

Mark 13:22

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For false Christs and false prophets shall rise, and shall shew signs and wonders, to seduce, if it were possible, even the elect.

Analysis

False Christs and false prophets shall rise, and shall shew signs and wonders—the Greek *pseudochristoi* (ψευδόχριστοι, 'false messiahs') and *pseudoprophētai* (ψευδοπροφῆται, 'false prophets') describe deceivers claiming divine authority. They will perform *sēmeia kai terata* (σημεῖα καὶ τέρατα, 'signs and wonders')—supernatural phenomena authenticating their claims. Satan empowers false signs (2 Thessalonians 2:9; Revelation 13:13-14).

To seduce, if it were possible, even the elect—the purpose is deception. The Greek *pros to apoplanān* (πρὸς τὸ ἀποπλανᾶν, 'toward the deceiving') indicates intentional seduction. **If it were possible, even the elect** (Greek *ei dynaton kai tous eklektous, εἰ δυνατὸν καὶ τοὺς ἐκλεκτούς*)—the counterfactual conditional implies impossibility. The elect cannot be ultimately deceived because God preserves them (John 10:28-29). Yet the attempt is so convincing that only divine preservation prevents success. This warns against trusting miraculous signs as authentication—truth rests on Scripture conformity, not supernatural phenomena.

Historical Context

Early church faced false teachers performing signs: Simon Magus (Acts 8:9-24) amazed people with sorcery; Bar-Jesus resisted Paul (Acts 13:6-12); sons of Sceva attempted exorcisms (Acts 19:13-16). Church history records ongoing deception: medieval wonder-workers, charismatic excess, modern faith healers, New Age

channelers. Not all supernatural phenomena are divine—Satan counterfeits (Exodus 7:11, Egyptian magicians; Matthew 7:22-23, false workers of miracles). Discernment requires:

1. conformity to Scripture (Isaiah 8:20)
2. proper Christology (1 John 4:1-3)
3. godly fruit (Matthew 7:16)
4. Spirit's witness.

The doctrine of elect's perseverance assures believers: though deception is sophisticated, God preserves His own. False signs may deceive temporarily, but genuine faith endures.

Related Passages

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. How can false teachers perform genuine supernatural signs—and why aren't miracles sufficient authentication of truth?
2. What does 'if it were possible, even the elect' teach about God's preservation of believers despite sophisticated deception?
3. How should Christians evaluate miraculous claims—what criteria distinguish divine signs from false wonders?

Interlinear Text

ἐγερθήσονται γὰρ ψευδόχριστοι καὶ ψευδοπροφῆται καὶ
shall rise For false Christs and false prophets and
G1453 G1063 G5580 G2532 G5578 G2532

δώσουσιν σημεῖα καὶ τέρατα πρὸς τὸ ἀποπλανᾶν εἰ
shall shew signs and wonders to seduce if
G1325 G4592 G2532 G5059 G4314 G3588 G635 G1487

δυνατόν καὶ τοὺς ἐκλεκτούς
it were possible and the elect
G1415 G2532 G3588 G1588

Additional Cross-References

Matthew 24:24 (Resurrection): 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.

Mark 13:6 (References Christ): For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many.

1 John 2:26 (Parallel theme): These things have I written unto you concerning them that seduce you.

Matthew 7:15 (Prophecy): Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.

Revelation 17:8 (Parallel theme): The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition: and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is.

1 John 2:19 (Parallel theme): They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us.

John 4:48 (Parallel theme): Then said Jesus unto him, Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe.

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