

The Last Days  
THE LAST DAYS DELUSION  
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Scripture: II. Timothy 4:1-8

FOUR WAYS TO GUARD YOURSELVES FROM THE LAST DAY'S DELUSION

1. Realize that one day, we are all going to be judged and will give an account of our lives.

*"I solemnly urge you in the presence of God and Christ Jesus who will someday judge the living and the dead when he appears to set up His Kingdom." (II. Timothy 4:1)*

*"And just as each person is destined to die once and after that comes judgment." (Hebrews 9:27)*

2. The preaching of the Word of God is an absolute priority for any church.

*"Preach the Word of God. Be prepared, whether the time is favorable or not. Patiently correct, rebuke, and encourage your people with good teaching" (II. Timothy 4:2)*

*For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. <sup>13</sup> And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account.*

(Hebrews 4:12-13)

*All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right.*

Scripture: (2. Timothy 3:16)

James 1:3 says, *"Dear brothers and sisters, not many of you should become teachers in the church, for we who teach will be judged more strictly."*

*The serpent was the shrewdest of all the wild animals the Lord God had made. One day he asked the woman, "Did God really say you must not eat the fruit from any of the trees in the garden?" (Genesis 3:1)*

*Work hard so you can present yourself to God and receive his approval. Be a good worker, one who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly explains the word of truth." (2. Timothy 2:15)*

We are to look at what scripture says as a whole, from Genesis to Revelation about the subject at hand.

*"All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right. <sup>17</sup> God uses it to prepare and equip his people to do every good work." (2. Timothy 3:16-17)*

*I will worship toward thy holy temple, and praise thy name for thy loving kindness and for thy truth: for thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name. (Psalm 138:2b)*

3. In the last days, we must be tuned in to the truth, not turned off by it.

- A. People will listen and live by false doctrine.
- B. People will listen and live by what appeals to their sin nature.
- C. People will look for teachers who will tell them what they want to hear, not what they need to hear.

Scripture: Jeremiah 23:16

*This is what the Lord of Heaven's Armies says to his people:*

*"Do not listen to these prophets when they prophesy to you, filling you with futile hopes. They are making up everything they say. They do not speak for the Lord!"*

Scripture: Jeremiah 14:14 *Then the Lord said, "These prophets are telling lies in my name. I did not send them or tell them to speak. I did not give them any messages. They prophesy of visions and revelations they have never seen or heard. They speak foolishness made up in their own lying hearts."*

Scripture: Matthew 24:24 *For false messiahs and false prophets will rise up and perform great signs and wonders so as to deceive, if possible, even God's chosen ones.*

2. Peter 2 *But there were also false prophets in Israel, just as there will be false teachers among you. They will cleverly teach destructive heresies and even deny the Master who bought them. In this way, they will bring sudden destruction on themselves. <sup>2</sup> Many will follow their evil teaching and shameful immorality. And because of these teachers, the way of truth will be slandered. <sup>3</sup> In their greed they will make up clever lies to get hold of your money. But God condemned them long ago, and their destruction will not be delayed.*

<sup>4</sup> *For God did not spare even the angels who sinned. He threw them into hell,<sup>[a]</sup> in gloomy pits of darkness,<sup>[b]</sup> where they are being held until the day of judgment. <sup>5</sup> And God did not spare the ancient world—except for Noah and the seven others in his family. Noah warned the world of God's righteous judgment. So God protected Noah when he destroyed the world of ungodly people with a vast flood. <sup>6</sup> Later, God condemned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah and turned them into heaps of ashes. He made them an example of what will happen to ungodly people. <sup>7</sup> But God also rescued Lot out of Sodom because he was a righteous man who was sick of the shameful immorality of the wicked people around him. <sup>8</sup> Yes, Lot was a righteous man who was tormented in his soul by the wickedness he saw and heard day after day. <sup>9</sup> So you see, the Lord knows how to rescue godly people from their trials, even while keeping the wicked*

under punishment until the day of final judgment. <sup>10</sup> He is especially hard on those who follow their own twisted sexual desire, and who despise authority.

These people are proud and arrogant, daring even to scoff at supernatural beings<sup>[a]</sup> without so much as trembling. <sup>11</sup> But the angels, who are far greater in power and strength, do not dare to bring from the Lord<sup>[a]</sup> a charge of blasphemy against those supernatural beings.

<sup>12</sup> These false teachers are like unthinking animals, creatures of instinct, born to be caught and destroyed. They scoff at things they do not understand, and like animals, they will be destroyed. <sup>13</sup> Their destruction is their reward for the harm they have done. They love to indulge in evil pleasures in broad daylight. They are a disgrace and a stain among you. They delight in deception<sup>[a]</sup> even as they eat with you in your fellowship meals. <sup>14</sup> They commit adultery with their eyes, and their desire for sin is never satisfied. They lure unstable people into sin, and they are well trained in greed. They live under God's curse. <sup>15</sup> They have wandered off the right road and followed the footsteps of Balaam son of Beor,<sup>[a]</sup> who loved to earn money by doing wrong. <sup>16</sup> But Balaam was stopped from his mad course when his donkey rebuked him with a human voice.

<sup>17</sup> These people are as useless as dried-up springs or as mist blown away by the wind. They are doomed to blackest darkness. <sup>18</sup> They brag about themselves with empty, foolish boasting. With an appeal to twisted sexual desires, they lure back into sin those who have barely escaped from a lifestyle of deception. <sup>19</sup> They promise freedom, but they themselves are slaves of sin and corruption. For you are a slave to whatever controls you.<sup>20</sup> And when people escape from the wickedness of the world by knowing our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and then get tangled up and enslaved by sin again, they are worse off than before. <sup>21</sup> It would be better if they had never known the way to righteousness than to know it and then reject the command they were given to live a holy life. <sup>22</sup> They prove the truth of this proverb: "A dog returns to its vomit."<sup>[a]</sup> And another says, "A washed pig returns to the mud."

Nevertheless, I have this against you: You tolerate that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophet. By her teaching she misleads my servants into sexual immorality and the eating of food sacrificed to idols. I have given her time to repent of her immorality, but she is unwilling. So I will cast her on a bed of suffering, and I will make those who commit adultery with her suffer intensely, unless they repent of her ways. I will strike her children dead. Then all the churches will know that I am he who searches hearts and minds, and I will repay each of you according to your deeds. Now I say to the rest of you in Thyatira, to you who do not hold to her teaching and have not learned Satan's so-called deep secrets, 'I will not impose any other burden on you, except to hold on to what you have until I come.' Revelation 2:20-25

#### 4. Be on guard

##### 1. Pastors/Leaders

"So guard yourselves and God's people. Feed and shepherd God's flock—his church, purchased with his own blood<sup>[a]</sup>—over which the Holy Spirit has appointed you as leaders.<sup>[a]</sup> <sup>29</sup> I know that false teachers, like vicious wolves, will come in among you after I leave, not sparing the flock. (Acts 20:28-29)

*Keep a close watch on how you live and on your teaching. Stay true to what is right for the sake of your own salvation and the salvation of those who hear you. (1 Timothy 4:16)*

A. Guard yourselves

B. Guard God's people

C. Realize you'll give an account to God one day

*Obey your spiritual leaders, and do what they say. Their work is to watch over your souls, and they are accountable to God. Give them reason to do this with joy and not with sorrow. That would certainly not be for your benefit. (Hebrews 13:17)*

## 2. The people of God

A. Search and study the scriptures yourself

*(Acts 17:11) And the people of Berea were more open-minded than those in Thessalonica, and they listened eagerly to Paul's message. They searched the Scriptures day after day to see if Paul and Silas were teaching the truth.*

B. Don't chase after signs at the expense of scripture

Scripture: 2. Thessalonians 2:1-15

*Now, dear brothers and sisters,<sup>[a]</sup> let us clarify some things about the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and how we will be gathered to meet him.<sup>2</sup> Don't be so easily shaken or alarmed by those who say that the day of the Lord has already begun. Don't believe them, even if they claim to have had a spiritual vision, a revelation, or a letter supposedly from us. <sup>3</sup> Don't be fooled by what they say. For that day will not come until there is a great rebellion against God and the man of lawlessness<sup>[b]</sup> is revealed—the one who brings destruction.<sup>[c]</sup> <sup>4</sup> He will exalt himself and defy everything that people call god and every object of worship. He will even sit in the temple of God, claiming that he himself is God.*

*<sup>5</sup> Don't you remember that I told you about all this when I was with you?<sup>6</sup> And you know what is holding him back, for he can be revealed only when his time comes. <sup>7</sup> For this lawlessness is already at work secretly, and it will remain secret until the one who is holding it back steps out of the way.<sup>8</sup> Then the man of lawlessness will be revealed, but the Lord Jesus will slay him with the breath of his mouth and destroy him by the splendor of his coming.*

*<sup>9</sup> This man will come to do the work of Satan with counterfeit power and signs and miracles. <sup>10</sup> He will use every kind of evil deception to fool those on their way to destruction, because they refuse to love and accept the truth that would save them. <sup>11</sup> So God will cause them to be greatly deceived, and they will believe these lies. <sup>12</sup> Then they will be condemned for enjoying evil rather than believing the truth.*

- Believers Should Stand Firm

<sup>13</sup> As for us, we can't help but thank God for you, dear brothers and sisters loved by the Lord. We are always thankful that God chose you to be among the first<sup>[a]</sup> to experience salvation—a salvation that came through the Spirit who makes you holy and through your belief in the truth. <sup>14</sup> He called you to salvation when we told you the Good News; now you can share in the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

<sup>15</sup> With all these things in mind, dear brothers and sisters, stand firm and keep a strong grip on the teaching we passed on to you both in person and by letter.

Hebrews 2:1-4 So we must listen very carefully to the truth we have heard, or we may drift away from it. <sup>2</sup> For the message God delivered through angels has always stood firm, and every violation of the law and every act of disobedience was punished. <sup>3</sup> So what makes us think we can escape if we ignore this great salvation that was first announced by the Lord Jesus himself and then delivered to us by those who heard him speak? <sup>4</sup> And God confirmed the message by giving signs and wonders and various miracles and gifts of the Holy Spirit whenever he chose.

C. Stay rooted and submit to church leadership with good, solid teaching

Scripture: I. Timothy 3:1-7

This is a trustworthy saying: "If someone aspires to be a church leader,<sup>[a]</sup> he desires an honorable position." <sup>2</sup> So a church leader must be a man whose life is above reproach. He must be faithful to his wife.<sup>[b]</sup> He must exercise self-control, live wisely, and have a good reputation. He must enjoy having guests in his home, and he must be able to teach. <sup>3</sup> He must not be a heavy drinker<sup>[c]</sup> or be violent. He must be gentle, not quarrelsome, and not love money. <sup>4</sup> He must manage his own family well, having children who respect and obey him. <sup>5</sup> For if a man cannot manage his own household, how can he take care of God's church?

<sup>6</sup> A church leader must not be a new believer, because he might become proud, and the devil would cause him to fall.<sup>[d]</sup> <sup>7</sup> Also, people outside the church must speak well of him so that he will not be disgraced and fall into the devil's trap.

Scripture: Titus 1:5-9

<sup>5</sup> I left you on the island of Crete so you could complete our work there and appoint elders in each town as I instructed you. <sup>6</sup> An elder must live a blameless life. He must be faithful to his wife,<sup>[a]</sup> and his children must be believers who don't have a reputation for being wild or rebellious. <sup>7</sup> A church leader<sup>[b]</sup> is a manager of God's household, so he must live a blameless life. He must not be arrogant or quick-tempered; he must not be a heavy drinker,<sup>[c]</sup> violent, or dishonest with money.

<sup>8</sup> Rather, he must enjoy having guests in his home, and he must love what is good. He must live wisely and be just. He must live a devout and disciplined life. <sup>9</sup> He must have a strong belief in the trustworthy message he was taught; then he will be able to encourage others with wholesome teaching and show those who oppose it where they are wrong.

Scripture: I. Peter 5:1-4

And now, a word to you who are elders in the churches. I, too, am an elder and a witness to the sufferings of Christ. And I, too, will share in his glory when he is revealed to the whole world. As a fellow elder, I appeal to you:<sup>2</sup> Care for the flock that God has entrusted to you. Watch over it willingly, not grudgingly—not for what you will get out of it, but because you are eager to serve God. <sup>3</sup> Don't lord it over the people assigned to your care, but lead them by your own good example. <sup>4</sup> And when the Great Shepherd appears, you will receive a crown of never-ending glory and honor.

Scripture: I. Peter 2:2, *"Like newborn babies, you must crave pure spiritual milk so that you will grow into a full experience of salvation. Cry out for this nourishment"*