

John Newlin Ministries, Inc.

- realizing the power of a life in Christ-

DECEPTION! – JESUS' FIRST WARNING

All creation – all that we see on earth as well as elsewhere – has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time (Romans 8:22). When did this begin? With the fall of Adam and Eve, when they chose to follow the devil in the Garden of Eden.

Yes, Jesus has come and has taken care of everything that separates people from God. He has reconciled people to God. Now it is up to each individual to receive what Jesus has done. But the planet, this earth on which we live, has not returned to its glory of that period just before the fall. It still is groaning. We are witnesses to that, in all the earthquakes, tsunami's, forest fires, volcanic eruptions, hurricanes, horrific tornados, and more disasters we have had in such abundance in these last few years. All creation is groaning.

To put it simply, we live in a crooked and perverse world. Those of us blessed to hear and receive the truths of what Jesus did for us are already in the Kingdom of God. We have even in some way been lifted up and seated in the heavenlies with Jesus, as we are told in Ephesians. But the secular world system in which we live our daily lives is not in the Kingdom. And it is spiraling ever downward, as all creation groans.

To focus just on the United States, in these last few years even unbelievers have seen the enormous decline of the country – the economy, the stature in the world, the decay in the vision of national leaders as to what the country is and should be, the ineptness and apparent confusion and dare we say evil involved in the national government and other governments. How can we not be sad over the current conditions? But we know a greater truth. We know that Jesus is soon to return, and we who know him will go with him. We know this current earth and its current condition are not our long term home.

That said, let's turn to the Lord's first advice to his disciples when they asked him about his return. There are three great chapters summarizing what he said to them (Matthew 24, Mark 13, Luke 21). In each chapter, the very first thing he said was this:

“Watch out that no one deceives you.” – Matthew 24:4, NIV

“Watch out that no one deceives you.” – Mark 13:5, NIV

“Watch out that you are not deceived.” – Luke 21:8, NIV

You should read the other verses in these chapters. There is more said about deception, including a warning about false prophets and even about those who would claim to be Christ. But the important point is inescapable. While he later in the same chapters warned of earthquakes and horrible other natural events and gave all sorts of signs we were to look for regarding his imminent return, the very first thing he warned against was deception.

I say to you now that you live in a world of deception. Surely if you know Jesus you have realized this. Look at national politics. Look at what many television networks report as news. Look even, sadly, at some preachers, even some well-known ones, and what they are doing, saying, and focusing on.

This is a time you must know the scripture in the Bible so you can compare what you hear with what is said there. You must live under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, who will convict you of all truth.

It is easy to recognize some deception, some falsehood. False religions, for example – Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, and so on. That’s easy. They are just false. Now don’t rush to condemn everyone in those religions. Many are very serious about what they have been taught. I used to work with many Muslims, and conservative Muslims reminded me in their seriousness of some fundamentalist Christians – no dancing, for example. Most of these people in the false religions grew up under false spiritual leaders, no doubt led by satan’s troops, and they have false doctrine. Some today are hearing the truth and turning to Jesus and the gospel. Since the mid 1990’s I have heard several credible reports of Jesus appearing to Muslims and Hindus, actually appearing – in dreams, visions, and even just being there in person, and the people naturally convert to Christianity. So God surely is moving in these false religions.

In a way we can’t be as upset with these false religions as with other so called Christian groups that present deception and falsehood. That’s even worse. How about churches that say miracles and healings ended in the first century? We know firsthand that is not true. Or those who warn members against any manifestation of the Holy Spirit and in fact never teach about the Spirit who is God himself. Certainly you have heard people speak against the gift of speaking in tongues, one of the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

So that kind of deception has a surface of seemingly being good, coming as it does from a “church” or church people, but it is deceptive in not teaching the full gospel and in denying truths of that very gospel.

Then there are the groups known as cults. There are many of these, some like the Mormons or Jehovah’s Witnesses professing to be part of Christianity. If you know the Bible you can deal with this. If you don’t, you will be just as naïve as those who contend that saying these are not Christian is just bigotry. Sadly, it is not. Views of these groups are far afield from the Bible and from what Jesus has taught you. I suggest you seek out publications on these groups if you are troubled. Or go to the internet to check them out.

It is undeniable that many Mormons exhibit exemplary morale character in their daily lives. But Mormons believe Jesus and the devil are brothers, that God had a plan to save the earth, that Jesus accepted the plan and the devil had another plan. They believe God initially was not perfect, that he worked his way into perfection. They believe that people on earth were first spirits who chose to come to earth so they too might have the opportunity to become gods; the spirits that chose not to come will remain as they were. Mormons have four spiritual books, only

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one of which is the Bible which they believe is valid “to the extent it has been interpreted accurately.”

Jehovah’s witnesses believe that Michael the archangel came to earth and was born as Jesus. They revised the Bible in the 1800’s.

Is that enough falsehood for you? I share those few points not because I want to but because I want you to be alert! Obviously the two previous paragraphs cannot be beliefs of true Christians. We could have gone on with other groups as well, such as Christian Scientists and the Masons.

This is a world of deception in which you live. What you think is true may not be. Only the Bible and the Holy Spirit can help you discern truth.

Two wonderful scriptures that bear on all this are these. I’ll quote the first and let you look up the second.

1 John 4:1 “Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world.”

2 Corinthians 11:13-15

As regards false prophets, there are many out there – famous and not so famous. God guides us in the Bible to run away from evil. How are you going to recognize these false prophets? By comparing what they say to what you know from the Bible. And by being guided by the Holy Spirit. You may already know some false prophets – not just religious leaders, but national politicians, newsmen, entertainers, Supreme Court justices, professors, writers, perhaps a neighbor or friend. Imagine the horrors that await them. Do you remember what Jesus said about anyone who would lead a child who believes in him to sin? He said it would be better for that person to have a millstone hung about his neck and then to be thrown into the sea. (Mt 18:6). One other comment of note: This deception warning is not just for deception from leaders and famous people. It also applies to your dealings with normal everyday people. Watch that you are not deceived.

There is so much more to be said on this subject and on the role of God’s people in this world today. I will write more on that in future documents and emails. For example, the subject of being a watchman, of having the responsibility to warn people who are in error, in sin, lost, is an important one. And then there is the general responsibility we all have to take the gospel message to the world, whether to those around us or even far afield.

The point is that these are the last of the last days. We must be bold. Do you remember Peter praying for boldness in Acts 4:29-30 as the early believers were stepping out? A good prayer for all of us.

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For tools to help you now, if you do not have our CDs *Fighting Evil – Being a Christian Soldier* and *The Holy Spirit*, I would suggest you request them (over our web site, or by writing or calling the ministry).

And I suggest you focus ever more on studying the Bible and receiving the gifts of the Spirit. Discernment in this time is a gift to seek! Remember, the Holy Spirit is your guide in this time. John 16 is a good chapter to read about the Holy Spirit.

In this present age you must be sensitive to the leading of the Holy Spirit. And, you must also be firm, even perhaps hard, in refusing to compromise with the world system. God is God. The Bible is the Bible. You cannot modify who or what Jesus is or what he did. He is the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except by him, as he pointed out in John 14:6.

DON'T MISS "A WATCHMAN WARNING!"

In the January newsletter I mentioned we would begin sending out to all on our email list "A **WATCHMAN WARNING!**" and the first issue has been sent out. Because events are moving so fast now, we have thought this particularly necessary and will issue as events merit. If you have an email and have not let us know it, please do so. You don't want to miss these notices. We do post them also on my blog and on the ministry web site, so you can check there to read any you have missed. (My blog can be reached through the menu on the ministry web site home page or by going to <http://johnnewlin.blogspot.com/>.)

DONATIONS GREATLY APPRECIATED!

These have been difficult years for the world economy. Many of those who contribute to Christian ministries and churches have also been experiencing hard times, and their contributions have been affected. I just ask that those of you who can please consider increasing your monthly partnership even by a small amount or consider becoming a contributor if you have not been one. That is how the ministry goes forward. God supplies through people like you who are led to contribute.

May God strengthen you and equip you to be ready to deal with all you will be confronting in these last days, and may you always live in his abundant blessings. Always, do what is printed at the bottom of this page: **Keep Your Eyes on Jesus!**

John

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