

# Wolves in Sheep's Clothing

## Part 2

### Introduction; We are many times mistaken or deceived.

#### A. Sometimes it isn't really important.

1. We are told that a class we want to take starts at a certain time. We get there and we were told wrong. It is already over. We may be upset but we are not really hurt.
2. We buy a flashlight that is supposed to last a lifetime, and it doesn't. We have been deceived and have lost some money. But in the long run we are not hurt.

#### B. Sometimes it is really important.

1. We have an expensive roof put on our home and it has a warranty and guarantee. If something happens to the roof we are supposed to be covered and protected.
2. A while later a terrible storm tears the roof off and ruins much of the inside of our home. We try to contact the company and they have gone out of business.
3. We purchase medical insurance and the agent tells us we are covered for certain things. We do not read the policy. We have a heart attack and find out it isn't covered because of pre-existing conditions or such things.

#### C. The greatest deceptions are in matters of religion.

1. Satan and his followers are great deceivers. They go to great lengths to deceive mankind and cause them to be lost in hell when they expect to go to heaven.
2. *Rev 12:9 So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.*
3. *2 Cor 11:13-15 For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ. 14 And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light. 15 Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works.*
4. Many will even argue with the Lord that they should be saved. But they were deceived and are lost.
5. *Matt 7:21-23 "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. 22 Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' 23 And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'"*
6. One of Satan's greatest weapons is false religion. Countless millions will be lost because they were deceived by false teachers. We must be very careful in what and who we believe.
7. *Matt 23:15 "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you travel land and sea to win one proselyte, and when he is won, you make him twice as much a son of hell as yourselves."*

#### D. Jesus warns against 'wolves in sheep's clothing.'

1. *Matt 7:15 "Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves."*
2. We must beware of Satan and his servants. They try to deceive us and cause us to be eternally lost. We began a study of ways Satan tries to deceive us and considered two methods.
  1. We considered how he tries to **discredit** God and the Bible to keep men from studying God's word and obey it.
  2. We looked at how the devil tries to **distract** us with the world and our lusts to keep us from following the Lord. He has the world to help him with this.

#### E. We will continue our study of 'Wolves in Sheep's Clothing' today.

## I. Third, Satan tries to *Discourage* us...

- A. Discouragement is a very effective weapon.
1. Men recognize this. Two nations may be at war. One weapon they use is propaganda. They may use radio or drop fliers to try to convince the other nation's armed forces that they are outnumbered and ineffective.
  2. Many people start things and find out they are more difficult than they expected. They may become discouraged and give up and quit.
  3. Many people in sports and business try to intimidate and discourage their opponents to make it easier to do better than them.
  4. We need to try to encourage one another in many areas of life. If someone thinks no one really cares if they do well they often do not try hard. Then they fail and quit.
- B. God's people have often been discouraged.
1. Ancient Israel became discouraged in the wilderness. This led them to sin against God and be punished. Satan was very successful here.
  2. *Num 21:4-6 Then they journeyed from Mount Hor by the Way of the Red Sea, to go around the land of Edom; and the soul of the people became very discouraged on the way. 5 And the people spoke against God and against Moses: "Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and our soul loathes this worthless bread." 6 So the LORD sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and many of the people of Israel died.*
  3. The people have almost finished the 40 years of wilderness wandering. They are going up to possess the land. In Numbers 21:1-3 they have a great victory over king Arad and his nation. They should be happy and encouraged.
  4. Yet, they become discouraged by the difficulties of the road around the land of Edom they are traveling. There are several million of them and they have their flocks and herds and children. It is very difficult.
  5. Satan is victorious and they speak against God and His prophet, Moses. Many die there in the wilderness.
- C. Israel was discouraged in the days of Zerubbabel.
1. The Jews were allowed to return by king Cyrus of Persia about 538 BC. They went back with great hope of rebuilding the temple of their God. However things did not work out as they hoped.
  2. *Ezra 4:3-5 But Zerubbabel and Jeshua and the rest of the heads of the fathers' houses of Israel said to them, "You may do nothing with us to build a house for our God; but we alone will build to the LORD God of Israel, as King Cyrus the king of Persia has commanded us." 4 Then the people of the land tried to discourage the people of Judah. They troubled them in building, 5 and hired counselors against them to frustrate their purpose all the days of Cyrus king of Persia, even until the reign of Darius king of Persia.*
  3. The people of the land want them to allow them to help and participate in the temple to Jehovah. When they Jews say, "No", then they harass and discourage them. The temple is not finished for over twenty years.
  4. Satan is able to discourage the people. They had high hopes in returning to the land. They probably expected some of the prophecies to come true about God blessing them and them becoming a great nation again.
  5. And now there are difficulties. They become discouraged and are not willing to work for what they need to do. Their spirits and hopes are dashed and they give up.
  6. We often do this too. Someone has said that anything worth having is worth working for. We must often suffer to have the things that are important to us.
  7. After 15 years or more God sends two prophets to encourage them. Haggai and Zechariah rebuke the people and assure them God is with them and they will be successful. God often gives us time to do what we should before He steps in.
- D. We are warned against discouragement today.
1. It was said of Jesus that He would not be discouraged. Despite what men did to Him He could not be stopped in His work.
  2. *Isa 42:1-4 "Behold! My Servant whom I uphold, My Elect One in whom My soul delights! I have put My Spirit upon Him; He will bring forth justice to the Gentiles. 2 He will not cry out, nor raise His voice, Nor cause His voice to be heard in the street. 3 A bruised reed He will not break, And smoking flax He will not quench; He will bring forth justice for truth. 4 He will not fail nor be discouraged, Till He has established justice in the earth; And the coastlands shall wait for His law."*

3. Verse 3 is quoted in Matthew 12:20 and applied to Jesus Christ. He came with a mission from God. Isaiah said He would not fail because of becoming discouraged. Jesus faced many problem and difficulties. Yet He never quit as we do.
4. Paul tells fathers to not provoke their children to wrath —Eph 6:4. If they do they can cause them to become discouraged and quit serving God. Parents can be so demanding and critical of their children that they discourage them of every serving God.
5. *Col 3:21 Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged.*
6. The Hebrew writer warns us against becoming weary and discouraged in our souls. This is becoming spiritually discouraged and giving up.
7. *Heb 12:1-3 Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, 2 looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. 3 For consider Him who endured such hostility from sinners against Himself, lest you become weary and discouraged in your souls.*
8. Hebrews 11 is a role call of heroes of faith. Many of them suffered and died for their faith. Yet they did not give up and were successful. We need to learn from them.
9. We need to keep our eyes on Christ and our goal of heaven. We cannot take our eyes off of Him and watch the storms of the world as Peter did —Matt 14:24-32.
10. Satan can discourage many by the hypocrites in the church. He can do so by poor teachers and preachers and the sins of the brethren. He can discourage us by our own failures. We must look beyond these to our goal of heaven and not give up.

E. We see that discouragement is a great and terrible weapon of Satan.

## II. Fourth, Satan tries to *Delay* us...

- A. Procrastination is one of the great short-comings of our society.
  1. Procrastination is *postponing something, especially as a regular practice*. It is from the Latin word, 'procrastinare,' which means, "to put off until tomorrow" —MS Encarta Dict.
  2. We put off many things. Usually these are things that we should do. They are responsibilities that we have. Sometimes we put them off so long we completely forget about them.
  3. *James 4:17 Therefore, to him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin.*
  4. This is true in life. It is true in our job, in our home and in our church. We need to be doing the things we know we should do and not make excuses.
- B. Satan wants to get us to put off serving God.
  1. In order to be pleasing to the Lord we must become a child of God and be active in the church of the Lord. We must actively serve the Lord.
  2. *Acts 10:34-35 Then Peter opened his mouth and said: "In truth I perceive that God shows no partiality. 35 But in every nation whoever fears Him and works righteousness is accepted by Him."*
  3. Yet many fully intend to serve the Lord faithfully **some day**. However today they are delayed by many other things.
  4. Mary and Martha were faithful children of God. They were good friends of Jesus and helped Him and his disciples. Yet even Martha became distracted by the things of the world.
  5. *Luke 10:38-42 Now it happened as they went that He entered a certain village; and a certain woman named Martha welcomed Him into her house. 39 And she had a sister called Mary, who also sat at Jesus' feet and heard His word. 40 But Martha was distracted with much serving, and she approached Him and said, "Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Therefore tell her to help me." 41 And Jesus answered and said to her, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things. 42 But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her."*
  6. Martha did not make the best choice. Jesus worked at teaching and preaching for only about 3 years. She should have wanted to listen. She probably intended to, but later, after her work was done.
  7. Many become distracted by the things of the world. They intend to get around to being fruitful in the kingdom, but many don't.
  8. *Matt 13:22 "Now he who received seed among the thorns is he who hears the word, and the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and he becomes unfruitful."*

C. Felix is an example of someone who delayed.

1. *Acts 24:24-25 And after some days, when Felix came with his wife Drusilla, who was Jewish, he sent for Paul and heard him concerning the faith in Christ. 25 Now as he reasoned about righteousness, self-control, and the judgment to come, Felix was afraid and answered, "Go away for now; when I have a convenient time I will call for you." 26 Meanwhile he also hoped that money would be given him by Paul, that he might release him. Therefore he sent for him more often and conversed with him.*
2. Felix was a Roman governor in Judea. He was a wicked man who abused his office greatly. Yet at one point in his life he heard the truth about believed it. He had a chance to save his soul.
3. He hears of righteousness and knows he has none. He hears of self-discipline and knows he is very lacking. He hears of the Judgment of the last day and knows he is in trouble. He is terrified.
4. Yet he soothes his conscience by promising himself that he will do something about this later. He will obey the gospel in a convenient time. Satan sees to it that he never has that convenient time.
5. Someone has said that the road to hell is paved with good intentions. Many will go there who did not intend to go. We cannot wait until the last minute to get ready. We do not know when it is coming —Matt 25:1-13.
6. *Luke 12:42-46 And the Lord said, "Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom his master will make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of food in due season? 43 Blessed is that servant whom his master will find so doing when he comes. 44 Truly, I say to you that he will make him ruler over all that he has. 45 "But if that servant says in his heart, 'My master is delaying his coming,' and begins to beat the male and female servants, and to eat and drink and be drunk, 46 the master of that servant will come on a day when he is not looking for him, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in two and appoint him his portion with the unbelievers.*
7. This servant intended to change. He intended to do what was right. Yet he did not know when the master was coming and was surprised. Many Christians will be likewise surprised by Jesus' coming.

D. There comes a time when it is too late to serve the Lord.

1. The church at Corinth had many problems and issues. Paul was very concerned for them. In 2 Corinthians 5 he encouraged them to be reconciled to God —vs 20.
2. In chapter 5 he encourages them to not receive the Lord's grace in vain. If they do not turn from their worldliness and sin they can be lost.
3. *2 Cor 6:1-2 We then, as workers together with Him also plead with you not to receive the grace of God in vain. 2 For He says: "In an acceptable time I have heard you, And in the day of salvation I have helped you." Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.*
4. He says they should not put off obeying the Lord. They should not put off making the changes they needed to make and serving the Lord as He directed.
5. Paul quotes from Isa 49:8 where Jehovah was encouraging his people to return to Him before it was too late. God's people can stay in sin too long and be lost. We need to change today.
6. *2 Pet 3:10-11 But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up. 11 Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness,*

E. Delay is a very successful weapon of the devil.

## Conclusion; We must beware of being mistaken and deceived.

A. Both Christians and non-Christians must beware of Satan's schemes.

1. Non-Christians can be too discouraged to become a child of God. They can also delay until it is too late.
2. Christians can become discouraged and quit serving the Lord as they should. Some may fall down in their service and intend to return some day. But someday may never come.

B. We should obey Jehovah **today** while we can.

1. We need to believe in Jesus Christ as the Son of God who died for our sins. He was buried but God raised Him from the dead. He is now reigning at the right hand of God.
2. We must then repent of our sins and turn from them. We decide to become servants of the Lord. We

confess Jesus as our Lord and are buried with Him in baptism —Rom 6:3-7.

3. *Mark 16:15-16 And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. 16 He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned."*
4. *Acts 2:38 Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."*

C. If we can help anyone in their service to God, please let us know how we can help.