

Welcome, let's pray.

Jesus, let every word spoken be anointed by the Holy Spirit and that every person will listen with their spiritual ears and hear the truth of God's Word. Jesus by divine revelation help the people to realize that now is the time to seek God and righteousness. I pray this teaching on your Word will not return void, but it will accomplish the purposes of God. In Jesus name, Amen.

I have started going through Matthew 24 a few verses at a time and giving some insights and commentary about these scriptures. I am going to continue to teach on Matthew 24 this week. However, I am going to skip over verse 3 for now and come back to it at a later time. This week let's look at Matthew 24 verses 4 and 5.

Mat 24:4 And Jesus answered and said unto them, **Take heed that no man deceive you.**

See that no man deceive you. This is a prophetic warning. Jesus is giving cautious advice to Christians regarding specific unfulfilled predictions.

Matthew 24:5

For many will come in my name, claiming, 'I am the Christ.' They will deceive many.

What is the meaning of the word--Christ. It means the anointed one and is the equivalent to the word Messiah.

The Jewish people were looking for a messiah which symbolized a savior or liberator of their people and their nation. The concept of a Messiah originated in Judaism, and is mentioned in the Hebrew Bible; a Messiah is a king or High Priest anointed with holy anointing oil. Consequently, the Jews were looking for a leader who would be anointed with holy anointing oil that would liberate them from the Romans. Since the Jews rejected Jesus as their Messiah, they are still looking for a Messiah today.

Jesus is warning the disciples that many will come and falsely claim to be the Christ or Messiah. The Jews were tired of being oppressed by the Romans and desperately hoping for a leader to rise up and liberate them from foreign rule. As a result many men have claimed to be the Messiah and tried to seduce the people which only concluded in false expectations. The prophecy explains that Christians would be in danger if they were deceived into believing in some other person declaring themselves to be the Christ.

Jesus also said these false Christ would deceive many. There has been such a desire to understand the events that will surround the return of Christ,

many interpretations have been taught about the second coming of Christ. All the different teachings regarding Christ's return has only fostered confusion and generated much deception, even among Christian believers. I believe it is safe to say that these two scriptures of prophecy have been and are currently being fulfilled exactly as Jesus predicted.

Now I want to look at another set of scriptures in Matthew 24 where Jesus warns his disciples a second time to not be deceived by false Christs, prophets, and Messiahs.

Mat 24:11 And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many.

Mat 24:23-26

Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here *is* Christ, or there is the Messiah; Do not believe it.

For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall perform great signs and wonders so to deceive, if possible, even God's chosen ones.

See, I have warned you about this ahead of time.

So if someone tells you, 'Look, the Messiah is out in the desert,' don't bother to go and look. Or, 'Look, he is hiding in a secret place here,' don't believe it!

In these scriptures, I believe Jesus was not only referring to the imposters that would follow shortly after His resurrection, but is making a direct link to the Antichrist and false prophet that will arise during the tribulation prior to His return.

Jesus warns that the Antichrist and the false prophet will show great signs and wonders and that these false marvels will be so convincing in appearance that even God's elect may be led astray and deceived.

Now let's look at more scriptures that are recorded by two other disciples Mark and Luke. In

Mark 13:5-6 And Jesus answering them began to say, Take heed lest any *man* deceive you:

For many shall come in my name, saying, I am *Christ*; and shall deceive many. Then in

Luke 21:8 And he said, Take heed that ye be not deceived: for many shall come in my name, saying, I am *Christ*; and the time draws near: go ye not therefore after them.

Jesus has stressed again the significance of not being deceived by the false

Christs. In the Luke record, Jesus informs them of the words these false Messiahs will use, like the time of the kingdom draws near at hand. The deceivers know these words will give people the sense of urgency to follow after them. But Jesus warns, do not follow after them to the desert or a secret place, Jesus has forewarned us that their words are lies.

Now I want to read from 1 John chapter 4:1-6. These scriptures compliment the words of Jesus in Matthew 24 to his disciples regarding being deceived.

Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.

Hereby know you the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confessed that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God:

And every spirit that confessed not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that *spirit* of antichrist, whereof you have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world.

You are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.

They are of the world: therefore they speak of the world, and the world hears them.

We are of God: he that knows God hears us; he that is not of God hears not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error.

Let's look at the words, Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God.

In God's Word we are warned against judging others, but in this text Christians are encouraged to use their ability to judge and discriminate and tests the spirit of an individual. We should not judge individuals, but we are allowed to judge the spirit of a person. Christians are expected to test the basis for each opinion that they believe to be truth.

For example, a false Christ or the antichrist will try to enforce his right to rule through violence and injustice. The true Christ knows that His kingdom cannot be expanded by brutality and force. It is the duty of Christians to take the light of God's Word and expose the lies and test the spirit of others and to judge if what another teaches is the truth.

There will be many types of antichrists. Some will promote the study of nature, and that physical laws are absolute. This position asserts that only the visible or tangible things control our existence, but that theory rejects Divine intervention. Also, they will contend that Christian values and teachings are incompatible with the natural laws and label them superstitions. This attitude identifies nature as an unstoppable force, but that is a lie because the supernatural hand of God can intervene and miracles are born. Last they will argue that humans can only advance in harmony

with the laws of nature. This lying spirit of antichrist claims that prayer is useless and that the only way we can survive is to conform to nature and ignore God's laws.

In addition, there are antichrist that have written books against Christ and His kingdom. They influence people to abandon God's Word, God's values, and God himself. Then there are false prophets in the religious world as well. These antichrist work to strip Christianity of its effectiveness, by substituting an empty form of godliness and deny the power and authority of the one true God. Finally, there is the false prophet that professes to be a Christian, but does not conduct themselves as a true follower of Christ and keep God's commandments. They are corrupt and worldly and behave contrary to Godly principles.

God's Word warns us to not be deceived by the many false Christs and to be vigilant in testing and trying the spirits of men. What is the test that will reveal if a spirit is bearing the truth or a lie? That test is whether the spirit confesses that Jesus Christ came in the flesh.

To "confess Jesus Christ come in the flesh" is to declare that Jesus was both human and divine from His birth, that Jesus is the Messiah foretold by the Old Testament prophets, that Jesus is the Godhead robed in humanity, and that Jesus is the Word made flesh.

We can also test the spirit of a person by looking at their motives or behaviors or personal traits. For example, are people motivated by vanity, fame, self-love, or greed. Are they boastful or humble and modest? Are they disobedient and have contempt for authority?

Other ways to detect a false prophet are as follows:

If they profess a strange or peculiar message from God.

If they pretend to be a special representative with an exclusive mission from God.

If they ever preach any doctrine contrary to Word of God, then they are a false teacher

A person who asserts that they have the only correct belief, but they do not display any spirituality.

In religion there appears to be no truth that the evil one does not try to present a counterfeit to oppose the original. Just because something appears to be supernatural, does not signify that it is from God. The devil has supernatural powers also. Let's look at an encounter in Acts 13:4-12 that Barnabas and Paul had on the island of Cyprus with a sorcerer, a false prophet, a Jew named Barjesus. Now the deputy of the country called for Barnabas and Paul and desired to hear the word of God. However, the sorcerer resisted them and tried to convince the deputy to not believe the word of God. Then Paul filled with the Holy Ghost called the sorcerer a child of the devil and told him to cease trying to pervert the ways of the Lord. Then Paul said that the hand of the Lord is upon thee and thou shall be blind

and darkness fell on the sorcerer and when the deputy saw this demonstration of God's power he believed in the doctrine of the Lord.

I have to end it there but I will continue to teach on Matthew 24 next week.

If you are not sure that your soul would go to be with Jesus if your soul was required of you.

Please repeat this prayer with me.

Jesus I confess I am a sinner. I repent of my sins. Please forgive me as I forgive others who have hurt me. Jesus come into my heart and be my Lord and Savior. Jesus heal me of all my diseases, give me peace and a good night sleep. In Jesus name, Amen.

I am going to continue to discuss Matthew 24 in the coming weeks. Please email me and let me know if you are enjoying this Bible study or if you have any questions or if I can pray for you. The whole world is suffering because of the Covid19 virus. I believe that if you humble yourself and repent and ask God to help you, God's Word promises that God will hear from heaven and God will restore health, jobs, peace of mind, and our very souls.

Thank you for listening and God bless you.

motives the false pretences to the spirit generally proceed. Vainglory, or a thirst after fame, is often the most prevailing motive. But to go a little deeper; self-love, of some kind or other, is the general root of all. Who does not wish to be one of the favorites of heaven, and to be extraordinarily illuminated, or conducted by God's Holy Spirit? When the pleasing delusion is once indulged thus far, the man begins presently to fancy himself a kind of saint upon earth, or perhaps an apostle.

I. By what rules or marks any pretences of that kind may be tried, and detected to be false and vain.

- 1.** Boasting and ostentation are a flat contradiction to the very supposal of the ordinary graces boasted of; because humility and modesty are the very chief graces upon which all the rest hang.
- 2.** Another sure, mark of a false spirit is disobedience to rule and order, contempt of lawful authority, and especially any intruding into what does not belong to them.
- 3.** Another sure mark of a false spirit is the laying down deceitful rules or tokens whereby to judge, whether or when a man has the spirit of God. There have been many who have laid great stress upon I know not what sensible emotions, or violent impulses, coming upon them at times.

III. How much it concerns us to be upon our guard in such cases. Religion, like all other weighty concernments, is best carried on in the calm, regular, and sedate way; and therefore great care should be taken to keep up the old and well-tried methods, rather than to change them for new devices, which will never answer. (*D. Waterland, D. D.*)

I. What rules there are in our days, to know and distinguish them so as that the honest and well-meaning Christians may not be imposed upon by false prophets or teachers.

- 1.** If men pretend to come to us with an extraordinary message from God, or boast of an extraordinary inspiration, such as the apostles had, we may justly require of them to give the same, or the like extraordinary proof of it.
- 2.** If they pretend to no more than a common and ordinary assistance of God's Holy Spirit, such as any good man may lay claim to, then are they subject to Christ and His apostles, and obey those orders and injunctions they have left us in the New Testament.
- 3.** If anyone, though never so regularly called to the office of the ministry, should preach a doctrine contrary to the doctrine of the gospel, such a teacher is not to be heard—his spirit cannot be from God.

In this world there appears to be no truth without its counterfeit, no religion without hypocrites, no gold without tinsel, nor good wheat of God unmixed with tares. Christ is mimicked by Antichrist.

It is a common but perilous mistake occurring even in books of Christian evidence, to treat the supernatural as synonymous with the Divine. One is amazed at the facility with which many religious minded people fall into the meshes of spiritualism.

Our Lord Himself foretold in His last discourses the rise of "false Christs and false prophets" to deceive the Church. "The false prophet" figures side by side with "the wild beast" in his visions in the Apocalypse, representing a corrupt form of religion abetting a cruel and persecuting worldly power.

To “confess Jesus Christ” is to confess the human Jesus, known in the gospel history, as the declared Messiah of God; and to confess Him “come, in flesh,” is to confess the Godhead in the humanity, to acknowledge Him as indubitable man, but more than man—to confess, in short, “the Word made flesh.”

The new prophets recoiled not from a crucified Messiah, but from a humanized God.

To “confess Jesus Christ come in flesh” is to declare the oneness of His Divine-human person as an abiding certainty, not from His baptism, but from His birth and onwards.

The apostle had felt the heaving of that breast, the beating of that heart, and he arrayed himself firmly and intelligibly against the philosophy of his times, that really, in effect, made Jesus Christ a phantom—an existence without bodily proportions and substantiality.

I speak of that large mass of half-educated minds, the aggregate or average of whose sentiments forms very largely what is commonly called public opinion; I speak of those, too, who aspire to be leaders of that public opinion. Such persons profess the utmost respect for what they believe to be Christianity, but repudiate whatever religion comes before them in a definite and tangible shape.

The next peril comes from men of a totally different stamp, a nobler sort than the others, persons of strong religious convictions, and professing a rigid orthodoxy of a certain kind. They accept the fundamental doctrines of Christianity, and other doctrines which, whether true or false, are not fundamental. But their creed is out of all keeping and perspective, for they lay but little stress upon the weightier matters of revealed religion; while the objects of present or recent controversy assume an exaggerated importance in their eyes. The end of it is that they become Protestants, or Churchmen, or Arminians, or Supralapsarians, or anything rather than Christians. And if, as is often the case, they have been led to dwell almost exclusively upon what may be called the subjective doctrines of the gospel—those which regard the work of redemption as it reveals itself in the inner man—the danger comes to them in a more subtle shape. For the internal and spiritual character of those doctrines seduces men readily into the belief that the profession of them is a guarantee for spirituality.

3.

Incarnation

Incarnation literally means embodied in flesh or taking on flesh. It refers to the conception and birth of a sentient being who is the material manifestation of an entity, god or force whose original nature is immaterial. In its religious context the word is used to mean the descent from Heaven of a god, deity, or divine being in human/animal form on Earth.

"What is the **meaning of the Incarnation of Christ?**" Answer: **Incarnation** is a term used by theologians to indicate that Jesus, the Son of God, took on human flesh. This is similar to the hypostatic union. The difference is that the hypostatic union explains how Jesus' two natures are joined, and the **Incarnation** more specifically affirms His humanity.

1 John 4:1-11

THE TOKEN OF GOD'S LOVE

In those days the intense ferment of men's minds wrought many delusions and heresies which were fraught with temptation to young converts, and the Apostle wished to give tests for determining which voice spoke from God. The confession of Jesus Christ as the Incarnate Word, a spirit of love and gentleness, and the willingness to abide in the doctrine of the Apostles, were signs that the speaker was commissioned by Christ.

Wouldst thou overcome the world? Let Christ enter, and the world will have no charms for thee. There is only one source of pure, divine love, and wherever that love is present, you know that the possessor has found its source in God. God's love is absolutely selfless. He loves the unloving to make them love, putting away their sin and perfecting their union with Himself.

1 John 4:1

Episode on the Spirit of truth and the spirit of error; the test to be applied; and the sure application of it.

[1Jn 4:1](#). **Beloved** introduces an affectionate interlude, in which the apostle passes from the personal assurance of fellowship with God given by the Holy Ghost, to the assurance given by the same Spirit concerning the doctrine on the belief of which that assurance is based. **Believe not every spirit, but prove the spirits whether they be of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.** The 'spirits' and the 'false prophets' are one. They are 'antichrists' in chap. 2; but the predominant reference to the Holy Ghost in this section gives occasion for the use of these two terms: 'spirits' as professing to be His organs, and 'false prophets' as professing to be moved by Him. As teachers they are not to be believed until tested: hence we are not to speak here of the gift of 'discerning spirits' ([1Co 12:10](#)), but of the universal duty incumbent on every Christian, of trying the doctrine brought concerning the Son of God. Many men professing to be inspired had gone out—not as in chap. 2 from the church—from the invisible realm, and from the one spirit of the lie into the world: not from the church into the world, but from the world into the church.

1 John 4:2-3

Hereby ye know the Spirit of God: that is, the voice of the one Holy Ghost in the various 'spirits' proclaiming a confession. The personal faith must have its outward avowal; every teacher or 'spirit' must teach on the basis of a confession of Jesus. In chap. 2 the test of antichrist was the refusal to believe that 'Jesus was the Christ' or 'the Father and the Son:' the divinity and Messiahship of our Lord. Here the true faith is **that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh:** not into the world simply, not simply into the flesh, which might connote its fallen condition, but 'in flesh' that is, in a true humanity He appeared who existed before as the Son of God, and so 'came' that it may be said as of an abiding presence, He 'is come.' The true reading of the antithesis, **every spirit that confessed not Jesus is not of God,** is most forcible in its simplicity: the name of Jesus is enough,

for the confession of a man as come from God means nothing. With the next words, **this is that of antichrist**, that 'matter' or that 'spirit' of antichrist refers back to chap. 2; though ye have heard indicates a well-known doctrine. A remarkable reading of the Vulgate, 'which annulls' or 'dissolves Jesus,' points to the severance of Jesus from the Christ, a Gnostic notion, or the separation of Jesus into two persons, a Nestorian error; but this reading is not confirmed. It can hardly be denied, however, that this confession alluded to the Docetic heresy which denied the reality of the Lord's human nature; though that was only a temporary form of opposition to an eternal truth, the sum and standard of all truth.

1 John 4:4-6

The apostle makes some strong assertions which have for their object to link a sound confession with a true religion. First, with reference to his Christian hearers, he connects their personal victory over the world, through the strength of Him who is **greater than he that is in the world**,—that is, its prince, the spirit who sent the antichrists,—with their sound faith. The indwelling God of chap. [1Jn 3:24](#) had given them the victory over all seducers, though they needed still to be warned. Taking up the term 'world,' he goes on to show that the same antichristian error which had come into the world is really **of the world**: doctrines from below which take their fashion from the earthly kingdom of darkness, breathe the spirit of fleshly reasoning, and taught by men whom **the world hears**, because it loves its own. The unregenerate have no sympathy with the truth; they only who are born of God can know Him, and understand the things concerning Him. **But he that is of God hears us**: the apostles and teachers of the faith are chiefly meant; but the same is true of all who witness a good confession. **By this we know**, or distinguish, **the Spirit of truth, and the spirit of error**, or the deceiving spirit. At the outset St. John spoke of the test of the confession of Jesus; now at the close the test is the religious and irreligious character of the teaching. He conjoins himself with his readers. Finally, we here have the answer to every argument against the universality of the testing privilege and duty: every Christian can discern between the true and the false confession of the Incarnate Son; and every Christian has the internal qualification of the indwelling Spirit that separates from the world.

[2Jn 1:2](#) For the truth's sake, which dwelled in us, and shall be with us forever.

For the truth's sake which abides in us and shall be with us forever. Obviously the common truth is, like regeneration, regarded as the bond of love. But there is an undertone of allusion to the fact that holding fast the truth is the test of religion, and that their common fidelity endeared the faithful to each other. Hence the change to 'us,' and

the quotation of the Lord's words, which applies to the truth what He spoke of the Spirit of truth, 'He abides with you and shall be in you:' with the change, however, that here the 'abiding is 'in' us, and the 'being' is 'with' us. It is like a preliminary triumph, in prospect of the subject that is coming.

2Jn 1:7 For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist.

2 John 1:7

There is no love which is not based on truth: the love which keeps the commandments keeps the doctrinal as well as the ethical commandments. And, as love is the strength of obedience, so it is the guardian of the truth. Hence the 'for' that follows: **for many deceivers are gone forth into the world**—from the spiritual world, the sphere of the lie—**they that confess not that Jesus Christ cometh in the flesh.** The supreme truth—as truth is in Jesus—is the incarnation. **This is the deceiver and the antichrist,** of whom the former Epistle spoke: the deceiver as it regards you, the antichrist as it respects Jesus. 'Cometh in the flesh' refers in the most general way to the incarnation itself: not as a past fact, 'came in the flesh' ([1Jn 5:6](#)); nor as the fact with its results, 'hath come' ([1Jn 4:2](#)); but in its widest universality, though without reference to the second coming.

Thin proof

For such a seemingly major doctrine, one might expect a weighty argument, but this is what is offered in The Scofield Bible's Reference Notes (1917 Edition): "... 'caught up'—Not church saints only, but all bodies of the saved [that is, not only the living, but also the dead], of whatever dispensation, are included in the first resurrection... [It] is peculiarly the 'blessed hope' of the Church (cf) Matthew 24:42; 25:13; Luke 12:36-48; Acts 1:11; Philippians 3:20, 21; Titus 2:11-13."

This offers surprisingly little information, considering how many accept the rapture doctrine based upon these notes. Additionally, all of the references he cited are about Christ's return and the believer's need to be ready for that event. None of them speak of a "near return" by Christ to snatch away believers.

Some rapturists today cite Acts 8:39, saying it uses the same Greek word that is translated "caught up" in 1 Thessalonians 4:17. They say that the fact the Spirit of God "caught [Philip] away" shows that 1 Thessalonians 4:17 means that the saints are caught away to heaven. Yet the Spirit did not transport Philip to heaven, but rather from one place on the earth to another.

The saints of 1 Thessalonians 4:17, on the other hand, rise to meet the Lord in the air. (We'll cover more on this point in the next article in this series.)

The words "blessed hope" also often appear in rapture literature. In fact, "The Blessed Hope" is the name by which some denominations refer to the rapture doctrine. They take "blessed hope" from Titus 2:13, where Paul writes, "looking for the blessed hope, and the appearance of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ."

The implication is that the word "appearance" conveys something secretive and sudden; that is, the rapture. Therefore, "blessed hope" becomes a sort of shorthand for the rapture in literature and films on the doctrine. A few other New Testament references that mention "the appearing of Christ" are also often cited, as if these scriptures strengthen their case.

But all of these are simply referring to Christ's coming, either the first time as a perfect sacrifice for sin, or the second time, as an invincible King.

Flawed foundation

The word *rapture* comes from the Latin *rapere*, meaning, "to seize" or "to abduct." It is translated from the Greek word that is rendered "caught up" in English Bibles today.

All advocates of the rapture agree that the main argument is based on 1 Thessalonians 4:17. Here the argument stands or falls.

First, look at verse 17 in the New King James Version: "Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord."

The Greek verb for "caught up" is *harpagesometha*. Does it convey the sense of an abduction here? No, "[it] combines the ideas of force and suddenness seen in the irresistible power of God" (Leon Morris, *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries*, Revised Edition, 1984, p. 94).

Why would Paul use such a strong word? Let's allow the Bible to speak for itself. The context of the subject begins in verse 13 and concludes in verse 11 of the next chapter. Paul wrote this section of the letter in answer to concerns of the local Christians.

As you read verse 13, you discover that Christians in Thessalonica were grieving over the unexpected deaths of members of their congregation.

Albert Barnes comments: "There seems some reason to suppose...that some of them believed that, though those who were dead would indeed rise again, yet it would be long after those who were living when the Lord Jesus would return had been taken to glory, and would always be in a condition inferior to them" (*Barnes' Notes on the New Testament*, notes on 1 Thessalonians 4:13).

Paul wrote that they should not grieve over this: "For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus [believers who had died]" (verse 14).

Was he responding to a worry about whether Christ would rescue believers from the Great Tribulation? No, nothing is said of this.

Nor is there anything in these verses that intimates Christ making a swooping pass by the earth to snatch off a few people to take them to heaven. These verses refer only to the doctrine of the second coming, at which time Jesus sets foot on the earth.

A reunion with friends who died

There is more to Paul's encouragement. Dr. Morris observes, "There will be a reunion with Christ, but there will also be a reunion with the friends who have gone before" (Tyndale).

The Commentary on the Whole Bible by Jamieson, Fausset and Brown observes something further. "The leading topic of Paul's preaching at Thessalonica having been the coming kingdom (Acts 17:7), some perverted it into a cause for fear in respect to friends lately deceased, as if these would be excluded from the glory which those found alive alone should share. This error Paul here corrects."

Verse 15 amplifies the point: "We who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep."

Verse 18 reiterates this main point: "Therefore comfort one another with these words." Paul sums it up in verses 10-11 of chapter 5 (there is no chapter break in the original text): "...that whether we wake or sleep [remain alive or die], we should live together with Him. Therefore comfort each other and edify one another, just as you also are doing."

Any claim that "the comfort" of these verses was about being snatched away to heaven takes incredible license with the Bible.

Paul's reason for using such a strong word as *harpagesometha* was to reassure people that, at Christ's return, God would reunite believers who remain alive with believers who had died. The dead won't be behind in any way!