



## Daily Verse and Comment

### Matthew 24:24

(24) For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect.

*New King James Version*

Because of the way this verse is translated, one can be left with the impression that it is not possible for the elect to be deceived. This concept is a close cousin to the theory of eternal security—the idea that once we accept [Jesus Christ](#) as our personal Savior, it is impossible for us to [fall away](#) (see [John 15:5-6](#); [I Corinthians 9:27](#); Hebrews 6:4-6; 10:26-31; 12:25; [II Peter 1:10-11](#); [3:17-18](#); [I Timothy 1:19](#); [6:10](#)). Similarly, this verse is sometimes interpreted to mean that if we are one of the elect, our minds are perfectly and forever protected from deception.

It is a tantalizing thought, implying that we are spiritually invincible once we accept the blood of Christ and receive the [Holy Spirit](#). Yet, if that were the case, the rest of the New Testament would consist of *vastly* different themes and warnings. In fact, Jesus begins this same prophecy in [Matthew 24:4](#) with the warning to His followers, "Take heed that no one deceives you"! If His followers *could* not be deceived, our Creator would have no cause to preface His prophecy in such a way.

In addition to Jesus' warning here, the apostles warn repeatedly and specifically against being deceived. For instance, in [Romans 16:17-18](#), Paul says to note those who cause divisions and [offenses](#) and avoid them—because "by smooth talk and flattering words they *deceive the hearts of the unsuspecting*" (verse 18; *Holman Christian Standard Bible*). If it were not possible for them to deceive us, we would have no reason to avoid divisive people. In [I Corinthians 3:18](#), he warns against deceiving *ourselves* by thinking we are wise by the world's standards. A few chapters later, he again warns against deceiving ourselves by believing that the unrighteous will

inherit the Kingdom ([I Corinthians 6:9](#)). He cautions in [I Corinthians 15:33](#), "*Do not be deceived: 'Evil company corrupts good habits.'*"

In [Galatians 6:3](#), Paul says, "For if anyone thinks himself to be something, when he is nothing, *he deceives himself*." He warns in [Ephesians 5:6](#), "Do not let anyone *deceive you* with empty words . . ." [Colossians 2:4-8](#) cautions against being deceived by persuasive words and cheated through philosophy and empty deceit. He begins [II Thessalonians 2:3](#) with the warning, "Let no one deceive you *by any means*. . . ." Finally, in Hebrews 3:13, the author warns against being hardened by the deceitfulness of [sin](#).

This is just a sampling of the many direct and indirect warnings against deception. It should be clear that the epistles' writers fully believed that it was possible for their audience—the same "elect" as in [Matthew 24:24](#)—to be deceived, and thus, they wrote as they did. Therefore, [Matthew 24:24](#) says that if there is a way to deceive one of the elect, the master deceiver will use it. In other words, we can take measures to guard against deception, but if one of the elect refuses to take heed, he will be deceived.

— David C. Grabbe

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**[The Truth About Deception \(Part One\)](#)**

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