



[Matthew 24:4-5](#)

- (4) And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you.
(5) For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many.

[Mark 13:5-6](#)

- (5) And Jesus answering them began to say, Take heed lest any man deceive you:
(6) For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many.

[Luke 21:8](#)

- (8) And he said, Take heed that ye be not deceived: for many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and the time draweth near: go ye not therefore after them.

King James Version

First, notice to whom He is speaking, His disciples. They had come to Him, asking Him to tell them the sign of His coming and of the end of the age (verse 3), and He proceeded to do just that. His remarks are pointedly toward His disciples, that is, He presents these signs from their perspective. In the first seal ([Revelation 6:2](#)), He is concerned that they, specifically, not allow themselves to be deceived because the effort to deceive the elect would be potent.

Second, the number of deceivers would be multitudinous: "many will come." This should be seen in contrast to the frequent description of His own disciples as "few," a "little flock," "a remnant," "not many," etc. The true disciples of Christ could be overwhelmed by the seemingly inexhaustible supply of [false teachers](#), liars, and spiritual cheats that would be thrown against them.

Third, these frauds and double agents would come in His name, that is, appearing to bear His authority. In particular, the name of "Christ" would be exploited as cover for

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their nefarious trickery, and by this ruse, great numbers of people would be deluded. The phrase, "saying, I am the Christ," should not be understood, as the New King James Version has punctuated it, to mean that many would come claiming to be the Messiah. No, they would come claiming that Jesus is the Messiah—a truth—and thereby gain people's trust. From that point forward, deception through doctrinal change, both major and minor, provides the means of deception. As the anonymous maxim puts it, "The nearer a lie to truth the more deceitful it is."

If not earlier, this first seal must have been opened very soon after the apostle John wrote the book of Revelation. Once the last of the original apostles was dead, the false "Christian" church began its swift and steady rise to dominance, eventually collaborating with Emperor Constantine (reigned AD 306-337) to become a major influence in the Roman Empire. This church, with its pompous ecclesiastical politics and Christianized pagan practices, looked nothing like the church the New Testament describes. The relatively tiny true church, often persecuted for its "primitive" beliefs and demeaned for its "Jewish" practices, was forced to flee to the relative safety of frontier lands and wilderness areas where its members could practice their biblical beliefs more freely.

It was not until the age of the Protestant Reformation, when the power of the Catholic Church began to wane, that Sabbath-keepers could once again express their beliefs openly. Even so, Protestantism—its various denominations merely rebellious daughters of the Universal Church—has not been entirely sympathetic to the law-keeping elect. Even today, a spirit of antagonism and condescension exists within Protestant circles for anyone who really believes and practices the doctrines of Jesus and the first-century church.

Religious deception, false gospels, and unchristian philosophies have continued unabated to our own day. Mainstream Christian churches continue to teach an antinomian gospel about the person of Jesus rather than proclaiming the true gospel of the Kingdom of God (Mark 1:15). They still lead their members to worship an unbiblical triune God, constructed out of a hodge-podge of Jewish mysticism, Gnostic Christian belief, and Greek philosophy a few centuries after the apostle John completed the New Testament canon with the book of Revelation. They continue to refuse to keep the biblical weekly Sabbath made for man (Mark 2:27), as well as the annual holy days that reveal God's plan for mankind. The churches also teach the pernicious doctrines of the immortality of the soul and eternal security, leading adherents to believe they already have eternal life and their place in "heaven" is guaranteed.

Another modern false gospel—endorsed by many, especially those who embrace New Age beliefs—is the "tolerant" idea that there are many roads to salvation. This notion

The Berean: Daily Verse and Commentary for Matthew 24:4-5 (<http://www.theberean.org>) posits that all religions are equal, and each is effective in bringing a person to eternal life. In other words, Buddhists, Hindus, Muslims, Jews, and Christians will receive the same salvation and afterlife despite their markedly different beliefs and practices. This also means that there is no reason for a person to convert to another religion, so each [faith](#) should accept and acknowledge the others in a spirit of goodwill and ecumenism. Of course, this flies in the face of [Acts 4:10-12](#), in which Peter asserts that only by the name of [Jesus Christ](#) is salvation possible.

— Richard T. Ritenbaugh

To learn more, see:

[The Four Horsemen \(Part Two\): The White Horse](#)

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