**THE DECEPTION OF THE LAST DAYS**

Sunday School Lesson 6

*Deceptions of the Devil*

2 Thessalonians 2:3

9/26/2021

**Introduction:** We have thus far considered the deception of other gods, reaping, wisdom, hearing, and pride. This week, we are going to look at the deception of the last days. The Bible shows us plainly that the last days leading up to the return of our blessed Saviour will be filled with much deceitfulness. The Devil, of course, will use all of this deception to set the stage for the anti-christ, who will be the great deceiver of the nations of the world. Yet, the anti-christ will not be the only one who deceives. The Bible warns that there will be many in those last days who will try to work deception in this world. 2 Timothy 3:13 warns that evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse. These men will both deceive and be deceived. If you are a born-again believer, you do not have to worry about being deceived out of your salvation: for this is not possible (Matthew 24:24). However, Christians are warned about the danger of the deception of the last days, and we would be wise to listen and take heed to the warnings that the Bible provides about that deception. As we covered at the start of this series, we are not to be people who are deceived. Titus 3:3 lists out people who are deceived in the same company with those who are foolish, disobedient, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another. Let’s examine the deception of the last days.

1. **THE DECEPTION OF THE LAST DAYS USES CONFUSION IN THE TIMING OF HIS RETURN.**
2. **Notice that some deceive by convincing that the return is sooner than it actually is (2 Thessalonians 2:1-3; Matthew 24:11).** We have all seen these so-called prophets in our day. They have proclaimed dates and even times that the Lord will return. They make bold prophetic statements that never come to pass. Our tendency is just to think of these people as misguided or a little bit wacky. Some even reason that these men are Godly men who have just taken things too far concerning end-time prophecy. I present to you that the Bible shows these men to be evil, seducing men. They are false prophets. They are workers of deception. The Devil is using them for a specific purpose. He wants to deceive the world regarding the return of Christ. His ultimate deception is not to convince the world that Christ will never return. His deception is to convince the world that the anti-christ is who the world has been looking for. Any person who proclaims that Christ has already come is a false teacher and should be rejected outright. Any person who teaches that they know exactly when Christ will return is a false teacher who should be rejected without a further thought being given to them. They are workers of Satan.
3. **Notice that some deceive by convincing that the return is not imminent (1 Thessalonians 5:1-3; Matthew 24:36-44; 2 Peter 3:3-4).** Of course, on the other side, you have those who are scoffers and mockers. They prophesy that the Lord is not going to return any time soon. Some even go so far as to say that the Lord will never return. Satan uses these people to deceive just as the first false prophets mentioned above. He wants to condemn man to Hell. He knows that if the world does not receive Christ, then they will be easily deceived into receiving the anti-christ when he comes. Deception always comes out of confusion. We certainly see this in our society today. There is great confusion over what is going on in this world, and there are wicked men who seize on this confusion in order to have their deception prosper. This is a tactic of the Devil. While believers know that Christ is going to return, there are some who have fallen asleep and have been deceived regarding the timing of His coming. They continue down their own path without any regard to how imminent the return of Christ is. They are not even looking for the rapturing of the church. It has been talked about for so long that they barely seem to believe it.
4. **THE DECEPTION OF THE LAST DAYS USES THE CONDITION OF THE CHURCH.**
5. **Notice that some deceive by failing to recognize the trial of faith that the church must endure first (2 Thessalonians 2:3; 1 Timothy 4:1-6).** As a church, we hold to a pre-millennial, pre-tribulation position when it comes to end-time prophecy. I’m thankful that the Lord is going to rapture up the church before the events of the great tribulation take place. We will not have to go through this time of horrible trouble for the world. Yet, we should not be deceived into thinking that the time leading up to the rapture will be filled with ease for the believer. This time will be a trial of faith for the church. The church in Thessalonica was warned that the day of Christ would not come until there was first a falling away that occurred. This is speaking of a falling away of the church. 1 Timothy reinforces this teaching. It says that the Spirit speaketh expressly. Some shall depart from the faith. This is a warning to the church to be on guard as that day approaches. Why will there be this falling away? What will cause it? It will be caused by seducing spirits and doctrines of the Devil. We must be ready for our faith to be tested.
6. **Notice that some deceive by ignoring that the falling away is taking place in the church (Jeremiah 14:14; Matthew 24:11-12; Luke 6:26; 1 Corinthians 10:12).** Some hold to the idea that this falling away will be visibly seen in such easy ways as church attendance. I do not believe that the falling away will be so easily noticeable as that. The Bible is speaking of a spiritual falling away. We can look to the spiritual condition of our own nation as proof that a falling away is not necessarily measured by how many people profess to be religious or not. We see that there are so many churches in our nation. It is estimated that there are more than 380,000 churches in America. Further, recent data says that there are over 167 million American adults who claim to be Christians. This is a staggering number! Yet, look at the overall spiritual condition of America. We are declining spiritually as a nation. We have fallen away greatly from where we were fifty years ago. I believe it is possible and perhaps even likely that the days before the rapture may be filled with false revivals. The Devil will do anything to deceive the people.
7. **THE DECEPTION OF THE LAST DAYS USES A COLLABORATION OF SPIRITUAL MEANS.**
8. **Notice that the deceivers will use spirit, word, and even counterfeit letters (2 Thessalonians 2:1-2).** The text in 2 Thessalonians shows us that the members of church of Thessalonica had been under spiritual assault from false teachers. These false teachers had set out to convince the church that the day of the Lord was already at hand. This, of course, was to cause the believers there to doubt their own salvation. These false teachers wanted to take away the comfort and security that the believers had in Christ and His promises. What were the instruments that these false teachers used to try to deceive these people? First, they used a spirit. It is likely that they came to them with news that they had been led by the Spirit of God. This is a common deception of the Devil in this present day. He will have men claim the guidance of the Spirit in their declarations. Secondly, we see that they used word. Perhaps, these were their own words, or they may have even used the Word to try to deceive. Lastly, they used a counterfeit word to try to convince this church. All three of these methods are still being used today.
9. **Notice that the deceivers will ultimately use any means that they can find to deceive us (3 Thessalonians 2:3; 2 Corinthians 11:3).** The warning for us is to let no man deceive us by any means. The false teacher will use any means that he can to deceive regarding the last days. I think that one common method that he uses is fear. The false teacher relies upon our fears to deceive us regarding matters concerning the last days. I’ve seen this happen even among believers. Again, they were not deceived into believing in another Christ, but they were deceived into believing some false doctrine regarding the last days. This happens in part because the believer does not study the Bible to see what events happen before, during, and after the Tribulation period. I’ve seen countless examples of this on social media where someone will mention something that they perceive to be occurring today, but the Bible says will occur during the days of the Tribulation period. Paul was concerned for the church of Corinth that the Devil would use any means to beguile them as he beguiled Eve in the Garden.
10. **THE DECEPTION OF THE LAST DAYS USES THE CHRISTIAN’S HOPE OF DELIVERANCE.**
11. **Notice that there will not be a lack of leaders in the last days (Luke 21:8; Matthew 24:4-8, 24; Mark 13:22; 2 John 1:7).** Again, we must be clear that the Bible says that the true believer will not be deceived into following after an anti-christ. Yet, it does tell us to take heed what we are told by men. Why would we have to take heed if it is not possible for the true believer to follow after one of these anti-christs? The Bible shows us that we are still under temptation while we are in this flesh. There may be some believers who are weak in the faith who will stumble because they have listened to someone who they thought was trying to help them in their spiritual walk. The point is that there will be many leaders in the last day. There will be many voices speaking loudly to the believer, but few voices will be speaking the Truth. As believers, we are looking for leaders to encourage us in our hope regarding the events of the last days. Yet, we must check the words of leaders against the Word of God.
12. **Notice that the hope of deliverance led to the deception for the Jews regarding Jesus Christ (Luke 19:11).** Was there ever a more hopeful people than the Jews living before and during the days of Jesus’ earthly ministry? They had waited so long for their Messiah to come. It had been so many years since their nation had been that proud nation that it was in the days of King David. The Jews had great hope. They had followed after others before Christ in hopes that those leaders would deliver them. None of them had been able to come through on the promises made. Isn’t it interesting that their hope did not lead to faith in the true Messiah. That’s because their hope was not grounded in the Word of God. They expected something different from the Lord Jesus Christ than what He came to do. We must study the Word of God carefully to be sure that we understand exactly who the Lord is and exactly what He is going to come back to do on this earth.