

Deceived

Joshua 9:4b-15

Preached by Phillip Kayser at DCC on Sunday, July 2nd 2023

I. Review

When we looked at the last six verses of chapter 8, we saw that God had brought Israel to a place of total dependence, consecration and commitment to His word. And we saw that that turned them into a powerful, formidable, unstoppable force. So Satan knew that he had to do something quick. And last week we began looking at the three strategies that he would use in this chapter to try to sideline Israel. We spent most of last week looking at his strategy of intimidation. We then started looking at his strategy of deception, but we didn't get very far. We only got up to the first phrase in verse 4. And we will look at his third strategy next week. But let's pick up where we left off.

II. Deception can easily happen (vv. 4ff) - other examples of deception

Verse 4 says about the Gibeonites: "they worked craftily, and went and pretended to be ambassadors." And you read on and you see that they pretended to be on Israel's side, to have come from a distant country, and to be delighted with what Israel was doing. What amazing con artists!

Have you ever had the wool pulled over your eyes by a con artist? I have had that happen more times than I would like to admit. I think the most embarrassing one for me happened in Calgary, Alberta, where I was doing street evangelism, handing out tracts and talking to anyone who would listen to my presentation of the Gospel on the street. One young man gave the most remarkable play acting that I have ever seen. He appeared to be under tremendous conviction of sin, confessed to drug addiction and said that he wanted counseling. He emptied his pockets out and threw away his drugs, and he faked a remarkable conversion. He came home with me so that I could introduce him to the counselors on the campus of the Bible School. And he was so good, that they were taken in as well. And in the course of his stay with me he not only ripped me off financially, but sweet talked several girls on campus out of a lot of money. In fact, it was in talking to these girls that we were first tipped off that he was lying. When we talked to his probation officer, we found out that he was a professional at this, and had talked people into giving him cars, and all kinds of things. He had had numerous fake conversions.

And I believe Satan used that fake conversion to divert me away from what God wanted me to do for a couple of weeks. It was an intense couple of weeks. Don't think that every ministry that is thrown your direction is a ministry that *God* wants you to do. Satan is OK with you doing ministry, so long as it is not the ministry God intended or you are not doing it with the anointing of the Spirit and with His guidance. If you read Matthew 7 sometime

you will see that Satan involves people in all kinds of church work. Yes! Church work! They even prophesied and cast out demons, yet Christ would declare to them on the last day, “I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness.” He didn’t say that they lost their salvation. He said, “I *never* knew you.” They were fakes. And we want to look at hints in this chapter as to how to avoid being sidelined by that, or if you have been sucked in already, how to profit from your mistakes.

Deception is something that we all continually face. There are unscrupulous sales people who will lie about their product, politicians who do the opposite of what they promised, and podcasters who teach false doctrine. But there are also less obvious ways in which we are taken in, and before we look at this passage and how to recover from the mistakes we have made, I want to give a brief survey of some of the Biblical illustrations of deception because it presents deception as being much more subtle than we might at first imagine.

The first passage is Mark 4:19. This speaks of the deception of riches. You may not have thought of an tangible thing like riches as being deceptive, but it can be. Christ was explaining part of the parable of the sower. He said that the seed is the word of God that is sown in people’s hearts. And let’s begin with verse 18 to see His explanation of the seed choked out by the thorns and thistles. He says,

Now these are the ones sown among the thorns; they are the ones who hear the word, and the cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches, and the desires for other things entering in choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful.

The deceitfulness of riches chokes out the word of God so that it becomes unfruitful. Riches are deceitful because they give the illusion of bringing joy when only God can do that; they give the illusion of security when only God gives security; they give the illusion of providing power when power can slip from a rich person’s hands so quickly. And I dare say that the allurements of riches has probably been a greater con artist in some of your lives than these Gibeonites were for these Israelite leaders. So many people go out and buy something when they are depressed because there is a transitory euphoria and comfort that they receive in having something new. They feel better, but it is not the transformational work of God’s grace. Ecclesiastes shows what a con artist riches can be. It doesn’t have to be, but it can be. It can leave you empty if you do not have Christ first and foremost in your life.

And Ecclesiastes shows the deceitfulness of entertainment. Many Christians fail to take the dominion they should be taking because of the lure of dopamine hits on social media, or hours spent on gaming, or watching way too much YouTube or TV. It makes them feel good, giving the illusion of taking dominion, and the illusion of fulfillment. But it sidelines them from taking dominion.

The pursuit of knowledge has deceived people into thinking that they are doing everything that needs to be done. These people must be spiritual because they study theology, talk theology, and write theology, yet James 1:22 says that if we are hearers of the Word but not doers, we deceive our own selves. We think we are OK with God when we really are not.

1 Corinthians 15:33 says that you can be conned out of your reward in heaven by succumbing to peer pressure. This was a huge one I had to battle.

Likewise, we are conned any time we substitute the wisdom of man for God's ways of doing things. Moses was initially taken in by the wisdom of Egypt, and Hebrews says he tossed it all away so that he could pursue of the riches of Christ.

So there are *many* subtle ways that we can be conned out of God's best for our lives. And we need to be on guard. The words deceit, deceive, or deception are used 163 times in the Bible.

III. Why do we get deceived?

But we are going to use this passage to illustrate at least *some* of the reasons why we can be conned. Why do we buy things that we later regret? Why do we cave in to temptations? I've got a much longer list of sales techniques that Satan used in Genesis 3, but this text suggests a dozen reasons that we need to recognize and be on guard against.

A. Packaging in a way that gets you to trust your senses (vv. 4b-6)

First comes packaging. Any unethical sales person who is trying to sell a less than stellar product knows that they have got to package their product in such a way that it immediately impresses the *senses* of the customers so as make them take the bait before their discernment and rational research kicks in. In this case, it was trying to get the Israelite leaders to see things that would make them believe that the Gibeonites had sacrificed a lot to get in contact with the God of Israel. It was similar to the guy in Calgary who had me completely fooled. The packaging here says that they have obviously traveled a long ways. And what the packaging hides is important as well. Nothing about this packaging reveals the fact that these people represent one of their nearby enemies whom God has called them to destroy. We will pick up where we left off last week in the second sentence of verse 4:

And they took old sacks on their donkeys, old wineskins torn and mended, 5 old and patched sandals on their feet, and old garments on themselves; and all the bread of their provision was dry and moldy. 6 And they went to Joshua, to the camp at Gilgal, and said to him and to the men of Israel, "We have come from a far country; now therefore, make a covenant with us."

In advertising, packaging involves a number of things. It anticipates skepticism and tries to have superficial (yet attractive) answers to that skepticism. It associates the product with something non-threatening. In this case the packaging is designed to convince the leaders that these people will be loyal to Israel and to Israel's God, that they are from a far country, and that they pose absolutey no danger. They have nothing but praise and flattery for Israel.

How many times have you made decisions because you have trusted your senses and the immediate impression they have made upon you? Most impulse buying is based on *packaging*, not as a result of research of the real content. And most impulse decisions that are bad decisions are made because the association at least *seems* good.

The prostitute being described in Proverbs 7 does *not* reveal to her customer the real dangers involved. No, she hides those well and does everything she can through the five senses to appeal to concupiscence. She doesn't say, "Oh, by the way, I've got incurable VD, and I've already had four customers today, and I want to destroy your good marriage, and I have a host of demons inhabiting me who waiting to inhabit the next customer who sleeps with me." No, that would turn all customers off. Instead she says that she has just come back from worshiping God (v. 14 - I'm a good woman and it's just you that I've been tempted by), and that she is married (implying that she is not a loose woman), and that her husband is gone on a trip (implying she is lonely, but also implying that there is no danger to the customer), and she describes beautiful tapestries, and perfumes, and delightful atmosphere, we can delight ourselves in love, and she uses EQ to build him up and make him feel important, etc. Packaging. It was all packaging. Well in Proverbs 7, God does the exact opposite. He shows the true nature of the *content* that has been wrapped up so beautifully. The *content* is not so pretty. The true content includes disease, demons, hell, dead men's bones, death, destruction, stinking filth, and evil. Proverbs 7 is warning young men that they need to look beyond the packaging to the real dangers. You young men who are tempted by pornography have got to work through my sheet on sales resistance to porn.

We saw last week that Satan often presents himself as an angel of light. Satan is described in Ezekiel 28 as being full of beauty. He knows how to package his product in such a way as to lure you in. If you are one who trusts your senses too much and makes impulse decisions based on packaging, it will make you ignore the rational warning signals on many other things too. The way to deal with that is through prayer, research, transparency, accountability, getting wisdom from your elders - and avoiding the next technique of deception that they used:

B. Pressuring you to make a quick decision (v. 6)

The next technique is in verse 6. The men pressure the leaders to make a quick decision. And this should have appeared very very odd. For two nations to come into covenant with each other is such a momentous decision that it really is ridiculous for them to be pressuring Israel to make a decision on the spot. Yet that is exactly what they are asking. In effect what they are saying is, "We have sacrificed a lot to make this trip. You can tell by how old everything is and how worn out our shoes are. We can't afford to stick around much longer, so could you quickly make a covenant with us. It will be worth it, because we will be your most faithful allies."

I have learned from many hard knocks not to be pressured into making hasty financial decisions. Those are usually the worst. What these leaders could have said was, "Thanks for telling us. We can send some agents to your nation and check things out. There shouldn't be a hurry. You guys have waited for weeks anyway; it won't hurt for you to wait a little while longer while we engage in due diligence. And since you are honest folks, you shouldn't mind a bit of due diligence, right?" But they didn't do that. There must have been some warning signals that were going off in their heads because they *do* say in verse 7, "Perhaps you dwell among us; so how can we make a covenant with you." They were almost onto the truth, but eventually got pressured into making a quick decision.

C. Getting you sidetracked after you start to respond Biblically (v. 7)

A third way we often get taken in, but which they avoided, is to fail to think Biblically. I am amazed at the discernment that grows in people as they prayerfully study the Scriptures. And Joshua applies Scripture well in verse 7. He knows that he is not supposed to make a covenant with Canaanites. And he is seeking to apply the Scripture to rule out that possibility. That's good. And we can take the cue from Joshua on this.

But here's the point - don't let yourself start with Scripture and then get side tracked. This is where I would tend to stumble in my teens and twenties. I sometimes let people talk their way around a subject until I forgot where we started. Cults are famous at not really answering your question. Look at their clever use of this device here. In verse 6 they claim to be from a far country, but they won't specify. And that made the Israelites a little suspicious. So in verse 7 the men of Israel said to the Hivites, "Perhaps you dwell among us; so how can we make a covenant with you?" Their answer is not an answer. Look at verse 8. "But they said to Joshua, 'We are your servants.'" Well, that's not an answer either, is it? In the next phrase Joshua tries again to get the identity of their nation out of them. "And Joshua said to them, 'Who are you, and where do you come from?'" Well, it's obvious that Joshua wants an answer and not evasions, so they try a different tactic. They try talking for a long time so as to change the subject. And their speech from verses 9-13 succeeds in finally getting the people to change the subject.

We've got to learn not to be taken in by this deceptive technique. It's used by cults. It's used by unbelievers when they want to avoid the conviction of the law, just like the woman at the well did with Jesus. She tried to change the subject, right? And it is used by Christians when they don't want to reveal their stand on issues. When I was in the PCA, I remember many times when people would be asked a question on feminism, full preterism, evolution, and other hot button issues and they would dance all around the question without actually answering the question. And this leads to the next point, which is related:

D. Letting you feel like you have done due diligence (v. 7)

Many deceivers will get fact-finders off their backs by letting them *feel* like they have done an adequate job of engaging in due diligence. I remember being frustrated with men from Covenant Seminary who were coached by one professor on how not to answer questions about evolution and other hot-button issues, but to give the *appearance* of answering by enthusiastically affirming the language of the Confession - and of course they interpreted the confession differently than the original authors did. But they won't tell you that. And most trusting pastors in our PCA presbytery would think that was the end of it; they've affirmed the confession. They were satisfied.

I'll just give you one example. Almost the same language happened several times with different candidates. But on this occasion, I prefaced my question to the candidate by saying, "I realize that the PCA allows for different views on creation and has different views of the six days. My question is not about which of those views you hold to. My question is 'Were there millions of years of death and suffering prior to Adam and Eve?'" That's a pretty straightforward question, right? Well, he hadn't been prepped for that kind of

question, so the answer his seminary professor gave him came off sounding a bit odd. He said, "I believe the world was created in six days and all very good." Now, even though it wasn't a very good answer, most of the elders there thought, "Oh, good. He's a six day creationist." Well, I knew better.

I followed up with, "Yes, I understand that you hold to one of the views of six days. That's not my question. My question is, "Were there millions of years of death and suffering prior to Adam and Eve?" He gave exactly the same answer. I followed up by asking, "So, by not answering my question, are you affirming that there were millions of years of death and suffering before Adam and Eve." He responded, "I believe the world was created in six days and all very good." After getting one more deflection, I told the presbytery that if a candidate does not have the integrity to answer a straightforward question, he obviously has something to hide. And he did. We came to find out that he was a straightforward evolutionist, but he didn't want to say so because of all the 6 day creationists in the presbytery. He didn't do a good job of hiding his position, but he had been carefully coached on how to make presbytery feel like they had done due diligence in asking questions. Some people are much more sophisticated than him in achieving that. Sales people are very adept at giving you tons of information - just not the information you need - it's all one-sided.

E. Appearing humble and eager to serve (v. 8)

The next technique is to appear humble and eager to serve. Verse 8: "But they said to Joshua, 'We are your servants.'" Though that was not answering the question, they wanted to appear humble and eager to serve. What enemy is going to come and offer to be in a subservient role to Israel and to want to help Israel?

Now I should remind you that God had already made provision for *individual* people to defect from their nation and to profess faith in Christ. Many had already done so. Even in the massive covenant renewal made in the last verses of chapter 8 we have mention of strangers who covenanted with God in verses 33 and 35. These were pagans who had rejected their paganism and embraced the God of Israel. So it is not as if God's arms were closed to repentant Canaanites. Not at all. God's arms were open to *any and all* who repented.

But what the Gibeonites were doing was different. They were bypassing repentance. They were seeking to get Israel to blindly covenant with a nation as a nation without ascertaining whether the nation was a believing nation. Their deception was not consistent with repentance (at least not at this stage) and was designed to keep their national status intact. But just like every other nation in Canaan, the cup of iniquity of the Gibeonite branch of the Hivites was full and they were worthy of judgment. So making covenant with nations was not something any of these leaders should have done without investigation of that nation at some *future* date.

And Israel in later history fell into this sin repeatedly. When another nation pretended humility of taking a subservient role (we call that the vassal role), the later kings of Israel

felt like having a nation in covenant was safer than having it in combat. But it is never safe to covenant with God's enemies.

Those of you who are visitors missed the previous sermons that pointed out that God made this actually backfire on Satan and that God would eventually use the Gibeonite contact with Israel's worship to convert them soundly and they would end up more faithful to God than Israel was. But at this stage they were saving their skin, not saving their souls.

Obviously Joshua is not taken in by such a brief answer because he repeats his question: "And Joshua said to them, 'Who are you, and where do you come from?'"

F. Downplaying danger (v. 9a)

So the next strategy of deception was to downplay danger. Joshua was obviously nervous about whether these ambassadors were from a nation under God's judgment, so the Gibeonites downplayed *that precise danger*. Verse 9:

So they said to him: "From a very far country your servants have come..."

And this has been Satan's strategy throughout time. He assured Eve in Genesis 3, "You will not surely die." The harlot of Proverbs 7 downplays the dangers. Pornographer's appeal to curiosity by posting something intriguing that seems to have no danger. Tobacco companies minimize the negative effects of cigarette smoking. Casinos don't advertise all the losses an individual might have had over the previous several months. They just highlight the times that this individual won \$300 (or whatever the win was). To give full disclosure would not be alluring at all because the amount lost is almost always more than the amount won. And it is important that we teach our children to be skeptical of invitations that promise no cost. There is always a cost (whether the cost is your time, energy, reputation, money, or something else, there is always a cost) and it is important that we know for sure what that cost is.

G. Winning trust by identifying with God and with your cause (vv. 9-10)

The next ploy is to win trust by identifying with God and with the Israelite cause. Verse 9 continues their speech:

... because of the name of the LORD your God; for we have heard of His fame, and all that He did in Egypt, 10 and all that He did to the two kings of the Amorites who were beyond the Jordan—to Sihon king of Heshbon, and Og king of Bashan, who was at Ashtaroth.

They didn't mention any of the recent battles because a far away nation wouldn't have known about those recent battles yet, so they mention battles that took place months before and also God's miracles in Egypt. And they use the name of God, Yehowah. That is LORD in all capital letters. How they discovered the name Yehowah, we aren't told. Perhaps scouts had witnessed the covenant in chapter 8.

In any case, winning trust by identifying with your core issues is a common way for advertisers to get people to click on click bait. One of my aunts got married to a man who identified with her core values, but did so deceptively. He joined the church, and participated in the choir just so that he could find a submissive Christian wife. As soon as he married my aunt, he told her that he was no longer going to church, and that he had only gone to church to get a wife, and that he wasn't really a Christian. He had been falsely appealing to her core issues in order to get married.

Why do I share stories like this? I want you all to have a degree of skepticism - not so much skepticism that you become cynical, but enough that you have your guard up. Last week we saw God's repeated warnings to be on guard. Online criminals who want to drain your bank account aren't going to reveal their real identity or their real intent. They will have your bank logo on their email and will say something like, "This is your bank notifying you that someone has tried to hack into your account. Please click this link to login to your bank account and change your password." They pretend to be identifying with your interests and having concerns for your well-being. How many people give away their bank credentials clicking on that fake link? It happens all the time. And their entire bank account is drained.

The internet is a dangerous place with Gibeonites pretending to have your interests and to agree with your causes and who give links that they hope you will click in order to gain information or in order to take you to a porn site. I'm not trying to make you overly paranoid - just cautious. We live in a world of sin, and the Bible cautions us to be on guard.

H. Stroking your ego (vv. 11)

Another strategy used is stroking the ego of these leaders in verse 11:

Therefore our elders and all the inhabitants of our country spoke to us, saying,
 "Take provisions with you for the journey, and go to meet them, and say to them,
 'We are your servants; now therefore, make a covenant with us.'"

In effect they were saying, "God has used you so powerfully, and we have so much respect for you, that we would like the privilege of being your servants." Woah! Talk about stroking their pride. But they did it in the context of lifting up God's name too, so that it sounded good. Pride is the deadly enemy of discernment. And if you start feeling your pride being stroked, watch out. Commentators point out that the offer to be servants means that the nation was not asking to be equal partners, but in a subservient position - the position of a vassal. And among other things, that could easily have been an appeal to pride.

I. Playing on your sympathies (vv. 12-13)

Next, in verses 12-13 the Gibeonites played on their sympathies by appearing to be weary travelers who had been on a long journey, and have made huge sacrifices purely for the benefit of Israel. And the implication is that if Israel rejects this offer, their sacrifices and love for Israel will have been spurned. Have you ever had people try to manipulate your sympathies that way? Narcissists can be expert at manipulating empathetic people and abusing your sympathy and generosity. Actually, narcissists are good at a number of these techniques - bending the truth by leaving out facts, trying to make you feel badly for them

so that you cover their bad behavior, etc. If you are led by emotion, it is easy to let others manipulate your sympathies. The remedy is to learn to please God first and foremost and to act on principle even if it hurts. And one good book that can help you on that is Ed Welch's book, *When People Are Big And God Is Small*.

J. Playing on our desires to be polite (vv. 11-14)

The next issue is playing on our desires to be polite. I have made bad decisions in the past because I didn't want to be rude. These leaders no doubt didn't want to act like jerks. They were offered food, and in middle eastern culture it is very offensive to turn down the offer of hospitality - even if the food is old. There was huge social pressure to accept hospitality and tokens of friendship.

How many people have been taken in because they were embarrassed to ask the right questions, because it just didn't seem polite. I have to confess that I hate controversy. And I hate appearing impolite. But that makes me vulnerable, and I have had to learn to compensate for that. And again, Ed Welch's book was super helpful. But Paul takes away that excuse when he says,

For do I now persuade men, or God? Or do I seek to please men? For if I still pleased men, I would not be a bondservant of Christ.

In that same book Paul uses Peter as an example of how even godly men can be conned because of this desire to be polite and not rock the boat. He kind of caved in to the Judaizers and stopped eating with the Gentiles. Why? Because he didn't want to offend the Judaizers. It was a kind of peer pressure. Ironically he ended up offending the Gentiles - *and* Paul, *and* God. Sometimes offense is impossible to avoid. You've just got to figure out which offense God wants you to accept.

K. Urging with signs of friendship (v. 14a)

A related technique is when people offer friendship and you feel bad rebuffing the friendship when you can't think of any good reason to rebuff it. It feels rude to de-friend people on Facebook, but I have had to do it a number of times because of the bad influence that person was having on my other friends. The first part of verse 14 says, "Then the men of Israel took some of their provisions..." They were both being polite and accepting signs of friendship. Many commentaries agree with Calvin in thinking that eating their bread was ratifying a suzerainty-vassal relationship via covenant. But whether that is the case or not, at a minimum, sampling their food is at least trying to be friendly and to not needlessly act hostile. Proverbs 27:6 says, "Faithful are the wounds of a friend, but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful."

L. Getting you to act before you ask God for guidance (v. 14b)

But the fundamental issue that led to their deception can be seen in the second part of verse 14. Verse 14 says, "Then the men of Israel took [or as some translate it, "sampled"] some of their provisions; but they did not ask counsel of the LORD." I agree with Calvin that to take some of their provisions meant to eat their bread and thus make a covenant with

them. They entered into covenant without seeking the Lord's guidance. This was a clear violation of Numbers 27:18-21, which said that Joshua was to inquire of the Urim and Thumim for all of their activities of going out and coming in. God's Word had already given them the instructions they needed for taking the land, but this guidance helped to apply that Scripture to specific situations. It gave wisdom for navigating the specifics.

And the Bible promises *us* guidance to apply the principles of Scripture to the specifics of life. Colossians 1:9 prays that everyone in that church "may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding." And what is the purpose of that guidance? The next verse says, "that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God." The Spirit takes the Scriptures we have internalized and helps us apply those Scriptures to concrete issues. You can't separate guidance from the Scripture. But we need the Spirit's guidance to avoid the deceptions of the modern Gibeonites.

And by the way, asking the Lord for guidance will often immediately expose hypocrisy and insincerity of heart within us. We often have mixed motives that we aren't totally aware of. In fact, Kathy and I sang Psalm 139 in this morning's devotions, and it was praying that God would keep us from self-deception. I remember as a young child having a disagreement with my father, and thinking at the time that it was a very valid disagreement. After discussing it for a couple minutes, my dad said, "Well, let's pray about it. I'll let you start." And I don't remember what the argument was about, but I remember thinking how unfair it was because as soon as I started praying, I knew I was wrong. I could hide my motives from my dad and from myself, but not from God. That was a case of really not wanting to know God's will. That's a sign of being on dangerous footing. If you sense that you really don't want to know what the truth is because it will be tough, it is a dangerous sign.

2 Timothy 4 says that those who are out of fellowship with God sometimes *want* to be deceived. It's strange, but that's what unconfessed sin does to us and pride does to us. Bitterness will do that to you. We prefer to remain deceived and in the dark.

2 Thessalonians 2:8-12 says that sometimes we lack a love for the truth. It speaks of "deception... because they did not receive the love of the truth." Do *you* have a love for the truth? Are you committed to going wherever it leads you? If not, you will be vulnerable to deception - and especially self-deception. But if you truly want the truth, God's guidance will expose whatever has been hindering your discernment. He'll open your eyes. He'll help you to think more Biblically. That's what true guidance is all about - thinking more Biblically in the concrete details of life.

M. Making a peace treaty with strangers (v. 15)

Finally, they entered a covenant that they should not have entered. Verse 15 says,

So Joshua made peace with them, and made a covenant with them to let them live; and the rulers of the congregation swore to them.

We will see in the future that this covenant gets them into trouble. But once made, they are bound by it. I have talked to couples who have wanted to get a divorce because they found

out stuff about each other that they really didn't like. But I pointed out that it was too late. They need to learn to love each other. I remember about 25 years ago one lady told me that she can't love her husband because she hates him. And I pointed out that God commands us to love our enemies, and how much more if you are married to one. Even Joshua kept this covenant. This covenant was so binding that when Saul sought to slaughter some of the Gibeonites 400 years later (on the pretext of cleansing the land of Canaanites), God treats him and his family as murderers and covenant breakers. God clearly honored this covenant even 400 years later and there is very strong evidence of their godliness over a period of more than 700 years - incredible covenant succession. We will look at that in more detail in the next section.

But we should make sure that *we* are never at peace with what God is at war with. As I mentioned last week, what you watch on TV can imply a peace treaty with the worldview of the movie you are watching - *unless* you have a discussion afterwards of what you disagreed with and turn it into an educational opportunity. The unstated assumption that children might make when you state that you love a movie is that you endorse everything in it. We must be very careful with what our children see us at peace with and what things they realize that we are still at war with. They need to understand the clear antithesis that we have with the world.

Next week we will look at what to do when we blow it like this (and we have likely all blown it at one time or another), but for now it is sufficient to say that we need to *recognize* the kinds of things that can lead us to making ungodly decisions. Jesus said, "Take heed that you not be deceived" (Luke 21:8). Or as Paul worded it, "Let no one deceive you by any means" (2 Thes. 2:3). May it be so Lord Jesus. Amen.