

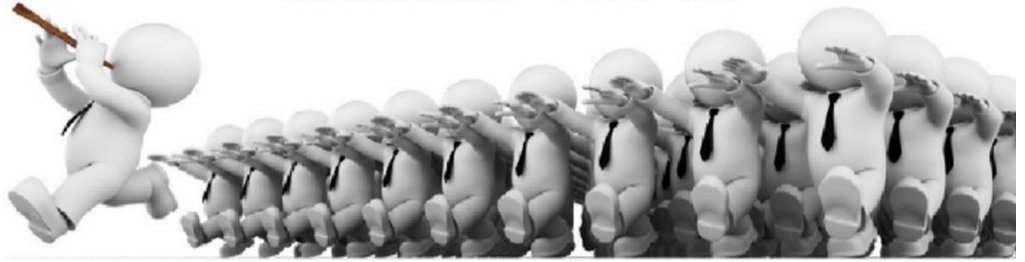
“Led Astray” –

Matthew 24:1-14

by Pastor Tim Dodson
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"Led Astray"

Matthew 24:1-14



Matthew 24:1-14 *Then Jesus went out and departed from the temple, and His disciples came up*

to show Him the buildings of the temple. 2 And Jesus said to them, "Do you not see all these things? Assuredly, I say to you, not one stone shall be left here upon another, that shall not be thrown down." 3 Now as He sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, "Tell us, when will these things be? And what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?" 4 And Jesus answered and said to them: "Take heed that no one deceives you. 5 "For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will deceive many. 6 "And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not troubled; for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. 7 "For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places. 8 "All these are the beginning of sorrows. 9 "Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for My name's sake. 10 "And then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another. 11 "Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many. 12 "And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold. 13 "But he who endures to the end shall be saved. 14 "And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.

The world did not come to an end on September 6, 1994. Nor on May 21, 2011, or October 21 of that same year, though Harold Camping had said in each case that it would. Like so many who came before him, Camping was obsessed with the idea of the second coming of Christ and the end of the world. It was a major aspect of discussion on his radio show at Family Radio Network, where he was president. His radio listeners contributed to his \$100 million campaign to convince the world that May 21 2011 would be the rapture day. Camping, like all the rest, kept moving the date each time he was wrong. Eventually, Camping went quiet, perhaps finally learning the great christian precept that says “where scripture is silent, so should we.”

There's an entire [Wikipedia page](#) full of entries about people who thought the end was here. There was the British hens that laid eggs with “Christ is Coming” etched into them (yes, it was a [hoax](#)) to pagan numerology based on Revelation, Daniel, and other books of the Bible.

2 Peter 3:3 says “...*I want to remind you that in the last days scoffers will come, mocking the truth and following their own desires.*” So we should not be surprised that false information is being put out, and in fact, we should be expecting it. Later in this chapter in Matthew we are told that we will not know the day of His second coming...that the angels will not know the day, that even JESUS does not know the day...*only the Father knows!* And yet the predictors keep coming...

2 Peter 3:10-11 “*But the day of the Lord will come as unexpectedly as a thief. Then the heavens will pass away with a terrible noise, and the very elements themselves will disappear in fire, and the earth and everything on it will be found to deserve judgment. Since everything around us is going to be destroyed like this, what holy and godly lives you should live...*”

2 Peter 3:14 *And so, dear friends, while you are waiting for these things to happen, make every effort to be found living peaceful lives that are pure and blameless in his sight.*

So scripture warns that “the day of the Lord will come like a thief.” Yet such scriptural facts as these do not seem to deter the greater Christian churches from flocking to any number of yearly “prophecy conferences” around the country and for that matter the world, just so we will be sure to have our bags packed when our taxi arrives.

While so much of scriptural tidbits on the last days can be ambiguous and mysterious, one thing is not. And that is how we are to wait. Scripture tells us that “while you are waiting for these things, strive to be found by him at peace, without spot or blemish.” The point to scriptural prophecy is to wait in patience while “constantly cultivating a relationship with Christ.” At the grocery store, at work, in your leisure activities... wherever you are and whatever you are doing, awareness of the “end of days” and the return of Christ should scripturally and frankly quite naturally lead a person into a sense of constant vigilance. Not just that we are ready to go, but that we are living our lives like we are ready to go. Because the truth is that for many of us there is no sense of peace, even with the people that claim to be saved and redeemed.

The other side of all of this, is those who will be led astray on the opposite end of the spectrum. Those that, *at least in their hearts*, will begin to spiritually “doze off” and many who will doctrinally “write off” vast scriptural truths and directives in favor of social peer pressure, ever changing cultural dictates and shifts in secular worldview. 2 Peter 3:3-4 says “...and in the last days scoffers will come, mocking the truth and following their own desires. They will say, ‘What happened to the promise that Jesus is coming again? From before the times of our ancestors, everything has remained the same since the world was first created.’”

These will not necessarily be those *outside* the church, but those who will come in amongst the church and alter it to fit their lusts, desires, and social agenda.

Acts 20:29 – 31a *“I know that false teachers, like vicious wolves, will come in among you after I leave, not sparing the flock. Even some men from your own group will rise up and distort the truth in order to draw a following. (so) Watch out!”*

John 16:2-3 *“...the time is coming when those who kill you will think they are doing a holy service for God. This is because they have never known the Father or me.”*

2 Timothy 3:5 *“...(they have a) form of godliness but denying its power...from such people turn away!”*

Today we not only have large shifts of the population abandoning Christianity...*especially Biblical Christianity*, we have significant numbers of churches, denominations, and certainly individuals that have rewritten the tenants of Christianity into a far more flexible and fluid version of faith. One that shifts and moves according to social mores and cultural changes. The church and the faith no longer affects the world, but instead the world now alters the faith...re-writing it to fit modern ideals and worldly priorities.

So today we are witness to radical reshaping of the world’s understanding of what Christianity even is. So much so, that we have a generation of young people that never knew anything else but the one that takes prominence today. Thus today is the baseline, and anything that came before is merely “old and archaic.” All I can say is

that if Christianity is indeed changing and is organic in such, then I want nothing to do with Christianity. Because truth does not change, and according to scripture, neither does God. But change is occurring even if it is based on a lie. More than 85% of American adults were raised Christian, but nearly a quarter of those who were raised Christian no longer identify with Christianity. This speaks of both the world in general as well as the terrible state of parenting in this world.

These changes are taking place across the whole of the religious landscape, affecting all regions of the country and many demographic groups. While the drop in Christian affiliation is particularly pronounced among young adults, it is occurring among Americans of all ages. Having long since abandoned the Bible as the guide, we have pushed off from that shore and are now adrift in a sea of arbitrary definitions and narratives. Christianity is effectively whatever you say it is, and to rebut any of it is to invite the public label of cult.

Social protocol overshadows God's Word. The Bible has much to say about hot button topics such as sexual activity and sexual identity. About participation in worldly activities, priorities, and participation. About family life, marriage and divorce, handling our money, and working our jobs. The "guidebook" is amazingly complete but we however have decided that we know better and we really don't want anyone telling us what to do.

For example, we know that we should not date or marry an unbeliever. 2 Corinthians 6:14 *"Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness?"* Exodus warns about marrying into non-believers. (34:16) *"Then you will accept their daughters, who sacrifice to other gods, as wives for your sons. And they will seduce your sons to commit adultery against me by worshiping other gods."*

De 7:3 *"You must not intermarry with them. Do not let your daughters and sons marry their sons and daughters..."*

Knowing these things has not deterred us. For today nearly four-in-ten (39%) report that they are in religiously mixed marriages, compared with 19% among those who got married before 1960. Nearly one-in-five people surveyed (20%) who got married since 2010 are either "religiously unaffiliated respondents" who married a Christian spouse or Christians who married an "unaffiliated" spouse. By contrast, just 5% of people who got married before 1960 fit this profile.

We know that the New Testament has much to say about the church and church life. Scripture is replete with descriptions and directives concerning church life and participation. Fifty or 60 years ago, churches, in particular, were a center of social and cultural life in America. For many people, that's still the case, but surveys tell us as certainly as we witness such around us that many people are creating their social lives outside of a religious context—rejecting that kind of social connection altogether. Even those that do, tend to seek the church that fits their social beliefs and cultural paradigm rather than one that stands upon scripture and promotes Christ in glory and grace. Aberrant structures have risen also, such as the "home church movement" that ignores precepts of pastor, elders, and tithing that is clearly taught in the Bible, and mega-churches that cater to the arena rock concert dynamic while fostering an emotionally stimulating consumer mentality instead of a "body-life" unity so prescribed by Christ.

We want in "our way." We want it to feel good, cost us nothing, be emotionally and physically stimulating, and never never make us feel bad. The market for spirituality in the U.S. has perhaps never been so robust. The self-help industry, which often include alternative modes of spirituality along with motivational books and life

coaching, brings in \$13 billion a year in the form of books, retreats, classes and more. In the last 50 years, modern spiritual gurus like Deepak Chopra, Ram Dass, Oprah Winfrey, and countless others emerged with a new prescription for well-being. Yoga has become a \$27 billion industry with more than 20 million practitioners in the U.S. Meditation and mindfulness were quick to follow, gaining fans among major companies like Google, General Mills, Aetna and Goldman Sachs.

And Jesus asks “*Do you not see all these things? Assuredly, I say to you, not one stone shall be left here upon another, that shall not be thrown down.*” According to Christ, it is all going to come to an end. If that is fact, *how then shall we live?*

Why Are So Many Christians Obsessed With Predicting the Rapture?

[Pacific Standard Magazine](#) Apr 22, 2016

By Laura Ortberg Turner