

False Flags Propaganda and Deception

Biblical Discernment in an Age of Lies

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In the book of Joshua, chapter 9, beginning there with verse three. And the title of the message is false flags, propaganda, and deception. A few weeks ago, one gentleman asked me a question, and I thought, well, I'll answer that question in a sermon. And this sermon is a result of the question that he asked. So let's begin reading in Joshua 9:3. "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 moldy. 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 moldy: 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. And it came to pass at the end of three days after they had made a league with them, that they heard that they were their neighbors, and that they dwelt among them."

So here's a good question. Have you ever been deceived? If so, do you remember how hurt you were when you realized the deception? At times you blamed the other person or the people for deceiving you and other times you blamed your own self for being so stupid and so gullible and to fall for such a swindle. But interestingly at times everybody wants to be deceived. We do not want the truth because the truth makes us uncomfortable. It holds us accountable and demands righteous action and conduct. And the truth of the matter is this.

Everyone uses deception. All warfare is deception. All camouflage is deception. Smiling at folks when you're irritated with them is deception. Telling your wife that she looks lovely in an unlovely dress is deception.

I saw a cartoon years ago. I've never forgotten it. And I don't believe any husband would be as brave as this man was in the cartoon. The wife was looking into a mirror standing behind him. He was sitting in a lounge chair reading the paper. And as she looked in the mirror, she said this. She said, "I'm old. I'm fat. I'm wrinkled. I'm sagging. And I need help." And she

looked at her husband said, "Say something to me that will help me." And he said, "For a woman as old as you are, you have mighty good eyesight." Well, I'm sorry, but I don't imagine any husband's going to be that brave.

But anyhow, deception, by the way, is not evil in and of itself. It's a tool and it may be used for good or it may be used for evil. The truth of the matter is this. Even God uses deception. I'm going to show it to you from the Bible. But if you remember in the book of Job 12 and verse 16, the Bible says, "With him is strength and wisdom. The deceived and the deceiver are his."

So if you will turn, holding Joshua 9, to 2 Chronicles chapter 18. Let's begin reading there with verse 12. I hope you remember the story about Ahab and Jehoshaphat. Ahab is trying to get Jehoshaphat to go with him to Ramoth-gilead. Of course, he has all of his false prophets, and they come out prophesying all kinds of success for Ahab. Jehoshaphat asks, Is there not here a prophet of God, a servant of God? Ahab answers, There's one, but I hate him. So he sends for Micaiah. Micaiah is already in prison because Micaiah is indeed a servant of God. So look, if you would, in verse 12 of 2 Chronicles 18. The messenger that went to call Micaiah spake to him, saying, "Behold, the words of the prophets declare good to the king with one assent; let thy word therefore, I pray thee, be like one of theirs, and speak thou good." Of course, they were false prophets. And Micaiah said, "As the Lord liveth, even what my God saith, that will I speak." When he was come to the king, the king said unto him, "Micaiah, shall we go to Ramoth-gilead to battle, or shall I forbear?" And he said, "Go ye up, and prosper, and they shall be delivered into your hand." Evidently he was saying this in a very sarcastic way, because in verse 15 the king said unto him, "How many times shall I adjure thee that thou say nothing but the truth to me in the name of the Lord?" Then said he, you want the truth, Ahab, here it is: "I did see all Israel scattered upon the mountains, as sheep that have no shepherd: and the Lord said, These have no master; let them return therefore every man to his house in peace." And the king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, "Did I not tell thee that he would not prophesy good unto me, but evil?" And again he said, "Therefore, hear the word of the Lord. I saw the Lord sitting upon his throne, and all the host of heaven sitting at his right hand on his left." And the Lord said, "Who shall entice Ahab, king of Israel, that he may go up and fall at Ramoth-gilead?" And one spake after this manner, and another after that manner. Then there came out a spirit and stood before the Lord and said, "I will entice him." And the Lord said unto him, "Wherewith?" And he said, "I will go out and be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets." And the Lord said, "Thou shalt entice him, and thou shalt also prevail. Go out, and do even so." "Now therefore, behold, the Lord hath put a lying spirit in the mouth of these thy prophets, and the Lord hath spoken evil against thee."

So here Ahab has been listening to his false prophets and of course they're telling him to go up and prosper and Micaiah comes out and tells him the truth. Look, if you go up to Ramoth Gilead, you're going to die. That's all there is to it. And of course, you know the story where he persuaded Jehoshaphat to go with him and he disguised himself and went into battle, but Jehoshaphat had on his kingly robes. And so, they fought against Jehoshaphat, thinking he was Ahab, until he cried out to the Lord, and the Lord called them off. And then the Bible says a certain man drew a bow at a venture and the arrow came and smote him between the shoulder blades and came out in the chest and, of course, he died later on. But notice if you would, please, his lying prophets are telling him to go up and prosper. And here comes Micaiah and he tells him the truth and Ahab refuses the truth. He prefers to be deceived. He prefers to believe a lie.

So let me make something exceedingly clear at this point. If you do not believe the truth, you will believe a lie. The only alternative to the truth is a lie. And Ahab believed a lie and he was killed. Destruction and damnation always follow a lie.

For instance, if you'd hold Joshua 9 still, turn in your Bibles to 2 Thessalonians chapter 2, beginning there with verse 10. Notice verse 10. Look what the Scripture says: "And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish." Now wait a minute. They're perishing, but notice that they are deceived: "with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish." Why are they perishing? "Because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved." Now watch. And for this cause, what cause? Because they received not the love of the truth. "God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness."

So again, we need to let this sink in. If you're not believing the truth, you are believing a lie. And if you believe a lie, you will be at your own destruction.

Our depraved nature loves a lie. We love to be deceived.

In fact, the Scripture tells us before our salvation that we were disobedient and deceived. You'll find that in Titus 3 and verse three where the apostle Paul wrote, "For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another."

Once again, he said before our conversion, we were disobedient and we were deceived. So, it's only in the grace of God that God opens our eyes, we see the truth, and we turn from the deception and from the lie.

That is why the apostle Paul in 1 Thessalonians chapter 1 talked about how the sound of these Thessalonians who were saved went out through all of Macedonia and Achaia. He says it shows "what manner of entering in we had unto you." Then he says, "And how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God; and to wait for his Son Jesus Christ from heaven."

In other words, you were once deceived. You were once disobedient, but now you've been delivered. You're no longer deceived. You've turned to the one true and the living God, and you're serving him. So, the truth of the matter is each of us before our conversion were deceived.

Now, there are two particular areas that God warns us as Christians and anyone else as well in which we are not to be deceived. I'm going to give you those two passages. I want you to look in 1 Corinthians chapter 15 and verse 33. Look at what the Word of God says. The Bible says, "Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners."

Now look at that. That is so simple and straightforward. God says, "Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners." Now, if you believe that you can associate intimately with wicked people and not be corrupted, then he says you are deceived, because he is telling you right now, "Evil communications corrupt good manners." The word "evil," of course, means that which is bad and wicked. The word "communications" is the Greek word *homilia*, which refers to what you and I would call communication, communion, intercourse, or an intimate and close fellowship. It would not only include an individual; it would also include what you and I would call a company, a group, or a multitude. For the Bible tells you in Exodus chapter 23 and verse 2, "Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil." In other words, if you associate with them, you're simply going to end up doing that which is evil. Now, when he says in verse 33, "Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners," the word "manners" is the Greek word *ethos*. It refers to customs, morals, or character. So he says, don't be deceived. Evil communications corrupt good character, good morals, and good manners. So

here is the truth that God is putting forward for us in 1 Corinthians 15 and verse 33. I've heard so many Christians say this: Well, I'm close friends with this wicked person, and I'm close friends with these wicked people because I want to lift them up and pull them up. God says, "Be not deceived." You're not pulling anybody up. They're going to pull you down. "Evil communications corrupt good manners." You do not lift wicked people up by becoming intimate with them. That doesn't mean that you cannot be friends, but it does mean that you cannot be associating with them and treating them as if everything is hunky-dory when, in reality, it is not hunky-dory.

The positive side of 1 Corinthians 15 and verse 33 would be this: we are to communicate; we're to associate with good men who will help us and lead us. We can associate with intelligent men from whom we can gain knowledge and understanding. But what he's saying is that if you begin to mess around, become intimate, and fellowship with the wicked, you're not going to lift them up. They are going to pull you down; they will destroy you. "Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners."

Here's the second one in which God tells you not to be deceived. And you can probably quote it, but it's Galatians 6:7 and 8 where he said, "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting."

Now, when you and I think about mocking God, we think about someone standing bravely, so to speak, and cursing God and denying God and doing all kinds of crazy and insane things. I remember reading about one infidel who was going to prove that God did not exist and he stood out publicly and dared God to strike him dead in five minutes. And then he started counting down. And when five minutes passed, he's still alive. He said, "See, there is no God." And this one godly woman said, "Do you think that you can exhaust the patience of an eternal almighty God in five minutes?" So we would call that mocking God.

But you can mock God without standing up criticizing, condemning, and denying him. All you have to do is disobey him. All you have to do is live your life as if he did not exist, as if his word was not true. In other words, God is not mocked. Whatever you sow, that's exactly what you're going to reap. You're not going to be able to sin against God and escape his judgment. You're not going to be able to sin against God and escape his condemnation. He said, "Be not deceived in this area. It's impossible. You cannot do this."

When we talk about deception, you have to understand deception reigns supreme today. All you have to do to be deceived is watch TV all the time or listen to the radio. Look how Americans are so tuned in to their games, their video games, their TV programs, and think about the fact that most Americans give their lives to nothing but circuses, fun, recreation, and that kind of thing. No one really studies, no one really thinks, no one ever really delves into anything. So consequently, propaganda, deception, and false flags are easily forced upon the American people.

Now, let me mention something about a false flag to begin with. First of all, a false flag is usually defined as a political or military action carried out with the intention of blaming an opponent for it. Nations have often done this by staging either a real or a simulated attack on their own side and saying that an enemy did it and use it as a pretext for going to war. At times they may actually allow an enemy to attack them so that they may retaliate with a vengeance and have what they would call the moral high ground to destroy that individual. You will find that stand-down orders have been given to military to law enforcement on many occasions. I can think of occasions in this nation in America where stand-down orders were given to cops

when there was a riot going on, people were killed. I know firsthand of a situation like that. I know the people who were involved. I'm just simply saying this is a false flag.

And you remember the false flag came into existence or I'm going to say real prominence in the 16th century where the pirates then took down their skull and bones flag and would fly the friendly flag of a neighboring nation in order to get close to a merchant ship. And once they were close enough, they would throw the ropes and pull alongside and mount them and kill everybody and steal everything they could steal. That was simply called a false flag because they were lying. They were deceiving the merchant ship, making them think they were something they were not.

When I was looking at this, I looked this up on the internet and here came one paragraph from the ADL and I want you to listen to this. The Anti-Defamation League. This is astounding, but there's a question bound to be asked after listening to this. Here's what they wrote: "False flag is a term used by conspiracy theorists to suggest that various world events and crises such as terrorist attacks or mass shootings were actually orchestrated by governments or sinister forces in furtherance of a political or social goal, such as gun control or sowing public fear. Historically, the term has been used to refer to a military or political operation carried out with the intention of blaming an opponent for it, often as a pretext for going to war."

Now, here's a question that begs to be answered. What does a conspiracy theory have to do with a false flag, if a false flag actually exists? What they're saying is that if you believe in any way that your government would harm you or do that which is wrong and wicked, then you have to be a conspiracy theorist.

When in reality, it has been governments all over the world that have been guilty of what you and I would call genocide or democide. Stop and ask Mr. Stalin how many millions he had killed. Stop and ask Pol Pot how many millions of Cambodians he killed. Stop and ask Idi Amin how many of his own countrymen he killed years ago before he died. I saw a cartoon and it was a picture of Idi Amin on the back of a jeep with a 50 cal machine gun and it was just smoking and dead Africans were laying all in front of him and he was on the phone and he said, "Traffic control, I want to report an accident. One jeep and 50,000 Africans." Well, it was supposed to have been, I guess, satirical, but it was true. He actually murdered his own people.

You don't think our government would harm us? Ask the Tuskegee airmen. You remember those black pilots from Tuskegee, Alabama that they purposely inoculated with syphilis? Think about all the other people who have been given all kinds of vaccines. I'm simply pointing out the fact that governments historically are the main cause of genocide around the world.

A false flag is deception. It's impossible to have a false flag attack without the use of deception. All war is deception. Government is deception. Things are not as they appear. And let me make a statement. I'm going to prove it before I get through, seeing is not believing.

Sun Tzu, in *The Art of War*, wrote this: "All warfare is based on deception. Hence, when we are able to attack, we must seem unable. When using our forces, we must appear inactive. When we are near, we must make the enemy believe that we are far away. When far away, we must make him believe that we are near." Again he said, "The whole secret lies in confusing the enemy so that he cannot fathom our real intent." All war is deception.

In deception, one must avoid direct answers to direct questions. Whenever you cannot get a straight answer, which I'm going to show you later, you've got to mark it down. Someone is hiding something and someone is trying to deceive you.

So closely associated with false flags is what you and I would call deception and propaganda.

Now, I hope you realize that all propaganda is deception. It doesn't matter if the propaganda is good or bad, it is still deception. Everyone should understand the usage of the word, especially when it is related to political or governmental sense.

So, let me give you a definition of propaganda. Here it is. Propaganda. Listen carefully: "The organized dissemination of information or allegations to assist or damage the cause of a government or movement." Listen now: "Official governmental communications to the public that are designed to influence opinion." So notice, if you would, official governmental communications to the public are designed to influence opinion. So the information may be true or false, but it's still propaganda because it is carefully selected for its political effect.

Now here's what I want you to note. First of all, note that the definition says that propaganda is organized. It is an organized dissemination of information. Now, if it's organized, it's not an accident. If it's organized, it did not simply happen. If it's organized, it is not innocent. If it's organized, it is purposeful, deliberate, premeditated, and approved by the government.

So, if you understand that it is indeed an organized dissemination of information, you can now understand the latter part of the definition where it is official governmental communications to the public that are designed to influence public opinion. That's what propaganda is.

Now, while propaganda can be termed either true or false, usually if it is from the government, it is false. A good clear illustration of this is the COVID vaccine, which of course was touted as being safe and effective when it was neither safe nor effective. It was deadly and destructive unless, of course, you define effective as disabling and killing. Now, in that case, it was very effective because that is basically what it has done and the cases of myocarditis and all these other diseases are coming now from this. This is propaganda and it is deceptive. That is it.

Now, what about MSM? The mainstream media. They're closely connected with the federal government, especially with the CIA and the FBI. And if you continue to listen to the MSM and believe what they say, well, you're going to be propagandized and deceived to the nth degree. It's just that simple. In fact, I came to a conclusion many years ago. If you listen to the mainstream media, the news, and believe absolutely the opposite of what they're telling you, you'd probably be closer to the truth. It's kind of like one cartoon I saw where the newsman came on, he says, "Tonight, we're telling you what we want you to believe." Well, that's about the truth. It is propaganda. It is deceit.

So you must remember this. When it comes to war, propaganda and deception reign supremely. When it comes to government, propaganda and deception reign supremely.

I want to show you this from Joshua chapter 9. So I want you to go back to Joshua chapter 9. I gave you all of that introduction to set you up for what is about to happen here. I want you to look at verses 3-5. "And when the inhabitants of Gibeon heard what Joshua had done unto Jericho and to Ai, they did work wily, 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 moldy." Now I want you to note, if you would, please, what the Bible says in verse three: "And when the inhabitants of Gibeon heard."

Now, when you see the word inhabitants you automatically think of people, the people who live there. Well, it would certainly include those people but may I remind you that Gibeon was a great city. And so there were elders and possibly even a king. So if you look in your Bibles to Joshua chapter 10 at verses 1 and 2, the Bible says this: "Now it came to pass, when Adonizedek king of Jerusalem had heard how Joshua had taken Ai, and had utterly destroyed

it; as he had done to Jericho and her king, so he had done to Ai and her king; and how the inhabitants of Gibeon had made peace with Israel, and were among them; that they feared greatly, because Gibeon was a great city, as one of the royal cities, and because it was greater than Ai, and all the men thereof were mighty." So Gibeon was not just some little podunk town somewhere. It was a great city as one of the royal cities. And of course, the inhabitants there would have to include their rulers. So if you look in Joshua 9 and verse 11, where they're talking to Joshua and the princes, they said, "Wherefore our elders and all the inhabitants of our country spake to us, saying."

So now they're saying the people and the rulers were one in what they were doing.

So you have to conclude then that this deception in Joshua chapter 9 was a governmentally organized and sponsored deception. You have here a foreign, well-established government interfering with a fledgling government that has not even really been set up. They're still conquering the territories. But here they are interfering by deceiving and propagandizing.

Now, when the Bible says in Joshua 9 and verse 4, "they did work wilily." The Hebrew word is *ormah*, and it means to use guile, subtlety, wisdom, prudence, shrewdness, and craftiness. In other words, they did work craftily. They worked subtly. They worked with shrewdness. In other words, everything that they did was planned, premeditated, and purposeful.

The Gibeonites did not want to be destroyed. This is why they did it. They confessed that. They said, "We knew that God had given you this land and we knew that God had told you to eradicate us. We didn't want to die." Well, I understand that. If I had been a Gibeonite, I think I'd have probably gone along with them, with this exception. There were other nations that said, "We're willing to bow to thee. We're willing to bow to the one true and the living God. We're willing to serve him." But they were not willing to come out and say that. And so, therefore, they used deception. It's just that simple.

Now, I want you to look again at verse six. I want to read through verse 16 because I want to make some very quick comments. I want you to apply what I'm going to be saying to the situation that we're in today. So look in verse six. "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 moldy: 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. And it came to pass at the end of three days after they had made a league with them, that they heard that they were their neighbors, and that they dwelt among them."

Now, let me make some observations and I want you to think with me.

First of all, it should be understood from our text as well as from our experience that things are not as they always appear. Appearances may be deceiving. Seeing is not necessarily believing. Everything about the Gibeonites was deceiving. Their manner, their clothes, their bread, their shoes, their speech, everything was designed to deceive and to fool. It was designed to trick the Hebrews into a league or covenant with them. I'm sure that most of you have seen on the internet artificial intelligence productions. I've seen men and women like Donald Trump or Joe Biden or some Hollywood movie star and you look there and you recognize those faces and they're speaking and you recognize their voices and they're saying certain things and you can't believe what they're saying and yet there they are. And it's not them at all. Even the lip movements match the words, the syllables, everything. But it's all fake. You say, "Well, I saw this. I heard this." But you may have seen wrongly and you may have heard wrongly. It's just that simple. What these people did, what Joshua and the princes did, they judged by appearances. You know what our Lord said in John 7:24? "Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment." So seeing is not believing because your eyes may be deceived as well. You may believe, but you may believe wrongly. Propaganda, deception, misinformation, and false flags are all designed to deceive. All of these things require that you judge by appearance. They require that you judge by the information that you are given. They do not want you to pray about anything. They do not want you to think about anything. They do not want you to study. They do not want you to research. They do not want you to check into it. They want you to judge based upon the information that you are given. That's exactly what the Gibeonites did to Joshua and the princes. So you have to understand that just because you think you see something does not necessarily mean that you see something because there have been men and women who were illusionists and magicians who made millions of dollars deceiving people and making them think that things disappear. I forget who is the magician that made the Great Wall of China disappear. Right in front of your eyes. He made it disappear. Not really. It was an illusion. I'm simply saying just because you see something does not mean it is absolutely true.

Here's the second thing. You must beware when you cannot get a straight answer from someone. It's interesting that twice Joshua asked, "Who are you? Where are you from?" "We be from a very far country." Really? Well, how far is far? And what country is that far country? How about the name of a city? How about the name of a town? Just tell me the country that you're from. Why would they not tell the country? Why would they not name a town or city? Because all of that could be verified. It may take a little time, but it could be verified. And they do not want verification. All they want is for you to act upon what you are told.

Now I have a question. I want you to look in verse 9. After he asked them, "Who are you? And from whence came you?" 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." Now wait a minute. We came from a very far country but now we have heard what God has done to the Egyptians. Well, I can understand that, because the Israelites traveled in the wilderness for 40 years and probably you could learn something in 40 years. You know you don't have a cell phone. You don't have telegraph. You don't have newspapers. But 40 years a camel could get pretty far, you know. But when they start mentioning Sihon and Og, they had just been defeated recently. How did they get the news of their defeat? Because they were defeated as they were trying to get into the promised land. And they're just now in the promised land. They've just defeated Jericho and Ai. How did these people from a very far country get this information so quickly? That's what I'd like to know. Here's another thing I want you to watch. I want you to see it again in verse 9.

The third thing that you need to consider is this. You must be concerned when men appear too religious and too quick to push positions that you hold and believe in. What are you talking about, pastor? Well, look in verse nine. They said unto him, "From a very far country thy servants are come ... because of the name of the Lord thy God." Now watch this. Here's my question. How did they know the personal name of God? Anytime you see the word Lord in all caps, it's the word Yahweh or Jehovah as it's translated sometimes. If they're from a very far country, how did they get the sacred name of God? How did they know who he was? Why are they pushing the name of the Lord?

Let me tell you something. I've had bums, hobos, drifters, ex-cons, and a host of other folks ply the religious theme when they wanted money or something else. And after they got what they wanted, their religion disappeared. All I'm trying to tell you is this. When people are pushy when it comes to religion, you better watch out. Someone's trying to trick you. Someone's trying to deceive you. A true believer, a true Christian knows how to communicate without being pushy and without being obnoxious. It's just that simple. So these people were pushing the fact that they knew the name of God.

Fourthly, let me point out, it is possible that even the wisest and the holiest may be deceived. Joshua and the princes were deceived. You may be a leader, you may be brilliant, you may be intelligent, you may be confident, but you can also be deceived. The truth is, even though God has given us our minds to use and our reasoning abilities in one sense of the word, we cannot trust them totally, solely, and completely. You remember that passage in Proverbs 3:5-7. What did he say there? "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths. Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the Lord, and depart from evil." So anytime we think, boy, we cannot be deceived, we're already deceived. It's just that simple.

Here's the fifth thing. Deception normally takes place when we abandon and refuse to seek God's counsel. Look at verse 14: "And the men took of their victuals, and asked not counsel at the mouth of the Lord." I know what a moldy piece of bread looks like. I know what old shoes look like. I have some of them. I probably don't know what an old wine bottle looks like, but I know some of these things. And some of them are very convincing. Look at that. And we were simply judging by appearance. What they did was judge by appearance and they refused to seek the Lord.

Let me tell you something. There are very few Christian people today who really know the principles of the Word of God, who know the precepts of the Word of God and are willing to live by those principles and those precepts. You remember what our Lord told the Sadducees and the Pharisees in Matthew chapter 22 and verse 29. He said, "Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God." Whenever we refuse the counsel of God, which is given us in Scripture, or refuse to seek him in prayer and ask for his wisdom, leadership, and direction, we are relying on our own understanding. That's exactly what happened in this instance. They relied upon their eyes. They relied upon their own intellect.

Here's the sixth thing, and I want you to think about this one. Eventually all deception will be exposed. In this instance, according to verse 16, it only took three days. "And it came to pass at the end of three days after they had made a league with them, that they heard that they were their neighbors, and that they dwelt among them." You know what our Lord said in Luke 12 and verse two? He said, "For there is nothing covered that shall not be revealed; neither hid, that shall not be made known."

So God says it's going to be exposed.

So let me just point out to you. I know we get upset and we should be in one sense of the word. But the Great Society is going to be exposed. The Great Reset's going to be exposed. The New World Order is going to be exposed. Everything that's wicked and sinful is going to ultimately be exposed.

What we must do as believers is not be deceived by any of these things. And the only way we cannot be deceived is by knowing the Word of God. What was it that condemned Joshua and the princes and the people? They refused to seek the counsel of God. They refused His Word. So, let me put it to you like this. It's only God and it's only His Word that can keep us from being deceived.

There are so many things going on today. I don't know if you've seen the hologram of the whale jumping out of the water and going in the water. It's not real. But you could put it on the wall over here and it looks real. You think that is a huge whale on that wall and he's diving in and out of the water. But it's just a hologram. They have what they call Project Blue Beam where they can shoot holograms up and you can see all kinds of flying saucers. You can see the Lord returning. You can see anything that they can manufacture. And the only way you're going to escape all of that deception, wickedness, and deceitfulness is by knowing the Scripture. That's it. It is Scripture that is going to reveal to us the wickedness of man and the wisdom of God. And it is Scripture that is going to tell us how we should live and how we should not be deceived.

When we fail to seek counsel from God, we are deceived already because we're trusting in our own understanding, our own intellect instead of relying upon the God of the universe. What did he say again? "Lean not unto thine own understanding; in all thy ways acknowledge him."

Yes, we may use our minds. Yes, we may use our understanding. Yes, we must think and we must deduce and we must apply. But we must seek God at the same time saying, "Lord, I'm human. I'm fallible. I can be deceived. I want your truth. I want your leadership. I want your power. I want your direction."

False flags are everywhere. Propaganda is everywhere; all you have to do is turn on the TV. It is deceit every day, every minute of the hour. As our Lord said, "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, we ask for your grace. We ask for your mercy. We ask, Lord, that you would help us not to be deceived, but Lord, you would indeed help us to search thy word, seek thy counsel, apply thy wisdom, and Lord, we ask thee to protect us in this day and age of false flags and propaganda and deception. Give us your grace and your mercy. In the name of Jesus Christ, we ask and pray. Amen.