

LETTER TWELVE

Be Prepared

Can We Know What Is Coming?

Preparation is not about living in fear of tomorrow. It is about becoming faithful today.

The Question Before Us

This may be the most difficult letter I have written—not because any one subject is impossible to understand, but because it touches so many areas of life that are rapidly changing before our eyes. Viewed separately, these developments may appear unrelated. Considered together, however, they reveal patterns that every believer should thoughtfully and prayerfully examine.

Can we know precisely what is coming?

Probably not in every detail. But Scripture tells us enough about the nature of deception, the strategies of the enemy, and the responsibilities of God's people that we should not be caught spiritually asleep or completely unprepared.

Some readers will disagree with my understanding of the end times, the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple, the tribulation of that generation, the rapture, the millennial reign of Christ, or Satan's "little season." I take no offense at that disagreement, nor is my purpose to engage in endless debate.

I am asking the reader to consider a larger and more urgent question:

What should the Ecclesia be doing in the eleventh hour?

Whatever conclusions we reach concerning prophetic timelines, the mission Christ gave His people remains unchanged. We are to make disciples of the nations, teach them to obey everything He commanded, and faithfully represent His Kingdom wherever He has placed us.

Scripture repeatedly warns that times of spiritual conflict are marked by deception, lawlessness, moral confusion, and departure from the faith. It is not enough merely to notice what is happening. The Ecclesia must discern the Word of God, hear what the Holy Spirit is saying, and understand the will of the Father.

Again like the sons of Issachar, we must understand the times and know what to do. Discernment that produces no faithful response is incomplete.

The purpose of this letter is to examine several strategies through which deception operates and test them by Scripture. My concern is not merely to identify deception, but to help prepare the people of God so they will not be overcome by it.

Some subjects may be familiar; others may be new or controversial. Yet each deserves thoughtful biblical examination because our calling is not simply to observe the times. We are called to fulfill Christ's mission in the midst of them.

We do not approach these matters as frightened people searching for danger around every corner. We approach them as sons and daughters of the King and ambassadors of His Kingdom.

Jesus Christ possesses all authority in heaven and on earth. He has given us His Spirit, entrusted us with the Gospel, and commissioned us to disciple the nations. Whatever challenges may lie ahead, our confidence does not rest in human strength, political power, or our ability to predict every event. Our confidence rests in our victorious King.

We prepare so that we may stand firm in truth, care for those entrusted to us, serve others in times of difficulty, resist deception, and continue representing Christ when the systems around us are being shaken.

The “Little Season”—A Time of Testing and Deception

Scripture consistently warns God's people about deception.

When the disciples asked Jesus about the destruction of the Temple and the end of the age, His first warning was not about wars, earthquakes, or political upheaval. It was:

“Take heed that no one deceives you” (Matthew 24:4).

Although Jesus gave that warning within the immediate context of the events leading to Jerusalem's destruction, it reveals a strategy the enemy has employed from the beginning. Deception remains one of his most effective weapons against individuals, congregations, and nations.

Paul likewise warned Timothy, “In the last days perilous times shall come” (2 Timothy 3:1). He described people as lovers of themselves and money—proud, boastful, rebellious, ungrateful, without self-control, and lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God. Most troubling, they would maintain “a form of godliness” while denying its power.

The danger would not come only from open enemies of God. Some deception would wear religious clothing.

Paul continued:

“Evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived” (2 Timothy 3:13).

That final phrase is important. Those who deceive others may themselves be deceived. Deception does not always come through people who knowingly spread falsehood. It can also spread through sincere people who have accepted a lie and then pass it to others as truth.

Paul gave a similar warning in his first letter to Timothy:

“The Spirit expressly says that in later times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons” (1 Timothy 4:1).

The greatest danger facing the Ecclesia is not merely persecution from outside. It is deception that gains agreement within.

Paul warned the Galatian believers, “If you bite and devour each other, watch out or you will be destroyed by each other” (Galatians 5:15). This warning was not directed toward the pagan world. It was addressed to believers.

If the enemy can persuade believers to see one another as the enemy, he can divert their attention from the true spiritual battle. Instead of confronting lies with truth, overcoming evil with good, and serving one another in love, the people of God begin accusing, discrediting, and destroying one another.

Religious deception is especially dangerous because it can disguise the works of the flesh as zeal for God. Pride can masquerade as conviction. Accusation can be mistaken for discernment. Division can be defended as faithfulness. Cruelty can be justified as standing for truth.

Scripture never calls us to abandon truth for the sake of artificial unity. Neither does it permit us to use truth as a weapon against the people Christ has called us to love.

A prepared Ecclesia must therefore discern not only deception operating in the world, but also pride, accusation, and division attempting to operate within its own ranks.

A Trespasser—not the Rightful King

From my understanding of Scripture, these warnings help us recognize the nature of what Revelation calls Satan’s “little season.” Revelation 20 tells us that after the thousand years, Satan would be released for a short time and would go out “to deceive the nations” (Revelation 20:7–8).

I recognize that believers interpret this passage differently. Whatever position we hold, one truth must remain central: Jesus Christ has triumphed and possesses all authority in heaven and on earth.

From my perspective, Satan does not return as the rightful ruler of the earth. He operates as a trespasser who seeks influence through lies, ignorance, fear, temptation, and human agreement.

- He cannot dethrone Christ, so he attempts to hide Christ's victory.
- He cannot take away the Kingdom, so he persuades believers that the Kingdom has not come.
- He cannot remove the identity Christ has given His people, so he deceives them into living as though they are powerless.
- He cannot cancel the Great Commission, so he convinces the Ecclesia that the nations are beyond hope and escape is its only remaining expectation.

His strategy is to divide nation against nation, race against race, class against class, denomination against denomination, and Christian against Christian. Confusion, accusation, fear, and division prepare the ground upon which deception flourishes.

Recognizing these conditions, however, is only the beginning. It is relatively easy to identify what is wrong with the world. The greater challenge is knowing what the people of God should do.

The Ecclesia must understand the times and know how to respond if we are fulfill His mission for us. That response requires biblical wisdom, spiritual discernment, courage, fellowship, practical preparation, and unwavering faithfulness to Jesus Christ.

We are not preparing because Satan is victorious. We are preparing because Christ is victorious—and we intend to remain faithful to Him whatever may come.

The Anatomy of Deception

Before we can recognize the many forms deception may take, we must understand deception from a biblical perspective.

Most Christians think of deception as false doctrine, misinformation, or an outright lie. Deception can include all three, but Scripture reveals something deeper.

Deception moves us away from the mind, truth, character, and purposes of God and toward independence from Him. It causes us to question what God has said, misunderstand what He is doing, misidentify the enemy, and pursue actions that appear reasonable but lead us away from faithful obedience.

The first deception recorded in Scripture did not begin with an obvious lie. It began with a question:

“Has God indeed said...?” (Genesis 3:1).

The serpent first caused Eve to question God's Word. He then contradicted the consequences God had declared: “You will not certainly die” (Genesis 3:4). Next, he distorted the character and motives of God: “For God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God” (Genesis 3:5).

The serpent suggested that God was withholding something good from humanity. He redirected Eve's attention from everything God had freely provided to the one thing He had forbidden. He then offered a counterfeit promise: humanity could obtain wisdom, identity, and advancement independently of God.

The anatomy of deception can be seen from the beginning:

- It questions what God has said.
- It contradicts or subtly alters His Word.
- It distorts His character and motives.
- It redirects attention from what God has provided.
- It creates dissatisfaction with our God-given identity.
- It offers a counterfeit promise.
- It invites us to act independently of God.
- It produces consequences far beyond the original decision.

Deception does not always deny the truth completely. Often, it mixes enough truth with error to make the lie believable. Adam and Eve's eyes were opened—but not in the way the serpent led them to expect. They gained experiential knowledge of evil, but they lost innocence, fellowship, and the freedom they had enjoyed with God.

- The serpent promised advancement but produced bondage.
- He promised enlightenment but brought darkness.
- He promised a greater identity but distorted the identity God had already given them.

This pattern continues throughout Scripture.

God warned Jeremiah about prophets who claimed to speak for Him but communicated “false visions,” divinations, and “the delusions of their own minds” (Jeremiah 14:14). These prophets were dangerous precisely because their messages appeared religious. They spoke in God's name, but God had neither sent them nor spoken through them.

Religious deception can be more dangerous than an obvious lie because it uses spiritual language, biblical terminology, religious authority, and sometimes even Scripture itself while subtly moving people away from the mind and mission of God.

Deception Redirects Our Attention

One of deception's most effective strategies is misdirection. It places intense emphasis on one issue so that we fail to recognize something more important.

A magician directs the audience's eyes toward one hand while the other performs the illusion. In a similar way, spiritual deception can consume our attention with arguments, controversies, predictions, personalities, and secondary matters while the mission Christ entrusted to us is neglected.

The distracting issue may not be entirely false. It may even contain legitimate concerns. The deception lies in allowing it to become so dominant that it displaces obedience to what matters most.

The Tyranny of the Urgent

Modern life is increasingly governed by what has been called “the tyranny of the urgent.”

Messages demand immediate answers. Deadlines press upon us. Notifications interrupt us. Problems insist they must be handled now. We hurry from one obligation to another, always busy but rarely still enough to ask whether the things consuming our time are truly important.

The urgent is not always the important.

Important things often do not shout for our attention. Time with God, meaningful conversation with a spouse, teaching our children, encouraging a discouraged friend, caring for an aging parent, studying Scripture, developing our gifts, and serving those God has placed around us can easily be postponed.

We tell ourselves:

- “I will pray when things settle down.”
- “I will spend time with my family when I finish this project.”
- “I will answer God’s call when life becomes less demanding.”

But life rarely becomes less demanding.

We can spend years responding to what appears urgent while neglecting what is eternally important. We can become extremely efficient at completing tasks that have little relationship to the purpose for which God placed us here.

Paul warned believers:

“Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil” (Ephesians 5:15–16).

A prepared Ecclesia must distinguish between what is merely demanding and what is genuinely important. Otherwise, the pressures of daily life will determine our priorities rather than the will of God.

The enemy does not always have to convince us to abandon our calling. Sometimes he only needs to keep us too busy to fulfill it.

When Technology Replaces Relationship

Technology has given us remarkable tools for communication, education, business, and ministry. Social media, phones, tablets, games, and applications are not inherently evil. They can connect people across great distances and place tremendous knowledge within our reach.

But a tool becomes dangerous when it begins to control the person who was intended to control it.

We are more connected technologically than any generation in history, yet many people are lonely, anxious, isolated, and relationally disconnected. Families can sit in the same room while each person lives in a different digital world. Friends may follow one another online while rarely sharing an honest conversation. We can know what hundreds of people posted today while remaining unaware of the pain carried by the person sitting beside us.

Social media can create the appearance of relationship without the sacrifice relationship requires.

True relationship demands presence. It requires listening, patience, forgiveness, accountability, encouragement, and a willingness to carry one another's burdens. An application can transmit information, but it cannot replace the fellowship for which God created us.

Jesus did not say the world would recognize His disciples by the reach of their platforms. He said:

“By this everyone will know that you are My disciples, if you love one another” (John 13:35).

This is another way deception steals from us. It may not openly command us to reject family, fellowship, prayer, or service. It simply consumes the time and attention those relationships require. Minutes become hours. Hours become days. Days become years.

Precious time that could have been invested in God, family, friendship, discipleship, creativity, service, and Kingdom purpose quietly disappears.

The issue is not merely how much technology we use. The deeper questions are:

- Is this tool serving God's purpose in my life, or consuming the life He has given me?
- Is it strengthening my relationships, or replacing them?
- Is it helping me fulfill my calling, or distracting me from it?
- Am I controlling the tool, or has the tool begun controlling me?

A prepared Ecclesia must recover the stewardship of attention, time, and relationship. These are gifts from God, and once spent, they cannot be reclaimed.

When Activity Replaces Obedience

Deception can keep us extremely active while preventing us from accomplishing God's purpose.

Religious activity is not necessarily the same as obedience. We can attend meetings, study prophecy, debate doctrine, build organizations, defend traditions, and remain constantly busy and fail to make disciples, love one another, serve our neighbors, or represent Christ within the spheres where He has placed us.

Activity can give us the feeling that we are accomplishing something for God while distracting us from what He has actually commanded.

The question is not merely, “Are we busy?”

The question is, “Are we faithfully doing what Christ commissioned His Ecclesia to do?”

Truth and sound doctrine matter. We must never sacrifice truth to maintain an artificial unity. Yet we can become so committed to proving we are right that we destroy the very people Christ commanded us to love.

Paul wrote, “Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace” (Ephesians 4:3). He also appealed to believers to be “of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind” (Philippians 2:2).

This does not mean believers must agree about every interpretation. It means our common life in Christ, love for one another, and shared allegiance to the King must remain greater than our disagreements.

Prophetic study should strengthen our faithfulness to Christ. Whatever conclusions we reach concerning modern Israel, prophetic events, or the last days, our attention must remain centered upon Jesus Christ, His present reign, His Kingdom, and the mission He gave His Ecclesia.

If prophetic study causes us to neglect the Great Commission, surrender the nations, or wait passively for escape, then something has displaced the mission.

Deception does not always tell us to stop serving God. Sometimes it keeps us busy doing many religious things so that we never do the thing He has called us to do.

Five Questions That Test What We Hear

The most dangerous deception may not be the lie we immediately reject. It may be the half-truth we embrace because it confirms what we already want to believe, justifies what we are already doing, or distracts us from what Christ has commanded.

Therefore, the question we must ask is not simply, “Is this statement true or false?” We must also ask:

- Does it agree with the whole counsel of Scripture?
- Does it reveal the character of Christ?
- Does it strengthen love and faithfulness?

- Does it direct us toward obedience?
- Does it advance the mission Christ entrusted to His Ecclesia—or distract us from it?

That is how a prepared Ecclesia begins to recognize the anatomy of deception.

What Does It Mean to Be Prepared?

We may not know every detail of what is coming. We may disagree about timelines, prophetic interpretations, and how particular events will unfold. But we know enough to understand what Christ requires of His people.

Preparation is not an attempt to predict every event or protect ourselves from every difficulty. It is the deliberate work of becoming a people who can remain faithful to Jesus Christ when the world around us is being shaken.

- A prepared Ecclesia knows the Word of God and recognizes when it is being distorted.
- A prepared Ecclesia knows its identity and refuses to live as powerless or abandoned.
- A prepared Ecclesia walks in the Spirit rather than being governed by fear, anger, pride, or accusation.
- A prepared Ecclesia values relationship and fellowship over isolation and artificial connection.
- A prepared Ecclesia stewards its time and attention rather than surrendering them to the tyranny of the urgent.
- A prepared Ecclesia recognizes the difference between religious activity and faithful obedience.
- A prepared Ecclesia refuses to bite and devour its own members while the enemy advances deception.
- A prepared Ecclesia understands the times, knows what to do, and remains about the Father's business.

Summary—Prepared for Faithfulness

The purpose of this letter has not been to create fear or claim that we can predict every development awaiting the world. It has been to awaken the Ecclesia to the nature of deception and the necessity of preparation.

Deception rarely announces itself. It enters through a question, mixes truth with error, redirects our attention, appeals to our desires, and invites our agreement. It can operate through governments, institutions, religious systems, entertainment, technology, and even our own unexamined beliefs.

It may appear as false doctrine, but it can also appear as religious activity without obedience, zeal without love, information without wisdom, connection without relationship, busyness without purpose, and unity without truth.

Therefore, preparation must begin within us.

- We must draw near to Christ.
- We must renew our minds through His Word.
- We must listen to the Holy Spirit.
- We must strengthen our families and relationships.
- We must recover genuine fellowship within the Ecclesia.
- We must steward our time, attention, resources, and technology.
- We must test every voice, including those that speak in the name of God.
- We must remain united in Christ without abandoning truth.
- We must faithfully continue the mission He entrusted to us.

Peter warned:

“Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith” (1 Peter 5:8–9).

We do not resist the enemy through fear, human strength, or obsessive attention to darkness. We resist him by standing firm in faith, truth, love, fellowship, obedience, and confidence in the victory of Jesus Christ.

We are not preparing because Satan is victorious. We are preparing because Christ is victorious—and we intend to remain faithful to Him whatever may come.

That is what it means to be prepared. That is what it means to occupy. And that is what it means to follow Him with our all.



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The letter does not end here. Continue the journey as we learn to think biblically, live courageously, and faithfully represent Christ's Kingdom in every sphere of life. Enter the War Room at 11thHourWarRoom.org

