

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:

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

Reading The Scripture:

The Beginning of Birth Pangs Matthew 24:4-8 and Mark 13:5-8

(Gospels forged together into one seamless story, in collaboration with New American Standard Bible,
authored by Michael Gibson, Founder of Spirit & Truth, dba Key 2 Changes: "Follow Me: A Message from God", a Journey with Jesus)

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,'¹ 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

(Gospels forged together into one seamless story, in collaboration with New American Standard Bible,
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"Then they will deliver you to tribulation,² and will kill you, and you will be hated by all nations on account of My name. And at that time many will fall away³ and will deliver up one another and hate one another. And many false prophets⁴ will arise, and will mislead many. And because

¹ **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.

² **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) The wrath of God refers to the anger of God poured out on the ungodly. (Ref: 1 Thessalonians 5:9-10)

³ **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.

⁴ **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)** 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?

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:

1. See to it that no one misleads you.
2. So make up your minds not to prepare beforehand to defend yourselves.
3. Recognize that her desolation is at hand.
4. See to it that you are not frightened.

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: wolves in sheep’s clothing. He had addressed false prophets and false teachers but now reveals a new threat yet to come: false messiahs.⁵
- **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.

- **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.*”

⁵ Christs

- **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 tribulation⁶, killed and hated by all nations on account of His name (The Lord Jesus Christ).

⁶ *Tribulation: 1 Peter 4:12-19* - ¹² Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. ¹³ But rejoice insofar as you share Christ's sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed. ¹⁴ If you are insulted for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. ¹⁵ But let none of you suffer as a murderer or a thief or an evildoer or as a meddler. ¹⁶ Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in that name. ¹⁷ **For it is time for judgment to begin at the household of God; and it begins with us, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God?** ¹⁸ And “If the righteous is scarcely saved, what will become of the ungodly and the sinner?” ¹⁹ Therefore let those who suffer according to God's will entrust their souls to a faithful Creator while doing good.

Matthew 5:10-12 - ¹⁰ “**Blessed** are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. ¹¹ “**Blessed** are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. ¹² **Rejoice and be glad,** for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

James 1:2-4, 12 - ² **Count it all joy,** my brothers, when you meet **trials** of various kinds, ³ for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. ⁴ And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing . . . ¹² Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under **trial**, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love him.

James' zeal for Jesus resulted in his being the first of the 12 apostles to be martyred. He was killed with the sword on order of King Herod Agrippa I of Judea, about 44 A.D., in a general persecution of the early church— James was the brother of Jesus (Matthew 13:55, Mark 6:3) and Authored the New Testament epistle, “James”.

Matthew 10:27-29 - ²⁷ What I tell you in the dark, say in the light, and what you hear whispered, proclaim on the housetops. ²⁸ And do not fear those who **kill the body** but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell. ²⁹ Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? And not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father.

Testimonies of those Tortured for Christ

A pastor by the name of Florescu was tortured with red-hot iron pokers and with knives. He was beaten very badly. Then starving rats were driven in to his cell through a large pipe. He could not sleep because he had to defend himself all the time. If he rested a moment, the rats would attack him.

He was forced to stand for two weeks, day and night. The Communists wished to compel him to betray his brethren, but he resisted steadfastly. Eventually, they brought his fourteen-year-old son to the prison and began to whip the boy in front of his father, saying that they would continue to beat him until the pastor said what they wished him to say. The poor man was half mad. He bore it as long as he could, then he cried to his son, “Alexander, I must say what they want! I can't bear your beating anymore!” The son answered, “Father, don't do me the injustice of having a traitor as a parent. Withstand! If they kill me, I will die with the words, ‘Jesus and my fatherland.’” The communists, enraged, fell upon the child and beat him to death, with blood splattered over the walls of the cell. He died praising God. - *Tortured for Christ, Richard Wurmbrand*

We Christians were sometimes forced to stand in wooden boxes only slightly larger than we were. This left no room to move. Dozens of sharp nails were driven into every side of the box, with their razor-sharp points

- **Route Marker #6** – Many disciples will fall away⁷ from their faith, hate and betray one another.

sticking through the wood. While we stood perfectly still, it was all right. But we were forced to stand in these boxes for endless hours; when we became fatigued and swayed with tiredness, the nails would pierce our bodies. If we moved or twitched a muscle – there were the horrible nails. - *Tortured for Christ, Richard Wurmbrand*

It was strictly forbidden to preach to other prisoners, as it is in captive nations today. It was understood that whoever was caught doing this received a severe beating. A number of us decided to pay the price for the privilege of preaching, so we accepted their terms. It was a deal: we preached and they beat us. We were happy preaching; they were happy beating us – so everyone was happy.

The following scene happened more times than I can remember. A brother was preaching to the other prisoners when the guards suddenly burst in, surprising him halfway through a phrase. They hauled him down the corridor to their “beating room.” After what seemed an endless beating, they brought him back and threw him – bloody and bruised – on the prison floor. Slowly, he picked up his battered body, painfully straightened his clothing and said, “Now, brethren, where did I leave off when I was interrupted?” He continued his gospel message! - *Tortured for Christ, Richard Wurmbrand*

At the age of eleven, Mihai began to earn his living as a regular worker. Suffering had produced a wavering in his faith. But after two years of Sabina’s imprisonment he was allowed to see her. He went to the Communist prison and saw his mother behind iron bars. She was dirty, thin, with calloused hands, wearing the shabby uniform of a prisoner. He scarcely recognized her. Her first words were, “Mihai, believe in Jesus!” the guards, in a savage rage, pulled her away from Mihai and took her out. Mihai wept seeing his mother dragged away. This minute was the minute of his conversion. He knew that if Christ can be loved under such circumstances, He surely is the true Savior. He said afterward, “If Christianity had no other arguments in its favor than the fact that my mother believes in it, this is enough for me.” That was the day he fully accepted Christ. - *Tortured for Christ, Richard Wurmbrand*

⁷ *Mislead / Fall Away*: (STRONG’S NO. 4624 – Skandalizó): **to put a snare (in the way), hence to cause to stumble, to give offense**; to entrap (apostasy (defection - revolt) – literally, “a leaving, from a previous standing” - (make to offend).

COGNATE (related definition): properly, *set a snare* (“*stumbling-block*”); (figuratively) “to hinder right conduct or thought; *to cause to stumble*” – *literally, “to fall into a trap”*. See 4625 (Skandalizó - properly, the trigger of a trap (the mechanism closing a trap down on the unsuspecting victim); (figuratively) an *offense*, putting a *negative cause-and-effect relationship* into motion (ex. “the stick in the trap that springs and closes the trap when the animal touches it”).

b. “to cause a person to begin to distrust and desert one whom he ought to trust and obey; to cause to fall away,” and in the passive, to fall away (John 6:61; Matthew 13:21; MATTHEW 24:10; Matthew 26:33; Mark 4:17; Mark 14:29; John 16:1).

i.e. 2 Thessalonians 2:1-17 (*Paul re-enforces Jesus’ Teaching on this same Event*) - **The Man of Lawlessness** - ¹Now concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered together to him, we ask you, brothers, ²not to be quickly shaken in mind or alarmed, either by a spirit or a spoken word, or a letter seeming to be from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come. ³Let no one deceive you in any way. For that day will not come, unless the rebellion (apostasía (646) - apostasy) comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, ⁴who opposes and exalts himself against every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, proclaiming himself to be God . . . ⁷For the **mystery of lawlessness** is already at work. Only he who now restrains it will do so until he is out of the way. ⁸And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will kill with the breath of his mouth and bring to nothing by the appearance of his coming. ⁹The coming of the lawless one is by the activity of Satan with all power and false signs and wonders, ¹⁰and with all wicked deception for those who are perishing, because they refused to love the truth and so be saved. ¹¹Therefore God sends them a strong delusion, so that they may believe what is false, ¹²in order that all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness . . . ¹⁵So then, brothers, stand firm and hold to the traditions that you were taught by us, either by our spoken word or by our letter.

BLASPHEMES (STRONG’S NO. 988 – blasphemía): “switches” right for wrong (wrong for right), i.e. calls what God *disapproves*, “*right*” which “exchanges the truth of God for a lie” (Ro 1:25 - “because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie”; Isa 5:20 - “you who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness.”). Literally, slow (sluggish) to call something *good* (that *really is good*) – and slow to identify what is truly bad (that really is evil). (THAYER’S GREEK LEXICON – βλασφημία, railing, reviling): *a.* universally, slander, detraction, speech injurious to another's good name.

- **Route Marker #7** – False prophets will arise and mislead many.
- **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?

i.e. **Mark 3:28-29** - ²⁸“Truly I tell you, people will be forgiven for their sins and whatever blasphemies they utter; ²⁹but whoever **blasphemes** against the Holy Spirit can never have forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin”—

Matthew 12:31-32 - ³¹ Therefore I tell you, people will be forgiven for every sin and blasphemy, but **blasphemy** against the Spirit will not be forgiven. **32** Whoever speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come.

Luke 12:10 - ¹⁰ And everyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven; but whoever **blasphemes** against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven.