

Jesus Christ, but their own belly, and by smooth words and flattering speech deceive the hearts of the simple.” Perhaps the listener has so much confidence in a preacher or teacher that he convinces himself he is being taught the truth, even though it contradicts what the Bible says.

✿ **One may be deceived by a popular false doctrine.** Often the error goes back for many years, and it has been so widely taught and believed that it seems more true than the word of God itself, which it actually contradicts. The words of Paul in Romans 16:18, concerning the *“smooth words and flattering speeches which deceive the hearts of the simple”* should keep all on their guard.

✿ **One may be deceived by following the majority.** He reasons that it would not be possible for so many to be wrong, but he forgets what Jesus said in Matthew 7:13,14: *“...wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it.”*

There are so many ways to be deceived when it comes to the plan God has made for our salvation, the church, acceptable wor-

ship, the kind of life He wants us to live, the certainty of the return of Christ and the judgment that will follow, and even eternity itself. **Man-made teachings are generally accepted as truth, while the actual truths as revealed in the Scriptures may be rejected as error — simply because so many have heard men’s lies more than they have heard God’s truths!** We plead with one and all to follow only God’s word in matters of the soul.

It is a sad fact that many “good” people tell themselves that God will overlook their failure to obey Him, on the grounds that they **did not know** what the Bible taught. They have **deceived themselves**. God has not promised to save us on the basis of *ignorance* but on the basis of *faith and obedience*.

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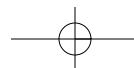
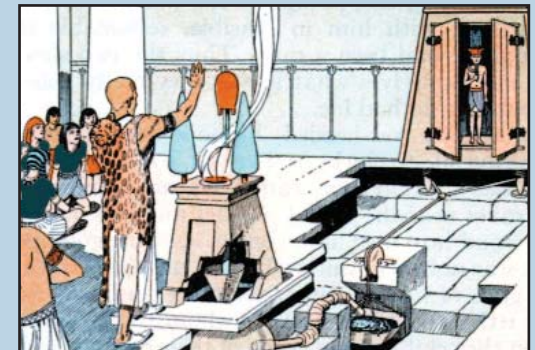
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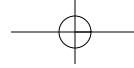
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Be Not Deceived

J.C. Choate

From time immemorial, Satan has used religion as an avenue of deception. He changed God’s words to deceive Adam and Eve in the Garden, and he changes God’s words today, accompanied by lying signs and wonders (2 Thessalonians 2:9), to deceive the masses. Be wary and forewarned.





Be Not Deceived

J.C. Choate

The Lord's word warns again and again that we be not deceived. To be deceived means that one has been misled, lied to, that he has been taught and has accepted false doctrine. Since we have the Scriptures to read and study, you wouldn't think that a person could easily be deceived, but he can be.

Jesus said, "*Take heed that no man deceive you. For many shall come in My name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many*" (Matthew 24:4,5). Just imagine people today being deceived by imposters claiming to be Christ or the Messiah! Who would think that intelligent people would fall for such lies, but there are many.

Paul warned, "*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, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God*" (1 Corinthians

6:9,10). Again, he said, "*Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners*" (1 Corinthians 15:33).

Writing to the Galatians, Paul said, "*Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting*" (Galatians 6:7,8).

The Ephesians were warned, "*That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive*" (Ephesians 4:14). "*Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience*" (5:6).

Paul reminded the Thessalonians, "*Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition*" (2 Thessalonians 2:3). He wrote to Timothy, "*But*

evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived" (2 Timothy 3:13).

James wrote, "*But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves*" (James 1:22). Then John was inspired to write, "*If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us*" (1 John 1:8).

From these passages of Scripture, and others which could be given, we learn that it is possible to be deceived, misled, and for a person finally to be eternally lost because of the deception.

❖ **One can deceive himself.** He can want to do something, or to believe something, so much that he convinces himself it is right, whether it is or not. Many centuries ago the prophet Obadiah wrote in verse 3, "*The pride of your heart has deceived you.*"

❖ **One can allow himself to be deceived by others,** as Paul warned in Romans 16:17,18: "*...note those who cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and avoid them, for they who are such do not serve our Lord*

