

The question arises: Can God deceive a person? When reading Ezekiel 14:9, it seems like God might deceive a prophet. But is that really the case?

Let's start by looking at the verse:

Ezekiel 14:9

(NKJV): "If a prophet is deceived and speaks a word, I the Lord have deceived that prophet. I will stretch out My hand against him and destroy him from among My people Israel."

At first glance, this might suggest that God deceives people. However, we must understand that God is holy and cannot lie (Titus 1:2; Hebrews 6:18). God does not directly deceive anyone. Rather, what we see here is that God allows a spirit of deception to deceive someone, especially when they have already turned away from the truth and chosen to follow evil. This is explained more clearly in 2 Thessalonians 2:10-12.

2 Thessalonians 2:10-12 (NIV):

“They perish because they refused to love the truth and so be saved. For this reason God sends them a powerful delusion so that they will believe the lie and so that all will be condemned who have not believed the truth but have delighted in wickedness.”

In these verses, we see that God permits a “powerful delusion” to come over those who refuse to love the truth. This is a judgment for their refusal to accept the truth of God’s Word. God does not deceive them Himself, but allows them to be deceived as a consequence of their choices.

The Example of King Ahab

Let’s dive into an example from the Bible to further understand this concept—King Ahab in 1 Kings 22. Ahab had rejected God, worshiped idols, and refused to listen to the true prophets. Yet, when he needed guidance for a battle, he still consulted the prophet Micaiah.

1 Kings 22:19-23 (NIV):

“Micaiah continued, ‘Therefore hear the word of the Lord: I saw the Lord sitting on His throne with all the host of heaven standing around Him, on His right and on His left. And the Lord said, ‘Who will entice Ahab into attacking Ramoth Gilead and going to his death there?’ One suggested this, and another that. Finally, a spirit came forward, stood before the Lord, and said, ‘I will entice him.’ ‘By what means?’ the Lord asked. ‘I will go out and be a lying spirit in the mouths of all his prophets,’ he said. ‘You will succeed in enticing him,’ said the Lord. ‘Go and do it.’ So now the Lord has put a lying spirit in the mouths of all these prophets of yours. The Lord has decreed disaster for you.’”

In this case, God did not directly deceive Ahab. Instead, God permitted a lying spirit to deceive Ahab's prophets, leading him to his death in battle. The deception was a consequence of Ahab's choice to forsake God and turn to idols. Ahab had already hardened his heart, so God allowed the lying spirit to mislead him.

Theological Insight:

In theological terms, this act of allowing a spirit of deception is part of God's judicial hardening. When people persist in rejecting the truth of God, He may allow them to be deceived. This concept is supported by several passages in the Bible, including Romans 1:24-28, where God gives people over to their sinful desires as a consequence of their rebellion.

Romans 1:24-28 (NIV):

“Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity... They exchanged the truth about God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator... Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts...”

This “giving over” is not God actively deceiving, but allowing people to pursue the consequences of their choices. It’s a sign of God’s judgment on those who refuse to turn to Him.

Ezekiel 14:9 in Context

When Ezekiel 14:9 says, “*I have deceived that prophet*”, it’s important to understand the context. This isn’t God lying to the prophet, but rather God allowing a spirit of deception to enter the prophet, because the prophet had turned away from the truth. If a prophet rejects God’s Word, God can allow him to be deceived by false spirits.

In other words, it’s not a direct act of deception by God but a permissive action—allowing a consequence for the prophet’s rebellion.

Practical Application:

What does this mean for us today? The Bible warns us to be careful about how we live our lives and how we approach God. If we persist in sin, idolatry, or living a life of rebellion against God, we open ourselves up to deception. We must never treat God like a problem solver or a fortune teller to simply give us answers while continuing in sin. God desires genuine repentance and submission to His will.

Galatians 6:7-8 (NIV):

“Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. Whoever sows to please their flesh, from the flesh will reap destruction; whoever sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life.”

If we approach God with hearts that still love sin and refuse to repent, we risk being led astray by a spirit of deception, just as Ahab was.

The Warning in Ezekiel 14

Ezekiel 14:1-5 (NIV):

“Some of the elders of Israel came to me and sat down in front of me. Then the word of the Lord came to me: ‘Son of man, these men have set up idols in their hearts and put wicked stumbling blocks before their faces. Should I let them inquire of me at all? Therefore speak to them and tell them, This is what the Sovereign Lord says: When any of the Israelites set up idols in their hearts and put a wicked stumbling block before their faces and then go to a prophet, I

the Lord will answer them myself in keeping with their great idolatry.”

Here, God warns that idolatry and sin can lead to deception. If we hold on to idols in our hearts and still seek God's answers while living in sin, we are opening ourselves up to deception. God will not answer us the way we expect, but will allow us to experience the consequences of our choices.

Final Thought:

If you haven't yet accepted Christ, remember that He is the way, the truth, and the life (John 14:6). There is no other way to come to the Father except through Him. Salvation comes through faith in Jesus, repentance, and baptism in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins (Acts 2:38). The Holy Spirit will guide you into all truth (John 16:13).

Maranatha! (The Lord is coming!)

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