TEN LIES SATAN LOVES TO TELL
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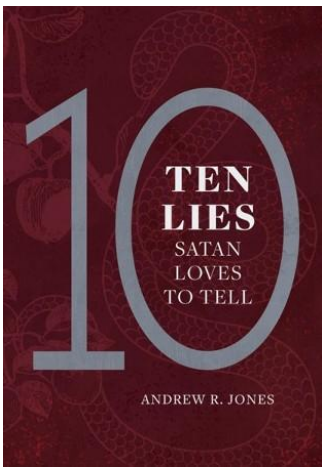

INTRODUCTION: SATAN – THE FATHER OF LIES (PP.5-15)

Satan is real. Satan is dangerous. He is dedicated to dismantling God's kingdom and God's people. One of Satan's primary tactics is deception. In John 8, Jesus exposes Satan as "a liar and the father of lies" (v. 44). Every time Satan appears in the Scriptures, he is lying, deceiving, and seeking the destruction of God's people. Satan's ultimate goal is to lead God's people as far away from God as possible. Satan assaults us by leading us ever toward present and eternal suffering.

Lies are the inception of all suffering. (6)

Each sin that you or I participate in is rooted in a lie we have believed about ourselves or about God...

This book is a handbook for those who believe in Jesus. It is a resource meant to be used by God's people against Satan and Satan's lies...

The ten lies this book highlights are lies Satan uses in the Scriptures and continues to tell even now. These are lies Satan has told me, lies Satan has told my family and friends, parishioners and students...

Furthermore, this is not a book about American (or any other) culture wars. It is not as if Satan has chosen to lie to some people and not to others. Satan lies to everyone. Our political preferences, denominational affiliations, and cultural heritages are not exemptions or protections against Satan. Jesus is our only hope and protection against Satan. While I will look at how Satan repeats his lies in our world today, political hot-button issues will not be talked about, even ones you may rightly care deeply about...

This is a book about lies Satan has repeated for thousands of years, spanning numerous cultures and languages. As Jesus says of Satan, "When he lies, he speaks out of his own character" (John 8:44). Or as the NIV puts it, "When he lies, he speaks his native language." Satan has told innumerable lies to God's people. The reason I have chosen to highlight these ten lies is that I see their origins from Satan's own words and actions in the Scriptures. I see them repeated in the Scriptures, causing devastation to God's people. And I see them repeated in our world today and in my own life. These lies attack God's people as they seek to follow Him in faith. (6-8)

THE CYCLICAL LIFE OF FAITH

Martin Luther held up Psalm 119 as a masterful example of the Christian life. Within the psalm, Luther saw a cyclical reality that trained God's people for a life of faith. He labeled this journey with the Latin phrase oratio, meditatio, tentatio. That is, prayer, meditation, and temptation. As we enter God's Word, we pray for the Holy Spirit to guide us into all truth. We meditate on God's Word by asking questions and listening with curiosity to what God reveals through His Word. But after we have prayed and meditated on God's Word, something happens that seems counterintuitive and counterproductive to our learning from the Lord and our life of faith: we are attacked by Satan. Luther writes, "For as soon as God's Word takes root and grows in you, the devil will harry you, and will make a real doctor of you, and by his assaults will teach you to seek and love God's Word." Satan seeks to drive us away from God and His Word with these attacks. But God uses Satan's attacks to drive us back to Himself—to prayer and to Scripture...

Satan attacks and means evil against us, but God always intends for such attacks to drive us back into conversation with Him in prayer and into further meditation on the sweet comfort of His Word. (8-9)

SATAN'S CHAOTIC DESIRED OUTCOME

Satan does not operate in such a way that makes it easy to fight his lies and overcome them. Indeed, this book seems out of order no matter what order I choose. Satan is organized when it suits him and chaotic when it suits him. Satan isolates when it suits him and lies to entire communities when it suits him. Satan is silent when it suits him. Satan whispers when it suits him. And Satan shouts when it suits him. We should never assume that we fully understand Satan's tactics. This book is not comprehensive, nor can any book on the subject be so. (11)

CONTOURS OF EACH CHAPTER

Each chapter of this book will be dedicated to exposing one of Satan's often repeated lies. With each lie, we will dig into that lie's origins. We will unmask the outcome Satan desires from this lie (which is why he loves to tell it). We will analyze the fears Satan preys on when using that particular lie. We will trace the repetition of the lie in the Bible as well as the repetition of the lie in the world today. But each chapter will turn to basking in the truth of Jesus. We will showcase God's desired outcome for us and our salvation. We will take comfort in God's love, which quiets the fears that Satan's lies prey on. Finally, the end of each chapter has questions for reflection and Bible passages for further meditation on the truth of Jesus. (14)

LIE 1: YOU CANNOT TRUST GOD (PP. 17-33)

Trust is central to our lives and relationships. When we trust people, we feel safe. When we do not trust people, we feel anxious and on edge. (18)

SATAN IN THE GARDEN

In Genesis 3, the first words out of Satan's mouth are a deception. He casts doubt on God's Word as he says to Eve, "Did God actually say, 'You shall not eat of any tree in the garden'?" (v. 1). This is misleading for a very simple reason: God did not actually say that. God gave Adam and Eve all the rest of the trees to eat, forbidding only the one that was not good for them. Satan knows full well God did not forbid all the trees. But Satan's intention is to cast aspersions on what God has said, to make God seem unreasonable and untrustworthy...

Notice the insinuation behind this truth. Satan is telling Eve that God is holding out on her. Satan is telling Eve that God does not have her best interests in mind. Satan is calling God a liar. Satan's overarching lie in all of this is that Eve cannot trust God.

Furthermore, Satan deceives not only with questions and half-truths but also with omissions. What Satan omits is that Eve is already like God in other ways that she will lose once she eats of this fruit. (19)

SATAN'S DESIRED OUTCOME

Satan wants God's people to hate God. Satan wants God's people to be distant, detached, and disinterested. What better way to get people to turn away from God than to convince them that they cannot trust Him?

Are there people in your life whom you do not trust? How much time do you choose to spend with such people? Probably as little as possible. None, if it can be managed....

Satan's only hope to destroy our relationship with God is to mess it up on our end, to keep us turning ever away from God, because God will never give up on us. (20)

THE FEAR BEHIND THE LIE

Behind many of the lies Satan tells us, our own fears lurk in the background. Satan preys on those fears. Fear is not necessarily sinful...

Satan notices our vulnerabilities and seeks to attack those weak points with precision. Fear is one of Satan's favorite allies, which is not surprising...

I believe that the fear connected with the lie "You cannot trust God" is the fear of being wrong, the fear of being deceived. (21)

Satan is a liar. So how would Satan gaslight us about God? By calling God a liar. Satan deceives us by trying to convince us that God has deceived us. Satan accuses God of the very crimes Satan himself has committed. (22)

When God comes looking for Adam and Eve and finds them hiding, their reactions to being wrong come out in their answers. Adam says, "The woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate" (Genesis 3:12). In being wrong, Adam blames Eve, and Adam blames God. Eve gave him the fruit. God gave Adam this woman. Adam stands defensive, afraid of being wrong. If you have ever heard of Luther or other theologians using the phrase "the old Adam," this posture of fear and self-justification is at the heart of that phrase. (23)

THE LIE REPEATED IN THE BIBLE

- Satan in the Wilderness: The first word out Satan's mouth might be his favorite word: if. Satan begins his temptation by saying, "If You are the Son of God . . ." (v. 3). Why does Satan say this? Because God the Father had just proclaimed from heaven at Jesus' Baptism, "This is My beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased" (Matthew 3:17). Satan's use of "If You are the Son of God . . ." is just another way of saying, "Did God actually say . . . ?" (24)
- The Parable of the Sower: When God's Word is proclaimed, the evil one (Satan) flies around, trying to devour the Word before it can take root. (25)
- Jeremiah: Satan's role in the Jeremiah story is not explicit, but we can see where God's people clearly abandon God's Word in favor of a lie. (25)

THE LIE REPEATED IN OUR WORLD

There are so many places in our world where Satan seeks to cast doubt on God and His Word. The misdirection of "Did God actually say . . . ?" can be finished with nearly any statement to destabilize God's people...

In each case, Satan wants us to question whether God's promises are trustworthy; he encourages us to place our trust somewhere else. Anywhere else. Inevitably, Satan wants us to place our trust in his deceptions and lies rather than in God's Word of truth. (27)

One of the devil's secondary goals with this lie is to convince us that we cannot trust anything or anyone, leaving us isolated with nowhere to place our trust or our faith, convinced that there is nothing worth believing in at all. (29)

THE TRUTH

The truth is we can trust God. God keeps His promises. Before God calls on the people of Israel to place their trust in Him as their God in the First Commandment, He speaks this Word: "I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery" (Exodus 20:2). God is saying to His people, "You can trust Me. I am your God. I brought you out of that suffering. Here are My Words, Words you can trust and live by." (29)

GOD'S DESIRED OUTCOME

While Satan's desired outcome is our distance from God and silence toward God, God's desired outcome is our nearness to Him. God's desired outcome is our constant communication with Him through prayer and meditation on His Word. As Paul writes, "Pray without ceasing" (1 Thessalonians 5:17). While Satan desires our complete isolation, God desires our unity and our gathering in community and praise with others. While Satan desires our hopelessness, God desires to instill us with hope. While Satan desires meaninglessness in our lives, God desires to bring us into the fullness of abundant life through Jesus. As Jesus Himself says, "The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly" (John 10:10). (30)

THE LOVE THAT CASTS OUT FEAR

The apostle John writes, "Perfect love casts out fear" (1 John 4:18). Dear reader, you are loved with the perfect love of Jesus. May His perfect love cast out the fear that Satan has planted in your life. Satan wants you to be terrified of being wrong, to worry that one mistake will lead to your eternal damnation. Jesus took on that burden for you. (30)