

FOUNDATIONS (AUGUST)



STUDY TEXT:

2 Thessalonians 2:1-3; 2 Timothy 3:13-14; 2 Peter 3:17-18 (K)

2 Thessalonians 2:1 Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him,

2 That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand.

3 Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition;

2 Timothy 3:13 But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived.

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¹⁴ But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them;

^{2 Peter 3:17} **Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness.**

¹⁸ But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus

APPLICATION POINT:

Scripture's consistent prophetic fore view and vision that characterizes our "end times" era clearly warns and stresses to every generation of Christ followers the sheer importance of being aware prepared to combat the climate of spiritual deception and defection ("falling away") that will become the dominate conditions of our era in prelude to the manifestation of the final Great Deceiver, who will be ultimately destroyed by the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

THE “FALLING AWAY”

FOCUS TEXT: Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness.

2 Peter 3:17 (K)

Of particular note, pertaining to the biblical timeline of the Kingdom agenda of redemption of our present contemporary era (while addressing the concerns of his Disciples in that era), the Lord Jesus cited regarding the true state of the progressively predominate, deteriorating spiritual climate that would characterize the global world scene prior to His Second Coming in **Matthew 24:4-5, “Take heed that no man deceive you.**

“For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many.”

As such, we (Christ followers) should not be shocked or disheartened by what we are presently witnessing in the sphere of contemporary life; but rather, acknowledge and affirmed the truth of Holy Scripture; and yet full equip ourselves to render spiritual service despite the formidable challenges that are present in our era.

It is still the case, as it pertains to advancing the cause of His Kingdom purpose, as cited in 2 Peter 3:9: “The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.”

And in this interim period, the Lord is no less at work to accomplish His will in the world regarding the salvation of the Lord.

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But too, we need to see the broader view of what is also being fully introduced before us that relates to the final judgment signaling the approach of closure to this present dispensation.

To this point, **2 Thessalonians 2:3** hinted and reported: **“Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition.”**

ALREADY IN MOTION

In *verse 3*, Apostle Paul explained to the Thessalonian assembly that one pronounced primary trait that would signal the closure of this present age would be a pronounced “turning away” or abandonment from the way of truth and the Word of God.

Now, distinctly this visible indicator pertains to those who at some point professed or claimed to be Christ followers.

However, over the elapse of time, their vain profession proved to be null and void, or simply invalid.

Whereas they once professed (perhaps with passion), inevitably their hearts “turned” and began to reject and repudiate all things that pertained to righteousness.

Now, this does not mean that they distanced themselves from the community of faith; but certainly, they defect from the “truth” and begin to fully embrace “the lie.”

Fully describing this spiritual phenomenon, Apostle Paul warned Timothy in 2 Timothy 4:3-4, **“For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears;**

“And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.”

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LED AWAY?

We should take note that the Word of Righteousness never warns us about how long we have “stood” or cautions us regarding how long we have remained “steadfast.”

Why? The obvious reply is that the normative direction of our inclination swings or teeters in the opposite direction.

Too, the divine injunction raises to our consciousness an ever-present reality of the perpetual danger that the followers of Christ confront daily. That continuous threat is the menacing opposition posed by the spiritual adversaries both of the Lord Jesus Christ and the Christian Believer.

Specifically, Scripture cites that the originating sources of the spiritual opposition that challenges us are:

- the World (the functional system of Wickedness established and administered by Satan);
- the flesh (our hereditary, fallen, adamic nature); and
- Satan, the arch-nemesis of Almighty God

Now, if we were honest with ourselves, most of us do not believe that we are capable of being “seduced,” or as the text phrases, **“being led away.”**

We believe that we are assured in that which we know, that we have learned, that we have researched and investigated. We have anchored ourselves to that we hold to be “truth.”

We are entangled in it; we are entrenched in it and will allow nothing or no one to break us free from that we have assuredly embraced.

Naturally, that is the right attitude to have. We are to be individual of conviction and not double-minded in our thinking or our beliefs.

The contemporary worldview would rather be flexible, tolerant and open to new things. They would rather we be relative

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in our thinking, and not individuals that are “absolute” in our thinking.

Again, it is good that we “know, what we know, what we know.” That is, as long as it aligns with biblical truth and that knowledge of biblical truth translates into associated practical behavior in our lives.

However, as stated, knowledge provides us with no security guarantee the ever-present propensity of being spiritually seduced, or being led away.”

It matters not how long we “have been saved.” It matters not what credentials we have obtained since we “have been saved.”

It matters not how many miraculous and spiritually uplifting and transitional experiences that we have and had since we “have been saved.”

The dangerous potential of being seduced or “being led away” is ever before us.

Spiritual seduction can be likened to a clandestine, a covert or an undercover agent that lurks and lives in the circle of our lives.

We cannot see it. We do not know specifically where it resides, but Scripture reminds us that it is perpetually there.

Because of this ever-present reality, the Apostle Paul cautioned the Corinthian congregation (and every generation of Believers), **“Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.”** (1 Cor. 10:12)

The documented record of Scripture and Church History clearly demonstrated that spiritual seduction has been a formidably potent weapon in the arsenal of Satan, our Chief Adversary.

The statistical results of its effectiveness conclude that few of us avoid being numbered among its casualties. Hence, we see the primary reason behind the repeated warning and cautions found in the record of Scripture.

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Furthermore, we should especially note the fact that the effectiveness of spiritual seduction will increase more greatly as the end of this spiritual era draws to a close. Its ultimate impact can be seen in the declaration of the Lord Jesus in the passage of **Matthew 24:24**.

The text renders, **“For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.”**

Hence, do we not have a very good reason to be weary of its presence and its potential impact on our lives?

Naturally, we live in an environment of spiritual wickedness where the presence of the where the influence of seduction toward that which is evil is innately endemic.

Hence, we should not be amazed to realize to the degree that spiritual thrives in this domain of evil. It is all around us.

Comparatively speaking, we expect it to characteristically rain heavily in a rainforest, thus we should not be surprised regarding the widespread reach of spiritual seduction in our contemporary times.

In **2 Peter 2:1**, the Apostle Peter warned the general assembly of believer scattered throughout the provinces of the Roman Empire, **“But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that brought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction.”**

Too, even today it is obviously clear that the influence of these implanted individuals has already made significant inroads into the circle of our churches and our lives.

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SPIRITUALLY FALLING

We may think that the ever-present debilitating snare of spiritually “falling” is something that lies at distance far away from us; when actually, it is a crippling hazard that ever lurks presently around us, given the fact Scripture reminds the Christ follower that we reside in a spiritual sphere that is formidably and relentless hostile to us.

Although too commonly we are not living attentively aware of this ever present and pervasive danger, **1 John 2:16** yet continually alerts us of its looming presence: **”For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.”**

And consequently, when we allow ourselves to become seduced and distracted by the world’s diverting influences for prolonged periods of time; or to become spiritually blinded by colluding and unifying with their endeavors; then we have foolishly positioned ourselves at the cliff edge of imminent spiritual disaster and are poised to fall.

Moreover, by ignoring the Spirit’s continual warning promptings and neglecting the redirecting and corrective counsel of the Word of God, obviously we place ourselves in the position to become completely victimized by our every lurking spiritual enemy.

To be sure, it is typically the case that we totally fail to understand and utterly completely underestimate the true power of influence of “the world.”

Due to our failure to remain spiritually alert and spiritually vigilant to its seductive influences, routinely, we find ourselves drawn to its alluring offering, only to be ultimately, suddenly caught in it spiritually perilous snare.