter to his fellow Christians was to write "about our common salvation." However, he felt "the necessity" to write to them concerning their "contending earnestly for *the faith*." According to the text, why did Jude change his mind?

Are these "ungodly persons" Christians? What makes you think so?

According to v. 11, what did these "ungodly persons" do for pay?

We have read about false teachers/ungodly persons following the “way of Balaam” (II Pet. 2:15) and rushing into the “error of Balaam” (Jude 1:11). Now look at what Jesus says in the Book of Revelation—

Revelation 2:14

“But I have a few things against you, because you have there some who hold the teaching of Balaam, who kept teaching Balak to put a stumbling block before the sons of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit acts of immorality.”

According to this verse, what did Balaam teach Balak to do?

Now focus on what you have read and learned about Balaam and his influence on the first generation of Israel. Can you sum up what the warnings are to us regarding Balaam? What does the “error” and “way” and “the teaching of Balaam” represent for the Church today? What does it look like? (This may take some thinking, but it is important to spend some time on this question.)

Every one of the references to Balaam in the New Testament are used in passages referring to Christians entering into a state of affairs *within the world* that not only defiles them in the Lord’s eyes, but also causes them to influence and defile others within the Body.

This defilement comes, as it did to the sons of Israel, by becoming enmeshed in the behaviors and world systems surrounding us that we have been *expressly* told NOT to emulate nor be a part of (I John 2:15-17). As Balaam taught, so these people too sacrifice to idols and commit acts of immorality. They become completely immersed in the world around them.

The deception that presently exists regarding our *purpose* (to rule and reign with Christ in the coming age) is a direct result of the leaven (false doctrine) introduced in the very beginning, and the teaching of Balaam. It is taught that it’s all right for God’s people to behave in any way they want, and they can do so with impunity.

Let’s not forget what Paul writes to the church in Galatia—

Galatians 6:7

Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap.

Good job today. Keep it up and we’ll start again tomorrow

Day Five – Future Success of Deception

We have covered a lot of ground this week! Deception is such a rampant problem since it is the number one tactic of our enemy, as it always has been. We need to be aware of this! It is not something to be taken lightly, nor is it something to be ignored. Deception is out there and deception will come to you, personally. It is your job to be on your guard and to study God's Word in order to combat it. Remember, faith is the opposite of deception. And faith, brought to its goal, results in the salvation of your soul. Do not forget Romans 10:17:

Romans 10:17

So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

So please continue to pray for God's leading and teaching in His Word. Pray that you are attentive to His Spirit, for He will lead you into all truth.

Today we will be looking at the final outcome of this deception. We'll focus primarily on the end of this age, with what awaits the Church as she stands before Her Lord and Judge. We've studied the leaven and its deceptive work—and since Jesus spoke the words regarding the word of the kingdom being "all" leavened, we can know for sure that it will happen just that way.

Let's read again the verse from Galatians—

Galatians 6:7

Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap.

Rewrite this verse in your own words.

Note what Jesus says in Luke—

Luke 18:7-8

⁷ ...now shall not God bring about justice for His elect, who cry to Him day and night, and will He delay long over them? ⁸ I tell you that He will bring about justice for them speedily. However, when the Son of Man comes, will He find faith [Lit., *the* faith] on the earth?

This is an interesting question that Jesus posed. The way it is structured in the Greek is actually more like, "However, when the Son of Man comes, he won't find the faith on the earth, will he?" The answer expected is a negative one—*no*.

We know Jesus will come back sometime in the future, and we can know from our timeline that it will not be too much longer. Jesus states that when He comes back He will *not* find THE faith (which is another way of speaking of the word of the kingdom—Paul used this expression quite a bit. We'll study this a bit more in depth in later weeks).

Let's look again at the passage from James we studied on Day One—

James 1:2-4, 12

² Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, ³ knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. ⁴ And let endurance have its perfect result, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing... ¹² Blessed is a man who perseveres

under trial; for once he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life, which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.

We need to encounter various trials in order to test our faith. The testing of our faith produces endurance. Endurance, *if we let it*, will result in us being “perfect” (Lit., fully grown) and “complete” (Lit., whole, having all parts—it expresses the perfection of man before the fall).

In v. 12, the man that does these things is called blessed, and he will receive “the crown of life.”

The Book of Revelation also mentions this crown:

Revelation 2:10

[Jesus speaking] **“Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to cast some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.”**

This passage in Revelation is giving us a glimpse into the judgment seat of Christ, yet future. Let’s learn more about the judgment seat.

Romans 14:10-12

¹⁰ **But you, why do you judge your brother? Or you again, why do you regard your brother with contempt? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of God.** ¹¹ **For it is written, “As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to Me, and every tongue shall give praise to God.”** ¹² **So then each one of us shall give an account of himself to God.**

Who will stand before the judgment seat of God?

What will we do there?

Paul mentions the judgment seat to the Church at Corinth also—

II Corinthians 5:9-10

⁹ **Therefore also we have as our ambition, whether at home or absent, to be pleasing to Him.** ¹⁰ **For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.**

According to v. 10, who must appear before the judgment seat of Christ? (Note: we can see the terms “judgment seat of God” and “judgment seat of Christ” used interchangeably here.)

What will we be “recompensed” for?

The very next verse in this passage is interesting—

II Corinthians 5:11

Therefore, knowing the terror of the Lord, we persuade men...

Do you get a warm and fuzzy picture of this judgment seat? Do you think we might need to be concerned about our deeds, *especially the bad ones*?

What do we do, now, with our bad deeds? Simple—

1 John 1:4-2:2

⁴ And these things we write, so that our joy may be made complete. ⁵ And this is the message we have heard from Him and announce to you, that God is light, and in Him there is no darkness at all. ⁶ If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth; ⁷ but if we walk in the light as He Himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us [Lit., *keeps on* cleansing us] from all sin. ⁸ If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves, and the truth is not in us. ⁹ If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. ¹⁰ If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us.

¹ My little children, I am writing these things to you that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; ² and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world.

What must we do with our sins?

What will Jesus do?

Do you think that God means it? (In other words, should we worry about our confessed sins?)

Paul tells us more about God's system of justice—

I Corinthians 3:10-15

¹⁰ According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder I laid a foundation, and another is building upon it. But let each man be careful how he builds upon it. ¹¹ For no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Christ Jesus. ¹² Now if any man builds upon the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, ¹³ each man's work will become evident; for the day will show it, because it is to be revealed with fire; and the fire itself will test the quality of each man's work. ¹⁴ If any man's work which he has built upon it remains, he shall receive a reward. ¹⁵ If any man's work is burned up, he shall suffer loss; but he himself shall be saved, yet so as through fire.

What is the *only* foundation that can be laid?

What can a man build upon this foundation?

How will it be revealed?

What does the fire do?

If a man's work remains, what will he receive?

What do the Scriptures say about the "reward" (*cf.* Col. 3:24)?

If any man's work is burned up, what happens?

Does the man burn up also?

Verse 13 says, "each man's work will become evident." What will show it?

What day? Take a quick look at your timeline in the back marked "Ages." Find the 1,000 years at the end of Man's Day. Notice that it's called the "day of the Lord." Paul is saying that this future "day of the Lord" is going to show every man's work. We can then go to the Book of Revelation and read about John's vision of this "day"—

Revelation 1:10

I [John, the apostle] was in the Spirit on the Lord's day...

The "Lord's Day" is that future 1,000-year "day"—the Seventh Day. John is getting a vision of future events and is told to record them and send it to the seven churches as a warning.

This Book of Revelation is completely about a future time, and we can understand all of what John writes in that respect.

The first thing John sees is Jesus. He is described in this way—

Revelation 1:13

...one like a son of man, clothed in a robe reaching to the feet, and girded across His breast with a golden girdle...

This Man, Jesus, was standing amidst seven lampstands, which are "the seven churches" (Rev. 1:20). Seven is a number of completion, used quite often throughout Scripture.

Jesus speaks—

Revelation 1:17b-19

^{17b} "Do not be afraid; I am the first and the last, ¹⁸ and the living One; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades. ¹⁹ Write therefore the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall take place after these things.

John saw a vision of Jesus, dressed as a Judge (He is girded across the breast as a judge would be dressed), standing with the complete Church on the Day of the Lord. Jesus then begins to give an account to each Church, stating what he knows about their deeds, and what He has "against" them. He states each

judgment as a warning, since this was given to John to give back to the churches—but, this is also a *prophetic* event that *will* happen in that future day just as is portrayed in this book. Do you see this?

Now we Christians, living near the end of our dispensation, can look at these warnings and take heed *now*, so that we don't end up hearing those same words on that day!

Let's look at the last Church mentioned, the Laodicean Church, and what Christ says to them—

Revelation 3:15-22

¹⁵ “ I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot; I would that you were cold or hot. ¹⁶ So because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of My mouth. ¹⁷ Because you say, ‘I am rich, and have become wealthy, and have need of nothing,’ and you do not know that you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked, ¹⁸ I advise you to buy from Me gold refined by fire, that you may become rich, and white garments, that you may clothe yourself, and that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and eye salve to anoint your eyes, that you may see. ¹⁹ Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline; be zealous therefore, and repent. ²⁰ Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him, and will dine with him, and he with Me. ²¹ He who overcomes, I will grant to him to sit down with me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne. ²² He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.”

(Note: Just to clarify, “the Church” means the entire Body of Believers who have put their faith in the shed blood of Jesus Christ. It has nothing to do with a building or denomination.)

What good thing does Jesus have to say about this last Church mentioned?

What negative things does He say about them?

What is this Church saying about itself ?

Is it aware of its condition?

What does Jesus tell them to do in v.19?

Jesus says that He stands at the door and knocks; He says that if anyone hears His voice and opens the door, He will *come in to them*. Therefore, is Jesus inside the Church, or standing outside the Church?

What are the present ramifications of that?

To the person who heeds His voice and opens the door, what will that person get?

And if a person “overcomes,” what does he/she get?

Let’s address one last thing about the leaven (note that leaven is yeast). In what temperature does leaven work the best? What does Jesus call this particular church?

Do you see the present, and future effects of this deception? Briefly write down what this means to you, personally.

I’d like to end this week’s lesson with some encouraging words. This subject of spiritual warfare has the potential to be, because of the nature of it, heavy and burdensome. It need not be, however, because the final day has not yet come, and the overcomers have not yet been identified.

Our time is short, however, and I encourage each one of you to spend some one-on-one time with the Lord. Take everything you’ve been learning to Him. There is only one truth to God’s Word and it’s up to His Holy Spirit to teach it to you. Pray that He opens your eyes and your ears. Pray that He clearly shows you the deception around you, and in your life. Pray that He gives you the strength to stand against the enemy. You have every opportunity—RIGHT NOW—to set your sights on that goal and stand firm!

Meditate on the following passages, and prayerfully make them your own. They should really be coming alive for you!

II Corinthians 4:16-18

¹⁶ Therefore we do not lose heart, but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day. ¹⁷ For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal [Lit., age-lasting (166)] weight of glory far beyond all comparison, ¹⁸ while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.

Ephesians 1:18-19

¹⁸ I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints. ¹⁹

and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe. These are in accordance with the working of the strength of His might...

Ephesians 6:10

Finally, be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of His might..

I Samuel 17:47

and that all this assembly may know that the Lord does not deliver by sword or by spear; for the battle is the Lord's...

Any thoughts?

See you next week.