

The Day of Deception

Welcome to Harvest Community Church

Series: Discernment for the Last Days

Text: Matthew 24:3-5, 23-24, 2 Thessalonians 2:3

One of the remarkable things about the last days is how many people will be deceived. Jesus confirmed that deception would be the main problem during what many call the “terminal” generation. The Bible tells us that the false prophets and false christs will perform great signs and wonders, so as to deceive if possible even the very elect or those chosen by God.

That is a powerful statement. “If possible” – The truth is that those who are walking in the Holy Spirit will have discernment. Most of God’s elect won’t be fooled. They will be lied to but will be able to see through the lies. Satan uses every sort of duplicity to lead people away from truth and into the tangled and confusing realm of deception. Truth has been outrageously violated in every area of society.

Deception is when you are lied to and you believe it. Some other words that describe it – misinformation, disinformation exaggeration, subterfuge, sleight of hand, propaganda, distraction, counterfeit, camouflage. **2 Corinthians 11:14**

Deception has become a part of our culture. **2 Timothy 3:7** The more a person is deceived the less capacity they have to discern the truth. The less likely they are to believe that they are being duped. Lying has become so common place that we almost expect it and are shocked when people are actually honest. Lying has become ubiquitous in our culture. We expect that every time a politician opens their mouth that they are lying. When news is dispensed, we are confident that it is no longer being reported accurately but with the slant and stats manipulated to make them say what they want us to hear so that we will believe what they think is best. Law has become so nuanced that no one really understands what a lawyer is saying except other lawyers.

The disciples asked Jesus what would be the sign of His coming and the end of the world and the first thing He told them was deception. **Matthew 24:3-5** Jesus gave many signs, but the first sign Jesus told them about contained a clear warning of a *wide-scale deception* that would emerge in the last part of the last days — and the need for people to prepare and guard against it. Jesus said, “...Take heed that no man deceive you.” Take Heed – Pay attention, Live with your eyes wide open, have your spirit in step with the Spirit of God – Be discerning.

Three Parts of Deception

- 1) The first part is a fundamental distrust of God, His leadership, His Authority and His Word. When Satan asked Eve, “did God REALLY say...” what he was doing was questioning all of it not just His Word. To walk in discernment, we must be willing to take God at His Word.

We must believe:

- ❖ What He **says**. **John 17:17, Psalm 119:105, Hebrews 4:12**
 - ❖ That He is **good**. **Psalm 119:68**
 - ❖ That He **loves** us. **John 3:16**
 - ❖ We must be willing to **follow** His leadership and like Jesus surrender our will to His will. **Matthew 6:10**
 - ❖ We must know that He is a **rewarder** of those who diligently seek Him. This is a life of faith. **Hebrews 11:6**
- 2) The second part of deception is **rebellion**. Just like Jonah, we know what to do but we are unwilling to do it. **James 4:17** Deception leads to us choosing our own ways and desires over what God has revealed in His Word or what He has specifically given us direction to do.
- 3) The third element of deception is the **rejection** of God's love. Those who are deceived are critical of everyone except themselves. Deception causes a distrust for God which causes us to distrust others. Deception is harsh and mean spirited. The Bible calls us to love God and to love others. A church and a person without the love of God does not belong to God.
Romans 13:10, 1 John 4:8, John 13:34

Deception offers what is desirable in the **beginning** but it destroys in the end.

Hebrews 11:25, Romans 6:23 Eve saw that the forbidden fruit was good for food and looked good but in the end, they were driven from Eden. David saw Bathsheba and thought that she was beautiful. Sexual sin led to murder and then to God's judgement upon him. **2 Samuel 12:10**

~ "Sin will take you farther than you want to go, keep you longer than you want to stay and cost you more than you want to pay" **Galatians 6:7-9**

Nine Types of Deception

- **Religious** Deception – Fasting without Godliness is an illustration of religious deception. **Colossians 2:16** Walking in unforgiveness or giving preferential treatment to some people over others are good examples. **James 2:3-5** Declaring people holy because they keep manmade rules is another example. **1 Timothy 4:1-5**
- **Doctrinal** Deception – This happens when people leave the simple meaning of the Word of God. An example would be those who say that there is no need for water baptism because the thief on the cross wasn't water baptized. **Matthew 28:19, Acts 2:38**
- **Ethical** Deception – This is when Christians profess the Lordship of Christ but cheat and lie when it is convenient. These people lack integrity and believe in **situational** ethics. **Proverbs 11:3 (NKJV, AMP, NLT)**

- **Moral** Deception – Humanism says, - “If it feels good do it.” **Matthew 4:4** We are not to break God’s law; His law breaks us.
- **Intellectual** Deception – This is when we believe that our opinions, preferences and ideas that are formed by our own understanding are equal or superior to the teaching of God’s Word. When this happens what many people are lacking is intellectual honesty. They refuse to recognize that they are elevating themselves over God and His ways. **Romans 3:3-4**
- **Fanatical** Deception – This is when we believe that ungodly means justify Godly ends. **John 16:2** The Crusades and the Spanish Inquisition are historical illustrations of this kind of deception.
- **Mystical** Deception – Trusting experiences, even spiritual ones, over God and His Word. **2 Corinthians 11:14** This is anything that inspires you to do anything contrary to the Word of God. (Mormonism that claims it has received extra Biblical revelation from the angel Moroni, Barking)
- **Sexual** Deception – This is the belief of philosophy that rejects the God-ordained monogamous sexual relationship between one man and one woman within the bonds of marriage as the only acceptable sexual relationship.
- **Spiritual** Deception – This is when Christians become bored with the discipline of the Word of God and begin practices that are contrary to New Testament orthodoxy. **2 Corinthians 11:3, Revelation 22:18-19**