

IS THERE A GROUP CALLED “THE VERY ELECT?”

Don Roth

Among the many groups that have come out of the WCG there are some who put an over emphasis on certain scriptures. Each group brings to light the niche scriptures they want to emphasize – an exclusiveness that will set them apart from all the other groups.

One scripture being used in this way is Matt. 24:24. “For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; in so much that if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.”

The point they make is that if you are one of the VERY ELECT you CANNOT BE DECEIVED. They imply that if you are one of them it confirms the certainty that you have NOT BEEN DECEIVED.

This in turn “proves” that you are one of the VERY ELECT – a circular reasoning. Once a person accepts membership into this VERY ELECT group his mind closes to the possibility that he could ever be deceived. This is a powerful glue that then permanently binds the person to that group, and thus the whole group thinks of themselves as the VERY ELECT who CANNOT BE DECEIVED. Of course this includes the leaders who teach it with this goal in mind.

When some do leave the group it is pointed out that they have succumbed to deception and therefore were not part of the VERY ELECT to begin with. (By definition they CANNOT be deceived so could not have been of the VERY ELECT.)

This is a powerful tool used to prevent the comparison of what is being taught with the standard of truth – God’s word – the Bible.

There are questions that need to be answered to grasp the intent of Christ’s statement of Matt. 24:24. It is obvious that a warning is being given here to His elect about coming delusions by Satan. Is this a warning that is applicable only to the end time? Christ gave this same alarm in verses 5 & 11, “For many shall come in my name, saying ‘I am the Christ,’ and shall deceive many.” “And many false prophets shall arise, and shall deceive many.” Each of these warnings represents an intensification by Satan to destroy the elect. His greatest effort comes as his time is running out.

The terms used in Matt. 24 for signs and wonders connotes more than spectacular events such as fire from heaven. It would come as the appearance of Godly character of those pretending to lead the way of truth. Paul’s warning to the Corinthians clearly shows this. II Cor. 11:13-15, “For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ. And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works.”

Paul is telling us not to be surprised at this transformation. Look what Satan does. When a being as evil as he can appear as an angel of light, that is a wonder. This would fall under signs and wonders without the spectacular visual effects; but it would be a spiritual wonder, devastating to God's people. Further, one must question the purpose of warning about a deception if the group addressed cannot be deceived. Let us think outside of the box. If these people cannot be deceived there must be a reason for Christ to couch His words as a warning. Could it be that their preparation and unmovable foundation gives them understanding about what the Father and Christ are accomplishing on this creation? That is the building of a family to go on through eternity; that they know God's laws and understand that those laws emanate from love; that they know the workings of this world are designed by Satan to deceive them – to destroy their opportunity for eternal life; and to know that they are in a fateful battle for their lives.

It becomes very obvious that this is a warning for us to understand His truth, (Thy word is truth,) to be trained and prepared for what is coming. I Peter 5:8-10, "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world. But may the God of all grace, who called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered awhile, perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you." The word PERFECT here is used to mean bringing something to its designed state through repair. ESTABLISH means to set fast by reinforcing, and SETTLING is to place something on a firm foundation.

It is our love of the truth that keeps us from being deceived through our strengthening by God's Holy Spirit in us - by His testing and training of us.

In addition the warning implies there is a potential for failure. The following scriptures confirm this reality. I Cor. 10:12, "Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall." II Tim. 2:14-18, "Remind them of these things, charging them before the Lord not to strive about words to no profit, to the ruin of the hearers. Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. But shun profane and vain babblings, for they will increase to more ungodliness. And their message will spread like cancer. Hymenaeus and Philetus are of this sort, who have strayed concerning the truth, saying that the resurrection is already past; and they OVERTHROW THE FAITH OF SOME." This is a clear statement that some have been lost.

II Peter 3:15-18, ".....and account that the long suffering of our Lord is salvation – as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given him, has written to you, as also in all of his epistles, speaking in them of things in which some things are hard to understand, which those who are untaught and unstable twist to their own destruction, as they do also the rest of the scriptures. You therefore, beloved, since you know these things before hand, beware lest you also fall from your own steadfastness, being led away with the error of the wicked; but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory now and forever. Amen."

This makes it quite clear that FAILURE IS POSSIBLE. Much of the New Testament was written as a guide to keep us from failing. If we are taught that we cannot be deceived because WE ARE THE VERY ELECT, and we believe that to be true, deception is at our door. We then ARE DECEIVED!

It is knowing and believing that we are vulnerable that keeps us vigilant. (Good News of 1939, quoting Mr. Armstrong, "It is the true remnant people of God who keep the COMMANDMENTS that the Devil is wroth with today. It is US Satan is seeking to deceive. He will deceive even the very elect if possible. And it is possible if we are careless, and assume things without careful study of all the sides, and ample PROOF from the Scripture. We must be continually ON OUR GUARD, never trusting any man or even a board or group of men, but God alone through His holy word!")

In addition, did Christ create a special category of elect here? Did he create the VERY ELECT as a group set apart from the regular ELECT? Or was this the creation of the King James translators?

The word for elect is number 1588 in Strong's, and is used 23 times in the New Testament. The only place that the word elect (#1588) is modified by the word "very" (#2532) is in Matt. 24:24. This holds true for the King James translation. The companion scripture of Mark 13:22 uses the same combination of words, but #2532 is here translated "even." If Christ was creating a new category of elect we should be able to find it in other scriptures, but it is no where to be found. It is only used in Matt. 24:24. This should be ample cause for investigation of this anomaly.

The definition of "kai" #2532 from Strong's reads: "Apparently a primary particle, having a copulative and sometimes also a cumulative force; and, also, even, so, then, too, etc.; often used in connection (or composition) with other particles or small words: - and, also, both, but, even, for, if, indeed, likewise, moreover, or, so, that, then, therefore, when, yea, yet."

It is clear that this word is never used as an adjective of a noun, but is used as a copulative. This error is corrected in the New King James translation as well as a preponderance of present day translations. J.P. Green's Interlinear Bible uses the word even instead of very, which is considered to be the norm.

The Concise Oxford Dictionary defines "very" as real, true, genuine. Webster's states "very" as inter alia, actual, real, legitimate. The word "very" emphasizes identity or significance, and brings the noun into special prominence. This definition shows the word to be an adjective, not a copulative. Therefore the correct translation should be "even," and most translations correctly read, "...in so much that if it were possible, they shall deceive even the elect." The understanding that one cannot be deceived is tantamount to being infallible. Christ never established an infallible group of the elect. This was a creation of the King James translators.

As Strong points out, #2532 is either a copulative or a cumulative force. "Kia" can be translated very when it is showing a cumulative force such as in Matt. 10:30, "But the

very hairs of your head are all numbered.” This would be a correct translation because it is used accumulatively.

Mr. Armstrong used twice the term “very elect, who cannot be deceived” – once in The Mark of the Beast, “It is a persecution – a torturing – a martyring of the saints of God – the very elect – who cannot be deceived, Matt. 24:24. And once in The Book of Revelation Unveiled at Last. “Satan’s last persecution and martyrdom against the true begotten sons of God whom he can’t deceive, as he deceived the world as a whole!”

The reason Mr. Armstrong used the term “cannot be deceived” is because the individuals being talked about in both of the above named booklets withstood Satan with a fervor that costs them their lives. A martyred person is one who is killed for his beliefs. Therefore it would be impossible to deceive them. **THEY WERE DEAD!**

The only time that one can be assured that he is free from deception in an absolute sense is after death. Therefore it is imperative that in this life we never leave our guard down and become open to deception.

THEREFORE, LET HIM WHO THINKS HE STANDS TAKE HEED LEST HE FALL!