

Thought for the Day

Saturday November 16, 2024

Today's Scripture:

Then Jesus began to say to them, "Beware that no one leads you astray. Many will come in my name and say, 'I am he!' and they will lead many astray. ~ Mark 13: 5-6

Thoughts on Today's Verse(s):

I don't think I've ever met someone who claimed to be The Messiah; have you? And yet I am compelled to dig for insight into Christ's declaration today. Could it be that Jesus was speaking in more general terms than we realize? I think so.

There are a lot of voices in this world and each of them compete for our attention. Those "things" can lead us astray so very easily. Consider self-help advocates. There are a myriad of authors/speakers and books who claim to have the advice you need to live a "better life" and just as the title suggests *help yourself* to better places and better things. The truth is that none of us is truly able to help ourselves. We always need someone else to guide us, to help us better understand what we're about, and the best Guide is always Jesus manifested in The Holy Spirit. Only The Lord can really help someone change and lead a "better life". It is only through the truth and righteousness of His Holy Word that anyone can find the truth, about themselves and this life.

There is another dangerous element in literature and media that may even be more insidious and may be those who Jesus was describing in today's verses - so called "Christian authors and speakers" who proliferate our television sets, computers and ipads at this time. Without naming names, I ask you to consider those personalities who profess and proclaim what is often referred to as "the prosperity gospel". They say things like, "*God wants you to have your best life now! Name it and claim it! God wants you to be healthy and wealthy!*" Only one problem: Jesus *never* said any of those things so to associate them with "the gospel" is close to abomination. In fact, what He did say was that we will have trouble in this life (John 16:33). At the very least, this healthy, wealthy prosperity culture leads people astray. The thousands who cram huge auditoriums and stadiums to listen to those who promise such worldly gratification is proof that so many are being led off course.

Friends, we must *be aware*. We must be discerning and alert. We too can far too easily be led astray. How do we prevent such an eventuality? *Ask for God's help in discerning what you should read and to whom you should listen*. And, always test the assertions of anyone (me included) against scripture. If someone's writings and proclamations are *not* based on The Bible, they are likely leading you astray, or at least trying to. Let us be diligent and careful as we examine and discern the works of those who "claim" to be Jesus or his spokesperson. Not all are.

Prayer:

Lord Jesus, please help us as we discern our way through life. Direct us to those who preach Your gospel and keep us from those who don't. Help us test their declarations and assertions against Yours. May Your Holy Spirit lead us so that we are not led astray from God's good will by those who proclaim a worldly prosperity gospel that has no lasting impact or meaning. Keep us from being led off course by those who are selling self-help and name it/claim it religion that is far from Your Holy Word. We pray under Your authority as Lord and Master over all that is, ever was or will be, Amen..