



* CELEBRATING 35 YEARS OF SPIRIT FILLED MINISTRY *

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THE AGE OF DECEPTION! by: David W. Lankford

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We want to take our scripture text today from **Matthew 24:4**, "And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you".

Needless to say, we are certainly living in the age of deception. Jesus told us that the last days would be characterized by the multiplication of false doctrine and deceptive appeals. No matter how fantastic, fanatical, or fraudulent, and satanic these movements are, there is never a lack of followers. I'm often amazed at how gullible people are when it comes to false doctrine. The reason they fall so quickly into error is because they know not the Word of God. Jesus said unto the Pharisees in **Matthew 22:29**, "Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God". Regretfully, we are witnessing the totality of deception and duplicity as it pervades and permeates, not only the world but the modern church. Three times in the Gospels, Jesus warned us of great deception: **Matthew 24:4**, **Mark 13:5**, and **Luke 21:8**. Make no mistake about it, through this spirit of great deception, we will witness the debut and rise of the Antichrist. The world will have become completely deceived for them to embrace the Antichrist as the Messiah. Jesus said in **John 5:43**, "I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not: if another shall come in his own name, him you will receive" Jesus made it evident, as well as perfectly clear, that there will be those who will absolutely reject him as the Christ, and there will be those, who will embrace the Antichrist.

Following the Olivet discourse, Jesus said, the most important thing you must be sober to, is the element of deception. All the Gospels, except John, recorded those words as Christ

first words as He departed from the Temple. Friend, that demonstrates the gravity of the coming deception! Paul the apostle also gave the church a plethora of warnings regarding the spirit and the age of deception. Let us examine the Pauline epistles and Paul's warning to the church regarding deception. We read in **2nd Thessalonians 2:1-3**, "Now we beseech you, brethern, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, (what day? The coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together unto him) except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition". Paul the apostle is very clear and very emphatic that Jesus Christ will not return and take away His church until there is first the great falling away and the revelation of the Antichrist. It saddens my heart profusely as I witness so many preachers who want to teach and preach that the falling away is the rapture of the church. Regretfully, that is the personification of deception. The phrase "falling away" in the Greek implies a bill of divorcement, coupled with apostasy. So before Christ returns and raptures the church, there must be a falling away and the revelation of the Antichrist. I challenge you to look up the phrase "falling away" #646. It grieves my spirit as I witness such misrepresentation concerning the truth of God's Holy Word. Nearly three years ago, the Lord spoke to my

heart and said that His Word would be challenged as never before in the coming days, and I must retain my rigidity as a preacher of the gospel of Christ! We're living in a time when there is no room for compromise; yet compromise is exploding. Paul said in **2nd Timothy 3:13**, "But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived". When ministers misrepresent the truth and twist the scriptures they are evil, they are seducers and they are deceiving, all the while being deceived. When I read such passages of scriptures like this in end times, it not only grieves my spirit but it invokes great fear, along with consternation in my heart and spirit. We also have a warning regarding the false prophet found in **Revelation 13:13-14**, "And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men, And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live". Never underestimate the spirit of religion, for religion will play a major role in deception here in the time of the end. Not only does Paul the apostle give us many warnings, but he gives specific warnings to the people of God. We read in **1st Corinthians 6:9**, "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor

extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God". How is it, preachers can declare once people are saved and go back into the sin of fornication or the sin of adultery they can not lose their salvation? Paul the apostle made it very clear, thus, he emphasized this statement, "be not deceived!" Paul, through the Holy Spirit is adamant in declaring that if people continue to live in sin and fail to repent, they will be deceived and they shall not inherit the kingdom of God. Let us continue on in **Galatians 6:7-8**, "**Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting**". If you sow it, you must reap it. Now, there are those who are unyielding and say that we should not be judgmental in identifying those who cause problems within the body of the Lord Jesus Christ. But let us do a thorough examination concerning this subject from the scriptures. We read in **Romans 16:17-18**, "**Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which he have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple**". Paul declares, we must mark them which teach false and contrary doctrines. Paul identified such men in the scriptures. We read in **2nd Timothy 2:16-18**, "**But shun profane and vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodliness. And their word will eat as doth a canker: (gangrene) of whom is Hymenaeus and Philetus; Who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some**". Men

who teach and espouse false doctrine will ultimately overthrow the faith of many. Paul went on to identify another man within the church, here in **2nd Timothy 4:14**, "**Alexander the coppersmith did me much evil: the Lord reward him according to his works**". Then we read about a man called Diotrephes from the apostle John. Look with me at **3rd John 9-10**, "**I wrote unto the church: but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the preeminence among them, receiveth us not. Wherefore, if I come, I will remember his deeds which he doeth, prating against us with malicious words: and not content therewith, neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and forbiddeth them that would, and casteth them out of the church**". Diotrephes undoubtedly was a very unruly member in the early church, thus we have this admonition from Paul, found here in **1st Thessalonians 5:14**, "**Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feebleminded, support the weak, be patient toward all men**". Paul the apostle used the term unruly which simply means those who are out of harmony and out of step with the true church of the Lord Jesus Christ. Once men get out of step and harmony with the Word of God and the Holy Ghost, they must be challenged, but challenged in love and with the holy scriptures. Last but not least, our nation has become inundated with deceitful leaders, both political and spiritual. What is even more alarming and disturbing are those who know the truth and fail to challenge those who are espousing lies and deception. Let me assure you, the truth never fails a thorough examination, but a lie will be exposed for what it is. Today, we are encountering the age of deception. Regretfully, deception will now accelerate as never before. This spirit of deception will ultimately bring

about the rise of the Antichrist, along with the false prophet. One other significant note: the Antichrist will be endorsed by the false prophet. I want to emphasize the word false. The word false #5578 in the Greek simply means "a pretender, a religious imposter, i.e. one who is erroneous, deceitful, and wicked". When something is false and purported to be the truth that is the personification of deceit and deception! The Lord has given the church two things that clearly negate error and deception: those two elements are the Holy Ghost and the Word of God. The Holy Ghost is the spirit of truth. We read in **John 16:13**, "**Howbeit when he, the spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come**". And of course, the veracity and validity of God's holy Word. Paul declared emphatically in **2nd Timothy 3:16-17**, "**All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good words**". Just the other day someone questioned me about error he supposedly found in the holy scriptures, that is a sign we are in the age of deception. Until next month, may you keep enduring, for Paul the apostle declared the time would come when men would not even endure sound doctrine. Thank you so very much for your love and support for my wife and I, along with the ministry. You are the means that God uses to enable us to preach the gospel of Christ without compromise. We do covet your prayers earnestly.

Serving With You All,

Pastor David W. Lankford