

THE HISS OF HANANIAH
THE SEDUCTION OF SANBALLAT
THE PROTEST OF PETER

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There are numerous principles in the Word that are repeated in seemingly unrelated events. They stretch from the oldest parts of the Old Testament, through the Prophets, and finally to the New Testament. One such positive principle is found in Psalms 1. Here you find the state of the blessed condition of man being beside waters of the river and him bearing fruit in season. This concept is repeated in Ezekiel and in The Revelation.

The same repetition is true for a negative principle whereby there are attempts to thwart the highest purposes of God. These attempts to thwart God's plans and purposes are ever so subtle and nearly impossible to detect. In nearly all cases, *the deceit falls in line with tradition, current thought and acceptance, and/or the feelings of the one being deceived.*

One such is the story about Nehemiah, and his effort to restore the walls of Jerusalem, per God's instructions. This effort was extremely difficult with all the roving bands of saboteurs, plus open, undefended territory, and the lack of willing men and equipment. The Hebrews he led were emerging from under the wrath of God, pictured here as reeling, staggering, and falling down like drunkards. They had seen much desolation, destruction, famine and the sword. The building of the wall was opposed by the locals, who ridiculed them and opposed them in every way, both mentally and physically. There was conspiracy on every side to stop the work of God. As it is written, their struggle was overcome by prayer, bravery and hard work (a principle I trust is not lost on those reading...). All this resistance had to have affected Nehemiah's feelings and his resolve. In other words, as their leader, he was in a stressed state. Cowardly bastard that he is, Satan was in full operation, demonstrating his age-old tactic of coming against a man of God. Such has been, and is, his way to attack other spiritual brothers that are strained, tired, afraid, old, fragile and/or weakened.

When Nehemiah had closed the gap of the wall, the epitome of treachery came at him. Sanballat and Geshem sent word to Nehemiah saying, "Let us meet together and *talk.*" But the Spirit of God warned him that they meant to do him harm. Nehemiah replied to Sanballat, "Why should the work stop while I come down and talk to you?" Sanballat did this four times and finally sent him an open letter accusing him of rebellion. "Let us take counsel together," he said, *pretending to treat him as a friend.*

A second example of deceit is in high places working to nullify God's plan, from the ranks of so-called prophets opposing Jeremiah. The setting is one where those of Israel who were not in exile, are still in rebellion and spiritual debauchery. A visiting prophet named Urijah warns them of the same destruction as Jeremiah, and as a consequence is cut down by King Jehoiakim. Hananiah then shows up and opposes Jeremiah to his face, quelling Jeremiah's words of doom and gloom that were spoken to Jehoiakim and company. Instead, Hananiah says that God told him that in two years He would return all the looted gold and return the people in bondage from Babylon, and then restore Jerusalem.

Jeremiah mocks him, saying, “Amen, bro’! May everything you say come true! But hear this; the prophets before me and you prophesied war, famine and pestilence against great kingdoms and many countries. If your words (of peace and good fortune) come true, then it will be known you are the true prophet.” Hananiah, in retaliation breaks the wooden yoke around Jeremiah’s neck that he wore as a sign to the people. Hananiah again uses God’s name as his source, and proclaims the yoke around Israel will be broken in two years, with the people of Israel coming home. This is just what they all wanted to hear.....Jeremiah left for a season, but returned to Hananiah, and had the last word; Hananiah died in less than a year.

The third example of Satan’s deceitful tactics is from the New Testament. It shows how he can use a devoted follower of Christ’s to unknowingly come against God’s plan. After Peter makes the famous confession by the Spirit that Jesus is the Messiah, Jesus later reveals to them that he must suffer, be killed and be raised on the third day. Peter suddenly begins to rebuke Jesus, “God forbid, Lord! This shall never happen to you!” Jesus turned and said, “Get thee behind me, Satan. You are a stumbling block to me...” Jesus, full of the Word, knew better. He knew who was talking.

The facets common to all three stories are fairly simple to determine;

- One, all of them *are from within the ranks of the “enlightened.”*
- Two, all of them *speak words pleasing to the ear.*
- Three, all of them *invoke the name of God.*
- Four, all of them *go with the thoughts of the status quo.*
- Five, the adversity *appears under the guise of a friend.*
- Six, the stance is *popular with the great majority.*

What then, was the anecdote to deception?

- One, the lie disagreed with the Word. Know the Word.
- Two, the lie was dispelled by prayer.
- Three, none of the lies agreed with God’s character.
- Four, the lie did not agree with reality.
- Five, remember the first six facets....

These three examples of Hananiah et al., illustrate the principle of what will and does happen when God truly is at hand and is moving. A fourth is from my own experience. What follows came this morning as I sat beside the window at dawn.

Ezekiel 2 says, “Son of man, stand on your feet, and I will speak to you.’ ‘...Open your mouth, and *eat* what I give you.’ And when I looked, behold, a hand was stretched out before me...and there were written on the book words of lamentation and mourning and woe. ‘Son of man, *eat* this scroll that I give you and fill your stomach with it.’ Then I *ate* it; and it was in my mouth as sweet as honey.”

When I *eat* the Bible as a whole, I find God inhabits judgment as much if not more than He inhabits grace and mercy. I find mercy follows judgment; compassion and love find root only in the deep soil blasted by the dynamite of judgment, plowed by violent cleansing unto contrition, and smoothed by the truth of the Word. I find pestilence precedes God, and that *only* when God's judgments are in the earth will men learn righteousness. But these truths do not sound pleasant, nor do they agree with the *status quo*. However, they do agree with the sorry plight of the Body of Christ, as in Jeremiah's day, and they do agree with History.

I find also that when I read the whole Bible, the words of lamentation, mourning and woe feed my soul and are indeed as sweet as honey. Lest any say this is because I was born and formed under rigid and cruel conditions, rejection, austerity and the like, you are dead wrong. My youth was formed in the woods, without abuse or rank injustice. My basic nature is that of a pacifist and appeaser, a tendency to flee rather than fight. Silence is preferred rather than confrontation. I hate conflict and debate, and abhor bad feelings between myself and anyone else. But then God got a hold of me, making a warrior out of a coward. His words reversed my feelings. He will exalt the humble and depose the proud. His ways are not as our ways.

By contrast, when the current clergy try to *minister* to me, and say my predilections with the Holiness of God, judgment and violence are because I am *rejected, hurt, and wounded*, I sense the silent slithering of a snake. It is the sliminess of a constrictor that is trying to envelope me, to wrap around me, to choke me and keep me from speaking the whole truth God has given. There is no feeling like a snake. It is dry, yet slimy as mucus; it is solid, yet its scales belie any perception of substance. It is like Jello inside a Zip-Lok bag. A snake always gives the sense of gradual, imperceptible encroachment, and the feeling of sneakiness, coming from your backside to entrap, beguile and entice you to succumb to its life-sucking contractions. There is a sense of being smothered by this false *love* and *mercy*, as with a heavy blanket. Unable to breathe, I am frightened that I shall never escape.

I get the same sense when a woman with six-inch cleavage leans over in front of me and oh-so-innocently asks me if I need anything. Alarms go off inside of me, and fleeing is uppermost. This same sense equates with that from a queer in my presence, or a pedophile. All four elicit the same sensation, which is to run, throw them off as one would throw off a viper about to bite you in the neck.

I can sense when the Enemy is present. Giving Peter some credit, he apparently did not realize it. Hananiah and Sanballat do not even deserve that degree of grace. I sincerely doubt if all who would derail me know either. For the most part, the ones who try to derail me are either ignorant of the Word, or are under a family spirit, predominantly effeminate. To somewhat mollify the mercy-mongering clergy, the Enemy has convinced them they are right. Deception is the most remote thing from their minds. *Mercy, compassion, and love* are so, so, so accepted and *scriptural*, so, so, so in line with our *feelings*. But this one-sided presentation of the whole counsel of God begets a lack of the fear of God, which has, and will lead to our undoing.

When assured of what the Lord wants me to say, particularly when the word is somewhat hard, there is nearly always resistance. If it were not so, I would immediately suspect the word wasn't valid in the first place. This attempt to derail a correction has occurred through time immemorial. There is the story about the (unknown) prophet who was instructed to deliver a message. He was told not to go out the same way he came in, nor to tarry there within the country after he delivered the message. During his exit, another prophet asked him to "come in and have lunch."

That little culinary detour of the disobedient prophet cost him his life; I want to live....

So assuming even a fraction of the above is true, why then, has God plucked me from the nothingness of rural Kentucky, and decided to alter my *alter-ego*? Am I the only one?

Nay, say I;

Nay, say 7000;

Nay, says the **Word**!

Nay, say the conditions under which we exist, not thrive, per the Word, or ye be a liar.

Nay, says the witness of our impotence, our poor health, our lack of *signs and wonders* that are supposed to accompany us. Our saltiness has become as dung, our light as a smoldering lamp wick. Examine History, if ye be intellectually honest.

Does not History besmirch us, and label us as being in the throes of decadence, looking at the bowels of Hell acted out before us?

Does not History bracket us in conditions equal to that of Sodom?

Has the SUV and HDTV erased our senses?

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One of the Tribe of Issachar