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## FALSE RELIGION DECEIVES MANY

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Religious people are often deceived, even as they deceive others. When the Lord Jesus was on earth, there were none more religious than the high ranking religious leaders. They made a show of their religious activities. Jesus severely criticized them for this.

"Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayer: therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation." (Matthew 23:14)

Appearing religious gained them respect from, and power over, the people. They began to think of themselves as the owners of God's people. Though they'd seen Christ raise the dead, heal lepers, give sight to the blind, and voices to the mutes, they hated Him. People were following Him. The religious leaders, who should have been urging people to follow Christ, perceived Him as a dangerous threat to their own authority. So they called a meeting to discuss this problem.

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"Then gathered the chief priests and the Pharisees a council, and said, What do we? for this man doeth many miracles. If we let him thus alone, all men will believe on him: and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation." (John 11:47-48)

These wicked religious leaders ultimately stirred up the people to demand the crucifixion of Christ rather than Barabbas. Pilate could find no fault with Christ and wanted to let Him go, so he gave the people a choice. He would either release Jesus, or the dangerous murderer, Barabbas. Those religious leaders saw this as an opportunity to get rid of Jesus.

"But the chief priests and elders persuaded the multitude that they should ask Barabbas, and destroy Jesus." (Matthew 27:20)

Do the leaders of your church grab power by inserting themselves as mediators between you and Christ? Do they use this power to extract wealth from you which they then use to solidify their own religious power? If so, they're leading you astray. There is only one legitimate mediator between you and God the Father.

"For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;" (1 Timothy 2:5)

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