Deception

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Welcome, brethren.

Can we be spiritually deceived? The answer is yes. We're going to turn to 2 Peter 2:1. The history of the Church is that people have been called, have received God's holy spirit, and then become deceived and have either left the Church, disfellowshipped themselves, or have been disfellowshipped because they just don't believe the truth anymore. So, the answer really is straightforward: Yes, we as we are today can be deceived.

2 Peter 2:1—But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you. So, Peter is now talking in the sense to the Church, to where yes, there could be false teachers. Now, we'll look at that as well when we go a bit further, about how that actually can happen. Because, really, what this false teacher is, is someone that is saying something different than the truth that has been given to them by God's apostle or the Church because truth enters the truth via an apostle.

…there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, which is their own opinions. A truth can be given, and then a person can say, "Well, I disagree," or "I agree." Now, we've been called and have God's holy spirit, and if we use God's holy spirit we will come into agreement with God by choice. We're going to choose that.

So, this is somebody that is in the Body of Christ and is then saying, they're giving their own opinion about a truth. In other words, they're disagreeing with God. So, they give their opinion which is actually against the truth.

…even denying the Lord, which is Joshua the Messiah, **who bought them**, through Passover, **bringing themselves to swift destruction**. Now, by "swift destruction" it doesn't mean it instantly happens when somebody is disfellowshipped; it's an instant destruction. It's something that is going to happen in time according to God's will and purpose in His plan, which is at the end of 7,100 years we will see a destruction of all evil. Everything that resists God will be gotten rid of.

Verse 2—And many, this is really interesting, **And many**, the majority, and that's the history of the Church so far, **Many will follow their destructive ways.** Argue against the truth, disagree with the truth, be against God. **…because of the way of truth will be blasphemed**. Which means they will speak of the truth in an evil manner. They will talk against God and the truth.

Verse 3—By covetousness… Which the reason is they're doing this. Why is somebody saying something like this? It's because they're going against God's holy spirit; they're going against God, but they're also, the person saying it is actually seeking a following. Because the person listening—it's a choice, could be

cut off—they're looking for a reason. Why are they saying this? Because they want someone to agree with them. They're seeking a following.

By covetousness they will exploit you with deceptive, which is something that is wrong. It's something that is false. **…deceptive words; for a long time their judgment**, which is judgment from God, **has not been idle**. In other words, it will happen. It's actually going to take place. It's not inactive; it's active. It's something that is in a process of happening. **…and their destruction does not slumber**. Because God ensures that it will happen.

So, here we see, really, is that someone is speaking against the truth for the purpose of deception, because it's deceptive words. That's why they're doing it. That's their real motive.

Yes, we can be deceived by false doctrine and/or teachings. Now, why does that take place? Because a person (one part of it), a person is willing to listen. Because otherwise, sometimes it may enter the person's mind, and they can cut it off.

But this is somebody that's seeking; they're a false teacher, someone who is seeking a following and wanting someone to agree with them, that they don't agree with God. They don't agree with an apostle. They don't agree with a teaching of the Church. So, they then put themselves in that position where they become false teachers because they're now trying to get a following; they're trying to say something that's against what God is saying.

Now, the most important thing in all of this is the choice to listen. A person does not have to listen. We could cut it off. It can enter the mind another way, but often it's somebody that's coming up, a false teacher, and they're saying something negative, and the mind then has to make a decision. It goes, "Oh, yeah, no, that sounds…" The carnal mind at work, "That sounds right."

And the issue is they listened, whereas if the person would have turned around in the beginning and said, "No, that doesn't agree with Church teaching. It does not agree with what God has put in the Church." Straightforward. And that person would shut up real quick. (Shouldn't probably use that word.) But be very quiet. Yep, that stops things because they know the person doesn't agree with them. "No use continuing because the person doesn't agree and I'm wasting my time by putting in my opinion, which is false against God."

Thousands of people who have been called by God, have received the gift of God's holy spirit, heard and understood the truth, have fallen to Satan's deception.

We're going to look at a scripture about the purpose of what Satan really is trying to do. Satan wants to destroy what God is trying to build. He's not trying; He's going to build it. But it's something that's a process, and Satan is intervening all the way along to stop it, to stop that process. He doesn't agree with God. He's against God. And therefore, the easiest way for him to destroy it (he believes) is to destroy by

deception, and that's what he's doing. He's destroying a person's potential by deception, and we can fall into that trap because thousands have. They have listened to and then believed a lie.

Now, I was thinking this morning that really, when you look at it, the Apostasy was about deception. We were weak, and we were vulnerable. We thought we were doing okay (which is pride), but that's what we thought, and drifting along, becoming lukewarm. But the real issue was when it came, when it was preached, it was about a lie, and it was about deception, and therefore, many—many—fell into that deception. Not all, necessarily, but many fell into the deception and believed the lie. We understand there was a lot that didn't. But the majority believed the lie; they were deceived. And who would have thought that people could be deceived – being in the Body of Christ, we could be deceived? Yes, we are vulnerable to that if we are willing to become lukewarm, to drift, and start having our own opinions or listening to false doctrine.

There are billions of people in this world who are currently blinded from the truth, or to the truth of God, because they haven't been called to see. They unknowingly live in deception. They are deceived. They don't know it. They don't believe it. If we went up to anybody and said, "You're deceived. You keep Christmas and Easter, and many other things, and other false religions," and you went up to them and said, "Oh, by the way, you are deceived," they will not understand what you're talking about. Because it's not possible. They can't believe what we're saying. They don't believe God because they're not being called to believe.

Everyone in mankind is deceived to some degree; some more than others. Some are deceived with Christmas. They don't even keep it; they don't have much to do with it, but it's a deception. But they're deceived in other ways.

Revelation 12:9— So the great dragon… Which is symbolic of Satan, because he's not a dragon. He's actually a spirit being, we understand, created by God, and then he went into rebellion. So, it's symbolic saying "the great dragon." …**was cast out, that serpent**… Now, the reason the word "serpent" can be used there is "sly or cunning." So, he is like a snake. It's a slithering. It's sly. It's cunning. And he's called **a serpent of old, called the Devil** (a false accuser, a slanderer) **and Satan**.

So, "Satan" is "an adversary; one who opposes another in purpose or act," and that's what Satan is about. Satan is in opposition to God; therefore, Satan is in opposition to us, God's people. He's in opposition, and he sets out to destroy by deception. Because people destroy what they have. They destroy the truth by being deceived to believe something that is a lie.

…**he was cast to the earth, and his angels who were cast out with him**. It's interesting because there was a third of the angels, we understand, with Lucifer—Satan, now Satan—that when he decided to talk about this in a negative manner against God that he was able to deceive, and these other angels decided to follow, which is really about a deception. They were deceived, and they willingly followed. They

willingly chose to go against God. They would have known that what they were doing was going against God, going against their creator, and following an angel like Lucifer.

Mankind has been deceived about the truth of God's plan of salvation for mankind. God's plan is to have a Family and create that Family of spirit beings from physical humans, mankind. So, the world is totally deceived about that. They believe in something totally different. They believe in a heaven and a hell, which is a lie. It doesn't exist. It's not real.

The truth is not in the thinking of mankind in the sense of the truth is not in mankind. There is no truth in mankind. He is fully deceived because Satan, the prince and power of the air, has deceived mankind, all of mankind. And we have to be called, receive the gift of God's holy spirit to come out of that error.

Satan has deceived mankind into believing many things. One of them is, of course, heaven and hell – that mankind believes that when you die, you have an immortal soul, and you go to heaven. Now, that's an absolute deception. It's an absolute lie. But it's entered not all mankind, but a lot of mankind.

Other religions believe in different things. There are other religions that believe that if you die as a so-called martyr, that you sacrifice yourself (blow yourself up), that you will end up in paradise with a number of virgins (who may not be virgins for very long). It's just so stupid, the thinking that that's what God would want of a person. Anyway.

Truth #8. I'm going to look at Truth 8 because the truth is what will set a mind free. And the choice to believe it, which is the power of God's holy spirit, has to be given to be able to believe the truth. That's why it's pointless talking to anyone about the truth without God's holy spirit being involved because they're not going to understand. They're not going to want to understand.

> **8 (5) What is man?** Man does not have an immortal soul. Man is a temporary living, mortal being that returns to the elements of the earth at death and does not go to heaven or hell. Only God can give mankind immortality in His Family.

That's God's intent. That's God's purpose. And there will be a Family of God. There are numbers that God has worked out, and we know 144,000 that will, at the return of Joshua the Christ, Joshua the Messiah, that will be changed to spirit, and they will think like God. It's just an incredible thing, and it's so exciting to understand that.

That is part of Truth 8. Now, that's all of that truth, but I've finished reading it. And what it really is saying is that mankind is deceived into this. And there are a lot, of course, that believe other weird things – coming back as animals, for example.

The new book covers many of the common lies and deceptions that have been promoted by mankind, mainly by false religion. But the instigator of all of that is really Satan, the prince and power of the air, who has deceived and has deceived the whole world into believing a lot of this rubbish.

Satan's lies, which are mankind's lies and deceptions, are to keep people in control, into slavery and bondage. That's why when we're called, we put it down to being called out of Egypt, being called out of sin, and we're on a journey for the rest of our life as long as we stay close to God and believe God and believe the truth and enact the fruits of the spirit. Which is a choice. The fruits of the spirit are there to be given to us, and that we can live them, but it is a choice to still do a lot of these things in the sense of listening to God and then implementing it.

When we look at politics, the vast majority of people know that they're being lied to, and they're lied to about everything. And people know it. The carnal-minded person knows that people get up there and make promises, but the majority of people know that they're not going to keep those promises. So, they know that they're being deceived and that people lie. But they know they have a hope. They hope it's going to get better. Because it's not; it's going to get worse.

The main goal there is to get reelected. So, the main goal of anybody that gets up and performs whatever is going to be said and says whatever they're going to say, their main motive, their intent is they want to get reelected. They want to have the people, gain a stronger following, so they can get reelected so that "I can live this lifestyle." They are willing and knowingly deceptive often. Some, I'm sure, probably think they're being genuine and following the ways and whatnot. But a lot of them know that they're there to deceive the people.

Some in religious circles know that much of what they teach is a lie. Now, there's a lot more than what we probably understand. Particularly (I'll mention it), there was a gentleman that I worked for some time ago who studied to be a priest and ended up in the Vatican. And he had access to certain documents in the Vatican, and he saw what was really going on, and he left, and he has nothing to do with the religion anymore at all.

But it just shows you that there are people there that know that things are wrong. There are people out there that know (in religion), that know when they're talking it's not able to be proved. It's just if you want to keep your job and have your pay, that's what you've got to do. And therefore, there is a repetition of things. People have positions and power, what they think, and they want to hang on to it. And they know that things aren't right, but they'll still teach it. But without God's holy spirit, of course, they will still be deceived in many things.

All of mankind other than the Church of God, God's true Church, has been deceived. Now, we once were deceived fully. Now, there are aspects where, on a spiritual level, we could still be deceived, and the worst thing we can do is listen to something that is going against what God is giving.

We live in an age where spiritual and physical deception has increased to incredible levels. Right now, we understand that just about every business, to some degree, there's a level of deception. Some are much worse than others. But mankind is about deceit, and anything that is new, like technology, where God

will give knowledge about a particular thing, yes, it could be used for good, but all too often it's used for evil.

A lie's intent or motive is to deceive. We can fall into this trap about lying about ourselves. Now, what we can find from understanding our own human nature is that when, for example, when we're verbally attacked or accused of something maybe, the first thing we will do is defend self. And when we really look at that, why do we defend ourselves? Because we've built up an image of what we are, which is a deception. Because deep down, what God tells us is what we are: lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, and pride of life. We're actually motivated by evil, and we have to fight it.

But someone challenges us, and it rubs a little bit of our pride, and we think we're not like that. We will defend it. We will justify it. We will get upset about it. But it all could be true. But to ourselves, it's attacking the self, and it defends self.

So, we are deceived already to a degree because of our natural carnal mind. We are self-deceived.

The reason we lie or cover something up is that we desire to cover so that people can't see what we're really like. The perceived image that we have built up will be protected by self, because we will defend ourselves, we'll argue, we will raise our voice because we're right. No matter what, we're right.

We can lie to protect our image. We lie to deceive. Because when we defend ourselves, we could be lying about something. Like little children generally will do. "I didn't do it!" Stuff all over their faces. "I didn't tip the flour out." It's all over them. But they will lie because they think, "Well, you're attacking me." So, we lie to deceive.

The motive or intent of mankind behind almost everything in this world is based on a lie or a deception. If we look at what happened in the Apostasy, for example, it was all about lies for the purpose of deception. Where God's people were told a lot of lies, and a lot were deceived about that lie and believed that lie. Incredible!

So, there is a thing called self-deception, and we'll look at what that is. It's about the act of convincing others of a lie. We're ignoring facts to protect our feelings, hide our true nature, or avoid painful truths. So, what we will do is we're self-deceived. The truth is what we're really like versus what we want to project out to others.

So, why do we lie? Well, the main reason we lie is to lower our stress level or anxiety about our own failings. We protect self, which is we keep a high opinion of ourselves, of what we're really like, but the truth is different. So, when we make a mistake of some type we will defend self because of the image that is there.

We will defend self to stay comfortable with a routine that we have established, so that we'll simply just deny. Even though it's the truth, we will deny that that's what happened. That's just human nature.

The purpose of this sermon is to consider why deception is behind everything in this world. The title of today's sermon is *Deception*.

I want to read part of, only part of Truth #36:

> **36 (15) No one goes to heaven, not even the 144,000**. Of all who have ever lived and died, only Joshua the Christ has ever gone to heaven. Satan has deceived [mankind's] religions [in the] teachings that mankind will go to heaven. Even many of those scattered in the Church of God believe that the 144,000 will go to heaven for training before Joshua the Christ returns.

Now, we looked at that in the sense of it's a deception, and people live in that deception. They wouldn't willingly know that they are deceived, and they would never admit it because pride gets in the way. If someone walks up to you and says, "You're deceived," the first thing we will go is "I'm not deceived!" But the truth is, before we were called, we were very deceived. But we still can be deceived on a spiritual level even now with God's holy spirit that we have access to. We could still fall into deception because we decide to disagree with God.

We'll look at **John 8:42—Joshua said to them, If God were your Father, you would love me, for I proceed forth and came from God; nor have I come of myself, but He who sent me**. Now, people in the world take that as if Christ was with God, and therefore, He came, and He was sent by the Father down. He decided to become the son. But that's not what it's talking about.

Christ was the foundation of God's plan to create a Family from mankind. Christ would be the first from mankind, and He is the first from mankind to enter Elohim.

Verse 43—Why do you not understand my speech? Well, we know why. Because they didn't have God's holy spirit. And someone without God's holy spirit cannot fully comprehend verse 42 or anything that Christ actually said. They will understand aspects of it on a physical level but the spiritual understanding of it is not given because they don't have God's holy spirit.

So, "Why do you not understand my speech?" They couldn't. Many things that Christ said went right over their heads, and they were confused about it. He was talking double-Dutch. Not to be against the Dutch, but double English – can't understand it. So, if someone doesn't have God's holy spirit they cannot understand the truth let alone believe the truth.

Because you are not able to listen to my word. They couldn't, but we can. We can actually listen and hear because we have God's holy spirit.

Verse 44—You are of your father the devil, and the desires… Which is the personal choice, the lust, the desire that's in us to do sin (which is a natural thing for the carnal mind), that's what we will do, because that's our nature. That's what we're like. We're not fighting it when we're carnal; we just let it all go.

…**of your father you want to do**. These desires are to get for self, and in doing that to destroy, just like Satan. Satan wants to destroy. He is the destroyer. He wants to destroy God's plan of salvation. He wants to destroy every single one of us in the Body of Christ, to cut off our potential to enter Elohim, because he never will and he never can.

These desires are to get for self. So, the carnal mind is about looking for self, and we will do anything. We will destroy anything around us to satisfy self.

He (Lucifer, Satan) **was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him**. Now, we can understand that we are called and receive God's holy spirit so that we can stand in the truth. Anybody who loses and is cut off from God's holy spirit cannot stand in the truth. They can only believe it with God's spirit. After being in the Body, some may take with them aspects. They may take away certain doctrines that they are convinced are true, but they don't fully understand them because they've lost the truth in other parts.

For example, Truth #4 about government. They're cut off from the government of God and yet may hang on to other doctrines. Can't. Can't have a relationship with God outside of the way God has established, which is the Church, the Body of Christ.

So, there is no truth in Satan whatsoever. **When he speaks a lie, he speaks of his own, for he is a liar and the father of it. He was the first father of it**. He was the first to lie, to set out to deceive by lying. Because what's the intent of lying? To deceive. So, when somebody attacks us personally, a person may lie to defend self. What are they doing? They're willing, wanting to deceive the person who's attacking them. "I didn't do it. It wasn't me." So, it's a lie. What is it? To deceive that person so they may think, "Oh, maybe he didn't do it." ("He." I'm using the word.)

Verse 45—But because I tell the truth, you do not believe me. Well, they couldn't. But we are required to. **Which of you convicts**… Which is "conviction" or "bring to light" or "expose," "say something" about Christ, you know, prove something. **Which of you convicts me of sin?** Trying to expose Christ by saying, "Oh, this is what you did," attacking Him or saying He lied, or He's sinned.

And if I tell the truth, why do you not believe me? He who is of God hears God's word. This is really a key because it requires the gift of God's holy spirit to be able to understand the truth, understand God's word. To listen and then implement it is what we have to do. Many people can listen to it and agree but do nothing, not use the gift of God's holy spirit correctly, which is to implement it into our life, to work at it.

He who hears God hears God's word. So, whatever God says, the truth, we are required. We hear it because we have the gift of God's holy spirit. **Therefore, you do not hear, because you are not of God**. It takes God's spirit to believe the truth.

We don't know exactly when Lucifer started to lie for the purpose of deception to the other angels. Because that was the process. When he rebelled against God, he had to have said something for others to turn and be against God. They must have had to have believed a lie. Which is what the Apostasy was about, believing a lie, cutting ourselves off from God.

We know that a third listened and rebelled against their creator. We do know when Satan lied first to humans: The Garden of Eden.

The purpose of deception is to destroy. And the Apostasy is a classic example of that. A lie: some believe that lie and therefore are destroyed from having a relationship with God.

Genesis 3:1. So, this is the time when we know that Satan lied to deceive Eve, and she fell into that deception. She believed a lie. **Genesis 3:1—Now the serpent** (symbolic of Satan) **was more cunning**… Which is "crafty" or "shrewd," a spirit being that had been given great knowledge by God at his creation, the creation of Lucifer. So, he was given great wisdom. What that wisdom was, it wasn't necessarily the wisdom of God, but there was great knowledge and great wisdom that he had to be able to operate, to manage what he was given to manage.

So, he's given this. **He was more cunning than any creature of the field which the Lord God had made. And he** (Satan) **said to the woman, Has God indeed said, You shall not eat of every tree of the garden?** It's about creating this doubt. "God has said this, but what's the reason that He said this? You know, what's the motive behind saying that, limiting you?" And the person can fall; Eve fell into that deception: "Oh, that's interesting. Why can't I eat both?"

Then it goes on, **verse 2—And the woman said to the serpent, We may eat the fruit of the trees of the garden; but of the fruit of the tree, which is in the midst of the garden, God has said, You shall not eat it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die**. There's a choice involved here, that God has said, "Well, this is what you're to do." It's like a naughty child. "Don't touch those lollies." And you leave the room, and the kid sits there and thinks, "Hmm… Maybe… one? But I've been told not to, but…" So, there's a temptation, of course, that goes with that.

Then the serpent (Satan**) said to the woman, You shall not surely die**. Now, that is an outright lie because the reality is that everybody will die a physical death, which is not what Satan's talking about. It's about death forever. The judgment. The last hundred years and then that last period of time when the judgment is executed. The execution of judgment, which is the second death.

So, he's lied deliberately there. He knew that, you know, the Family of God is a potential for every human. It'd be offered. It doesn't mean to say that they'll take it.

"You shall not surely die." This is a lie. Its purpose and intent is to deceive. Its intent is to cause sin, rebellion against God. And that's exactly what was achieved: rebellion against God, that lie.

For God knows that in the day you eat it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil. This is about the choice of what is good and what is evil. We live in a world where people call evil good and good evil. We should understand that we would be considered evil, deceived lunatics, really. Just in a cult, as they would say. So, they would call us—which we have God's spirit, good, in the sense that good we have—but they call us evil. They don't call us good at all. They would call us evil, look down on us.

Verse 6—So, when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, a tree desirable to make one wise… Which is now pride, the carnal mind, pride comes up and says, "Oh, I'm going to be wise like God. I'm going to be able to decide what is good and what is evil." Eve thought about it. Human reasoning kicked in, and it came into play. Because that's what can happen.

When somebody comes up with a false doctrine and pushes it and a person's willing to listen, they start to think about it and contemplate it – danger, danger, danger, warning, warning, warning. Because it's only going to lead to one thing: doubt. And that's what Satan uses: doubt. And with that doubt, because it's a lie someone is talking rubbish, it's a lie, the idea of it is to deceive to follow, to gain a following.

…**she took its fruit and ate. She also gave it to her husband with her, and he ate**. Now, Adam wasn't deceived. Adam made a free-will choice here. We don't understand the conversation that took place. There was bound to be something that had been said. But we don't know of it, but it says in scripture that Adam was not deceived, Eve was. So, this must have been a free-will choice to go against what God said.

Verse 7—Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves a covering. So, they realized that, "Ah, I'm naked," and whatever reason goes on in the mind, they cover up.

Satan's lie (which was a deception, was with the intent of destroying God's plan) appeared to him at that time that it had worked. Because Adam and Eve had gone against God and rebelled against God, and therefore, it looks like it worked.

Now, we understand also in other scriptures that Satan tried to destroy the birth, when Christ had been born. That Satan set out to destroy a baby, and all those babies died because of that choice of Satan. So, he realizes that he wants to destroy as much as he can. He is against God's plan. He works against God's plan, and he's still today working against God's plan.

1 Timothy 2:14—And Adam was not deceived. It was a willful choice. It was a freewill choice that he made. …**but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression**. So, both sinned. One was through deception, which is the whole world is deceived. The other was a freewill choice. Now, it's a freewill choice, brethren, if we decide to listen to someone who's talking falsely and speaking against God's

government, talking against God's truth in any way. It is a freewill choice that we make. We can't say we're deceived. No, it's a freewill choice just like Adam made. Freewill choice.

2 Corinthians 11:3—But I (Paul) **fear, lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ**. So, we, brethren, and here Paul is saying he's concerned because we could go back into this deception. We've come out of deception, but we could go back into it.

For if he who preaches another Joshua… So, anybody who comes that preaches another way of doctrine, another doctrine, another way. It's another Joshua here. …**whom we have not preached**… In other words, this is brand new; it's something new, it's different than what we've been taught, the truth. It's different than the truth. …**or if you receive a different spirit**, which is a lying spirit that we could be receiving, **which you have not received, or a different gospel** (different good news). So, it's something that's different. That's the main point. It's just different than what the Church is teaching and what God has established in the Church at this point in time. …**which you have not accepted—you may well put up with it!**

Paul gave a warning to not be deceived by what is spoken by others that is not in unity with God's apostle. That's about as straightforward as we can get on that. And the issue is us willing to listen. Now, that's the danger – willing to listen.

Because deception can come in other ways – through a thought in the mind – but the idea, of course, is with God's holy spirit we then can fight that thought and not then blab it out. Just fight that thought and get rid of it, knowing that it's coming from Satan. It's a choice that we've got to make. We've got to fight self, and Satan knows that we're fighting it. Well, he'll try to magnify it. But we know through the power of God's holy spirit we can defeat that thought. We can say, "No, I'll stick to the trunk of the tree. I'll stick to the truth."

There is an account that reveals how humans can reason without understanding that God sees everything in the human mind. This is a rather interesting event that took place at the beginning of the Church, and there were reasons for it. One that we can take out is that God sees every thought. God sees everything we do. So, if we're willing to stand and listen to someone else's opinion on a truth, we have to be very careful. We might think, "Ah, I can handle it." Well, not necessarily. The best idea is just cut it off straight away, so it doesn't enter the mind and doesn't wander. Because that's the danger: the thought wanders.

Acts 5:1. I was saying to my wife it's going to be interesting that if Ananias and Sapphira are resurrected at the hundred years, possibly, it's going to be really interesting. And someone comes up and he introduces himself and says, "Oh, I'm Ananias," and the person there will go (if they've read the Bible), the person will go, "Oh, you. *That* Ananias?" Because it's going to be a "Oh, that Sapphira? Is that you that it's written in the Bible about?" It's going to be really interesting.

And also about if everyone is resurrected, of course, at a certain body, in a certain age, some will say, "This is my mother, who's (that age), and this is my grandmother and my great-great grandmother, and the great-great-great-great…and great-great-great…" and they're all going to look very similar. It's going to be fascinating how people see each other. Because they'll have a hundred years to choose God or not.

Acts 5:1—But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession. Now, at this point we look at it and just say it is a block of land (it doesn't say what it is). It's "sold a possession" and it's worth $100,000. And it is totally theirs. They could give $1 if they wanted to. But the choice is it's theirs. Everything, anybody sells something, it's yours. It's the person's. It's ours. It's your house.

And he kept back part of the possession. There is nothing necessarily wrong with keeping back part. He could have given half if he'd wanted to. **…and his wife also being aware of it, and brought a certain part and laid it at the apostles' feet**. The issue here is he should have just said, "Well, I'm just giving you this amount of money." Ananias had made it look like they were giving the full amount of the possession to the apostles.

Now, this is actually a lie and deception at work. Because the reason he's lying is because he wants to deceive the apostles that are there. And what's the motive behind that? Image. It's to lift up the image, have people think more or better of you because it lifts the image. "They think I'm pretty generous and I've given all this." It's a pride issue underlying.

So, the lie leads to why the lie is deception, and the deception is about self: lifting self up, have a better image of self, lift the image up, make people think better of me than what I really am.

Verse 3—But Peter said, Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie? We can choose to lie, but Satan enjoys that. Now, this thought process that Ananias and Sapphira must have gone through, they had an opportunity to cut it off. They had an opportunity to turn around and go, "No, that's the wrong thing to do."

Even carnally minded people know that lying is generally wrong. Most do anyway. They know it's wrong and they don't fully understand why they lie (protect self-image), but they understand that it's a lie.

So, Ananias's intent was to deceive. Who is the deceiver? Satan.

…**to lie to the holy spirit**, which is lying to God and the power that's been given that he could have maybe fought this, **and keep back part of the price of the land for yourself?** It would have been better just to have been honest, say, "Look, I'm giving you half. I'm keeping the other half" for whatever reason.

While it remained, was it not your own? And after it was sold, was it not your own to control? Because he could have done. **Why have you conceived this in your heart?** Which is in the mind. You have to have thought about it. You might have gotten $100,000 for the land, and had to have made a decision. It

would have been far better to have prayed about it and maybe given the 50% or whatever percentage he gave and been honest about it.

This is about the whole idea about deception, that we have to be very careful that we're not deceiving ourselves, and that we don't believe lies and that we don't listen to lies.

"Why have you conceived this in your heart?" Because pride was there. The intent was to have others think highly of them. That was the motive.

You have not lied to men but to God. Because it's God's Church. "You're lying. You're deceiving. You're lying to God." It would have been far better to have be open and honest about it, and that would have been fine.

The principle is you cannot hide anything from God. That's the key of this whole thing, that when we lie and we're deceptive on little things (mainly about ourselves), we're deceptive, God sees it all. God sees every component of our mind.

This principle applies to tithing. We're either honest or we're deceptive. And we might lie about tithing, the amount, and why would we do that? To deceive. But we don't deceive God. It's stupid really, to look at it deeply.

There's a question: Are we honest about saving second tithe? Or are we lying to ourselves about it, thinking that, "Oh well, at the end of the year it'll work out this much and I'll just put it on a credit card." The idea is like first tithe – it's God's – first tithe. Second tithe is to keep God's Holy Days, and therefore, we would save that money.

I do know of an example of somebody who got rid of all their second tithe and did something else with it other than saving it for the purpose that God had outlined, thinking that they're deceiving God. But they're not. You can't lie to God. You can't deceive God. He knows everything.

When it comes to offerings, God looks at the heart, our thinking. So, it might be $1, it may be lots of dollars, but the issue there is what is our motive? Are we lying to ourselves about it, or are we being honest about it? Because if we understand offerings, really, if we really, really understand offerings, we would understand that God has allowed us to have access to what we have. But it's not really ours. It actually belongs to God, all of it. It's all physical. It all belongs to God. Therefore, when we give an offering, we should have thought about it and thought, "Hmm. I've been so blessed by God, because it all belongs to God, and I'm going to give back 'this' much." So, our thinking is so important in all this, and the most important thing is that we don't think that we're deceiving God, and lying is a deception.

Verse 5—Then Ananias, hearing these words, fell down and breathed his last. So, he died. **So great fear came upon them all, those who heard these things**. Whether or not they fully understood then, it may

be just under you better be very honest to God's Church, be honest about that, or be honest about everything.

Because we understand that in the end all deception will be destroyed. Because at the end of the hundred years, at that very time, the execution of judgment, everything will be exposed and deception will stop. There won't be any. There will be no lying, and there will be no deception anymore because the Family of God is not about lying and deception. So, deception is coming to an end. It will all be destroyed, and no deception will exist.

Verse 6—And the young men arose and wrapped him, and carried him out and buried him.

Verse 7—Now, it was about three hours later… So, about three hours later, then his wife came in not knowing what had happened. So, Sapphira turns up and is going to say the same story, which is a lie and deception – for the purpose of deception.

Verse 8—And Peter answered her, Tell me whether you sold the land for so much? And she said, Yes, for so much. So, she was in full agreement with Ananias. She was willing to lie to God for the purpose of deceiving (can't deceive God), but deceiving so that the Church would think highly of them. Might do temporarily, but here they've been caught out.

And we all get caught out, brethren. If we do these things, we will be called out at some point. Maybe not straight away, but at some point it will be revealed and it will be exposed.

The truth is we are all guilty of deception because pride dwells in us all. Now, because we have pride we defend self, which is a lie, because we'll lie about it, and it comes in different forms and different degrees. But really, if we see our nature, we'll realize that we actually live a lie often because we, you know, answer with deception. We live it just to be seen to be good or seen to do this, seen to do that. Now, we've all done this or said something that has the deception as its motive. It's just who we are.

Verse 9—Then Peter said to her, How is it that you have agreed together to test the spirit of the Lord? Which is talking about God. **Look, the feet of those who have buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out. (Verse 10) Then immediately she fell down at his feet** (Peter's feet) **and breathed her last. And the young men came in and found her dead, and carried her out, buried her by her husband**.

Verse 11—So great fear came upon the Church and upon all who heard these things. God did not cause people fear as in a fear as a human fear. This is about fearing God and fearing going against God's word. So, God doesn't cause lies. God doesn't cause deceit. It's in us.

God caused people to think carefully about their thoughts and actions. And that's what we have to do, brethren. We have to think carefully about our thoughts—in other words, discipline and work with them —and our actions that come from those thoughts.

James 1:12—Fortunate is the man who endures trials and tests. Only if we look at it spiritually. Because if we have a physical test and it doesn't mean anything on a spiritual level the way we respond and what is actually happening and what it's really all about – if we're not looking at it spiritually, we're not fortunate; it's just a drudgery because it's like everybody else in the world, it's another test, another trial.

No, we should be looking at it from a spiritual point of view, and that is how we are responding. What am I really thinking about? Where is God in the picture of this particular test or trial?

…**and when he has been approved**… Which is tried and tested to see if we will place God first in that trial, think about what it is: Is this about sin? Am I involved in this sin? Where is God in this picture? It's taking it to God. We look to put God first. We look for a positive outcome of it.

…**he will receive the crown of life**. So, if we are working hard, disciplining self, if we're looking at ourselves all the time about whether we're sinning, what is my motive, the end result, if we endure to the end with that process (with the gift of God's holy spirit), we will receive a reward, which is life in Elohim.

…**which the Lord has promised to those who love Him**. So, we have to demonstrate that we love God by putting Him first in our life. Obedience to the very word of God.

So, any trial that comes along, we need to look at it from a spiritual perspective. It's just not a physical trial. It is a physical trial, but it has a spiritual component. It's a matter of whether or not we are willing to look at it from a spiritual perspective.

Let no man say when he is tested, I am tempted by God; for God cannot be tempted with evil, nor does He himself tempt anyone. So, it's not about God saying, "Okay, I'll tempt you to sin to see whether you'll sin." No, it's the tests of life. It's just here; it's what it is, and now whether or not we're going to choose, put God first, or whether we're going to look after self, please self.

Verse 14—But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. And that word "enticed" is "to be lured; enticed; to be deceived." It's our choice to sin.

Verse 15—Then, when desire has conceived… Because it's the desire within us to satisfy self, to please self. The thought developed, and even act on it. So, here we are; it's conceived. So, we're looking at it, we're thinking about it, but now it's going further and further and further; it's now developing, it's thinking. And we're looking at this in the context of false doctrine, thinking about it, and it's conceived.

…**it gives birth to sin**. Because if we're deceived, we will live sin. …**when it is full-grown, brings forth death**. Because the wages of sin is death unless we repent of it. Now, if we repent, we know that God can forgive us, and He will forgive us if it's a genuine repentance.

Verse 16—Do not be deceived… "Do not be deceived." That's self-deceived. Which is, "deceived" here is "to go astray, to wander away from God's way." …**my beloved brethren**.

Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, of/with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning. So, the truth is the truth. It's black and white, really. It's straightforward; it's black and white.

To be deceived is to walk in darkness or in the shadows, which is sin. So, if we're deceived, we will sin, and we won't even realize we're sinning because it just becomes a habit and we'll just automatically do it. To believe God and to live His way is to walk in the light, to walk in the truth.

Verse 18—Of His own will He brought us forth, which means we've been called, then we've been begotten with God's holy spirit, **by the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of His creation**. So, that is God's purpose. It's our desire to be part of God's Family. It's His desire to give it to us.

But it's not just given, where we do nothing. We have to do something. And the most important thing in life is not to be deceived, and there is a self-deception in all of us where we deceive ourselves.

When you look back at what happened to the Church in the Apostasy period, in Laodicea, was that there was a lot of deception that came – that people were being self-deceived, believing they were doing alright but becoming lukewarm toward God and God's truth. And then it made it a lot easier when a lie came, when deception came. People fell for it because they weren't strong enough to resist it.

Verse 19—So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, which is hear God's word, be swift to it. In sermons, to hear the truth. …**and slow to speak**. Stop. Really, what it's talking about – stop and think about it, to believe God, and not speak against it. Very slow to speak. Be careful with our thinking.

If we ever have an opinion, our opinion must match God's will, God's word. If not, it's only our opinion, and our opinion is motivated by pride. Pride is the problem. So, what we have to do is to exercise the mind. We have to seek what God's will is in our life so that we're exercising the love of God because we love God's word.

Drop down to **verse 22—Be doers of the word**… Be doers of the logos. In other words, not just hearers only; we're not just to hear it, we actually have to do it, we have to implement it into our life.

…**and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves**. What God is saying here is it is really a deception to think that if we want to just listen to the truth that God has given to us, if we just listen to it and go, "Oh, I agree with that," and not be a doer, we are deceiving ourselves. Because just hearing God is not enough. It's hearing God, changing, and doing what God has said. And if we just hear it and think, "Well, that's a great idea!" a waste of time. We are self-deceived.

We are deluded if we think that we can just hear God but not implement any change into our life. We understand the wages of sin—what we're going to get paid for not disciplining the natural carnal mind (fighting against it)—is death. And it's referring to a second death.

We in God's true Church can be liars without understanding the spirit of the matter. And what I'm really saying there is we have to be very careful about why we say what we say. What is the motive behind what we're saying? And we can be deceptive toward others, trying to protect our own image.

1 John 1:8—If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, if we think that we don't have sin. Because the natural mind sins. Lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. It's natural to us, and it's natural for us to justify ourselves. It's natural for us to defend our image, the one we've created. That's who we are.

If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves (we are deluded), **and the truth is not in us**. Because the truth is there are 57 Truths that have been given to us, but there's a lot more to it. The truth is we're carnal; we are sold to sin. We've been born this way for the purpose of fighting against it.

Verse 9—If we confess (acknowledge) **our sins, He** (God) **is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness**. Through repentance.

Verse 10—If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him (God) **a liar**. Because God says we sin by nature; that's who we are. …**and His word is not in us**. Well, God's word is in us because He, through the power of the holy spirit, has given us the ability to see self and what self is really like.

1 John 2:3—Now by this we know that we know Him (God). How do we know that we know God? …**if we keep His commandments**. We guard our thinking. That's what the commandments are about. People look at just the Ten Commandments, but God's overall instruction to us is that this is the way we are naturally and that we are to fight self. We're to fight our intent. We're to discipline self. We're to go against ourselves, fight against. We don't want to be deceived, to think that we're something we're not.

We're pathetic really, compared to God. What are we? What is man that you are mindful of us? Well, God is creating a Family from us.

We're to look at our intent behind our thinking and our actions. So, why do we do what we do? Why do we say the things that we do? It's an interesting exercise to go through that whole process because it reveals much about who we are and the image that we have created, that we think we're protecting.

Verse 4—He who says, I know Him, and does not keep His commandments… Now, this is about the spirit of the matter. You know, this isn't just keeping the Ten Commandments and saying, "This is what I do." No, it's about what the motive behind it all is. Like "Thou shalt not commit adultery." Well, there's a spiritual component to it which we've talked about.

Well, if we don't keep the spirit of the law …**he is a liar**, which means they're self-deceived. Anybody that's a liar, it's just self-deceived. It's not what we're really like. …**and the truth is not in them**. **But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is being perfected in him**. Because it's a process and it will take time. Because it's about a lifetime of choices.

By this (by fighting self, denying selfishness in us, the self in us), **we know that we are in Him**. We are in unity; we're in full agreement with God. And we know that. That's why we can say we know God because we are fighting the self, we're resisting selfishness, we're looking for selfishness, and we realize how easy it is to deceive ourselves and to be liars. That we're not what the world would like to think they generally are.

People think they're great, and they're successful and all these, but the truth is we're carnal, we're selfish, and we look after self. We love self first. And only by the power of God's holy spirit, from a calling, gift of God's holy spirit, can we deny self, can we fight self and see self, what it's really like.

Verse 6—He who says he abides (dwells) **in Him ought himself to walk** (which is to live) **just as He** (Christ) **walked**. We're to live by every word of God. We're not to be deluded. You know, we're deluded if we think we can just listen and not do.

1 John 2:21—I (John) **have not written to you because you do not know the truth, but because you know it, and that no lie is of the truth**. So, no use lying to ourselves about what we're really like. It's best to be just open and honest to God and tell God that we see it. And thankfully, we can see it. We don't like it, we don't want it, we want to be different. That's what we have to do, and that's what we want to do.

So, we know the truth and that no lie is of the truth. So, very important that we're not living a lie to try to protect an image. We need to be open and honest about everything. And sometimes it can be very hard with our human nature to be open and honest about everything and not to lie about self. It can be really difficult. It's a real test. Because there are opportunities that come up where people can see that we're living a lie. Well, what we have to do, the opportunity to come up to fight self, to deny self, and that no lie is of the truth. We believe that.

Who is a liar but he who denies that Joshua is the Christ? Now, what that really is saying is that someone is a liar if they deny Christ living in them. By living a lie, that's what we would be; we would be a liar. Because we deny Christ changing us, changing our thinking, denying self.

We deny Christ living in us by unrepented sin. Because sin will cut us off from God's flow of the holy spirit; therefore, we're living a lie. We think we're doing well, but we're not really. We're living a lie. We can deny Christ by the way we live. Because we're fighting against Christ, we deny the opportunity to change, that God wants us to change, Christ wants us to change to think differently. Well, we can deny that.

He is antichrist who denies the Father and the son. Because we won't allow God to work in us, that we won't fight the mind, so we're denying Christ. We have to be a living sacrifice.

Verse 23—Whoever denies the son, which is about not living sacrificing love. We deny Christ. If we don't sacrifice self, we're not allowing Christ to change us. …**does not have the Father either**. So, we can't have God's holy spirit living in us because we're not willing to fight self, to deny self, because we're deceiving self to think we're doing okay.

We'll close now on **1 John 4:20— If someone says, I love God, and hates**, which is, we understand, "love less," or does not sacrifice for his brother, **he is a liar**. Now, we understand living a lie is deception.

Now, people in the Body have lived a lie to the purpose of deception. Incredible. But that's the potential. And we can all believe a lie. We have to be very careful, be on guard that we're not deceived, that we're not deceiving ourselves what we're really like.

…**for he who does not love his brother**, which means doesn't sacrifice for them, **whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen? And this commandment we have from Him: that he who loves God must love his brother also**. If we say we love somebody in the Body of Christ or love anybody, and we're not sacrificing self, we're a liar. We are deceiving ourselves. Because it's impossible. We can't love anybody unless we're willing to deny self and sacrifice self for their benefit.

So, really, asked the question in the beginning: Can we be spiritually deceived? The answer is yes. If we fail to believe the truth, which is to fail to believe God, we have been deceived.