**Do Not Deceive Yourself**

*Jeremiah 17:9-10*

**Introduction**

1. **Jeremiah 17:9-10** – Judah had deceived themselves into believing prosperity and happiness would come to their nation in compromising with Pagan philosophies and idol worship.
   1. **(v. 9a)** – They deceived themselves into thinking these actions were acceptable, and beneficial
      1. ***“There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death” (Proverbs 14:12)***.
      2. ***“and desperately wicked” (v. 9)*** – The way they were going seemed right (self-deception), but their hearts grew corrupt and wicked in the process (opposite of what they thought).
   2. **(v. 10)** – The Lord tests the heart, and thus knows its condition. They would be given what they worked for.
   3. **(v. 1-4)** – The people of Judah were deep in idolatry, and their hearts were corrupt. Even their children were being taught the ways of paganism **(v. 2).** God would punish them as He said **(v. 4).**
2. Their self-deception included a thought that, despite their wickedness, they would continue to be accepted by God. But this was not so, they were deceived 🡪
   1. **(v. 5-6)** – The man who does not follow God is cursed.
   2. **(v. 7-8)** – The man who follows God is blessed.
3. **The greatest deception comes from within. We must make sure we do not deceive ourselves. 🡪**
4. Do Not Deceive Yourself…
5. About Sin **(cf. 1 John 1:8)**
   1. **John’s first epistle was written to individuals who were being influenced by false teachers.**
      1. **Gnostics** – *thought they reached an exalted spiritual state through superior knowledge* (**cf. 1 John 2:20-21** – *Gnostics didn’t have a special anointing of knowledge, but the Christian’s had the word of God, which was sufficient* – **vv. 26-27**).
      2. Evidently, part of their belief was that they received an exalted spiritual state through their knowledge **which rendered them sinless** **(cf. 1 John 1:8-10).**
      3. **2:1-2** – John affirmed that all have sinned, and still fall short from time to time in weakness. Jesus is our propitiation. (**For the Gnostics as well, although they claimed they didn’t need the blood of Jesus because they were sinless.)**
      4. **This kind of self-deception about an exalted sinless state comes from a heart of pride. 🡪**
   2. **1 Corinthians 3:18-20** – Some in Corinth were puffed up, thinking they were more knowledgeable, and better than others.
      1. This was manifest in their sectarian spirit (**cf. 1:12** – following proclaimers of the gospel as if they were philosophers.)
         1. Each group thought they were better than the other for whatever reason.
         2. **They needed to recognize that true wisdom was with God, not men’s philosophy**.
      2. **4:6-8** – They were puffed up against one another, thinking themselves superior.
         1. (**v. 8)** – Even their self-proclaimed spiritual state was better than what the apostles have.
         2. **This self-deception due to pride is very destructive 🡪**
   3. **We need to recognize our sin, and become humble before God so He can heal us spiritually.**
      1. **Parable of Pharisee and the Tax Collector** – Pharisee prayed with pride and self-righteousness (thanking God he was not a sinner like the tax collector). The tax collector was humble, and recognized his sin asking God for forgiveness.
      2. **Luke 18:14** – The tax collector, who did not deceive himself into thinking he was better and sinless, was justified.
      3. ***“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 5:3).***
6. About God’s Judgment
   1. **Some do not deceive themselves into thinking they have NO sin, but that their sin does not affect their relationship with God.**
   2. **Jeremiah 17:9-10** – As noted earlier, Judah deceived themselves into thinking their idolatry would not sever them from God.
      1. **Romans 6:23** – We need to recognize that our sin brings forth spiritual death (separation from God).
      2. **Isaiah 59:1-2** – When we sin, we are separated from God.
      3. **We must recognize the horrible effects of sin, and repent of them, turning to God for forgiveness.**
   3. **1 Corinthians 6:9-10** – We must not deceive ourselves into thinking we can continue in sin, and still be with God.
   4. **Galatians 6:7-8** – God has told us we will reap what we sow. If we sow sinful things, we will reap corruption.
   5. **We must not deceive ourselves into thinking God will not judge us for our sin.**
      1. **2 Timothy 4:1-5** – Some will deceive themselves by requesting preaching that will make them feel good despite their sinful state. ***(“according to their own desires”)***
      2. **Jeremiah 6:14-15** – Judah did the same while given over to paganism. *They deceived themselves by listening to false prophets cry peace when there was none to be found*.
      3. **They needed to understand God’s promised judgments to the unfaithful would be meted out. 🡪**
   6. **Jeremiah 37:9** – The people of Judah were deceiving themselves into thinking the Babylonians would not overtake them.
      1. **Jeremiah 6:1-5** – Due to their unfaithfulness, God promised Judah destruction would come from the north – **the Babylonians would overtake them.**
      2. **Jeremiah 37:5-10** – While the Chaldeans (Babylonians) besieged Jerusalem, the Egyptians challenged them (helping Judah), and they had to deal with them before completing their task against Judah.
         1. **(v. 7-8)** – The Egyptians will not stop God’s judgment against Judah through the armies of Babylon.
         2. **(v. 9-10)** – Even if the Babylonian army was severely wounded and exhausted from battle, they would still defeat Judah – this was God’s purpose.
   7. **We must understand what Judah did not – God will punish evildoers, and nobody will escape His judgment.**
   8. **Romans 2:3-9** – If we practice sin, and do not repent and turn to God, we will be punished eternally – **DO NOT DECEIVE YOURSELF!**
   9. In order to escape this punishment, we must turn to God and do that which is good (**cf. Romans 2:10).** 🡪
7. About Salvation and the Word
   1. **James 1:22** – James informed his readers that merely hearing God’s word wouldn’t help them.
      1. **To hear and not do, and think that will profit you, is to deceive yourself.**
      2. **Deceive** – *paralogizomai* – delude.
      3. ***“But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves.” (NASB)***
      4. The one who thinks he can hear the word, but not do it, and receive salvation is **delusional – he is living in a fantasy**.
   2. **James 1:18** – God saves us through “the word of truth.”
      1. God begot us (brought us forth – we became His children) through the gospel of Christ – power of God to salvation (**cf. Romans 1:16**).
      2. **(v. 19-21)** – To continue as His children, **we must continue to hear His word, and repent of our sins.**
   3. However, we must not just hear His word, but do His word (**cf. James 1:22-25**).
      1. **Some deceive themselves by thinking reading God’s word is enough. They think hearing the preaching of God’s word is enough. THEY ARE WRONG!**
      2. We must be hearers AND doers in order to be pleasing to God!
   4. **James 1:26** – Furthermore, it is not enough to merely practice outward religion.
      1. We **must have our hearts changed by the truth, and be sincere** in our religious service (doing of the word) before God.
      2. ***“God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth” (John 4:24).***
      3. The unbridled tongue manifests a heart problem – ***“For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies” (Matthew 15:19).***
   5. In order to be saved in the end, we must continue to do as God commands – ***“But he who endures to the end shall be saved” (Matthew 24:13).***
8. **Do not deceive yourself in any way, but turn to God with an honest heart, and do as He commands!**

**Conclusion**

1. We must understand that which the Lord said in ***Jeremiah 17:9 – “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; Who can know it?”***
2. We cannot allow ourselves to be deceived by our own hearts!
3. **We must learn God’s word continually so as to understand the truth, and prevent self-deception.**