

Mark 13:6

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many.

Analysis

Many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many.

The false messiahs claim Jesus' authority ('in my name') while asserting their own messianic status ('I am Christ'—Greek *egō eimi ho Christos*, ἐγώ εἰμι ὁ Χριστός). This describes usurpers who invoke Christianity while distorting it. They don't deny Jesus outright but redefine Him, claiming to reveal 'deeper truth' or 'new revelation.'

History fulfilled this literally and spiritually. AD 66-70 saw Jewish messianic pretenders (Josephus names Theudas, Egyptian false prophet, others). Spiritually, false teachers throughout church history claimed Christ's name while teaching heresy—Gnostics, Arians, medieval mystics claiming private revelations, modern cults (Mormonism, Jehovah's Witnesses), prosperity preachers, progressive theologians who redefine Christ according to culture. The warning: popularity ('deceive many') doesn't validate truth. Satan disguises himself as angel of light (2 Corinthians 11:14); false teachers appear as Christ's ministers.

Historical Context

Between Jesus' prophecy and AD 70, multiple messianic pretenders arose. Josephus recorded Theudas (ca. AD 45), who promised to part the Jordan; an Egyptian (ca. AD 55) who claimed he'd collapse Jerusalem's walls; others who led followers into wilderness expecting deliverance. All failed. Spiritually, Simon Magus (Acts 8:9-24) claimed divine power. Early Gnostics taught secret knowledge

beyond apostolic gospel. Medieval period saw flagellants, millennial movements, individuals claiming messianic authority. Reformation confronted papal claims to Christ's vicar. Modern era sees cults, charismatic excess, progressive Christianity—all invoking Jesus' name while distorting His gospel. The pattern continues: 'many shall come... and shall deceive many.'

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Study Questions

1. How can false teachers claim to come 'in Christ's name' while teaching heresy—and why is this more dangerous than open opposition?
2. What criteria distinguish true teachers from false ones who invoke Jesus' authority?
3. Why does Jesus warn that false teachers will 'deceive many'—what makes popularity or large followings unreliable indicators of truth?

Interlinear Text

πολλοὺς	γὰρ	έλεύσονται	ἐπὶ	τῷ	ὄνόματί	μου	λέγοντες
many	For	shall come	in	G3588	name	my	saying
G4183	G1063	G2064	G1909		G3686	G3450	G3004

ὅτι	Ἐγώ	εἰμι	καὶ	πολλοὺς	πλανήσουσιν
G3754	I	am	Christ and	many	shall deceive
G1473	G1510	G2532	G4183	G4105	

Additional Cross-References

Mark 13:22 (References Christ): For false Christs and false prophets shall rise, and shall shew signs and wonders, to seduce, if it were possible, even the elect.

