

# Be Not Deceived

In this newsletter, we will be studying deception. This is a bit of a refresher from the newsletter about Love Reality (Waymark 3373-3374)

## The Warning of Jesus

When the disciples asked Jesus about the end of the world, He had a very explicit warning. The first words out of His mouth that the Bible records were:

Take heed lest any man deceive you. (*Mark 13:5 KJV*)

We should make diligent inquiry then, into exactly what kind of deceptions are coming upon the world. There are many forms and means of deception, but the Bible's specific warnings are exceedingly broad.

## Destitute Of Experience and Power

When the Sadducees tried to trap Jesus with a question about the resurrection, Jesus told them:

Do ye not therefore err, because ye know not the scriptures, neither the power of God? (*Mark 12:24*)

The Greek word Jesus uses, which is here translated as err, appears elsewhere as astray, or in other cases, such as Mark 13:5, deceived.

The Sadducees were deceived, Christ said it was because they did not know the scriptures. The teachers of the Law didn't know the scriptures? Yes, they did not have experiential knowledge or a proper understanding of them. Neither did they understand the power of God. In the last days, this is exactly what the condition of Christianity will be, the Bible proclaims that people will be found:

Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof. (*2 Timothy 3:5 KJV*)

Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. (*2 Timothy 3:7 KJV*)

This is precisely the condition that the Sadducees were in. On the outside, they appeared clean, but on the inside, they were full of dead men's bones and uncleanness. Their hearts were not changed, they knew the Truth, and they spent their lives trying to destroy the Truth—all while pretending to be spiritual—and thoroughly deceiving God's chosen people.

Today, there is a class of people who deceive themselves and others. While they make a great profession of truth, they are found in opposition

to the plainest statements of God through His Word and the prophetess. Destitute of the graces of His spirit, they have no power in their lives. These are most zealous in the cause of themselves, their authority, and their influence. Like the Pharisees and the Sadducees, they are seeking to draw men and women, by their great displays of pretended piety, after themselves. They want to be teachers, but they can only teach others how to be twice the children of hell as themselves (*Matthew 23:15*).

If we would not be deceived, we must have an experiential knowledge of the Truth and the power of God unto salvation. We must taste and see that the Lord is good, and we must not be followers of men.

## "I Am Christ"

Most closely associated with Jesus's warning against deception is the following:

For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many. (*Matthew 24:5 KJV*)

This is the only recorded warning in the Gospels that uses the word Christ; in the other instances, it is supplied by the translators. The other references to this statement record Jesus saying, "Many shall come saying I Am."

Both of these statements are strikingly associated with the New Age movement in Christianity. Many will take the name I AM upon themselves. The Greek word for Christ means "anointed." New agers also say, when someone has come to "discover that they are God," that they have achieved "Christ consciousness." They claim Christ is not The Anointed, merely an anointed, and you can be a Christ too! As I am sure each of you well knows, Spiritualism is rapidly increasing, and the number of people claiming to come in the name of Christ whilst professing to be Christ is increasing in accordance. The most concerning part is Jesus's statement, "and shall deceive many." Many will be deceived by this deception because they are not rooted and grounded in scripture. This movement brings its practitioners directly in contact with demons, who would deceive if possible the very elect. The best thing to do is avoid them.

## Will a Man Mock God?

The Bible makes it crystal clear that mankind

**2** cannot enter into heaven while practicing sin.

Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. (*Galatians 6:7 KJV*)

Somehow, people think that just because they claim the name of Christ, they are miraculously exempt from the consequences of their own actions or from the wages of sin. The law of the vegetable kingdom also governs the choices of man. Good cannot come from doing evil, no more than a Tomato plant can grow from an Apple seed. The impact of each and every choice is felt for time and for eternity. Says the Prophet:

By the atmosphere surrounding us, every person with whom we come in contact is consciously or unconsciously affected.

This is a responsibility from which we cannot free ourselves. Our words, our acts, our dress, our deportment, even the expression of the countenance, has an influence. Upon the impression thus made there hang results for good or evil which no man can measure. Every impulse thus imparted is seed sown which will produce its harvest. It is a link in the long chain of human events, extending we know not whither. If by our example we aid others in the development of good principles, we give them power to do good. In their turn they exert the same influence upon others, and they upon still others. Thus by our unconscious influence thousands may be blessed.

Throw a pebble into the lake, and a wave is formed, and another and another; and as they increase, the circle widens, until it reaches the very shore. So with our influence. Beyond our knowledge or control it tells upon others in blessing or in cursing. (*Christ's Object Lessons, pg. 339-340*)

Says the Apostle Paul:

For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting. (*Galatians 6:8 KJV*)

There has been and will continue to be the seductive call of Satan, which tells us we can obey our lust and have Christ too. This is the secret of such opposition to the message "The hour of His judgment has come." The carnal heart hates accountability just as much as it hates the law. After all, isn't that the work of the law? To hold the heart accountable?

This deception is repeated over and over by people who make it their mission to attack the truth of the investigative judgment. If they could, they would keep the king from inspecting His

guests. If you are wearing the robe of Christ, you will not be fearful of the solemn work of judgment now taking place. Daily, it is our privilege and opportunity to be found clean in the eyes of God through the exceeding precious promises in the Bible—to overcome even as Christ overcame.

The warning is good news. Do you sow to the Spirit? Do you deny yourself for God? Do you obey the Word and claim the promises? Well then, the promise is: "You will reap what you have sown." The Judgment announced by the first angel to the whole world is good news, but only for those who are sowing good things.

All things are naked and open to Him with whom we have to do. We must beware of thinking that God will be an unjust judge, a respecter of persons, simply because we can name-drop. Jesus tells us;

Behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be. (*Revelation 22:12 KJV*)

Then let us enter into the Master's vineyard, for the reward will be in proportion to the grace of God and not the work accomplished. For God looketh more at the love one worketh, than the amount one doeth.

### **Inheritance of the Unrighteous**

As if the previous warning were not enough, God warns us again that wicked people will not inherit the kingdom of God. Through Paul, God specifies some sins that exclude us from heaven:

Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God. (*1 Corinthians 6:9-11 KJV*)

The acknowledgment here that some of his readers had practiced these very sins is designed to give hope to a world perishing in sin. They have been redeemed and justified by Jesus, then sanctified—set apart from these sins—by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Obviously, this particular deception—that one can go to heaven whilst still practicing their sins—Christ saw would be common in the last days. He saw fit to warn us against it three times!

For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom

of Christ and of God. Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience. Be not ye therefore partakers with them. *(Ephesians 5:5-7 KJV)*

Make that four.

Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous. He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil. *(1 John 3:7-8 KJV)*

The message is clear: you will not enter heaven while practicing sin. Let no man deceive you with vain words. We will either receive the inheritance of righteousness or the inheritance of unrighteousness. This will be determined more by what one doeth than the words he sayeth.

**Personal Holiness?**

In my research on New Age, I came across a person vehemently opposing the idea that there is only one way to God (known as exclusivism). This was what he had to say;

“The problem with exclusivism is that it presents us with a god from whom we need to be delivered rather than the living God who is the hope of the world. The exclusivist god is narrow, rigid, and blind. This god pays no attention to the sanctity and personal holiness of people outside the Christian fold. This god takes no loving and parental pride in the lives of great spiritual leaders who spoke of other paths to truth, figures like Moses, Siddartha [Buddha], Mohammed, and Ghandi.... Such a god is not worthy of honor, glory, worship, or praise. This god offers no hope for a world deeply divided along religious lines, a world crying out for peace and reconciliation.” (Mansions of the Spirit, pg. 61, Michael Ingham)

What a mouthful of blasphemy that was. This is a deception that Satan is attempting to bring upon the whole world; every religion leads to the true God. You have probably heard this in your own church. Often the conversation goes something like: “Oh, so you think that Adventists are the ONLY people that will go to heaven? God can reach people wherever they are.” This has a certain level of truth, Paul writes:

For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law: and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law.... In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel. *(Romans 2:12&16 KJV)*

Regarding ways to salvation, Christ speaks of

two paths, and only one leads to heaven. He says: **3**

Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: *(Matthew 7:13 KJV)*

The narrow way is the way of Christ, Bible religion, walking in the Spirit, denying self and sin. The wide gate is every other way. Jesus tells us plainly;

I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me. *(John 14:6 KJV)*

Well then, the Gentiles who treat others the way they want to be treated, they walk in Truth. Perhaps they do not have all the truth, but they follow the truth they do have.

For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not. *(2 Corinthians 8:12 KJV)*

This is acceptable unto God. God requires every man to give an account of what he has, and not what he does not have. As for those who know better, Christ says:

And that servant, which knew his lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more. *(Luke 12:47-48 KJV)*

So then, God is a just judge; He is not arbitrary, and He is not a respecter of persons. There is only one way to God, the Truth, and all who love the Truth, all who are willing to practice it and seek it, God knows. He has commanded us to teach all nations the Truth. To disobey this command is to be unfaithful to the Truth we know.

That comment about God not paying attention to the sanctity and personal holiness of those outside the fold—crazy. Do we have personal holiness? Well, God has a very blunt warning against this deception.

If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. *(1 John 1:8 KJV)*

Here, we find a class of people who deceive themselves and claim they have no sin. They claim holiness.

There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes, and yet is not washed from their filthiness. *(Proverbs 30:12 KJV)*

This is one of the characteristics of the final

4 generation of the wicked. They are gospel hardened, because they think themselves already holy. They claim this “holiness” while practicing their cherished sins. Real holiness is not desirable to them because it requires repentance. They feel they need nothing, but they are destitute of true holiness and therefore cannot see God (*Hebrews 12:4*).

### **The Day of the Lord is At Hand?**

Paul, writing to the Thessalonians, warns them about people claiming to know when Christ shall return;

Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; (*2 Thessalonians 2:3 KJV*)

Commenting on this event, Ellen White writes:

When the Thessalonian church received erroneous views concerning the coming of Christ, the apostle Paul counseled them to test their hopes and anticipations carefully by the word of God. He cited them to prophecies revealing the events to take place before Christ should come, and showed that they had no ground to expect Him in their day. “Let no man deceive you by any means” (*2 Thessalonians 2:3*), are his words of warning. Should they indulge expectations that were not sanctioned by the Scriptures, they would be led to a mistaken course of action; disappointment would expose them to the derision of unbelievers, and they would be in danger of yielding to discouragement and would be tempted to doubt the truths essential for their salvation. The apostle’s admonition to the Thessalonians contains an important lesson for those who live in the last days. Many Adventists have felt that unless they could fix their faith upon a definite time for the Lord’s coming, they could not be zealous and diligent in the work of preparation. But as their hopes are again and again excited, only to be destroyed, their faith receives such a shock that it becomes well-nigh impossible for them to be impressed by the great truths of prophecy.

The preaching of a definite time for the judgment, in the giving of the first message, was ordered by God. The computation of the prophetic periods on which that message was based, placing the close of the 2300 days in the autumn of 1844, stands without impeachment. The repeated efforts to find new dates for the

beginning and close of the prophetic periods, and the unsound reasoning necessary to sustain these positions, not only lead minds away from the present truth, but throw contempt upon all efforts to explain the prophecies. The more frequently a definite time is set for the second advent, and the more widely it is taught, the better it suits the purposes of Satan. After the time has passed, he excites ridicule and contempt of its advocates, and thus casts reproach upon the great advent movement of 1843 and 1844. Those who persist in this error will at last fix upon a date too far in the future for the coming of Christ. Thus they will be led to rest in a false security, and many will not be undeceived until it is too late. (*Great Controversy, pg. 457*)

The day of the Lord is most certainly at hand; we are living in the end of time. Nevertheless, let no man deceive you, God has not given anyone the date of His appearing. We have inspired words of warning about the danger of time-setting. Christ swore by Himself in Revelation 10:6 that there is no more time for prophecy. So when people claim to have a message from God and contradict God and His prophet, do not be deceived or surprised. Jesus said:

And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many. (*Matthew 24:11 KJV*)

We can even expect great signs and wonders from these false prophets, but this will not make them true prophets. You will know them by their fruits. The words of Christ, directed at the scribes, ring true of many of these false prophets:

Beware of the scribes, which love to go in long clothing, and love salutations in the marketplaces, And the chief seats in the synagogues, and the uppermost rooms at feasts: Which devour widows’ houses, and for a pretence make long prayers: these shall receive greater damnation. (*Mark 12:38-40 KJV*)

The love of money and the love of display mark the followers of Baalim. They prey upon the hopes of God’s people to profit themselves. In a world perishing without Christ, they are like clouds without rain.

*For a finished work,*

**Jonathan Taylor**

*Wisdom is justified of all her children. -Luke 7:35*

*More Food for the Little Flock —*