

Beware the Rise of False Messiahs: From 'Jesus of Siberia' to the Modern Mahdi

A chilling story out of Russia is again reminding the global church of Jesus' warning in Matthew 24:24—"For false messiahs and false prophets will appear and perform great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect."

Sergei Torop, a former traffic officer turned cult leader who claimed to be the reincarnation of Jesus, has been sentenced to 12 years in prison for psychologically and physically harming his followers. Known as "Vissarion," Torop founded the "Church of the Last Testament" in 1991, establishing isolated settlements in Siberia where nearly 300 people lived under his strict rule.

What began as a post-Soviet spiritual search quickly spiraled into a dangerous cult marked by authoritarian control, financial exploitation and psychological manipulation.

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Russian authorities found that Torop and his associates caused serious harm to numerous individuals, including minors, while defrauding the regional government of over \$60,000. Followers were lured by promises of divine truth but instead became enslaved to a man who set himself up as "the living word of God."

Torop's story is not unique. Across history and into the present day, charismatic individuals have claimed messianic or prophetic status, preying on the spiritually hungry and desperate.

In fact, another recent example comes from a two-part video series by Christian author L.A. Marzulli, who interviewed a man claiming to be the Mahdi—a prophesied Islamic savior figure. This modern claimant denies being Jesus but claims to be His messenger, asserting that he carries the “Holy Spirit” of God and should be followed as the divinely appointed “caliph” of our age. He claims to unite all faiths and bring peace, yet his teachings twist Scripture, deny the divinity and resurrection of Christ, and reinterpret prophecy to elevate himself.

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Both Torop and the self-proclaimed Mahdi reflect the same underlying spiritual deception—individuals setting themselves up as saviors, speaking in divine authority and gathering disciples by claiming hidden knowledge and mystical experience. Scripture is clear: “Do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God” (1 John 4:1). Sadly, many are drawn to these figures during times of upheaval, when truth feels elusive and hope scarce.

This is a pattern that has repeated throughout history. From Simon Bar Kokhba to Sabbatai Zevi, false messiahs have appeared in times of crisis, offering counterfeit hope. They promise peace but bring confusion. They claim revelation but contradict the Word of God. And they demand loyalty to themselves rather than pointing people to the true and risen Christ.

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As the church navigates this age of deception, several biblical truths must anchor our discernment:

- **Test every claim by Scripture:** No new revelation should

override the Word of God.

- **Reject anyone who denies Christ's finished work:** Any teaching that diminishes the cross or Jesus' bodily resurrection is heresy.
- **Beware authoritarian control:** True Christian leadership equips others for ministry and always exalts Christ—not the leader.
- **Look for the fruit:** Jesus said, "By their fruit you will recognize them" (Matt. 7:16). Is the outcome of a ministry healing or harm?
- **Guard your heart from spiritual sensationalism:** Desperation can lead to deception if not rooted in truth.

In a time when the world longs for answers, the danger of deception increases. Christians must be watchful, discerning and rooted in the true Gospel of Jesus Christ—not swayed by dreams of unity, signs and wonders or smooth words from self-appointed messengers.

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The sentencing of "Jesus of Siberia" and the emergence of a modern Mahdi are clear reminders that not everyone who claims to speak for God actually does.

Let us be a people grounded in truth, unmoved by false claims and ever watchful for the return of the true Messiah, Jesus Christ, the Son of the Living God.

James Lasher is staff writer for Charisma Media.

Deception of the Masses: The Return of Totalitarian Media Tactics

In the latest episode of Through the Lens on Hope for Our Times, Pastor Curt Reed explores how the Antichrist will rise to global power through deception, flattery and mind control.

Drawing from the book of Daniel and historical parallels to Nazi Germany, Reed warns that “history is repeating itself” as today’s media tactics mirror the propaganda strategies of the Third Reich. “He is going to corrupt by way of flattery,” Reed says, referencing Daniel 11:32. “People love flattery, right? We see that.”

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Reed draws a stark comparison between the Antichrist’s future control and the manipulation seen during global crises and political upheavals.

“The final Antichrist and his cohort, the final false prophet, are going to move in that very direction,” he said. “They will be filled with lies, with falsehood, deceiving people on a global governmental stage.”



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Citing modern programs like DARPA’s Modeling Influence Pathways, Reed explains how governments are already experimenting with AI-driven media control, warning, “They have just found new ways to do the same old things.”

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For those seeking a deeper understanding of what to expect in this breakdown of end-times deception, here are five key takeaways from the video:

- The Antichrist's rise will mirror the propaganda strategies of Nazi Germany.
- Media manipulation will be central to global deception, just as it was under Goebbels.
- Modern AI and government projects like DARPA's MIP are laying the groundwork.
- False teachers and emotional manipulation are already preparing people to be deceived.
- Only those who know the Word of God will be able to discern truth from lies.

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To hear the full teaching and explore the Scriptures Pastor Reed references, watch the full video below.

James Lasher is staff writer for Charisma Media.

**Palantir, PayPal and
Prophecy: Pastor Connects**

Billionaire Peter Thiel to End-Time Signs

As technology, surveillance and global control continue to dominate headlines, many believers are asking whether today's innovations are laying the groundwork for the Antichrist.

In a recent video, Pastor Kap Chatfield addressed growing speculation around tech billionaire Peter Thiel, highlighting eerie parallels between Thiel's work and prophetic warnings found in Scripture.

"Is this tech billionaire Peter Thiel the Antichrist?" Chatfield asked. "A lot of people all over the internet are asking this question, especially after this interview came out where he openly talked about transhumanism and he kind of hinted at the fact that he's not totally against the idea of depopulating the globe."

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Thiel, co-founder of PayPal and Palantir, has made public comments about the Antichrist and the rise of global surveillance. In one interview, Thiel speculated: "The Antichrist will talk about Armageddon all the time. He'll scare people then offer to save them."

Chatfield pointed to 1 Thessalonians 5:3: "For when they say, 'Peace and safety!' then sudden destruction comes upon them..." He suggested that while Thiel appears to be issuing warnings, it's worth asking whether he is also contributing to the very system he seems to fear.

"Could you possibly be creating the very technology that you're warning everybody about?" Chatfield said. "When you say, 'Oh peace and safety, this technology is for your good,'"

and then sudden destruction comes upon everybody when the surveillance state is created.”



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Palantir, the company Thiel co-founded, develops surveillance systems used by governments and law enforcement, including ICE. The company's name is derived from the "Palantír," a mystical seeing orb used by evil forces in The Lord of the Rings. Chatfield questioned the symbolism: "Is it just poetic? Or is there a spirit behind what they're doing that they might not even be aware of?"

He also referenced Daniel 11:37, which says the Antichrist will "regard neither the God of his fathers, nor the desire of women." Thiel was raised Lutheran and is in a same-sex marriage. "He hasn't publicly professed his faith and he's also living a godless lifestyle," Chatfield said. "So is he a guy who doesn't regard the God of his fathers?"

Despite these concerns, Chatfield urged viewers not to attack or condemn Thiel but to pray for him. "People like this are people that Jesus paid a high price for on the cross," he said.

Rather than stir fear, Chatfield said his purpose is to equip believers to respond biblically to the times. He laid out five key biblical responses to help Christians remain spiritually grounded and alert.

5 Biblical Responses to the End Times

1. Be Discerning and Not Deceived

"Stop scrolling more on social media than you're spending time in the word of God and in prayer and in the house of God," Chatfield said. Citing 2 Thessalonians 2:3, he emphasized the

need to stay rooted in Scripture: “Let no one deceive you by any means, for that day will not come unless the falling away comes first and the man of sin is revealed...”



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2. Stay Filled with the Holy Spirit

Chatfield explained that the Holy Spirit is currently restraining the rise of lawlessness in the world. “The Holy Spirit of God, the third person of the Godhead in the church, the people of God is what is restraining the full rise of evil,” he said, referencing 2 Thessalonians 2:7.

3. Live Holy and Ready

“We gotta live holy and ready,” Chatfield urged. Referencing 1 John 3:3 and Matthew 25:6, he added: “Behold, the bridegroom is coming... Go out to meet him.” He warned viewers not to delay obedience or take sin lightly.

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4. Focus on the Mission, Not the Mayhem

Pointing to Luke 19:13, Chatfield encouraged Christians to stay mission-minded: “Do business till I come.” He challenged believers to stay active in the work of the gospel. “Get off your butt. Stop scrolling. Go to church. Go to your job. Make disciples. Preach the gospel. Lay hands on the sick. Cast out devils. Raise the dead.”

5. Look for Jesus, Not Just the Beast

“My challenge to you is to look for Jesus. Don’t look for the beast,” Chatfield said, quoting Titus 2:13: “Looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ.” He reminded viewers that prophecy is

meant to prepare, not to paralyze.

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“He’s not telling us this stuff to scare us,” Chatfield concluded, “but to prepare us.”

James Lasher is staff writer for Charisma Media.

Bishop Alan DiDio: We Are Living in the Days of Noah

At the International Prophetic Summit, evangelist Perry Stone delivered a sobering message about the shaking taking place in churches and ministries, connecting current global unrest to prophetic events leading to Jesus’ return.

Referencing Hebrews 12:25-29, Stone emphasized that God is allowing a shaking “so that that which cannot be shaken will remain standing at the very end.”

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Stone warned that the world is seeing the fulfillment of several end-times signs, each pointing to the nearing end of the age and the return of Jesus Christ. He cited four prophetic events described in Scripture that are converging:

1. Global Preaching of the Gospel

Stone pointed to Matthew 24:14, which states, “And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world

for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.”

“This is not just local,” Stone said. “It’s global. The gospel of the kingdom will be preached around the world globally, and then the end will come.” He emphasized the expansion of evangelism through technology and media, calling it a major prophetic indicator.

2. Worldwide Outpouring of the Holy Spirit

Referencing Joel 2:28-29, Stone quoted the Lord’s promise: “I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh.”

“This is happening actually,” he said. “All flesh indicates that it’s global—it’s every nation of the world. That is part of what is about to happen and is already happening.”

3. The Great Falling Away

Turning to 2 Thessalonians 2:1-3, Stone discussed the prophesied apostasy: “That day shall not come, except there come a falling away first.”

“The primary meaning of ‘apostasia’ is for someone to revolt against something or for there to be a defection from absolute truth,” Stone said. “There will be... a final departure from truth so severe that in Luke 18:8 Jesus makes this statement: ‘When the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on the earth?’”

4. Widespread Offense and Betrayal

Drawing from Matthew 24:10-12, Stone described an atmosphere of offense, betrayal, and lawlessness that will affect believers. “There is this season of betrayal and offense that becomes so great around the earth that it affects people spiritually,” he said.

He also warned of widespread deception, noting, “Deception is mentioned four times in Matthew 24. It means to roam away from—to slowly begin to step away from truth, the presence of God, and the Word.”

Stone argued that many believers are not abandoning their

faith in God but are losing faith in people who claim to represent Him. "Most people who were ever offended in a church were never offended by God nor were they offended by the Holy Spirit nor were they offended by Jesus," he said. "But they were offended by somebody in the church acting a certain way toward them."

He also emphasized the danger of invisible sins in the church: "Sins of the spirit are just as negative and bad as sins of the flesh. It's not what you're eating—it's what's eating you."

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As false prophets rise and deception grows, Stone encouraged believers to remain rooted in biblical truth. "Everybody that wants to be a prophet—you better understand something: no prophet in the Old Testament was ever appreciated," he said. "Sometimes those who really carry a word are not going to be popular."

Stone reminded listeners that knowledge will increase in the last days, fulfilling Daniel's prophecy: "God has reserved the revelation of many prophetic mysteries for the time of the end, a time when knowledge shall increase."

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As deception spreads and truth is under assault, biblical literacy and spiritual discernment are no longer optional, they are essential.

James Lasher is staff writer for Charisma Media.

Are Fallen Angels Behind Today's Technological Explosion?

A recent event in Israel has caught the attention of the world, again. A red heifer was burned in Samaria, an act that, while not official temple protocol, echoes the ancient purification rites detailed in Scripture and points toward significant prophetic implications.

Though the heifer used was disqualified from being the actual one used for future temple purification due to minor imperfections, the ceremony itself was carried out according to the biblical guidelines found in Numbers 19. In this passage, God commands that a red heifer “without blemish and upon which never came a yoke” be offered, with its ashes used to ritually cleanse and prepare the priests for service in the temple.

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This practice run is not just symbolic, it reflects growing momentum within Israel to reestablish the conditions necessary for the restoration of temple worship.

Since 2022, five red heifers have been brought from Texas to Israel. The recent burning, conducted under rabbinic supervision, is seen by many as a tangible step toward reviving the ancient purification system required for priestly service in a future third temple.



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Why does this matter to Christians? Because key end-times prophecies point to the existence of a third temple during the tribulation period. Books such as Daniel, Matthew and 2 Thessalonians describe a time when this temple will be desecrated by the Antichrist, a pivotal moment in prophetic chronology. But for such a temple to operate, ritual purity must first be reestablished, which hinges on the availability of red heifer ashes.

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This development underscores the urgency for believers to remain spiritually alert. The Bible repeatedly calls followers of Jesus to watch and be ready, not as passive spectators, but as discerning participants in God's unfolding plan. In a world increasingly shaped by confusion and spiritual deception, anchoring ourselves in Scripture, prayer and fasting is more crucial than ever.

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As prophetic signs continue to emerge in real time, one truth stands firm: God's word is being fulfilled, and the return of the Lord draws nearer.

James Lasher is staff writer for Charisma Media.

Could Iran Become a Beacon of Christianity in the Last Days?

In a recent episode of The Pulse, Pastor Troy Brewer shared a powerful prophetic perspective on the devastating Texas floods, declaring the event to be “a word for the United States of America.” Brewer emphasized the timing of the flooding on July 4 as a divine signal, saying, “Whenever this thing happened on July the 4th... this is not just about Texas. This is a word for all the United States of America.” He linked the disaster to the nation’s founding, pointing out that 1776 divided by two is 888, the numerical value of the name Jesus in Greek.

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Brewer also highlighted the significance of the location most affected: Kerrville, Texas—home to a 77-foot-7-inch sculpture known as The Empty Cross.

“This is the place where the heavens cross,” he said, referring to the intersection of the October 2023 and April 2024 solar eclipses over that region. “Our hope is in Jesus. Our hope is in the resurrection power of the Lord Jesus Christ.” He further noted the prophetic meaning of the flood victims’ rescue count: “Do you know that there are 888 people rescued out of that river?... 888 is the number of Jesus.”

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current issues, Holy Spirit news, Christian teachings, Charisma videos & more!

Beyond the symbolism, Brewer warned of a spiritual war being waged against the nation's children. "The wolf is after our children. The woke demonic agenda to sexualize our children and to sweep them away is something that we see happening on a daily basis." He believes this tragedy, though heartbreaking, may serve as a catalyst for national revival.

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To watch the full podcast and hear the complete prophetic word, see the video above.

James Lasher is staff writer for Charisma Media.