

THE GOSPEL IS SUPERNATURAL

- A. Introduction: The Bible is very clear that the years leading up to the return of Jesus to this world will be a time of great religious deception. Jesus Himself warned His followers that there are going to be false prophets and false Messiahs who will deceive many. Matt 24:4-5; 11; 23-24
1. This is consistent with what other passages tells us about world conditions in the years leading up to Jesus' return. The Bible describes a system of worldwide government, economy, and religion.
 - a. This system will be presided over by a world leader who is hand-picked and empowered by Satan — his Anti (or in place of) Christ. Rev 13; II Thess 2:9-10;
 1. This man will demand and receive worship from the world. He will lead his supporters in an attempt to stop Jesus from returning, as Satan attempts to hold on to his control in the earth (lessons for another day). Dan 8:23-25; II Thess 2:3-4; Rev 19:19
 2. These conditions won't come out of a vacuum. They will be the next logical step in the progression of earth's current trajectory toward globalism.
 - A. The world increasingly speaks of global issues and problems that must be addressed by the global community and global leadership.
 - B. Orthodox Christianity is being vilified at the same time a church is developing that claims to be a more "tolerant" version—a church that will welcome this final world ruler.
 - b. It's easy to presume that we would never fall for anything like that because we'd surely recognize a false messiah—a wild eyed man dressed up in a goatskin cloak or a creepy guy like Damian from *The Omen* movies. However, the Bible is very clear that that's not how this man will be.
 1. Forget Hollywood and religious ideas about Antichrist for a moment. *Webster's Dictionary* defines a messiah as "a professed or accepted leader of some hope or cause."
 2. In other words, a messiah is someone who has answers. A messiah is a fixer of problems. This final leader will be hailed because he seems to have answers and solutions.
 2. To achieve his ambitions, the devil must deceive people into accepting a false Christ. This means that the genuine—Jesus who is revealed in the Bible—must be undermined.
 - a. Before Jesus returned to Heaven, He warned His apostles that Satan would come to steal the Word and that he would sow tares among the wheat, or counterfeits among the genuine. Matt 13:24-30
 1. Tares (known as darnel) are a type of weed common in Israel. At first, it is indistinguishable from wheat plants, so it is allowed to grow. By harvest time tares are easy to spot and remove.
 2. It wasn't long after Jesus left for Heaven that false ideas, false teachings, false teachers began to infiltrate the infant church. Satan came to steal the Word of God—just as Jesus had warned.
 - b. Consider some statements Paul the apostle made. He founded a number of churches in the Roman province of Galatia (Acts 13:4-52; 14:1-28), as well as the church in the Greek city of Corinth (Acts 18:1-17). When he moved on from both, false teachers infiltrated and infected the churches.
 1. Gal 1:6-9; II Cor 11:4—Paul wrote that these teachers were false apostles who were teaching a different gospel than he preached.
 - A. II Cor 11:13-15—Paul identified the devil and his deceptive tactics as the source of the false gospels, calling them Satan's ministers.
 - B. II Cor 11:3—But [now] I am fearful lest that even as the serpent beguiled Eve by his cunning, so your minds should be corrupted and seduced from wholehearted and sincere and pure devotion to Christ. (Amp)
 2. I Tim 4:1-2—Paul wrote that in the last times some will depart from the faith and give attention to deluding and seducing spirits and doctrine that demons teach through men who are liars and hypocrites with seared consciences.
 - c. Paul was not the only apostle and follower of Jesus to note these deceptions. Shortly before Peter

was executed for his faith in Christ he warned of false teachers who “teach destructive heresies about God” and deny the Lord who bought them, adding that “many will follow their evil teachings and shameful immorality” (II Pet 2:1-2, NLT).

1. Jude warned of ungodly men among us who will turn the grace of God into an excuse for sin and deny our Lord and Master. Jude 4
2. John warned: It is the last time—hour [end of this age], and you have heard that Antichrist [he who will oppose Christ in the guise of Christ] is coming, even now many antichrists have arisen, which confirms our belief that it is the final (the end) time (John 2:18, Amp). Many deceivers have gone out into the world...watch out...be diligent (II John 7-8, NLT).
3. We could do lessons on the false ideas that were infiltrating the church (another time, perhaps). Note this one point. These false teachings all had to do with who Jesus is and why He came to earth.
 - a. The gospel is presently being altered and the Person and work of Jesus is being misrepresented like never before—not just among unbelievers, but among people who profess to be Christians. The internet has taken misinformation and deception to a whole other level.
 1. Therefore, we are taking time to look at who Jesus is and why He came, according to the Bible. The Living Word, the Lord Jesus Christ, is revealed in the written Word, the Bible. John 5:39
 2. Federal treasury agents study legitimate bills to become so familiar with genuine money so that they can immediately recognize counterfeit bills. We are studying the genuine Jesus.
 - b. Remember that the New Testament was written by eyewitnesses of Jesus (or their close associates). And, the basis of their message (Jesus rose from the dead) is based on verifiable, historical facts. When subjected to the same rules of evidence as any other historical event, it stands the test.
4. Mark 1:14-15—When Jesus began His public ministry He proclaiming the gospel or good news that the time has come at last for the kingdom of God to be restored. We have made these points thus far:
 - a. Mankind and the earth are not as God intended. He created men and women to become His sons and daughters through faith in Christ and the earth to be a home for His family. Eph 1:4-5; Isa 45:18
 - b. Sin has damaged both the family and the family home. When Adam sinned, a curse of corruption and death infused the human race and the earth itself. Gen 3:17-19; Rom 5:12-19; Rom 8:20; etc.
 1. The plan was further altered in that God intended to rule the earth through His family. Men and women were supposed to be His under-rulers on earth. Gen 1:26
 2. Adam, through his sin, surrendered man’s God-given authority to the devil who became the god (or under-ruler) in this world. Luke 4:6; II Cor 4:4; John 12:31; Luke 22:53; etc.
 - c. Jesus came to break Satan’s authority over mankind and the earth and restore the kingdom or reign of God through men. The restoration of the reign of God begins in the human heart.
 1. Following His resurrection, Jesus initiated a previously unforeseen form of the kingdom—the reign of God in the hearts of men through the new birth—a supernatural transformation that turns sinners into holy, righteous sons and daughters of God. Luke 17:20-21; John 3:3-5
 2. The restoration of the reign of God will be completed when Jesus sets up God’s visible, eternal kingdom on this earth (made new) in connection with His second coming. Rev 11:15; Acts 3:21; II Pet 3:13; etc.
5. Jesus did not come to earth to fix the world and make it a better place. He came to root out its core problem: sin which has resulted in death. He came to abolish sin and death. Heb 9:26; II Tim 1:10
 - a. Gal 1:4—Who gave (yielded) Himself up [to atone] for our sins (and to save and sanctify us), in order to rescue and deliver us from this present wicked age and world order, in accordance with the will and purpose and plan of our God and Father. (Amp)
 - b. We’re in the age when things aren’t as God intended them to be. But Jesus came with good news. The reign of God is at hand and things won’t always be this way. The transformation has begun.

- B. Jesus didn't come to help us solve our problems or live a better life (although those are by-products of living for Him). He came to solve our greatest problem. We're guilty of sin before a holy God and under the dominion of Satan and death with no way out.
1. Gen 2:17—God warned Adam and Eve that the consequence of sin would be death. The first death they saw following their sin was that of innocent animals, slain to provide a covering for their sin, foreshadowing how sin would be dealt with (Gen 3:21).
 - a. Then, their second born son died, murdered by their firstborn (Gen 4:1-8). From then on, each successive generation succumbed to death, mankind's common fate (Gen 5:1-32).
 - b. Isa 25:8; Hosea 13:14—But God, through His prophets, began to speak of a time when death would be conquered and swallowed up by life.
 2. God's plan was to join us in death and bring us out of death. We could do an entire series on each point that follows (maybe later on), but for now, consider these thoughts.
 - a. At Jesus' incarnation in the womb of the virgin Mary, Jesus took on flesh so that He could die. Jesus is God become man without ceasing to be God. While on earth, He lived as a man in dependence on God His Father. As the God-man He was uniquely qualified to pay for our sin.
 1. Since God was the Father of His humanity, Jesus didn't partake of the fallen flesh all the rest of humanity shares. He lived a perfect life and had no sin of His own. Luke 1:35; II Cor 5:21; etc.
 2. As the sinless Lamb of God He was able to satisfy justice on behalf of the whole race. I Pet 19
 - b. Jesus' death was substitutionary. This means that He took our place in punishment and death and satisfied justice on our behalf. He died for us as us. When the price for our sin was paid, Jesus rose from the dead for us as us. Isa 53:3-5; I Pet 2:24
 1. Once we were no longer guilty of sin, Satan and death lost their dominion over us. Jesus resurrection is proof that sin has been paid for. Rom 4:24
 2. Heb 2:14-15—Because God's children are human beings—made of flesh and blood—Jesus also became flesh and blood by being born in human form. For only as a human being could he die, and only by dying could he break the power of the Devil, who had the power of death. Only in this way could he deliver those who have lived all their lives as slaves to the fear of dying. (NLT)
 3. Jesus joined us in death to take us through death and bring us out of death. In Heb 2:14 *destroy* means bring to nought and make of no effect. *Power of death* means the dominion or ruling control of death.
 - a. In the context of resurrection of the dead and restoration of the physical body (when Jesus returns) Paul quoted Isaiah 25:8 and added: I Cor 15:54-56—Where now, O death, is your victory; where now is your stinging power? It is sin which gives death its sting, and it is the Law which gives sin its power. All thanks to God, then, who gives us the victory over these things through our Lord Jesus Christ (Phillips).
 1. There would have been no death if there had been no sin. God didn't create anything only to watch it die. The word sting means prick (goad or dagger). Sin opened the door to death and gave it its sting or destructive power.
 2. Sin is the sting that results in death (NLT), and sin exercises its power [upon the soul] through [the abuse of the Law] (Amp).
 - b. Col 2:13-15—You who were spiritually dead because of your sins...God has now made to share in the very life of Christ! He has forgiven all your sins: he has utterly wiped out the written evidence of broken commandments which always hung over our heads, and has completely annulled it by nailing it to the cross. And then, having drawn the sting of all the powers and authorities ranged against us, he exposed them, shattered, empty and defeated, in his own triumphant victory (Phillips).
 - c. I Tim 1:15—Jesus came to save sinners from the penalty and power of sin through His death and resurrection and open the way for sinners to be transformed into sons.

1. Rom 5:12—This then is what happened. Sin made its entry into the world through one man, and through sin, death. Then entail of sin and death passed on to the whole human race, and no one could break it for no one was himself free from sin. (Phillips)
2. Rom 5:17—The sin of this one man, Adam, caused death to rule over us, but all who receive God’s wonderful, gracious gift of righteousness will live in triumph over sin and death through this one man, Jesus Christ. (NLT)
3. John 1:12-13—Where ever men did accept him he gave them power to become sons of God (Phillips). They are reborn! This is not a physical birth resulting from human passion or plan—this rebirth comes from God (NLT).
4. Jesus preached the reign of God. But God can’t reign in sinners. They must first be cleansed and transformed into sons through the Cross and the new birth. Paul wrote that the gospel is the power of God unto salvation. Rom 1:16
 - a. Jesus personally taught Paul the gospel he preached (Gal 1:11-12). And Paul was very specific as to what gospel he preached: Jesus died for our sins, He was buried, and He was raised from the dead just as the Scriptures foretold (I Cor 15:1-4).
 - b. When you believe the gospel (God’s Word concerning who Jesus is and what He did) the power of God transforms you—the kingdom or reign of God comes into you and supernatural transformation occurs. You are changed from a sinner into a holy, righteous son or daughter of God. This inward transformation produces outward results (lessons for another day).

C. Conclusion: Many false gospels and false Christs are being preached today. By false, I mean contrary to the clear revelation of who Jesus is and why He came according to the Bible.

1. A social gospel is quite popular in many circles—the idea that Jesus wants us to change society through soup kitchens and government programs. I’m not saying that we shouldn’t help our fellow man, by caring for the down and out, but soup kitchens and programs don’t produce supernatural results.
 - a. The gospel is supernatural, not social. Jesus came to change hearts not fix up society. That happens as we proclaim the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus, the gospel that produces new birth.
 - b. Neither is it about taking over the government and “Christianizing” the world by forcing people to conform to a legislated outward moral standard. It’s about supernatural transformation through the gospel.
 - c. Paul wrote that prior to the second coming of Jesus there will be those who have a form of godliness (or religious activity), but deny the power thereof.
 1. II Tim 3:5—They will act as if they are religious, but they will reject the power that could make them godly. (NLT)
 2. It’s quite common today to hear people justify sinful behavior by proclaiming: I don’t need to change because God made me this way. And, if you disagree, you are a hater.
2. I realize that these kinds of lessons can seem tedious and impractical (i.e.—I’ve got real problems and need real help). But if ever there was a time to know Jesus of the Bible—Who He is and why He came to earth—it’s now.
 - a. Note what John wrote: II John 7-9—Many deceivers have gone out into the world...watch out...be diligent...for if you wander beyond the teaching (doctrine) of Christ, you will not have fellowship with God. But if you continue in the teaching (doctrine) of Christ, you will have fellowship with the Father and the Son (NLT)
 - b. We are going to continue to look at the genuine—Jesus of the Bible—so that we can immediately recognize error when we encounter it. Lots more next week!