

Discernment or Deception

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Nathaniel Bronner: No matter what you go through, no matter how long it takes. If you lose your faith in God, you've lost it all.

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(Music Playing)

And now for 5814, "Discernment or Deception Part 3, When God Leads You Into the Wilderness."

Nathaniel Bronner: Welcome to Brothers of the Word because, brother, you need the word. And today I am still in the midst of a series called Discernment or Deception. How do you know if you're dealing with the voice of God or if you're dealing with the voice of itself, the voice of the world, or a demonic voice? How do you know if you are truly hearing the voice of God?

In part one, I've dealt with the examples from the Bible of class A type profits who still got it confused and who went haywire because they did not discern the true voice of God. Even though they were hearing from God, they still missed it. The second part, God simply had me to just go down some of the things in this church that God has spoken and it's come to pass, and that's why we live here even by the voice and the word of God.

And today, I want to deal with part three of Discernment or Deception, when God leads you to the wilderness. You see, in so many instances, we think when a person hears the voice of God and when they're following God, all of these things are just beautiful. Once I have heard from God, it's just going to go all smooth out now. Often times, it doesn't work like that, so sometimes we will judge whether or not it is God or not by based on whether or not there's any pain in the thing. And if the thing has some pain and if it has some struggling, if it has some turmoil in it, well, it's then -- that's not God, that's the devil.

There have been so many of the things in my world that I have gone throwing some stuff and I'm saying a prayer, "Lord, why you let the devil do this to me?" "Because I ain't the devil, that's me. And so this is why I am doing this to you. That's not the devil,

that's me." Sometimes you have to understand God would lead you into the wilderness. Just like with Jesus, the Bible says that as soon as Jesus was baptized, heaven was opened, and he saw the spirit of God descending like a dove lighting. You can just imagine. Did the heaven just open up? Did you just see the dove coming down and the dove light? Jesus showed up! That's so wonderful. Then you hear this voice, and a voice from heaven said, "This is my son." You can hear the deep bass voice of God. "This is my son whom I love. With him, I am well pleased." Then you go to the very next verse. Not 10 verses, the very next verse. Send him into the wilderness to fast and be tempted, and be hungry by the devil for 40 days. The very next verse.

And sometimes, some people will come down for salvation, and the very next day, they're like, "All hell breaks loose." You make a decision to serve God in the very next minute, like your spouse going acting crazy on you. You make a decision if she's going to do right and you get fired the very next day. Sometimes stuff can happen, and when stuff happens, people assume it's not God because we often think God only works in the pleasant -- the dove lighting on our shoulder.

Sometimes God didn't put a dove on your shoulder, He will put a hawk to come down and light you. And you don't understand something, all of this stuff is orchestrated and all of it is God, but we only think God works in just the beautiful painless, pleasant, happy moments of life.

You see, I want to just do a theorem, I want to test a theorem. And a theorem basically is a proposition or statement that can be proven to be true every time. In math, when you have a theorem, what you do is you plug in extremes.

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Now, even the word "theorem", the beginning of the word is "theo". Theo is the Greek prefix, it simply means God. It's where you get theological from and theologian. Theo means God. So, when you're dealing with a theorem, even though it is mathematical thing, the root of it is God.

Actually, when I was studying just theo, looking up some stuff on it, I put theo in my browser, and the thing that popped out was the online word. I didn't realize the online word begins with God.

It is our most visited website and it begins with T-H-E-O, it begins with the Greek word God. And I've never even realized it. Just even this morning, we got a huge donation that came in out of England. People listen all over the world to the online work because it's absolutely free, and for every 10,000 folks who listen, only one person will send in a donation. I want to thank that person from England who sent that big donation in today, because most folks will listen all day long and they want every cent and a penny. And that's fine, we do that so people can listen. But I am thankful to people who do support because you do need to have some support. You got to have some folk who do something instead of folk who just listen. You got to have some folk who do something. So, I thank you, that person from England, who sent in that money today to help us and to help pay for things.

But when you want to test a theorem, you test extreme. So, if you look at what is the extreme and if we look at the extreme situation of what we will call a wilderness situation, if we look at the absolute extreme, one person comes to mind. And that one person is Job, no question about it. Job is the one extreme -- so if you want to look at the extreme of something, if you want to test the mathematical theorem, is you put in an extreme, you put in an extremely little number, then you put in an extremely big number, and if the equation holds with the big and the little number, it's true.

Here, I want to just take a minute just to examine Job and to understand some things that often when God works in our lives, it is not always smooth. I see Ringo(ph) sitting over there in the audience. Ringo and I work out together three times a week. Ringo is my trainer. Do you know you can't have a general trainer? Not if you want to grow and build and become strong. You can't have no general trainer and just say, "Well, pastor, you think you might want to do something today? Don't strain yourself, pastor, don't strain yourself. Don't put no pressure. Don't strain yourself, pastor." That's not the way a good coach or a good trainer works.

What do you think about God? You want your spirit develop. You want to become strong and powerful in faith. What makes you think God just going to give you an easy -- because you can't develop any kind of faith muscles like that. You got to have a situation or something. All of my great faith has come out of great trials and great tribulation. It's come out of stuff we've had to go through, it's come out as -- But my uncle just call situations. It has come out

of those kinds of things that we have had to struggle through. So, when we look at some, God will often have to put us through the wilderness to really take us to The Promised Land. We must go via the wilderness, but we sometimes do not see God in the middle of the wilderness, all we see is our pain and our struggle. But you got to understand, God works on both ends of that thing. He's an excellent trainer. And an excellent trainer is going to put you through some stuff that's going to strain you, and it's going to make you struggle, and sweat, and holla(ph) and complain and want to quit.

We worked that yesterday. I want to quit yesterday. We were supposed to go visit someone yesterday. I told Ringo, "I got to go with Pastor James, and I won't have time, I got to leave." And Pastor James just said, "They won't be at home, we're not going." Ringo said, "You still got to go," and I want their life to end and beyond, I want your life to end(ph). I went just telling him, "Yeah, I still got to go. I still got to go." Ringo said, "You still got to go?" And I said, "You ain't got to go, let's hit it." And I was, "Oh, my good -- " I mean, it just had me just struggling and straining, but that's the way you grow. And a good teacher, and a good trainer and a good God is going to put you through some stuff so you can become strong.

So, if we look at just the extreme of Job. Job is actually the oldest book in the Bible, yet it's number 18 in the actual listing of the books. And for those of you who might not, there may be a person listening right now. Anyone who's been in church any amount of time is really familiar with Job, but there may be somebody who just never heard of Job. Matter of fact, they see it and they call it Job. They just never heard of Job before. If you've never heard of Job, the Book of Job deals with the man who was actually the wealthiest man in the whole country. He was the wealthiest man ever. And Job had all of this stuff. Job had seven sons and three daughters, and all of a sudden, in just a single instant, Job lost all of his stuff in virtually a day. Raiders came --

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-- fire came from heaven, winds came, killed all of his children, took all of his property, and Job was that way because of a conversation between God and the devil. And God told the devil, "Had you considered my servant Job?" And the devil said, "Yeah, he's faithful to you because you put a hedge around him, made him the richest man in the land. He got all these -- but yeah, he's faithful to you. Take his stuff

and then see, will he still be faithful?" So, God said, "Okay, we'll test him." So, He took all of his stuff, and Job was still faithful, killed all of his children and see to anyone looking at that. All of his friends told Job, "Man, you had to have done some mighty big sinning. You had to have done something extremely --"

See, some people will think that about you when you go through some of your tough situations. They will look at you and say, "Man, if this happened to you, you got had to have done something real wrong for this to be happening to you." That's what Job's friends all said. They all condemned him, they all criticized him, they all said, "You had to have been doing some massive sinning in order for this to happen in your life." What they couldn't see and what Job could not see was the heavenly orchestration.

But I just want to take a little bit of just dealing with -- of the chapter that you've heard so many times before. Job's chapter two verse seven. "So, Satan went out from the presence of the Lord and afflicted Job with painful sores from the soles of his feet to the top of his head. Then Job took a piece of broken pottery and scraped himself with it as he sat among the ashes." His wife said to him, "Are you still holding on to your integrity? Curse God and die." He replied, "You are talking like a foolish woman. Shall we accept good from God and not trouble?" In all of these, Job did not sin in what He said.

Now this is the part that all of us have heard. This is the part that all of us know. And for countless centuries, everyone has all condemned Job's wife for being such a foolish woman. What they don't know is what Andy Rooney used to call in 60 Minutes, "the rest of the story". The rest of the story, to be honest, is not in the Bible. It's in the apocryphal books. The apocryphal books, for those of you who don't know, there were a whole lot of scriptures. The scriptures were canonized at the Council of Nicaea, and these were the ones of 66 books that were officially placed in the Bible, but there were other books. Well, the rest of the story isn't in some of those other books. If you want to read it, you can find it on the Jewish Women's Archive. It's jwa.org. They have it under "Job's wife", so you can see what happened. But Job's wife was actually named Uzit, U-Z-I-T.

People think that Job's captivity or Job's trials -- I've heard some preaches that lasted nine months. So where did he get that from? It's not in the Bible. It's not in the Bible and it's not in any of the apocryphal books.

The apocryphal books do tell you exactly how long Job's trial lasted. Job's trials, when he lost everything, when his body was covered with sores, when he was begging for food and all of this stuff, his trials lasted 48 years. Forty-eight years! That's the part you don't know.

Job's wife was a good woman and she would have to go and struggle to beg for bread because they had no money. Satan disguised himself as a bread merchant. And in the market, he saw Uzit coming and he told Uzit, he said, "I will give you three loaves of bread for your hair." A loaf of bread would last them about a day, and the apocryphal books says that Uzit said, "Well, I'm starving, my husband is starving, what good is my hair if we're starving?" So, Satan shaved off her hair in public, gave her three loaves of bread. And after those, three days was up, Uzit had neither bread nor hair. She had lost her crowning glory.

Now, remember Job was the richest man in the land, but his wife was the richest wife in the land because you can't be married to the richest man and you're not the richest wife. So, she was the richest wife. It hurts a father to lose a child, but it hurts a mother even more. So Uzit have been going through all of this stuff, so that's why you have to understand the rest of the story. She was going through all of this stuff. She had lost everything. All of her children were dead. She had lost her beauty, she was baldhead, she was broke, she was hungry, she had been going through this thing for 47 years. That's why she said, "Curse God and die." Uzit just didn't say that out of the flesh, Uzit was tired.

Some of you have gone through situations, and you're in situations, you're just tired. Can you imagine 48 years? Anybody thinking Job suffered just a few months, go check the other scripture and you'll find 48 years!

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Can you imagine going through something after you've been on top? Now, see, it's one thing when you've never known luxury. It's one thing when you've never had. It's one thing when you've always been hungry, but that's one thing. That's why poor folk usually don't commit suicide. They can deal with it. You'd better be ready if I had poor folk committing suicide. That's a middle- and upper-class thing. When someone go running, "I just can't take this." Poor folk, "It's just another day." Today, nothing. "You ain't killing -- I ain't going to kill me. You might kill me but I ain't killin' me." That's

a middle- and upper-class thing. That's the thing about folk who had it and have lost it. They can't handle this stuff. So it's one thing when you have had all of this and you lose it.

So, when Uzit told her husband, "Curse God and die," Uzit was tired, and she was bald and she was depressed and she had lost her faith. No matter what you go through, no matter how long it takes, if you lose your faith in God, you've lost it all. No matter how long it takes, if you lose your faith in God, you've lost it all. And see, Uzit and Job, are both in the same situation, but Job says, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him. Even if He kills me because He gave me life anyway. I'm naked came out into the world and naked I'm going to leave out of the world." So, God controls it all. Job said, "Even if He kills me, I shall still remain faithful." Uzit said, "After 48 years, I've had enough. I've had enough." That's why you can't judge until you understand the whole story. You can't judge another man or another woman until you walked a mile in their shoes.

You spent 48 years bald, broken, hungry and all your children are dead, and it begins to vex and work on your soul. It takes a lot of faith to stand through all of that. But that's why God said, "Have you considered my servant Job?" He did not say, "Have you considered my servant Job and his wife?" He didn't say, "Have you considered Job's family?" He said, "Have you considered my servant Job?" Because God knew upfront Job was going to be the only one who will stand up on all that pressure.

Some of you right now, you're under pressure, and the pressure is from God, but you think it's the devil. The pressure is from God. Let me tell you what happened with Job. Uzit said, "Curse God and die." She did die. When Job had the second set of 10 children, that was not the same wife. Job married Dinah. Dinah was the daughter of Jacob. If you remember in the Bible, the story about this man who saw this woman. She was so beautiful, he just went crazy, raped her, went to his dad and said, "Daddy, I got the hottest woman. Do whatever we need to do to marry this woman." And they went to Jacob's son and said, "Look, my son wants to marry your daughter but doesn't know your daughter has violated --" They went and said they had to be circumcised. While they were still sore, he went and killed them all. That was Dinah.

That's why the Bible says, in the second set of children, the women were more beautiful than any woman in the land. Wait a minute. Why

weren't the first set of girls that pretty? Because it was a different woman. So, Job went from the richest man in the land to nothing, to almost the poorest for 48 years. His wife died, but God gave him the most beautiful wife in the land, gave him 10 more children, gave him 140 more years to live and doubled all his possessions. But Job hung in there. Turned to the person next to him saying, "Hang in there. I don't care how long it's been going on, hang in there. Don't do like Uzit." Now, she had a good reason. She had good reason, but a good reason is never a good enough reason to leave God. You look into me and say, "Lord, I've been dealing with this mess a long time."

Some of you all have been dealing with some mess a long -- and you were born into the mess. And I've got some news for you that this is not good preaching. It's really not. It's not good preaching. It's not going to get into great amens and hallelujahs. Some of you are never going to be rich. That financial breakthrough just ain't coming. You're going to die in a struggle. I know someone's, "That's a bad thing to say." And I said, "Is there no good preaching here?" Some of you are never going to find that rich, dark, handsome prince. You just ain't going to find him. That's just all it is to it. Now, some of you, will, but some of you, ain't. You're just not going to find it. Some of you, the sickness is never going away. You're going to die with that sickness. Some of you are going to get miraculous healing and some of you, not. But that's not the point. The point is no matter what happens, you do not lose your faith in God. This life is temporary. All of this stuff is just temporary.

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See, the kingdom of heaven is within, so even if you don't have all of that external stuff, it really don't make that much. Paul says this, "To keep me from becoming conceited because of these surpassing great revelations that has been giving me a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan to torment me. Three times I've pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me, but He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Paul had a thorn from God, never took away, and He said He gave him the thorn to keep him from being so proud. He gave him all his revelation, all his great preaching ability, all his miracles. He came to Paul. "I put that thorn, and so you won't blow up and cry, and I won't take it away." Paul prayed three times, "God, take this thing from me." Just like some of you are that prayed over and over, "Get me out of this situation." And He won't get you out

of it because He placed it there in many of us for reason. But this is the part that you have to understand, the same thing that Jesus told Paul is the same thing He tells you, "My grace is sufficient." I don't care what you're going through, "My grace is sufficient." Thank you for joining us today at Brothers of the Word, because, brother, you need the word.

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