

Don't Fall For It!

Joe Slater

Sometimes I don't know whether to laugh or cry. So many "friends" on social media keep falling for the same hoaxes that were debunked years ago. "Oh no! Facebook is going to start charging us for having an account!" Um, no, they aren't. They couldn't even if they wanted to, because you haven't given them your credit card number or your bank information. Somebody started the hoax, it went viral, and gullible people keep passing it on. (sigh)

The same thing happens in spiritual matters. Jesus warned that false christs would arise. *"Then if anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Christ!' or 'There!' do not believe it"* (Matthew 24:23-24). His words came true in the first century AD and many were led astray. It still happens today, though less frequently.

John cautioned us to *"test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world"* (1 John 4:1). Just because someone says something with an air of authority doesn't make it true! Remember the noble Bereans who *"received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so"* (Acts 17:11).

It has been accurately stated that a lie, repeated often enough, becomes accepted as truth. Countless falsehoods are routinely treated as true today. For instance:

"Peter was the first Pope."

"The Catholic Church gave us the Bible."

"All you need to do to be saved is believe in Jesus."

"The denominations are branches on Jesus, the vine."

"We're all going to the same place but taking different roads."

Don't fall for it! Search the Scriptures! Know the truth!

A Vacation From Jesus

Vacation season is upon us! Soon we will hit the highways, byways, and airways, heading to far away destinations. With great expectations we'll travel to our favorite vacation spots for fun, adventure, rest, and relaxation. Finally, after a long winter, we can forget about work and life's dreary obligations for a week or two.

In our Americanized state of mind, we have come to believe that we deserve a break from the norm, and we long to get away from it all. Not only do we take one or two weeks for vacation, but we must include several weekend getaways as well.

It is true that there are times when we need a break. Jesus and His disciples took time to rest from the work of ministry (Mark 6:31), and we, too, need to take time to relax and refresh ourselves.

Sadly, as many Christians head out to make memories in distant places, they take a vacation from the Lord as well. Sundays are spent doing vacation stuff instead of meeting with the saints and worshipping our Mighty God. There is no singing, no praying, no sharing of the scriptures, no remembrance of Christ with the Lord's Supper. When we do this, we make a conscious and willing decision to neglect corporate worship, which is sinful according to Hebrews 10:23-31. Jesus calls us to be His disciples every day (Luke 9:23) which certainly includes Sundays during our vacation.

While online booking our hotels and making reservations, finding a place to worship should be included as part of our vacation planning. The experience of meeting and worshipping with a congregation in other places can be very rewarding. If we return to the same location yearly, we can develop relationships with Christians there and enjoy Christian fellowship while at our favorite vacation spot. Let's not ever take a vacation from Jesus!

--Jay Launius (Maud, TX)

A Question Of Education

We were waiting our turn in a friend's office at the university in my hometown. We overheard the conversation taking place in the other room. A man was asking to register for a post-graduate course. Taken aback, my friend said, "Sir, you must have a degree before you can take that course!" The response was, "Will a degree from Cambridge do?"

Shocked silence was the response. The door opened, and a man in a weathered cowboy hat, faded blue jeans, and dusty boots emerged. We recognized him as one of the wealthiest ranchers in the area, and also the owner of a café that we frequented at the edge of town. But no one dreamed that he had a degree from Cambridge!

In John 7:15-18 we find the educated teachers of the Law of Moses questioning the credentials of a Man from Galilee who had not attended any of their rabbinical schools. They didn't recognize Him as the unique Son of God.

Outward appearances can never be the measure by which we judge the ability of another, and we cannot assume the educational level based on occupation. Beware of first impressions that divide or degrade!

--George V. Mortensen (adapted) via *Power For Today*

^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^

URGENCY AND EMERGENCY

The tragedy of these times is that the situation is desperate, but the saints are not. If the saints were as desperate as the situation, something might happen. The Scriptures portray the times in terms of emergency that calls for urgency.

--Vance Havner