

Luke 17:23

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And they shall say to you, See here; or, see there: go not after them, nor follow them.

Analysis

And they shall say to you, See here; or, see there: go not after them, nor follow them. Jesus warns against deception during the disciples' longing for His return. The phrase **they shall say to you** (ἐροῦσιν ὑμῖν, erousin hymin) identifies false teachers who will claim special knowledge of Christ's location. **See here; or, see there** (ἰδοὺ ἐκεῖ, ἰδοὺ ὧδε, idou ekei, idou hōde—"Behold there! Behold here!") mimics urgent announcements of Messiah's secret appearance.

Jesus' command is unambiguous: **go not after them, nor follow them** (μὴ ἀπέλθῃτε μηδὲ διώξῃτε, mē apelthēte mēde diōxēte—"do not go away nor pursue"). The double prohibition emphasizes complete avoidance—don't even investigate such claims. Why? Because Christ's return won't be secret or localized (v. 24)—it will be unmistakable, visible to all simultaneously, like lightning illuminating the entire sky.

This warning addresses persistent church temptation: every generation produces false christs and false prophets (Matthew 24:23-26, Mark 13:21-23). From first-century Zealot messiahs to modern cult leaders claiming to be Christ returned, the pattern continues. Jesus' warning protects against wasting energy chasing deceptions. True disciples don't need insider information about secret appearances—Christ's return will be public, glorious, and unmistakable (Acts 1:11, Revelation 1:7). Until then, we wait patiently, living faithfully, refusing to be distracted by sensational claims.

Historical Context

First-century Palestine saw multiple messianic pretenders: Judas the Galilean (Acts 5:37), Theudas (Acts 5:36), the Egyptian false prophet (Acts 21:38), and others who led followers into wilderness expecting divine deliverance. After Jerusalem's destruction (AD 70), messianic expectations intensified, producing Bar Kokhba's revolt (AD 132-135). Early Christians faced constant pressure from both Jewish messianic movements and Roman emperor worship.

Church history confirms Jesus' warning's ongoing relevance: Montanus (2nd century) claimed new revelation about the parousia; medieval movements followed date-setters and visionaries; modern examples include William Miller (1844), Charles Taze Russell (Jehovah's Witnesses), David Koresh (Branch Davidians), and countless others who claimed special knowledge of Christ's whereabouts or return date. Jesus' warning stands: ignore such claims. The Son of Man's coming will be as obvious as lightning—no secret locations, no insider knowledge required. Meanwhile, be faithful where you are (Luke 12:35-48).

Related Passages

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. How can believers discern between legitimate teaching about Christ's return and sensational deception?
2. What makes Christians vulnerable to false teachers claiming special revelation about end-times events?
3. How should Jesus' warning against chasing reports of secret appearances shape your response to contemporary prophecy claims?

Interlinear Text

καὶ	ἐροῦσιν	ὕμῖν	Ἴδοὺ	ᾧδε·	ἢ	Ἴδοὺ	ἐκεῖ	μὴ
And	they shall say	to you	See	here	or	See	there	not
G2532	G2046	G5213	G2400	G5602	G2228	G2400	G1563	G3361

ἀπέλθῃτε	μηδὲ	διώξῃτε
after	them nor	follow
G565	G3366	G1377

Additional Cross-References

Luke 21:8 (Parallel theme): And he said, Take heed that ye be not deceived: for many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and the time draweth near: go ye not therefore after them.

Luke 17:21 (Parallel theme): Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you.