



**Living in the Last Days
What Do We Pray For?**

**Based on being in the last days are there any specific things we need to be concerned with?
John 8:44, Matthew 24:3-5, Colossian 2:8**

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A unique thing we have been subjected to ever since Genesis 3 is the deception of the devil. Jesus made it clear as He discussed the plight of the hopelessly deception infected religious leadership in Jerusalem.

John 8:44

“You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him. **Whenever he tells a lie, he speaks from his own nature, because he is a liar and the father of lies.**” (NASB 2020)



This whole idea of being misled, of being deceived is the first topic Jesus brought up in His discussion on the Mount of Olives.

Jesus was asked by His disciples three questions.

Matthew 24:3–5

“And as He was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, “Tell us, when will these things happen, and what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?” And **Jesus answered and said to them, “See to it that no one misleads you.** For many will come in My name, saying, ‘I am the Christ,’ and they will mislead many people.” (NASB 2020)

What is the first major concern Jesus has about His flock here in these last days? It is our need to not be gullible.

Does this mean that Christians can be deceived? Unless we are Spirit filled and Spirit led, we are walking ‘marks’ for the great deceiver. Jesus will later warn that **“For false christs and false prophets will arise and will provide great signs and wonders, so as to mislead, if possible, even the elect.”** (Matthew 24:24, NASB 2020)

The arguments and proofs from deceivers in the end times will be so convincing that it will be difficult to be faithful. If we are prepared, Jesus says, we can remain faithful. With the Holy Spirit’s help, the elect will not give in and will be able to discern that what the deceivers say is false. (Barton 1996, 477)

Prayer Point One

This fear brings us to the first thing we must be making a matter of prayer in these last days. **We must be praying for discernment.**

Why is this so seriously important? Especially in this nation and so close to an election. Because there are those who lie in order to manipulate and deceive you and me.

Jonathan Turley wrote the following recently in USA Today. “Across the country, a curious trend is taking hold in the Democratic Party: The left has found God in politics. As Politico noted most recently, Democrats are running for Congress by leaning on their Christian bona fides.” (Turley 2026)

The problem, who is lying and who is telling the truth, or are they all lying. Remember, deception is the thing in the last days.

How bad is this? From Turley’s article again. In Iowa, Democrats fielded three ministers to try to wrestle back seats from Republicans, with two remaining after the primary elections. Lutheran minister Sarah Trone Garriott is under attack for participating in the wedding of a satanist couple. She recounted her role with pride, though saying that she was not sure if she should use a passage referencing Satan to “make them feel more at home.” Trone Garriott is part of a movement of “resistance preaching” to organize far-left ministers to use religious pitches to support an election blue wave. (Turley 2026)

Notice she is a “pastor.” The problem is not just in the church, but also in the schools that train folks to serve.

Some Point Loma Nazarene University alumni are raising concerns about the Christian university’s dean of students, alleging he told student leaders that identifying as being “in Christ alone” reflected “white privilege.” The controversy centers on PLNU Dean of Students Jason Cha, whose 2023 dissertation at



Azusa Pacific University is titled “Raging Waters of Whiteness: Addressing White Evangelical Racism in Higher Education.”

Two of Cha’s most prominent critics are PLNU alumni Lidiya Harvey and Isabella Simmons, who say his hiring reflects the university’s broader progressive direction.

Speaking specifically about the “in Christ alone” claim, Simmons told The Fix that Christian identity does not erase race or racism, but said “our identity in Christ is a blood-bought reality given equally to every believer.”

“That is not a minor disagreement, but a theological question about who gets the final word on reality: Christ and His Word, or an unbiblical ideological framework that reinterprets Christianity through its own categories?” (Peethala 2026)

Paul was concerned for the church about deception since he had already encountered it multiple times in Thessalonica and other locations as well. He is not the only one as this has, as you can tell, continued to be an issue even to today. It is not getting better either.

The lying and twisting of the scriptures and the truth of the scriptures by those who say they are the church but are atheists doesn’t help. For example, there is a candidate running for Senate in Texas who comes from St. Andrew’s Presbyterian Church in Austin TX.

Protestia tells us a little about that church.

A pastor at Texas U.S. Senate candidate...home church says most of their congregants are agnostic or atheist, according to a recent report in Townhall.

Rev. Babs Miller is “Minister to the Parish” at St. Andrew’s Presbyterian Church in Austin, Texas. Part of the Presbyterian Church (USA), the congregation is pro-choice and pro-LGBTQ and is about as progressive as they come.

In a video obtained by Townhall, Miller can be seen admitting that the bulk of their congregants do not identify as Christian. (Staff Writer 2026)

Colossians 2:8

“See to it that there is no one who takes you captive through **philosophy and empty deception in accordance with human tradition, in accordance with the elementary principles of the world**, rather than in accordance with Christ.” (NASB 2020)

What is it that Paul is warning us to be on the lookout for? We are to be on the lookout for exactly what we are seeing showing up all around us today. False and deceptive teachers. They sound good and even use scripture, but they have another meaning that they are taking from it other than what the Holy Spirit has intended for it to mean. Yes, we are talking about spiritual confidence scammers.

They come as male or female these days and the goal is the same. Mislead, misdirect, steal your money and steal your joy. F. F. Bruce tells us what Paul is warning about.

“The spiritual confidence-tricksters against whom they are put on their guard did not inculcate a godless or immoral way of life: the error of such teaching would have been readily exposed. **Their teaching was rather a blend of the highest elements of religion known to Judaism and paganism; it was, in fact, a philosophy.** Paul does not condemn philosophy as such, **but a philosophy of this kind—one which seduces believers from the simplicity of their faith in Christ.** “Everything that had to do with theories



about God and the world and the meaning of human life was called 'philosophy' at that time, not only in the pagan schools but also in the Jewish schools of the Greek cities." For all its attractiveness, this philosophy was but empty illusion." (Bruce 1984, 98)

When I say pray for discernment, this is for all of us, but there is also a spiritual gift of discernment.

I have a couple of friends who have that gift, but they are not local. They have the innate ability to feel that something is not right about a teaching, a ministry, a pastor or even a church. We all can, through the power of the Holy Spirit, discern things we could not have discerned before Christ. But the type of discernment I am talking about here is a specific gift to the church.

1 Corinthians 12:7-11

"But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. For to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, and to another the word of knowledge according to the same Spirit; to another faith by the same Spirit, and to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, and to another the effecting of miracles, and to another prophecy, and to another the distinguishing of spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, and to another the interpretation of tongues. But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually just as He wills." (NASB 2020)

Before we came to Christ, we were rather clueless about the unseen realm. We may have had hints of it and some may have even consorted with fallen members of it, but once we come to Jesus Christ, we are suddenly introduced to a world we did not know about.

Pastor Chuck Smith tells us "there are two worlds coexisting, each passing through the other. For the most part, we are not conscious of that other world - but it is very conscious of us. The Bible calls it the world of spirits. This spiritual world is very real, and has a tremendous influence on all of our lives, either for good or for evil." And once you come to Christ, you have disavowed allegiance to the prince of the power of the air and those who follow him, in favor for his Creator, the God of the Universe in the person of Jesus Christ. And the Holy Spirit immediately stakes out the claim moving inside at once preventing the enemy the ability to do anything about it. (Smith 2018, 174)

As a follower of Jesus, we are encouraged to ask to pray for discernment in order to know who and who is not trying to lie to us. That is what is behind us being Bereans among other things. Part of my job as a shepherd of the flock is to warn of those who are trying to take advantage of us.

How does this show up when you ask? Ever get an uneasy feeling about someone. I am not talking about an uneasy feeling because they have a personality different than yours, what I am saying is that someone who just makes you feel, uncomfortable. You see darkness while everyone else sees nothing at all.

Pastor Chuck tells us that "if you're walking in the Spirit and are spiritually attuned, you'll sense that power of darkness strongly and clearly. I have discovered that having the discerning of spirits can sometimes present a problem. You sense a deceiver's true character so clearly and definitely that you assume everybody must be able to see he's a total phony - and you are amazed when someone believes or follows him. You can't understand how anyone could be so gullible - it's so plain, so obvious, why can't they see?" (Smith 2018, 175-176)

I have warned others about certain people in the past, and provided receipts too, since I have learned the same as Pastor Chuck that not everyone can see what you happen to see about that person.

Satan is a counterfeiter and many times his counterfeit of a "pastor" or a "teacher" is quite good. They have the right school, but when they speak, you don't hear what you expected to hear. When someone tells you to disregard the Old Testament and stick with New Testament. That is a false teacher. When



someone tells you they have discovered something entirely new hidden for a thousand years because of their formula, warning, warning, warning Will Robinson.

Many false teachers today have large well-funded organizations. They have large staff who are more than happy to continue to keep you in the loop by using the latest computer tools so that way you can feel a personal touch from the teacher you are following who never would ever visit with you one on one, but they make it seem like they would. They use a few words of scripture here and there but out of context. They quote their favorite Bible teachers instead, but the problem is, many of them are serious apostates as well. And then there is the good old "I am a man of God how dare you question me since I have had visions of Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit has revealed things to me."

They then present to you their own philosophy and doctrine as if it came from God, and it is Holy Spirit powered. It is spirit powered, just not the Holy Spirit.

I have had one on one conversations with those who chase after the Spirit liver quiver instead of after the Lord. And when you provide the receipts regarding the individual, they will tell you how wrong you are. He is a man of God. I have been tempted to ask which god.

Peter ran into a guy like this, Simon the Magician, and he was Spirit filled and Spirit led at the time clearly seeing what game this guy was playing.

Acts 8:9–17

"A man named Simon had been a sorcerer there for many years, amazing the people of Samaria and claiming to be someone great. Everyone, from the least to the greatest, often spoke of him as 'the Great One—the Power of God.' They listened closely to him because for a long time he had astounded them with his magic. But now the people believed Philip's message of Good News concerning the Kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ. As a result, many men and women were baptized. Then Simon himself believed and was baptized. He began following Philip wherever he went, and he was amazed by the signs and great miracles Philip performed. When the apostles in Jerusalem heard that the people of Samaria had accepted God's message, they sent Peter and John there. As soon as they arrived, they prayed for these new believers to receive the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit had not yet come upon any of them, for they had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. (NLT)

The text tells us even Simon believed. Or did he? At least he did put on the external show even going as far as being baptized so at this point, it appears to be genuine. He went from being the alleged mouthpiece of God, to one of Philip's converts. A "rock-star convert."

Simon is still hanging out with Philip and as he sees Peter lay hands on those new followers, and he sees and hears what transpires as they are baptized with the Holy Spirit, he is impressed.

If he had that power to lay hands on people and then they receive the Holy Spirit, possibly exhibiting the same gifts as seen at Pentecost, that would really bring in the followers and the cash.

Simon knows his former power is totally eclipsed by what he has seen Philip do and now Peter and John. He may have also experienced the same as seen in the Temple at Pentecost, we aren't told. But he is impressed enough to say and do what he does next.

Acts 8:18–19

"When Simon saw that the Spirit was given when the apostles laid their hands on people, he offered them money to buy this power. 'Let me have this power, too,' he exclaimed, 'so that when I lay my hands on people, they will receive the Holy Spirit!'" (NLT)



Welcome to a brand-new heresy that has continued on to today. This incident is the basis of the term “simony,” referring to the greedy attempt to purchase a spiritual reality falsely with money. (Osborne 2019, 162)

Why ask for discernment, because Simony is alive and well today.

What is Simony and why does this matter today? Simony is the practice of buying or selling something spiritual, especially ecclesial offices. The word “simony” came from Simon Magus, who tried to buy the gifts of the Holy Spirit from Peter and John (Acts 8:14–24). Simony initially referred to purchasing or selling anything spiritual, but it was commonly used in the medieval period of buying or selling ecclesial offices. By the modern period, the word had an expanded meaning. It could be used to talk about any office, whether in government, business, or the church, that was received without following the proper channels and without regard for competency, especially if the office was acquired through bribery. The practice of simony has perpetually plagued the church. (Mills 2022)

Simon, who has had a money making enterprise in the past playing with spiritual powers, demons, appears to still be in league with them otherwise why would he ask this question? He has experienced and seen all of the signs and miracles taking place, the power is greater than what he had in the past and he sees this as the opportunity to open up a new line of work. That of a traveling evangelist/miracle worker. And making lots of cash in the process.

Monetizing the gospel not for the purpose of spreading the gospel, but for the pride of being a big wig, the control of people, and the money.

Welcome to Austin TX and the Church in name only that we discussed earlier. And, as we have seen, this is now everywhere.

Here in the last days, we must be people of prayer and what we have seen today, we must be praying for and exercising discernment as we do life here in the last days.

Let's pray.

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