

Restoration to the tree of life

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Understanding through testimony

- Present truth is what the Spirit is saying to the church 'today' through presbyteries in the right hand of Christ. 2Pe 1:12. Heb 3:12-15. Rev 1:20. It is a conversation within, and proceeding from, the presbytery, with those who have an ear to hear what the Spirit is saying to the churches. 1Jn 1:1-3. Rev 2:7.
- In this season, the Spirit is addressing us on the culture of our marriages and families. In particular, we are being called to give attention to the matters of uncleanness in our relationships, and to be restored to the daily conversation of faith that belongs at the tree of life. In this fellowship, believing couples are established as heirs together of the grace of life, as they avail themselves of the remnant of the Spirit that is unique to their marriage covenant. This grace is necessary for the cultivation of the divine nature in their household. 1Pe 3:7. Mal 2:15.
- The proclamation of this word is possible only through *testimony*. Ministering in this manner reflects the pattern exemplified by the apostle Paul, who used his own experiences to communicate the culture of faith that belongs to the word. 2Co 11:1-2. Accordingly, in this present season, I have endeavoured to share from the journey of our reformation, by confessing the faults that the Lord has addressed in our marriage.
- In the natural, Lorraine and I are favourably compatible as a couple. Yet, this compatibility is insufficient for a fruitful Christian marriage. Our matrimonial journey has been marked by three significant encounters with the Lord. Each of these points of visitation and response has been essential to the restoration of our marriage to the image that was intended by God.

Deliverance from control

- Early in our marriage, just following the birth of our third child, the Lord spoke to Lorraine regarding her propensity toward control in our marriage and family. A particularly poignant manifestation of this disposition involved Lorraine itemising and communicating my failings as a husband, as a father, and even as a minister. Further to her own law, Lorraine's expectations and assessments of me were informed by her knowledge and training which, in this case, was as a graduate of Bible School.
- Lorraine's drive for control was exacerbated at this time by her anxieties, which were heightened as the Lord began to reveal to her that domestic and international travel would become a feature of my ministerial work. This impending change in my program challenged the expectations that she had of family life in the ministry. Interestingly, the Lord was speaking to her about this change in my program *before* He revealed it to me.
- Through a dream, the Lord addressed Lorraine's propensity for control. In this vision, she saw me as a dishevelled drunk, sitting in the gutter, attired in an old army coat. Despising what she saw, she asked the Lord, 'What is he doing there?' The Lord

responded, saying, 'You put him there.' He further revealed that her assessments of my inadequacies, which were based on her romantic expectations of our life together, were the source of the cultural degradation that she was foreseeing. This was the impact of her control upon our marriage and family.

- On account of the Fall, every woman inherited, from Eve, the desire for control. The woman was created by God as a helper to man, and to become a vessel for multiplication. However, the woman ate the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, desiring to become the *source* of this expression. Consequently, a woman, particularly in the context of marriage and a household, seeks the verification of her identity through the cultivation of life in her image and likeness. We will say more on this later in these notes.
- A woman's deliverance from control is necessary for the restoration of every Christian marriage. However, this is impossible in the flesh. Because a carnal woman seeks for identity verification through the cultivation of life in her image and likeness, relinquishing control, for her, is like falling into 'a black hole'. She believes that, as she loses control, she will, herself, be completely lost. As she begins to lose control within the context of her life, anxiety grips her, driving her to assert herself upon the situation or family. Through her actions and their effects, she obtains some sense of personal validity.
- The assessments, accusations and interventions of a wife can dishonour her husband. When this happens, she dishonours Christ, who is the Head of her husband. Moreover, she dishonours the Father, who is the Head of Christ and the source of her name as a son of God. 1Co 11:3. Disconnected from this fellowship of headship, a wife will be bereft of grace, and her emotions will be amplified.
- A Christian wife can find deliverance from this inherent drive for control, *only* through a personal encounter with Christ. As His word makes a breach upon her heart, and she is illuminated to the effects of her carnality upon her husband and family, she can begin to mourn in a godly manner. This sorrow leads to repentance as she relinquishes control, and ceases from her assessments. As she lets go in this manner, she realises that she is not being lost in a black hole. Instead, she obtains deliverance from the fear of death as she receives faith for life as a God-fearer.
- This deliverance is marked by a change in her conduct towards her husband, even if he is not obedient to the word. To this end, the apostle Peter exhorted Christian women, writing, 'Wives, likewise, be submissive to your own husbands, that even if some do not obey the word, they, without a word, may be won by the conduct of their wives, when they observe your chaste conduct accompanied by fear'. 1Pe 3:1-2.

Communication in marriage

- In my early forties, I was hospitalised following what was thought, at the time, to be a heart attack. After my condition had stabilised, and the diagnosis of my ailment had been clarified, I was advised to take some time to recuperate. Additionally, the specialist who treated me explained that my heart was functionally sound, and that engagement in physical activity would be beneficial to my recovery.
- My ready return to physical activity, combined with my tacit dismissal of Lorraine's concerns about the risks of engaging in activity, were a point of contention between us. During this season of recuperation, we were staying in the country with an older

ministry couple. This senior woman noted the tension, and admonished me for my treatment of Lorraine. She explained that I was frightening my wife, because Lorraine perceived my enthusiastic engagement in physical activities as being cavalier and she was concerned for my wellbeing. In contrast, I was confident because of the doctor's advice, and unintentionally dismissive of Lorraine's misgivings. Evidently, we did not appreciate or understand each other's perspectives on the issue.

- Through this experience, I recognised that the distinction between the perspectives of a husband and a wife necessitate open and deliberate communication between them. When contentions arose in our relationship, I set aside time to discuss with Lorraine how we were viewing and interpreting a matter, in order to come to a shared understanding.
- I preached on this subject, wrote numerous sets of notes and books, and conducted marriage seminars promoting the importance of relational commitment and communication in marriage. This spawned the 'vanilla slice culture', as I often encouraged couples to sit down together over a culinary delight, such as a vanilla slice, to meet and discuss the issues at hand. Engaging over a meal marked the deliberate nature of the interaction.
- While open and effective communication is essential to a fruitful marriage, through this most recent season of cultural reformation we have come to understand the importance of this conversation happening at *the tree of life*, rather than at the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

Fellowship at the tree of life

- Almost three years ago, Lorraine was hospitalised as a consequence of a life-threatening medical emergency. This was the climax of a protracted season of health difficulties, which included the severe and enduring symptoms of an autoimmune condition that afflicted her whole body. In the midst of this emergency, the Lord spoke to Lorraine and I, separately. His addressing of us, individually, has had a profound impact upon our marriage.
- At the height of the emergency, with Lorraine's condition still critical, the doctors sent me home, saying that they would have to wait until morning to operate on her. I arrived home from the hospital at about midnight and began to pray for Lorraine. As I was praying, the Lord spoke to me quite strongly, saying, 'I am not happy with your marriage covenant. Why are you between Lorraine and I? She is a son of God. Stop presuming to stand between her and I as an expression of your headship.' The Lord was directing me to cease from operating like a fallen cherub. He was naming her; she is not named by me. Although I knew the Lord's sharp rebuke, I instantly found peace. I recognised that if the Lord was dealing with Lorraine, she was not going to die.
- Meanwhile, in the hospital, Lorraine's condition had deteriorated to the point where the operation could no longer be delayed. However, due to technical issues concerning Lorraine's medication, even though the operating theatre was on standby because of the urgency of her situation, the operation did not proceed until about midday on the following day. By then, the surgeon said that the situation was precarious, and proceeded with the operation without fully resolving these matters with his anaesthetist. As the doctors operated on her, Lorraine left her body. She was above

her body looking down upon it, wondering why they were endeavouring to revive her body, which had deteriorated so markedly.

- Then, behind her, a cone of light appeared. Lorraine turned and saw the Lord in the light. He had white, priestly garments in His hands, and on top of the garments was a white stone. He gave to her the white stone, and a garment, directing her to clothe herself with the garments. As Lorraine dressed herself, she returned to her body, and then slept for two days.
- Lorraine had met the Lord face to face. Her experience reflected the promise that Jesus made to the church in Pergamos. He wrote to them, saying, 'He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes I will give some of the hidden manna to eat. And I will give him a white stone, and on the stone a new name written which no-one knows except him who receives it.' Rev 2:17.
- In giving Lorraine a white stone, the Lord was speaking to her about the name and works that belong to her sonship. The garment that she received mandated her for a priestly work. She was to wash and make this garment white in the blood of the Lamb through her personal fellowship in His offering and sufferings. Of course, Lorraine was already born of God and joined to the fellowship of Christ's offering as a member of His body. This visitation was, for her, a 'second time'.
- Prior to this encounter, Lorraine had faithfully served the Lord as 'the pastor's wife'. While she was submitted to the agenda of my work, there were clear lines of demarcation regarding our individual roles and responsibilities in relation to this agenda. At times, tensions arose, and emotions were provoked, when I assumed some of these roles and responsibilities, particularly as her health deteriorated. This was because her identity was, in some way, being assailed by her inability to fulfil her role. Furthermore, I objected to her comments about how I performed these duties.
- In reality, the agenda of our household has not changed since the Lord's visitation. However, the *conversation* through which we serve this agenda has changed. We have repented of the 'vanilla slice' culture, where the workload is divided up according to our knowledge of good and evil. Our conversation has had to shift from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil to the tree of life.
- Only at the tree of life are we able to obtain a remnant of the Spirit which is necessary for the multiplication of life in our house. Our conversation at the tree of life is ongoing. We accept that, through the physical and relational difficulties that we experience in a day, the Lord is processing us. I am able to turn from the propensity to function in the house as a fallen cherub. Lorraine is learning to stand in the new name that the Lord has given to her.
- Part of this conversation is the recognition that emotional contentions are the evidence of a conversation being based in our knowledge of good and evil. They are the passions, or emotions, of sin that are aroused within us through the exercise of the other law. Rom 7:5. Rom 7:23. We are learning to let go of the emotions of sin, and to dismiss the issues that provoke them.
- Importantly, we have learned to draw a line at the end of each day, consigning the difficulties and responses of the day to the sea of God's forgetfulness. They belong to the trouble that was sufficient for that day, and do not belong to the day to come. Mat 6:34. In the morning, we awake and avail ourselves of the mercies of God that are

new 'today'. Lam 3:22-23. By these mercies, we present ourselves for participation in the works that belong to our fellowship in the offering and sufferings of Christ, as individual sons of God. Rom 12:1-2. That is, we begin our day together at the tree of life, receiving our works for the day from the Lord. We live simply, accepting that we will not understand all of the issues that we will face, yet confident in the Lord's faithfulness to establish us according to His will.

- Physical healing has been an amazing implication of this reformation. As we turned from our previous way of relating, and began to walk in obedience to the way that the Lord was illuminating to us, Lorraine was miraculously delivered from the autoimmune condition that had so severely afflicted her whole body. This miracle demonstrates that, as we deal with the uncleanness in our lives, marriages and families, we obtain deliverance from the unclean spirits which cause these infirmities.

The example of Rachel

- The book of Genesis details the lives of several women whose profiles exemplify particular dynamics of the Fall, in marriages. We note, for example, the accounts of the lives of Eve, Sarah, Lot's wife, Rebekah, Rachel and Leah. In these notes, we will consider the impact of Rachel's culture upon the household of Jacob.
- After a month of residency in Laban's house, Jacob was asked what his wages should be for his service. Jacob was in love with Rachel, and offered seven years of service for her hand in marriage. She was a beautiful woman in form and countenance, while her older sister, Leah was less appealing, being described as having 'weak eyes'. Gen 29:17.
- At the conclusion of these seven years, on the evening of his wedding, Laban deceived Jacob, giving to him Leah, rather than Rachel. It is unlikely that this situation happened against Leah's will. It is more probable that Leah, as the firstborn daughter, demanded this of Laban, and that Laban deceived Jacob at her behest. From this perspective, Jacob and Leah's marriage was the fruit of her exertion of feminine *eros*, which was energised by a familiar culture. Mercifully, Leah was delivered from her carnal expectations of life and marriage, through her season of childbearing. 1Ti 2:15.
- Although incensed at Laban's deception, Jacob agreed to observe the ceremonial week pertaining to his marriage to Leah. Following this week, he married Rachel, for which he served Laban for another seven years. The Scriptures record that Jacob loved Rachel more than he loved Leah. Gen 29:22-30.
- Unable to bear children, and envious of Leah who had already given birth to four sons (Reuben, Simeon, Levi and Judah), Rachel said to Jacob, 'Give me children, or else I die!' Gen 30:1. Jacob's anger was aroused against Rachel, and he said to her, "Am I in the place of God, who has withheld from you the fruit of the womb?" ' Gen 30:2. Rachel's envy surfaced as she, through the exercise of her other law, compared herself with her sister. Her response in this situation exposed the corruption in her heart. King Solomon described this corruption as 'rottenness', writing, 'A sound heart is life to the body, but envy is rottenness to the bones [or the very structure of a person's identity]'. Pro 14:30.
- The demand that Rachel made upon Jacob, which was driven by envy, was the expression of desire that belonged to the curse on the woman, following the Fall. The Lord said to the woman, 'Your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over

you.’ Gen 3:16. To adequately appreciate the dynamics at play in this encounter between Rachel and Jacob, we must again consider the details of the Fall.

The source of desire

- Like Rachel, Eve’s inability to bear children was a point of vulnerability to the corrupting influence of Satan. Eve was formed from a rib of Adam to be a helper comparable to him. Gen 2:18. At this point, she was like a ‘clone’ of Adam, and was unable to bring forth children. Although she was predestined to be a vessel through which identities would be multiplied, there was a delay between her formation as ‘woman’ and the Lord’s initiative, through His word, to establish her as ‘Eve’, the mother of all living. Gen 3:20.
- Eve was exposed to the deceptive word of Satan because Adam had failed to adequately guard the garden of Eden. He had not wholly fulfilled the mandate that God had given to him when he was placed in the garden ‘to tend and keep it’. Gen 2:15. The Hebrew word for ‘tend’ in this passage of Scripture literally means, ‘to hedge about; to guard’. Of course, Adam had dominion over the whole creation. The only thing that he needed to guard against was Satan, who had fallen from heaven and was now walking about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. 1Pe 5:8. Adam’s insufficient application to his responsibilities opened his marriage to the deception of Satan. This was the beginning of his disobedience, culminating in his willing consumption of the fruit.
- The fall of mankind was precipitated by a deceptive, lying word, spoken by the Devil. Addressing the nature and fruit of the Devil’s lie, Jesus said to the Jews, ‘Why do you not understand My speech? Because you are not able to listen to My word. You are of your father the Devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it.’ Joh 8:43-44. Satan’s fall from heaven was because of envy. He said in his heart, ‘I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation on the farthest sides of the north; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High.’ Isa 14:13-14.
- With all of his power, Satan was, and is, unable to harm a person. He can only provoke in them a dream, or an imagination, through a lie. A lie has no substance. However, as a person gives consideration to his lie, Satan has access to them and is able to feed off them. It is their uncleanness that gives Satan an advantage over them, and brings them under the effects of the curse, including many medical conditions.
- To achieve his presumptuous goal, Satan transformed his appearance to that of a seraph, or flying serpent. That is, he presented himself as ‘an angel of light’. Paul revealed Satan’s capacity to do this, saying, ‘Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light.’ 2Co 11:14. Satan positioned himself *in* the tree of the knowledge of good and evil as a fiery serpent, or seraph. By implication, he claimed ownership, or possession, of this knowledge, communicating as though he had a right to speak from there. By presuming to minister as a seraph, in whom God’s name resided, Satan took the Lord’s name in vain.
- The Devil said to Eve, ‘You will not surely die. For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.’

Gen 3:4-5. As we have previously considered, it was not *Elohim* who said that they shall not eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. It was *Yahweh Elohim* who said that. Gen 2:16-17. Satan falsely declared that the Father's creative initiative was the expression of His own identity and life, apart from the fellowship of Yahweh. Moreover, he denied that the fellowship of headship was the order of life through which Adam and Eve had their expression.

- Through his address, the Devil endeavoured to provoke within the woman the same desire that was in him. The Scriptures recorded, 'So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate. Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves coverings.' Gen 3:6-7.
- As the woman heeded Satan's word, which was ministered to her from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, its fruit began to appear differently to her. For almost three thousand years prior to this encounter, the fruit had not been appealing to the couple. In fact, Adam and Eve had viewed it as being dangerous. The woman knew that she was not even to *touch* this food. Gen 3:3. Now, however, she saw that it was good for food, and she presumed to lay hold of, and to handle, the fruit.
- The term 'pleasant to the eyes' means that the fruit became an object of desire. Significantly, the Hebrew word that is translated as 'pleasant' in this passage is *ta'avah*. This word is used to describe 'a delight', including 'a charm' that provokes desire within a person. To this end, we see that, as Eve gave her ear to Satan's word, the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil became a spiritual 'charm', or totem, that elicited a craving within her for this food. She was 'bewitched' by Satan and was now under his power.
- Paul was referring to this principle when he asked the Galatians, 'Who has bewitched you that you should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed among you as crucified?' He also warned the Corinthians, writing, 'But I fear, lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. For if he who comes preaches another Jesus whom we have not preached, or if you receive a different spirit which you have not received, or a different gospel which you have not accepted - you may well put up with it!' Gal 3:1-2. 2Co 11:3-4.
- The fruit also became, to the woman, 'desirable to make her wise'. The Hebrew word that is translated as 'desirable' in this instance is *chamad*. It is a verb meaning 'to take pleasure in, to desire, to lust, to covet, to be desirable, to desire passionately'.
- In summary, for Eve, having seen the fruit in a new way, it became a charm that provoked the desire of envy within her, driving her to partake of the fruit of the knowledge of good and evil in order to become 'like God'. The desire to bring forth children, which was part of her identity, and should have had its expression from the tree of life, was now a perverted desire for the cultivation of life in her own image, which could never be satisfied.

The 'black hole'

- Explaining the implications of eating the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, the Lord God said to the woman, 'I will greatly multiply your sorrow and your

conception; in pain you shall bring forth children; your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you.' Gen 3:16.

- Note that the Lord God distinguished between the multiplication of the woman's sorrow, and the pain associated with bringing forth children. The sorrow that the Lord described includes the anxiety and depression associated with her romantic endeavours to cultivate life in her image and likeness. This sorrow is distinct from the pain of childbirth.
- The Hebrew word for 'desire', which the Lord used to describe the nature of a fallen woman's orientation to her husband, is *teshuwqah* (tesh-oo-kaw). It is different from the word used to describe the desire that Satan provoked within Eve to eat the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. *Teshuwqah* means 'to stretch out after; or a longing'. It is a desire motivated by envy and a sense of loss.
- The Lord's statement reveals that the woman's desire, or longing, which is directed towards her husband, is the fruit of Satan's lie. Because a lie has no substance, the drive within her to be like God is a vacuum, or 'black hole', which can never be satisfied. Fearing being lost to this black hole of identity obscurity, the woman is driven to control her environment.
- In this regard, a woman's 'desire for her husband' is a yearning for him to provide, or to be, for her, what she needs for identity verification. As we have already noted, this was exemplified in the demand that Rachel made of Jacob, saying, 'Give me children, or else I die!' Gen 30:1. This desire, driven by envy, is a powerful imposition upon others. As Solomon noted, 'Wrath is cruel, and anger is outrageous; but who is able to stand before envy?' Pro 27:4.
- This same void was established in the hearts of men when Adam ate the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. However, the Lord explained that a man's desire would be expressed differently from a woman's desire. Reflecting the purpose for his creation, the fallen man is driven by the desire for identity verification through the exercising of dominion over his life and over others. As the Lord said to the woman, 'He shall rule over you.' Gen 3:16.

Deliverance at the tree of life

- Romance in a marriage relationship that is based on the expression of these desires is *uncleanness*. This is because it provokes jealousy and envy within, and beyond, the relationship, resulting in the emotions, or passions, of sin. Unless a couple is engaged in a process through which they are being cleansed, this dynamic will be apparent in their marriage. That is, they must be delivered from their conversation at the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, to a conversation at the tree of life.
- The emotions of sin that arise in a marriage relationship are the evidence that one, or both, of the spouses is endeavouring to be known through the expression of their fallen desire, or envy. However, this way of living is under the judgement of God. This judgement belongs to His jealous love. His jealousy is expressed from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.
- A spiritual couple recognise the fallen desires within themselves and within their relationship. As emotions arise over a particular issue, they are able to stop, to take heed to themselves, and to acknowledge the contention for what it is. In doing so,

they can 'draw a line' under the matter, forget it, and move on with the works that belong to the day.

- In fact, this conversation is how a spiritual couple commences their day. Practically, they communicate with one another regarding the works that belong to their sonship as part of the household. Moreover, they consider how to walk in the love of God, 'today', fulfilling the will of God as they avail themselves of the remnant of the Spirit that belongs to their marriage covenant. *Agape* at the tree of life is the source of their romance, for it is based in their appreciation of each other as they lay down their lives to reveal the other, by the capacity of love that the Spirit pours into their heart.

The effect of uncleanness

- Jacob's anger was aroused against Rachel in response to her demand for a child. He said to her, 'Am I in the place of God, who has withheld from you the fruit of the womb?' Gen 30:2. By this, Jacob was asserting that he was not in the place of God, and that Rachel was accountable for her own response in relation to God, who was evidently resisting her.
- However, the envy of Rachel was unabated. She was driven by this uncleanness and its oppressive influence. First, she followed the example of Sarai, and gave her maid, Bilhah, to Jacob as a wife. Jacob went into Bilhah, and she conceived a son whom Rachel named Dan, believing that God had judged her case, heard her voice, and given her a son. Gen 30:6. Bilhah conceived again and bore Jacob another son, whom Rachel named Naphtali, believing that she was prevailing in her jealous wrestle with her sister, Leah. Gen 30:7-8.
- Rachel's uncleanness, and ensuing oppression under the effects of unclean spirits, was on display when she asked for the mandrakes that Reuben had picked for his mother, Leah. Rachel traded the opportunity to lie with Jacob, for Leah's mandrakes. This demonstrated her superstitious inclinations, which failed to elicit the conception that she desired. Ironically, the night that Leah lay with Jacob for the price of the mandrakes, God listened to her and she conceived a fifth son.
- The point to note is that Rachel's religious professions of God's agreeable bearing towards her were complete imaginations, based in the delusions that belonged to her uncleanness. We know this because, after Leah, Bilhah and Zilpah had finished bearing children, the Scriptures recorded, '*Then God remembered Rachel, and God listened to her and opened her womb.*' Gen 30:22. Evidently, prior to the Lord's initiative towards her, she had been *forgotten* by God.
- While her uncleanness remained, Rachel was unable to even appreciate or to enjoy the miraculous birth of her son, Joseph. Instead of giving thanks for this provision, she named him Joseph, saying, 'The Lord shall add to me another son.' Gen 30:25. This inability to rejoice in the blessing of the Lord was a fruit of oppression, which remained because of her uncleanness.

The teraphim

- Rachel's uncleanness was epitomised by her worship of teraphim, or household idols. They were such an orienting influence in her life that she stole them from her father when Jacob and his household made their flight from Laban's house. Gen 31:34.

- The Hebrew word for 'teraphim' is plural. Some commentators have suggested that this implies that the idols were arrayed and utilised in pairs. To this end, their use may have been an attempted *simulation* of worship at the gate of the garden of Eden, which was guarded by two cherubim. This is where, prior to the great flood, Adam, and the sons of God who followed him, worshipped the Lord and received His word.
- Although household idols were engaged for various reasons, it appears that teraphim were particularly utilised for the purpose of *divination*. For example, the prophet Ezekiel noted that King Nebuchadnezzar used teraphim to divine whether to attack Judah and Jerusalem or Rabbah of the Ammonites. Eze 21:20-23. Although this was a practice that belonged to the spirit of the world, the Lord caused this 'vain divination' to direct Nebuchadnezzar towards Jerusalem for its destruction under His judgement. Eze 21:22-24.
- In Israel, those who crafted and consulted teraphim believed that because these objects were dedicated to the Lord, He spoke to them through the teraphim. For example, during the era of the Judges, a man named Micah set up teraphim in his house. They were crafted from silver, which his mother had *dedicated* to the Lord for the *purpose* of making a carved image and a moulded image. Jud 17:3-5. The author of the book of Judges noted that this form of worship reflected the culture of the nation at that time, saying, 'In those days there was no king in Israel; *everyone did what was right in his own eyes.*' Jud 17:6. In other words, the employment of teraphim reflected a life lived according to the sight of one's own eyes. It was a deluded and abominable religious practice.
- Notably, Micah's delusion regarding the legitimacy and acceptability of this practice was only exacerbated when he secured the service of a Levite to minister as a priest in his house. He claimed, 'Now I know that the Lord will be good to me, since I have a Levite as priest!' Jud 17:13.
- As we have already considered, Rachel's deluded and religious expression within her marriage and family demonstrated that she was *bewitched* in the same manner as Eve had been. To this end, the teraphim was a religious *charm*, or practice, through which unclean spirits were able to stir up desire within her, motivating her to act on her knowledge of good and evil. Empowered in this manner, she then endeavoured to enlist others to serve her agenda. This had a profound effect upon her marriage and upon her children.
- Although Rachel believed that her observance of these practices was 'of God', the longing desire, and enduring delusion that tainted these years of her life reveal that she was, in fact, worshipping another god. That is, her employment of the teraphim was the worship of Satan and his spiritual host of wickedness. Paul highlighted the connection between delusion and the god of this world, writing, 'But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them'. 2Co 4:3-4.