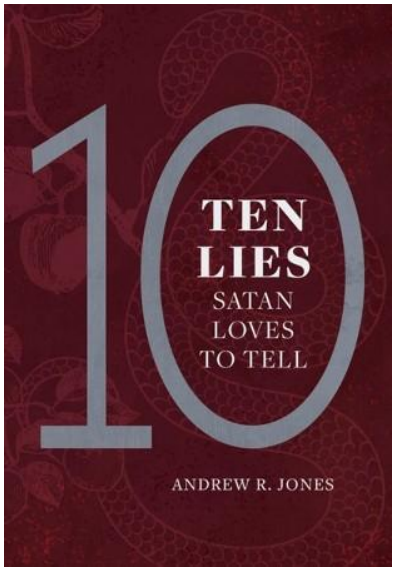
TEN LIES SATAN LOVES TO TELL
ANDREW R. JONES



LIE 9: YOU ARE ALONE (PP. 162-177)

God and Satan both encourage time away from other people, but for opposite reasons. God encourages us toward solitude, toward times of stillness and calm with Him and Him alone. Satan encourages us to isolate, to push others away, to hide who we truly are and what we are truly feeling from everyone, including God and even ourselves.

I find that, when we are by ourselves, solitude seems to occur when we recognize God's presence, whereas isolation occurs when we forget God's presence. Solitude can strengthen us. Isolation can only weaken us. (162)

SATAN IN THE GARDEN

The text tells us that Satan is speaking to Eve and Eve alone, as the text records, "He said to the woman" (Genesis 3:1). Satan isolates Eve in his address, whether or not Adam can overhear.

A strange aloneness occurs when God comes looking for Adam and Eve. God asks, "Where are you?" (v. 9). Adam replies, "I heard the sound of You in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself" (v. 10).

Both Adam and Eve hear God in the garden. They both are afraid. They both are naked. They both hide. Yet Adam speaks only for himself here. There are few things more pleasant to Satan's ears than the first-person singular. I. Me. Myself.

Very little dialogue is recorded from Adam or Eve. It is strange, but the only time they reference themselves in the plural is before their fall into sin. Eve says, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden" (v. 2, emphasis added). After that, it is all singular. When Eve gives birth to Cain, she says, "I have gotten a man with the help of the Lord" (4:1, emphasis added). When Eve gives birth to Seth, she says, "God has appointed for me another offspring instead of Abel, for Cain killed him" (v. 25, emphasis added).

Make of this what you will, but not until the birth of Noah does the Bible again record a human using the first-person plural. Noah's father, Lamech, says, "Out of the ground that the Lord has cursed, this one shall bring us relief from our work and from the painful toil of our hands" (5:29, emphasis added).

Adam is incomplete without Eve. He is not whole until she is created. Yes, God makes a good creation, but God Himself says, "It is not good that the man should be alone" (2:18, emphasis added). It is not good for us to be alone, to be isolated. Community is good. Fellowship is good. Friendship is good. Satan drives a wedge between Adam and Eve that isolates them from each other. Now, I'm not saying that Adam and Eve never referred to themselves as "we/our/us" for the rest of their lives. But there is something striking about the Scriptures not recording such togetherness after the fall. Adam and Eve brought forth an isolation and a cursed ground that are not transformed until the days of Noah. (162-163)

SATAN'S DESIRED OUTCOME

Peter writes, "Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour" (1 Peter 5:8). If you have ever watched a nature show that featured lions or most any cat, you have likely seen their strategy for hunting. They locate a vulnerable victim and then isolate it.

Peter's comparison of Satan to a lion is most apt. Satan loves this lie because he knows that God's people are more easily devoured when they are alone. Satan loves this lie because it works. (163-164)

Whether we are physically alone or lost in a crowd, Satan desires that we feel isolated. Once we feel alone, he nudges us in various directions. Satan might push us toward self-loathing: "I'm alone because I'm unlovable." "Nobody notices me because I'm worthless." And Satan never misses an opportunity to push us toward hating others, so he also wants us to think, "Nobody notices me because they are all jerks," or, "I'm alone because all my friends forgot me and actually hate me." Hating others and loathing ourselves will bring us further and further from the community we so desperately need and were created to participate in. But Satan can also move us in another more subtle direction: feeling self-assured in being alone. Satan persuades us to be alone as the path of least resistance. The lie becomes "You are alone, and it is easier and better that way." (165)

THE FEAR BEHIND THE LIE

On the surface, this lie and the fear behind it are one and the same. "You are alone" preys on the fear of being alone. But the fear of being alone is not simply a matter of loneliness. Being truly alone means being without security, without any support, help, or guidance—these are much deeper fears. (166).

THE LIE REPEATED IN THE BIBLE

- Elijah: On the surface, this lie and the fear behind it are one and the same. "You are alone" preys on the fear of being alone. But the fear of being alone is not simply a matter of loneliness. Being truly alone means being without security, without any support, help, or guidance—these are much deeper fears. (167)

  God tells Elijah that he is not alone. There is a community waiting for him—seven thousand people preserved and reserved who have never bowed down to the false god Baal. God sends Elijah back with work to do, but He makes sure someone is with Elijah for the rest of his days: another prophet, named Elisha. (168)
- Naomi: alone. So they go together. Sometimes grief and loss make us feel terribly alone. Naomi had lost her husband and her two sons. If you were to lose three family members in quick succession, you, too, would probably think with great frequency, "I am so alone." The loss of one person can make life feel horribly unstable and uncertain. The loss of several loved ones can make us want to huddle in a corner and hide alone. Feeling alone has a way of making us seek out more loneliness.

  When Naomi returns with Ruth to Bethlehem, people ask, "Is this Naomi?" (Ruth 1:19). Naomi responds, *Do not call me Naomi; call me Mara, for the Almighty has dealt very bitterly with me. I went away full, and the Lord has brought me back empty. Why call me Naomi, when the Lord has testified against me and the Almighty has brought calamity upon me? (vv. 21–22)* Naomi's name means "pleasant." The name she chooses for herself, Mara, means "bitter." (169)
- The Woman at the Well: Elijah: On the surface, this lie and the fear behind it are one and the same. "You are alone" preys on the fear of being alone. But the fear of being alone is not simply a

matter of loneliness. Being truly alone means being without security, without any support, help, or guidance—these are much deeper fears. (170)

THE LIE REPEATED IN OUR WORLD

In our world, one of the places where this lie becomes most apparent is social media. (171)

I am like a sheep that has twisted its ankle. Satan, the prowling lion, nips at my heels, making me panic. I turn left, then right, then completely away from my community of safety and love until I am, in fact, alone, isolated from others. And in my isolation, Satan begins to feast on my despair and hopelessness. Until along comes Jesus. He comes looking for me, the lost sheep. He smacks that lion Satan in the face with His shepherd's staff, and He lifts me up out of the mess and brings me back to the flock, my community, His people.(172)

THE TRUTH

The truth is that we are not alone. When Jesus' birth is revealed to Joseph, we are told, "All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: 'Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call His name Immanuel' (which means, God with us)" (Matthew 1:22–23). God is with us.

When Adam and Eve fall into sin, God does not abandon them to be alone. He comes looking for them. The first words out of God's mouth after the fall are "Where are you?" (Genesis 3:9). (172)

GOD'S DESIRED OUTCOME

God's desired outcome is that we always remember His presence, that we are surrounded by a community of faithful people who will support us and help us. God wants us to be surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses both here on earth and into eternity. (173)

THE LOVE THAT CASTS OUT FEAR

In Psalm 107, the poet begins by writing, "Oh give thanks to the Lord, for He is good, for His steadfast love endures forever!" (v. 1). The author then proceeds to list out examples of God's love, situations where God shows up and delivers people.

Perhaps the most interesting of these is this: *Some wandered in desert wastes, finding no way to a city to dwell in; hungry and thirsty, their soul fainted within them. Then they cried to the Lord in their trouble, and He delivered them from their distress. He led them by a straight way till they reached a city to dwell in. (Psalm 107:4–7)*

Those who are wandering need to be shown the way. That makes sense. Yet one might presume the path would go to a different location. At least to my mind, those who are wandering in the desert need to be shown the way to water, to a river, a lake, an oasis, a stream. But that is not where the path goes. It goes to a city. The way out of the desert leads to a place to live, a community to dwell in.

When we are wandering alone and in need, God shows us the way to a city to dwell in. Indeed, God sends Jesus to be the way to the eternal city, the new Jerusalem. In that eternal city, which Jesus has gone to prepare for us, we will never be alone. We will never fear the possibility of being without support or without help. We will be with all the faithful whose robes have been washed by the blood of Jesus. And more than that, as Paul says: "And so we will always be with the Lord" (1 Thessalonians 4:17). (174-175)