

“OVERCOMING DECEPTION”

BIBLICAL WARNINGS AGAINST DECEPTION, ESPECIALLY IN THE LAST DAYS, IS EXPLORED. SOME FUNDAMENTAL CHARACTERISTICS OF DECEPTION ARE DISCUSSED SO THAT THE BELIEVER IS MORE EQUIPPED TO IDENTIFY AND AVOID IT.

KEY SCRIPTURES: 1 TIMOTHY 4:1-8, 2 CORINTHIANS 11:14-15, MATTHEW 24:1-35, REVELATION 13:11-18, 2 TIMOTHY 3:1-9, ISAIAH 14:12-15, GENESIS 3:6

*THE WHOLE DISCOURSE IN **MATTHEW 24** CARRIES A TONE OF WARNING FOR EVERY BELIEVER. **MATT 24:23-25** “THEN IF ANYONE SAYS TO YOU, 'LOOK, HERE IS THE CHRIST!' OR 'THERE!' DO NOT BELIEVE IT. 24 FOR FALSE CHRISTS AND FALSE PROPHETS WILL RISE AND SHOW GREAT SIGNS AND WONDERS TO DECEIVE, IF POSSIBLE, EVEN THE ELECT. 25 SEE, I HAVE TOLD YOU BEFOREHAND.” (MY SUBJECT IS DECEPTION AND MY FIRST POINT IS):*

I. THE INCREASE IN DECEPTION DURING THE LATTER DAYS.

PAUL WARNED IN 1 TIM 4:1 “NOW THE SPIRIT EXPRESSLY SAYS THAT IN LATTER TIMES SOME WILL DEPART FROM THE FAITH, GIVING HEED TO DECEIVING SPIRITS AND DOCTRINES OF DEMONS.” THESE ARE PEOPLE WHO OUGHT TO KNOW BETTER. THESE ARE PEOPLE WHO ARE DEPARTING FROM “THE FAITH.” YOU CAN’T DEPART FROM SOMETHING YOU HAVE NEVER BEEN IN. SO THEY WERE NOT ONLY IN CHURCH, THEY ARE DEPARTING FROM “THE FAITH.” AND WHAT CAUSES THEM TO DO THAT? DECEPTION-DECEIVING SPIRITS AND DEMONIC DOCTRINES! WHEN I READ ABOUT DECEIVING SPIRITS AND DOCTRINES OF DEMONS, I IMMEDIATELY THINK OF SOMETHING REPULSIVE—DISGUSTING LITTLE, LOATHSOME CREATURES AND OBJECTIONABLE

DOCTRINES. BUT IF IT WERE REPULSIVE TO THESE PEOPLE, THEY WOULD NEVER FOLLOW IT. IT HAS TO LOOK GOOD ON THE SURFACE. IT HAS TO APPEAL TO THESE PEOPLE IN SOME WAY OR THEY WOULD NEVER FALL FOR IT. PAUL TALKS ABOUT DECEITFUL WORKERS WHO TRANSFORM THEMSELVES INTO APOSTLES OF CHRIST—LEADERS WHO SEEM LIKE THE REAL DEAL. THEY OPERATE OUT OF DECEPTION. 2 COR. 11:14 “AND NO WONDER! FOR SATAN HIMSELF TRANSFORMS HIMSELF INTO AN ANGEL OF LIGHT. 15 THEREFORE IT IS NO GREAT THING IF HIS MINISTERS ALSO TRANSFORM THEMSELVES INTO MINISTERS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS...” FOR THERE TO BE DECEPTION, IT HAS TO LOOK RIGHT, IT HAS TO LOOK GOOD. IF I’M GOING TO PASS A COUNTERFEIT \$ 20 BILL, IT CAN’T HAVE PORKY PIG’S PICTURE ON IT. IT HAS TO LOOK AUTHENTIC ON THE SURFACE.

THE FIRST THING WE HAVE TO DO IS GET RID OF THE IDEA THAT WE COULD NEVER BE DECEIVED. THE PRIDE BEHIND THAT KIND OF THINKING IS A SET UP FOR DECEPTION. 1 COR. 10:12 “THEREFORE LET HIM WHO THINKS HE STANDS TAKE HEED LEST HE FALL.” WHATEVER THE DEVIL PRESENTS FOR DECEPTION WILL LOOK GOOD AND BE APPEALING IN SOME WAY. THE GLOBALIZATION MOVEMENT IS VERY APPEALING TO MANY PEOPLE. “IF WE COULD ALL JUST BECOME ONE, IF WE COULD GET RID OF OUR BORDERS AND PRIDEFUL NATIONALISM—SIT AT ONE TABLE AND GET ALONG, WE COULD PUT OUR HEADS TOGETHER AND SOLVE THE PROBLEMS. WE COULD END WORLD HUNGER; WE COULD PUT AN END TO ALL THE BLOODSHED AND WARFARE. WE COULD MAKE THIS WORLD A BETTER PLACE. I CAN UNDERSTAND HOW MANY WOULD THINK THAT WAY AND WONDER HOW ANYONE COULD QUESTION IT. YET THE BIBLE TELLS US THAT IN THE LAST DAYS A GLOBALIZATION MOVEMENT WILL PRODUCE JUST THE OPPOSITE OF ALL THAT. IT WILL PRODUCE WARS AND FAMINE AND TERRIBLE SUFFERING THROUGHOUT THE WORLD LIKE NEVER BEFORE. IN THE BOOK OF REVELATIONS WE SEE A

GLOBALIZATION MOVEMENT IN BOTH THE POLITICAL AND RELIGIOUS WORLD. THERE IS THE ANTICHRIST WHO WILL GAIN ENORMOUS POLITICAL POWER IN THE EARTH. AND BESIDE HIM WILL BE THE FALSE PROPHET WHO WILL DEMAND RELIGIOUS ALLIANCE TO THE ANTICHRIST. THE FALSE PROPHET WILL LOOK LIKE A LAMB ON THE SURFACE. HE WILL SEEM TO BE A PEACEFUL MAN BRINGING EVERYONE TOGETHER. BUT WHEN HE SPEAKS HIS TRUE CHARACTER COMES OUT. REV 13:11-18 “THEN I SAW ANOTHER BEAST COMING UP OUT OF THE EARTH, AND HE HAD TWO HORNS LIKE A LAMB AND SPOKE LIKE A DRAGON. 12 AND HE EXERCISES ALL THE AUTHORITY OF THE FIRST BEAST IN HIS PRESENCE, AND CAUSES THE EARTH AND THOSE WHO DWELL IN IT TO WORSHIP THE FIRST BEAST, WHOSE DEADLY WOUND WAS HEALED. 13 HE PERFORMS GREAT SIGNS, SO THAT HE EVEN MAKES FIRE COME DOWN FROM HEAVEN ON THE EARTH IN THE SIGHT OF MEN. 14 AND HE DECEIVES THOSE WHO DWELL ON THE EARTH BY THOSE SIGNS WHICH HE WAS GRANTED TO DO IN THE SIGHT OF THE BEAST, TELLING THOSE WHO DWELL ON THE EARTH TO MAKE AN IMAGE TO THE BEAST WHO WAS WOUNDED BY THE SWORD AND LIVED. 15 HE WAS GRANTED POWER TO GIVE BREATH TO THE IMAGE OF THE BEAST, THAT THE IMAGE OF THE BEAST SHOULD BOTH SPEAK AND CAUSE AS MANY AS WOULD NOT WORSHIP THE IMAGE OF THE BEAST TO BE KILLED. 16 HE CAUSES ALL, BOTH SMALL AND GREAT, RICH AND POOR, FREE AND SLAVE, TO RECEIVE A MARK ON THEIR RIGHT HAND OR ON THEIR FOREHEADS, 17 AND THAT NO ONE MAY BUY OR SELL EXCEPT ONE WHO HAS THE MARK OR THE NAME OF THE BEAST, OR THE NUMBER OF HIS NAME. 18 HERE IS WISDOM. LET HIM WHO HAS UNDERSTANDING CALCULATE THE NUMBER OF THE BEAST, FOR IT IS THE NUMBER OF A MAN: HIS NUMBER IS 666.” POWER CORRUPTS; AND ABSOLUTE POWER CORRUPTS ABSOLUTELY. ONCE THE ANTICHRIST AND THE FALSE PROPHET GET IN POWER, THEY WILL DEMAND COMPETE OBEDIENCE. THEY WILL CONTROL THE ECONOMY ALL THE WAY DOWN TO THE INDIVIDUAL—

SOMETHING THAT IS MADE POSSIBLE WITH COMPUTERS. NO ONE CAN BUY OR SELL WITHOUT THE MARK OF THE BEAST—WITHOUT BECOMING A PART OF HIS SYSTEM. THE ANTICHRIST WILL RISE UP AS THE PERSON WHO CAN SOLVE ALL THE TURMOIL, UNREST, AND CHAOS IN THE WORLD.² AND FOR A TIME HE WILL SEEM TO ACCOMPLISH THAT—BUT DESTRUCTION AND SUFFERING LIKE THIS WORLD HAS NEVER SEEN, WILL THEN FOLLOW.

2 TIM 3:1-9 “BUT KNOW THIS, THAT IN THE LAST DAYS PERILOUS TIMES WILL COME:”³ THE GREEK WORD (CHALEPOS) TRANSLATED “PERILOUS” MEANS STRESS-FILLED, TROUBLESOME, DANGEROUS, HARD TO DEAL WITH.⁴ THE OTHER PLACE WHERE YOU FIND THE WORD IN THE NEW TESTAMENT IS MATT. 8:28 WHERE THE TWO DEMONIZED MEN TERRORIZED THE WHOLE REGION. THEY WERE DESCRIBED AS “FIERCE” OR “VIOLENT.” “...IN THE LAST DAYS PERILOUS TIMES WILL COME:”

WHAT WILL MAKE THE KAIROS/SEASON/TIMES SO PERILOUS? IT WILL BE THE CONDITION OF PEOPLE’S HEARTS. VERSE 2 “FOR MEN WILL BE LOVERS OF THEMSELVES, LOVERS OF MONEY, BOASTERS, PROUD, BLASPHEMERS, DISOBEDIENT TO PARENTS, UNTHANKFUL, UNHOLY, ³ UNLOVING, UNFORGIVING, SLANDERERS, WITHOUT SELF-CONTROL, BRUTAL, DESPISERS OF GOOD, ⁴ TRAITORS, HEADSTRONG, HAUGHTY, LOVERS OF PLEASURE RATHER THAN LOVERS OF GOD, ⁵ HAVING A FORM OF GODLINESS BUT DENYING ITS POWER. AND FROM SUCH PEOPLE TURN AWAY!” LOOK AT THIS DESCRIPTION FOR A MOMENT. PEOPLE WILL BE “LOVERS OF THEMSELVES.” THIS SELF-ABSORPTION IS THE MOST FUNDAMENTAL PROBLEM OF ALL: SELFISHNESS. THE SECULAR PSYCHIATRIST WILL TELL YOU THAT YOU DON’T LOVE YOURSELF ENOUGH; THAT IS THE PROBLEM.⁵ THE BIBLE SAYS PRE-OCCUPATION WITH SELF, LOVE OF SELF, IS THE PROBLEM.⁶ SALVATION IS NOT JUST ABOUT A LEGAL TRANSACTION IN THE HEAVENLY COURTS. IT IS ALSO ABOUT DELIVERANCE FROM SELF-ABSORPTION. A PLACE FULL OF SELFISH PEOPLE IS NEVER A

HEAVEN; IT HAS THE MAKINGS OF HELL. OUT OF THAT LOVE OF SELF, PEOPLE WILL LOVE MONEY. PEOPLE LOVE MONEY FOR WHAT IT CAN DO FOR SELF. IT CAN BUY SOME COMFORTS AND PLEASURES. IT BRINGS RECOGNITION AND POWER. THE LOVE OF MONEY IS IRREVOCABLY TIED TO THE LOVE OF SELF. THEN YOU SEE IN THIS PASSAGE WORDS THAT DESCRIBE THE PRIDE IN PEOPLE'S HEARTS: BOASTERS, PROUD, BLASPHEMERS. "DISOBEDIENT TO PARENTS" ADDRESSES THE BREAKDOWN IN THE FAMILY, THE ABSENCE OF RESPECT TOWARD AUTHORITY. THE LIE THAT SAYS KIDS WILL FARE BETTER IF YOU JUST LET THEM HAVE THEIR WAY IS PRODUCING PEOPLE WHO ARE WHAT? "DISOBEDIENT TO PARENTS." DOCTRINES OF DEMONS AND DECEIVING SPIRITS ARE BEHIND ALL OF THAT. "UNTHANKFUL" ALSO MADE THE LIST. DO WE UNDERSTAND THE SERIOUSNESS OF INGRATITUDE? THIS IS REFERRING TO AN ENTITLEMENT MENTALITY. I DESERVE THE HELP JUST BECAUSE I'M ME. IF I DON'T GET THE HELP, I'M GOING TO BE MAD; AND IT'S ALL YOUR FAULT.