

## Spiritual Warfare Part 3

### Dealing with the Cloud of Deception over the U.S.

**Thesis:** We are a people who are equipped and empowered to join Jesus in spiritual warfare for the advancement of the kingdom of God.

**Note:** This material comes from a [handout](#) which is given to people who participate in **MTT Deliverance and Anointing**. It is an advanced class for [Ministry Team Training](#). So, I am making this material available to you as a more complete context if you want to explore more about spiritual warfare.

We have covered the topic of spiritual warfare in our last 3 messages. You can find two messages which I preached, and one which Joshua shared.

The reason we are addressing the issue of spiritual warfare is because of an impression I got on 10'5'21. We were praying during our Ministers Prayer Network Board Zoom meeting.

Here was the impression: we need to mobilize prayer to deal with cloud of deception over the U.S.

In Matthew 24:3, the disciples ask Jesus about the signs of the end of the age.

- *Jesus answered: "Watch out that no one deceives you" (Matthew 24:4 NIV).*
- *And Jesus answered them, "See that no one leads you astray" (Matthew 24:4 ESV).*

Jesus says that one of the signs of the end of the age is deception.

It is interesting that the NIV says to watch out that no one deceives you. The ESV warns against people leading you astray.

Both of these realities are taking place in our day.

1. Media, societal leaders, Google, Facebook, social media, and those who control politics are leading us astray. They are actively seeking to get us to see what they want us to see, to believe what they want us to believe, and to buy what they are selling: divisiveness, disunity, hatred, fear, and conspiracies.
2. The enemy is the author of lies, or deception. It started with distortion in the Garden of Eden. It continues today. Distortion. Deception. Conspiracy theories. Blatant lies. It is like a cloud or blanket of deception is over our nation.
3. Anxious systems are the seedbed for deception. We are stupid when we are anxious. Our nation suffers from chronic anxiety. We aren't thoughtful and reflective when we are anxious. We aren't discerning. We believe what we are

told by the voices who seem to align with what we believe and who play on our fears and anger. And if any trust exists in the other side's voices, it is a Trojan Horse, a conspiracy, a poison pill. **O God, help us, I pray.**

4. And, that is exactly what we need to do. We need to pray. Pilate was deceived at the trial for Jesus.
  - a. *But Pilate answered, "You take him and crucify him. As for me, I find no basis for a charge against him." 7 The Jews insisted, "We have a law, and according to that law he must die, because he claimed to be the Son of God." When Pilate heard this statement, he was even more afraid. 9 He entered his headquarters again and said to Jesus, "Where are you from?" But Jesus gave him no answer. 10 So Pilate said to him, "You will not speak to me? Do you not know that I have authority to release you and authority to crucify you?" 11 Jesus answered him, "You would have no authority over me at all unless it had been given you from above..." (John 19:6–11).*

#### **Definition of deception:**

The practice of lying or tricking someone into believing something that isn't true. In some cases deception can be self-inflicted. Also: Connivance; Deceitful; Deceive; Deceived; Deceiver; Deceivers; Deception; Defrauding; Distortion; Insincerity; Lie; Lies and Deceits; Misrepresentation; Pretense; Prevarication; Self-Deception; Trickery; Unreliable (Logos Bible Software).

Deception is seeking to cause someone to believe an untruth (Logos Bible Software).

#### **Spiritual warfare**

*And there was war in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought back. 8 But he was not strong enough, and they lost their place in heaven. 9 The great dragon was hurled down—that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him (Revelation 12:7-9 NIV).*

One translation says: *who deceives the whole world.*

This passage in Revelation 12 is about spiritual warfare: *There was a war in heaven.* With whom? *The one who leads the whole world astray... who deceives...* it was war with the spirit of deception.

*See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the basic principles of this world rather than on Christ (Colossians 2:8).*

The goal of deception is to kill, steal, and destroy. The goal is to take you captive. To control you. To take away your freedom.

**What is our protection? How do we stay out of deception?**

1. **Choose humility.**
  - a. *He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God (Micah 6:8).*
  - b. *Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. 29 Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30 For my yoke is easy and my burden is light (Matthew 11:28–30).*
2. **Be a lifelong learner.**
  - a. *His God instructs him and teaches him the right way (Isaiah 28:26).*
  - b. *The Sovereign LORD has given me an instructed tongue, to know the word that sustains the weary. He wakens me morning by morning, wakens my ear to listen like one being taught. 5 The Sovereign LORD has opened my ears, and I have not been rebellious; I have not drawn back (Isaiah 50:4-5).*
3. **Chose faith, hope, and love** (1 Corinthians 13:1f).
  - a. We are a people of faith, hope, and love.
  - b. *1 Corinthians 13:4–7 (ESV): Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant 5 or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; 6 it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. 7 Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.*
4. **Check your inputs:** what are you feeding on? Garbage in; garbage out.
  - a. What is your source for news and truth?
  - b. Where does the Lord, his word, and his people fit in?
  - c. If you listen to 30 hours a week of cable news, social media, podcasts, and the like, and if you only hear 1 hour a week from your pastor or church, who is setting the agenda and giving you the talking points for the day?
  - d. **If the fruit of what you are hearing is anger, fear, frustration, hopelessness, despair, then, question the source.**
5. **Get familiar with the authentic and you can spot the counterfeit.**
  - a. Get so close to Jesus that you can spot the counterfeit a mile away.
  - b. The Holy Spirit will lead you into all truth.
  - c. Jesus is your protector.
6. **Get involved with an authentic community full of Christ's love and leadership** (Philippians 1:9-11).

- a. *And this is my prayer: that your [plural] love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, 10 so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless until the day of Christ, 11 filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ—to the glory and praise of God (Philippians 1:9–11).*
  - b. In Acts 15 at the Council of Jerusalem, we see how the early church came together to discern the voice of the Holy Spirit through dialogue and understanding. It was a season of sharp disagreement. And, by the leadership of the Lord and the discernment of their leaders, they discerned what the Spirit was saying and chose the way forward. They did it by majoring on the main points and not giving in to the fear of change.
7. **Ask God for the spiritual gift of discernment** (1 Corinthians 12:10).
- a. We need the lost tool of discernment.
  - b. Is something of the divine, demonic, or human spirit?

### **How do we fall or give into deception?**

1. **The enemy is using fear and anger to manipulate people.**
  - a. When we are afraid, we become stupid, reactive; we are no longer thoughtful and reflective.
  - b. When we are angry, we fight, and we don't always fight the right enemy. We want to change things and aren't clear about who or what needs to change.
2. **How do we fall or give into deception?** (These are things for which we need to repent.)
  - a. **Pride:** *let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall (1 Corinthians 10:12).*
    - i. Jay Kelley: If you think you can't be deceived, you are probably already deceived.
    - ii. Humility: willing surrender, total dependence.
    - iii. *Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble." 6 Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you, 7 casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you (1 Peter 5:5–7 ESV).*
  - b. **Being a know-it-all:**
    - i. God calls us to be humble, a lifelong learner.
    - ii. *His God instructs him and teaches him the right way (Isaiah 28:26).*

- iii. *The Sovereign LORD has given me an instructed tongue, to know the word that sustains the weary. He wakens me morning by morning, wakens my ear to listen like one being taught. 5 The Sovereign LORD has opened my ears, and I have not been rebellious; I have not drawn back (Isaiah 50:4-5).*

c. **Fear:**

- i. Throughout the word of God, we are commanded, “Don’t be afraid.”
- ii. Fear opens the door for our lives to be trafficked by the enemy.
- iii. Anxious systems are the seedbed for deception. We are stupid when we are anxious. We have chronic anxiety in our culture. We aren’t thoughtful and reflective. We aren’t discerning. We believe what we are told by the voices who seem to align with what we believe.
- iv. God calls us to be a people of faith. Faith can see in the dark. Faith is belief in action.
- v. *For God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control (2 Timothy 1:7 ESV).*

d. **Anger:**

- i. *Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger; 20 for the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God (James 1:19–20 ESV).*

e. **Focus on the wrong thing:**

- i. We have convoluted the gospel. It is not the gospel of a political party. It is not the gospel of America. I love my nation. I am proud to be an American and a Texan. But my allegiance and devotion are not first to my country and my state; my first allegiance is to King Jesus.
  - 1. What is my gospel? Do others have to vote like me? Think like me? Value what I value to matter to me?
  - 2. What is my gospel which I am talking about and evangelizing? A political view? A nationalistic value? An economic system?
- ii. We have lost our witness through culture wars to the younger generations. They look at how we treat others, while claiming to be Christians, and we have lost our witness. Jesus was the friend of sinners. He even pursued relationships with people, ate in their homes, and had conversations with people who were out to trap him.

**Pray about the cloud of deception in our land and live into the opposite.**

1. **Truth:** the opposite of falsehood and lies.
  - a. **Truth is found in a person, Jesus Christ;** not as defined by a political party or nation.
  - b. *To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. 32 Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free" (John 8:31–32).*
  - c. Pray for the Spirit of wisdom and revelation.
    - i. *I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better (Ephesians 1:17).*
2. **Humility:** the opposite of pride.
  - a. *He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God (Micah 6:8).*
  - b. *"God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble" (James 4:6).*
3. **Faith, hope, and love** (1 Corinthians 13:13): the opposite of anger and hatred.
  - a. We are a people of faith, hope, and love.
  - b. *1 Corinthians 13:4–7 (ESV): Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant 5 or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; 6 it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. 7 Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.*
4. **Light:** the opposite of darkness and evil.
  - a. We are people of the light (Matthew 5:14-16; 1 Peter 2:9; Colossians 1:9-13).
  - b. We are people of the day.
    - i. *You are all sons of the light and sons of the day. We do not belong to the night or to the darkness (1 Thessalonians 5:5).*
  - c. *I am sending you to them 18 to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me (Acts 26:17–18).*
  - d. *For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light 9 (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth) 10 and find out what pleases the Lord (Eph 5:8–10).*
5. **Civility:** the opposite of disrespect and disdain.
  - a. Treat others with dignity and respect, for they are created in the image of God.

- i. *But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect (1 Peter 3:15).*
    - b. Treat others as you would want to be treated with respect, grace, understanding, etc.
      - i. *So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets (Matthew 7:12 NIV).*
  6. **Dialogue / conversation:** the opposite of self-importance and self-justification.
    - a. *My dear brothers, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry (James 1:19).*
    - b. **Practice listening to understand** rather than to win an argument or to be heard.
  7. **Differentiation** (individuate and stay connected): the opposite of cutting off and distancing.
    - a. **Individuating:** this is what I think, feel, and believe.
      - i. By the way, **I am responsible for what I say and how I say it.** I am not responsible for how others respond to what I say. I can't control what others think or feel.
      - b. **Staying connected:** to those who think, feel, and believe differently than you.
  8. **Focus on the main things:** the opposite of promoting a false gospel or majoring on the minors.
    - a. **Jesus has come to take over, not join our side, our political party,** etc. He is asking us to join him on his kingdom mission in partnership with others in our spheres of influence.
      - i. *Now when Joshua was near Jericho, he looked up and saw a man standing in front of him with a drawn sword in his hand. Joshua went up to him and asked, "Are you for us or for our enemies?" 14 "Neither," he replied, "but as commander of the army of the LORD I have now come." Then Joshua fell facedown to the ground in reverence, and asked him, "What message does my Lord have for his servant?" 15 The commander of the LORD's army replied, "Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy." And Joshua did so (Joshua 5:13–15).*
      - ii. Joshua 5 reminds us that Jesus came to take over.
        1. He is not a Republican nor a Democrat. We have convoluted the gospel if we say that you can't be a Christian and be a Republican or you can't be a Christian and be a Democrat.

2. We have a diverse congregation. The body of Christ across America is diverse. I fly under the banner of Jesus, not a political party. I want to support those men and women in both parties who are people of peace (shalom, wholeness, well-being), according to Luke 10:6.
  - b. Romans 14. Who I am I to judge another master's servant?
    - i. *Who are you to judge someone else's servant? To his own master he stands or falls. And he will stand, for the Lord is able to make him stand (Romans 14:4).*
  - c. Mike Bickle says: Find the redemptive gifts in the people who attack you or who see things differently than you and call that forth, bless that gift, and pray for them.
  - d. Key public figures have attacked my friends, labeling them heretics who promote doctrines of demons and who deceive people. How do I respond? I have lost church members because of what they have said. How will I respond?

Conclusion: Divisiveness and deception are tearing the body of Christ apart. We are biting and devouring one another. We are ravaging the body of Christ, the Bride of Christ. God help us.

1. *There are six things the LORD hates, seven that are detestable to him: 17 haughty eyes [pride], a lying tongue [deception] hands that shed innocent blood, 18 a heart that devises wicked schemes, feet that are quick to rush into evil, 19 a false witness who pours out lies and a man who stirs up dissension [division] among brothers (Proverbs 6:16-19).*
2. *The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; 20 idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions 21 and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God (Galatians 5:19–21).*
3. *You, my brothers, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature; rather, serve one another in love. 14 The entire law is summed up in a single command: "Love your neighbor as yourself." 15 If you keep on biting and devouring each other, watch out or you will be destroyed by each other (Galatians 5:13–15).*
4. God hates it when people sow discord and division in the body of Christ, when people bite and devour one another.
5. God invites us to a better way: the way of love. We are called to work for unity and love (John 17:20-26; John 13:35; Ephesians 4:3).