

A Declaration of Those Things Which Are Most Surely Believed Among Us

An Expository Study of **The Gospel According to Luke**
Chapter 21- Luke 21:7&8

315- When Therefore Will These Things Happen?-
Part 2- See To It That No One Misleads You- Part 1

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Luke 21:7-38

⁷ They questioned Him, saying, "Teacher, when therefore will these things happen? And what *will be* the sign when these things are about to take place?"

⁸ And He said, "See to it that you are not misled; for many will come in My name, saying, 'I am He,' and, 'The time is near.'** Do not go after them.**

To the Glory of God

Now, as I told you last week, the Christian Church has believed and taught that Jesus is physically and literally coming back to this earth to destroy the wicked and to gather His people for 2,000 consecutive years. The Second Coming of Jesus to this earth is not a secondary or a peripheral issue, it is prime. It is a fundamental Truth of Biblical Christianity, and should be heralded loudly and clearly and repeatedly and unashamedly.

The earliest writings that we have discovered in Church History show us that those who led the Church in its formative years taught clearly and repeatedly that Jesus was Coming again. For example, the earliest Creed of the Christian Faith ever developed is called "The Apostle's Creed". Now the myth about this Creed is that it was developed by the Apostles, with each one writing a part.

We know now that that is not true, but The Apostle's Creed, nevertheless, was developed very early on from that body of divinely inspired revelation from the Apostles with parts of it being quoted as

early as AD140, about 111 years after the Resurrection. In that Creed we find this part:

... From there He [Jesus] will come to judge the living and the dead.¹

And both the AD 325 and the AD 381 Nicene Creeds say:

... From thence He [Jesus] shall come [again with glory]
to judge the quick and the dead

So from this we know that from the earliest days of Christianity it was taught and believed that Jesus was coming back.

And there is also no doubt that from the earliest records of Church History the attitude that was promoted and praised among those who led the Church was that all believers should be eagerly awaiting the Return of Jesus, at any minute! That we should live with the expectation that Jesus might come back immediately! So there should be a great anticipation and a great eagerness mixed in with a healthy degree of godly fear that will govern the way we live our lives, because we don't want to be caught doing something sinful when Jesus comes back.

So here is the central area of Truth concerning the Return of Jesus to this earth that we all need to believe and confess and teach:

Jesus is coming back at some point in the future and we should be eagerly anticipating His Arrival and live accordingly

And we also know that we are told to pray for the Return of Jesus. And this prayer is mixed in with the mystery concerning how prayer works, in general. For example, it is the Will of God that Jesus come back to this earth. Jesus Himself said this in **The Revelation 22:20a**:

He who testifies to these things says, "Yes, I am coming quickly..."

To which John responded with a prayer:

The Revelation 22:20b
... Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.

¹ Apostle's Creed

So the way we are to understand the connection between Prayer and God's Will is that God has made His Will known through His Word. But, even though it is God's Will, God will *not* perform His Will in the earth except by answering the prayers of His people. So the "Means of Grace" by which God carries out His Will in the earth is through answering the prayers of His people.

Now, some would ask, "*But are you saying that if we do not pray then God's Will will not be done?*" Yes and No. I am saying that since it is God's Will, He will *assure* that His people pray to that end since He has already determined not to carry out His Will in the earth except through answering their prayers. So when we find out that something is God's Will, we are to pray to that end. And it is the Will of God that Jesus come back to this earth to end our way of life and to destroy the wicked and gather His people to Himself. So, as God's people, we should faithfully pray to that end.

Now, in spite of the effort by some in the modern Church to place Eschatology into the forefront of Biblical Truth, we must understand that while the Second Coming of Jesus is a "Primary Doctrine" of the Christian Church, and is, therefore, "Essential Doctrine", the *details* surrounding how all of Redemptive History will wind down are not. Genuine Blood-washed believers differ today on *some* of the details of Eschatological events, and they always have. And that is *why* we must guard our hearts and *resist* the temptation to separate ourselves from those fellow bond-slaves of Jesus who may honestly hold differing views or insult them by saying, "*They don't believe the Bible*".

Leaving a Church over false doctrine is correct and proper, but only after the one leaving has *exhausted* himself in trying to prove his case *biblically*. But leaving a Church or separating from other believers over a disagreement about Eschatology is not permitted in the Bible and is sin.

The truth is that how much or how little of Biblical Prophecy is "literal" or "symbolic" is simply not clear to us. And we have to be honest enough about the issue of Eschatology to say that there is more speculation about this subject than any other.

And, whereas, our *own* speculation may be very sincere, and while we may speculate *passionately*, human speculation has never, is not now, and will never be infallible. As humans, we have the capacity to be in error about very serious issues, even those we hold dear. So we

must cry out to God and beg Him to continue to give us a mind to believe Divine Truth and the courage to correct our views when we come to believe they are wrong.

So as we move into this Passage, we must understand that there is only one way to look at the question that was asked of Jesus here in verse 7. And that is to keep it *in context* with all that happened from **Luke 20:1** all the way down to **Luke 21:6**. So when they asked Jesus:

Luke 21:7b

... Teacher, when therefore will these things happen? And what *will be* the sign when these things are about to take place?

... they were asking about what Jesus had just said He was going to do in verse 6:

Luke 21:6

As for these things which you are looking at, the days will come in which there will not be left one stone upon another which will not be torn down.

... and *not* His Second Coming. It is twisting this Passage completely out of context to assume that Jesus is discussing any other topic than when He is going to "tear the Temple down", and we simply don't have the authority to do that.

Now, as I told you last week, this Destruction that Jesus promises here is far more than simply the demolishing of a building. The Destruction of the Temple represents the ending of the First Covenant to make room for the infinitely superior New Covenant and the end of the importance of the Jewish way of life, including their worship of God.

Now having said that, look at how Jesus responds immediately to the question:

... when therefore will these things happen? And what *will be* the sign when these things are about to take place?

As soon as they asked Jesus this question, He begins by showing them the great importance of Sound Doctrine:

Luke 21:8a

See to it that you are not misled...

So the first thing out of Jesus' Mouth when asked “**when... will these things happen?**” had nothing to do with the “Rapture” or the “Rebuilding of the Temple” or “The Mark of the Beast”, or any of the issues that are almost universally put at the forefront of Eschatology. The most important thing on Jesus' Mind to discuss with His disciples concerning their future was yet another warning about the great importance of what we believe and why we believe it.

Now this is certainly not the first time that Jesus warned His followers to guard what they believe. This has been a central theme from the very beginning. And at each critical juncture during His earthly Ministry, as He was healing and performing miracles and casting out demons and controlling Creation, He constantly warned those who trusted in Him to take heed what they believed.

Jesus constantly reminded His disciples that they were not saved because of their efforts to be faithful or to obey Him. Their sins were not washed away because of the miracles or the signs and wonders, but these unworthy sinners were forgiven and saved because of *what* they believed and *who* they were trusting in. At one point Jesus even minimized the fantastic miracles that He Himself was performing in order to teach His disciples what was most important when He said in **Luke 10:18-20**:

18 ... I was watching Satan fall from heaven like lightning.

19 "Behold, I have given you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing will injure you.

20 "Nevertheless do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice that your names are recorded in heaven.

So the key element in their belief was not their power over demons, but their faith and trust in Jesus. So, “Who Jesus is” was central to their Salvation. So much so that if they believed wrongly about Jesus they could not be forgiven and they could not be saved. Turn over to **Matthew 16** for just a moment so we can see how vital this is- **Matthew 16**:

Matthew 16:13

Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, He was asking His disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?"

So Jesus is asking His disciples Who other people said that He was. And look how they answered Him in the next verse:

Matthew 16:14

And they said, "Some *say* John the Baptist; and others, Elijah; but still others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets."

Now in the mind of many of the Jews, to equate this itinerate Preacher from Nazareth with some of the greatest heroes in Jewish history was a compliment. I mean, after all, Malachi had prophesied that God was going to send Elijah again:

Malachi 4:5-6

5 "Behold, I am going to send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and terrible day of the Lord.

6 "He will restore the hearts of the fathers to *their* children and the hearts of the children to their fathers, so that I will not come and smite the land with a curse."

Now these were the last Words that God spoke to Man for over 400 years until the birth of John the Baptist. From the time that God moved upon the Prophet Malachi to say verses 4-5, right here, until John was born was a 430 year period of complete silence. There was no miracle, no sign, no angel, not Prophet, and no Word from God. For 400 years the Heavens were brass and the people waited and waited.

And so some thought that Jesus was the fulfillment of this Prophecy. Of course, in **Luke 7**, Jesus told us that John was the fulfillment of Malachi's prophecy when He said:

Luke 7:27-28

27 "This is the one about whom it is written, '*BEHOLD, I SEND MY MESSENGER AHEAD OF YOU, WHO WILL PREPARE YOUR WAY BEFORE YOU.*'

28 "I say to you, among those born of women there is no one greater than John; yet he who is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he."

So, Jesus was *not* the "second coming" of Elijah the Prophet, John was. And so Jesus also wasn't a "re-appearing" or Jeremiah or any of

the other Old Testament Prophets. And that is because Jesus is superior to those Prophets. So that left the mystery of Who Jesus is still on the table.

So Jesus was not fishing for compliments here at all. He was establishing the basis by which sinners are saved, and so He presses the disciples to get very specific:

Matthew 16:15

He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?"

Jesus knew that a correct belief in Who He was is central to Salvation. And so He presses the disciples to think and to come up with the right answer. And none of them opened their mouths except Peter who said:

Matthew 16:16b

... You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.

Now the reason that the other men didn't say anything is not because they were bashful, but because they didn't know. Now how do we know that? Read the very next two verses:

Matthew 16:17&18

17 And Jesus said to him, "Blessed are you, Simon Barjona, because flesh and blood did not reveal *this* to you, but My Father who is in heaven.

18 "I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of Hades will not overpower it.

Now there is a lot to say about this Passage, but suffice it to say that the Greek word that was translated here as "**Peter**" means: *a little stone*, and the word that was translated here as "**rock**" means: **a huge mountain**.

And, whereas, some might want to say that the Christian Church is built upon the small pebble named "Peter", what is actually true is that Jesus built His Church upon the huge mountain of the Divine Revelation that Jesus is the Christ the Son of the living God.

This Divine Revelation of Who Jesus is is the "Rock" upon which

the Church is built. And at this moment, God had not sovereignly revealed that Truth to anyone but Peter.

Now, the point I am making is that the Revelation of Who Jesus is, which is the Rock upon which the Church is built, was not merely an issue this one time. It is *a/ways* the issue. The Divine Revelation of Who Jesus is is not only the foundation of the Christian Church, it is also the basis of our Salvation.

Nobody can be saved unless they know the Truth about Jesus and believe it. In other words, nobody who gets Jesus wrong can be saved. Another way of understanding this is that nobody who does not trust in the Biblical Jesus can be forgiven or saved.

Now this was not merely something that was important to Jesus. This was also important to the Apostle John. And, in **1 John 5:5-13**, the Apostle said:

5 Who is the one who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?

6 This is the One who came by water and blood, Jesus Christ; not with the water only, but with the water and with the blood. It is the Spirit who testifies, because the Spirit is the truth.

7 For there are three that testify:

8 the Spirit and the water and the blood; and the three are in agreement.

9 If we receive the testimony of men, the testimony of God is greater; for the testimony of God is this, that He has testified concerning His Son.

10 The one who believes in the Son of God has the testimony in himself; the one who does not believe God has made Him a liar, because he has not believed in the testimony that God has given concerning His Son.

11 And the testimony is this, that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son.

12 He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life.

13 These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life.

So, a correct confession of Jesus is mandatory for Salvation. You get Jesus wrong and you remain in your sins. And any other so-called, "revelation" about Jesus, such as what the Mormons produce, is an evil

deception, because it distorts the Biblical Record and it contradicts the Testimony of both God the Father and God the Spirit concerning God the Son.

So, we must know what God has revealed about Jesus in infallible Scripture, and believe and trust that. And, by default, that means that we must also reject any other so-called "revelation" that would "add to" or "take away from" the already revealed Jesus.

So, I'm not going to receive what you say that the angel told you about Jesus. I'm going to reject what you say your dreams revealed to you about Jesus, and what you say God showed you directly about Jesus. I'm also going to reject what the Book of Mormon and the Pearl of Great Price and the Doctrines and Covenants say about Jesus. I reject the "Jesus" that is revealed both in the Qur'an and the Bhagavad-gita. And I'm also not going to trust in the "Jesus" that is revealed in the teachings of Ellen G. White, or the teachings of Mary Baker Glover, Patterson, Eddy (she had a problem with husbands). I'm going to believe and trust and confess and preach and teach and defend what the 66 Books of the Holy Bible say about Jesus.

So we have to understand that the central issue when Jesus walked the earth was: Who is Jesus? And that was the central issue with the Apostles, and that was the issue all down through Church History. And, the central issue today, out from which all other issues flow, is:

Who is Jesus?

And so, today, when pagans and humanists and other unbelievers think they are complimenting Jesus by equating Him with being a Prophet or a Humanitarian or a great Teacher or even a "Community Organizer, all of these people are actually insulting Jesus and they are minimizing Who Jesus is. God has already revealed to Peter Who Jesus is and He is:

The Christ- the Son of the living God

And so here, at the very beginning of Jesus' Teaching about when He is going to destroy the Temple and usher in the glorious New Covenant, Our Lord begins with this simple warning:

Luke 21:8a

See to it that you are not misled...

... and then He goes into *why* He says this and reminds the people that just as there is one genuine Christ, there will be false Christs.

Luke 21:8b

**... for many will come in My name, saying, 'I am *He*,' and, 'The time is near.'
Do not go after them.**

So there are two issues here that Jesus is warning about:

- ✓ Who He is
- ✓ The time

Now there are two ways of understanding this Statement by Jesus. One is to understand that Jesus is warning us that some people will rise up and say that they *themselves* are the Christ. In other words, people will be demonically empowered to assume the position of Jesus Christ in order to draw away unstable souls after them.

But, there is another way of understanding this section of God's Word. And that is to see that Jesus is saying that some will come and will affirm that Jesus is the Christ, but then go about to teach false things about the time being near.

And so, while we must understand that while "Who Jesus is" is the main thing that brings about our Salvation, "Who Jesus is" is *not* the only thing to be concerned about. We must also be biblical about every issue, including our understanding of "The Time".

But now look carefully again at the end of verse 8:

.. and, 'The time is near.'

So here we see that in addition to Jesus warning us to hold fast to a biblical understanding of Who Jesus is, we must also realize that Jesus says here that some will lay claim to have special insight into the end of time. And Jesus warns us about these people when He said:

Do not go after them.

So we are commanded by the Lord Christ to not only reject people who lay claim to be Jesus themselves, but we must also reject people who correctly say that Jesus is the Christ the Son of the living God, but who then go about and teach false things concerning the end of time.

And so, Jesus is warning us to not only “stay the course” as it pertains to a Biblical Confession about Jesus, but to also resist the temptation to satisfy our curiosity about what is coming down the road and not buy into the so-called “revelations” or special “insights” or the teachings where some seem to have the “end times” all figured out.

Now, this is almost the identical warning that the Apostle John gave over in **1 John 4:1** when he said:

Beloved, 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.

And, just as Jesus said that the deception concerning what time it was would center around Himself, so, too, John said that we had to test the spirits to make sure we weren't deceived about Who Jesus is, because there were *many*, not a few, but *many* false prophets in the world teaching wrongly about Jesus, and that was written 2,000 years ago!

1 John 4:2-3

2 By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God;

3 and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God; this is the *spirit* of the antichrist, of which you have heard that it is coming, and now it is already in the world.

Now specifically, John was referring here to the Gnostic mystics who were trying at that very moment to infiltrate the Church with a tidal wave of false teaching about Jesus. And contrary to the Jews, the Gnostics had no problem at all with the concept that Jesus was God. Of course, the Jews, both then and now, consider the notion that Jesus was fully Deity to be blasphemy.

But, the Gnostics rejected that Jesus was human. And so John is teaching here that Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God, Who is the

only Savior of the world, is not only fully God, but, He is, also, at the same time, fully Man.

The point I am making here is that the central issue at stake, even after the Resurrection is, Who is Jesus? That has *always* been the central issue throughout history, it is the central issue this morning, and it will *always* be the central issue. So, the Church had to develop a very detailed and very biblical understanding of Who Jesus is so they could withstand all of the various false teachings concerning the Lord. And immediately after the great battle with the heretic Arius concerning the fully Deity of Jesus Christ, the Church hammered out one of the very best definitions of Jesus that has ever been made.

And the "Summary Statement" or the "Creed" that flowed out from that 4th Century Church Council that officially and formally confronted and condemned the heresy that is now the foundational teaching of the Jehovah's Witnesses says this about Jesus:

We believe:

... in one Lord Jesus Christ
the only-begotten Son of God,
begotten of the Father before all worlds;
God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God;
begotten, not made,
being of one substance with the Father, by Whom all things were made.
Who, for us men for our Salvation, came down from heaven,
and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary, and was made Man;
and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate;
He suffered and was buried;
and the third day He rose again, according to the Scriptures;
and ascended into Heaven,
and sits on the Right Hand of the Father;
and He shall come again, with Glory, to judge the quick and the dead;
Whose Kingdom shall have no end.²

² From the Nicene Creed (from Creeds of the Church, PC Study Bible formatted electronic database Copyright © 2003, 2006 by Biblesoft, Inc. All rights reserved.)

You should know and understand and believe and confess and defend these items, for they are an accurate reflection of what the Bible teaches about Jesus.

But, we also have to know that in addition to doing battle against the Gnostics, who were trying to corrupt the correct understanding of Who Jesus is, John and the other Apostles were also resisting a new phenomenon within the ranks of believers that began to spring up soon after the Resurrection. This was the intoxication of what became known as "Sensuality" or "Mysticism".

Now, Sensuality is a very close counterfeit to true, genuine spirituality, but it is deadly and destructive. Real Spirituality is based on objective, propositional Absolute Truth, whereas "Sensuality" is based on human emotions and the five senses of Man. And throughout the 2,000 years of Christianity, there has always been a clear distinction between a person being "mystical" or "sensual" and a person being "spiritual".

Now it is commonly thought that being spiritual is the same thing as being mystical or sensual, but it isn't. Now it is true that as the Bible was being developed, God moved upon a few men in ways that could be considered "mystical". These men saw visions, and spoke with angels, they were "caught away", and they received direct Divine Revelation from God. But there are some things we need to remember about this:

- ✓ God only moved upon a handful of people like this (it was never common)
- ✓ There was a very precise purpose in it
- ✓ There was a time frame associated with it

But, even at that, the men who did experience what many today would consider to be "mystical experiences" were all governed by the external, propositional, objective, Absolute Truth of 39 infallible Books. There is no command or direction in all of sacred Scripture that promotes anyone to be mystical. Sensuality, however, is condemned repeatedly. For example:

- ✓ **Isaiah 47** condemns the pagan religion and practices of the Chaldeans, whom God raised up to bring chastisement to His

people. The Chaldeans forgot that the only reason they rose up was because God used them to bring repentance to Israel, and that after that God was going to destroy them. And God calls these pagans- the “**sensual one**” (**Isiah 47:8**).

- ✓ In **Ezekiel 33**- God likens the words of Ezekiel to a “**sensual song**” in the ears of the sinful Jews in that they are being put to sleep by the command to repent and will slumber until God’s Wrath comes upon them.
- ✓ In **1 Timothy 5:11**- the Apostle Paul likens the lust of younger widows to “**sensual desires**” and cautions the Church to make sure that the widows they support are what Paul called “widows indeed”, and worthy of support.
- ✓ In **2 Peter 2:7** the Apostle called the sexual perversity of the homosexuals of Sodom “**sensual conduct**”.
- ✓ **Mark 7:22; Romans 13:13; 2Corinthians 12:21; Galatians 5:19; Ephesians 4:19; 1Peter 4:3; 2Peter 2:2; 2Peter 2:18; and The Revelation 18:3** likens sensuality to sexual sins.

Now, perhaps what is more telling is what God inspired both James and Jude to write:

James 3:15

This wisdom is not that which comes down from above, but is earthly, natural, demonic.

Jude 19

These are the ones who cause divisions, worldly-minded, devoid of the Spirit.

Now, the word that was translated into English as “**natural**” here in **James 3:15**, and as “**devoid of the Spirit**” in **Jude 19**, both comes from the very same Greek word that means: *of or belonging to the psuchee- which is the nature of an animal- who operates on unbridled lust- sensual.*

The point here is that sensuality is the enemy of true genuine spirituality. Because genuine Biblical Spirituality has to do with struggling against the lusts of the flesh by the Power of the Holy Spirit to be found humbly and joyfully submitted to the Authority of the Scriptures in your daily life, all to the Glory of God. While Sensuality or Mysticism has to do with:

- ✓ Paganism
- ✓ False Religions
- ✓ Savagery and Barbarism
- ✓ Unbridled lust
- ✓ Sexual sins
- ✓ Judgment of God
- ✓ Falsehoods
- ✓ The Nature of Animals

Mysticism is linked with Sensuality, while true biblical spirituality is linked Scripture. Being Spiritual has to do with reigning in your five senses, while Sensuality and Mysticism has to do with letting them roam free.

It is no mystery that wherever Mysticism and Sensuality dominate, sexual and financial sins abound, and wherever Scripture dominates, Holiness and Righteousness flourish.

And this is why the Apostle Paul said this in **Ephesians 5:18**:

And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit,

Now, a few years ago a man named Rodney Howard Browne rose to fame who taught that being filled with the Spirit was equated with being drunk. And the end result of his teaching was that the “weirder” people acted the more spiritual they were. And so people were engaging in all sorts of crazy behavior, including uncontrollable laughter and falling all over the floor, which is the height of sensuality, not spirituality.

So, Paul was actually teaching the opposite of what Browne and others taught. The Apostle was condemning the use of alcohol and drunkenness in the pagan religion in ancient Ephesus who thought that getting drunk was the gateway to spirituality, similar to the American Indians who smoked peyote to get high to commune with “the gods”.

Paul taught that being filled with God’s Spirit had nothing to do with wild, aberrant behavior, or even mystical experiences (he used the word “dissipation”), but said that being “filled”, or in other words, being “dominated” or “controlled” or “empowered” or “led” by God’s Spirit was

pure and holy and godly, and was genuinely spiritual, not just silly and weird, and not sensual or mystical.

Now, I bring all this up to say this. One of the great challenges of the Church is to always make the distinction between being “spiritual” and being “sensual” or “mystical”. And here’s why. Because we are fallen, human beings are naturally attracted to mysticism.

Mysticism has great appeal because in our fallen condition we wrongly equate mysticism with spirituality. We were made to worship God in Spirit and Truth; we were made to be the physical tabernacles of God the Holy Spirit. And yet we are fallen. And, so, the counterfeit is always more attractive than the original because the original focuses on God while the counterfeit focuses on us.

After the Resurrection, the Church came into an almost immediate battle against Mysticism. Now Sensuality and Mysticism had *always* been a major part of the Babylonian Mystery Religions, but now these sensual teachings and practices were knocking on the door of the Church.

And, so, people rose up in the Second Century who made the claim that they heard directly from God and that they received new revelation from God. These people were characterized as seeing visions and having dreams and of being transported by the Spirit and of visiting with angels. And it was a great challenge to the Leaders of the Church because what these false teachers said and did was enormously popular with the people.

And perhaps the most famous of these “new mystics” was a man named Montanus. And, so, the heresy that promoted Mysticism and Sensuality over true genuine Spirituality came to be known as Montanism. And Montanism taught that being “spontaneous” was the height of spirituality, and the goal of a Church Service was *not* to worship God, in the Beauty of Holiness, but for everyone to get into a state of emotional ecstasy.

And so they rejected any effort that allowed people to spend time in the Scriptures as they said they were being led “directly by God the Holy Spirit”, and, thus, had “no need to study.”

Montanists were characterized by long sessions of prayer and fasting whereby they would enter into a condition they termed as “The Hill of the Lord”, where they would go into mystical trances and supposedly commune directly with God. The Montanists would

prophecy what they considered to be “new revelations” and direct “Words from God”. Two other very important tenets of the Montanists were:

1. Their promotion of female prophetess’
2. Their prophecies concerning the “End Times”

... which is *exactly* what Jesus taught that we were *not* supposed to do when He said:

Luke 21:8b

... for many will come in My name, saying, 'I am He,' and, 'The time is near.' Do not go after them.

Montanism was defined as:

“... a prophetic movement that called for a reliance on the spontaneity of the Holy Spirit and a more conservative personal ethic. Parallels have been drawn between Montanism and modern-day movements such as Pentecostalism, the Charismatic Movement, and the New Apostolic Reformation.”³

Eventually, the Christian Church officially and formally declared Montanism to be a heresy and excommunicated its followers. Now what is fascinating is that even though they were advocating all of this mystical sensuality, the Montanists were staunch defenders of the Biblical understanding of Who Jesus is.

So, even though they correctly said that Jesus was the Christ, they then went about deceiving people concerning the “End Times”, which is exactly what Jesus warned us about.

And the lesson learned from Montanism is that whatever excites the flesh and overcharges the five senses, whatever appeals to the carnal desires of fleshly people, *especially* about things that are hard to verifiably prove, like “End Time Events”, should *always* be governed by what we can prove, like the infallible Words of the Holy Bible. So part of correctly interpreting the Bible are two things to always keep in mind:

³ Wikipedia; <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Montanism>; See also Robeck, Cecil M, Jr (2010), "Montanism and Present Day 'Prophets'", *Pneuma: The Journal of the Society for Pentecostal Studies* 32: 413, doi:10.1163/157007410x531934.

- A. The unclear verses and passages are to be defined by the clear ones
- B. The single verse does not define the many- the many defines the single

So, just how can we guard against falling into traps like Montanism? How can we guard ourselves so that we will not be led astray by those who seem to have great insight into End Time Events? A Loving Church. Please turn with me to **2 John**. There, the Apostle says this:

2 John

1 The elder to the chosen lady and her children, whom I love in truth; and not only I, but also all who know the truth,

2 for the sake of the truth which abides in us and will be with us forever:

3 Grace, mercy *and* peace will be with us, from God the Father and from Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, in truth and love.

4 I was very glad to find *some* of your children walking in truth, just as we have received commandment *to do* from the Father.

5 Now I ask you, lady, not as though *I were* writing to you a new commandment, but the one which we have had from the beginning, that we love one another.

6 And this is love, that we walk according to His commandments. This is the commandment, just as you have heard from the beginning, that you should walk in it.

7 For many deceivers have gone out into the world, those who do not acknowledge Jesus Christ *as* coming in the flesh. This is the deceiver and the antichrist.

8 Watch yourselves, that you do not lose what we have accomplished, but that you may receive a full reward.

9 Anyone who goes too far and does not abide in the teaching of Christ, does not have God; the one who abides in the teaching, he has both the Father and the Son.

10 If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not receive him into *your* house, and do not give him a greeting;

11 for the one who gives him a greeting participates in his evil deeds.

12 Though I have many things to write to you, I do not want to *do so* with paper and ink; but I hope to come to you and speak face to face, so that your joy may be made full.

13 The children of your chosen sister greet you.

Now, I'm not going to be able to finish this today, but the issue before us here is just how we can avoid making the same mistakes of the past, especially since we are 2,000 years closer to the Return of the Lord than John was when he wrote this, and 2,000 years closer than Jesus was when He spoke to us from **Luke 21**? In other words, just how can we be obedient to Jesus when He warned us in **Luke 21:8** and said:

See to it that you are not misled; for many will come in My name, saying, 'I am He,' and, 'The time is near.' Do not go after them.

And I think a great lesson can be learned here from the Apostle John as he teaches here that a truly loving Church will help guard each of the members from falling into false teaching, *especially* about the "End Times". Now please allow me to show you how I make this connection.

Here, in verses 5 and 6, John is telling the Christians to love one another. And the last phrase of verse 5 says:

... that we love one another.

And the last phrase of verse 6 says:

... that you should walk in it.

So this the Commandment to love one another. But then verse 7 gives them the reason *why* they should love like this:

For many deceivers have gone out into the world, those who do not acknowledge Jesus Christ *as* coming in the flesh.

So, John is not simply telling us to love one another here. He is saying that our love for each other is a vital component in keeping us

faithful to God, precisely because of the great deception that is in the world.

Now keep in mind that the word “**for**” here means: *because*. So John is saying,

Love one another... BECAUSE many deceivers have gone out into the world.

And that means that this kind of love is a great protection against the very kind of deception that Jesus warned us about in **Luke 21:8**. Or, if it would help the point stick in your mind, you could even say:

Mutual Christian affection is a protection against deception.

Now what kind of deception will this love keep us from? The deception of the antichrist. Look again at verse 7:

For many deceivers have gone out into the world, those who do not acknowledge Jesus Christ *as* coming in the flesh. This is the deceiver and the antichrist.

Now I want you all to meditate on this until next week when, Lord willing, we will finish this mini-series on “See To It That No One Misleads You”.

Amen. Let’s pray

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The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen. Be watchful and quicken your pace. Soli Deo Gloria. For the Glory of God alone.