



Dear Phil

AVOIDING DECEPTION

“How does one avoid being deceived by false prophets, as it says in Matt. 24:4, 5?”

Jesus answers this question in Matt. 24:27, “For just as the lightning comes from the east and flashes even to the west, so will the coming of the Son of Man be” (nasb). Anyone who claims to be Christ (24:5) or says he knows where He is on earth (24:23, 26), even if that person does miraculous things (24:25), is a false prophet. When Christ comes again in power, the whole world will know it (24:27, 30), because it will be sudden and obvious like lightning.

Let’s broaden the question just a bit and ask, How can we avoid being deceived by the enemy of our souls? The devil deceived Eve into thinking that it was not wrong to eat the forbidden fruit. As a result she sinned, thinking that she was not sinning (1 Tim. 2:14). Paul indicates that it is possible for us to be deceived like Eve was and expresses his concern over this in 2 Cor. 11:3, “But I am afraid that, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds will be led astray from the sim-

licity and purity of devotion to Christ” (NASB).

There are two keys to avoiding deception. First, you must know God’s Word. If you do not know what God has said, you are susceptible to being deceived. Jesus gives the second key in John 7:17 where He tells the Jews, “If anyone is willing to do His will, he will know of the teaching, whether it is of God or whether I speak from Myself.” In other words, Jesus is saying that only if the Jews were willing to do God’s will would they be able to discern whether what Jesus taught was the truth and not a lie. This principle applies to us as well. If we want to know whether something is truly from God or not, we must first be willing to do His will.

We can know that we are willing to do His will if we are currently doing all that God has asked us to do. If we are not walking in all the light that God has already given us, then we are obviously not really willing to do His will. That is a fearful position to be in, for it opens us up to the enemy’s deception.

Stay immersed in the Word and walk in all the light God gives you, and you won’t have to worry about being deceived.

Your friend,
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But you don’t have to miss Him. Those who were in tune to God’s redemptive plan and activity recognized Jesus right away. Simeon and Anna recognized Him as God’s means of salvation when He was still a babe in His mother’s arms. The Wise Men worshiped Him, John the Baptist announced Him as the “Lamb of God,” and the woman of Samaria said to her friends, “Is not this the

Christ?” Even a Roman Centurion who witnessed His crucifixion said, “Truly this was the Son of God.”

If Jesus were reincarnated among us today, would we be prepared to recognize Him? Or have we created a Jesus so much to our own liking that we would never know the one walking through the pages of our New Testament? This Christmas season, go back to the gospels and look for Him. You will be awed by what you find. ■

JESUS WHO? continued

- (p5) The crowd from Jerusalem raised the cry. The Galileans proudly answered of their local boy who had made good, “This is Jesus the prophet of Nazareth.”

A prophet. Men of power, the prophets. But men. Men who sometimes failed. In time all of them died. Prophets deserve honor and respect but not adoration, worship, surren-

der, absolute trust. This is due to God alone.

“Who am I? What do you say?” It is Jesus’ challenge. “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God!” Peter knew. Not through reasoning. By revelation. He was doing the will of God; he had heard from heaven.

Have you? ■