

Messenger Of Truth

"Holding forth the Word of Life" (Phil. 2:16).

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Be Not Deceived

In the New Testament we encounter a reoccurring thought that we too often overlook, and that is the repeated warning, "not to be deceived." We find Jesus giving such a warning (Luke 21:8). The apostle Paul warned the young struggling congregation at Corinth (1 Cor. 6:9; 15:33; 2 Cor. 11:3). Paul even warned the churches in the region of Galatia (Gal. 6:7). And James admonished his readers with such a warning (James 1:16).

The Greek paints the word picture that to be deceived is to roam from safety, truth, or virtue. Strong's mentions the idea of straying from orthodoxy or piety. It is hard to believe that we can so easily be led astray and tricked into believing something that is not true.

Many of us want to give people the benefit of the doubt. We tend to think good of most people and tell ourselves that surely they would not intentionally lead us astray. Well, in part they may well be true. Perhaps it is not that they intentionally lead us astray, but the fault may well lie in the fact that we don't check things out to see whether they are true.

How many fine young people have been raised by well meaning parents who told them that baptism is not necessary for salvation? Granted, our Lord plainly said that it is necessary. "He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned" (Mark 16:16). Belief and baptism are coupled together and are not intended to be separated in this statement. But a well meaning, loving parent or grandparent, may not have studied their Bibles well enough to have seen that truth, and then imparted the error to their children or grandchildren. And those children or grandchildren, not wanting to insult or believe that they could have been deceived, never check to see if it is so.

Remember the statement of the Bereans: "These were more fair-minded than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so" (Acts 17:11). Notice the diligence to investigate what they had been taught.

Granted there are those who seek to deceive others. But let's hope that the majority with which we come into contact are trying to uphold and teach the truth. It may well be that not only do we need to be cautious in what we receive, but be loving and interested enough to help them see the error of their ways, just as Aquila and Priscilla did with Apollos (Acts 18:24-28).