



LESSON 138 - MARK 13:21-23

And then if any man shall say to you, Lo, here is Christ; or, lo, he is there; believe him not: For false Christs and false prophets shall rise, and shall show signs and wonders, to seduce, if it were possible, even the elect. But take ye heed: behold, I have foretold you all things.

1. Why do people give false information?
2. What's the difference between a false Christ and a false prophet?
3. Are signs and wonders always from the devil?
4. What's the difference between a sign and a wonder?
5. What do you learn about Jesus in this passage?

POSSIBLE ANSWERS

Some are deceived themselves, thinking they know the truth when they don't. Some do it with evil purposes. No matter the motive, from time to time, you will hear information that is false. It is up to you to discern that it is false and not take heed to it. Two important ways to counteract deceit are: to be well-versed in the Word of God, and to listen carefully to the Holy Spirit each day. There is also a gift of discernment which you can request from the Lord, which will enable you to sense the type of spirit influencing people.

1. In this passage, Jesus is teaching His disciples that, in the seven years of a time called the tribulation, different religious people will give out false information to seduce people into following and supporting them. That false information will be bolstered by deceiving signs and wonders done by the power of the devil. (Rev 13:4,13-15, 19:20)
2. Jesus was the true Son of God, which was attested to by His Father at Jesus' birth, baptism, in His teachings, miracles, healings, power over demons, and also His transfiguration, death, and resurrection. To recognize a false Christ, you first need to know the true Christ. Get to know the real Jesus Christ and you'll never be deceived by a false one. A false Christ is someone claiming to be divine, that is, God in the flesh, and who gathers followers to support his propaganda and agenda. He may be in it for the money and/or the power it gives him. He definitely has listened to the lies of the devil and has believed them. He acts holy in front of people and probably can quote some scripture out of context to deceive those who might know a little of the Bible. He is a tool of the devil and either doesn't know it or doesn't care. Knowing Jesus' character and His Word is the way to avoid being deceived by anyone. A false prophet is the one who claims to speak for God, who wants everyone to believe that he has a direct line from God's mouth to his ear. Sometimes he will align himself with a false Christ and be the religious arm of that man. This person seeks to deceive for money and power, too. There have been many true prophets of God, but, if you study their lives, they weren't in the service of God for money or power, and most of their lives were very difficult. These righteous prophets were commissioned by God to spread His messages and warnings, and to show the world how to come to God. Their message nearly always was one of calling people to confession of sins, repentance (Mt 3:1-3), and to turn to God (Ezek 14:6, Joel 2:12-13).

3. No. The servants of God can also do signs and wonders at times, but those are given them, not to deceive, but to enlighten people and draw them nearer to God. That is one way to determine whether the sign/wonder is from God or the devil. Does it draw the person nearer to the Lord or does it just spotlight the one doing the wonder?

4. I think we've talked about this before. A wonder is a supernatural happening that makes you wonder about its origin and its purpose. When it is from God, you are astounded by it, while at the same time, it makes you want to know better the One Who did this wonder. In Exodus 3, Moses saw a wonder in the desert, a burning bush which was not consumed, and it caused him to wonder "why the bush was not burned up." In approaching the bush, he heard God call his name twice, and subsequently received the prophecy of the Hebrew children's deliverance from slavery, their exodus from Egypt, their future inheritance in the Promised Land, and his designation as their leader. In Acts 3:1-11 there is a recorded wonder of a man, lame from his mother's womb, who is miraculously healed by God through Peter and John. This miracle caused all who found out about it to wonder (vs 10-11), which resulted in the crowd wanting to hear what Peter had to say in explanation (vs 12-26). This wonder afforded Peter a wonderful opportunity to tell the crowd about Jesus the Messiah, and even to give an invitation for them to accept salvation (vs 19-26). Other wonders are seen in Lk 9:37-43, 11:14, Acts 7:31, 8:13. A sign is the same as a wonder, but it has a message and/ or a verification attached to it. For instance, in a previous lesson, Mt 24:3, the disciples asked Jesus what would be the sign of His coming and the end of these age. In subsequent verses, He tells them the signs, so they would know them and pass on the information, so future followers would not be deceived about the tribulation. Nearly 2000 years later, we are still studying scripture today to learn more about those signs, which the world will undoubtedly see fulfilled, perhaps in this generation. In Luke 2:12, the angel appearing to the shepherds announced that the Christ had been born that day in Bethlehem, and the sign to verify that this Child was the Christ would be in finding the Babe wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger, a place no newborn would ever be put. 5. Jesus acted as a Father, instructing and warning the children His Father had given Him. (Isa. 9:6, Hebrews 2:13) He taught them the things He had been told of His Father, so the disciples would be adequately prepared for the times ahead of them. He still does that today with His children through the Holy Spirit and the Word. He took good care of the disciples. He'll take good care of you. Trust Him.

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