

The False Christ Deception

Was Christ Really Resurrected?

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Jesus warned that the hallmark characteristic of the coming Antichrist regime would be unparalleled deception. Three times in Matthew 24, Jesus warned of deception.

Matthew 24:24 For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect.

This unparalleled spiritual deception operated constantly throughout the twentieth century, as Satan and his demons gradually moved the world closer to the time when enough people would be willing to believe that a messiah (the "false christ") could arise.

God warned, in Daniel 12:10, that while the righteous would understand what is happening in the world, *"none of the wicked shall understand."* Today, we are aware that events are fulfilling Bible prophecy, and we understand why. However, anyone who has not been called by God cannot understand.

Events are beginning to explode, and the world is rushing headlong into the planned global conflict that will prompt the Antichrist to arise. In this light, it is crucial that we prove whether things are so; it is vital that we seek the truth in all things. Since the Globalists have such tight control of the mass media, we will not find one ounce of truth in the propaganda of flagrant lies that they use to manipulate the public.

It is well known, that in the dark world of military intelligence, in order to arrive at the truth, one has to develop "opposite direction thinking;" in other words, truth in many situations, especially strategic planning, is found in the opposite direction of the public rhetoric. During a build-up to war, for example, public rhetoric will speak of peace and treaties.

Jeremiah faced a similar dilemma, in his day, to what we face today. It was obvious to those who were watching their nation degenerate as a result of covetousness, deception, immorality, Sabbath breaking, and idolatry, that the average citizen did not want to hear the truth.

Jeremiah 6:13-14 Because from the least of them even to the greatest of them, Everyone is given to covetousness; And from the prophet even to the

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priest, Everyone deals falsely. They have also healed the hurt of My people slightly, Saying, 'Peace, peace!' When there is no peace.

We hear that in our news today, when in reality, things are in an awful situation.

Jeremiah responded here in amazement to Judah's ignorance. No one would listen to him, as he tried to warn them of the coming calamity. This is the first of more than three dozen times in Jeremiah, where the people refused to listen to and obey God's Word. They refused to hear the truth. Their ears were closed to truth, and they found God's Word to be offensive; so some sought to change it to their liking and others were determined to eradicate it from the land.

God's prophet, Ezekiel, told the false prophets of Israel what God was going to do with them if they did not stop lying to the people. The term "prophets" refers primarily to the religious teachers and priests, but sometimes included the political leaders who predicted a bright future for the nation when they knew very well that the nation's problems were very serious.

They were deceitfully saying, 'peace', whereas Ezekiel was predicting destruction. Right there you can see the difference between God's servant and Satan's servant. Their deceptive ministry was like a flimsy wall covered with whitewash.

Figuratively speaking, instead of calling Israel's attention to the serious cracks in its moral foundation, these prophets were "dabbing plaster" to hide the deficiencies. That is exactly what we will see here:

Ezekiel 13:9-12 My hand will be against the prophets who envision futility and who divine lies; they shall not be in the assembly of My people, nor be written in the record of the house of Israel, nor shall they enter into the land of Israel. Then you shall know that I am the Lord GOOD. "Because, indeed, because they have seduced My people, saying, 'Peace!' when there is no peace—and one builds a wall, and they plaster it with untempered mortar—"say to those who plaster it with untempered mortar, that it will fall. There will be flooding rain, and you, O great hailstones, shall fall; and a stormy wind shall tear it down. "Surely, when the wall has fallen, will it not be said to you, 'Where is the mortar with which you plastered it?'"

A white paste formed from the chalk deposits of Israel was used to plaster over the

rocks that formed the walls of most houses. This plaster hid uneven rocks, and the prophets were expounding Israel's difficulties by hiding their problems that needed to be exposed. So here you see the symbolism of the mortar, which hid imperfections, and blocked up the ugly cracks that could be seen.

Ezekiel 13:13-16 Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: "I will cause a stormy wind to break forth in My fury; and there shall be a flooding rain in My anger, and great hailstones in fury to consume it. "So I will break down the wall you have plastered with untempered mortar, and bring it down to the ground, so that its foundation will be uncovered; it will fall, and you shall be consumed in the midst of it. Then you shall know that I am the LORD. "Thus will I accomplish My wrath on the wall and on those who have plastered it with untempered mortar; and I will say to you, 'The wall is no more, nor those who plastered it, 'that is, the prophets of Israel who prophesy concerning Jerusalem, and who see visions of peace for her when there is no peace,'" says the Lord GOD.

So there, in verse 16, he explains the symbolism of the untempered mortar that He is referring to, the false prophecies of the prophets of Israel. They were just covering up the sins of the nation, and not warning them.

Since the false prophets had deceived the people by plastering over an unsafe wall, they would be blamed when the wall collapsed. God's judgment would break down Israel's flimsy wall of appearances. That is all it was, because the foundation was rotten to the core. Bad weather, representing God's wrath, would beat against the wall, and it would collapse.

Then the people would ask the prophets, 'Where is the whitewash you covered it with?' The "whitewash" was their false prophecies; and when Jerusalem was destroyed, their deceit would be revealed and they would be destroyed in it. So a greater curse and judgment comes upon false prophets, false ministers, and false leaders who lie to the people.

Verse 17-18, condemns the prophetesses who receive paltry grain for which they give 'feel good' predictions. And then in verse 19 Jeremiah writes, "And will you profane Me among My people for handfuls of barley and for pieces of bread, killing people who should not die, and keeping people alive who should not live, by your lying to My people who listen to lies?"

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They "profaned" God by making His name the banner under which they spat out falsehoods. It would have been a sin to do these things among the Gentiles, who did not know God, but the sin is much greater when done among the people of God.

There is an interesting tie-in here, in Proverbs 28:21, "To show partiality is not good, because for a piece of bread a man will transgress."

This is what the prophetesses were doing, for a meager piece of bread, grain or money, they were telling the people that came to them whatever they wanted to hear, favorable things. So the prophetesses gave positive predictions to those whom they favored.

They kill 'people who should not die' by calling good evil and evil good just as today's prominent women political leaders. Even talk-show hosts, newscasters, activists and palm-readers, give positive predictions. If they spoke words of caution, of calamity and destruction then they would lose their positions, and those that received jobs would lose pay.

Emotional people are not interested in the truth; they are interested in what seems good, and what feels good. You find a lot of these types of people in the media or entertainment field. They are emotional people that sensationalize stories, and tell people what they want to hear.

So they are more inclined to condemn people who study the Bible, and try to apply the truth in their lives. It is not enough for them to quietly reject God's inspired written word, they have to ridicule and persecute those who do. We see that happening more and more, especially by women talk show hosts, and women leaders. For some reason they are more verbal than men.

A society that tolerates such hateful persecution will eventually condone the murder of those who love the truth. In this way, these false prophetesses kill 'people who should not die.' In contrast, they encourage and promote the livelihood of those who are the most evil. We see that in the news very flagrantly with the Anna Nicole story. She is a dead sleazy, pornographic individual who has dominated the news. This nation's idol is a dead person right now, and it is just beyond belief. A society that tolerates such immorality is a society that is full of hate, because they hate the truth and they hate those that follow the truth, and they hate God's people.

The people who believe the lies are responsible for their own willful gullibility because they love to hear it so. Therefore, these people are willfully deceived, so that their guilt lies at their own door.

More than a century ago, the American writer and humorist Mark Twain wrote:

Everybody lies ... every day, every hour, awake, asleep, in his dreams, in his joy, in his mourning. If he keeps his tongue still his hands, his feet, his eyes, his attitude will convey deception.

Hopefully that is talking about the world, and the people in it, and not God's church. But, we are not perfect, we are all guilty at times, hopefully very few, of deception.

His observation of the human nature of people, in general, is a telling statement of their moral depravity in this area.

This has all been an introduction, and a lead-up, to an article that I want to quote on.

Most of you, I believe, are familiar with a new film, which deceitfully documents the fraudulent discovery of a Jerusalem cave containing ten caskets claimed to hold the remains of Jesus, Mary, Mary Magdalene and others.

According to an article by Ariella Ringel-Hoffman in his article, "Jesus' Burial Site Found" in YNET News, February 23, 2007:

The cave in which Jesus Christ was buried has been found in Jerusalem, claim the makers of a new documentary film.

If it proves true, the discovery, which will be revealed at a press conference in New York Monday, could shake up the Christian world as one of the most significant archeological finds in history.

The coffins which, according to the filmmakers held the remains of Jesus of Nazareth, his mother Mary and Mary Magdalene will be displayed for the first time on Monday in New York.

If this claim can be made to appear authentic, the mainstream Christian churches will be shaken as never before, and many Christians weak in doctrinal knowledge could very well suffer the loss of their faith.

"The story starts in 1980 in Jerusalem's Talpiyot neighborhood, with the discovery of a 2,000 year old cave containing ten coffins. Six of the ten

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coffins were carved with inscriptions reading the names: Jesua son of Joseph, Mary, Mary, Matthew, Jofa (Joseph, identified as Jesus' brother), Judah son of Jesua (Jesus' son - the filmmakers claim)."

"The findings in the cave, including the decipherment of the inscriptions, were first revealed about ten years ago by internationally renowned Israeli archeologist Professor Amos Kloner.

Since their discovery, the caskets were kept in the Israeli Antiquities Authority archive... but now two have been sent to New York for their first public exhibition.

Although the cave was discovered nearly 30 years ago and the casket inscriptions decoded ten years ago, the filmmakers are the first to establish that the cave was in fact the burial site of Jesus and his family."

Keep in mind that this is from the viewpoint of the filmmakers, and many "experts" that they are using to give this documentary credibility.

Of course, the entire lie of the DaVinci Code is that Jesus never died in the tomb, but was revived and taken out of the tomb by his disciples, who had bribed the Roman guards. His supposed wife, Mary Magdalene, escaped the wave of persecution, which killed Jesus, and she traveled to the Coast of Normandy, France. She supposedly gave birth to a daughter, whom Jesus had sired, and later married this daughter to a Merovingian Prince.

The nobility families of Europe, Russia and Great Britain, can all trace their lineage back to the Merovingians. Therefore, when the Globalist "savior of the world" arises from within the Merovingian bloodline, he can trace his lineage through Jesus and therefore, directly to King David.

So what you can see is a process where the world is being programmed to believe that there is this descendency from Christ.

Obviously, if this Da Vinci Code ("Holy Blood, Holy Grail") story were true, Jesus' body would be lying somewhere in a cave. In fact, this book, "Holy Blood, Holy Grail," strongly hinted that the secret societies had discovered Jesus' body many centuries ago, and were awaiting "just the right time" to reveal it to the world!

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That "right time" is just before the appearance of the false Christ, as we very well know. Propaganda introducing his divine ancestry and his kingly lineage must be made to prepare the way in a Satanic counterfeit of the second coming of Jesus Christ. This will be a staged appearance on the world scene. This means a major effort must be made to convince the world that Jesus was never resurrected.

Not only would millions of nominal Christians suffer a loss of faith, but also the vast majority of the world would feel relieved in believing that Jesus Christ was simply another "world teacher"—a prophet—on the same basis as Buddha, Krishna, Mohammed, and other prophets of other religions.

Therefore, when the antichrist will claim that he is possessed of the same "Christ Consciousness Spirit" as that which possessed Buddha, Krishna, Mohammed, and Jesus—all in their own time periods, people will be prepared to easily believe in this false Christ that is going to be brought on to the scene.

The final matter, to be understood, is that this spurious story is being backed by some of the greatest "heavy hitters" in mass media.

The film, which documents the stages of the discovery, is the result of three years labor and research. It will be broadcast on the international Discovery Channel, Britain's Channel 4, Canada's Vision and Israel's Channel 8, which also took part in the film's production.

That line-up is quite impressive. The Discovery Channel, in particular, has the reputation of being quite scientific and very impartial. When they air this documentary, a lot of people will be convinced.

This film will also breeze through quite a number of "experts" to solidify their claim.

According to the filmmakers, the film's claim is based on close work with world-famous scientists, archeologists, statisticians, DNA specialists and antiquities experts.

The "DNA specialists" will carry extraordinary weight with a lot of people in the world in carrying out this charade. In the world of propaganda, what is "truth"?

Adolf Hitler answered this question from the world's perspective when he said:

"Truth is not what is; truth is what people perceive it to be."

There are two main goals of this ongoing movement to deny the resurrection of Jesus Christ:

1. In order to bring about one global religion, Jesus Christ must be reduced to the level of a common human prophet. Equal to, but not greater than, human false prophets like Buddha, Vishnu, Mohammad, Nostradamus, the Dali Lama, Sun Yong Moon, Edgar Cayce, Krishna, and Joseph Smith of the Mormons, who is followed by fourteen more prophets.
2. In order for the end-time false prophet to rule over mainstream Christians he must acquire the authority of Jesus Christ through inheritance, therefore he must be a descendant of Jesus through a human lineage, which as I said earlier also takes him back to the Davidic kingly line.

The world has willfully and blindly allowed Satan to deceive it. In its quest to destroy all things related to the true Christ, a massive propaganda war is being waged against Him, headed by the master conspirator—the Devil. He is preparing the way for the Anti-Christ, and he has been ever since the time of Christ!

Paul treats the non-appearance of the antichrist as an indication that the end is not yet.

II Thessalonians 2:3-4 Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.

So by making a claim that he is of the lineage of Jesus Christ, also ties in a connection to that godly throne.

The term "antichrist" represents the principle of satanic opposition to God's rule active throughout history. This is seen in the persecution of the Jews under Antiochus Epiphanes, but especially in the persecution of the church in the last days. The character of the last day's antichrist can be seen in the description of his predecessors described in Daniel 8. Certain characteristics are mentioned: furious power, rage, exalts himself, deceit, and destroys holy people. He is going to be a charming man, and he will charm the world, but not God's people.

Christ's victory over evil, already achieved in principle, is manifest in this age primarily in the suffering witness of the church; only at the end will His victory be complete in the elimination of the powers of evil. Therefore in this age, the success of the church's witness is accompanied by the mounting of violence of satanic opposition. Satan wants no less than to destroy God's church.

Evil will reach its final crescendo in the final Antichrist, who is both: a false Messiah and false prophet inspired by Satan to perform false miracles, and a persecuting political power blasphemously claiming divine sovereignty. The false global church will manipulate the political power of Satan's world government. The apostle Paul wrote of this human embodiment of evil to the Thessalonians.

II Thessalonians 2:5-12 Do you not remember that when I was still with you I told you these things? And now you know what is restraining, that he may be revealed in his own time. For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only He who now restrains will do so until He is taken out of the way. And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming. The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

The world will not believe the truth even though it will hit them between the eyes like a two by four, and a major part of the reason is that God will send them a strong delusion. Notice the main characteristic of this false messiah: deceivableness of unrighteousness.

Other New Testament references find the antichrist already present in heretical false teachers. The coming of the false Christ has been anticipated in every great crisis of the church's history. But there will be no mistaking the deceitful use of power and signs and wonders to 'wow' the world when he actually does come on the scene.

How can a person like the Antichrist become so evil? Well there are a lot of reasons for that, but let us just focus on the idea of lies and truth.

Self-deception helps a person ensnare other people more effectively. It enables him to lie "sincerely," to lie without realizing at the moment he lies that he is lying. Lying is from

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the heart. There is no longer any need to put on an act, to pretend that he is telling the truth. Indeed, a self-deceived person is actually telling what he believes to be the truth, the "truth" to the best of his knowledge, and believing his own story makes it all the more persuasive, when he is telling to someone else.

I would like to give you an example of this in M. Scott Peck's book "People of the Lie." It describes the mentality of evil people which may give us some insight into the attitude of antichrists.

Utterly dedicated to preserving their self-image of perfection, [evil people] are unceasingly engaged in the effort to maintain the appearance of moral purity. They worry about this a great deal.

The words "image," "appearance," and "outwardly" are crucial to understanding the morality of evil. While they seem to lack any motivation to be good, they intensely desire to appear good. Their "goodness" is all on a level of pretense. It is, in effect, a lie. This is why they are the "people of the lie."

Actually, the lie is designed not so much to deceive others as to deceive themselves.

Keep in mind, Satan is the great deceiver, who has deceived himself and deceives others. He knows exactly how to deceive a human, because he is an expert on human nature.

They cannot or will not tolerate the pain of self-reproach. The decorum with which they lead their lives is maintained as a mirror in which they can see themselves reflected righteously.

Yet the self-deceit would be unnecessary if the evil had no such sense of right and wrong. We lie only when we are attempting to cover up something we know to be illicit. Some rudimentary form of conscience must precede the act of lying. There is no need to hide unless we first feel that something needs to be hidden.

We come to now to a sort of paradox. I have said that evil people feel themselves to be perfect. At the same time, however, I think they have an unacknowledged sense of their own evil nature. Indeed, it is this very sense

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from which they are frantically trying to flee. The essential component of evil is not the absence of a sense of sin or imperfection but the unwillingness to tolerate that sense. At one and the same time, the evil are aware of their evil and desperately trying to avoid the awareness. Rather than blissfully lacking a sense of morality, like the psychopath, they are continually engaged in sweeping the evidence of their evil under the rug of their own consciousness.

The problem is not a defect of conscience but the effort to deny the conscience its due. We become evil by attempting to hide from ourselves. The wickedness of the evil is not committed directly, but indirectly as a part of this cover-up process. Evil originates not in the absence of guilt but in the effort to escape it.

Since our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ directly instructs all of us to overcome, it is beneficial for us then to see what part self-deception plays in concealing from us our true spiritual condition. If we hide our sins from ourselves, we will never work to overcome them!

The reason people are good at lying is because they have learned how to lie to themselves first. Let me show what I mean in this other quote, it is quite long but I think it is an important one to explain a very important issue.

The June 2005 issue of *Scientific American Magazine* carried an article titled, "Natural-Born Liars" by David Livingstone Smith. He approaches deception from a biological perspective. He asserts that multiple studies reveal that deception is far more than conscious verbal dishonesty.

What I am leading to is that lying starts in the heart, and it is in the character of the person. If you keep that in mind, as I read this to you, I am pretty sure that it will become very clear.

He writes:

One good example was a study conducted in 2002 by psychologist Robert S. Feldman of the University of Massachusetts Amherst. Feldman secretly videotaped students who were asked to talk with a stranger. He later had the students analyze their tapes and tally the number of lies they had told. A whopping 60 percent admitted to lying at least once during 10 minutes of

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conversation, and the group averaged 2.9 untruths in that time period. The transgressions ranged from intentional exaggeration to flat-out fibs. Interestingly, men and women lied with equal frequency; however, Feldman found that women were more likely to lie to make the stranger feel good, whereas men lied most often to make themselves look better...

These references are just a few of the many examples of lying that pepper the scientific record. And yet research on deception is almost always focused on lying in the narrowest sense—literally saying things that aren't true. But our fetish extends far beyond verbal falsification. We lie by omission and through the subtleties of spin...

Ironically, the primary reasons we are so good at lying to others is that we are good at lying to ourselves. There is a strange asymmetry in how we apportion dishonesty. Although we are often ready to accuse others of deceiving us, we are astonishingly oblivious to our own duplicity. Experiences of being a victim of deception are burned indelibly into our memories, but our own prevarications slip off our tongues so easily that we often do not notice them for what they are.

The strange phenomenon of self-deception has perplexed philosophers and psychologists for more than 2,000 years. On the face of it, the idea that a person can con oneself seems as nonsensical as cheating at solitaire or embezzling money from one's own bank account.

...The brain comprises a number of functional systems. The system responsible for cognition—the thinking part of the brain—is somewhat distinct from the system that produces conscious experiences. The relation between the two systems can be thought of as similar to the relation between the processor and monitor of a personal computer. The work takes place in the processor; the monitor does nothing but display information the processor transfers to it. By the same token, the brain's cognitive systems do the thinking, whereas consciousness displays the information that it has received. Consciousness plays a less important role in cognition than previously expected.

This general picture is supported by a great deal of experimental evidence. Some of the most remarkable and widely discussed studies were conducted several decades ago by neuroscientist Benjamin Libet, now professor emeritus at the University of California at San Diego. In one experiment,

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Libet placed subjects in front of a button and a rapidly moving clock and asked them to press the button whenever they wished and to note the time, as displayed on the clock, the moment they felt an impulse to press the button. Libet also attached electrodes over the motor cortex, which controls movement, in each of his subjects to monitor the electrical tension that mounts as the brain prepares to initiate an action. He found that our brains begin to prepare for action just over a third of a second before we consciously decide to act. In other words, despite appearances, it is not the conscious mind that decides to perform an action: the decision is made unconsciously. Although our consciousness likes to take the credit (so to speak), it is merely informed of unconscious decisions after the fact. This study and others like it suggest that we are systematically deluded about the role consciousness plays in our lives. Strange as it may seem, consciousness may not do anything except display the results of unconscious cognition...

...But once again we can find a clue from Mark Twain, who bequeathed to us an amazingly insightful explanation. "When a person cannot deceive himself," he wrote, "the chances are against his being able to deceive other people." Self-deception ...helps us lie to others more convincingly. Concealing the truth from ourselves conceals it from others.

...Uncomfortable, jittery liars are bad liars. Like Pinocchio, they give themselves away by involuntary, nonverbal behaviors... In an effort to quell our rising anxiety, we may automatically raise the pitch of our voice, blush, break out into the proverbial cold sweat, scratch our nose or make small movements with our feet as though barely squelching an impulse to flee.

...Fooling ourselves allows us to selfishly manipulate others around us while remaining conveniently innocent of our own shady agendas.

The students described earlier, who admitted their lies when watching themselves on videotape, knew they were lying at times, and most likely they did not stop themselves because they were not disturbed by this behavior.

At other times, however, they are happily unaware that they are pulling the wool over their own eyes. A biological perspective helps us understand why the cognitive gears of self-deception engage so smoothly and silently. They cleverly and imperceptibly embroil us in performances that are so skillfully crafted that the act gives every indication of complete sincerity, even to the

actors themselves.

What these biological studies show is that lying begins in the character of the individual. If a person lies, he has deceit in his heart. This holds true for all lies—even so called "white ones." They have all been conjured up beforehand, because in the heart is deceit.

People are often, at least vaguely, aware that they are willing dupes in their own con game, stubbornly refusing to openly admit to themselves just what they are up to. They know that the stories they tell themselves do not agree with their behavior, or they fail to recognize physical signs, such as a thumping heart or sweaty palms, that betray their emotional states.

Even when a person has had the truth of God revealed to him and begins obeying it, there is still a powerful urge in human nature to go back to what was ingrained in our character at an earlier age. Even members of God's church can be deceived about their true standing with God.

II John 7-8 For many deceivers have gone out into the world who do not confess Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist. Look to yourselves, that we do not lose those things we worked for, but that we may receive a full reward.

James 1:22-25 But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was. But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does.

In order to overcome sin, we must identify it. We have to weed out self-deceit in ourselves. Only by careful study of God's Word, the ultimate righteous standard of thought, speech and conduct, can we know what is right and wrong. We should follow our study with honest and truthful comparison of those words with our own lives. How do we match up to what God's inspired written word inspires? If we read the words of God and walk away, forgetting what we saw, we deceive ourselves.

None of us compares favorably with what we read in scripture, so we have to make

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changes. James says our religion—our practice of God's way of life—is vain if we omit either the positive instructions (that is visiting widows and orphans) or the negative ones (removing the spots from our character). So there is a complete package that has to be done.

Satan, the great deceiver, and his followers appear as angels of light. As Paul says, the devil's ministers even infiltrate the church of God! We are battling the world, Satan and our own human nature.

This is a formula for self-deceit. Even when we look into the mirror of God's Word, we often deny the differences between His standard and our conduct. Often we deceive ourselves.

I John 1:8 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

Self-deceit is an inherent part of man's emotional, mental and spiritual makeup. We have a hard time seeing it in ourselves, because we are experts in hiding reality from ourselves and trying to hide it from others. However, we fool ourselves if we think that we can hide our true nature from God.

Hebrews 3:12-19 teaches us to exhort one another frequently and to avoid becoming hardened by sin's deceitfulness and jeopardizing our salvation. Just as so many Israelites failed to reach the Promised Land, their carcasses falling in the desert.

Deceiving ourselves about our own spirituality and running from the truth are serious impediments to overcoming. If we remove our self-imposed blinders from our eyes, we will have taken the first step toward overcoming.

The Books of Isaiah, Jeremiah and the Revelation of Jesus Christ, all expose large groups of people deceiving themselves. Here is one quick example:

Jeremiah 5:26-27 'For among My people are found wicked men; They lie in wait as one who sets snares; They set a trap; They catch men. As a cage is full of birds, So their houses are full of deceit. Therefore they have become great and grown rich.

The Old Testament prophecies broaden the scope of this problem. In type, we find both

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Isaiah and Jeremiah castigating the end-time church for deceitfully dressing itself up to appear more spiritually beautiful than it is, competing as the "fairest in the land" through an artificial, untrue depiction of itself. Isaiah uses the imagery of individual women to stress this point. In His Revelation to John, Christ indicts at least two churches, Sardis and Laodicea, for group self-deception. So we see that both individually we can be self-deceived, as well as the group as a whole.

Is Jesus dead? The documentary people tell us that He is, but that He did not rise to heaven. Is the resurrection merely a "fundamental belief" or an actual historical fact?

The apostle Paul was inspired to write:

I Corinthians 15:14 And if Christ is not risen, then our preaching is empty and your faith is also empty.

That is quite a powerful statement.

Then, according to the Bible, the resurrection is such a basic truth that denial of it renders the whole of Christianity empty, vain and useless! So we see why there is such a concerted effort by the world to discredit the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

The same inspired Paul later said:

I Corinthians 15:17-19 And if Christ is not risen, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins! Then also those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable.

Unless we accept the resurrection of Jesus Christ, and the resurrection of the dead at His coming—our Bibles say that our whole Christian faith is useless. Unless we accept the fact of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, our sins have not been forgiven, and the penalty of eternal death is still hanging over us. So how shocking is it to see much of mainstream Christianity openly denying the risen Christ, openly proclaiming that they believe His second coming to be sheer myth and yet still claiming His name, still calling themselves Christian?

Paul was inspired to teach us that, "Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures."

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I Corinthians 15:3-4 For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures,

Paul is very clear that the scriptures from the Old Testament—those they had at that time—predicted that Christ would die for our sins, and be risen.

The Bible is the only authority for truth. Christ spoke with the authority of the Father Himself, and the apostle spoke with the authority of Jesus Christ.

The apostle Paul spoke and wrote about the resurrection of the dead with the authority of Jesus Christ and the Father.

No single miracle of the Bible has escaped the caustic sarcasm of the supposed higher critics who, having denied the actual authority of God and the Bible, have been given over to degenerate minds. Of all the miracles, the resurrection has received the strongest criticism.

Some say that the Jews stole Jesus' body away. Others believe that the Roman soldiers hid His body secretly, to bury it elsewhere, at a later time. Still others actually believe that His disciples spirited His body away, and reburied it. Orthodox Jewry firmly believes this.

Some claim the disciples were victims of hallucinations, or self-hypnotism, because of their fervent belief that Christ would rise again, and their great desire to see Him resurrected. Some mainstream Christians, today, believe that He stayed buried, or if He came to life again, that He disappeared into obscurity—living out His natural life elsewhere, to finally die of old age. We remember that the Da Vinci code claims that He did this. All that they are doing is continuing this lie that was begun back in the time of the apostles.

Did the Jews steal His body? Some people reason His Pharisaical enemies, the Jewish religionists of His day, stole His body, stealing it away to a different location, where they secretly buried it again.

This could not be true, because it makes no sense. On many different occasions, the Pharisaical leaders had attempted to have Jesus Christ killed. They would have done anything to discredit Jesus as the true Messiah.

After the death and reported resurrection of Jesus Christ, the Jewish leaders themselves tried to bribe soldiers to lie about Jesus' body.

Matthew 28:12-15 When they had assembled with the elders and consulted together, they gave a large sum of money to the soldiers, saying, "Tell them, 'His disciples came at night and stole Him away while we slept.' "And if this comes to the governor's ears, we will appease him and make you secure." So they took the money and did as they were instructed; and this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day.

The Jews themselves paid a large sum of money to the soldiers to spread the lie that Jesus' disciples had stolen the body away. If the Jews had stolen His body, why would they bribe the soldiers to say the disciples had done it?

What would have been one of the greatest proofs to the Jews that Jesus was not the Messiah? Surely the finding of Jesus' body would have. Had the Jewish leaders, or any of the Jews of Jesus' day been able to find Jesus' body, they would have produced that body in public.

The Jews of Jesus' day would have paraded Christ's broken body through the streets of Jerusalem, and all the other towns and villages around, with the hatred of a mob of killers. They would have displayed it publicly for the entire world to see.

Yet today, orthodox Jews do not believe that the Jews stole Christ's body. They believe that His disciples stole it. Just as the Bible records, in Matthew 28:15, "...this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day."

If the Jews had stolen His body, and knew where that body was, why would the New Testament be absolutely filled with accounts of how these same Jews finally persecuted and even murdered at the jeopardy of their own lives, those who went about teaching that Jesus had risen from the dead?

Would it make any sense to take vows not to eat food and not to drink water until they had killed the apostle Paul, to kill James the brother of John, to martyr and butcher numerous other disciples and true apostles of God for teaching Jesus had risen from the dead, if the Jews absolutely knew He had not risen from the dead?

Absolutely not! In the face of such absolute conclusive evidence, only a fool would believe that the Jews stole Jesus' body.

Did the disciples steal His body? Many Jews today commonly claim that His disciples stole His body.

But this does not make any sense. His disciples were very reluctant to believe that He had risen again. Peter said, "I go fishing!" Others had scattered to different areas. To them, the whole thing was over.

Their leader had been martyred, and they were ready to go back to their jobs and positions of before. They did not believe because they had not yet received the Holy Spirit and faithfully begun the process of conversion.

With these facts in mind—Is it even remotely possible to believe that these same disciples could have been so filled with power and the deep conviction of the truth of the resurrection of Jesus Christ that they went out fervently preaching against all opposition, even at the expense of their own lives, that Jesus truly had risen, if He had not?

Dozens of men would not have endured being torn limb from limb, thrown to wild beasts, drawn and quartered, sawn asunder, hung upside down, burned at the stake in horrible martyrdom for something they knew to be a deliberate hoax. No man on earth would do that. They would not have been deeply committed enough to tolerate such terrible tortures for a cause that they knew to be a lie. Their hope would have evaporated. Even as Jesus Christ was crucified and buried, and before they found out and realized that it was true that He had risen again they just all fled to the wind so to speak, went back to doing what they had done.

The mere suggestion that His disciples stole away His body is nothing less than foolish.

Also, remember that the early New Testament apostles who first preached and published the story that Jesus Christ had risen from the tomb believed it to be a fact. They were not resting their faith on an empty tomb, but upon supernatural, miraculous appearances of Jesus Christ on many different occasions.

Thomas had actually investigated His wounds and scars, Christ had appeared to over five hundred brethren at the same time. He had appeared in a room where they were meeting, but with the doors locked.

Jesus was seen alive after His resurrection, not once or twice, but at least ten times, as recorded in the New Testament. He was not seen by just one individual whose word could be doubted, but by groups of two, seven, ten, eleven, and even five hundred.

Since the apostles initially did not believe Jesus had risen, it could not have been a hallucination or an apparition.

Matthew 28:17 When they saw Him, they worshiped Him; but some doubted.

Luke 24:10-12 It was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the other women with them, who told these things to the apostles. And their words seemed to them like idle tales, and they did not believe them. But Peter arose and ran to the tomb; and stooping down, he saw the linen cloths lying by themselves; and he departed, marveling to himself at what had happened.

So you get the feeling that by the marveling to himself that his mind was just racing and he wanted to believe but, still, could it be true?

Later, reading the account from verses 13-31, the inescapable evidence is given that the disciples did not want to believe that He had risen. Jesus had drawn near to them as they were nearing a small village outside of Jerusalem. Their eyes were closed that they did not recognize Him, and He began speaking to them. But Cleopas began to relate what had occurred, in a doubtful, hesitating way.

Luke 24:25 Then He said to them, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken!

Even after this stern admonition, and His expounding of all of the scriptures concerning Himself, it was not until after the meal that they finally recognized Him.

All the way through the Gospel accounts, writers themselves attest to a very great reluctance on the part of His closest apostles, and servants, to believe in His resurrection. They had not received the Holy Spirit yet. They had faith, but it was such a limited human faith, the type of faith that we have before we are baptized, and receive the Holy Spirit.

Could Jesus have been revived after He had been in the tomb, and somehow escaped it, to journey off to a distant place and there live out His natural life and die of old age? That is what some people claim.

The actual historical events show this to be impossible. His own mother, and others with her, actually saw Him die. He was beaten and whipped until He was so exhausted He literally collapsed on the public streets. He was up all one day and all one night and part of another being pummeled about, kicked and spit upon. He was without food or water, and lashed within an inch of His life. He had spikes driven through His hands and feet, and He hung in the blazing sun for hours. Then, He had a huge spear plunged into His side, with great spurts of gushing blood and fluids from His stomach pouring out of His body. Then, His lifeless, limp body was taken down from the stake, carefully wrapped in grave clothes by Joseph of Arimathea, and laid away in a tomb.

If there was even the remotest possibility that He was not dead, in His horribly wounded condition, weak and exhausted—could He have moved a great huge stone that required several Roman soldiers, in all of their youth and strength to move? While outside, the Jews were carefully guarding against this possibility.

The chief priests and Pharisees had said to Pilate,

Matthew 27:63-66 saying, "Sir, we remember, while He was still alive, how that deceiver said, 'After three days I will rise.' "Therefore command that the tomb be made secure until the third day, lest His disciples come by night and steal Him away, and say to the people, 'He has risen from the dead.' So the last deception will be worse than the first." Pilate said to them, "You have a guard; go your way, make it as secure as you know how." So they went and made the tomb secure, sealing the stone and setting the guard.

This shows that they firmly believed Him to be now dead, and were satisfied that He really was dead, and wanted to keep Him there.

Anyone promoting the lie that Jesus had only "passed out" is denying logic, reason, historical fact, the inspired Word of God, and sanity itself. They are of the lie. Those that are promoting these heretical lies are of their father the devil.

The Jews were convinced that He was dead. Not only were they thoroughly satisfied of this fact, but they were making sure that the stone could not even be opened from the outside—let alone from the inside by a mortally wounded man.

When the stone was rolled back, secretive disciples did not do it at night, but by a powerful angel. The watchers the Jews had set fainted dead away at the sight of him. This was not some secretive thing, of Jesus' inert body being whisked away by night,

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but a tremendous, awesome, glorious miracle.

If He were merely physically alive after His so-called "resurrection" and had not really died, but had been in a "passed out" condition, and subsequently escaped from the tomb, how is it that He was able to manifest Himself right through locked doors?

Jesus Himself said in His Revelation to the apostle John,

Revelation 2:8 "And to the angel of the church in Smyrna write, 'These things says the First and the Last, who was dead, and came to life:

We know, in this room, that we can believe the inspired written word of God.

Could the resurrection have been a spurious addition to the text? That is another claim that has been bantered about.

The resurrection doctrine could not possibly have been inserted into the original writings at a later time. The records could not have been tampered with to that extent.

It is an actual, firmly established historical fact that the so-called "sect" known as "Christians" came into being during the reign of Tiberius. The thing which was attested to, by even pagan writers and scholars that brought these Christians into existence was the belief that Jesus had risen from the dead.

The resurrection of the dead did not become a later belief of Christians. Rather, it was the very beginning of their belief, the strength and impetus of their faith, and the very reason for their fervent hope.

The cause and the beginning of real and true Christian faith was the literal resurrection of Jesus Christ. It did not gradually come to be accepted, or to be inserted into the Bible later; it was already a belief right from the beginning.

These people during that early first century had no written records of Christ's resurrection, except for prophecies in the Old Testament scriptures. They had personal attestation, living eyewitnesses, and personal experiences of their own upon which to base their faith. Any subsequent records of a later date were the result of their faith, not that which brought their faith into existence.

If Jesus Christ had not risen from the dead, there would have been no church of God,

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and no New Testament writings. Even Tacitus, a pagan writer of the day wrote of the resurrection of Jesus Christ as a well-known fact.

The apostle Paul said to King Agrippa,

Acts 26:26 For the king, before whom I also speak freely, knows these things; for I am convinced that none of these things escapes his attention, since this thing was not done in a corner.

The resurrection of Jesus Christ was an openly discussed, well-known, event that rapidly swept through the entire Roman Empire.

It is of the utmost importance that we realize how much depends on the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Without it, there would have been no Holy Spirit from heaven. No New Testament of the Bible, all history would have been written differently.

And that is exactly what is being attempted today with such propaganda heresies as Dan Brown's book, *The DaVinci Code*, and the heretical documentary that I referred to earlier that promotes the false claim that Jesus' burial site has been found with His wife and child by His side.

Without the resurrection we could not be saved, because Christians are saved by His life, not by His death. Without the resurrection of Christ, there would have been no church, and there would never have been a single Christian. Professing Christians who deny the resurrection of Christ are absolutely not true Christians.

I Corinthians 15:19-20 If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable. But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.

The basis of our hope for life after death is based on the fact that Jesus Christ—the firstfruit of the firstfruits—was raised from the dead to immortal, eternal life. We have a guarantee that if we are of the truth we will follow in like manner at the appointed time.

The lesson for us is that in truth there is no deceit; and if we know the truth and live it—the truth will make us free!

Jesus Christ is the most righteous being to ever walk the surface of the earth. The

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contrast between the Son of God Christ, and the counterfeit Christ, is as different as light and darkness. The counterfeit Christ will be a mere Satan-possessed physical man of unbearable arrogance and deceit tempered with charm; but listen to this succinct brief description of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ:

I Peter 2:22-23 Who committed no sin, Nor was deceit found in His mouth"; who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously;

May we all follow Christ's example by committing ourselves to the God of truth who judges with mercy, wisdom, love, and always with complete truth!