

## Message #69 of *Scripture Beneath The Surface*

### *“Doctrines Of Devils”*

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Hello! Thanks for being with us. Today I'd like to take you to 1 Timothy, chapter 4. We'll take just a little bit at a time, and start with verse one. It says, “Now the Spirit speaks expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils;” Notice that the opening verse says that the Spirit speaks expressly. The word expressly means, specifically, or perfectly. In other words, Paul is saying that this is not a general reference that the Holy Spirit is making, but, it is a very specific statement that needs to be looked at very clearly. This statement of Paul's first tells us that the Holy Spirit is trying to explain to us something important. It says that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith. The Bible refers to latter times in many instances, and the latter day's are the subject of many discussions in today's church groups. Paul is saying that the Holy Spirit is trying to tell us that in these last days there will be a departing from the faith by some Christians. It has to be Christians that the Holy Spirit is referring to, because you cannot depart from the faith if you have never been in the faith. To depart from the faith is to depart from the truth of the word of God.

Jesus is the Word of God, and he is our faith. However, 1 Timothy 4:1 is plainly telling us that there will be a departing from faith in the latter days, and it says that the reason for the departure from the faith is that Christians will listen to seducing spirits, and will accept doctrines of devils. When we look at the original word for seducing spirits, we recognize that the original word for this implies a wandering, or a roving manner, much the same as a vagabond, or a tramp. People who have no place to live but only wonder from place to place are considered vagabonds, or tramps. When people become subject to seducing spirits they are actually becoming subject to that which leads them around from place to place without their feet ever being able to be planted firmly on solid ground.

Jesus Christ is the solid rock, and we make our abode in him and he in us. But evil spirits have not anchored themselves in Jesus Christ and in the truth of God's word, so therefore, they lead people astray rather than into a safe and secure abode. People who have not made themselves secure in Jesus Christ are subject to evil spirits. Because they have not anchored themselves in Jesus and in his word, they do not know when they are being led astray. Now, notice that the other portion of that phrase, that goes along with seducing spirits, says that the seducing spirits bring in doctrinal error to the people. Paul says in this verse that these are doctrines of devils, and that because the people have not been firmly planted in the word of God, they will receive doctrine which wanders away from the truth.

It may seem like this portion of the scripture is not very important, but Christians should recognize that without the firm foundation of the word of God which anchors you in Jesus Christ, you can easily be led astray, allowing the evil seducing spirits to drag you here and there. The apostle Paul also tells us in Ephesians 4:14, that we, from this time forward, should no longer be children, tossed here and there, and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, by which they lie in wait to deceive us. The apostle Peter also refers to Paul's statement when he says in 2 Peter 3:16, that Christians who are unlearned, and have not become stabilized in the word of God, can only end up in a wrestling match with these scriptures, trying to understand them. And also notice that these statements recognize that the evil seducing spirits bring in their devilish doctrines through men.

Christians who have not laid a solid foundation on the word of God cannot possibly have a faith structure that is stable. This is nothing more or less than the concept brought out in the parable of the man who built his house upon the sand. Anything built on shifting ground will eventually fall.

But, let's go back to 1 Timothy 4, and read the next verse; verse two. It says, "Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron;" This is what happens to Christians who build their faith on various whims of doctrine that float to and fro through the church of today. There are many false doctrines which permeate the church. But the only Christians who will be able to stand when faith is put to the test, are those who have a firm basis in the word of God. Those who have not built on a solid foundation of the word of God, and are carried about with various winds of doctrine, will not be able to stand against the storms of life.

In verse 2, of 1 Timothy, chapter 4, it says that these people who are led about by seducing spirits with devilish doctrines are people who will speak lies. No, Christians don't think of themselves as being speakers of lies, for we are supposed to be speakers of truth. But when we listen to doctrines of devils, we will be in error, just as the evil spirits which are teaching the evil doctrines. In addition, as we just read in verse two, those Christians will not have a conscience that can be trusted. They will have a conscience that has been destroyed, as if it were burned with a hot iron. This means their conscience will not be soft and pliable and alive and able to

respond by warning the people when they are about to enter into error, but will be hardened just as a piece of meat is hard and stiff when it is burned to a crisp.

In verse three, we further see that Paul has given two general false doctrines as examples of what will come from these seducing spirits. Let's read verses 3-5, of 1 Timothy 4. It says, "Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God has created to be received with thanksgiving, by those who believe and know the truth: 5 For it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer."

The first false doctrine that Paul gives as an example is the doctrine of, "forbidding to marry." This is a doctrine which is put forth in the Catholic church in application for priests. It is, according to the verses we just read, a doctrine of devils. It is a doctrine which comes from seducing spirits, and not a doctrine which comes from the Bible. In fact, we can refer directly to Biblical statements in 1 Timothy 3:2 which says that a bishop, which means an overseer of the church, should be the husband of one wife. If the Bible says that an overseer of the church should have but one wife, then how can the Catholic church say that their bishops should not have a wife? Clearly, to preach a doctrine which forbids marrying is contradictory to scripture.

However, for the established church to teach doctrinal issues which set aside the scriptures is nothing new. Jesus referred to the same principle of church doctrine replacing the words of the Bible when he spoke to the scribes and Pharisees in Matthew 15, berating them for teaching doctrines which set aside the commandments of God. This still goes on today by the modern day scribes and Pharisees of today's church. The current leaders of today have developed doctrines which clearly are opposed to the Bible. We see this again in Paul's second example of doctrine which comes from devils. This second example, in 1 Timothy, chapter 4, states that some people will say that we should abstain from meats which God has created to be received. This is a doctrine of many non-Christian religious movements, and specifically one Christian movement in general. The Christian movement is the Seventh-Day Adventist church which follows the doctrine of a woman they call a prophetess of the Seventh-Day Adventist church, rather than following scripture. This doctrine of telling their congregations that they should abstain from eating all meats or certain meats, is clearly in opposition to scripture.

Let's break this down into two facets. Some religious movements, both Christian and non-Christian sects, teach that all meats should be avoided. Some religious movements teach that only certain meats should be avoided. The Seventh-Day Adventist Church teaches both doctrines, in the sense that they require their members to abstain from certain meats which were forbidden to the Jewish people when they were under the Law of Commandments, and they also encourage Christians to abstain from all meats. They don't absolutely forbid their members to eat any meat, but state that any Christian who does eat any meat will not live through the Great Tribulation in the last days. The inference is that a good Christian will abstain from all meats if they really and truly want to be good servants to God.

First of all, the doctrine of forbidding to eat all meat is a doctrine which leads to confusion in understanding the scriptures. It also leads to various pagan religious movements which teach that to kill an animal is wrong. However, when the doctrine of abstaining from meat is followed, it soon becomes a stepping stone to the refusal of accepting the spilled blood of Jesus Christ for the atonement of sins. When men stop killing animals, and the concept of spilling their blood becomes objectionable to the human senses, then they will also want to separate themselves from thoughts of spilled blood, including the spilled blood of Jesus Christ, who is the Lamb of God, the sacrifice for all men's sins. This concept of the spilling of blood being repulsive is already been introduced to the church, and a Bible has been published which has omitted all references to blood. Many times Christians are oblivious to the deceptive tactics of Satan when he instigates doctrine which eventually undermines Bible truth.

But, for those of you who might realistically question whether or not the eating of meat is a sin, let me take you to another Bible scripture. It is 1 Kings, chapter 17, verses 1-6. It says, "And Elijah the Tishbite, who was of the inhabitants of Gilead, said unto Ahab, As the LORD God of Israel lives, before whom I stand, there will not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word. 2 And the word of the LORD came unto him, saying, 3 Go then, and turn eastward, and hide yourself by the brook Cherith, that is by the Jordan. 4 And it shall be, that you shall drink of the brook; and I have commanded the ravens to feed you there. 5 So he went and did according to the word of the LORD: for he went and dwelled by the brook Cherith, that is before Jordan. 6 And the ravens brought him bread and flesh in the morning, and bread and flesh in the evening; and he drank of the brook."

Notice that in these scriptures it is God himself which tells Elijah to dwell by the brook Cherith, and that he has commanded the ravens to feed him there. Then God sends the ravens to Elijah, and what do they give Elijah? Bread and flesh. The flesh is specifically referring to meat. God himself fed Elijah meat. So, let me ask you a question. If God fed Elijah with meat, how can people say that eating meat is not God's will? Also, how can people teach a doctrine that says God doesn't want us to eat any meat? In addition to this, Genesis 9:3 tells us that God spoke to Noah and his sons when they came out of the ark after the flood, and told them that every moving thing that lives shall be used as food. This is clearly telling them that they are to eat meat, and that they can eat every kind of meat.

But, let's go on to the second example of devilish doctrine in 1 Timothy 4. This second example refers to seducing spirits bringing in the doctrine of abstaining from meats which God himself has created to be received. Remember, what we are reading in 1 Timothy 4, is Paul's warning against doctrines of devils. It is a warning against evil spirits seducing Christians into believing things which are opposed to the truth of God. In verse 5, Paul states very plainly that every creature of God is good, and nothing is to be refused, if it is received with thanksgiving. And the qualification for the purity of the meats is not based on the Law of Commandments, but based on the fact that the meats have been sanctified by the word of God and by prayer. It is the praying to God for the blessing of food which removes the curse of the food. And, it is the sanctification of the food which sets it apart from that which is unclean. Sanctification is the act of making

something holy, and holiness is being set apart for God's purpose. If God sets something apart for his own purpose, how can any man suggest that it is not a holy and acceptable thing?

In the Old Testament, when the Israelites came under the Law of Commandments, they were set aside as a special people. The other nations at that time were not included within God's chosen people. They were called gentiles, which means, foreigner. They were not included within the Jewish Covenant, and were, therefore, alienated from God. The various animals of the Bible are representative of the different kinds of people on the earth. Just as the gentiles were excluded from being part of God's chosen people, certain animals were designated as being unclean. These were symbolic references which help us understand the principles of God. But when Jesus Christ died on the cross, the Law of Commandments was fulfilled. Its purpose was complete, for it had accomplished what God had wanted it to do. And because Jesus Christ had died on the cross, every man became eligible to become a part of God's chosen people, whether they were Israelite or gentile. The Law of Commandments which had been given to Israel as a Covenant from God, was fulfilled in Christ Jesus. The Law of Commandments was no longer given as the way to salvation, for it had fulfilled its purpose by bringing in the knowledge of sin, and had clearly demonstrated that righteousness could not possibly be accomplished by trying to keep the Law.

When the apostle Peter was sent by God to the house of Cornelius, a gentile, he had an experience which shook up his doctrinal viewpoint. God gave him a vision of every kind of animal, and spoke, saying, "Peter, rise and eat." In the vision were animals which, under the Law of Commandments, were considered to be unclean. Peter refused to eat them, but God chastised him, saying, "Do not call anything unclean when I have cleansed it." In today's society, we still have religious organizations which teach a doctrine which says to abstain from certain meats. Although these same animals were originally created by God, and they were originally considered to be food for Noah and his sons, as we referred to with Genesis, chapter 9, these religious organizations are teaching otherwise.

But, the abstention from eating certain meats, or all meat, is not a doctrine of God, no more than it is a doctrine of God that men should not be allowed to marry if they are overseers of the church. Men have a strong desire to create doctrine which is opposed to the Bible. For the men themselves, this creation of doctrine which opposes scripture may be born from a true desire to shepherd God's flock. However, as we have just read in 1 Timothy 4:1-5, the examples of forbidding to marry and to abstain from meats are not stated as being just an error of man's judgment, but as doctrines of devils. And it is stated plainly that it is the intention of evil spirits to seduce God's children into leaving that solid firm doctrine of the Bible and to roam freely away into man's own mental assumptions. The scribes and Pharisees of Jesus' day did the same thing. And, we know from scripture, that these same scribes and Pharisees were generally evil, for they did not worship God in true word and spirit, but in a religious spirit which circumvented God's purpose. Just as Jesus condemned the doctrine of the scribes and Pharisees of his day, there should also be condemnation of improper doctrine today. No, this does not mean that the Catholics and the Seventh-Day Adventists are evil people. What it does mean is that Paul was

giving clear examples of doctrines which come straight from devils, and we of the church today should not be ignoring his warning.

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The church of today mostly ignores the warnings of scripture, and consequently they do not recognize doctrinal error. Just as the people of Jesus' day accepted the scribes and Pharisees at face value, the people of today accept any representative of the church without weighing what they say and without praying to God for the understanding. But if you don't weigh carefully what people say, then you could find yourself at the mercy of another Jim Jones. Certainly, God does not want people to be gullible. God wants his people to be led into all truth by his Holy Spirit, not led into truth by men. Yes, men must be teachers and preachers, but men are only presenters of God's word. It is still up to you to weigh what you hear and what you read.

And, in closing, let's pay particular attention to 1 Timothy, chapter 4, again, and see what interesting statement follows the warning of seducing spirits and doctrines of devils. Verse 6 says, "If you put the brethren in remembrance of these things, you shall be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished up in the words of faith and good doctrine, unto which you have attained." Think about this. Are you putting the brethren in remembrance of these things? It is time for Christians to put each other in remembrance that doctrines such as forbidding to marry and to abstain from meats which God has created to be received, are doctrines of devils, and not God's true word. It is time for God's children to make a firm stand on solid ground instead of wallowing around in the muck and mire of the Devil's doctrine, which so permeates the church of today, just as it did in the time that Jesus walked the earth. It is time that God's people realize that scribes and Pharisees still exist today.