

False Messiahs

Jesus warned us, “Beware! See that no one deceives you, for there will be many who come in my name, saying, ‘I am’, ‘I am the Christ’ and ‘The time has come’. Many will be deceived by them. Do not go after them.” (Matthew 24:23, Luke 21:8) We often fail to note the importance and implications of this warning.

Angels Are Not Enough

The Apostle Paul was very concerned with this problem. In Galatians 1, he sounds an intense warning: “Even if we or an angel from heaven should proclaim to you a gospel contrary to (or beyond) what we proclaimed to you, let that one be accursed! As we have said before, so I now repeat, if anyone proclaims to you a gospel contrary to what you received, let that one be accursed!” (Galatians 1:8,9) This calls for discernment. Paul is saying that *if he himself* were to come back and begin to preach a message different from that which he taught the Galatians when he announced the Grace of God in Jesus Christ, he should be rejected as an accursed man.

Isn't it interesting that the major movements of Islam and Mormonism have supposedly been initiated by the visit of an “angel?” And that they claim an affiliation with Jesus, but then relegate Him to a subordinate position by their supposed “new revelation?” Such dishonesty and abandonment of the eternal truth of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Savior of the world, deserves our utmost contempt, even as we love and pray for those who are misled.

It was not just in Galatia that Paul encountered this

problem. In writing to the Christians in Corinth, he addressed the same challenge. He wrote, “I am afraid that just as Eve was deceived by the serpent’s cunning, your minds may somehow be led astray from your sincere and pure devotion to Christ. For if someone comes to you and preaches *a Jesus other than the Jesus we preached*, or if you receive a different spirit from the one you received, or a different gospel from the one you accepted, you put up with it easily enough.” (2 Corinthians 11:3,4)

Further on in the same chapter, Paul describes such men who would appear to bring a new version of Jesus, a changed gospel: “For such men are false apostles, deceitful workmen, masquerading as apostles of Christ. And no wonder, for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light. It is not surprising then, if his servants masquerade as servants of righteousness. Their end will be what their actions deserve.” (2 Corinthians 11:13-15)

Jude, in verse 3, says this: “Dear friends, although I was very eager to write to you about the salvation we share, I felt I had to write and urge you to contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints.” It is a ‘once for all’ faith, not subject to superior revelation down through time.

The Apostle John repeatedly emphasized the urgency of having the Son, Jesus, if one were to have God the Father. 2 John verse 9 says, “Anyone who runs ahead and does not continue in the teaching of Christ does not have God; whoever continues in the teaching has both the Father and the Son.” It is not enough to claim that Jesus is a part of your belief. It must be THE SAME JESUS

WITNESSFORJESUS.COM

as is revealed in Scripture. Indeed, one must remember that Jesus is the focus of Scripture. That is why the angel completed his warning to John as he did in the Book of Revelation, chapter 19, verse 10. John reveals, "At this I fell at his feet to worship him. But he said to me, 'Do not do it! I am a fellow servant with you and with your brothers who hold to the testimony of Jesus. Worship God! For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.'" Or, as one translation puts it, "Bearing witness to Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." HE is the theme of the Bible.

This is a critical statement in Scripture. The focal point of all prophecy, and the focal point of the true gospel, is bearing witness to Jesus. All of God's provision is wrapped up in Him. If the message you are hearing is not centering your attention on the person of Jesus, not exalting and glorifying Jesus, the you are not in the presence of the Holy Spirit's work. Jesus, when promising the coming of the Holy Spirit said in John 15:26, "When the Counselor comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father, *he will testify about me.*" In the following chapter, John 16:13,14, Jesus says, "But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. *He will bring glory to me* by taking from what is mine and making it known to you."

To come along and claim you are connected with Jesus, that you recognize him as a prophet, and then deny his Divinity and Sonship from the Father is to promote a false Messiah, and to demonstrate your complete hypocrisy and dishonesty. That is exactly what Islam does, that is what Mormonism does, that is what The Way does and that is what

Jehovah's Witnesses do. There are many others, for Satan is always trying to deprive mankind of the blessing of knowing the true Jesus. Indeed, that is the object of all Satan's deceptions: *To take your mind and heart off of Jesus, off of who He is and what He has done for you and will do for you.* Any other subject of attention will do, even what might be considered good and beneficial.

Feeding the poor is good, but if it subordinates the primacy of Jesus, it is evil. Social justice is a noble cause, but if it leaves Jesus unheralded as the King of Righteousness, it is a wicked thing. Any good thing that renders Jesus any less the focus of attention and any less than who He is -- The Son of God, The Savior of the world, the object of our praise and worship -- that good thing becomes the tool of the enemy to send you to hell.

A Call To Vigilance

So then, let us be careful to make sure our beliefs are true to the original Jesus. For, "How can we escape if we neglect so great a salvation? It was declared at first through the Lord, and it was attested to by those who heard Him." (Hebrews 2: 3) How wonderful it will be for those who make sure they are following the real Messiah when he says, "Come you who are blessed by my Father; inherit the kingdom prepared for you."

We invite your comments and support. Send correspondence to:

Jerry J. Mercer
P.O. Box 121773
Nashville, TN 37212

Or, email: one@witnessforjesus.com