

False Messiahs

Jesus said to them: “Watch out that no one deceives you. Many will come in my name, claiming, ‘I am he,’ and will deceive many” (Mark 13:5-6).

Scripture: Mark 13:1-13

Song: “How Firm a Foundation”

In the fifth century AD, a man named Moses who claimed to be the Messiah convinced many Jews who lived on the island of Crete that he would lead them back to the promised land. They gathered at the edge of the sea, and this Moses commanded the seas to part, imitating Moses from Genesis. When the waters didn't part, he told his followers to have faith and walk into the sea. Most were carrying their possessions since they believed they were leaving Crete. Moses of Crete was not the Messiah. The seas did not obey him, and many of his followers drowned.

When Jesus' followers asked about the time of the destruction of the temple, He didn't give them a date. Instead, He warned them to be on their guard against deception. He warned them about false messiahs, rumors of war, natural disasters, and strife within families.

Jesus doesn't want us to be deceived and distracted. He calls us to focus on getting the gospel out. Reading God's Word each day keeps the truth of the gospel in our minds and alerts us when we come across falsehood.

Father, help me faithfully focus on and share the true gospel. In Jesus' name, amen.

June 1–5. **Katie Robles** works in a school for children with disabilities. She lives in Delaware with her husband and four sons.

Ready for Jesus

“Be on guard! Be alert! You do not know when that time will come” (Mark 13:33).

Scripture: Mark 13:28-37

Song: “My Testimony”

On a mission trip during my college years, the country we visited would not allow us to share the gospel unless the person we were talking to brought it up. We started each day with prayer and kept praying throughout the day, asking God to steer our conversations toward Him. We were alert and watchful, always ready when opportunities popped up to talk about Jesus.

Many times the opportunity was subtle. Once when someone asked about my favorite part of a movie, I said I liked how the main character showed sacrificial love just like Jesus did. Or if we were talking about holiday traditions, I explained that Christmas was a celebration of Christ’s birth, not Santa’s generosity. But a few times the opportunity was perfect, like the day I was playing a game with a new friend, and in the middle of it, she looked up and said, “Tell me about Jesus.”

Jesus told His followers that He would return one day and that they should be ready. We’ve been given a job to do while we wait for Him. When we pray and invite God to enter our conversations and provide opportunities to share the gospel, He does just that. He tells us to be watchful for those opportunities because they’re easy to miss.

Father, thank You that Jesus is coming back one day. Help me to be found ready. Help me see the opportunities I have today to share the gospel. In Jesus’ name, amen.

A Lost King

God is my King from long ago; he brings salvation on the earth (Psalm 74: 12).

Scripture: Psalm 74:10-23

Song: “Jesus Shall Reign Where’er the Sun”

In the 1800s, doubt was cast on the accuracy of the Bible because Isaiah 20:1 mentions King Sargon of Assyria. After 30 years of digging in the Middle East, archaeologists had yet to find evidence that King Sargon existed. Some argued that the Bible couldn’t be true because it wasn’t historically accurate. But then in 1843, archaeologists discovered the Assyrian city of Dur-Sharrukin, which included a magnificent palace with bricks that bore the name of King Sargon. There were even inscriptions celebrating Sargon’s victory over the city of Ashdod, also mentioned in Isaiah 20. Dur-Sharrukin was abandoned after King Sargon’s death.

Psalm 74 calls on God to defend himself against mockers and those who revile His name. The psalmist lists amazing ways God has shown His power through creation, and he wonders why God doesn’t strike down His enemies. Throughout history, men have mocked God and His Word, but God defends himself on His terms and according to His timetable.

The Bible shows us that God does not forget His people or His promises to them. One day every knee will bow and every tongue confess that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God (Philippians 2:9-11). Let’s continue to praise God for the things we have seen Him do—and lay at His feet our unanswered questions.

Father, I praise You because You are powerful and faithful. Please show the world that Your Word is true. In Jesus’ name, amen.

Rise and Fall

“You said, ‘I am forever—the eternal queen!’ But you did not consider these things or reflect on what might happen” (Isaiah 47:7).

Scripture: Isaiah 47:1-9

Song: “Humble King”

Babylon’s King Nebuchadnezzar had good reason to be arrogant. He was the supreme ruler of a mighty empire that defeated many nations and their multiple gods. But God reminded Nebuchadnezzar over and over again that He was God and Nebuchadnezzar was not. First, God sent the king a dream that only Daniel, God’s servant, could interpret. Then when Nebuchadnezzar ordered his subjects to worship a golden statue, God protected Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in the fiery furnace, proving that God was mightier than Babylon’s gods. Later on, Nebuchadnezzar was still so full of pride that God caused him to be driven away from people and live in the wilderness for seven years (Daniel 3–4).

Isaiah prophesied about the fall of Babylon about 150 years before it happened (Isaiah 13). Through Isaiah, God told His people exactly what would come to pass: God would use Babylon to discipline His people, allowing Nebuchadnezzar to carry them into exile, but then arrogant Babylon itself would be conquered. God made it clear to His people and to the foreign King Nebuchadnezzar that God is the one raising up and deposing kings.

God is not impressed by human power, wealth, or intelligence. He is pleased by a humble heart that acknowledges His sovereignty. He is Lord over all, and we can praise Him for that!

Father, You are my Redeemer, the King of kings. I will stay on Your path so the attitude of my heart will heart be pleasing to You today. In Jesus’ name, amen.

It's Coming

“Your wisdom and knowledge mislead you when you say to yourself, ‘I am, and there is none besides me’” (Isaiah 47:10).

Scripture: Isaiah 47:10-15

Song: “Still”

My husband and I had plans for the last few days of our honeymoon in the Caribbean. Those plans changed one morning when we were coming back from the beach and saw a hotel employee tie five deck chairs together and throw them into the swimming pool. We thought his behavior was odd but continued into the hotel, where more hotel employees were nailing pieces of plywood over the windows. The front desk explained that a hurricane was approaching. Our hotel was on a small island, and we needed to decide within the hour whether we would leave on the last ferry or wait out the storm on the island. There was no third option—the storm was coming whether we wanted it to or not. People could prepare and scientists could monitor, but no one could stop that storm.

Babylon was trusting in magic, superstition, and astrology to keep them safe and make them prosper. God warned them, however, that what He said would happen *would* happen. No one and nothing would be able stop what He was sending their way.

When we trust in the Lord, He doesn't fail us. But when we trust in other things, such as our own wisdom or strength, they will eventually fail us. Only God will always see us through.

Father, thank You that Your will prevails. Thank You that I can trust You. Help me look to You and not to myself today. In Jesus' name, amen.