

Do Not Be Deceived

06 - Metamorphosis: The Way of Transformation
Church on the Park | Sunday, 03 OCT 2021 | Glen Gerhauser

Text: “Jesus answered: ‘Watch out that no one **deceives [misleads]** you. For many will come in my name, claiming, ‘I am the Messiah,’ and will **deceive** many. You will hear of wars and rumors of wars, but see to it that you are not alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come. Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes in various places. All these are the beginning of birth pains. Then you will be handed over to be persecuted and put to death, and you will be hated by all nations because of me. At that time many will **turn away** from the faith and will betray and hate each other, and many false prophets will appear and **deceive** many people. Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most [many] will grow cold, but the one who stands firm to the end will be saved. And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come” (Matt. 24:4-14, NIV).

Theme: You can guard yourself against deception by following the safeguards the Scripture lays out.

Intro: In the Olivet Discourse, Jesus repeatedly warns us to watch out for deception. The original language’s word picture is that of being taken off track and wandering. In other words, it’s veering from the straight and narrow way of Jesus (Matt. 7:13-14). The other picture Scripture paints about deception is something that captures and ensnares us—a trap. The way seems right, but ends in death. So how can you keep from wandering from the truth? Today, I will give you seven safeguards to guard you against deception.

1) Do not be deceived (Matt. 24:4).

- Over four specific times in Matthew 24, Jesus warns us not to be deceived, mislead or go astray.
 - Why? Because as we get closer to the end of this age, there is an increase in lawlessness.
 - 1 John 2:18 says, “Children, it is **the last hour**; and just as you heard that antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have appeared; from this we know that it is the **last hour**.”
 - According to John, we are in the last hour. And we know he wrote this about two thousand years ago.
 - Realise it was written from God’s perspective. From our perspective, it looks like Christ’s coming is taking a long time. But from God’s perspective, a thousand years is as a day and a day is as a thousand years (2 Pet. 3:8).
 - Lawlessness means breaking away from God’s teaching and Word.

- We see this in our laws regarding abortion, euthanasia and marriage.
- But also, we need to guard our own hearts and thoughts.
 - We can be deceived in areas of unforgiveness, neglecting fellowship, prayerlessness, and a multitude of other things.
- Again, there's a multitude of ways we can all be led astray.
 - You can be drawn away in your mind or heart.
 - You can be led away by bad teaching and false prophets.
 - You can be deceived in your thoughts, conduct or beliefs.
 - Often, we are led astray in a small area, and if we don't get back on track in that area, our whole lives will follow.
- However, the Bible gives us all the warnings and wisdom we need to prevent us from going off God's way.
 - Therefore, you don't need to worry or be obsessed about deception, but you need to be watchful.

2) The two rails that keep the train of your life on track are the Scripture and the Spirit.

- So that you can understand these two, I made an infographic with Seven Safeguards Against Deception.
 - Each safeguard hangs off these two.
- You can find it at <https://www.brisbanefire.com/infographics>
- **1 - Let Scripture be Your Standard (2 Tim. 3:16-17; Isa. 8:19-20).**
 - First and foremost, the Scripture is the standard.
 - We need to keep going back to that standard and comparing our lives, our ministry and our churches.
 - And this is what we do every week in our church.
 - But we also need to do it every day in our lives and families.
 - The Reformation of 1517 and beyond emphasised the truth: Sola Scriptura
 - Simply put, it means Scripture alone. Scripture alone is our standard for knowing God, true faith and how the Lord wants us to live. Scripture alone is the final authority of the church.
 - And when we debate matters, we don't do it based on popular opinion or our pet doctrines, but instead on what the Scripture says.
- **2 - Be Sensitive to the Holy Spirit (John 16:13).**
 - The Holy Spirit teaches us the Scriptures and guides us into all truth.
 - He's never in conflict with God's Word; he always speaks in agreement with it, illuminating its truth.
 - Let's look at Samson (Shimshon), whose name means sunshine or sunrise in Hebrew.
 - His life highlights (for good and for bad) the importance of the seven safeguards that I'm sharing with you.

- Samson is a puzzling Bible character. He's an enigma because God is using him at times, and at other times he's being carried away by his flesh.
 - And this can happen to any of us if we do not take these seven safeguards seriously.
- First, let's look at how Samson is a foreshadowing of Christ in Judges 14:1-20.
 - Samson desires a Philistian wife, a Gentile bride, which was not customary and broke God's law regarding intermarriage (Deut. 7:3-4).
 - However, the Book of Judges makes it clear that his desire for a Gentile bride was from the Lord.
 - Again, this is puzzling, a riddle. How is it from the Lord?
 - Even though Samson is a deeply flawed character, this portion of the story is a picture of Christ.
 - Jesus came from heaven to earth to seek a bride made up of both Jew and Gentile, who have been made one through the cross (Eph. 2-3).
 - Yet, something happens on Samson's way to get his Gentile bride—he's attacked.
 - A young lion jumps out at him trying to destroy him.
 - But the Spirit of God breaks upon Samson, and he rips it into pieces.
 - The attack by the lion reminds us of Jesus' arrest and crucifixion.
 - By the power of the Holy Spirit, Jesus turned the greatest attack into the greatest blessing.
 - When Samson passes the dead lion, he discovers something surprising: there's a hive of bees in the lion making honey.
 - So he comes up with this riddle: "Out of the eater something to eat; out of the strong, something sweet" (Judges 14:14).
 - מִהָאֵכֶל יֵצֵא מֵאֲכָל
 - וּמֵעַז יֵצֵא מִתּוֹק
 - This is an example for us all.
 - No matter what the attack, by the power of the Holy Spirit, you can draw the sweetness of honey from it.
 - Remember, God's Word is as sweet as honey (Ps 119:103; Ps 19:10).
 - And it's a beautiful picture of the cross.
 - God turned the lion's attack (the devil's attack) into the sweetest honey: God's grace, mercy and forgiveness.
 - And through the cross, Jesus captured his Gentile bride.
- **3 - Surround Yourself With the Saints (Eph. 3:17-19, MSG).**

- Now, as we quickly go through the following safeguards, think of how Samson's life would have been different if he followed these rather than chasing prostitutes and sleeping with the enemy.
- **4 - Submit to God and One Another (James 4:7, Eph. 5:21).**
- **5 - Seek Sanctification (1 Thes. 4:3).**
- **6 - Be Sober Minded (1 Pet. 5:8-9).**
- **7 - Stay Close to the Shepherd (John 10:27-28).**

Conclusion: You can guard yourself against deception by continually returning to the standard of Scripture and the guidance of the Holy Spirit.