

# Scriptural “Red Flags” – No. 1

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The exhortation, *Be not deceived*, appears several times in the New Testament. Each occurrence prefaces some special danger and should serve as a “red flag” of warning. Accordingly, we will be wise to note some of these:

In Luke 21:8 Jesus warned the apostles not to be deceived by mistaking false signs for true signs of the coming destruction of the Temple (A.D. 70). We need not be concerned about that particular warning, since its object has long since occurred. However, we do need to beware of other false doctrines that have arisen relative to the destruction of Jerusalem.

1. Some are teaching that the end of all things (i.e., the Second Coming, the Resurrection, the end of the world, the Judgment) occurred in A.D. 70 when Jerusalem was destroyed. This theological system is variously called “Realized Eschatology” or “The AD 70 Theology.” There is hardly a more obviously false doctrine, seeing that the world still stands, and the graves still contain their countless dead. If Christ came in A.D. 70, neither Christ nor the inspired John knew it; they were still anticipating it in A.D. 96 (Rev. 22:20). It is amazing to hear of brethren who have been deceived and carried away by this heresy.
2. While Luke 21 relates to the destruction of the Temple alone and to the signs of its approach, in the parallels (Mat. 24; Mark 13), Jesus **followed** those signs and warnings with teaching concerning His second coming. A common error is the failure to distinguish between these two subjects in the Lord’s discourse. This basic error has led various ones to mistake the signs of the Temple’s destruction for “signs” of His coming. Partly because of this egregious error many have thought they could predict the very day when Christ will return.

A careful reading of Matthew 24 and Mark 13 will reveal a **clear change in the subject matter** between the two aforementioned subjects. In both places the Lord first answered the apostles’ question about the Temple (Mat. 24:3a). He indicated such by saying that **all of the signs** He had given would occur in **that generation** and that His words would not fail (Mat. 24:35; Mark 13:31).

He then began answering the questions about His coming, which would be the end of the world (Mat. 24:3b). He said that no man, nor the angels, nor He Himself, but the Father only, knew the time of His return (Mat. 24:36–25:30; Mark 13:32–37). In light of the plain warnings of Christ that we cannot know when He will return, there is no excuse for setting a time or for believing the time setters. **“Be not deceived”!**

[**Note:** I wrote this article for and it was published in *The Lighthouse*, weekly bulletin of Northpoint Church of Christ, Denton, TX, May 31, 2009, of which I was editor.]

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