

Be Not Deceived

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Date: 10 May 2009

[0:00] And with what we're often hearing in the news lately, what's going on in the world, we can begin to ask ourselves, where will it end?

! Of course we that know the Saviour know where it will end. He is coming soon. Luke 21 verse 25 onwards, it talks about some of that time of the world's history that is yet to come.

Luke 21 verse 25 it says, And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars, and upon the earth, distress of nations with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring, men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth, for the powers of heaven shall be shaken.

Luke 21 verse 26 and then shall they see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. Luke 22 and when these things begin to come to pass, then look up and lift up your heads, for your redemption draweth nigh.

It's an encouragement to us when we see the signs because it says, Look up then, your redemption is drawing nigh. Amen. Earlier in verse 8 our Lord says to us, Take heed that ye be not deceived.

[1:27] For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ, and the time draweth near. Go ye not therefore after them. So one of the things I wanted to draw out today about the second coming, about the coming of our Saviour, is that it's going to be a time of deception.

A time when there will be a lot of deception. And we see that the Lord Jesus, He returns twice, once in the clouds to gather His people, and then again at the end of the wrath of God, at the end of the tribulation to take His enemies.

And for us that believe our Lord's coming back is an encouragement to us. That He's coming back to rescue His people, to take us to Himself. And it's that much closer every day.

Day by day, it's one day closer, isn't it? And that can encourage us. And He warns us, be not deceived. He says, look out, take heed, watch out, because there's deception going to be one of the hallmarks of the end days.

And He says that too, in 2 Timothy 3, verse 1, it says, Paul writes, he says, He says, He's the Christ of mankind, that He's a good guy, and He's got everyone's interests at heart.

[3:06] He's an anointed one. He's the Christ. They're going to think He's Christ. They're going to think He's a Christ coming to be a Messiah. And we see, you know, sometimes they talk about certain political leaders in our day.

They call them a Messiah or a Saviour, or think of them as such. And the Lord says, watch out when these things happen. When these ones come, and they think, people think they're a great guy, and that the world's going to be a better place because of them.

And especially when this ultimate one comes, who's going to be the Antichrist, because it says, really, there's lots of antichrists, plural, around. Well, we see this, yet that one antichrist, the Antichrist is going to come, and he's going to take center stage.

The Bible says to us, watch out. Look out. These are things, these are signs that we can be watchful, and watch out that we do not get deceived. And we can see deception, deception on a number of fronts.

And there's lots of warnings through the Word of God about being deceived, about deception. And so I've picked out some of these scriptures that talk about deception. The things that we should watch out that we don't get deceived about.

[4:19] And one of them is laziness. Watch laziness. James 1, verse 22. It's a familiar one. It says, but be ye doers of the Word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.

Some people, they can be hearers, but not doers of the Word. They can get lazy. They can think Christianity is purely a listening and not a doing. They think Christianity is just a receiving, it's not an active, lived out life.

And the Bible says, don't be deceived. Don't be a hearer only, be a doer as well. Watch laziness. Another thing in James that goes on, in verse 26 of James 1, James says, watch vain religion. There's a lot of vain religion in our world. We know our Lord talks about vain oblations or offerings and vain assemblies of some. That it's vain. It's in vain.

And he says of vain religion, James 1, verse 26. If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain.

[5:27] For some people, that their religion is vain. They don't have a faith in Christ that's real. It's a vain thing. It's a showing fake thing. It's vain. It's worthless.

Another thing to watch out for is watch influences around you. Paul writes to the Corinthians in 1 Corinthians 15, 33. Be not deceived.

Evil communications corrupt good manners. So he says that those evil associations, mixing with the wrong crowd, can corrupt that good behaviour, that good manners.

Watch the influences. Don't be deceived by people who are going to damage your faith. They're going to damage your walk with Christ.

Another area to watch is pride. Watch pride in 1 Corinthians 3, 18. Paul writes, Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you seem to be wise in this world, let him become a fool that he may be wise.

[6:27] Likewise, 1 John 1, 8. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. And Galatians 6, for if a man think himself to be something when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself.

Now, every one of us need to take a heart here and take attention here that we watch out lest we deceive ourselves. By pride, by lack of humility, by putting on airs and thinking of ourselves more highly than we ought to think, that's a dangerous thing.

Don't deceive yourself by thinking too highly of yourself, by thinking that you have no sin. It says, the truth is not in you. Not to think of ourselves to be something when really we're nothing.

In contrast to Calvary, in contrast to the Saviour, really we need to have a regard of ourselves in that context, in context in relation to our great Saviour.

How insignificant we really are, and not to deceive ourselves by having pride. And also to watch sin. Galatians 6, 7. Be not deceived, God is not mocked.

[7:36] For whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. What you put out in your life, how you live, is going to bring a consequence, it's going to bring a result.

And Paul writes to the Corinthians 2, just one more about this deception. 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.

Paul says none of these shall inherit the kingdom of God. He says don't be deceived. We know in some circles that people are not paying regard to these sort of verses that warn us of the danger of sin, the danger of deception.

And the Lord Jesus in Luke 21, verse 8, he says, Take heed that ye be not deceived. He says look out. Deception is going to be one of the hallmarks of the latter days of planet Earth.

One of the characteristics. Take heed that ye be not deceived. It's possible. Look out. 2

Thessalonians 2 says, Let no man deceive you by any means, for that day shall not come, except that come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition.

[8:54] Paul's writing about the day of the Lord. He says it's not going to come until the falling away comes first, and the man of sin be revealed. So, it's going to be part and parcel of the end time package, if you like, of the second coming.

It says there's going to be a falling away first, and the man of sin. And then the Lord Jesus is going to come. And 1 Timothy 4, it says, Now the spirit speaketh expressly that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils.

So, again, there's a warning here that in the end times there's going to be doctrines of devils, deception on many fronts, seducing spirits. It's going to take many forms.

We know in the world today, as we read the news and we see on the religious front, a departure from the faith. What was essential Christian doctrine and practice is being scorned and laughed at. The Word of God is being sidelined by men's opinions and popularity polls, really, isn't it? Opinion polls is taking more importance than the Word of God.

[10:12] So, people are having dialogue and discussions about things that the Word of God is quite plain about. There's no room for discussion on such things.

Really, it's plain and simple. If the Word of God was taken as read, there wouldn't be any question. And yet, there's a departure from the faith where some are casting doubt on what the Word of God says quite clearly and plainly.

A departure from standards. Standards is a word that is established. A standard is something that's established by a sovereign power as a rule or measure by which others are to be adjusted.

There are certain things that are standards. We know that the Word of God is a rule of faith and conduct. It's a rule. It's a standard. This is our standard.

This is the plumb line, if you like. We know when builders, hopefully, they get the wall square that they're putting up. I'm sure there's some very qualified building people here today that can testify of the plumb line and how it has to be straight up and down.

[11:18] And the Word of God is straight up and down. There's no deviation. There's no modification needed to this Word of God. It's full, it's complete, and it's sure.

The Word of God is our measuring stick. It's our plumb line by which we measure what is the standard, what is right and what is wrong. And yet today, people are setting other standards.

They're making other rules and decisions and making other policies and directives that are out of alignment with the Word of God.

They're quite contrary to it. And the Word tells us when people are turning away their ears from the Word of God and sound teaching that they become easy prey to the enemy.

And our responsibility, brothers and sisters, as God's people, is to preach the truth, the unvarnished truth. 2 Timothy 3, it says, Of this end time again, but evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived.

You know, they're deceiving and they're being deceived. Now, I could have pulled together some little video clips to show you about some of the things that are going on.

[12:27] I think it would be too distressing, really, to disturb our sacred time to show you some of this stuff. But you can catch some glimpses of it, you know, through different sources.

You can see some of the weird stuff and wacky stuff that's going on in the world today on many fronts. And you see people carrying on in quite lunatic ways.

And yet this is the accepted fashion in some circles. And yet you wonder, why is this? It says, the Word of God says, That evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived.

You know, we've heard of, for example, there's one particular situation that the Lakeland Revival, the Lakeland Revival so-called, where the man Todd Bentley, he's a big fellow covered in tattoos, and he's got a habit of punching people in the stomach to make them fall over, or kicking them with his biker boots.

He's been shamed lately because he's gone off with the nanny of his kids and now he's remarried to her. And he's waiting to restart his ministry, supposedly.

[13:41] This is what's going on, and yet people are regarding him as a prophet, as a man of God, and yet he was carrying on in these sinful ways before the Lakeland Revival so-called even started. And this is what's going on, where people are screaming and carrying on, rolling on the floor, going completely ape.

And they think this is God. They think this is God doing this. Evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived. And 2 Timothy 4, it says, For the time will come when they shall not endure sound doctrine, but after their own lusts they shall heed to themselves

teachers having itching ears, and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.

Brothers and sisters, we're living in the last days. But people are so gullible, so easily swayed that they would follow such a spectacle and think that that's God.

They think that that's God. They think that that's the Holy Spirit doing that. We're living in the last days, people today. And we can see these things on the TV and on the Christian channels.

There's more of this stuff coming and predominating the airways. That's church now. You come and you get whacked on the floor. You fall on your back. You get slain in the spirit, supposedly.

[15:00] You carry on like a pork chop. This is church now in many circles. Where you've got the big razzmatazz and the flashing lights and the rock band and anything goes.

This is church now. This is church in the 21st century. Brothers and sisters, if it's astray from the Word of God, they're deceived and they're being deceived. That's plain and simple.

And the features of these end times is that there will be a strong delusion. There will be false doctrines. There will be counterfeits. Now, a counterfeit is something that kind of looks pretty close.

So you start to get the magnifying glass out. You start to see something's not quite right.

Something's not quite adding up. There's a fault there.

It's a cheap imitation. It's a counterfeit. It's a false thing. And the Bible talks about false doctrine. It talks about false prophets, false apostles, false teachings.

[16:01] Strong delusion. And brothers and sisters, these are things that really should encourage you. It should encourage you because the Lord Jesus says in Matthew 24 verse 11, And many false prophets shall rise and shall deceive many.

So false prophets are going to rise. Many are going to be deceived. There's going to be a Laodicean spirit. You know Laodicea, the church of Laodicea, lukewarm and made God feel really sick.

Literally sick to the stomach. That's how God feels about such things that are going on. Lying wonders. They might have their signs and wonders, but their lying wonders.

False signs and wonders. And we see the headship of Rome emerging as some that will come in the fold of Rome in these latter days too.

Rome is still very much pulling the strings and regarded as taking the lead in Christian circles at times. And it's all gearing up for that one world order, that one world economy.

[17:09] And this is going to be something that we need to be alert for. The Lord Jesus says, take heed. He says, look out. Watch out for this. It's going to happen. Charismatic confusion.

Hypnotic style meetings. A focus on sensations and feelings. They're all center stage today.

Deceived and being deceived. Mistakenly understanding that that's Christianity today.

This cunningly close, substitute, counterfeit movement. Where is God's true church? Where are those who will still hold fast to the sound and faithful teaching of God's true word?

Those who will contend earnestly for the faith. There's a testing that needs to go on. And I read something of late, kind of contrasting the two streams, if you like, within churchdom today.

Reason or feelings. Scripture or stories. Sound doctrine or experience. New Testament or new age.

[18:16] That's the kind of dividing line between these two streams at the moment. Discernment. And discernment is needed. Discernment. What does discernment mean? It means to separate.

It means to be able to discriminate. It means to be able to discern what's right, what's wrong. It means a truly, a searching and investigating of something. A judging between what is right and what is wrong.

And by discerning, a Christian can make an accurate determination of what is God honoring and what is not. I don't mean to dwell on this, but people, this is real.

This is what is happening. As we look in many circles, what is prevalent, what is predominant in so-called Christianity today. And I read a good book called Slaying in the Spirit, A Telling Wonder.

And it looks at this phenomenon of slaying in the spirit. And the author explored this phenomenon, which is a comparatively recent one.

[19:17] It doesn't, you don't see it back in the Bible, the New Testament, in early church history. You only see it like in the latter part of the 1900s. People, this is a latter-day delusion.

And the man examined and scrutinized this phenomenon and he noticed how it was really altered states of consciousness. This is what the hypnotists do. When the hypnotists get people on the stage and they act like a fool and they don't realize that they're just being pulled along in this direction by the one who's taking charge.

And preachers who masquerade and do this sort of stuff, it's false. It's not biblical, it's not real. We need to discriminate between what's right and wrong. Altered states of consciousness, like what drugs do to people.

Mystical, experiential stuff. Experience-oriented religion. And sometimes it's encouraged by hyped-up voodoo-style music.

You know the voodoo drums? It goes on and on and on, mesmerizing, hypnotizing, drawing people in. So they get sucked in.

[20:28] They don't realize they're getting swept along by what's going on. And the chanting, the supposed phenomena that goes on when the repetitive-style music becomes like a chanting, like the voodoo-style witch doctors would do.

And then we see the fake healings and the fake prophecies. That's not to say God cannot heal. He does heal by faith, by prayer and believing faith.

God can heal. God can heal. But it's not this carry-on, this muck around that is going on today, this mind control that is going on. And the so-called speaking in tongues, we know it's not biblical.

And what is being exercised here, it's not scriptural. We could talk more at length about that. But people today, we need to watch out. Is it biblical or is it not biblical?

Do we find it in the Word? The unbiblical practices of today need to be named for what they are. They're wrong. They're false. They're unscriptural. And the bizarre hocus-pocus that's going on.

[21:29] It's not of God. It's a foolishness and it's dangerous. We need to look for the truth and find it. John warns the people in 1 John 4. He says, Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits, whether they are of God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world.

He says, test these things. Try them. Look out. See whether it's the spirit of God or whether it's another spirit, because many false prophets have gone out into the world.

Demonic deception is rampant. Where is the sense of the sacred? It's gone. We think of the reformers of old. What were their hallmarks? The scripture alone.

The Bible alone is the standard. Scripture alone. The glory of God alone. That was what they wanted. God to get the glory. The glory of God alone. The Christ's work alone, we are saying. Christ's work alone. By grace alone. Justification by faith alone. These are the things that stood out for the reformers and revivalists of old.

[22:37] The faithful men and women of God. They loved the word. The word alone. The glory of God alone. Christ's work alone. Grace alone. Faith alone. That's what saves.

That's what leads us as God's people. The sufficiency of scripture. The word of God alone. The word of God alone. The word of God alone. Can reveal God's truth. For living godly lives. It's not that we seek some extra biblical revelation.

We can end up like Joseph Smith of the Mormons. Or who knows all these crazy latter-day prophets. Alan White of the Seventh-day Adventists.

Jim Jones. Crazy, kooky wackos. Those who think they can add to the word of God. It gives some latter-day extra biblical teaching. People today, if it's not in alignment with this, it's not of God. Believe not every spirit. Try the spirits. It's dangerous to distort the word of God. We're getting dangerous ground. It's thin ice. It's dangerous ground.

[23:40] Don't tread on it. And people, our philosophy of ministry as a church, I pray, it's guided by the scripture. It begins with the scripture. Not with the philosophies of the world. They're not what steers us.

What shapes us. What guides us. It's not what radio station people listen to that dictates what music we play. It's whether it's scriptural. It's whether it's godly. It's whether it stands up to searching the scriptures.

And what does God say is true? That's what counts. That's what matters. We're seeing emerging today what some have called the market-driven church.

You know, some use the word purpose-driven. Really, they're market-driven. It's market-driven. It's seeker-sensitive. Everything is revolving around what the people want. The church is shaped so much by the culture that we wonder, whilst we want to be reaching out, are we selling out to the world?

I read a good book, *This Little Church Went to Market*. I saw that the market-driven church was examining this latter-day kind of trend where everything is gazed not by the standard of what is right or wrong, but by whether it is judged to be either fun or boring.

[24:54] That's what people check out churches and that's what people scrutinize and decide what kind of church they go to.

Is it fun or is it boring? One or the other. It doesn't matter anymore whether it's right or wrong. It's whether it's right or wrong. That's what counts. That's what matters.

And people, we all need to be careful that everything that we do is right. And seek God by His grace to help us where there's need for us to correct.

We want to be led by the Spirit. We're not meaning to think we're right and everybody else is wrong. I don't want to have that kind of mindset. But by God's grace we'll seek to be right.

By God's grace we'll be led by His Spirit, led by the Word as we search the Scriptures, as we gain Scriptural understanding that our practice and doctrine, our standards will be set by the Word of God strongly and squarely.

[25:57] And it doesn't matter whether we're fun or boring. It's whether we're right. It's whether we're Godly. It's whether we're Scriptural. It's whether the truth is proclaimed and held fast. And it's not that entertainment or amusement dominates.

Because in the struggle to draw a crowd, the church has become a laughing stock, a circus, a spectacle where they've got to go from some height to the next height, one fad to the other, one hysteria, one emotionalism, one extreme to another.

And for some worse, it's really just an emotional hysteria. It's kind of a hyped up thing where it just becomes just an emotional thing instead of a spiritual thing, which is what matters.

And where foolishness abounds, where we see unscriptural practices like woman preachers, you know, things that are plain and simple in the Word of God that shouldn't be happening are a happening.

And people flitting from one fad to another, from one fix to another. It's a bit like a drunkard, addicted, wanting the next fix, wanting the next high.

[27:06] And in an effort to please the crowd, things can get superficial. The substance is gone. It's been lost. And instead of wanting to please a crowd, our desire should be to please the Lord.

That's what matters. That's what counts at the end of the day. And not that the music is framed to be a performance, but the music is framed to be a praise unto God.

Not that the church atmosphere should become more egocentric or self-centered, but theocentric, God-centered.

People, I want to encourage you today, church today, that truth will be that hallmark, will be that place that we want to stand. We want to stand with the truth.

And not a me-first kind of paradigm where it's all about what people want. Because our mandate has got to be set by the Word. Our mandate has to be established by God's truth.

[28:07] We're not on about making people happy, but making people holy. It's not about pleasing the sinner, but about pleasing the Saviour.

The preaching is not to entertain the people, but to edify the people. It's not about giving people what they want, but giving people what they need. And we all need to have the Word of God.

Have it refreshed. Have it central. Have it front and centre in our thinking, in our living, in what motivates and guides us and leads us. And not that the world will invade and pollute the church such that it's been distorted from what God really wants it to be.

And so just to wrap up, Reverend today, God's Word is the absolute truth. It's the absolute final authority.

It's given to us by the God who cannot lie. His Word is true. Amen. I mean, last night, the young people, one of the definitions of the word, Amen, means it's the truth.

[29:16] This is the truth. So be it. We can stand on it. We can have a complete confidence in this one. The God who cannot lie, who's given us his precious Word in our language by his grace.

And the Word of God, it needs to be paramount, the truth, the authority and the sufficiency of the Scriptures. And the Word of God, when this Word is at odds with the spirit of this age, we don't follow the spirit of this age.

We follow the spirit of the Word of God. The Word of God. The Word of his truth. Not the mindset of this world. The Word of God. The Word of God.

So, Scripture alone, that's our authority. That's what we establish everything by. And when we see the shifting that is going on, the shifting sands, the shifting sands, there's a shifting of the mind. There's a mind shift. There's a paradigm shift. You could use the mod terms. A paradigm shift. And it's not for the better. It's for the worse. And you see some churches say, they use such phrases as, we're going to the next level.

[30:29] We're going to the next level. You know, we're on the cutting edge. We're going to the next level. But really, they're going down, down, down to the next level. They're going down. Away from the truth.

Away from the Word. Away from God's will. And we need to be careful that we don't shift in the world's direction. Let's shift in God's direction. What would please Him.

And to find that real cutting edge. That real power. That real purity. That at times we've lost. In some quarters, when it's all talk of powers and signs and wonders. Really, the Church of God has become powerless.

Because it's gone away from the Word of God. This is the power of God unto salvation. To everyone that believes the Gospel. The Word of God.

And so, be encouraged today. God's people. Be encouraged to shift again. To shift again. To shift course back to the way that God would steer us.

[31:29] To steer the fellowship back in God's direction. Back in God's direction. To bring a correction. To set it back on course. And this is what should dictate the course, the direction.

This is the standard. This is the rule of faith and conduct. God's precious Word. This is where we need to make a correction. Back to this book. Get back to it.

Back to the Bible. And so, where we can, let's overcome evil with good. Says in Romans. To counter false doctrine with sound doctrine. That's what I pray that we as a Church can do.

That we can declare the message, the Gospel, soundly and clearly. The true Word of God. Sound doctrine. That will counter the false doctrine that is around. So that those that might be struggling or a strain.

Well, we know this folk with influences from the new age. And they can't see what's wrong.

Because they don't have their eyes open to the truth of God's Word.

[32:33] And we see that in church circles too. Where the new age is coming in. And Mother Earth and all kinds of crazy talk. That people are getting swept along into spiritual ideas.

So instead of religion, it's about spiritualism. It's about, what's the phrase I'm trying to think of? It's a, it's a, it's a, it's a, it's a, it's a, it's a, it's a, it's a, it's a, it's a spiritual.

And spirituality is the word I was thinking of. They use this word spirituality. The New Ages use that term. Spirituality, it's kind of a, it's not offensive. It's not offensive. They're not talking about the Holy Spirit, of course.

They're talking about spirituality. People, it's not about spirituality. It's about the Holy Spirit. It's about the Holy Bible. It's about salvation by God's grace through faith.

That's where we need to get to. And not a spirituality that's kind of a vague, airy, fairy, fuzzy, wuzzy kind of God. That anybody can believe in. We need to get back to the God of the Bible.

[33:41] The only God who sent His Son to die as that blood sacrifice for our sin. The only one who is the Redeemer, the Savior for man and women

who will put their trust in Him.

He's the only one. And we need to point people to Christ and go the distance with the truth. And so ways to protect yourself from deception. Just to wrap up with one scripture to close, Acts 17, a familiar one.

Ways that you can protect yourself from the deception. The Lord Jesus says, take heed that no man deceive you. Discern. Search the scriptures.

Test everything. Try the spirits. There's many false prophets. Try the spirits whether they are of God. And Acts 17, 11 gives us a good way of testing what comes about, what comes across our path.

Acts 17, 11, it talks of the people from Berea. The people from the town of Berea. And Acts 17, 11, it says of them, these were more noble than those in Thessalonica in that they received the word with all readiness of mind and searched the scriptures daily whether those things were so.

[35:04] They searched the scriptures daily whether those things were so. They were listening to Paul and Silas. Now, we know Paul and Silas, they had been right, bang, square on the scriptures.

They had been full on, no doubt about it. Yet, the people at Berea were commended because they searched the scriptures daily to see whether those things are so.

Do that with me. Do that with whoever is preaching or ministering. Do that with the Christian TV programs you watch. Do that with the Christian material that you read. Do that with the Christian radio programs you listen to.

Search the scriptures. See if these things are so. Test the spirits. See if they be of God. Many false prophets are going out into the world.

False prophets, false apostles. Search the scriptures. Receive them. Receive the word. And study, pray. Know God's word. People, we need to take heed lest no man deceive us.

[36:07] These are the days of the latter times. Of the end days of planet Earth. The Lord Jesus is coming soon. He's coming for a church that is ready. That's watching.

That's looking. That's God glorifying. And it says, your redemption draweth nigh. He says, these are perilous times. Don't be deceived.

Be a doer of the word. Not a hearer only. Take heed to yourselves. Use a dream. Use a dream. Use a dream.

Use a dream. Use a dream. Use a dream. Use a dream. Use a dream. Use a dream. Use a dream. Use a dream. Use a dream.

Use a dream. Use a dream. Use a dream. Use a dream. Use a dream. Use a dream. Use a dream. Use a dream. Use a dream.

[37:01] Use a dream.