

# MARK 13:5-6

## BEWARE OF RELIGIOUS DECEPTION

- When Jesus Christ delivered His longest sermon in this gospel, He focused on things to come.

Jesus Christ warned His disciples to beware, v. 1-4, of distraction. He said:

- watch out for the wrong focus
- beware of departing from true spiritual sonship
- avoid the pitfalls of holy shrines, ceremonies and outward shows that eclipse the truth of worship that is spiritual.

Why? Because he warned of the coming destruction of Jerusalem. In A.D. 70 Titus, son of the survivor of the A.D. 69 year of four emperors took the city and destroyed it. If worship only physical sense, then nothing left!

Josephus records them as leaving the city “as swimmers deserting a sinking ship,” an image that accords very well with Jesus’ command to leave everything behind. The roofs were thronged with famished women with babes in arms, and the alleys with corpses of the elderly. Children and young people swollen from starvation “roamed like phantoms through the marketplaces and collapsed wherever their doom overtook them.” Jerusalem could not bury all the bodies, so they were flung over the wall. The silence was broken only by the laughter of robbers stripping the bodies. Josephus War, II

- A. Remember solution:
  - 1. Invest in people 1 Thess. 2:19
  - 2. Worship in spirit Phil. 3:3
- II. Secondly, Christ warned of not only the distraction, but of deception -- religious deception.
  - A. By Jesus:
    - 1. Matthew 7:15 -- Our Lord Jesus prophesied that apostasy would enter the church, and He knew what He was saying. He cautioned, *“Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.”*

2. Matthew 16:6 -- *“Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees.”* Leaven conveys the idea that the evil influence of the religious leaders permeates the rest of the people (cf. 24:11).
  3. - Jesus Christ said to watch out for drinking from the wrong wells -- “only one source of truth”
  4. - beware of false teaching, false doctrine
  5. - danger is departure from the Word of God to false teaching -- false doctrine to fall away from the truth the only way to eternal life. Jn. 17:3, 17.
- B. By Paul:
1. When Paul was bidding farewell to the Ephesian elders in the twentieth chapter of Acts, he said, *“For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them”* (vv. 29-30). The Corinthians, the Galatians, and the Colossians, and some of the churches of Asia Minor that our Lord addressed in Revelation 2-3, also had apostate false teachers.
  2. Apostasy is a general term; it does not refer to a specific religious system. Those *“certain men”* were not part of an organized group of apostates, because apostasy hadn’t become as sophisticated as it is today with the presence of so many cults. But whatever its form and level of sophistication, apostasy has always penetrated the church and corrupted its doctrine.
- C. By Peter:
1. In 2 Pet. 2:1-2, the Apostle said, *“But there were false prophets among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who secretly shall bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction.”*

So Jesus Christ said beware of deception. How? By knowing the truth! Do you know Christian doctrine -- the essentials -- truth that leads to eternal life. Let me list them. Okay?

1. The infallibility of Scripture, inerrancy (2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Pet. 1:21)
2. The absolute deity of Christ (Jn. 1:14, 8:53-58)
3. The miraculous virgin birth of Messiah (Is. 7:14, 9:6; Mt. 1:18)
4. The historic creation of man (Gen., Mt. 19, 1 Tim. 2)
5. The spiritual depravity of man (Rom. 3)
6. The substitutionary death of Christ for sinners (Rom 5:6-8; 2 Cor. 5:21)
7. Sinless life of Christ (Heb. 4:15), cleansing blood efficacious (effective) to cleanse sin (Acts 20:28; Heb. 9:22; 1 Jn. 1:7). Now our only mediator (Eph. 4:7-10; Heb. 8:1-6; 1 Tim. 2:5-6)
8. The bodily resurrection of Christ from the grave (1 Cor. 15:1-11)

9. The literal return of Christ to the earth (Jn. 14:1-3; 1 Thess. 4:13-18; Rev. 19)
10. The resurrection and assignment of all people either to eternal blessedness (if saved) or eternal condemnation (if not saved)

Ten areas that are life or death for your soul! So that's truth -- what is the error?  
It is doctrine twisted by false teachers!

Christ + apostles warned often of their evil.

--- hunt quote false Christ ---

Today's false gospel is spawning "Christians" who have been attracted to a "Christ" who has the attributes of Antichrist. This widely-presented false "Christ" no longer calls sinners to repentance before a holy God but excuses ungodly behavior as a psychological problem resulting from traumas suffered in childhood. Instead of requiring his disciples to "deny self and take up the cross," he teaches them to love and accept themselves and to recognize their inherent "self-worth." Nor does this "Christ" promise the "meek" that they will inherit the earth, but offers "self-assertion" training. Instead of blessing those that "mourn," he warns against "low self-esteem" and promotes a new "positive self-image." And rather than promising heaven to the "poor in spirit," this false "Christ" offers to the financially poor the enticing gospel of a hundredfold return for gifts to certain ministries.

The Characteristics of Apostasy:

There will be a denial of the truth within the so-called church of Jesus Christ. In fact, the apostasy of the end times is basically a series of denials. There will be...

(1) A DENIAL OF DIVINE POWER (2 Tim. 3:4-5)

Men will be *"traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God, having a form of godliness, but denying the power of it..."*

(2) A DENIAL OF CHRIST (2 Pet. 2:1)

The false prophets of the apostasy will be *"denying the Lord that bought them..."*

*"...in the latter times, some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to...doctrines of demons."*

(3) A DENIAL OF CHRIST'S RETURN (2 Pet. 3:3-4)

*"...there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation."*

(4) A DENIAL OF THE FAITH (1 Tim. 4:1)

*"...in the latter times, some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to...doctrines of demons."*

(5) A DENIAL OF SOUND DOCTRINE (2 Tim. 4:3-4)

*“...the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine but, after their own lusts, shall they heap to themselves [false] teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.”*

(6) A DENIAL OF THE SEPARATED LIFE (2 Tim. 3:1-2)

*“...in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers....”*

(7) A DENIAL OF FREEDOM IN CHRISTIANITY (1 Tim. 4:3)

There will be a reversion to legalism. Some shall teach doctrines *“forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from foods, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving....”*

(8) A DENIAL OF MORALS (Jd. 18-199)

*“...they [the Apostles] told you there should be mockers in the last time, who should walk after their own ungodly lusts. These are they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit.”*

(9) A DENIAL OF BIBLICAL AUTHORITY (2 Tim. 3:8)

*“...these also resist the truth, men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith.”*