

## Sermon 2: Seeing the Source of Deception

This second session in our seven-week study explains the difficulties we face in living for eternity while on this earth. It exposes the source of deception that blinds the eyes of men to the truths of God. Satan does not want Christians living as representatives of God's eternity. This sermon should help believers understand Satan's objectives and his deceitful tricks and learn how to be victorious in the Christian life.

### Fast Facts

In our book, *Cultural Captives*, we report several statistical facts providing insight into this week's study. These statistics represent the average result from four national surveys of American religious thought and behavior.

- The percent of emerging adults who believe that Satan is a real force in the world today ranges from about 30% of non-evangelical emerging adults to about 60% of evangelical emerging adults. Most Americans do not believe that there is an external force for evil in this world.
- The percent of emerging adults who are born-again, have a biblical worldview, and have a minimally consistent religious practice (i.e. prayer once a day, read the Bible once per week, go to church a couple of times a month, involved in a small group) is approximately 4%. Thus, over 95 out of 100 emerging adults do not have a biblical worldview that carries over into their religious practices.

Using our survey of young adults, we can divide those emerging adults who profess to being born-again into four distinct groups:

- (1) those with a biblical worldview who attend church regularly (24%)
- (2) those with a biblical worldview who do not attend church regularly (6%)
- (3) those without a biblical worldview who attend church regularly (37%),
- (4) those without a biblical worldview who do not attend church regularly (33%).

Less than one in four born-again emerging adults have a biblical worldview that includes at least a minimal level of religious activity.

### Sermon Video

Cultural Captivity Defined [vimeo.com/probe/captive](https://vimeo.com/probe/captive)



Christians should be living as citizens of heaven. Therefore, they should be aware that Satan opposes God's purpose and uses the world and the flesh to attempt to attack believers.



## Suggested Sermon Ideas

### Seeing the Source of Deception

#### I. Introduction

“See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Christ.” Colossians 2:8

##### A. Does Satan exist?

1. Barna survey found four of ten Christians (40%) strongly agreed that Satan “is not a living being but is a symbol of evil.”
2. Another 19% said they “agree somewhat” with the perspective.
3. Some Christians seem to have internal contradictions in their worldview.
4. Half of those Christians who believed that Satan is merely a symbol of evil nevertheless agreed that a person can be under the influence of spiritual forces.

##### B. Does it matter if we believe in Satan?

1. Some Christians think that belief in Satan is optional. After all, if you believe in Jesus that should be enough.
2. Satan is mentioned 29 times in the Gospels, and 25 of those references are from Jesus.
3. Satan is mentioned in the Old Testament and in every New Testament book.

“There are two equal and opposite errors into which our race an fall about the devils. One is to disbelieve their existence. The other is to believe and to feel an unhealthy interest in them. They themselves are equally pleased by both errors and hail a materialist or a magician with the same delight.” C.S. Lewis

#### II. Satan’s names

##### A. Ruler of the world (John 12:31; 16:11, also 14:30)

1. It means that Satan can use the elements of society, culture, and government to achieve his evil ends in the world.
2. Doesn’t mean every aspect of society or culture is evil and doesn’t mean he has complete control.

##### B. God of this world (2 Corinthians 4:4)

1. Paul says Satan has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel.
2. Satan sets himself up as a false god to many.
3. His power over religion and the ability to promote false religions keeps people from the true gospel.

##### C. Prince of the Air (Ephesians 2:2)

1. Satan controls the thoughts of those in the world’s system.
2. “The whole world lies in the power of the evil one” (1 John 5:19).
3. That is why we find ourselves in the midst of spiritual warfare.

#### D. Adversary

1. Satan in Hebrew means “adversary.”
2. Satan is opposed to God and His plans, including God’s plan for our lives.
3. Old Testament uses this name 18 times, and the New Testament uses this name 34 times.

#### E. Devil

1. Devil comes from the New Testament Greek word, diabolos.
2. It is derived from the word “to throw.” The devil throws accusations and lies at us while he slanders us.
3. This name occurs 36 times in the New Testament.

#### F. Tempter

1. Satan is also known as the tempter.
2. When he appeared to Jesus in the wilderness, he was referred to as the tempter (Matthew 4:3).
3. Paul also called him “the tempter” (1 Thessalonians 3:5) affirming the fact that Satan tempts people to sin.

#### G. Satan’s deception

1. Prevents people from seeing the truth (2 Corinthians 4:4, parable of sower (Matthew 13:1-9).
2. He sows doubt - led Adam and Even to sin (Genesis 3:1-7) and Job to doubt.
3. Satan is the source of false teaching (Matthew 13:24-30, 36-39)

### III. Captive of the Culture

“See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Christ.” Colossians 2:8

#### A. Beware

1. How do we avoid being captured?
2. We have to be on guard!
3. We are to “see to it” we are not taken captive.
4. In other words, we are to “beware” and “be careful.
5. Like the unsuspecting soldier who falls into the trap of the enemy, we can fall into the traps laid by Satan and by those who oppose the Bible.
6. It appears from what Paul wrote that the Christians had not yet fallen victim to false teachers, but their existence presented a clear and present danger.

#### B. Captured

1. We must understand the consequences of capture.
2. When the enemy captures us, we are taken away.
3. We are the plunder or the booty that is removed.
4. Captives of our culture are taken away to a place not of their choosing.
5. Paul is not talking about Christians losing their salvation, but he is talking about the powerful forces that will take us away from the pure gospel.
6. The warning against being taken captive is in the present tense. That means the danger of cultural captivity is an ever-present danger.
7. It is tempting to think that after you accept Jesus Christ that you have achieved total spiritual victory.

### C. False philosophies

1. Paul also tells us what we must guard against to avoid being taken captive. He says we must guard against dangerous philosophies.
2. That does not mean that Christians should never study philosophy.
3. The word philosophy is a compound word that means “love of wisdom.”
4. Believers should love godly wisdom (Proverbs 29), but they should reject the philosophies of the world.
5. Paul not only identifies the danger of secular philosophy but also warns against “empty deception.”
6. The word empty implies an absence of anything substantive.
7. Paul gives a similar warning to the Ephesians (5:6) - “Let no one deceive you with empty words.”

### D. Traditions and elementary principles

1. Paul also warns them about the “traditions of men.”
2. He is not warning them to avoid all traditions. In other letters to Christians (1 Cor. 11) he encourages them to “hold to the traditions you were taught.”
3. Paul warns that another source of false philosophy can come from “the elementary principles of the world.”
4. We could also refer to these as the first principles or the basic principles we find in our world.
5. We are living a spiritual life not just a physical life.
6. He also explains to the Galatians (4:3) that “we were children [and] were held in bondage under the elemental things of the world.”

### E. Conclusion

1. Instead of being captured by the culture, we should be captured by Christ.
2. We cannot allow ourselves to be captured by anything in the world.
3. We are to depend on Him in order to avoid being led astray by false ideas and empty deception.

## IV. Spiritual Warfare

“Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might. Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore, take up the full armor of God, so that you will be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm.” Ephesians 6:10-13

### A. Be strong

1. We are to be “strong in the Lord” and steadfast in our resistance to the Devil.
2. One way we do this is to put on the whole armor of God.
3. But before we put on the armor, we need to understand the nature of spiritual warfare.
4. Paul not only assures us there is a spiritual war, but he also warns us that we must use the right weapons to fight the battle.

5. These are divinely empowered weapons in order to repel Satan's attack.
6. Our battle is not against flesh and blood but against spiritual forces.

“Stand firm therefore, having girded your loins with truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; in addition to all, taking up the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.” Ephesians 6:14-17

#### B. The belt

1. “Stand firm therefore, having girded your loins with truth” (Ephesians 6:14a).
2. Roman soldier would gird up his tunic. Sword and the breastplate attached.
3. Discerning Christian must be able to handle the word of truth (2 Timothy 2:15) and expose Satan's lies.

#### C. Breastplate

1. We also have “the breastplate of righteousness” (Ephesians 6:14b).
2. Breastplate on a Roman soldier was a protective vest overlaid with metal.
3. Our righteousness comes from Christ's righteousness placed upon us and protects us from the intrusion of Satan and his demons in our lives.

#### D. Shoes

1. “And having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace” (Ephesians 6:15).
2. We are to walk in the “gospel of peace.” The gospel is “good news” and it is a message that we are to bring to the world.

#### E. Shield

1. “We are to take “the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one”. (Ephesians 6:16).
2. This “shield of faith” protects us from any arrows Satan might launch at us (cannot prevent Satan from sending these arrows, it can protect us).

#### F. Helmet

1. “And take the helmet of salvation”. (Ephesians 6:17a).
2. The helmet on a Roman soldier protected his head from blows.
3. Helmet allows Satan and his demons to hit us squarely in the head and still be effective in spiritual warfare.

#### G. Sword

1. We are also to take up “the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God”. (Ephesians 6:17b).
2. Every Roman soldier would carry a foot long sword into battle.
3. We are to use the Bible like a sword against our enemy.