

Introduction

While I was managing Murchison Drilling Schools, the Director of Learning and Development at an offshore contractor in Houston contacted me about training their personnel in well control. We were already training some of their personnel with our courses in drilling operations. This new opportunity would be a major break-through for us, as they had about four thousand drilling personnel that would need regular training. This opportunity required us to open up a training center in Houston. Their manager understood that it would take us some time to develop enough instructors to teach all their drilling personnel, and we worked out a plan to ramp up over a two-year period. He promised that we would have five hundred people the first year while we were ramping up. We found a property in Stafford, just a few minutes from their headquarters in Sugarland, and opened a beautiful training center. During that first year of business in our Houston Training Center, we had a grand total of two people from that contractor. That drilling contractor announced the opening of their own training center. They had already purchased the property years in advance, and their plans all along were to conduct all of their own training. They never intended to use our company for training their personnel in well control. They had spent tens of millions of dollars on specialized simulator equipment that emulated their specific equipment on their drillships and semi-submersibles. I had been deceived by this manager into opening up a training center and investing a couple hundred thousand dollars. Even though we did not get much training from that contractor, we were able to secure a lot of other training contracts with other companies, and our Houston Training Center eventually became our largest training center. I lost respect and trust for the manager of that contractor because he had lied and deceived me.

One day I received an email from the training manager at another one of the offshore contractors in the U.S. He wrote that their company wanted to start using our company to train their personnel in well control. In preparation for the transition to start using our company, he asked me to send him our set of materials and well control formulas, which I gladly sent to him. I was pretty excited about this training opportunity, which could help us to grow significantly. After I had sent this manager the material, I tried to call him to set up a trip to Houston to follow up. He did not answer or return calls. He also did not respond to any of my emails. On one of my trips to Houston, our manager in Houston, and I went to their office to visit him. I discovered that they had put millions of dollars into full-sized simulators and a state-of-the-art training center. They were conducting their own well control training, and they never had any intent of using our company. He just wanted to have our materials, and he had just told me that they wanted to start using us in order to obtain all of our materials. I had been quite deceived. I lost a lot of respect and trust in the manager of that company for how he had deceived me.

God does not want us to be deceived. In our passage Paul, Silas, and Timothy wrote, “Let no one in any way deceive you.” This letter was written to the Thessalonians to correct a false word and teaching about the Day of the Lord. It had disturbed and shaken the Thessalonians, so they wrote this letter to give a proper understanding about the Day of the Lord and to keep them from being deceived. They first tell the Thessalonians not to let anyone deceive them. They were to be on guard against deception. Second, they give them the truth about the Day of the Lord. Truth is how we discern false teaching, false prophecy, and other errors. Third, they tell the Thessalonians to stand firm and hold to the traditions that they had taught them. Knowing your source of information is also important. Fourth, they end the passage with an exhortation to stand firm on truth. The passage is about not being deceived about the Day of the Lord, but the principles shared in the passage apply to every other area. God does not want us deceived in any area of our lives.

Standing Firm Against Deception – Part 1

1. Be on guard against deception (2 Th 2:1-3) – Part 1
 - A. How deception comes in
 - B. Why can we get deceived
2. Know the truth (2 Th 2:3-12) – Part 2
3. Stand firm on truth (2 Th 2:13-15) – Part 2

(2 Th 2:1–17) “Now we request you, brethren, with regard to the **coming** of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, {2} that you not be quickly shaken from your composure or be disturbed either by a spirit or a message or a letter as if from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has **come**. {3} Let no one in any way deceive you, for *it will not come* unless the apostasy **comes** first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, {4} who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God. {5} Do you not remember that while I was still with you, I was telling you these things? {6} And you know what restrains him now, so that in his time he will be revealed. {7} For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only he who now restrains *will do so* until he is taken out of the way. {8} Then that lawless one will be revealed whom the Lord will slay with the breath of His mouth and bring to an end by the appearance of His **coming**; {9} *that is*, the one whose **coming** is in accord with the activity of Satan, with all power and signs and false wonders, {10} and with all the deception of wickedness for those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the **truth** so as to be saved. {11} For this reason God will send upon them a deluding influence so that they will believe what is **false**, {12} in order that they all may be judged who did not believe the **truth**, but took pleasure in wickedness. {13} But we should always give thanks to God for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth. {14} It was for this He called you through our gospel, that you may gain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. {15} So then, brethren, stand firm and hold to the traditions which you were taught, whether by word *of mouth* or by letter from us.”

1. **Be on guard against deception** (2 Th 2:1-3a)

The letter was written to confront and correct a false word about the coming of Christ, i.e. the Day of the Lord. In chapter one, they wrote that when the Lord is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire, He will deal out retribution to those who do not know Christ. Those that have not obeyed the gospel of Christ will pay the penalty of eternal destruction. At the same time, those who have been persecuted will finally get relief at that time. On the Day of the Lord, Christ will be glorified in His saints, and this will be marveled at among all who have believed. Many people separate the gathering of the saints, the rapture, and the judgment on unbelievers. The scriptures are very clear that all of this happens when the Lord returns.

(2 Th 1:6–10) “For after all it is *only* just for God to repay with affliction those who afflict you, {7} and *to give* relief to you who are afflicted and to us as well when the Lord Jesus will be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire, {8} dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. {9} These will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power, {10} when He comes to be glorified in His saints on that day, and to be marveled at among all who have believed—for our testimony to you was believed.”

Chapter two is a continuation of the discussion that began in chapter one. Paul, Silas, and Timothy requested the brethren, the saints in Thessalonica, not to be quickly shaken from their composure or disturbed about the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, and our gathering together to Him. This judgment and the gathering all happen when the Lord returns.

(2 Th 2:1–3a) “Now we request you, brethren, with regard to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, {2} that you not be quickly shaken (saleuo) from your composure or be disturbed either by a spirit or a message or a letter as if from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come. {3} Let no one in any way deceive you...”

The word for shaken is saleuo (Strong’s G4531), and the root word means a wave. The false teaching that came in was like a storm wave, and the stormy waters threatened the peace of the Thessalonians. They cared about the welfare of the Thessalonians and wanted to comfort and strengthen them in the faith. In Ephesians 4:14, Paul wrote about how the five-fold ministry is to equip the saints and help bring the body of Christ to maturity, so that they are not tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming. This is exactly what was happening in Thessalonica, and so this letter was to address the root issue so that the Thessalonians would not be tossed here and there by waves, and would not be deceived. The Thessalonians were new believers. At the time of this second letter, they were probably only four months old in the Lord; they were not mature believers.

(Eph 4:14) “As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming;”

The false word that had been shared with the Thessalonians was that the Day of the Lord had already come, and the Thessalonians had obviously missed out on it. They were shaken and disturbed. False teaching does that. On the island of Crete, false teachers and deceivers had come in like a hurricane and upset whole families. Paul left Titus there to set things back in order. He was to raise up elders in every church, and the leaders were to silence these rebellious men who were upsetting people. The issues were different in Crete, but the damaging effect of false teaching was the same, people’s faith was upset.

(Tt 1:5–11) “For this reason I left you in Crete, that you would set in order what remains and appoint elders in every city as I directed you... {10} For there are many rebellious men, empty talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision, {11} who must be silenced because they are upsetting whole families, teaching things they should not *teach* for the sake of sordid gain.”

A. How Deception Comes In

i. By a spirit

How did the deception come in? There are three specific things mentioned, and it was probably a three-fold attack on the church. First, there was a message by a spirit. It was obviously not the Holy Spirit, but a demonic spirit. Just because a word is given by someone, we are not to blindly receive that word. We must always judge and examine the word. In 1 Thessalonians 5:20-22, they exhorted the Thessalonians not to despise or disallow prophetic utterances. They should earnestly desire prophecy, but with the prophecy they are to examine everything carefully. Any word that is given by the “spirit” is to be examined carefully. If it is good, they were to hold fast

to it. That is also what Paul wrote to the Corinthians. After a word was given, they were to pass judgment on the prophecy. We must be on guard against deception, particularly in the exercise of spiritual gifts. The use of gifts in the service without careful examination is an open invitation to deception. So, they wrote, “Let no one in any way deceive you.”

(2 Th 2:2–3a) “that you not be quickly shaken (saleuo) from your composure or be disturbed either by a spirit or a message or a letter as if from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come. {3} Let no one in any way deceive you...”

(1 Th 5:20–22) “do not despise prophetic utterances. {21} But examine everything *carefully*; hold fast to that which is good; {22} abstain from every form of evil.”

(1 Co 14:29) “Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others pass judgment.”

ii. Through a message (2 Th 2:2-3a)

The second thing mentioned was a message. This could be a prophetic message, a teaching message, or even someone telling the church that they had a message from Paul to share with the church. They mentioned, “as if from us,” so it was likely a false message brought in and Paul’s name was used to gain credibility and acceptance, even though he had not sent it. We must be on guard against deception. The enemy does not play by the rules, and telling a lie to deceive us is just one of many ways that the devil uses.

(2 Th 2:2–3a) “that you not be quickly shaken (saleuo) from your composure or be disturbed either by a spirit or a message or a letter as if from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come. {3} Let no one in any way deceive you...”

iii. Through a letter

The third thing mentioned was a letter. It appears that a fake letter was written with Paul’s name attached to it. Again, the use of Paul’s name was to deceive and bring credibility to the contents. At the end of this letter Paul wrote, “I, Paul, write this greeting with my own hand, and this is a distinguishing mark in every letter; this is the way I write.” The distinguishing mark was important to verify the authenticity of the letter. Any future letters that they received that did not have this distinguishing mark was to be rejected. They were to be on guard against deception so that they were not deceived by anyone.

(2 Th 2:2–3a) “that you not be quickly shaken (saleuo) from your composure or be disturbed either by a spirit or a message or a letter as if from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come. {3} Let no one in any way deceive you...”

(2 Th 3:17) “I, Paul, write this greeting with my own hand, and this is a distinguishing mark in every letter; this is the way I write.”

One day I received a phone call from Veronica, our Training Administrator in Houston. She was at Office Depot buying eight seventy-five-dollar Apple gift cards. She said that I had sent her an email asking her to do this, and then to reply back to that email with the certificate numbers. She said they only had seven of them, and do I want her to go to another store and pick up the other one. I replied that I knew nothing about all of this, and I had not sent her an email requesting her to do this. I told her not to buy any certificates, and to forward me the email, which she did.

Some person had set up an account with my name on it, with a Gmail account. The email did not show the email address, only the name, Bill Murchison, so it looked official. If you clicked on more information on the heading, you could see that it was not from Bill Murchison, but the email was this person's email account. If she had replied to that email with the certificate numbers, he would have received it, and I would never have known about it. He would have got away with stealing six hundred dollars. This incident led to some training with all of our instructors and administrators. I told them to always check who an email is coming from and to verify the authenticity. I also shared with them other computer safeguards, particularly relating to attachments. There are people who are out to deceive and take advantage of us. These deceivers in Thessalonica had done the same thing, used Paul's name and then shared their false messages.

iv. Through power, signs, and false wonders

There are many different ways that deception can come in. In verse nine, we see that the activity of Satan includes power and signs and false wonders. Just because a miracle happens, we are not to use the miracle to attest a word or message. Satan will use lots of different methods to try to deceive believers. We must be on guard against every form of deception so that we are not deceived.

(2 Th 2:9–10) “*that is*, the one whose coming is in accord with the activity of Satan, with all power and signs and false wonders, {10} and with all the deception of wickedness for those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved.”

When Moses was before Pharaoh, he performed signs. Then, the magicians and sorcerers also performed signs. They were not able to do all the signs that Moses did, but they had demonic powers and were able to do many signs and wonders.

(Ex 7:10–11) “So Moses and Aaron came to Pharaoh, and thus they did just as the Lord had commanded; and Aaron threw his staff down before Pharaoh and his servants, and it became a serpent. {11} Then Pharaoh also called for *the* wise men and *the* sorcerers, and they also, the magicians of Egypt, did the same with their secret arts.”

(Ex 7:20–22) “So Moses and Aaron did even as the Lord had commanded. And he lifted up the staff and struck the water that *was* in the Nile, in the sight of Pharaoh and in the sight of his servants, and all the water that *was* in the Nile was turned to blood.... {22} But the magicians of Egypt did the same with their secret arts; and Pharaoh's heart was hardened, and he did not listen to them, as the Lord had said.”

(Ex 7:22) “But the magicians of Egypt did the same with their secret arts; and Pharaoh's heart was hardened, and he did not listen to them, as the Lord had said.”

(Ex 8:6–7) “So Aaron stretched out his hand over the waters of Egypt, and the frogs came up and covered the land of Egypt. {7} The magicians did the same with their secret arts, making frogs come up on the land of Egypt.”

Those are some of the ways that deception can come in. We have to be on guard against deception so that we are not deceived by anyone.

B. Why do we get deceived?

i. Lack of spiritual maturity

Why do we get deceived? We saw in Ephesian 4 that a lack of maturity is a leading cause of being deceived. The Thessalonians were baby Christians, and they were therefore very vulnerable to deception. The church needs to be equipped by apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers so that they can grow and mature to the full stature of the measure of Christ. That will prevent much deception.

(Eph 4:11–15) “And He gave some *as* apostles, and some *as* prophets, and some *as* evangelists, and some *as* pastors and teachers, {12} for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; {13} until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ. {14} As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming; {15} but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all *aspects* into Him who is the head, *even* Christ,”

ii. Lack of judging by God’s Word

A second and closely related reason that believers get deceived is they do not judge them by God’s word. When we judge prophecy, visions, dreams, messages, and revelations, we must judge them according to God’s word. The Bereans were great examples of that. Luke recorded that they were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so. The church in Thessalonica had not run things through the scriptures and had been deceived.

(Ac 17:11) “Now these were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily *to see* whether these things were so.”

In order to judge them according to the Scriptures, we must know the Scriptures. The young believers in Thessalonica did not know the Scriptures. Sadly, most believers do not have a Biblical worldview. In February 2022, Barna came out with a survey about Biblical worldviews. Among all Christian pastors, only 37% had a Biblical Worldview. The non-denominational, independent pastors had the highest Biblical Worldview, and it was only 57%. Mainline protestant denominations only had a 32% Biblical Worldview. When Barna broke down it down by pastoral position, senior pastors had a 37% Biblical Worldview, associate pastors had a 28% Biblical Worldview, teaching pastors had only a 13% Biblical Worldview, and youth pastors only had a 12% Biblical Worldview. If the pastors in churches do not have a Biblical Worldview, and they are the ones instructing the flock, the church is in big trouble, and it is. Barna found that only 6% of “self-defined” Christians possess a Biblical Worldview. Among the Christians that claim to be born-again, only 13% hold a Biblical Worldview. In regard to judging prophecy and messages, the church and its leaders do not know God’s word and are extremely vulnerable to being deceived.

Biblical Worldview	
Role/Office	%
Senior Pastors	37%
Non-denominational senior pastors	57%
Mainline protestant senior pastors	32%
Associate pastors	28%
Teaching pastors	13%
Youth and children pastors	12%
Self-defined Christians	6%
Self-proclaiming “born again” Christians	13%

We must encourage people to read the word. We need to encourage people to have a daily Bible reading program where they can read through the entire Bible every year. We have several Bible reading plans posted on our website under Connection Tools. My daily reading plan works for me, but it may not be the best one for you. Find or develop a reading plan that works for you. In my plan, I read through Proverbs and Psalms twelve times a year. I read through the gospels and the New Testament four times a year, and I read through the Old Testament once a year. This does not include study or other times of reading, just my devotional reading.

iii. Not examining the messenger

A third reason that believers can be deceived is because they do not examine the messenger. In 1 Thessalonians Paul requested that the brethren appreciate those that diligently labor among them. We saw that the Greek word that is translated as appreciate is oida, (Strong’s G14920, and really means to know. We need to know those who are sowing into our lives. In verse fifteen, they wrote, “So then, brethren, stand firm and hold to the traditions which you were taught, whether by word of mouth or by letter from us.” The Thessalonians had got to know Paul, Silas, and Timothy very well in the three weeks they had been with them, and they could be trusted.

(1 Th 5:12) “But we request of you, brethren, that you appreciate (oida, Strong’s G1492, know) those who diligently labor among you, and have charge over you in the Lord and give you instruction,”

(2 Th 2:15) “So then, brethren, stand firm and hold to the traditions which you were taught, whether by word *of mouth* or by letter from us.”

Jesus warned in Matthew 7, “Beware of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves. You will know them by their fruits.” We need to look at the fruit of those who bring messages. Jesus said, “A good tree cannot produce bad fruit, nor can a bad tree produce good fruit.... So then, you will know them by their fruits.” We must examine the fruit of those that want to teach, share prophetic messages, visions, dreams, etc. These false prophets and false teachers come in sheep’s clothing, but they are not sheep; they are ravenous wolves who deceive and lead astray.

(Mt 7:15–20) “Beware of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves. {16} “You will know them by their fruits. Grapes are not gathered from thorn *bushes* nor figs from thistles, are they? {17} “So every good tree bears good fruit, but the bad tree bears bad fruit. {18} “A good tree cannot produce bad fruit, nor

can a bad tree produce good fruit. {19} “Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. {20} “So then, you will know them by their fruits.”

Peter’s second letter has a whole chapter devoted to recognizing these false teachers. He said that false prophets and false teachers will arise and secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the Master. He devotes much of the chapter to their fruit. They are sensual, greedy, fleshly, despise authority, daring, self-willed, have eyes full of adultery. They revel in their deceptions, entice unstable souls, and have a heart trained in greed. Peter wrote all of this under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit because God does not want you and I to be deceived. We must do what Jesus taught us, to examine the fruit of those that want to minister to us.

(2 Pe 2:1–14) “But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will also be false teachers among you, who will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing swift destruction upon themselves. {2} Many will follow their sensuality, and because of them the way of the truth will be maligned; {3} and in *their* greed they will exploit you with false words... {10} and especially those who indulge the flesh in *its* corrupt desires and despise authority. Daring, self-willed... {13} suffering wrong as the wages of doing wrong. They count it a pleasure to revel in the daytime. They are stains and blemishes, reveling in their deceptions, as they carouse with you, {14} having eyes full of adultery that never cease from sin, enticing unstable souls, having a heart trained in greed, accursed children;”

iv. Not alert and watchful

A fourth reason why believers can be deceived is that we are not watchful. We saw in 1 Thessalonians 5 that we are not to be of night or of darkness, and not to sleep as others do, but to be alert and sober. The word alert is *gregoreo* (Strong’s G1127), which is translated as watch twenty-one times out of twenty-three occurrences. We must be constantly be on guard, alert, watchful, and in prayer.

(1 Th 5:4–6) “But you, brethren, are not in darkness, that the day would overtake you like a thief; {5} for you are all sons of light and sons of day. We are not of night nor of darkness; {6} so then let us not sleep as others do, but let us be **alert (*gregoreo*)** and sober.”

In 1 Thessalonians they were to be watchful about the signs of the Day of the Lord. In Matthew 26, Jesus asked Peter, James, and John to watch with Him in the garden, and they were to pray about temptations.

(Mt 26:41) “Keep watching and praying that you may not enter into temptation; the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.”

Our alertness and watchfulness also applies to be deceived. When Paul met with the Ephesian elders at Miletus, he warned them to be on guard for themselves and for all the flock. He said that he knew that after his departure savage wolves would come in, not sparing the flock. Therefore, they were to be on the alert (*gregoreo*). They were to be alertly praying and guarding the flock. The sheep need to be watchful, and their shepherds, the elders of the church must continually be watching, guarding, and praying for the flock so that these deceivers do not come in and take advantage of the flock. Sadly, surveys of pastors reveals that the majority of them spend less than five minutes a day in prayer, and do not spend much time in God’s word. Most churches are very vulnerable to deception. The church in Thessalonica had all new believers;

they did not have seasoned leaders who were mature in the Lord to pray over them. They had been deceived and taken advantage of by these false prophets and teachers.

(Ac 20:28–31) “Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. {29} “I know that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; {30} and from among your own selves men will arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them. {31} “Therefore be on the alert (gregoreo), remembering that night and day for a period of three years I did not cease to admonish each one with tears.”

As a pastor, I always have my antennas up when people share things. I am running what they say through the filter of God’s word. I am testing the message, the spirit of the message, the fruit of the messenger, and other things. I am being watchful over the flock. One man began coming to our church plant in New Mexico with the intent of bringing us under the Law. After patiently working with the man, I eventually had to ban him from coming. His message was wrong, and his motives were wrong.

Another man and his wife began coming, and they were part of a cult called the Way, which do not believe in the deity of Christ or the Holy Spirit. I picked up on all of this at a fellowship meal after the service. I shared that they were welcome to come and learn, but they were not welcome to share their beliefs with our congregation. They chose not to come any more, which was good, because they were not there to learn, but to share their false teachings with our congregation.

On another occasion, a woman and a family came to our church and by alertly listening to them, I learned that they did not believe in the final authority of the Scriptures. They also did not have a proper understanding or respect for authority. They were there to take over the church. We had to very firmly tell them that in our church the word of God is the final authority, and all messages and things from the Spirit had to be filtered through the word of God, and if they did not line up, they were not to be accepted. We must examine everything carefully by God’s word. As I looked at the fruit of their lives, the woman leading this group had terrible fruit. She was one of the rudest women that I have ever met in my life. As a pastor, I have to watch over and guard the flock from the savage wolves that come in dressed like sheep, but are ravenous wolves on the inside. Sheep need to be alert and watchful, and pastors, in particular, need to alertly watch and guard the flock.

v. A defiled or seared conscience

A fifth reason why people can be deceived is found in 1 Timothy 4:1-2. Paul wrote that those with a seared conscience will fall away and pay attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons. Paul lived his life with a perfectly good conscience, and we need to teach, exhort, and encourage people to live with a good conscience. Our consciences need to be programmed and calibrated with God’s word. Our consciences are not God’s plumbline; God’s word is the plumbline. Our consciences are like an instrument that is programmed to help us stay on course in our lives, and when our consciences get defiled or seared, they no longer protect us and we become vulnerable to deceitful spirits and doctrines.

(1 Ti 4:1–2) “But the Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons, {2} by means of the hypocrisy of liars seared in their own conscience as with a branding iron,”

Conclusion and Applications

God does not want His people to be deceived. He gave us His Word so that we will know the truth. He wants us to know His word and to apply it in every area of our lives, and this includes examining visions, messages, letters, prophecies, signs, wonders, and miracles. He exhorts us to be sober and alert, and watchful. He warns us to be on guard. He gave gift ministries to equip the church so that the church can become mature, and less susceptible to deception. He gives elders or shepherds to each church family, and they are to watch over and guard the flock.

Unfortunately, the Thessalonians were all new believers. They did not have mature spiritual leaders, and they did not have mature believers in the congregation, and they were susceptible to deception. They did not know the Word of God, and could not judge things by the Word of God. Again, they were susceptible. This letter was written to give them the truth about the Day of the Lord and to remove the false teaching or false messages that they had been given.

What about your life? Are you easily deceived? When you hear a message, are you a Berean that examines everything carefully with the Scriptures to make sure it is so? Do you judge prophecies and visions and things that you hear according to the Scriptures? Do you look at the fruit in the lives that are sharing messages? Do you know those who labor among you?

How is your Bible knowledge? If you took the Barna survey, would you fare better than the church at large? Would you fare better than the pastors? Do you have a Biblical Worldview? Do you have a good Bible reading plan that you follow? Have you read through the Old and the New Testament? Knowing Scripture is critical to our maturing process, and in guarding against deception. I exhort you to begin reading the Scriptures. Make it a priority in your life. Some like to hear, rather than read. There are programs that will read the Scriptures to you, so if you are an auditory learner, listen to the Scriptures. The important principle is that you become knowledgeable in the Scriptures.

In Part 2, we will look at the remainder of 2 Thessalonians 2, and how we are to know the truth, and to stand firm on the truth. Paul, Silas, and Timothy gave the Thessalonians the events that must take place prior to the Day of the Lord, so that they would no longer be deceived by the false words that they had been given.

2. **Know the truth** (2 Th 2:3-12)
3. **Stand firm on truth** (2 Th 2:13-15)

Closing Prayer

Father God, thank You for giving us Your Scriptures. Thank You for the truth, and how it helps us to grow and mature. Thank You for how Your word helps prevent us from being deceived. Help us to know Your Word. Give us discernment so we can properly examine things that we hear or see. Help us to be alert and watchful at all times. Help us become more knowledgeable about the Day of the Lord so that we will not be deceived about what must happen before the Day of the Lord occurs, and what happens when You come. I pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen.

Standing Firm Against Deception – Part 1

Introduction (2 Th 2:1–17)

1. **Be on guard against deception** (2 Th 2:1-3a, 2 Th 1:6–10, 2 Th 2:1-3a, Eph 4:14, Tit 1:5-11)

A. How Deception Comes In

- i. By a spirit (2 Th 2:2–3a, 1 Th 5:20–22, 1 Co 14:29)
- ii. Through a message (2 Th 2:2-3a)
- iii. Through a letter (2 Th 3:17)
- iv. Through power, signs, and false wonders (2 Th 2:9–10, Ex 7:10-11, 20-22, 8:6–7)

B. Why can we get deceived?

- i. Lack of spiritual maturity (Eph 4:11–15)
- ii. Lack of judging by God’s Word (Ac 17:11)
- iii. Not examining the messenger (1 Th 5:12, 2 Th 2:15, Mt 7:15-20, 2 Pe 2:1–14)
- iv. Not alert and watchful (1 Th 5:4–6, Mt 26:41, Ac 20:28–31)
- v. A defiled or seared conscience (1 Ti 4:1–2)

Conclusion and Applications