

Watch Out That You Are Not Deceived

Matthew 24:4-6; Mark 13:5-7; Luke 21:8-9

Late in the afternoon on Wednesday the thirteenth of Nisan

DIG: Why would Yeshua warn His talmidim to be on guard and not be deceived? What did He say must happen before **the end** would **come**?

REFLECT: The underlying principle of all the Adversary's tactics is deception. He is a liar, a crafty and clever camouflager. What is your defense against his schemes (see Galatians 5:13-26)?

Before **Messiah** began to answer **all three questions** (see **Jh - The Three Questions**), He decided first to give some general characteristics of **the Church Age** (Matthew 24:3b), none of which meant **the end** had begun. Yeshua wanted to make sure that His apostles would not jump to conclusions and misinterpret what He was saying. So He chose to tell them of things that would *not* mean **the end** had begun. **There were two general characteristics in the near historical prophecy of the Church Age.**¹³²³

The first general characteristic would be the rise of false messiahs. Jesus replied: **Watch out** (Greek: *blepo*), literally *see to it*, **that you are not deceived. For many will come in My name, claiming, "I am He," or "I am the Messiah," and, "The time is near." They will deceive many, but do not follow them** (Matthew 24:4-5; Mark 13:6; Luke 21:8). Historically, Yeshua of Nazareth was the first person that claimed to be **the Messiah**. Before Him, there were some minor political rebels but none that unequivocally claimed to be **the messianic Deliverer**. After Him, however, there were many more. From **Christ's** time until the 1850s there were imposters, from Simon Bar Kokhba to Shabbetai Tzvi and Jacob Frank, who have claimed to be **the Meshiach**. Unfortunately, **many** have been **deceived**. But the mere existence of these false messiahs did not mean **the end** had **come**. Since **ADONAI** promised Isra'el a coming **Messiah**, He would also give 354 prophecies on how to recognize Him (see **Mu - 354 Prophecies Fulfilled in Jesus Christ**).

*There is a great counterfeiter who adapts himself to every culture, even deceiving true believers at times. He doesn't charge on the scene clothed in red and wearing a hideous mask, but charms his way as an angel of light (Second Corinthians 11:14). That's how Satan operates.*¹³²⁴

The second general characteristic of the Church Age would be local wars. The Lord stated that when the Twelve would continually hear of local wars and rumors of wars, but they didn't need to be frightened because these things would *not* be signs of the end of the age. No local war, even in the Near East, will point to the end.

In conclusion, Jesus said that both false messiahs and local wars and rumors of wars must happen first, but the end is still to come (Matthew 24:6; Mark 13:7; Luke 21:9). In other words, the rise of false messiahs and long periods of local wars will come first. But neither of these things would be signs that the end had come.