



Pray for the Nation ~ INOI MO TE MOTU

Intercessors for New Zealand

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APRIL 2017

“Do not be deceived. God will not be mocked. You will reap whatever you sow. If you sow to your flesh, you will reap corruption from the flesh. But if you sow to the Spirit, you will reap eternal life from the Spirit.” (*Galatians 6:7-8*)

Deception ! **The choice is ours!**

Way back in the beginning, God took the man (Adam) He had created and put him in the Garden of Eden to till the land and look after it. God said he could eat of every tree of the garden except the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, because if he ate from that tree he would die. Then God created Eve to be with Adam as a helper and partner. Sometime later, Satan tempted Eve (not Adam) to eat of the forbidden tree, asking “Did God say that you should not eat from any tree?” to which Eve replied that they could eat of any tree except the one in the midst of the garden, for if they ate of it they would die. Obviously, Adam had told Eve this. The devil then contradicted what God had said to Adam, saying they would not die if they ate of it, but would become like God, knowing good and evil. So Satan’s original question to Eve became a denial of what God had said. Eve believed the devil, ate and then gave some to Adam who also ate, in spite of God having told him not to. See Genesis 2:15 to 3:19.

So Eve was deceived by Satan because she believed his lie. Adam sinned against God because he did what God had told him not to do.

Deception is believing what is a lie, and going against what God has told us – either disobeying what He has told us to do, or doing what He has said not to do.

We live in a world which is full of deception because people deny that God exists, or refuse to obey His call to repentance.

Paul speaks of people who do not serve the Lord, but serve their own desires, and who use “smooth talk and flattery” to deceive the simple-minded. Satan used this with Eve because he said she would “become like God, knowing good and evil.” Had she believed what God had told Adam, and refused to listen to Satan, she would not have been deceived. Adam knew what God had said but disobeyed and thus sinned against God.

We need to know the Truth – this is why God’s Word, the Bible, is so important – both to **know it** and **obey it!**

Let us not be deceived by ignorance; or sin by disobedience. Smooth talk and flattery (rebellion and

pride) are two major areas in which we can all be tempted.

In 1 Corinthians 6:9-10 Paul writes, “Do you not know that wrongdoers will not inherit the Kingdom of God? Do not be deceived! Fornicators, idol worshippers, adulterers, male prostitutes, sodomites, thieves, the greedy, drunkards, revilers, robbers – *none of these will inherit the Kingdom of God.*” Revelation 22:14-15 says, “Blessed are those people who wash their robes so that they will have the right to the tree of life and may enter the holy city by the gates. Outside are the dogs, those who practice sorcery [witchcraft and spiritism], fornicators, murderers, idol worshippers and everyone who practices what is false.”

Sources of deception

The Bible shows us a number of ways through which people can be deceived, including the following:

Ignorance of the Truth. This is why it is so important to read, study and understand the Word of God.

Unbelief – not believing God’s Word or God’s Spirit when they speak to us.

Disobedience to the Truth – that is, sin, especially knowingly and deliberately disobeying God.

Pride. Pride is a major cause of leading to deception.

Self. Self-deception; believing a lie.

Satan. Satan is a major author of deception and lies.

The lives, words and actions of unbelievers can also lead to deception, because they do not believe God.

“Seemingly plausible” arguments.

Security from deception

Read, study and obey the Scriptures – the Word of God.

Walk in the Holy Spirit – be led, guided, empowered and protected by Him.

Fellowship with other believers who are sound in the Faith.

Walk in humility.

Do what is right – and ask for God’s help to do this!

Pray for discernment.

Resist the enemy.

This is why we need to know the Truth and not be deceived by lies, no matter how convincing the argument may be. There is safety in the *wise counsel* of a number of mature, Godly Christians.

Don't be deceived into disobeying what God has said, and thereby sin against God.

There is forgiveness for sin if we will repent and ask God's forgiveness (which comes by God's grace, and which we receive by faith). But we cannot continue our lives in sin and rebellion, and expect God's forgiveness if we are so deceived that we will not turn from sin with God's help. Compromise with sin is deception. Heaven is only for those who have been made holy through the blood of Jesus Christ our Saviour and Lord.

If we have been born again and are seeking to live lives that are pleasing to God, the Truth is, that by God's

grace we have been saved, through faith. And this does not come from ourselves – it is the gift of God; it is not earned by works so no-one can boast in what they have done (Ephesians 2:8-10). Jesus paid the penalty for all the sins of the redeemed when He shed His blood and gave His life, taking our place, on the cross. Sin leads to death. Acceptance of God's grace by faith, leads to life everlasting, and a life here and now that always seeks to honour and obey our Lord.

To God be the glory! To Jesus be our thanks! To the Holy Spirit, through Whom we are born again, be the praise!



BIBLE STUDY

His name is *J e s u s*

2. *Filled with the Holy Spirit*

Jesus' early childhood

Between the ages of about 2 years and 30 years, we read very little about the boyhood and early manhood of Jesus. His parents returned to Nazareth from Egypt, and it is said of Jesus that He "grew and became strong, was filled with wisdom, and the favour of God was upon Him" (Luke 2:40). What a testimony for any child or young adult to have!

The Bible also says that Joseph, Mary and Jesus every year went down from Nazareth to Jerusalem for the Feast of Passover. When Jesus was 12 years old and His parents were returning to Nazareth after the Feast, they thought Jesus was amongst the group of people who had come down to Jerusalem with them. They travelled all day on their journey back before they realised they had left Him behind in Jerusalem. On returning to find Him, after three days they found Him in the temple, talking with the teachers, listening to them, and asking them questions. His teachers were amazed at His understanding and His answers! When His mother asked why He had done this, He replied, "Why were you searching for Me? Didn't you know that I must be in My Father's House?" They returned to Nazareth and the Bible says "Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man." (Luke 2:41-52)

When Jesus was a baby, His parents dedicated Him to God in the temple (Luke 2:22-38). He grew up in the knowledge and wisdom of God, and in the Word and ways of God; and the favour of God was upon Him. As a result, He not only grew up with God's favour on Him, but also He lived His life in such a way that other people were attracted to Him too. Surely this is the way that every child should be raised, to the best of their ability, by Christian parents.

Jesus is our Example

Jesus has left us all an example of how we should live – dedicated to God, and walking in His ways day by day. This world would be incredibly different if every Christian (and especially if every professing Christian) lived like this!

- John 13:15 Jesus said, "I have set you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you."
- 1 Timothy 4:12 Paul said to Timothy, "Let no one despise your youth, but set the believers an example in speech and conduct; in love, in faith, in purity."
- 1 Peter 2:21 Peter says, "If you endure when you do what is right but suffer for it, you have God's approval. For you have been called to this, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you should follow in His steps."
- 1 John 2:6 John says, "This is how we can be sure that we are in Him: whoever says 'I abide in Him' ought to walk just as He walked."

Jesus is our example!

Jesus' baptism

Jesus' cousin, John the Baptist, was a prophet who called people to repent of their sins, turn to God and be baptised in water as a symbol of them being washed from sin and rising out of the water into a new life of following (or, discipleship to) the Lord. Because of his unique ministry, some people thought John might be the Messiah, but he said to them, "I baptize you with water for repentance, but One Who is more powerful than me is coming after me; I am not worthy to carry His sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire." (Matthew 3:11)

Consequently, when Jesus came to John and wanted John to baptize Him, John thought it was all the wrong way around – Jesus should baptize him! Jesus replied, "Let it be so [as I have asked] for it is proper for us to fulfill all righteousness in this way" – and so John baptized Jesus in water. Remember: He is our example.

"When Jesus had been baptized, just as He came up from the water, suddenly the heavens were opened to Him and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on Him. Then a voice from Heaven said, 'This is My Beloved Son, with Whom I am well pleased.'" (Matthew 3:16-17). Remember: He is our example.

So Jesus was baptized in water and in the Holy Spirit. He identified with Mankind as a Man. He was born into a fallen world, although He personally had no sin. As our example, He went through the waters of baptism. As our example, He was also baptized in the Holy Spirit.

Jesus' ministry on earth flowed out from Him being baptized and filled with the Holy Spirit, and His walking in the Spirit all His life. Acts 10:38 says: "God anointed Jesus Christ with the Holy Spirit and power, and Jesus went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him." Jesus did good works by the power of the Spirit, and He said to His disciples, "As the Father has sent Me, I am sending you." (John 20:21). "You shall receive power after the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you shall be witnesses to Me ..." (Acts 1:8)

If Jesus needed to be baptized in water, and baptized in the Holy Spirit, how much more do we! In fact, this is so important for us that we are told in the Bible to "walk in the Spirit"; to "pray in the Spirit"; to "live by the Spirit" (Romans 8:4; Ephesians 6:18; Galatians 5:16, 25). It is the power of the Holy Spirit which enabled Jesus, as a Man living on this earth, to do what He did. Remember: He is our example!

Jesus only did what He saw His Father doing

Jesus said to His disciples, "Truly I tell you, the Son can do nothing on His own, but only what He sees the Father doing. For whatever the Father does, the Son does likewise. ... I can do nothing on My own. As I hear, I

judge, because I seek to do, not My own will, but the will of Him Who sent Me." (John 5:19, 30)

Jesus also said, "When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will realize that I AM, and that I do nothing on My own but I speak these things as the Father instructed Me. The One Who sent Me is with Me; He has not left Me alone, for I always do what is pleasing to Him." (John 8:28-29)

We all need to continually seek to hear, see and discern what God is saying and doing, to and through us. We need to walk in His Spirit and so please and glorify Him.

QUESTIONS

1. What are some of the most important things that parents can do to encourage their children to 'grow and become strong, be filled with wisdom, and know the favour of God upon them', like Jesus (Luke 2:40)?
2. What can parents also do to encourage them to 'increase in favour with God and people' (Luke 2:52)?
3. How important is it that all believers are baptised in water and the Holy Spirit, as Jesus was?
4. Jesus always did what He saw His Father doing. Can we also "see" what God is wanting to do in and through our lives? How can we at least get a glimpse of this?
5. What does it mean to be "filled with the Spirit" (Eph. 5:18); to "walk in the Spirit" (Gal. 5:16, 25; Rom. 8:4-5); and to "pray at all times in the Spirit" (Eph. 6:18)?
6. How well does my life demonstrate my faith and love for Jesus, both to Christians and to people who are not yet Christians?

Prayer Suggestions

PRAYING FOR OUR LEADERS

- Please continue to pray for all our leaders in Government and in Local Government. A list of important Cabinet positions, and the Minister associated with that role in Cabinet, is given below.
- Please pray for Prayer @ Parliament which is held three times a year in the Grand Hall at Parliament, as Christians gather to worship the Lord, share and pray for our nation's leaders – not just our Government, but also leaders in other fields.
- Pray for the General Elections to be held in September – for God's over-ruling as to who are our chosen leaders: pray for MPs who will bring blessing to our nation through laws which help to promote righteousness, justice, fairness, and unity in our country.

IMPORTANT CABINET POSITIONS and their current Ministers

Prime Minister: Bill English
Deputy Prime Minister: Paula Bennett (and Minister of Police)
Minister of Finance: Steven Joyce
Leader of the House: Gerry Brownlee
Minister of Justice: Amy Adams
Minister of Health: Jonathan Coleman

Minister for Social Development: Anne Tolley
Minister of Education: Hekia Parata

A complete list of Ministers and their roles in Parliament can be found at:

<https://www.dpmc.govt.nz/cabinet/ministers/ministerial-list>

- Please pray for all our Ministers, Party Leaders, and other MPs, especially the MP representing your electorate.
- Last month's Prayer @ Parliament **Closing Prayer:**
King of kings and Lord of lords:
We praise and thank You for the tremendous privilege of being able to meet together freely, here in the Great Hall of our nation's Parliament, to intercede and Pray for the Nation.

We thank You for the freedom we have in our country, and the encouragement we have, to live as Christians, and let our light so shine before others that they may see our good works and give glory – not to us – but to You, our Father in Heaven.

Thank You for those people You have set in authority over us, both in our nation's Government, and in Local Government. And for the many other leaders you have given us in many different fields.

We continue to pray that You will bless, inspire and always grant us good and righteous leaders, who will lead according to Your divine principles, leading our nation in ways that

bring blessing, encouragement and the overall well-being of our people.

May we, as a nation, always be a good and Godly example of how a nation ought to live.

May our witness and prayers, as Christians, always be strong and effective, as we sow the seeds of the Faith throughout our land. May we also reap an abundant harvest that will bring glory and honour to You, our Lord and God.

Our Father, Who is in Heaven, may Your name always be kept holy. ***May Your Kingdom come! May Your will be done here on Earth, as it is in Heaven!***

In Jesus' name, we pray.

Now unto Him Who is able to keep us from falling, and present us faultless before the presence of His glory, with exceeding joy; to the only wise God, our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and forever, Amen!

ALPHA

Hopefully most New Zealand Christians have heard of Alpha Courses which have been running for a good number of years now, seeking to share the Gospel with ordinary New Zealanders in a way which they can understand and relate to, and also respond to. Many people have come to Christ as a result of these Courses which have been run by many churches throughout the country.

Alpha run a number of other Courses apart from the basic (original) Alpha Course; these include an Alpha Prayer Course; Marriage and Parenting Course; Film series; and Youth Film series.

Please pray for Alpha, as it is one of the major ways in which people are coming to Christ in our nation. For further information see www.alpha.org.nz

GOD'S VISION FOR NEW ZEALAND

Where there is no vision [or prophetic direction], the people perish; but blessed are those who keep the Law. (Proverbs 29:18)

A small group of Christians who felt that they should seek God for His vision for New Zealand, prayed and sought the Lord, and were given the following:

GOD'S VISION FOR NEW ZEALAND

– A DECLARATION & AFFIRMATION –

This Vision and these words are for declaration and affirmation by believers in Jesus Christ as the Son of the Living God – the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

New Zealand is Jesus Christ's, Aotearoa O Ihu Karaiti:

- ~ a people living under the Government of God,
- ~ a land of righteousness,
- ~ a beacon to the nations,
- ~ a refuge for the persecuted,
- ~ a people who walk humbly with God.

For those who have confirmation or a 'witness' that this Vision is truly of God, it is necessary to believe in faith that it will be, and spiritually already is. This is the 'faith' that is the reality of the thing hoped for.

Through such persevering trust that stands throughout all trials and troubles, apparent failure, doubt, discouragement, mocking and all manner of opposition, the outcome is assured for the time and manner Christ Jesus chooses.

To all those to whom the Lord Jesus speaks, seek Him for what He requires of you concerning the Vision, and hold fast until it comes!

Pray for the Nation, 105 Woodman Drive, Tawa, Wellington 5028, New Zealand

Please note the change of address. Our PO Box address will be closed at the end of March 2017

Weekly *Prayer Updates* can be found on our website: www.pray-for-the-nation.org/prayer-updates.php

This monthly *Prayer Letter* is also on our website: www.pray-for-the-nation.org/monthly-magazines.php