

Mark 13:5

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And Jesus answering them began to say, Take heed lest any man deceive you:

Analysis

Take heed lest any man deceive you (Greek *blepete mē tis hymas planēsē*, βλέπετε μή τις ὑμᾶς πλανήσῃ)—Jesus' first warning concerns deception. The verb *planaō* (πλανάω) means lead astray, seduce into error. Deception is Satan's primary weapon (John 8:44; Revelation 12:9). Jesus prioritized warning against false teaching above warning about persecution or tribulation, indicating doctrinal error's danger.

This command brackets the discourse (repeated in v. 9, 23, 33)—constant vigilance required. Christians face relentless pressure toward false doctrine. The passive voice 'be deceived' warns deception can happen unintentionally—hence need for active watchfulness. The remedy is biblical discernment (Acts 17:11), sound doctrine (Titus 2:1), and Spirit-guided wisdom (1 John 4:1-6). Deception thrives when Christians neglect Scripture, substitute feelings for truth, or embrace culture's values uncritically.

Historical Context

First-century church battled numerous deceptions: Judaizers demanded circumcision (Galatians), Gnostics denied Christ's incarnation (1 John 4:2-3), false apostles promoted 'another gospel' (2 Corinthians 11:4), antinomians abused grace (Jude 4). Jesus foresaw this. AD 66-70 saw multiple messianic pretenders (Josephus records several), fulfilling verse 6. Church history witnesses recurring heresies—Arianism, Pelagianism, medieval errors, modern liberalism. Each generation faces

deception tailored to its culture. Today's deceptions include prosperity gospel, therapeutic moralism, universalism, relativism. The warning remains urgent: 'Take heed lest any man deceive you.'

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

1 John 4:8 — God is love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. Why does Jesus prioritize warning against deception before warning about wars, persecution, or tribulation?
2. What makes deception particularly dangerous compared to external threats like persecution?
3. How can Christians today cultivate discernment to resist subtle doctrinal error and cultural accommodation?

Interlinear Text

ὁ	δὲ	Ἰησοῦς	ἀποκριθεὶς	αὐτοῖς	ἤρξατο	λέγειν
G3588	And	Jesus	answering	them	began	to say
	G1161	G2424	G611	G846	G756	G3004

Βλέπετε	μή	τις	ὑμᾶς	πλανήσῃ·
Take heed	lest	any	you	man deceive
G991	G3361	G5100	G5209	G4105

Additional Cross-References

Colossians 2:8 (Parallel theme): Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.

Ephesians 5:6 (Parallel theme): Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience.

Jeremiah 29:8 (Parallel theme): For thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Let not your prophets and your diviners, that be in the midst of you, deceive you, neither hearken to your dreams which ye cause to be dreamed.

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