



Deception and Temptation

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- Those who want you to join them in sin will try to entice and deceive you.
- Proverbs 1:10–16; 12:5–6; 14:6–16
- In the very first chapter of Proverbs, Solomon gave us a vivid image of what it's like when the wicked try to entice us to follow them rather than follow God's wisdom.
- “Lie in wait for blood” and “ambush the innocent without reason” (1:11) sound obviously wicked, so why would any decent person be tempted to go along with that?

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- The reason someone would be tempted to join the wicked is because of what they promise: “all precious goods” and “plunder” (1:13).
- Solomon warned his son not to listen to those who promise a life of easy money; it will always be gotten by evil means. He told us not to be tempted; participating in this evil will only lead to destruction.
- It’s also very possible that though they promise to share “one purse” (1:14), they may entice you into doing the evil and still not give you your fair share of the plunder.

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- Proverbs 12:6 uses the same language – “lie in wait for blood” – but explicitly tells us that the wicked are deceitful (12:5).
- They make a trap with their deceptions, both for their victims and for the one who goes along with them.
- Some scholars suggest that the word used for “deceit” in both Proverbs 12 and 14 also means self-deception.
- Those who would tempt us to join in their wickedness not only try to deceive us, they also deceive themselves.

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- These fools also “mock at the guilt offering” (14:9), one of the two offerings given for atonement of sin in ancient Israel.
- The “sin offering” was made to purify the tabernacle and the people from their sins.
- The “guilt offering” was made to make amends for the damage done by your sin.
- In addition to the offering, you had to pay back the value of whatever you stole or damaged, plus 20 percent (Leviticus 4–7).

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- Other places in God's law state that if someone stole an animal and it was found alive in his possession, he had to pay double its value (Exodus 22:1–4).
- People had to make amends if they sent their cattle to graze in another's field or if a fire on their property got out of control and spread, damaging another's crops (Exodus 22:5–6).
- If someone stole an ox or sheep and killed or sold it, he had to repay five oxen for one ox or four sheep for one sheep (Exodus 22:1)

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- The answer to all these temptations is wisdom and discernment. Solomon urged his people, “Do not walk in the way with them,” referring to these sinners who try to entice you (1:15).
- Trust in the Lord and walk in His ways. He told them to “leave the presence of a fool” – simply get away from them. They’ll lead you astray from the way you should go. They’ll drag you down with them.
- The key is to walk by the Spirit (Galatians 5), to listen to God’s voice, to study His Word. That is how you will know when someone is trying to entice you to do evil.

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- In all these proverbs, Solomon contrasted the wicked with the upright, the fool with the wise.
- He encouraged his people to have prudence (14:15) and discernment (14:8) when listening to the promises of others.
- If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is.
- If they require you to do something against God's law, it's not worth it, even if it does lead to riches.

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- Be careful with powerful people; they may have ulterior motives.
- Proverbs 16:19–25; 23:1–3
- These sayings are set in an ancient culture where it would have been unusual for the average person to ever be in the presence of rulers.
- Yet Solomon was the king, and the sons to whom he was writing would have been in the presence of powerful people all the time.

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- One of the biggest ways to gain honor was to be invited to a dinner party with someone more powerful than yourself. And even at the dinner party, there were seats of higher and lower honor and other ways of gaining or losing honor.
- One way for a person to gain honor was by doing something nice for a less-honored person so that the person owed them a favor.
- Being invited to a ruler's table could just be a social move rather than an authentic act of hospitality.

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- Their goal was to trap the less-honored person into doing their bidding.
- A modern comparison might be when someone takes you to an expensive dinner to “butter you up.” This is how their food can be “deceptive.”
- Imagine how tempting it would be for a regular person to eat these “delicacies” and how hard it would be to say no.
- That’s why Solomon used this dramatic saying, to “put a knife to your throat” (23:2).

Deception and Temptation

- Gamaliel was considered one of the greatest rabbis in Jewish history.
- He appears in the New Testament in Acts 5:34 defending the disciples against the religious leaders of the Sanhedrin who wanted to kill them. He said that if the disciples' mission was really from God, they wouldn't be able to stop it.
- In the Mishnah, Gamaliel is quoted as saying something very similar to this proverb: "Be careful in your dealings with the ruling authorities for they do not befriend a person except for their own needs."

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- Gamaliel was familiar with the “ruling authorities” and how wicked and manipulative they could be. He was a Pharisee and part of the Sanhedrin.
- He knew the religious leaders who plotted to kill Jesus and were trying to kill the disciples. He likely had often seen them do things like this before.
- Both Gamaliel and Solomon knew what they were talking about when it came to the deception and manipulation of rulers.
- They had seen it happen many times over. We need to be careful of those in power who are suddenly nice to us or want to befriend us.

Deception and Temptation

- Smooth talk can entice us, deceive us, and lead us astray.
- Proverbs 5:3–6; 7:21–23; 22:14; 23:26–28; 26:23–26
- The woman's words are like a "deep pit" (22:14; 23:27) because they entrap us like a stag or bird caught in a snare (7:22–23).
- We might not even realize how we got there. That's how smooth talk can be.
- It's like when a really good salesman has talked you into buying something you don't need. It seemed like a good idea at the time, but when you get home, you think, "Why did I buy that?"

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- Solomon compared these smooth talkers to the shiny glaze covering an earthen vessel (26:23). It's a disguise.
- Their smooth words cover a deceitful heart (26:24). They drip honey and are smoother than oil, but they end in death (5:3–6).
- Solomon warned us to beware of people who try to lead us astray and said we need discernment.
- We need God's wisdom and His Spirit to recognize the difference between smooth talk and truth.



Archaeological discovery of the earliest recorded name of God from Mt. Ebal.

Curse Tablet

- Dr. Scott Stripling (Associates for Biblical Research) uncovered a Late Bronze Curse Tablet found in Joshua's altar on Mount Ebal.
- Joshua 8:30 indicates that Joshua built an altar on Mt. Ebal, which is the mount of cursing.
- The ancient Hebrew inscription in proto-alphabetic script consists of 40 letters.
- It is centuries older than any known Hebrew inscription from ancient Israel.

Joshua's Altar



JOSHUA'S ALTAR
BUILT 3,400 YEARS AGO

Cruse Tablet

Folded lead tablet from Mt. Ebal



Photograph by Michael C. Luddeni

Cruse Tablet

Chiastic Parallelism on the Mt. Ebal Amulet

Cursed, cursed, cursed - cursed by the God **YHW**.

You will die cursed.

Cursed you will surely die.

Cursed by **YHW** – cursed, cursed, cursed.

Note: The amulet contains 40 proto-alphabetic letters, 11 of which are aleph.
In the 23-word English translation of the inscription, the word
curse appears 10 times, and YHW appears twice.

Press Conference



Curse Tablet

- Dr. Jeremiah Johnston says there are four major conclusions we can draw:
- First, this is the earliest recorded Divine name (Yaweh) in Israel.
- Second, it is hundreds of years earlier than any extant Hebrew text that we have (previously, the oldest came from Saul's monarchy).
- Third, this supports the earlier date of the Exodus (Patterns of Evidence).
- Fourth, it challenges the Documentary Hypothesis (Moses didn't write Torah) – we have both El and Yaweh in the same inscription.

