

THE BEREAN

"...EXAMINING THE SCRIPTURES DAILY..." (Acts 17:11)

BE NOT DECEIVED

*A STUDY OF THE EPISTLE OF JAMES
PART NINE OF SIXTY FOUR*

Repeatedly the Bible warns us of being deceived. "Be not deceived, my beloved brethren" (James 1:16). There are two possible sources of deception. We may be led astray by others. Of these Jesus warned, "Beware of false prophets who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravening wolves" (Matthew 7:15). In this day when it is popular to say that "one church is just as good as another," it is increasingly easier to be misled by others. If one is as good as another, then a lie is just as good as truth. Be not deceived!

We may also deceive ourselves. James declares this possibility. "Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deluding your own selves" (James 1:22). He also declares that a man may "deceive his heart" making his religion vain (James 1:26). It is obvious that one of the greatest dangers of the heart of man is being deceived. Be not deceived!

We may be deceived about God, sin, and our connection with both. James wants us to understand that temptation is not from God Who is the giver only of good (James 1:13,17). Sin is the result of our own lusts (James 1:14). We must not be deceived about the real responsibility for sin in our lives. Neither should we be

deceived about who shall enter the kingdom of God. "Or know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived..." (I Corinthians 6:9).

How is man to avoid deception? How can we know the truth about spiritual things? James answers, "But he that looketh into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and so continueth, being not a hearer that forgetteth, but a doer that worketh, this man shall be blessed in his doing" (James 1:25). Only the gospel of Jesus Christ can keep us from being misled. Into it we must look to know the truth to make us free (John 8:32). We must not deceive ourselves into thinking that reading alone saves. We must be doers of the Word. What determines your religious practice? Are you guided by what you feel and like? By man's traditions? Or by the Word of God? Be not deceived!

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