

# Behold I Thought ...

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## Introduction

Isaiah 55:8-9 says, *“For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways,” declares the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways And My thoughts than your thoughts”* (NASB95).

Jeremiah 10:23 says, *“I know, O Lord, that a man’s way is not in himself, nor is it in a man who walks to direct his steps”* (NASB95).

Proverbs 14:12 says *“There is a way which seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death”* (NASB95).

In spite of these warnings, man often seeks to make his own way, think his own thoughts, and chart his own course. However, in religious and spiritual matters, we do not have that option. Whenever man turns aside from the Lord’s path, and pursues his own way, he **always** gets himself into trouble.

## Abraham

Abraham thought he could avoid trouble by lying (Genesis 12:10-20; 20:1-18). Actually, he failed to tell the whole truth. Sarah was his half-sister, but she also was his wife. How many times do we “think” that we can get out of a fix by lying? Many accept lying as a necessary ingredient of life. People lie to their boss, their husband or wife, their parents or children, their teachers, and even to themselves. However, dishonesty is never pleasing to God (Prov. 12:22; Eph. 4:25; Col. 3:9-10; Rev. 22:15).

*Genesis 12:10-20 ... 10 Now there was a famine in the land; so Abram went down to Egypt to sojourn there, for the famine was severe in the land. 11 It came about when he came near to Egypt, that he said to Sarai his wife, “See now, I know that you are a beautiful woman; 12 and when the Egyptians see you, they will say, ‘This is his wife’; and they will kill me, but they will let you live. 13 “Please say that you are my sister so that it may go well with me because of you, and that I may live on account of you.” 14 It came about when Abram came into Egypt, the Egyptians saw that the woman was very beautiful. 15 Pharaoh’s officials saw her and praised her to Pharaoh; and the woman was taken into Pharaoh’s house. 16 Therefore he treated Abram well for her sake; and gave him sheep and oxen and donkeys and male and female servants and female donkeys and camels. 17 But the Lord struck Pharaoh and his house with great plagues because of Sarai, Abram’s wife. 18 Then Pharaoh called Abram and said, “What is this you have done to me? Why did you not tell me that she was your wife? 19 “Why did you say, ‘She*

*is my sister,' so that I took her for my wife? Now then, here is your wife, take her and go." 20 Pharaoh commanded his men concerning him; and they escorted him away, with his wife and all that belonged to him. (NASB95)*

*Genesis 20:1-18 ... 1 Now Abraham journeyed from there toward the land of the Negev, and settled between Kadesh and Shur; then he sojourned in Gerar. 2 Abraham said of Sarah his wife, "She is my sister." So Abimelech king of Gerar sent and took Sarah. 3 But God came to Abimelech in a dream of the night, and said to him, "Behold, you are a dead man because of the woman whom you have taken, for she is married." 4 Now Abimelech had not come near her; and he said, "Lord, will You slay a nation, even though blameless? 5 "Did he not himself say to me, 'She is my sister'? And she herself said, 'He is my brother.' In the integrity of my heart and the innocence of my hands I have done this." 6 Then God said to him in the dream, "Yes, I know that in the integrity of your heart you have done this, and I also kept you from sinning against Me; therefore I did not let you touch her. 7 "Now therefore, restore the man's wife, for he is a prophet, and he will pray for you and you will live. But if you do not restore her, know that you shall surely die, you and all who are yours." 8 So Abimelech arose early in the morning and called all his servants and told all these things in their hearing; and the men were greatly frightened. 9 Then Abimelech called Abraham and said to him, "What have you done to us? And how have I sinned against you, that you have brought on me and on my kingdom a great sin? You have done to me things that ought not to be done." 10 And Abimelech said to Abraham, "What have you encountered, that you have done this thing?" 11 Abraham said, "Because I thought, surely there is no fear of God in this place, and they will kill me because of my wife. 12 "Besides, she actually is my sister, the daughter of my father, but not the daughter of my mother, and she became my wife; 13 and it came about, when God caused me to wander from my father's house, that I said to her, 'This is the kindness which you will show to me: everywhere we go, say of me, "He is my brother." ' ' " 14 Abimelech then took sheep and oxen and male and female servants, and gave them to Abraham, and restored his wife Sarah to him. 15 Abimelech said, "Behold, my land is before you; settle wherever you please." 16 To Sarah he said, "Behold, I have given your brother a thousand pieces of silver; behold, it is your vindication before all who are with you, and before all men you are cleared." 17 Abraham prayed to God, and God healed Abimelech and his wife and his maids, so that they bore children. 18 For the Lord had closed fast all the wombs of the household of Abimelech because of Sarah, Abraham's wife. (NASB95)*

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*Proverbs 12:22 ... 22 Lying lips are an abomination to the Lord, But those who deal faithfully are His delight. (NASB95)*

*Ephesians 4:25 ... 25 Therefore, laying aside falsehood, speak truth each one of you with his neighbor, for we are members of one another. (NASB95)*

*Colossians 3:9-10 ... 9 Do not lie to one another, since you laid aside the old self with its evil practices, 10 and have put on the new self who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him— (NASB95)*

*Revelation 22:15 ... 15 Outside are the dogs and the sorcerers and the immoral persons and the murderers and the idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices lying. (NASB95)*

## **Naaman**

Naaman nearly rejected the prospect of physical healing because the conditions did not conform to his expectations (2 Kings 5:1-14). Thinking the prophet would do some great thing, he viewed Elisha's response as insultingly simple. Moreover, he thought that the waters of Abana and Pharpar were better than the muddy waters of the Jordan. He thought he would be healed in some way other than the way prescribed by the prophet.

*2 Kings 5:1-14 ... 1 Now Naaman, captain of the army of the king of Aram, was a great man with his master, and highly respected, because by him the Lord had given victory to Aram. The man was also a valiant warrior, but he was a leper. 2 Now the Arameans had gone out in bands and had taken captive a little girl from the land of Israel; and she waited on Naaman's wife. 3 She said to her mistress, "I wish that my master were with the prophet who is in Samaria! Then he would cure him of his leprosy." 4 Naaman went in and told his master, saying, "Thus and thus spoke the girl who is from the land of Israel." 5 Then the king of Aram said, "Go now, and I will send a letter to the king of Israel." He departed and took with him ten talents of silver and six thousand shekels of gold and ten changes of clothes. 6 He brought the letter to the king of Israel, saying, "And now as this letter comes to you, behold, I have sent Naaman my servant to you, that you may cure him of his leprosy." 7 When the king of Israel read the letter, he tore his clothes and said, "Am I God, to kill and to make alive, that this man is sending word to me to cure a man of his leprosy? But consider now, and see how he is seeking a quarrel against me." 8 It happened when Elisha the man of God heard that the king of Israel had torn his clothes, that he sent word to the king, saying, "Why have you torn your clothes? Now let him come to me, and he shall know that there is a prophet in Israel." 9 So Naaman came with his horses and his chariots and stood at the doorway of the house of Elisha. 10 Elisha sent a messenger to him, saying, "Go and wash in the Jordan seven times, and your flesh will be restored to you and you will be clean." 11 But Naaman was furious and went away and said, "Behold, I thought, 'He will surely come out to me and stand and call on the name of the Lord his God, and wave his hand over the place and cure the leper.' 12 "Are not Abanah and Pharpar, the rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? Could I not wash in them and be clean?" So he turned and went away in a rage. 13 Then his servants came near and spoke to him and said, "My father, had the prophet told you to do some great thing, would you not have done it? How much more then, when he says to you, 'Wash, and be clean'?" 14 So he went down and dipped himself seven times in the Jordan, according to the word of the man of God; and his flesh was restored like the flesh of a little child and he was clean. (NASB95)*

In like manner, many today reject God's terms of spiritual pardon as expressed through the gospel. They expect some kind of direct operation of the Holy Spirit. They listen for some "small still voice." Many think that God will save them in some way other than the way that has been

revealed in Holy Scripture. In reality, men are saved when they respond to the preaching of the gospel (Rom. 1:16-17; John 6:44-45).

*Romans 1:16-17 ... 16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. 17 For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "But the righteous man shall live by faith." (NASB95)*

*John 6:44-45 ... 44 "No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up on the last day. 45 "It is written in the prophets, 'And they shall all be taught of God.' Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father, comes to Me. (NASB95)*

Naaman sought physical healing; sinful mankind stands in need of spiritual healing. As Naaman objected to dipping in the waters of the Jordan; so likewise, many object to water baptism. As God tested the faith of Naaman, he also tests us. Do we have enough faith in God's revealed word to obey (Acts 2:36-38; 22:6-16; Gal. 3:26-27; 1 Pet. 3:20-21)?

*Acts 2:36-38 ... 36 "Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made Him both Lord and Christ—this Jesus whom you crucified." 37 Now when they heard this, they were pierced to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brethren, what shall we do?" 38 Peter said to them, "Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. (NASB95)*

*Acts 22:6-16 ... 6 "But it happened that as I was on my way, approaching Damascus about noontime, a very bright light suddenly flashed from heaven all around me, 7 and I fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to me, 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?' 8 "And I answered, 'Who are You, Lord?' And He said to me, 'I am Jesus the Nazarene, whom you are persecuting.' 9 "And those who were with me saw the light, to be sure, but did not understand the voice of the One who was speaking to me. 10 "And I said, 'What shall I do, Lord?' And the Lord said to me, 'Get up and go on into Damascus, and there you will be told of all that has been appointed for you to do.' 11 "But since I could not see because of the brightness of that light, I was led by the hand by those who were with me and came into Damascus. 12 "A certain Ananias, a man who was devout by the standard of the Law, and well spoken of by all the Jews who lived there, 13 came to me, and standing near said to me, 'Brother Saul, receive your sight!' And at that very time I looked up at him. 14 "And he said, 'The God of our fathers has appointed you to know His will and to see the Righteous One and to hear an utterance from His mouth. 15 'For you will be a witness for Him to all men of what you have seen and heard. 16 'Now why do you delay? Get up and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on His name.' (NASB95)*

*Galatians 3:26-27 ... 26 For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. 27 For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. (NASB95)*

*1 Peter 3:20-21 ... 20 who once were disobedient, when the patience of God kept waiting in the days of Noah, during the construction of the ark, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were brought safely through the water. 21 Corresponding to that, baptism now saves you—not the removal of dirt from the flesh, but an appeal to God for a good conscience—through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, (NASB95)*

## **Saul/Paul**

Sincere but mistaken, Saul of Tarsus thought he was doing the Lord's will when he persecuted the church (Acts 8:1-3; 23:1; 26:9-11). Many today believe they are pleasing God, when in reality, they are following the commandments of men (Matt. 7:21-23; 15:8-9; Rom. 10:1-3; Col. 2:6-8). In contrast, those who are faithful seek divine authority for all that they preach and practice (Col. 3:17; 1 Pet. 4:11).

*Acts 8:1-3 ... 1 Saul was in hearty agreement with putting him to death. And on that day a great persecution began against the church in Jerusalem, and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles. 2 Some devout men buried Stephen, and made loud lamentation over him. 3 But Saul began ravaging the church, entering house after house, and dragging off men and women, he would put them in prison. (NASB95)*

*Acts 23:1 ... 1 Paul, looking intently at the Council, said, "Brethren, I have lived my life with a perfectly good conscience before God up to this day." (NASB95)*

*Acts 26:9-11 ... 9 "So then, I thought to myself that I had to do many things hostile to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. 10 "And this is just what I did in Jerusalem; not only did I lock up many of the saints in prisons, having received authority from the chief priests, but also when they were being put to death I cast my vote against them. 11 "And as I punished them often in all the synagogues, I tried to force them to blaspheme; and being furiously enraged at them, I kept pursuing them even to foreign cities. (NASB95)*

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*Matthew 7:21-23 ... 21 "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven will enter. 22 "Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?' 23 "And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness.' (NASB95)*

*Matthew 15:8-9 ... 8 'This people honors Me with their lips, But their heart is far away from Me. 9 'But in vain do they worship Me, Teaching as doctrines the precepts of men.' (NASB95)*

*Romans 10:1-3 ... 1 Brethren, my heart's desire and my prayer to God for them is for their salvation. 2 For I testify about them that they have a zeal for God, but not in accordance with knowledge. 3 For not knowing about God's righteousness and seeking*

*to establish their own, they did not subject themselves to the righteousness of God. (NASB95)*

*Colossians 2:6-8 ... 6 Therefore as you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, 7 having been firmly rooted and now being built up in Him and established in your faith, just as you were instructed, and overflowing with gratitude. 8 See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ. (NASB95)*

*Colossians 3:17 ... 17 Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father. (NASB95)*

*1 Peter 4:11 ... 11 Whoever speaks, is to do so as one who is speaking the utterances of God; whoever serves is to do so as one who is serving by the strength which God supplies; so that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belongs the glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen. (NASB95)*

## **Conclusion**

Let us boast, not in our wisdom, might or riches, but in understanding and knowing God (Jeremiah 9:23-24). Trust in the Lord, and do not rely upon your own understanding (Proverbs 3:5-12). Following the example of Jesus Christ, let us obey the Father's will (Hebrews 5:8-9).

*Jeremiah 9:23-24 ... 23 Thus says the Lord, "Let not a wise man boast of his wisdom, and let not the mighty man boast of his might, let not a rich man boast of his riches; 24 but let him who boasts boast of this, that he understands and knows Me, that I am the Lord who exercises lovingkindness, justice and righteousness on earth; for I delight in these things," declares the Lord. (NASB95)*

*Proverbs 3:5-12 ... 5 Trust in the Lord with all your heart And do not lean on your own understanding. 6 In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He will make your paths straight. 7 Do not be wise in your own eyes; Fear the Lord and turn away from evil. 8 It will be healing to your body And refreshment to your bones. 9 Honor the Lord from your wealth And from the first of all your produce; 10 So your barns will be filled with plenty And your vats will overflow with new wine. 11 My son, do not reject the discipline of the Lord Or loathe His reproof, 12 For whom the Lord loves He reproofs, Even as a father corrects the son in whom he delights. (NASB95)*

*Hebrews 5:8-9 ... 8 Although He was a Son, He learned obedience from the things which He suffered. 9 And having been made perfect, He became to all those who obey Him the source of eternal salvation, (NASB95)*