

~False 'Christs' in ancient times~

Henry Hammond (1681)

"**Simon Magnus** set himself to contend against the Apostles, that he might also appear glorious. He was, for his Magic, honored with a statue by Claudius Caesar. He was glorified by many as a god, and taught that it was *he* that appeared as the Son among the Jews, that in Samaria he descended as the Father, and in other nations came as the Holy Ghost. That he was the most sublime virtue, that is, he which was the Father over all, and that he was content to be called by the highest titles that any man did call him." (A Paraphrase, p. 272)

Eusebius (325)

(Regarding Simon Magus) "After the Lord was taken up into heaven the demons put forth a number of men who claimed to be gods. These not only escape being persecuted by you, but were actually the objects of worship - for example Simon, a Samaritan from the village called Gittho, who in Claudius Caesar's time, thanks to the art of the demons who possessed him, worked wonders of magic, and in your imperial city of Rome was regarded as a god, and like a god was honoured by you with a statue in the River Tiber between the two bridges. It bears this inscription in Latin, SIMONI DEO SANCTO. Almost all Samaritans, and a few from other nations too, acknowledge him as their principle god, and worship him." (p. 86)

Eusebius (325)

"**Meander, who succeeded Simon Magus**, exhibited himself in his conduct an instrument of diabolical wickedness, not inferior to the former. He also, was a Samaritan, and having made no less progress in his impostures than his master, revelled in still more arrogant pretensions to miracles; saying that he was, in truth, the Saviour, once sent from the invisible worlds for the salvation of men; teaching also, that no one could overcome even the very angels that formed the heavens in any other way, than by being first initiated into the magic discipline imparted by him, and by the baptism conferred by him for this purpose." (Book 3, Ch. 26)

John Gill (1809)

"It was usual for these imposters to lead their followers into deserts, pretending to work wonders in such solitary places: so during the siege, **Simon, the son of Giora**, collected together many thousands in the mountains and desert parts of Judaea; and the above-mentioned **Jonathan**, after the destruction of the city, led great multitudes into the desert: behold, he is in the secret chambers, believe it not; or should others say, behold, or for certain, the Messiah is in some one of the secret and fortified places of the temple; where, during some time of the siege, were **John and Eleazar**, the heads of the zealots; do not believe them. Some reference may be had to the chamber of secrets, which was in the temple; 'for in the sanctuary there were two chambers; one was called ... the chamber of secrets, and the other the chamber of vessels' " (John Gill, on Matthew 24:26).

Josephus, in his Antiquities, said expressly, that "*many* impostors and cheats persuaded the people to follow them into the desert," where they promised to show manifest wonders and signs done by the providence of God ; and many being persuaded suffered the punishment of their folly; for Felix brought them back, and chastised them." Again in his history of the Jewish war, speaking of the same persons, he

said, that "these impostors, under a pretence of divine inspiration, affecting innovations and changes, persuaded the multitude to grow mad, and led them forth 'into the desert,' as if God would there to show them the signs of liberty".