

A SETUP FOR SATAN'S MASTER DECEPTION

Today we are often amazed at how leaders can seemingly so EASILY DECEIVE the masses. It seems CRAZY. In reality, it is "demonic". Satan is the "god of this age" who blinds the minds of people (2 Cor. 4:4).

In Matthew 24 the disciples wanted to know what will SIGNAL the future coming of Christ that will bring to an end this present pre-kingdom age.

Matthew 24:4 (NKJV)

4 And Jesus answered and said to them: "Take heed that no one deceives you.

The subject in view is the "end of the age" with the KEY marker in view being the 70th week of Daniel as referenced in Matthew 24:15. The 70th week of Daniel – otherwise known as the 7-year Tribulation Period, will culminate in Christ's Second Coming (cf. Dan. 9:24-27).

I believe the context here in Matthew 24:4-8 relates to the first half of the Tribulation Period. The correspondence between the descriptive traits in Matthew 24:4-8 with that of the first four seal judgments in Rev. 6:1-8 have much overlap. So much so that many scholars believe they are BOTH texts descriptive of the first half of the Tribulation Period.

"The events of vv. 4-8 are part of the seal judgments early in the tribulation." – The Moody Bible Commentary

When Jesus speaks of "you" in these verses He is speaking generically to everyone – especially to those who will find themselves living in the Tribulation Period that will usher in "the end of the age".

The 70th week of Daniel (the Tribulation Period) begins with one of the greatest deceptions of all time. Antichrist will deceive the nation of Israel by brokering a 7-year covenant (Dan. 9:27) which will be a "covenant with death" (cf. Isa. 28:15, 18). Antichrist will in effect be a false Christ (cf. Zech. 11:15-17; Jn. 5:43). He comes deceptively as a man of peace – a man of white. And he will not come alone as he will have a whole host of deceivers in league with him.

1 John 2:18 (NKJV)

18 Little children, it is the last hour; and as you have heard that the Antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come, by which we know that it is the last hour.

The world is even now being set up for THE Antichrist by the spirit of Antichrist which is operative in many people. Apostasy and deception define the last day's perilous times of the Church Age (cf. 2 Tim. 3), but the Church Age then gives way to the ultimate era of deception with the emergence of THE Antichrist coming onto the scene.

Revelation 6:1–2 (NKJV)

1 Now I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals; and I heard one of the four living creatures saying with a voice like thunder, "Come and see."

2 And I looked, and behold, a white horse. He who sat on it had a bow; and a crown was given

to him, and he went out conquering and to conquer.

1 Thessalonians 5:3 (NKJV)

3 For when they say, "Peace and safety!" then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape.

2 Thessalonians 2:9–10 (NKJV)

9 The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders,

10 and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved.

In relation to discussing "the end of the age" the very FIRST thing Christ addresses is the issue of DECEPTION!

Matthew 24:5 (NKJV)

5 For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will deceive many.

"During the first half of the Tribulation, many false messiahs will appear who will succeed in deceiving multitudes. The current rise of many false cults may be a prelude to this, but it is not a fulfillment."

– William MacDonald

As the world enters into the Tribulation Period it will be a time of unparalleled deception – with much of it being done in Christ's name.

DECEPTION is the devil's game and he is good at it. In Revelation 12:9 it says he "deceives the whole world". Jesus said he "is a liar and the father of it." (Jn. 8:44).

The entire world is progressively being set up for the master DECEPTION of Satan which will be the antichrist. The last days of the Church Age are "perilous times" because they are days of APOSTASY that sets the world up for the antichrist (2 Tim. 3:1-5). In this context "evil men and imposters will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived" (2 Tim. 3:13). And in this context "all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution" (2 Tim. 3:12).

Paul told Timothy that he must CONTINUE in the Word and exhorted him to "Preach the Word" in season and out of season (cf. 2 Tim. 3:14 - 4:5). Our assignment as God's people in the face of mounting apostasy is to faithfully HOLD to and PROCLAIM God's truth.

God help us to be faithful!