

Mark 13:21

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And then if any man shall say to you, Lo, here is Christ; or, lo, he is there; believe him not:

Analysis

And then if any man shall say to you, Lo, here is Christ; or, lo, he is there; believe him not—Jesus returns to the deception theme (vv. 5-6). The Greek ide (ἴδε, 'lo/behold') draws urgent attention; hōde (ὧδε, 'here') and ekei (ἐκεῖ, 'there') indicate localized messianic claims. False teachers will direct people to specific locations or individuals claiming Christ's presence. Jesus commands: mē pisteuete (μὴ πιστεύετε, 'do not believe')—absolute prohibition.

Why? Christ's return will be unmistakable, universal, visible to all (v. 26; Revelation 1:7—'every eye shall see him'). No one will need to point Him out; His appearing will be self-evident as lightning (Matthew 24:27). Any localized, secretive, cult-like claim ('Christ is in the desert,' 'Christ is in the inner chambers') is false. This guards against deception: when Christ returns, you'll know—no announcement needed. False teachers exploit credulity, claiming secret knowledge or special revelation. Christians must test claims against Scripture (Acts 17:11; 1 John 4:1).

Historical Context

AD 66-70 witnessed messianic pretenders claiming to deliver Israel from Rome. Josephus names several. After AD 70, various figures claimed messianic authority: Simon bar Kokhba (AD 132, led revolt, proclaimed Messiah by Rabbi Akiva, failed); medieval figures like Sabbatai Zevi (17th century); modern cult leaders (Jim Jones, David Koresh, Sun Myung Moon) claiming Christ returned in them. Each fulfilled

Jesus' warning. Christian history includes movements claiming Christ returned secretly (Jehovah's Witnesses claim 1914 invisible return; some Adventist groups claim secret rapture occurred). All contradict Jesus' clear teaching: His return will be public, visible, unmistakable. Vigilance against false christs remains necessary. Test claims by Scripture; reject secret, localized messianic assertions.

Related Passages

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Study Questions

1. Why does Jesus emphasize His return will be unmistakable rather than localized, secretive, or requiring announcement?
2. What makes Christians vulnerable to false christs' deception—and how does Scripture knowledge protect against it?
3. How do modern cults and movements fulfill Jesus' warning about localized messianic claims—and what's the proper Christian response?

Interlinear Text

καὶ	τότε	έάν	τις	ὑμῖν	εἴπῃ	Ίδού,	ὅδε	ό	Χριστός
And	then	if	any man	to you	shall say	Lo	here	G3588	is Christ
G2532	G5119	G1437	G5100	G5213	G2036	G2400	G5602		G5547
ἢ	Ίδού,	ἐκεῖ	μὴ	πιστεύσητε					
or	Lo	he is there	him not	believe					
G2228	G2400	G1563	G3361	G4100					

Additional Cross-References

Luke 21:8 (References Christ): 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.

Matthew 24:5 (References Christ): For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many.

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