

Resurrection Life of Jesus Church

SIGNS OF THE END TIMES

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PART 4: DECEPTION AND FALSE PROPHETS

Signs of the end time that I have covered to date:

1. Deception – **Matthew 24:4-5**
2. Wars and Rumors of Wars – **verse 6**
3. Famines, Earthquakes, Pestilences – **verse 7**
4. Many shall be offended – **verse 10**

WHAT DID JESUS KNOW?

When we read Matthew chapter 24, it is important to understand that Jesus spoke to the disciples as God/man. He had emptied himself of the full glory of God prior to his coming and was limited in what He knew.

This understanding of Jesus is shown in **Luke 9:28-36**. God sent Moses and Elijah from Paradise to instruct Jesus about His coming death. There would have been no need for this if He would have had full knowledge.

When the disciples asked Him when the end of the world was to come, Jesus told them that it was only known of the Father in heaven. **Matthew 24:36; Acts 1:7**

Jesus knew what he was saying but there was knowledge of many heavenly things He had emptied Himself of in order to keep it a secret from the Devil. **1 Corinthians 2:6-8**

We know that when Jesus spoke, He was moved by the Holy Spirit, who gave Him direction from the Father. **John 12:49-50**

THE DISCIPLES GOT CONFUSED ON THE TIMING

All the apostles believed that Jesus would come back in their lifetime. **Matthew 10:23; 16:27-28; Luke 9:26-27**

Neither the disciples nor the Devil had understood that Jesus would die and be resurrected. This is what Paul later referred to as the “Mystery of the Gospel.” **Romans 16:25-27; Ephesians 1:9-12; 3:1-11**

As a result, Jesus did not know the time frame when He prophesied in Matthew chapter 24. The first prophecy about the temple in Jerusalem was fulfilled about 37 years after the crucifixion. But Jesus didn’t know that 1,976 years later we would still be waiting for His return.

There is also a “double prophecy” in this chapter where Jesus warned the people living in Jerusalem, that when they would see a heathen standing in the Temple



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area, it was time for the believers in Christ to flee as fast as they could from the city. The Jewish Christians in Jerusalem remembered this and historical records show there were no Christians left in the city when Jerusalem fell in 70 A.D.

Matthew 24:15-20

EVENTS AND TIMING

Every Bible student should know that the signs Jesus gave are not given in chronological order. As we look back in history, we can see that all the signs up to verse 20 have been fulfilled and are being fulfilled.

What we need to understand is that all of these signs will increase in crescendo and it will become more and more violent until we enter what Jesus called "The Great Tribulation." **Matthew 24:21**

DECEPTION AND FALSE PROPHETS

Jesus said that there would be many false prophets, not just one or two, and that the deception would ensnare a large number of people. **Matthew 24:11**

WALK THRU HISTORY

While the original apostles were still alive on this earth, false prophets and teachers had already started to spread their poison in the early church. **Galatians 1:6-9; 2:4; 2 Peter 2:1-3; Revelation 2:18-25**

GNOSTICISM

Gnosticism was a false teaching that evil spirits introduced to the Christian Church in 135 and continued strong until around 160. They believed Jesus did not come in the flesh, but in ghost-like (docetic) appearance. The teachers of this heresy claimed that only through a mystical "knowledge" (gnosis) could the Christian grasp the mystery of the Gospel. This teaching can be traced back to the Cabala as the Gnostics taught that the world of matter (the physical earth) is evil. It was created by an inferior god, not the real God. Therefore the Old Testament was the story of the inferior evil god. They believed the Messiah prophesied in the Old Testament did not have a real incarnation and that there was no death or resurrection.

Large number of pastors and churches bought into this demonic lie and almost destroyed the true church of Christ. The heresy was not defeated until the fifth century.

MONTANISM

Montanism began in the 2nd century after Christ was named after Montanus, who was from the area of Asia Minor, also known as Phrygia. According to Jerome (church scholar 340-420), Montanus had been a priest of Cybele (the great mother goddess) before his conversion to Christ.

In 156 Montanus proclaimed himself be the passive instrument through whom the Holy Spirit spoke. In a new revelation Montanus declared the promise of

Christ was fulfilled and the dispensation of the Holy Spirit had begun. He was soon joined by two prophetesses, Prisca and Maximilla. They affirmed, as mouthpieces of the Spirit, that the end of world was at hand and that the heavenly Jerusalem was about to be established in Phrygia and instructed believers to gather there.

To prepare for this event, the Christians were to practice celibacy, fasting and abstinence from meat. Since most of the church at this time had become very worldly, it appealed to many people seeking a closer walk with God.

The movement started to spread and the bishops of Asia Minor held a synod in 160 condemning the movement as heresy. By 170 it spread to Rome and caused great damage to the unity of the Christians there. Even though Maximilla, the last of the founders, had died in 179, the movement kept growing. By 207 it had spread to Carthage and the presbyter (elder) and Christian writer Tertullian (155-255) embraced Montanism.

Note: It is interesting to compare Montanism with the Jehovah's Witnesses and Harold Camping of Family Radio. Both have wrongly predicted the end of the world several times and yet people still flock to them.

THE ARIAN CONTROVERSY

The Arian heresy began in Alexandria, Egypt around 320, when Arius, a student of Lucian of Antioch, was a presbyter in charge of the church known as Baucalis. Arius stressed the unity and self-contained existence of God and that Jesus Christ was a created being like all other creatures "out of nothing." According to Arius, Jesus was not eternal but had a beginning and was lower than God. Arius taught that Jesus was neither fully God nor fully man, but a "tertium quid" (third something).

Bishop Alexander of Alexandria fought Arius with all his power, but Arius appealed to the Bishop Eusebius of Nicomedia, who gave Arius a platform and refuge. In May, 325 Emperor Constantine called for a church council where Arius and his teaching was rejected and he was banished.

Under the time when one of Constantine's sons reigned as emperor, Arianism had temporarily been victorious, but it slowly died over several centuries.

MONASTICISM (SELF DENIAL)

After the independent churches in the Roman Empire had been forced to form a state church with Emperor Constantine in 325 as the first pope, people who were not born again were added by the millions to this state church. The result was that many born again Christians longed for to live "a dedicated life." In the late third century, some Christians started to live a life of solitude and became known as hermits. This became very popular in Egypt.

Around 320 the first monastery was established in southern Egypt by a former Roman soldier Pachomius. When he died in 346 there were ten monasteries in Egypt.

There were no uniform rules and regulations and perversion crept in until the Benedict monasteries came into being. In 529 Benedict of Nursia founded the original monastery on the hill of Monte Cassino, about half way between Rome and Naples. It did not take long for the hierarchy of the Roman Catholic Church to realize that monasteries were valuable to the church, monks were used as missionaries, they also worked and made money for the church and the discipline of the young men and women living and being trained became valuable “slave workers” for the church.

When the Devil and his demons create false religions, which I call “perversion soup,” he only has so many ingredients to cook with. When we look at all the different variants of false Christian sects, we find that each is a “soup” of one or more of the first heresies mixed with local flavor. But it all boils down to the central point: **The rejection of Jesus Christ as being God.**

ISLAM

The religious soup of Islam cooked up by Mohammed and inspired by the Devil never mixed with Christianity. The murderous teaching found in the Koran stated that those who did not convert to Islam were to die by the sword. Damascus was conquered in 635 by the Muslim hordes, Antioch in 638, Alexandria in 641, the Persian kingdom was conquered in 651, and by 711 the bloodthirsty Islamic barbarians had conquered all of North Africa and wiped out Christianity. They then crossed into Spain and killed the Christians there but were defeated when they tried to go further north by the Franks in a battle in 732.

The believers in Christ at the time must have thought that the end of the world was at hand and that Islam was the Antichrist system.

While the political church leaders in the Western and Eastern Roman Empire quarreled over doctrine and could not come up with a united defense, the Islamic hordes solidified its grip on the nations they had conquered. The Christian leaders did not understand that Islam would become a world religion, and as of today, more than one billion people are in the clutches of the Devil. What the Muslims were not able to do in the eight century they are doing now as they spread into every nation in the world through immigration.

THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

Under the papacy of Gregory the Great (590-604), penance for sin and the doctrine of purgatory was introduced. In order to lessen the amount of time spent in purgatory, good Roman Catholics can purchase candles from the church, and together with financial gifts to the church, speed up the time a person would have to spend in Purgatory. Transubstantiation of the body and blood of Christ in communion was introduced in 831.

Over time came the creation of dead saints that people were supposed to seek in prayer and the deification of Mary, the mother of Jesus.

DEFINITION OF FALSE DOCTRINE

I am going to limit my definition of false doctrine to the distortion of salvation in this message since this is the most critical issue. If people are misled in the doctrine of salvation, they will spend eternity in the Lake of Fire. If they are misled in other areas, they will experience all kind of difficulties in life but they will not be lost for eternity.

The following church denominations or groups have false doctrine when it comes to salvation:

- ❖ All Catholic churches such as Roman, Greek Orthodox, Russian Orthodox, the Coptic church, the Syrian church, etc.
- ❖ There are many break away groups from these major Catholic churches, but one of the most well known are the Molokans, founded in Russia during the mid 1600s by Matthew Simon Dalmatov.
- ❖ United Pentecostal Churches, also known as UPC.
- ❖ Rick Warren and his Purpose Driven Churches.
- ❖ Most Lutheran churches which have evolved back to Catholic doctrine.
- ❖ Children of God, founded in 1969 by David Moses Berg.
- ❖ Christian Science, founded in 1877 by Mary Baker Eddy.
- ❖ Jehovah's Witnesses, founded in 1879 by Charles Taze Russell.
- ❖ Mormonism, founded in 1820 by Joseph Smith.
- ❖ World Wide Church of God, founded by Herbert W. Armstrong 1934.
- ❖ Unification Church, founded in 1954 by Sun Myung Moon.
- ❖ Scientology, founded in 1950 by L. Ron Hubbard.
- ❖ The Anthroposophical Society (Waldorf Schools), founded in 1909 by Rudolf Steiner.
- ❖ Plus ten thousands more spread all over the world.

Many churches in the so-called "Faith Movement" have adopted the doctrine that Jesus did not pay for our sins on the cross, but had to die spiritually and was taken to hell where He was tormented for three days and three nights by the Devil. They further believe that during this time His nature became one with the Devil and it was in hell He paid for our sins. When he was resurrected he came back as a man, and as a man he went back to heaven. This was done, so that man could become gods. This doctrine is also known as Jesus died spiritually (JDS).

This doctrine was first exposed to the general Christian community by E.W. Kenyon, accepted by Kenneth Hagin Sr., and spread through the Rhema Bible School to men like Kenneth Copeland, Fred Price, Joyce Meyers, Benny Hinn, Ulf Ekman and thousands of pastors, evangelists and teachers within the Charismatic movement.

SUMMARY

False doctrine and prophets have been around since the founding of the church in 34 A.D. Due to increased communication abilities, more have been birthed and the spiritual cancer spread through the printed word and later through radio, television and now the Internet. It is a miracle that true Christianity has survived.

The survival of the truth is the sovereign work of God through the power of the Holy Spirit.

The apostle Paul warned us. **1 Timothy 4:1-3; 2 Timothy 3:1-7**

The apostle Peter warned us. **2 Peter 2:1-3**

The apostle John told us what to do. **2 John 7-11**

IDENTIFY FALSE DOCTRINE – REJECT IT – EXPOSE IT!

Remember, it's not so important how you begin your life after salvation, but how you finish it!

DO YOU HAVE AN EAR TO HEAR WITH?