

# The High Cost of Deception

by Chuck Smith

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*The sermon emphasizes the dangers of deception and the necessity of genuine obedience to God's guidance.*

**Duration:** 27:06

**Scripture:** Jeremiah 42:6

**Topics:** "Obedience To God", "Deception And Consequences"

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## Description

This sermon delves into the importance of obedience to God's guidance, using the examples from the 2nd Epistle of John and the book of Jeremiah. It emphasizes the deceptive nature of making vows or promises to God without true obedience, highlighting the need to trust in God's direction even when it goes against our own logic or desires. The message underscores the consequences of disobedience and the blessings of following God's will wholeheartedly.

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## Transcript

For our Scripture reading this morning, we want to read the 2nd Epistle of John. So go to Revelation and then turn left a couple of books and you'll find it. The 2nd Epistle of John.

I'll read the 1st and the outnumbered verses. Pastor Brian will lead you in the reading of the even-numbered verses and shall we stand as we read the Word of God. The elder to the elect lady and her children, whom I love in the truth, and not I only, but all they that have known the truth.

For the truth's sake which dwelleth in us and shall be with us forever. Grace be with you, mercy and peace from God the Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, in truth and in love. I rejoiced greatly that I found thy children walking in truth, as we have received a commandment from the Father.

And now I beseech thee, lady, not as though I wrote a new commandment unto thee, but that which we had from the beginning, that we love one another. And this is love, that we walk after his commandments. This is the commandment, that as ye have heard from the beginning, ye should walk in it.

For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist. Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward.

Whosoever transgresseth and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. And he that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you and bring not this

doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God's speed.

For he that biddeth him God's speed is a partaker of his evil deeds. Having many things to write unto you, I would not write with paper and ink, but I trust to come unto you and to speak face to face, that our joy may be full. The children of the elect sister greet thee.

Amen. Let's pray. Father, we thank you that you have given to us the word of God to guide us into all truth.

And Lord, over and over you have warned us concerning deception, many deceivers in the world today. But Lord, we pray that you will keep us from being deceived and that we will, Lord, walk in your truth. Thank you for the opportunity today of just again looking at your word, studying your word, and being led in to follow after the precepts that you have taught us in and through your word.

Minister to us, speak to our hearts today, we ask, Father, in Jesus' wonderful name. Amen. You may be seated.

Well, we're moving through the book of Jeremiah. Almost finished. In fact, one more week in Jeremiah, and we move on to the prophet Ezekiel.

So, this week it is Jeremiah 41 through 45. We encourage you to read it over, join with us tonight at 7 o'clock as we continue this journey through the Bible. But this morning we want to draw your attention to chapter 42 and a tip into chapter 43.

So, here's the situation. The children of Israel have fallen to Babylon, and they have been rebellious, and they had rebelled against Babylon under Zedekiah, and the Babylonians came the second time, conquered Jerusalem the second time, took Zedekiah as a captive back to Babylon, put out his eyes, and he was in Babylon until his death. And Babylon put a fellow by the name of Gedoliah over to watch over Jerusalem.

Gedoliah was a wonderful man, but there was a conspiracy and a group of fellows actually assassinated him, and so the people that are still there in the land are fearful of the Babylonians coming to retaliate. And so they have gathered together and they're ready to escape to Egypt to escape the retaliation of Babylon because of this heinous crime against the Babylonian authority that had been established there in the land. And so they are down near Bethlehem, and they are ready to make the journey back through the wilderness to Egypt in order to seek the safety of Egypt from the retaliation by the Babylonians.

And so that's where we pick it up in chapter 42, verse 2. We read there that a group of the leaders came to Jeremiah the prophet, and they said to him, we ask you, accept our supplication. Pray for us unto the Lord thy God, even for all this remnant, for we are only a few left out of many, as you can see. Ask the Lord thy God to show us the way wherein we may walk, and show us what to do.

And then Jeremiah the prophet said unto them, I have heard you, and behold, I will pray unto the Lord your God according to your words, and it shall come to pass that whatever thing the Lord shall answer you, I will declare it unto you. I will keep nothing back from you. And then they said to Jeremiah, the Lord be a true and a faithful witness between us, if we do not even according to all of the things which the Lord thy God shall tell you for us to do, whether it is good or whether it is evil, we will obey the voice of the Lord our God to whom we send thee, that it may be well with us when we obey the voice of the Lord our God.

Sounds good, doesn't it? Here they are making a commitment. They're coming to Jeremiah and they're saying, inquire of the Lord, find out what we should do, and whatever the Lord says, we will do it, no matter what, you know, we will obey the Lord. It sounds like they've learned their lesson and things at this point are looking quite good.

Here's a group of people seeking the will of the Lord and vowing to obey whatever God tells them to do, whatever it may be. But you know, vows and promises are deceptive. For usually we believe them.

We're deceived ourselves by the promises that we make. I think that we are often very sincere when we make promises or vows unto God. We intend to keep them, but yet I think that so often people make their vows and yet when it comes right down to it, they don't keep the vows that they have made.

So they become very deceptive because I think, well, I've promised that I'll do this and I surely will, you know, if things are fine and goes right. But it's interesting, vows are usually made or promises are usually made in a day of trouble. When I'm needing help from God and I want to get some special help from him, I say, now Lord, if you'll just do this for me, this is what I'll do for you.

And we're trying to make a deal with God, you know, it's sort of, well, let's make a deal, you know, you help me and I'll do this. And it's a promise sort of actually trying to curry the favor of God for the request that I am making. God tells us in Ezekiel 5.5, it's better that you not vow than that you should make a vow and not to pay it.

In Matthew 21.28, Jesus spoke a parable and he said, what do you think? There was a certain man who had two sons and he came to the first and he said, son, go work today in my vineyard. And he answered and said, I will not. But afterwards he repented and he went out and worked.

The second son, he said, go and work in my vineyard. And he said, yes, sir. But he didn't go.

Which of them did the will of the father? And they said unto him, well, the first one, of course. Too many people, there is all talk and no walk. One thing to say it, it's another thing to do it.

And the Lord doesn't really reward me for what I say, but he rewards me for what I do. Jesus said in Matthew 7.21, not everyone who says Lord, Lord will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of my father, which is in heaven. For many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? And in thy name, we've cast out devils.

And in thy name, we've done many wonderful works. And Jesus said, then will I profess unto them, I never knew you. Depart from me, ye that work iniquity.

Paul expressed a concern of his own to the Corinthians in 1 Corinthians 9.27. He said, I keep my body under and bring it into subjection, lest by any means, when I preach to others, I myself should be a castaway. Paul is saying, I really don't trust myself. I keep my body under.

My body is wanting to rule, but I keep it under, under the control of the spirit because I am concerned. Lest having preached to others, I myself would be a castaway or sit on the shelf. Well, Peter warned in his second epistle, chapter one, and beside this giving all diligent, add to your faith virtue, to your virtue, knowledge, to your knowledge, temperance, to temperance, patience, to patience, godliness, to godliness, brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness, love.

In other words, our Christian experience should not be static. We shouldn't be at the same place today that we were last year. We should be growing in our Christian experience.

We should be developing and the attributes of Christ should be more manifested in our lives today than they have been in the past. And that's basically what we are being encouraged by Peter to do, to grow in our walk and in our relationship with the Lord. For he said, if these things be in you, these characteristics, and they abound, they will make you that you will neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

But he who lacks these things is blind, and he is nearsighted, and he has forgotten that he has been purged from the old life. Wherefore, the rather brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure, for if you do these things, you shall never fall. Are you sure of your calling and election? The very fact that we are told to be diligent and to make it certain means that there are many people who are trusting in deception.

They're trusting in their own words, in what they say they will do, but not in what they are actually doing. Are you trusting in what you are saying? Remember, it is so easy to say the right things, but doing the right thing is often a far different story. In our lesson today, the people are saying the right things.

They said to Jeremiah, the Lord be true and faithful, a witness between us. If we do not, according to all of the things which the Lord our God tells us to do, whether it is good, whether it is evil, we will obey the voice of the Lord our God to whom we send thee, that it may be well with us, that we may obey the voice of the Lord our God. Sounds good.

They're saying the right things. However, when it came down to it, after 10 days, Jeremiah had sought the Lord and he came to the people, and there in verse 10 of chapter 42, he said, if you will abide in this land, the Lord declares, I will build you and not pull you down. I will plant you and not pluck you up, for I repent for the evil that I had to do unto you.

But be not afraid of the King of Babylon, saith the Lord, for I am with you to save you and to deliver you from his hand. And I will show mercies unto you, that he may have mercy upon you and cause you to return to your own land. But if you say, we will not dwell in this land, neither obey the voice of the Lord your God, saying no, but we will go to the land of Egypt, where we will see no war, will not hear the trumpet, nor the hunger of bread, nor we will dwell there.

Now, therefore, hear the word of the Lord, ye remnant of Judah. Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel. If you wholly set your faces to enter into Egypt and to go and sojourn there, then it shall come to pass that the sword which you feared will overtake you there in the land of Egypt, and the famine of which you were afraid.

And it shall follow close after you there in Egypt, and you will die there, and so shall it be with all of the men that set their faces to go to Egypt to stay there. They shall die by the sword, and by the famine, and by the pestilence. None of them shall escape the evil that I will bring upon them.

For thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel. As my anger and my fury has been poured forth upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so shall my fury be poured forth upon you when you enter into Egypt. And you shall be an excretion and an astonishment, a curse and a reproach, and you shall see this place no more.

Very stern warning from God to them through Jeremiah, don't go to Egypt. It's going to be a problem. If you go there, you'll die there.

You'll never see this place again. Now these people at this point have some very serious considerations. Do we believe and obey God and stay here and trust God to protect us from a Babylonian reprisal for what has been done? Or shall we go to Egypt to seek the protection of Egypt? It is interesting that in the Bible, Egypt is always a type of the life of the flesh.

And it is really returning to the trusting in the flesh. If we go to Egypt, we'll trust in Egypt to deliver us from the hand of the Babylonians. It seems that sooner or later, it comes to this in our lives.

Do I trust in the help of God or do I trust in the help of man? Proverbs 29 tells us that the fear of man brings a snare, but who so puts his trust in the Lord shall be safe. So here is the decision they'll have to make. They've said to Jeremiah, you seek the Lord, whatever he tells us to do, we'll do it no matter what, good or evil, we'll do it.

You know, tell us what does God say? He tells them what God says. And he warns them, don't do your own thing. Listen to what God has told you.

But then we read in the next chapter, chapter 43, then spoke all of the proud men saying to Jeremiah, you speak falsely. The Lord our God has not told you to say, do not go to Egypt to live there. But Baruch has set thee against us to deliver us into the hand of the Chaldeans, that they might put us to death and carry us away as captives to Babylon.

They were ostensibly seeking the guidance from the Lord, but not always is a person willing to follow the advice or the guidance from God that they're only really seeking to be affirmed in what they're doing. We find this so often in counseling, people come for counseling, not really to be counseled from the word of God, but they have in their mind what they want to do. And they are only wanting someone to confirm them.

Well, that's wonderful. That'll be fine. Yes, do it, go for it, you know.

And they're just looking for encouragement to continue in what they're doing, but they're not really looking for the will of God or the real purpose of God in their lives. And unless God agrees with what they're planning to do, they won't take the counsel that they have supposedly been seeking. They're not willing to be conformed to the will of God, but they're wanting God to be conformed to their will.

And that is so often the case. I just want God to confirm the things that I've decided that I'm going to do. But note the deception.

They wanted to hear what God had to say. They promised that they would obey whatever God told them to do. They said to Jeremiah, may the Lord be true and faithful witness between us.

If we do not even according to all of the things, which the Lord our God shall send thee to us, whether it is good or whether it is evil, we will obey the voice of the Lord our God to whom we send thee, that it might be well with us that we might obey the voice of the Lord our God. This was their commitment. You know, we're ready to do it.

Whether it's, whether we agree with it or not, we're going to do it. Whatever you tell us, God says we're going to follow it. Jeremiah tells them what the Lord says.

Don't go to Egypt. Stay here. I'll be with you and I'll make it well with the Babylonians.

I will, you know, appease them. But it came to pass that Jeremiah had made an end of speaking unto the people all of the words that the Lord had spoken to them, that they then spoke to Jeremiah saying, you speak falsely. The Lord our God has not sent thee to say, do not go to Egypt to sojourn there, but Baruch set thee against us to deliver us into the hand of Chaldeans, that they might put us to death and carry us away as captives to Babylon.

So they do just exactly the opposite of what Jeremiah has told them God told them to do. Don't go to Egypt. And so they decided that they would head for Egypt anyhow, because that was in their mind to do from the beginning.

And they just wanted confirmation. They wanted Jeremiah to come back and say, oh, great idea. You know, go to Egypt and find the protection and all.

But Jeremiah then prophesied to them that their going to Egypt is a great mistake. They're going to die in Egypt and they will not come back out of Egypt. And the thing they're trying to flee from, the Babylonian army, will pursue them to Egypt.

And there they will be conquered by the Babylonians. There they will experience the hunger and so forth, the destruction from the Babylonians. It's a one-way street.

You'll never return. So guess what happened? I think you know. The Babylonians did invade, and they invaded Egypt, and they conquered Egypt.

And the children of Israel who had fled to Egypt for protection all died in Egypt. In 1 Samuel 15, 22, Samuel said, has the Lord greater delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than to sacrifice, and to listen to God is better than the sacrifice of rams unto Him. God wants our obedience.

We may not understand, and it may be a step of faith. It may be against our own logic or reasoning, what God tells us that we should be doing. But yet, if we will follow after God, He will take care of us, and you can be convinced, and you can know and be assured God's not going to let you down.

So again, what a lesson we have here in this prophecy of Jeremiah of the people who were seeking the guidance from God, who hear the guidance from God, and then disobey. And just the calamities that they were seeking to escape come upon them just as God said they would. And so the lesson is when God speaks to you, obey the voice of the Lord.

He'll take care of you. You don't have to worry. You don't have to be concerned.

He wants to show Himself strong on your behalf and will show Himself strong on your behalf if you'll just put your confidence and trust fully in Him. So great lesson. They didn't learn it.

May God help us to learn from their mistakes, and may we learn that lesson of obedience to the will of God and to the voice of the Lord as He speaks to our heart concerning our relationship with Him and how we are to follow Him. Father, we thank you for this wonderful lesson here in the book of Jeremiah. And

Lord, we pray that we might learn from their mistakes, that we will not go our own way nor just really supposedly seeking your guidance and help only to confirm what we're planning to do and then going ahead and doing what we are wanting and planning to do despite of what you have said.

But Lord, help us to be obedient to your voice, to follow the leading of your Spirit that you, Lord, might be glorified in and through our lives as we take this step of faith and put our trust and confidence in you. We ask it in the name of Jesus our Lord. Amen.

Shall we stand? The pastors are down here at the front to minister today. And so we encourage you, if there's a need in your life, that you'll just come on down and just share with them and let them pray for you. For the Bible tells us that the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.

God wants to help you. God will help you if you'll just give him the opportunity to do so. So the Lord bless you, go before you, keep you in his love, cause you to abound in all things in Christ Jesus our Lord, and just cause you to just experience the joy and the power of God's Spirit in your life this day, this week, as we walk with him.

His countenance upon thee and give thee peace. God bless you.

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