**Setting and Background**

In the latter years of the 1st century, around AD 90-95, Apostle John started writing and was now the last man standing among the 12 – the apostles had been persecuted and martyred for their faith.

* All the other 11 apostles had experienced martyrdom/death at the time John began writing
* Paul had been in heaven for 20+ years
* 50+ years had passed since Christ’s death on the cross and resurrection – AD 29-30
* Reign of Nero in AD 54-68 - Nero was the 5th emperor of Rome and was 16 when he became emperor, committed suicide at age 30 in 68AD. Nero took the throne approximately two decades after Christ was crucified. Although still in its infancy, Christianity was spreading rapidly during this time. In fact, approximately fourteen of the New Testament’s twenty-seven books were written in whole or in part during Nero’s emperorship. Also during Nero’s reign the apostle Paul was confined to house arrest in Rome (AD 60—63), where he wrote Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon. Nero was the “Caesar” to whom Paul appealed for justice during his trial in Caesarea ([Acts 25:10–12](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%2025.10%E2%80%9312)) Nero’s legacy is not a pleasant one. Although his regime began with mildness, it ended with cruelty. He began murdering anyone who became an obstacle to him; his victims include his own wife and mother as well as his step-brother. In July of 64AD, the Great Fire of Rome broke out and lasted for six days. Some historians believe Nero may have been responsible for the fire, although his involvement is not clear. What is clear is that Nero deflected the focus from himself by blaming the fire on the Christians, many of whom he tortured and killed. The historian [Tacitus](https://www.gotquestions.org/Tacitus.html) described these atrocities: “Covered with the skins of beasts, [Christians] were torn by dogs and perished, or were nailed to crosses, or were doomed to the flames and burnt, to serve as nightly illumination when daylight had expired.” Nero’s use of Christians as human torches to light his evening garden parties is well documented. Ultimately, it is the brutality inflicted on the early Christians for which Nero is remembered. Nero blamed the growing sect of Christians for the fire because the Christians claimed God was greater than all other gods, including Caesar Nero.
* Polycarp (Bishop of the early Christian church in Symrna from 69-155AD) Commissioned by John – martyred in 155 burned at the stake; speared to his death. 12th martyr in Smyrna. “Eighty and six years I have served Him, and He has done me no wrong. How can I blaspheme my King and my Savior?”
* Antipas (Bishop of the early Christian church in Pergamum) - martyred in AD 92 - burned alive in a brazen bull-shaped altar used for casting out demons - (his persecution was while John was writing the Gospel of John)
* Domitian reigned as emperor in Rome in 81AD – 96AD and stirred up a mass persecution of Christians. Exiled John to Patmos in 95AD after he had him boiled in oil.
* John, Bishop of Ephesus, began a 5-year writing ministry of the gospel, 3 epistles, and Revelation – AD 90-95 – there were 20-25 gods and goddess in Ephesus – a city of pagan deities with each their own temple and altars for worship. Ceremonial processions for the gods were regular practices in Ephesus. The city was filled with polytheistic worship (worship of many gods) -

John was one of the three most intimate associates of Christ’s, along with Peter and James.

* **Matthew17:1** – “*Six days later Jesus took with Him Peter and James and John his brother, and led them up on a high mountain by themselves.”*
* **Mark 14:33** – *“And He took with Him Peter and James and John, and began to be very distressed and troubled.”*

**Who is John at this age and stage of his life?**

As we already mentioned, John was a lover of truth. He stood for truth. He defended truth. Which means John had **zero tolerance** for error. He had zero tolerance for any and all lies; any and all abbreviated truth; any and all **compromise** of the truth. So, John writes for one purpose and one purpose only - the truth of Jesus Christ, the truth the believers had heard from the beginning. So, at this age and stage of his life we find an old man who tirelessly devoted himself to truth with joy, love, and **dogma**.

But was young John always this vintage John? I have read volumes of literature on this beloved disciple, but this summary written by Dr. John MacArthur, was most helpful:

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*“Younger John was a very outgoing and almost volatile person. In some ways, he is the very opposite of the way he is depicted - highly emotional, somewhat demanding. His writing is very bold; it is very direct; it is very dogmatic. I don’t think there’s another New Testament writer that is as dogmatic as John is. He is authoritative in his writing. He is committed to absolutes. He is black and white.*

*These, as you know, are gray days in the life of the church. These are days when Christian thinking is loose, if there’s any Christian thinking at all. It is accepting. It is inclusive. It is uncertain. It is lacking in doctrinal clarity. It is lacking in dogmatism. It is lacking in conviction. It is given to tolerance; it is given to compromise. This is a perfect time to hear from John. This black and white, dogmatic, exclusive, absolute, authoritative apostle. He’s really the perfect writer to address the church today. He is a man, for our time, to confront the laxity in the church, the shallowness among the professed people of God, and the lack of conviction about what is really true and what is not.*

*John writes with simple words. He writes in clear certainties. Nothing in John’s writing is vague. Nothing is ambiguous. He is firmly committed to establishing the absolute truth in the mind of his readers. And John’s letter will bring a new sense of certainty to all who hear and understand. And if there’s anything lacking in modern evangelical thinking, it is certainty.*

*Sound doctrine, graciousness and the love of the Spirit – that’s what is heard in John’s epistle. It’s not enough to have the love and the gentleness and the graciousness and leave out the truth. You have to have the truth. Truth is sound doctrine. The disillusioned and deceived need the truth. And it’s not enough to love them. That is to leave them in error, leave them in shallowness. It’s not enough to come to people clothed in tolerant sentimentality, which is a poor substitute for genuine love. It must be the truth.*

*But it’s not unloving, self-exalting orthodoxy either. It’s not good when love is missing and the truth is just cold facts stifling and unattractive. Ministry must possess truth and love, for that is the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. Christ was the perfect image of truth and love in balance.*

*If you understand those two things, you understand John. Eventually, he became humble. He wasn’t that way at the beginning. He didn’t manifest humility at the start; he manifested a bold, self-promoting ambition. And even, along with his brother James, asked his mother to ask Jesus if he and his brother could sit on the right and left hand of Jesus in the kingdom. He had a volatile personality. He had a fervent, passionate personality. He was intolerant, very ambitious. He was anything but that dove-like person he’s often painted as being in those medieval paintings. In fact, when James one time wanted to bring down fire and burn up all the Samaritans, John was in agreement. John agreed. John wasn’t the passive brother; they were both Sons of Thunder. John has the ability to be narrow. He has the ability to be dogmatic. He has the ability to be exclusive. He has the ability to be prejudiced. He has the ability to isolate himself and draw a hard line. He has the ability to be black and white. And do you want to know something? That’s usable – if it’s for the right things.*

*Why would God choose a man like that? Why would the Lord Jesus make him an apostle? Because this is the kind of man that can be shaped into strength. He had the potential to be hard for the truth. What the Lord had to do was make him loving. He had that kind of personality of conviction, of narrowness; uncompromising, intolerant devotion to what was true. He had a clear-cut view of spiritual realities.*

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John recalled Christ’s warning in Mark 13:22,

“*False* *Christs and false prophets shall rise, and shall show signs and wonders, to seduce, if it were possible, even*

*the* *elect" (*[*Mark 13:22*](https://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/Mark%2013.22)*).* TheApostle Paul’s warnings in Acts 20:29, *“I know that after my departure*

*savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock”* served as John’s foundation for his epistle in leading

the church “back to the basics” – back to the fundamentals of faith in Christ.

The deceiving heresy John faced as he began writing 1 John was the beginning (the seeds) of **Gnosticism.** Gnosticism was in its early stages of influence in the latter third of the 1st century and was beginning to spread like gangrene in the 2nd century among the believers of Ephesus and churches in Asia Minor.

So, what is Gnosticism? It is comes from the Greek word <gnosis> for “**knowledge**.” Those who practiced Gnosticism believed:

- They were directly given **special** ongoing knowledge, “enlightenment” or “divine revelation,” a “higher transcending knowledge” about God from God. They claimed to know the secret side of God once a higher level of spirituality was achieved.

- They believed they were given the ability to perform **miracles** (“signs and wonders” – which were pseudo-miracles employed to support their claims.)

- They believed all physical matter was evil and only the **spirit** of a person is what was important. They also practiced sexual immorality to participate in the commerce and social opportunities of the region, with the belief that what was done in the body or with the body is **irrelevant**. What matters is what is in the spirit of a man – if his/her spirit was good, that was what they **elevated**. This deceived and depraved ‘mindset’ that believes ‘*our bodies are corrupt and grace covers what is done in the body anyway’* is gnosticism. This depraved mindset, *‘What really matters is the spirit of a person; what a person thinks and feels*’ will increase and dominant the minds and practices of **many** who profess to be Christians. We see this in Matthew 7:22: “**Many** will say to Me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast our demons, and in Your name perform many miracles\*?’ And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; LEAVE ME, YOU WHO PRACTICE LAWLESSNESS.” NASB

**You are either a Christian or you are not a Christian; you cannot be partly a Christian. You are either "dead" or "alive"; you are either "born" or "not born".** – Martin Llyod Jones

\*prophesy, cast out demons, miracles - *works of power* …*this is satanic supernatural power and many church members, many who are religiously serving in churches, will be deceived, (because of these remarkable signs and wonders and their timely and remarkable ‘word’ {prophesies} from God, and their apparent successes/breakthroughs/deliverances/healings in relating to the demonic world system), into thinking they are saved when they are not … all because of these supernatural signs and wonders. In fact, the entire certainty of their salvation was in these works, and as spectacular as they might have appeared, were not of God.*

This gnostic false teachings and practices feature two basic forms:

1. Asserting that Jesus’ physical body was not real but only “seemed” real physically (known as Docetism from a Greek word that means “to appear” or “to seem.”) They contended that God’s “spirit” descended on the human Jesus at His baptism, but left Him just before his crucifixion. (1 John 1:1-4; 4:2-3; 5:6) Hebrews 2:14-17 provide us the biblical view of Jesus’ complete humanity as well as His full deity.)

*Any* teaching that does not teach **the true** Christ, is coming from a salvage wolf / a false prophet, or from a true believer who is being bewitched by a heresy. (Galatians 3:1)

1. That “matter was evil and only spirit was good” led to the idea that sin committed in the body had no connection or effect on one’s spirit. This opinion led to many in the church to believe that sin committed in the body, with the body, did not matter; absolute indulgence in immorality was permissible; one could even deny their sin even existed (1 John 1:8-10) and disregard God’s law (I John 3:4).

A final summary of John from Dr. MacArthur:

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*There was nothing vague in his world, and that was good. And God needed it, but it had to be tempered with love. Jesus wanted his strengths. He wanted his resolution, his commitment, but he needed to get rid of all the interests of selfish ambition and pride. And so, this is John. And what we’re going to get is vintage John in these epistles. An 80+ year old man who had been transformed literally into the most clear-cut, black and white, authoritative, absolute writer of the New Testament known in history as the apostle of love. Not a love that takes you down the road of tolerance, but a love that takes you down the road of truth, for telling the truth is the most loving thing anyone could ever do. John loved the truth and the God of the truth and the Christ who is truth incarnate so much that he would tell people lovingly the absolute truth. And so, we’re going to learn the truth, in no uncertain terms, from a man who is committed to it, but also with a heart of love.*

*And, you know, this is so desperately needed today. And the assumption today is that if you hold to the truth, without vagueness – if you hold to the absolute truth of Scripture, you’re somehow not loving. Nothing, of course, could be further from the truth.\**

*\*GTY.org 1 John Vol 1 – audio message \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_*

**The Certainties of First John**

We live in a world that looks *suspiciously* on any form of conviction or certainty with regard to the truth. We

also live among a society that has not only abandoned the principles in living with absolutes, but now there is

among the church an inclusiveness that tolerates personal **opinions** and viewpoints, but not dogmatism.

It is because he knew that Christ taught that Christians not only *can* know the truth, but **must**know

the truth.

* John 8:32 - *“and you will* ***know*** *the truth, and the truth will make you free.”*
* Luke 1:4 - ***“****It also seemed good to me, since I have carefully investigated everything from the very first, to write to you in an orderly sequence, most honorable Theophilus,**so that you may know the* ***certainty*** *of the things about which you have been instructed.”*
* Proverbs 22:21 – “*To make you know the****certainty*** *of the words of truth.”*

John knew that those who genuinely love the truth are not slow in applying it to their life.

* John 3:21 – “*But anyone who* ***lives by****the truth comes to the light, so that his works may be shown to be accomplished by God.”*

**“Such God-honoring adherence to divine, absolute truth is precisely what he exalted in his first epistle as the evidence of genuine salvation.”** – John Macarthur

The whole text of this epistle is to be regarded as a making known the means that promote our *fellowship* with God:

* increased joy
* holiness
* assurance

… that *living in truth* brings and he tells us those are the very reasons for his writing.

* **Chapter 1 verse 3** – “*That which we have seen and heard, we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.”* Fellowship is an old Saxon word, ‘communion’ – a Latin word that signifies more than to be a recipient of His grace or a partaker of His love. Literally, it means ‘sharers together’ and ‘having things in common.’ In its simple Greek form, it is translated ‘**partners.**’ Therefore, the Son declared unto the Father, “the glory which you gave me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one.” John 17:22

**“The basic idea of ‘fellowship’ is sharing together … not that this signifies an equality, but rather the dutiful and cheerful drawing near so as there is holy intimacy and freedom because we are beloved of Him.”** - Author Pink

* **Chapter 1:4** - “*These things we write*” – says John – “*so that your joy may be made complete*.”

There can be no fullness of joy while the soul is in a state of uncertainty of its acceptance in the Beloved.

But when there is certainty of true regeneration of the soul, that joy which is made complete is a

spiritual joy resulting from the **heart** abiding in fellowship with the Lord.

Psalm 4:7 – *“You have put more joy in my heart than they have when their grain and wine abound.”*

* **Chapter 2:1** - “*My little children, I am writing these things to you that you may not sin.”* Not too hard to interpret, is it? Then he launches into some discussions that speak to a believers and an unbelievers life of sin. He contrasts the differences of the life of a child of God who sins and the life of a child of the devil who sins. He contrasts those who **practice** sin and those who do not. He had heard his Lord say, “*Go and sin no more.”*
* **Chapter 5:13** - “*These things I have written to you” – “you who believe in the name of the Son of God, in order that you may know that you have” –* what? *– “eternal life*.” John wanted to eliminate their sadness, their sin, and their doubt.

When our bible study is over, I truly believe God will honor the intent of those words. Our joy will be full; we will recognize and turn more eagerly from sin, and we will have assurance of our life now in Christ, our eternal life.

**“Throughout the epistle there rings loudly the note of certainty.”** – Author Pink 1952

John wanted Christians to know the truth of Christ, and he wanted them to know, as a warning, who the non-

Christians and false teachers were; and for the non-Christians and false teachers to know who they are.

Non-Christians and false prophets are everywhere! They are in:

* World Cults/World System Religions – Mormonism, Jehovah Witness, Muslim, Scientology, etc.
* Universalism - belief that all humankind will eventually be saved
* Pantheism – a practiced doctrine that rejects the idea of a personal God and believes instead that everything is divine—every rock, plant, animal, etc., is made of “God.” They believe God is Universe and Universe is God, and that there is a divine connection with all He created – every tree, bird, weed, seashell, etc.
* Polytheism - belief in and worship of more than one god
* Pragmatism – idea that the real test of what is truth is w*hatever works* – what will best achieve *my* goals is what works and is what’s truth (for me)
* Panentheism - God is greater than the universe but as the universe grows and learns, God also increases in knowledge and being
* Pandeism – the god of pandeism is not involved in the operation of the universe, and neither can he/it at all discern human experience. He created the universe, and then took His hands off, and does not get personally involved with Creation or human life.
* Henotheism – recognizes many gods but exclusively worships one god -
* Roman Catholicism - <https://www.gotquestions.org/Roman-Catholicism.html>
* Paganism - can refer to polytheism (the worship of more than one god), such as in ancient Rome. A pagan is also considered to be one who, for the most part, has no religion and indulges in worldly delights and material possessions; someone who revels in sensual pleasures; a hedonistic or self-indulgent individual. Modern “pagan” practices are actually similar to their ancient counterparts in that they rely heavily on hedonism—sensual gratification and self-indulgence and the pursuit of happiness and pleasure to the exclusion of everything else.
* Hedonism – a philosophy of life that supports pursuing all kinds of pleasure. Hedonists pursue a lifestyle of self-indulgence. If they want it, they get it. If it makes them happy, then it is good/right. Ultimately it is what makes them happy and experience pleasure that governs their decisions.

And deceived, pretending and professing Christians and false teachers are on …

* TBN - <https://www.gotquestions.org/Trinity-Broadcasting-Network-TBN.html>
* 700 Club – <https://www.gotquestions.org/700-Club.html>
* They make up the New Apostolic Reformation – <https://www.gotquestions.org/New-Apostolic-Reformation.html>

They are in Baptist, Methodist, Presbyterian, Nondenominational, Interdenominational, Church of Christ, Church of

Latter Day Saints, Pentecostal, Lutheran, Episcopal, and ‘you name it’ churches and conventions teaching bible

studies, praying, and serving. They are on Right Now Media. They profess to be evangelical preachers. They are

professors with doctorate degrees in seminaries. They are among the elders, the deacons, the missionaries, and the

church ministries. Besides being *among the people* within the local and online gatherings of the church, they are

*among the people* by the **millions** on social media platforms.

**And in John’s 1st epistle, the congregation is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.**

But I want to jump forward to one instruction that we need to have in the forefront of our minds as we

understand the purpose of this epistle. We see in Chapter 4:1 that we are told to, “*test the spirits*.”

**“Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, for many false prophets have gone out into the world.”**

* Underscore the word ‘Beloved’ – for John is writing this word of warning to the true Christian.
* Underscore the word, “spirit” for that word in Greek is a word that literally means ‘persons.’ John didn’t say

‘to *hear* whether they are from God,’ he said to ‘*see* whether they are from God.’ He was instructing them to

do more than listen to their words, but look to their **life** for manifestations (fruit, works, evidences, conduct)

that he has already been addressing in chapters 1, 2, and 3.

* Underscore the word, ‘false’ because it is means lying, deceiving, charming, alluring, and misleading.

‘Prophet’ means teacher/preacher/proclaimer and ‘into the world’ speaks of the whole created world of

humankind.

**“Spiritually speaking, Christians, when confronted with various doctrines and religious teachings, all of which claim to be true, must be able to tell those that are biblically sound from those that are not.”**

**– Dr. John MacArthur**

John didn’t want the Christians to be naïve or gullible - false teachers *are* deceivers and in Chapter 2:18, they

are also referred to as antichrists. If we assume that every ministry and so-called Christian minister and teacher

teach sound biblical doctrine concerning Christ, then we are not heeding John’s warning.

An antichrist is anyone who tampers with, distorts, and disillusions people concerning the true nature of Christ

and what the Word of God says.

The ultimate form of idolatry would be to reject the **mind of God** in Scripture and worship at the altar of one’s own

independent thinking.

* Idolatry - *Man attempting to make God in his own image*.

**1 John 5:13 – In Order That They May Know**

Just because someone prays a prayer, joins a church, buys a bible, reads a bible, studies a bible, memorizes

Scripture, is baptized, gives to the local church and ministries, is at their local church every time the doors

open, participates in missions, serves as a pastor or teacher, and does good works does not guarantee they

**know** the Lord and that He knows them. Jesus said in Matthew 7:21, **“*Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord,***

***Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven*.”**

So, the question on the table is –

“How do I *know* that my profession of Christ is real and genuine?”

**“I’ve seen hundreds of people come to Christ and 19 out of 20 of them were church members saying, ‘Lord, Lord…” until God removed the scales from their eyes and they could see themselves as God sees them, outside the kingdom.”** – Dr. Steve Lawson

As we study this epistle, we are going to see the marks [evidences] of someone truly born again, and we will

learn the marks [evidences] of someone who is **self-deceived** and is a child of the devil.

**The Degree of Self-Deception**

Matthew 7:22-23 shows us the degree of self-deception possible:

**“Many will say to Me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?’ And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; leave Me, you who practice lawlessness.” NASB**

First, notice the first word – *Many*. Not few. Not several. Not a small portion. But *many* [the majority of the

professing Christians] will say to the Lord … Circle the word ‘say’ because it is going to be another key word

in our study of 1 John not only due to how often it is repeated in the text, but because of the truth *conveyed* in

that one three letter word.

*Many* is mentioned again in Matthew 7:13 – “***Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is***

***easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many.”*** Narrow gate represents God’s way to life

eternal by **grace** alone, through **faith** alone, in **Christ** alone. This one narrow way is precise and constricted to

life in Jesus Christ. The broad way is wide including all man-made religions, interpretations, and ideologies of

works and self-righteousness, leading to hell and not heaven.

*Many* find themselves entering through that gate and walking that way because it’s a wide gate (not hard to

find) and Christ said it “*is easy*” and their minds have been darkened by a deceiving self-made self-glorifying

religion because they think it is the way to heaven.

**How Does This Happen?**

If you ask the typical Christian today to explain or summarize the gospel, you’ll hear statements such as:

* Accept Jesus as your personal Savior
* Ask Jesus into your heart
* Invite Christ into your life
* Make a decision for Christ

Those expressions have become so common with today’s Christians that it’s difficult at times to explain

that **none** of them are actually based on true biblical terminology, but are actually the result of a diluted

gospel. Jesus taught that to follow Him came with a high cost; the way was narrow and that many who call

Him Lord are forbidden from entering the kingdom of heaven. He gave those very sobering warning:

**“Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven; but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven will enter.” Matthew 7:21**

**“Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and there are many who enter through it. For the gate is small and the way is narrow that leads to life, and there are few who find it.” Matthew 7:13**

**There are two religions in the world:**

**Narrow Gate Wide Gate**

Divine Accomplishment Human Achievement

Election – took place in eternity past False Christ / False Faith

Predestined us to be children of God Self-deceived

Regenerated – operative grace – salvation is a work of God No work of God

Born from Above No rebirth

Once we are given life from above, we repent and believe No genuine repentance or belief in the true

The ‘many’ who stand before Him that day, will be those stunned to learn that they are not included in the

kingdom.

When you see a name repeated twice in Scripture,

*‘Abraham, Abraham!’* (Genesis 22:11)

*‘Jacob, Jacob.*’ (Genesis 46:2)

*‘Moses, Moses!’* (Exodus 3:4)

*‘Samuel! Samuel!’* (1 Samuel 3:10)

*‘Martha, Martha,’* (Luke 10:41)

*‘Simon, Simon,”* (Luke 22:31)

*‘Saul, Saul,’* (Acts 9:4)

*‘My God, My God’* (Mark 15:34 – quoting Psalm 22:1)

In Hebrew, it denotes **intimacy** … an expression of a real close relationship. Those *‘many’* in Matthew 7 who

are on the wide and easy road and who never did the will of the Father, say to Him, “Lord, Lord…” – they

have been deceptively **convinced** that what they called and considered true intimacy with Christ because of all

that they **did** – they prayed, they prophesied, they cast out demons, they performed miracles, signs and

wonders, they lived a religious life of what they considered ‘divine works of God.’ Yet, Christ says to them,

“… you who practice lawlessness,” (NASB) “you workers of lawlessness,” (ESV) - “you lawbreakers!”

(HCSB), “you who act wickedly” [disregarding My commands]. (AMP)

**How Many is this *Many*?**

This one word in our English language requires four Greek words working together for us to clearly

understand its full message.

Πλεονάζω *Plehonazo* - more in quantity, major portion, to exceed, superabound, increase, long

Πολύς *Polus* – mostly, largely, plenteous, often, long

πόσος *Posos* – how many, how much, how large, how great, long

Τοσούτος *Tosoutos* - so much, so vast in quantity, majority, so great, so many people, so long

**Who Are the *Many*?**

They are those who **profess** Christ, yet do not **possess** Christ.

These are professing believers who are so self-deceived concerning their relationship with God,

Christ’s answer to them is so clear – paraphrased:

‘*You were self-deceived. All that you were doing that you believed in and thought were righteous deeds, were acts of sin. All of those things you listed to justify your place in the kingdom were all works of the adversary. It is all a lie. You’ve been living as a hypocrite because the continual lifestyle you practiced was sinful. Depart from Me. I never knew you and you never knew Me. You were not born again. We never had fellowship*.’

Harsh? Not at all …

“**God has always judged willful rejection by giving men over to impurity and degrading passions so in the last days God will sovereignly seal the fate of those who persist in following Satan and his counterfeit Christ. As in all ages, those who habitually reject the truth are judged by being left to the consequences of their sin.”** \*Macarthur Study Bible commentary

Satan’s counterfeit Christ will deceive *many* in our churches today using all the sign gifts they mentioned in

their plea – there will be claims of supernatural works and claims of new revelations spoken directly from God

to someone who will ‘prophesy.’ “*God gave me a word for you*,” is a common charismatic belief and will

increase.

This practice of mysticism and the practice of these *experiences* are already being encouraged in many

evangelical churches – to become more ‘welcoming of the sign gifts’ and to be ‘courageous enough to try

them.’

– A Man Blew in My Face

There will be pseudo-miracles, and the claims of casting out of demons, but the person the demons are using

for their deceptive works will be convinced that they are true Christians because of what ‘works’ they are

performing. They will reason that only someone who is saved could perform all these dramatic indications of

*good works* and of *being filled by the Holy Spirit.*  It will be so convincing, ***‘so as to***

***lead astray, if possible, even the elect.’ Matthew 24:24.***

*(\*Chapter is of the time during the tribulation)*

And all this is led by ‘false prophets’ [Matthew 7:15] who are impersonating as ‘true shepherds’ over their

churches. These deceive not by disguising themselves as sheep, but by impersonating true shepherds.

This ‘even the elect’ is not in reference to the church for the true church (the elect of Christ) would have

already been raptured. This is in reference to the elect Jews and Gentiles who are converted during the

tribulation. But as we see in Scripture, before the rapture of Christ’s church, we will experience during the

Church age the growing shadows of this great and growing deception.

During the tribulation, Matthew 24:24 tells us – “For false christs and false prophets will arise and perform

great signs and wonders, so as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect.” In other words, it’s not possible. The

false prophets and false christs cannot deceive those genuinely converted during the tribulation. But *many* Jews

will be deceived by the satanic religious leader’s miracles because Jews require signs, I Corinthians 1:22 –

***“For Jews demand signs…”.***

In and among many [majority of] churches and religious gatherings, the prophesying, the casting out of

demons, the signs and miracles, the gnostic gospel of mysticism, higher knowledge, and experience will be the

supernatural work of Satan, not God. And it will all be so convincing, that all of what they are doing will be

seen by them as indication of their regeneration. To them, it all must be evidence of a transformed life, because

it’s all spectacular – a grandiose-ness and emphasis of the sign gifts will be increasing and deceiving many

to believe in a wrong Christ.

* A Word from the Lord? Evaluating the Modern Gift of Prophecy –

 <https://www.gty.org/library/sermons-library/TM13-8/~/about>