

The Pathway to Bondage

Thine habitation is in the midst of deceit; through deceit they refuse to know me, saith the LORD.

Jeremiah 9:6

The prophetic ministry of Jeremiah to the kingdom of Judah spanned the years before and into the Babylonian captivity. Aside from some brief times of revival, the people of Judah had declined in their relationship with Jehovah by adopting faith in the false deities of the surrounding cultures. The deceitful influence of idols began during King Solomon's reign, and continued to plague the nation throughout its history. God's prophets had some short successes, but eventually the wayward nation would fall back into idolatry.

Today's verse states that God's people lived in the midst of deceit, and falling prey to that deception they refused to know God. It was deception that Satan used to entice the progenitors of mankind, and it is deception that the devil continues to use in our time. Though the temptation in Eden was strong, there was a way to refuse it; but in their self-will, they made the choice that would negatively impact the course of history and the people of the world. Because Israel had not totally driven out the heathen from the Promised Land, they became influenced by the idolatrous practices of the Canaanites. King Solomon further complicated matters by taking many wives and concubines who turned his heart to idolatry. Being drawn in by the deceitful influences of false deities, King Solomon's knowledge of Jehovah and His laws was forgotten, dynamically affecting the whole nation.

The up and down experiences of the nation Israel picture the struggles that afflicts many believers today. When someone has been delivered from the bondage of sin, their adversary Satan does not give up trying to deceive and fulfilling his plan for bringing them back into servitude to sin. Although the pull of temptation is strong, the power of the Spirit of God within is greater, however surrendering to temptation is still a choice. When a believer chooses not to read God's word and neglects communing with God through prayer, they become more vulnerable to the wiles of the devil. His subtle deceits can make a transgression seem like a reasonable choice which can lead to more poor choices. Fortunately, the straying child of God can recover themselves from the snare of the devil by repenting of their sin and acknowledging and following God's truth. The singular narrow path that leads to eternal life stands in contrast to the many and broad ways that lead someone to destruction. That wrong path begins with falling prey to Satan's deception and choosing our own way instead of God's. We must remember that *there is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.*

With guidance from the Holy Spirit, may we choose not to refuse the things that draw us ever closer to God so we can avoid the pathway to bondage. J. Ekis