

Recognizing The True Christ

Matthew 24:23-28

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23 “Then if anyone says to you, ‘Behold, here is the Christ,’ or ‘There He is,’ do not believe him.

You should be alert as to what is **TRUTH** and what is **FALSE!** Jesus Christ began this entire discussion on The Tribulation by warning of deception: in verses 4, 5 and 11 of chapter 24.

*4 And Jesus answered and said to them,
“See to it that no one misleads you.*

5 For many will come in My name, saying, ‘I am the Christ,’ and will mislead many

11 Many false prophets will arise and will mislead many

Now, Jesus is going to spend some **six verses** (23-28) on the issue of ‘not being deceived’ and ‘how powerful Satan is to deceive.’

And oh, people, while this is speaking of **The Tribulation** (first 3 ½ years) and **The Great Tribulation** (second 3 ½ years). Believers in the Church Age need to be so careful so as not to be deceived by false teachers or charlatans who can make a lie sound so good.

It is amazing how careful some people are when choosing a doctor but will sit under someone in a church who does not teach 'sound doctrine'

2 Timothy 4:3

For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires,

Remember
Opening The Bible
Is The Most Dangerous Thing You Will Do !

Therefore you should be most careful whom you listen to in the teaching of the Word of God. A careful study of 1 Corinthians chapters 2-3 is an excellent guide and warns us on choosing a Pastor-Teacher.

Now, as He describes the last 3 ½ years of **The Great Tribulation**, He warns against being deceived.

The Greek adverb translated *then* does not indicate any phase of time. But here in our passage it is after the abomination is set up. So, sometime in The Great Tribulation these false claims will come into play to entice the Israelites. In times of trouble people are always looking for a deliverer, a Messiah.

Warning: The motivation for being deceived is a desire to come to Christ. At the heart of this warning by Jesus Christ is the all importance of *having a relationship with Jesus Christ*.

There are so many areas of being deceived.

For example:

One may give full devotion to God, however, **Jesus Christ teaches that the only way to the Father is through Him.**

And then there are those who are deceived by false teaching that the way to Jesus Christ or to God the Father is by DOING; by being moral; going to church; receiving the rituals of Baptism and Communion.

By DO and DO, they never get to Christ by grace through faith which is the only way to Jesus and the only way to God the Father.

So Jesus warns them of a TRUTH that applies to the Church Age while it is essential in The Great Tribulation,

DO NOT BE DECEIVED BY FALSE CHRIST.

Jesus Christ will now spend some 6 verses warning not to be deceived by False Christ!

So the question arises, why?

Why this great emphasis on not being deceived by False Christ?

Why the rise of all these claims to be the Christ?

Why would they be so deceived? What is the Anti-Christ doing?

From the standpoint of the Jews

1st The horror and distress of the times of the Great Tribulation will cause many to be looking for '**a**' if not '**the**' Messiah to put an end to all the killings and evil; all their heartaches and fears.

It is from the 'flesh nature' that they will be desiring a relief.

2nd Those Jews who do know a '**little**' Scripture know that He is coming but do not know enough Scripture to be warned against going after a false Messiah.

We come back to that principle of identifying counterfeit money... be trained in identifying the real money.

A good student of the Word of God(—Daniel, Revelation, Isaiah, etc.—) will know what to look for in the coming of the True Messiah.

And right here we are told one thing they can look for to identify the TRUE Messiah:

Verse 27

“For just as the lightning comes from the east and flashes even to the west, so will the coming of the Son of Man be.

From The Standpoint Of The Antichrist, The Beast:

Dr. Thomas O. Figart in *The King of the Kingdom of Heaven* gives the following from the standpoint of the Dictator of the Revived Roman Empire.

“Following the evacuation of Judea (the command by Jesus Christ to get out of Jerusalem in the middle of the Tribulation) the false messengers of Satan will find it necessary to attempt to infiltrate those who have fled to the mountains. First they will claim that Christ has already appeared, saying ‘Lo, here is Christ, or there’ (24:23)

In order to bolster such claims they shall show great signs and wonders, two words that are used of Christ’s miracles in Acts 2:22; so that their counterfeit ministry ***‘if possible might deceive the very elect.’***

Obviously this will fail, yet the attempt will be made”

And he is trying to lure these in so he can kill them!

Remember Satan’s desire is to exterminate all Jews from earth.

Jesus Christ gives just a few of
the major warning signs of a False Christ:

- 1 Beware following the crowds
- 2 Beware of false prophets
- 3 Beware of deceiving signs and wonders.

Not only will Satan send in rumors of False Christ and actual False Christ but he also sends in “false prophets”. Their job is the same as the job all through the Old Testament of false prophets:

Give Prophecies That Go Against The Plan Of God.

Ezekiel 22:28

“Her prophets have smeared whitewash for them, seeing false visions and divining lies for them, saying, ‘Thus says the Lord GOD,’ when the LORD has not spoken.

We have already noted how Peter (2 Peter 2:1) spoke of false teachers—to the church and false prophets to Israel.

The false prophets Jesus Christ speaks of here certainly includes the false prophet of Revelation 13:11-18.

One of Satan's strategies or schemes or devices of Satan (2 Corinthians 2:11) is to combine both political leader and religious leader into one.

This is not unlike the Muslims, we should recognize Islamic movement not just as religious but very political.

The reason why they are getting away with so much in this country is that most people—politicians—see them only as religious but they are very political in their objectives.

In Revelation 13 Satan joins together political (Revelation 13:1-10) with religious leadership (Revelation 13:11-18)

We have noted several times that the designation “anti-christ” is found only in 1 John 2:18 and 1 John 4:3.

But it should be noted that the designation in verse 24 *False Christ* conveys the same concept of *anti-christ* in 1 John.

The prepositional prefix *anti* in front of Christ – *anti-Christ* does not mean against or in opposition to Christ, but rather a False Christ.

This person is known by many different names: ***beast, antichrist, the man of sin, and the man of lawlessness*** in 2 Thessalonians 2.

This joining together is clearly seen in Revelation 19:20

²⁰ *And the beast [political authority] was seized, and with him the false prophet [false religion] who performed the signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image; these two were thrown alive into the lake of fire which burns with brimstone.*

Don't let anyone ever tell you there is no hell, there is no lake of fire...; there is and the Word of God makes this clear. The reference to the false prophet certainly includes the false prophets Jesus speaks of here in Matthew 24.

The *false signs and wonders* spoken of by Jesus in verse 24 also certainly include those spoken of in Revelation 19:20.

What is so intriguing is that this wording (signs and wonders) are also used to describe the miracles of Jesus Christ and His apostles.

We must remember that while Satan is the first murderer and the father of lies and the hater of God, he is a supernatural being—super natural—above nature and therefore can use nature to the degree God will allow him.

We have seen him do this in the Old Testament but he is at his best in The Tribulation. The miracles described here are real!

Revelation 13:13

13 *He [the beast out from the earth] performs great signs, so that he even makes fire come down out of heaven to the earth in the presence of men.*

14 *And he deceives [remember that in Matthew 24, Jesus Christ warned all believing Jews not to be deceived] *those who dwell on the earth because of the signs which it was given him to perform [given by Satan] in the presence of**

the beast, telling those who dwell on the earth to make an image to the beast [the abomination that causes desolation] who had the wound of the sword and has come to life.

15 *And it was given to him to give breath to the image of the beast, so that the image of the beast would even speak and cause as many as do not worship the image of the beast to be killed.*

In 2 Thessalonians 2:9-12 Paul tells why God gave this power to these creatures.

But what is interesting from the Lords prophesy of The Great Tribulation and a study of 2 Thessalonians 2:9-12 is that multitude of Jews will be deceived by these signs and wonders. And this is exactly what they were designed to do.

Matthew 24:24

“For False Christ and false prophets will arise and will show great signs and wonders, so as [The Greek conjunction joins the preceding clause with the next clause as here giving intent] so as to mislead, if possible, even the elect.

But we are told that the elect will not be led astray.

It is often difficult to tell a false teacher from a true teacher, unless you listen carefully, both will use words like: ***faith, love, Jesus, gospel, etc.***, but they do not mean the same thing.

They mean one thing to the false teacher and another to the true teacher and you have to listen in the discerning power of the Holy Spirit. The miracles of Jesus Christ had strong spiritual meaning while these of the false prophets are nothing more than a display of deceiving flamboyance!

We see a lot of this today around the world – faith healers, charismatics speaking monosyllables trying to imitate those on the day of Pentecost but really are imitating the babbling of a child. And those who know and understand scripture will know they are seeing and hearing the power of the enemies of Christ.

Matthew 24:25

25 *“Behold, I have told you in advance.”* [Here is another example of Spiritual love in action. Jesus, as God, looked down the corridors of time and sees what these believers are going to be against. And His love seeing a need meets that need—] *I told you all these things before they happened.*

There are several reasons why Jesus Christ tells us things in advance:

John 14:29

“Now I have told you before it happens, so that when it happens, you may believe. [If we make application of the principle here in John 14 to Jesus’ Words in Matthew 24:25—*when they see the abomination that causes desolation* set up in the Temple—] *let the reader of Daniel understand— along with what I have told you about false prophets and False Christ—believe all the you have heard and read in the Scriptures*

John 13:19

From now on I am telling you before *it* comes to pass, so that when it does occur, you may believe that I am *He*.

[Then the one I love and hold dear:]

John 16:33

“These things I have spoken to you, so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world.”

Matthew 24:26

26 *“So if they say to you, ‘Behold, He is in the wilderness,’ do not go out, or, ‘Behold, He is in the inner rooms,’ do not believe them.*

In this section, verses 23-28 is based on a foundational premise:

**Their Relationship With Jesus Christ;
Their Dependency On Him.**

And when you are in such a search, it is so easy to be deceived.

This happens all through the Church Age. So many people are deceived by religion, by preachers who do not even know the gospel on how to be saved.

But if you truly seek Him, He will make Himself known to you.

But in The Great Tribulation there will be no doubt when the Messiah comes.

Note verse 27 [Matthew 24]

27 “For just as the lightning comes from the east and flashes even to the west, so will the coming of the Son of Man be.

Everyone will see His coming

It will not be in secret or in private so that people will have to say...*here He is* verse 26

26 *“So if they say to you, ‘Behold, He is in the wilderness,’ do not go out, or, ‘Behold, He is in the inner rooms,’ do not believe them.*

Verse 27 says you will not miss His coming.

Note in verse 27 the word *flashes*

This is the Greek word **phano** from **phos** light!

In the transitive this means *to appear, to be conspicuous, become visible, to shine* the whole world will see His Coming...

not in private but seen by every eye!

This same word is used of Jesus Christ in verse 30

30 *“And then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the SON OF MAN COMING ON THE CLOUDS OF THE SKY with power and great glory.*

If you combine verses 27 and 30 it is without question that this speaks of the Second Coming of Christ.

Verse 27 *so will the coming of the Son of man be*

[is the Greek word **parousia** which means to be present or coming to a place or arrival. It is most often used for the coming of Christ.]

Look back at Matthew 24:3

...what will be the sign of your coming?

This word is used of the Lord's presence at His Second Advent:

1 Corinthians 15:23; 1 Thessalonians 2:19; 1 Thessalonians 3:13;
1 Thessalonians 4:15; 1 Thessalonians 5:23; 2 Thessalonians 2:1 and 8;
James 5:7 and James 9; 2 Peter 1:16; 2 Peter 3:4; 1 John 2:28

This section ends with

28 *“Wherever the corpse is, there the vultures will gather.*

What in the world does this mean and where does it come from?

First: Divine Judgment

We know from a study of Revelation that when Jesus Christ comes there will be world-wide judgment. Verse 27 refers to the Second Advent of Jesus Christ and now in verse 29 Jesus Christ comes with Judgment of the whole world.

As quickly and suddenly as the lightning flashes so will be the swiftness and universal judgment at the end of The Tribulation; so that where corpses are, buzzards or vultures gather. The King James translates the Greek as *eagles*, but what is described here is not characteristic of **eagles** but certainly **buzzards** or **vultures**.

In Matthew 24:29-31 we have more on the description of the
Coming Of Our Saviour, Jesus The Christ.