



The Good Word

*"Exalting the Savior, Equipping the Saints,
Evangelizing the Sinner"*

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Jesus Warned That in the Last Days - Counterfeit Christs

"Jesus answered and said to them: 'Take heed that no one deceives you. For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will deceive many.'"
(Matthew 24:4, 5, NKJV).

Do not be deceived

Shortly before His crucifixion, Jesus preached His great prophetic discourse regarding profound events that would occur at the end of the age just prior to His Second Coming. Among those events, He said, would be false prophets and false christs. He warned, "Then if anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Christ!' or, 'There!' do not believe it. For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect. See, I have told you beforehand. Therefore, if they say to you, 'Look, He is in the desert!' do not go out; or 'Look, He is in the inner rooms!' do not believe it' " (Matthew 24:23-26, NKJV).

Jesus emphasized that these false christs will perform great signs and miracles and deceive many. Many Christians think that as long as they believe in Jesus, they will be shielded from the deceptions of the last days. However, these will not be crude deceptions that will be easy to identify. Jesus says that the deceptions of these false christs are so carefully planned and so skillfully carried out, that even God's chosen ones would be deceived—if that were possible. And the only reason it is not possible is if we keep our focus on the real Jesus through study of His Word and through prayer.

Unfortunately, many will be deceived into following the wrong Jesus. The apostle Paul wrote, "I am afraid that just as Eve was deceived by the serpent's cunning, your minds may somehow be led astray from your sincere and pure devotion to Christ. For if someone comes to you and preaches a Jesus other than the Jesus we preached, or if you receive a different spirit from the one you received, or a different gospel from the one you accepted, you put up with it easily enough" (2 Corinthians 11:3, 4, NIV). The apostle is writing to the Christians of the early church. He warns them concerning false apostles who were preaching about a Jesus who is not the real Jesus of the Bible—a fictitious Jesus, a fabrication of the corrupt imaginations and erroneous thinking of those who want to deceive God's people. The gospel associated with this false christ is a different gospel; it is not the gospel recorded in the Bible and preached by the true apostles. Further, a counterfeit spirit accompanies this false gospel—not the Holy Spirit.

Tragically, those who are deceived in the last days by these false christs will sincerely regard themselves to be genuine believers, actively doing the work of Christ. They will even prophesy in the name of Jesus, cast out demons in the name of Jesus, and work miracles in His name. But they are serving a false Christ—not the real Jesus. "Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?' Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers'" (Matthew 7:22, 23, NIV). The followers of the false Christ disregard the commandments of Jesus. In contrast, Jesus declares, "Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me. He who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love him and show myself to him" (John 14:21, NIV).

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