

“The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons.” —
1 Timothy 4:1 (NIV)

Shalom! May the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ be praised.

We live in a time when spiritual deception is widespread. The Bible does not leave us in the dark about this reality. In 1 Timothy 4:1, the Apostle Paul reminds us that the Holy Spirit speaks *clearly*—without symbolism or hidden meaning—that in the last days, many will turn away from the Christian faith, listening to deceiving spirits and demonic doctrines.

This warning is not symbolic, like some prophecies that require spiritual discernment or revelation. It is straightforward, intended to open our eyes and prepare us for the times we live in.

When the Spirit Speaks Symbolically

Often in Scripture, the Holy Spirit speaks in ways that require spiritual discernment. For example:

“Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches.”

— Revelation 2:29 (NIV)

This phrase implies that not everyone will immediately understand the message. Some spiritual truths are hidden and must be revealed through the Spirit (see 1 Corinthians 2:10-14).

Take Revelation 2:26-28 as an example:

“To the one who is victorious and does my will to the end, I will give authority over the nations—that one ‘will rule them with an iron scepter and will dash them to pieces like pottery’—just as I have received authority from my Father. I will also give that one the morning star.”

— Revelation 2:26-28 (NIV)

Here, key elements like *“authority over the nations”* and *“the morning star”* are not immediately clear. They require spiritual interpretation (e.g., the “morning star” could refer to Christ Himself—*Revelation 22:16*).

But in 1 Timothy 4:1, the message is unambiguous and direct: in the end times, many will fall away from the faith.

How Do Deceiving Spirits Speak?

Paul says people will listen to these spirits, meaning they communicate somehow. According to Scripture and Christian theology, deceiving spirits influence humans in two major ways:

1. Internally, through thoughts and impulses

This is when a person feels urged to do things contrary to God’s Word—such as lying, stealing, committing adultery, engaging in idolatry, or embracing immoral behavior. James explains:

“Each person is tempted when they are dragged away by their own evil desire and enticed.”

— James 1:14 (NIV)

Spiritual warfare occurs in the mind and heart. If a person obeys impulses that contradict the Word of God, they are being led by a deceiving spirit—even if they are unaware.

2. Externally, through false teachers and preachers

Jesus Himself warned:

“Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves.”

— Matthew 7:15 (NIV)

These individuals often look religious or spiritual, but they teach doctrines that contradict the gospel of Christ—encouraging sin, materialism, self-glorification, or compromise with worldly values. Listening to them leads believers away from truth.

Paul emphasizes the urgency and clarity of the Spirit's message because many—not just a few—will be deceived. Jesus also spoke of this:

“For false messiahs and false prophets will appear and perform great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect.”
— Matthew 24:24 (NIV)

This means even sincere believers can be misled if they are not spiritually alert.

How Can We Avoid Being Deceived?

The only way to test spirits and teachings is by comparing them with Scripture. The Berean Jews were praised for doing this:

“Now the Berean Jews were of more noble character...for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true.”
— Acts 17:11 (NIV)

Do not trust your feelings or personal experiences alone. Even Satan can appear as an angel of light:

“And no wonder, for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light.”

— 2 Corinthians 11:14 (NIV)

Only the Word of God is a sure foundation.

“Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path.”

— Psalm 119:105 (NIV)

A Call to Faith and Discernment

Dear friend, if you've delayed giving your life to Jesus because of confusion, doubt, or worldly distractions, it's possible that deceiving spirits have already influenced you.

But today is your opportunity to turn to Christ. He is waiting with open

arms.

“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.”

— Matthew 11:28 (NIV)

Jesus desires that you live—and not perish. His warning through the Spirit is a sign of His love.

Final Exhortation

The Holy Spirit is not vague. He has clearly warned us: in the last days, many will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits. Let us be among those who remain faithful to Christ.

“The one who stands firm to the end will be saved.”

— Matthew 24:13 (NIV)

Let's stay vigilant. Let's stay grounded in truth. And let's help others do

the same.

Maranatha - The Lord is coming.

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