

Lesson 47

Do Not Be Misled

Icebreaker:

- Have you ever been misled by someone before?
- What could you have done to prevent being misled?

Introduction:

The main purpose of the Olivet discourse **appears** to be foretelling future events. But in reality, Jesus uses it to keep His disciples from being **misled** about the future, especially the events surrounding His second coming. In both the Temple Mount and Olivet discourses Jesus begins answering the disciple's questions by warning them, "*see to it that you are not misled.*" Knowing that deception will come and to keep His disciples from being misled, Jesus leaves very specific instructions for them to follow when **they observe** certain events occurring.

Group Discussion:

1. How do you know that you have not been misled about end-time events already?

Reading the Scripture:

Matthew 24:4-14, Mark 13:5-13, Luke 21:8-24

Warnings

Luke 21:8-11

Scripture excerpts from "Follow Me: A Message from God"

And He said, "See to it that you be not misled; for many will come in My name, saying, 'I am He,' and, 'The time is at hand'; do not go after them. And when you hear of wars and disturbances, do not be terrified; for these things must take place first, but the end does not follow immediately." Then He continued by saying to them, "Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and there will be great earthquakes, and in various places plagues and famines; and there will be terrors and great signs from heaven.

The Apostolic Witness

Mark 13:9-11, Luke 21:12-19

Scripture excerpts from "Follow Me: A Message from God"

"But before all these things, they will lay their hands on you and will persecute you, delivering you to the synagogues and prisons, bringing you before kings and governors for My name's sake. It will lead to an opportunity for your testimony. So make up your minds not to prepare beforehand to defend yourselves; for I will give you utterance and wisdom which none of your opponents will be able to resist or refute. But you will be delivered up even by parents and brothers and relatives and friends, and they will put some of you to death, and you will be hated by all on account of My name. "Yet not a hair of your head will perish. By your endurance you will gain your lives."

Desolation of Jerusalem¹

Luke 21:20-24

Scripture excerpts from "Follow Me: A Message from God"

"But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then recognize that her desolation is at hand. Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, and let those who are in the midst of the city depart,² and let not those who are in the country enter the city; because these are days of vengeance, in order that all things which are written may be fulfilled. Woe to those who are with child and to those who nurse babes in those days; for there will be great distress upon the land, and wrath to this people,³ and they will fall by the edge of the sword, and will be led captive into all the nations; and Jerusalem will be trampled under foot by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles⁴ be fulfilled."

The Beginning of Birth Pangs

Matthew 24:4-8, Mark 13:5-8

Scripture excerpts from "Follow Me: A Message from God"

And Jesus answered and said to them, "See to it that no one misleads you. For many will come in My name, saying, '**I am the Christ**,⁵ and will mislead many. And you will be hearing of wars and rumors of wars; see that you are not frightened, for those things must take place, but that is not yet the end. For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and in various places there will be famines and earthquakes. But all these things are merely the beginning of birth pangs."

The Apostasy

Matthew 24:9-14 and Mark 13:12-13

Scripture excerpts from "Follow Me: A Message from God"

"Then they will deliver you to **tribulation**,⁶ and will kill you, and you will be hated by all nations on account of My name. And at that time many will **fall away**⁷ and will deliver up one another and hate one another. And many **false prophets**⁸ will arise, and will mislead

¹ **Desolation of Jerusalem.** Roman legions under Titus, the eldest son of the Roman emperor Vespasian, conquered the city of Jerusalem and tore the Temple down on the ninth of Ab (late August) in 70 AD.

² **Let those in the city depart.** Titus and his Roman legions surrounded the city of Jerusalem in the spring of 70 AD. When they temporarily withdrew from their siege the Christians fled the city and went to Pella, a city on the eastern side of the Jordan River in current day Jordan.

³ **Wrath to this people.** According to Josephus Flavius, the Jewish historian, 1,100,000 Jews were slain and 97,000 were carried away captive as slaves by the Romans in the war of 66-70 AD.

⁴ **The times of the Gentiles.** After the Romans destroyed Jerusalem in 70 AD, Jews were allowed to remain there until the Bar Kokhba Revolt (131-135 AD). They were expelled from the city of Jerusalem in 134 AD and it was renamed Aelia Capitolina. The city remained under foreign (Gentile) control until June 8, 1967 when it was liberated from Jordan in the Six Day War. In 1980, a proclamation was issued that declared Jerusalem a united city under Israeli sovereignty.

⁵ **I am the Christ.** Some of those who claimed to be the Christ (messiah) after Jesus were: the Sicarii, Theudas (AD 44-46), Menahem ben Judah and Simon bar Kokhba (AD 135). And in the five-hundred-year period from AD 1500 – 2000 there have been over forty individuals who claimed to be the Christ.

⁶ **Tribulation.** Many people confuse two Biblical concepts: tribulation and God's wrath. Tribulation is affliction or suffering endured by the saints in this world at the hands of men. (Ref: John 16:33, 1 Peter 4:12-19; Matthew 5:10-12; James 1:2-4, 12; Matthew 10:28-29) The wrath of God refers to the anger of God poured out on the ungodly. (Ref: 1 Thessalonians 5:9-10)

⁷ **Fall away.** The word used here is apostasy, which means defection from truth, falling away, forsake. Some New Testament references to this concept can be found in: Galatians 1:6-9, 1 Timothy 4:1-3, Hebrews 3:12, Hebrews 6:4-6, 2 Peter 2:1-3, 2 Peter 3:17-18, 1 John 2:18-19 and Jude 3-4.

⁸ **False prophets.** A prophet is one who is supposed to declare God's will to people. In the Old Testament a prophet was considered false when he came in the name of the Lord and **1)** told people to serve other gods or **2)**

many. And because lawlessness is increased, most people's love will grow cold. But the one who endures to the end, he shall be saved. And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world for a witness to all the nations, and then the end shall come."

The Commands:

- ❖ See to it that no one misleads you.
- ❖ Do not go after them.
- ❖ Do not be terrified.
- ❖ So make up your minds not to prepare beforehand to defend yourselves.
- ❖ Recognize that her desolation is at hand.
- ❖ Let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains.
- ❖ Let those who are in the midst of the city depart.
- ❖ Let not those who are in the country enter the city.

The Lesson:

Being misled deals with the issue of **leadership**. An individual is misled when he follows or listens to someone who is not his leader. On the previous day Jesus taught His disciples a lesson about leadership. He instructed them not to be called leaders, rabbi (teacher) or father. **Each** of them was responsible to **1)** follow Jesus, the Word of God, **2)** be taught by the Holy Spirit and **3)** be servants of their Father in heaven alone.

Having begun His discourses with the words "*see to it that you are not misled*", Jesus is quite aware that His statement has raised some common questions in the disciples' minds. As He continues the discourses Jesus answers their anticipated queries.

- **Who would try to mislead us?** In previous teachings Jesus had warned his followers about deceivers:⁹ wolves in sheep's clothing. He had addressed false prophets and false teachers but now reveals a new threat yet to come: false messiahs.¹⁰
- **Why would we be following them?** Jesus explains that many people will come claiming to be the Christ, who is sent by God. Within one hundred years of Jesus' death one group of people, the Sicarii and three individuals laid claim to the title of Messiah. And in the 500-year span from 1500 AD to 2000 AD more than forty people have claimed to be the Messiah.
- **How will they try to influence us?** Since people are always concerned about the future, Jesus said that these false messiahs would be declaring, "*The time is near.*" In other words, the end is near and judgment is coming.
- **What should we do?** Jesus said, "*Do not go after them.*"
- **Jesus, since you are concerned that we are capable of being misled, then how will we recognize the real thing?** This is the crux of the matter so He spends the rest of the discourse explaining how they will know.

Jesus lays out a road map of the future and places markers along the way so His disciples won't be confused about the route it is going to take. That way they won't be misled.

the sign (miracle, prophecy, etc.) he declared did not come to pass. Jesus added another test when He told his disciples to discern the prophet's fruit (character): Was his behavior producing the fruit of the Holy Spirit?

⁹ Lesson 17 and Lesson 37

¹⁰ Christs

- **Route Marker #1** – The apostles will be sent out to give their testimony of Jesus. He commands them, “*So make up your minds not to prepare beforehand to defend yourselves; for I will give you utterance and wisdom which none of your opponents will be able to resist or refute.*”
- **Route Marker #2** – Jerusalem will be taken over by the Gentiles for a period of time. Jesus said, “*When you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then recognize that her desolation is at hand.*”
- **Route Marker #3 – Hearing** of wars and rumors of war. Jesus said, “*See that you are not frightened, for those things must take place, but that is not yet the end.*”
- **Route Marker #4** – Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and in various places there will be famines and earthquakes. Jesus said, “*But all these things are merely the beginning of birth pangs.*”

As the end approaches Jesus narrows the focus of His discourse from a broad world perspective to things directly affecting His disciples (Christians).

- **Route Marker #5** – Jesus’ disciples will be delivered into tribulation,¹¹ killed and hated by all nations on account of His name (The Lord Jesus Christ).
- **Route Marker #6** – Many disciples will **fall away**¹² from their faith, hate and betray one another.
- **Route Marker #7** – False prophets will arise and mislead many.

¹¹ *Tribulation: (thlipsis – STRONGS NT 2347 – θλίψις) – properly, pressure (what constricts or rubs together – ref. 2 Corinthians 4:8-11, “⁸We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; ⁹persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; ¹⁰always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies. ¹¹For we who live are always being given over to death for Jesus’ sake, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh.”), used of a narrow place that “hems someone in”; tribulation, especially internal pressure that causes someone to feel confined (restricted, “without options” or “no way of escape” – ref. Hosea 2:14-15, “¹⁴Therefore, behold, I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness, and speak tenderly to her. ¹⁵And there I will give her her vineyards and make the Valley of Achor (or trouble) a door of hope.”) – (Thayer’s Greek Lexicon); contextual meaning – Matthew 24:15-22, Mark 13:14-20, “Therefore when you see the ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand) . . . for then **there will be a great tribulation, such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever shall;** Matthew 5:10-12 – “**Blessed** are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven . . . **Rejoice and be glad; i.e. Testimony of one Tortured for Christ:***

One of our workers in the Underground Church was a young girl. The Communist police discovered that she secretly spread the Gospel and taught children about Christ. They decided to arrest her. But to make the arrest as agonizing and painful as they would they decided to delay her arrest a few weeks, until the day she was to be married. On her wedding day, the girl was dressed as a bride – the most wonderful, joyous day in a girl’s life! Suddenly, the door burst open and the secret police rushed in.

When the bride saw the secret police, she held out her arms toward them to be handcuffed. They roughly put the manacles on her wrists. She looked toward her beloved, then kissed the chains and said, “I thank my heavenly Bridegroom for this jewel He has presented to me on my marriage day. I thank Him that I am worthy to suffer for Him.” She was dragged off, with weeping Christians and weeping bridegroom left behind. They knew what happens to young Christian girls in the hands of Communist guards. Her bridegroom faithfully waited for her. After five years she was released – a destroyed, broken woman, looking thirty years older. She said it was the least she could do for her Christ. – *Tortured for Christ, Richard Wurmbbrand, VOM*

- **Route Marker #8** – Because lawlessness is increased, most people’s love will grow cold. Jesus said, “*But the one who endures to the end, he shall be saved.*”
- **Route Marker #9** – The gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world for a witness to all the nations. Jesus said, “*Then the end shall come.*”

The Point of the Lesson:

Follow Jesus’ instructions and you won’t be misled.

Application:

Around 1600 AD, John Calvin developed a system of theology that has been condensed to a single statement used by many evangelical Christians: “Once saved, always saved.”

If this is so, why was Jesus concerned about His disciples being misled?

If this is so, who are the many who will fall away?

Today, many people are writing books and teaching what they believe about end time events. Much of the teaching ignores what Jesus said or it is relegated to secondary importance. Remember, being misled deals with leadership. Whom do you believe or whom do you follow or whom do you listen to concerning future events?

Are any of these whom you are listening to the head of the Church or your leader?