

Prophecy in Motion

Lesson 1: Mass Deception

In His Olivet Discourse, the very first sign that Jesus warned His disciples about was deception. Jesus gave clear warning to His followers that there would be wide-scale, worldwide deception at the end of the age. Now deception is a prominent theme throughout scripture, but as we approach the end of the age, deception will reach a deeper level. Jesus told His disciples to be on guard because deception would characterize the Last Days time period. He warned that it would be so powerful that even the elect could be seduced by it.

Matthew 24:4-5 AMP - Jesus answered them, Be careful that no one misleads you [deceiving you and leading you into error]. For many will come in (on the strength of) My name [appropriating the name which belongs to Me], saying, I am the Christ (the Messiah), and they will lead many astray.

Revelation 12:9 AMP - And the huge dragon was cast down and out—that age-old serpent, who is called the Devil and Satan, he who is the seducer (deceiver) of all humanity the world over; he was forced out and down to the earth, and his angels were flung out along with him.

A. Satan's Strategy of Deception

1. The word *deceive* means to wander off course.

The meaning of the Greek word for deception is to veer off course from a moral position. This can apply to individuals, to a nation, or to a vast number of nations.

2. Deception affects societal behavior.

When someone is deceived, they are confused about morality and they are drifting without any sense of purpose. They become unpredictable, morally unstable, and even dangerous.

Luke 8:27-29 NIV - When Jesus stepped ashore, he was met by a demon-possessed man from the town. For a long time this man had not worn clothes or lived in a house, but had lived in the tombs. When he saw Jesus, he cried out and fell at his feet, shouting at the top of his voice, "What do you want with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg you, don't torture me!" For Jesus had commanded the impure spirit to come out of the man. Many times it had seized him, and though he was chained hand and foot and kept under guard, he had broken his chains and had been driven by the demon into solitary places.

3. Deception produces confusion.

James 3:16 AMP - For wherever there is jealousy (envy) and contention (rivalry and selfish ambition), there will also be confusion (unrest, disharmony, rebellion) and all sorts of evil and vile practices.

The devil's strategy is to engulf humanity with moral confusion.
The debate over gender identity is fueled by the devil's deception.

4. Deception moves people away from truth.

When truth is discarded and rejected, it's replaced with politically progressive thinking. The devil wants people to believe that the world can be a better place without God in it.

Colossians 2:8 AMP - See to it that no one carries you off as spoil or makes you yourselves captive by his so-called philosophy and intellectualism and vain deceit (idle fancies and plain nonsense), following human tradition (men's ideas of the material rather than the spiritual world), just crude notions following the rudimentary and elemental teachings of the universe and disregarding [the teachings of] Christ (the Messiah).

5. Deception produces moral confusion.

Isaiah 5:20 NAS - Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; who substitute darkness for light and light for darkness; who substitute bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter!

The prophet warned us of a time when what was once viewed as morally wrong, would be accepted and celebrated. This end-times deception is seeping into every part of society. The devil's strategy of deception is to reform people's mindset, to move them away from truth and into error.

B. A Beguiled Society

1. The Last Days period of deception will be so intense that people will deny truth and common sense.
2. A mass departure from truth will open society up to moral confusion and deceit.

Romans 1:20 AMP - For ever since the creation of the world His invisible nature and attributes, that is, His eternal power and divinity, have been made intelligible and clearly discernible in and through the things that have been made (His handiworks). So [men] are without excuse [altogether without any defense or justification].

3. The term *beguile* means to deceive or to entice with bait.

2 Corinthians 11:3 AMP - But [now] I am fearful, lest that even as the serpent beguiled Eve by his cunning, so your minds may be corrupted and seduced from wholehearted and sincere and pure devotion to Christ.

Notice that the devil works against the mind. He arouses her curiosity concerning the tree of knowledge. He appeals to what she feels.

Genesis 3:6 AMP - And when the woman saw that the tree was good (suitable, pleasant) for food and that it was delightful to look at, and a tree to be desired in order to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate; and she gave some also to her husband, and he ate.

4. Believers are warned against deceptive rhetoric.

Colossians 2:4 AMP - I say this in order that no one may mislead and delude you by plausible and persuasive and attractive arguments and beguiling speech.

This is a warning against misleading teachings and deceptive rhetoric or false doctrines.

5. *Beguile* evokes the idea of enchantment and seduction. In these Last Days, there will be a flood of deceitful influences. When people are “beguiled,” they lose moral discernment and ethical conduct disappears.

6. The concept of being beguiled reminds us of the dangers posed by distractions and deceptions that will permeate the culture. The warning of the scripture in 2 Corinthians 11 is to not be moved away from devotion to Jesus Christ.

2 Corinthians 11:3 MSG - And now I'm afraid that exactly as the Snake seduced Eve with his smooth tongue, you are being lured away from the simple purity of your love for Christ.

Society will be duped by the devil in the Last Days. As a follower of Christ, I must remain in fellowship with Him every day. He's the Great Shepherd! I must follow Him.

C. Religious Deception

Matthew 24:4-5 MSG - Jesus said, "Watch out for doomsday deceivers. Many leaders are going to show up with forged identities, claiming, 'I am Christ, the Messiah.' They will deceive a lot of people."

1. Many will fall under religious deception. Jesus said that many, meaning large multitudes, will be led into religious deception.
2. Jesus was telling the disciples that spiritual leaders will come, declaring the anointing. The concept here is not so much claiming to be Jesus, Himself, rather claiming to be the next anointed one.
3. *Christ* comes from the Greek word *Christos*. It means the anointed one or the chosen one. That's the message Jesus was wanting to communicate to His followers. Many will claim to be a Messiah, the Anointed One.
4. There will be many deceived church leaders. It seems that Jesus was prophesying about spiritual leaders who would deviate from the Word of God into deception. Paul warned Timothy about this very thing happening in the Last Days.

1 Timothy 4:1 AMP - But the [Holy] Spirit distinctly and expressly declares that in latter times some will turn away from the faith, giving attention to deluding and seducing spirits and doctrines that demons teach.

These defectors are those who have been affected by the deceptive spirit of the age. They give in to the hostile, deceived culture that is pressing in all around us.

5. We must take heed, watch, and pray.

Mark 13:33 AMP - Be on your guard [constantly alert], and watch and pray; for you do not know when the time will come.