

Matthew 24:11

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many.

Analysis

And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many (καὶ πολλοὶ ψευδοπροφῆται ἐγερθήσονται καὶ πλανήσουσιν πολλούς)—After false messiahs (v. 5), Jesus warns of ψευδοπροφῆται (pseudoprophētai)—literally "lying prophets." The verb ἐγείρω (egeirō, "rise up") suggests they emerge from within the community, not invade from outside. The repetition of "many... many" hammers home the scope: widespread deception affecting large numbers.

False prophets are more dangerous than false messiahs because they speak with apparent spiritual authority while subtly undermining truth. Deuteronomy 13 warns that false prophets may even perform signs and wonders. 2 Peter 2:1 specifies they "secretly bring in destructive heresies." The antidote? Test all prophecy against Scripture (1 John 4:1, Acts 17:11) and examine fruit (Matthew 7:15-20).

Historical Context

The apostolic era saw numerous false teachers: Hymenaeus and Philetus taught resurrection had already occurred (2 Timothy 2:17-18), the Judaizers demanded circumcision (Galatians), early Gnostics denied Christ's incarnation (1 John 4:2-3). Before AD 70, Josephus records multiple "prophets" promising deliverance who led thousands to destruction. Church councils (Nicaea, Chalcedon, etc.) convened specifically to combat false teaching that had deceived many.

Related Passages

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. What characteristics distinguish false prophets from genuine teachers who occasionally make mistakes?
2. How can believers balance necessary discernment with the equally necessary grace toward those who err unintentionally?
3. Why are false prophets particularly effective at deceiving during times of crisis and persecution?

Interlinear Text

καὶ πολλούς· ψευδοπροφῆται ἐγερθήσονται καὶ

And many false prophets shall rise And
G2532 G4183 G5578 G1453 G2532

πλανήσουσιν πολλούς·

shall deceive many
G4105 G4183

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.

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

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

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

1 Timothy 4:1 (Parallel theme): Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils;

Revelation 19:20 (Prophecy): And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone.

2 Peter 2:1 (Prophecy): But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction.

1 John 4:1 (Prophecy): Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.

1 John 2:18 (Parallel theme): Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time.

Jude 1:4 (Parallel theme): For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.