**THE CALL TO BE READY**

1. Jesus’ disciples asked:

“Tell us, when shall these things be, and what shall be the sign of thy coming and of the end of the world?”

- Matthew 24:3

Jesus answered:

“Take heed that no man deceive you.”

- Matthew 24:4

The apostle warned the church:

“Let no man deceive you by any means…”

- 2 Thessalonians 2:3

Again:

“This know that in the last days perilous times shall come”…

But evil men and seducers [juggling imposters] shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived.”

- 2 Timothy 3:1, 13

1. Characteristics of deception (root: to ensnare, take in)

A lie that appears to be true

It’s often repeated/reinforced to take effect

The purpose is to mislead with the ultimate goal of bringing others under the power of the deceiver.

It can result in CONVERSION to a different way of thinking/behavior

In extreme cases, it can lead to mind-control

1. **Listen to Jesus:**

**“And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many. And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.”**

- Matthew 24:11, 12

Pressure to give in to these seducers will be so great because of the number of them saying the same thing! In Daniel chapter 7, the little horn speaks great words *against the Most High. T*he spirit of the anti-Christ will repeatedly use words to “wear out” or break down the defenses of the saints. (Remember Samson and Delilah; she simply “wore him out.” That is the spirit of deception in action.) We must have ears tuned to heaven rather than to the popular media.

We understand that the prevalence of ungodly behavior and attitudes, and society’s approval and participation in these things will be so acceptable (to them) and widespread, not only will it influence the weak believer but will cause others to think, “What’s the use? We can’t win; we are not winning.” At this point, their zeal will be lost and they will become backslidden. They will have no love for God or His things because they will no longer value the things of God, but will follow man’s measurement (the world’s) of what is acceptable behavior.

1. **So, how do we guard against deception?**

**KNOW WHAT TO EXPECT - KNOW THE WORD!**

Don’t be blind-sided. Matthew 24:24 states, “…if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.” A thorough reading of Revelation 13 is helpful. As believers, we should all be familiar with the contents of this chapter! (Note: Pastor Grant requested that we all read the entire book of Revelation.) If we are only looking for sensation, excitement, or even just miracles, we can become open to deception. Let us know the word and LOOK FOR JESUS – not just miracles.

Jesus’ coming looks like this: Matthew 24:26-31 and Revelation 1:7. HE WILL BE COMING IN THE CLOUDS OF HEAVEN AND EVERY EYE SHALL SEE HIM.

**THE DISCERNMENT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IS VITAL!**

“But he that is spiritual judgeth [discerneth) all things, yet he himself is judged of no man.”

- 1 Corinthians 2:15

With the gifts of the Spirit active in our lives, we cannot be fooled. The Holy Ghost is the Spirit of truth and “searches” all things.

- 1 Corinthians 2:10

**THE FOUR TOOLS**

There are four instructions the apostle Paul gave to Timothy in 1 Timothy 4:13-16 which we can use to prepare us to “save ourselves” and others.

1. *Read the Word! (Verse 13).*

Being attentive to reading (the Bible), exhortation (hearing the word preached), and doctrine (teaching/belief) is essential to our spiritual success and survival and to guard us against deception.

1. *Have the gifts of the Spirit active! (Verse 14).*

This verse begins, “Neglect not the gift is in thee…” We must now begin to “stir” up latent spiritual gifts as they are needed to discern the spirits of this end-time age.

1. *Focus! (Verse 15).*

Meditation positions us to receive from the Lord both by revelation from His word (the Bible) and hearing His voice. This will enable us to get much-needed direction for our lives and that of others.

1. *Watch! (Verse 16).*

Self-check is important to maintaining a successful spiritual walk. Examining ourselves in the light of Scripture and doing so continuously enables us to know whether we are still “in the faith” or not. Our being on the right path will ensure the salvation of those following us.

*2 Thessalonians 2:1-12 MSG*

**2 1-3** Now, friends, read these next words carefully. Slow down and don’t go jumping to conclusions regarding the day when our Master, Jesus Christ, will come back and we assemble to welcome him. Don’t let anyone shake you up or get you excited over some breathless report or rumored letter from me that the day of the Master’s arrival has come and gone. Don’t fall for any line like that.

**3-5** Before that day comes, a couple of things have to happen. First, the Apostasy. Second, the debut of the Anarchist, a partner in crime with Satan. He’ll defy and then take over every so-called god or altar. Having cleared away the opposition, he’ll then set himself up in God’s Temple as “God Almighty.” Don’t you remember me going over all this in detail when I was with you? Are your memories that short?

**6-8** You’ll also remember that I told you the Anarchist is being held back until just the right time. That doesn’t mean that the spirit of anarchy is not now at work. It is, secretly and underground. But the time will come when the Anarchist will no longer be held back, but will be let loose. But don’t worry. The Master Jesus will be right on his heels and blow him away. The Master appears and—puff!—the Anarchist is out of there.

**9-12** The Anarchist’s coming is all Satan’s work. All his power and signs and miracles are fake, evil sleight of hand that plays to the gallery of those who hate the truth that could save them. And since they’re so obsessed with evil, God rubs their noses in it—gives them what they want. Since they refuse to trust truth, they’re banished to their chosen world of lies and illusions.