Matthew 24:24 & Mark 13:22

The Rise of False Teaching

To effectively address the factors of this topic, it is essential to adopt a systematic approach that examines the historical origins of misleading teachings. This should also incorporate the scriptural insights found in God's word, while seamlessly integrating the biblical references provided in the list of verses below that pertains to this topic, which will help connect with the theme of **false Christs, false prophets, deception, and the security of God's elect** as mentioned in – **Matthew 24:24**: *"For false Christs and false prophets will appear and perform great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect."*

Biblical Usage of Appropriate Verses

These scriptures, taken together with Matthew 24:24, provide a well-rounded understanding of the theme of deception by false Christs and prophets, as well as the assurance of God's protection over His elect.

1. Deception by False Prophets:

- **Deuteronomy 13:1-3**
  - *If there arise among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and giveth thee a sign or a wonder, and the sign or the wonder come to pass, whereof he spake unto thee, saying, Let us go after other gods, which thou hast not known, and let us serve them; Thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams: for the*

Lord your God proveth you, to know whether ye love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul.

Connection: This passage warns against following prophets who perform signs and wonders but lead people away from God. It mirrors the warning of Matthew 24:24 regarding false prophets performing signs to deceive.

2. False Christs and Antichrists:

- **1 John 2:18**
  - *Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time.*

Connection: This verse speaks of many antichrists appearing, which aligns with the concept of false Christs in Matthew 24:24. It highlights that deception was already occurring during the apostle John's time.

- **1 John 4:1**
  - *Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.*

Connection: John cautions believers to test the spirits to avoid deception by false prophets, which ties directly into the theme of discerning false prophets in Matthew 24:24.

3. Signs and Wonders to Deceive:

- **2 Thessalonians 2:9-10**
  - *Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders,*

And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.

Connection: This passage describes the coming of one who will perform “lying wonders” to deceive, echoing the signs and wonders performed by false Christs and prophets in Matthew 24:24.

4. Security of the Elect:

- **John 10:27-29**
  - *My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father’s hand.*

Connection: These verses confirm that God’s elect (His sheep) are secure in His hand and cannot be ultimately deceived or lost, paralleling Matthew 24:24’s statement that it is impossible for the elect to be fully deceived.

- **Romans 8:33**
  - *Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifieth.*

Connection: This emphasizes the protection and security of the elect, further illustrating that they cannot be deceived, in line with Matthew 24:24.

5. Warnings About the End Times:

- **2 Peter 2:1**
  - *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 bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction.

Connection: This passage warns about false teachers introducing heresies, which relates directly to the rise of false prophets that Jesus foretold in Matthew 24:24.

- **Mark 13:22**
  - *For false Christs and false prophets shall rise, and shall show signs and wonders, to seduce, if it were possible, even the elect.*

Connection: This is a parallel passage to Matthew 24:24 in the Gospel of Mark, reiterating the same warning about false Christs, prophets, and the potential for deception.

6. God's Sovereign Protection:

- **Jude 1:24**
  - *Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy.*

Connection: This verse reassures believers that God is able to keep them from falling into deception, aligning with the promise in Matthew 24:24 that the elect cannot be ultimately deceived.

A Theological Framework Known as

Dispensationalism

The Rise of False Teachers and the Deception of Dispensationalism

In Matthew 24:24, Jesus gives a serious warning:
"For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect." This verse not only points to the dangers posed by false Christs and prophets but also the ability of these figures to deceive even those who are firmly rooted in their faith. While the elect are ultimately secure in God's hands, this warning underlines the power of deception that has crept into Christian theology over the centuries.

One of the most significant theological deceptions that has affected many Christians today is the belief in **dispensationalism** and the doctrine of a **pre-tribulation rapture**. These ideas began to gain traction in the late 18th to early 19th century, with **John Nelson Darby** often credited as the major promoter. However, Darby did not originate these ideas; they were already circulating and he merely popularized them, shaping what would become a widespread doctrine among many evangelical Christians.

The Influence of Dispensationalism

Dispensationalism teaches that history is divided into different periods, or "dispensations," in which God interacts with humanity in distinct ways. One of the core ideas of this theology is the belief in a **pre-tribulation rapture**—the idea that the Church will be taken up to heaven before a literal seven-year tribulation period occurs on Earth. During this tribulation, God's focus supposedly shifts back to Israel.

This idea of a pre-tribulation rapture is not biblically

founded in the traditional sense, as it was never a part of early Christian doctrine or teaching. Its roots can be traced to the 19th century, and the movement was further advanced through the teachings of **John Darby**. However, what cemented this belief in the minds of many Christians was the introduction of the **Scofield Reference Bible** by **C.I. Scofield**, which contained commentary and notes that interpreted scripture in a dispensational framework. Many believers accepted these notes as authoritative, often without realizing that they represented a modern interpretation, not the traditional biblical understanding.

The Connection to Zionism and Political Theology

The rise of **Zionism**—the belief in the restoration of Israel as a physical nation—further intertwined with dispensationalism. Zionist ideas, coupled with dispensational theology, began to shape the eschatological (end times) views of many Christians. The belief that God's promises to Israel in the Old Testament required a literal fulfillment in a modern political state led to strong support for the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948.

This created a significant shift in the interpretation of biblical prophecy. Rather than understanding God's promises to Israel as being fulfilled spiritually in Christ and the Church (as was historically understood by many Christians), dispensationalism taught that God's plan involved two distinct peoples: Israel and the Church. The Zionist movement, combined with this theology, thus fueled a political agenda within Christian circles that moved away from the biblical narrative of salvation through Christ alone, uniting both Jew and Gentile into one body.

The Danger of False Doctrines: Deception in Eschatology

This movement, as outlined, represents a **false teaching** that aligns closely with the warning Jesus gave in Matthew 24:24. While false Christs and prophets may take many forms, the essence of their deception remains the same: they draw people away from the true gospel and lead them into error. In this case, many believers have been led to focus on a future rapture and tribulation period, rather than on the biblical call to live in faithfulness to Christ and His Word today.

The apostle Paul warns similarly about the power of deception in the end times. In **2 Thessalonians 2:9-10**, he writes:
"Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved."
This passage speaks of how false teachings, backed by deceptive signs, can lead people astray if they do not hold fast to the truth of the gospel. Dispensationalism and pre-tribulation rapture theology, with their emphasis on physical signs and Israel as the focus, can be seen as part of this deception, drawing believers away from the truth that the promises of God are fulfilled in Christ.

The Security of the Elect

Despite the widespread influence of these false teachings, Matthew 24:24 reassures us that even though false prophets will arise and perform signs and wonders, it is **impossible** for them to completely deceive the elect. The elect, those whom God has chosen, are secure in His hands.

John 10:27-29 emphasizes this security:
"My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never

perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand."
This passage underscores that while deception is powerful, God's sovereign protection over His people is stronger. The elect cannot be ultimately led astray because their faith is grounded in Christ, not in man-made doctrines.

Final Warnings from Scripture

The Bible repeatedly warns us to be on guard against false prophets and teachers. In **2 Peter 2:1**, we are told:
"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 bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction."

In the same way, **1 John 4:1** cautions:
"Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world."
These warnings remind us to test all teachings against Scripture, ensuring that we are not led astray by false interpretations that are rooted in modern theological movements, like dispensationalism, rather than in the timeless truths of the Bible.

Reviewing Theological Framework Known as Dispensationalism

The rise of dispensationalism, the pre-tribulation rapture, and the intertwining of these beliefs with Zionist political theology represent a major theological shift that has affected the understanding of prophecy and the end times among many Christians. These teachings have led to a focus on events that are not supported by scripture in the traditional sense and have contributed to the deception that Jesus warned about in

Matthew 24:24. However, the elect are secure in God's grace and cannot be fully deceived. As believers, it is vital to return to the truth of Scripture, focusing on the finished work of Christ and rejecting doctrines that lead us away from the heart of the Gospel.

Addressing Biblical Usage of Term "Dispensation"

The term "dispensation" appears in the Bible, however, the interpretation and application of this term have led to significant theological debates, particularly concerning the framework known as **dispensationalism**.

Biblical Usage of "Dispensation"

In the New Testament, the Greek word *oikonomia* is translated as "dispensation" in several passages:

- **1 Corinthians 9:17**: "For if I do this thing willingly, I have a reward: but if against my will, a dispensation of the gospel is committed unto me."
- **Ephesians 1:10**: "That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him."
- **Ephesians 3:2**: "If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward."
- **Colossians 1:25**: "Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil the word of God."

In these contexts, "dispensation" refers to a stewardship or management role assigned by God, emphasizing the

administration of responsibilities rather than delineating specific time periods (Character of God).

Development of Dispensationalism

Despite the term's biblical presence, the systematic theology of dispensationalism—dividing history into distinct periods where God interacts differently with humanity—emerged in the 19th century.

John Nelson Darby is often credited with developing this framework, which was later popularized through the Scofield Reference Bible (Wikipedia).

Critics argue that this approach imposes a rigid structure on biblical history that isn't explicitly supported by Scripture, potentially leading to misinterpretations (Semper Reformanda).

Theological Implications

The primary concern is that dispensationalism's emphasis on different divine economies across time can overshadow the consistent and unifying theme of God's grace and the centrality of Christ's sacrifice.

This perspective may lead to an overemphasis on eschatological timelines and a neglect of the timeless aspects of the gospel (Semper Reformanda).

Conclusion

While "dispensation" is a biblical term, its interpretation within dispensationalism represents a specific theological perspective that warrants careful examination.

It's essential to distinguish between the term's scriptural usage and the doctrinal systems developed around it, ensuring that our understanding aligns with the holistic message of the Bible.