Living in the Last Days What Do We Pray For?
Taking the Offensive Against Evil but Praying for those who do it, to be saved!
Isaiah 5:18-23 Psalm 79:5-6

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Living as we do here at the end of the age, we are witnessing expressions of evil that seems to be off the charts. Deception is at an all new high and there are indeed many running around today who believe they are serving their personal interpretation of who God is by persecuting those who are actually serving the Lord.

This leads us, as we pray, many times to ask a simple question as we pray. And yes, there are also those times where we want something to happen to those who are the purveyors of what is taking place.

We find we are in agreement with Isaiah's perspective. The Complete Jewish Bible translation lays it out for us.

Isaiah 5:18–23
"Woe to those who begin by pulling at transgression with a thread, but end by dragging sin along as if with a cart rope. They say, **"We want God to speed up his work, to hurry it along, so we can see it! We want the Holy One of Isra'el's plan to come true right now, so we can be sure of it!" Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who change darkness into light and light into darkness, who change bitter into sweet and sweet into bitter! Woe to those seeing themselves as wise, esteeming themselves as clever. Woe to those who are heroes at drinking wine, men whose power goes to mixing strong drinks, who acquit the guilty for bribes but deny justice to the righteous!"** (CJB)

We too would like to see Him rapture us yesterday. But we are still here and find ourselves remaining faithful while the whole world goes crazy around us. We are not catty as those in Isaiah were, in asking for Him to show up, we are more in alignment with Asaph in Psalm 79.

Psalm 79:5–6
"How long, LORD? Will You be angry forever? Will Your jealousy burn like fire? **Pour out Your wrath upon the nations which do not know You, And upon the kingdoms which do not call upon Your name.**" (NASB 2020)

The question Asaph, after seeing what has taken place in his vision, asks is no different than the question we ask today. "How long Lord?"

James Boice tells us that for the nation "it is often the question asked by God's suffering or persecuted people. They do not complain that their treatment by God is unjust. They know they are sinners; they know they have sinned repeatedly in thought, word, and deed. They know that God has been merciful to them even in his judgments. They know they have suffered much less than they actually deserve. God is merciful. Still, they are hurting, and they are hoping that the punishment will not go on much longer. "How long, O LORD?" is their agonizing question." (Boice 2005, 655)

The remnant will indeed ask that question during the Tribulation. We know that, since some of those who were martyred beforehand have an interview with the King. That interview is recorded for us in Revelation.

Revelation 6:9–11 "When the Lamb broke the fifth seal, I saw underneath the altar the souls of those who had been killed because of the word of God, and because of the testimony which they had maintained; and they cried out with a loud voice, saying, "**How long, O Lord, holy and true, will You refrain from judging and avenging our blood on those who live on the earth?"** And a white robe was given to each of them; and they were told that they were to rest for a little while longer, until the number of their fellow servants and their brothers and sisters who were to be killed even as they had been, was completed also." (NASB 2020)

Here is the thing, we too ask "how long." That is not just asked while in a trial, but daily and as we see those who are responsible for the crimes and sins committed against us not being held visibly accountable. We also ask how much longer before you come and fulfill your promise and take us in the rapture of the church. Then there is the "how long" of Habakkuk which we can all identify with.

Habakkuk 1:2–4
"**How long, LORD, must I cry for help? But you do not listen! I call out to you, "Violence!" But you do not deliver! Why do you force me to witness injustice? Why do you put up with wrongdoing?**

Destruction and violence confront me; conflict is present and one must endure strife. For this reason the law lacks power, and justice is never carried out. Indeed, the wicked intimidate the innocent. For this reason justice is perverted." (NET 2nd ed.)

This is the "how long" of our culture and of our living here in the last days. No different than living in Jerusalem just prior to Babylon showing up.

Our problem is really simple, we are finite beings and as such, we want painful experiences to end as soon as possible. It is difficult for us to see God's eternal perspective on issues like this. That is why we must remain faithful and obedient to our King, trusting Him.

2 Peter 3:8–9
"But do not let this one fact escape your notice, beloved, that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years like one day. The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not willing for any to perish, but for all to come to repentance." (NASB 2020)

But about the evil we see.

Psalm 79:6–7
"**Pour out Your wrath upon the nations which do not know You, And upon the kingdoms which do not call upon Your name.** For they have devoured Jacob And laid waste his settlement." (NASB 2020)

For Asaph to ask for the Lord to pour out His wrath on those who did what he is seeing, tells me he is aware all is not lost because there is a remnant that remains. But when he prays this here in verse 6, is that an imprecatory prayer more oriented for the Old Testament or can you and I pray for God's wrath to come down on those who commit violence and evil today. Yes, we can indeed pray for this.

Don't forget, we serve a table flipping Savior.

John 2:13–16
"The Passover of the Jews was near, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. And within the temple grounds He found those who were selling oxen, sheep, and doves, and the money changers seated at their tables. And He made a whip of cords, and drove them all out of the temple area, with the sheep and the oxen; and He poured out the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables; and to those who were selling the doves He said, "Take these things away from here; stop making My Father's house a place of business!"" (NASB 2020)

But when do we move from for those caught up in evil, and against those doing it, and begin flipping tables?

Here is the thing, we already know, based on our study of the book of Romans, that there is no one on this planet who is without excuse. All know of God. We also know, from that same study, that everyone has a conscience and yes, it can indeed be seared almost to nonexistence, but that does not remove accountability from any of us.

For Asaph, those who attacked Jerusalem and defiled the Temple must be held accountable for what they did. First of all, they are willfully ignoring the existence of God, it is not that they do not know Him, they do and that is indeed why they are accountable. And since they do know, they have chosen do not believe, so unbelief is also a problem.

Can we pray this way though? Can a New Testament follower of Jesus Christ here in these last days seek and ask God to judge and condemn the wicked while at the same time following what He says in Matthew 5.

Matthew 5:43–44
"You have heard that it was said, 'YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, **love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you**," (NASB 2020)

Does this mean we can't pray for God to destroy the evil plans of those who are deceivers, false teachers and murderers? I think we need to first understand who we are in Christ and that was us before we came to Jesus.

Then there is this, as Richard Phillips puts it, "we must discriminate between our prayers for individuals who harm us and our prayers for God to defend his gospel and the church." (Phillips 2020, 85)

Yes, indeed we should pray against those who do evil and pursue evil and teach others to do the same. We do indeed pray against false teachers and those who are leading others to hell. Of course we pray against them. But we also pray that they find Jesus. George Horne says the following.

"Prayer is therefore here made by the faithful, that God, not to gratify any vindictive spirit of theirs, but to vindicate his own attributes, would break the teeth of the oppressor, and work a public and glorious salvation for his chosen: at beholding which, the very adversaries themselves might possibly be converted." (Horne 1858, 288-289)

Based on our studies thus far in the Psalms, we learn, and I agree with Reed Dunn, "that God expects us to pray against evil, and the Psalter sees evil everywhere. From foreigners marching on Jerusalem to fellow Israelites acting corruptly, wicked people are a never-ending source of affliction. Imprecatory psalms teach us to voice that affliction and pray against its source whenever and wherever we see it. When we pray in our own words, we likely pray "balanced" prayers where we weigh the good and bad of other people and try to be objective about our situation. Imprecatory psalms do no such thing. They attack. They have no regard for balance, and they teach us to quit playing it safe with God." (Dunn 2025, 130)

Have we been taught to be wimpy welcome mat Christians? To a degree, perhaps but usually it boils down to not seeing what is clear in the scriptures. As followers of Jesus, we are to take the offensive in prayer against three things, the devil and his works, the ungodly and wicked who are busy serving him, and then against our own sinful flesh and sin nature.

For example, we pray that God would remove the hindrances to His work and to those who live here in South Florida from hearing and responding to the gospel.

We have discovered some of the hindrances come from within the body of Christ. The enemy works through deception and lies and there are those who are busy doing what they think is the right thing, but for the wrong reason. We pray against what they do, because many times they have no idea it plays into the hands of the enemy, but we also pray for them to once again see what it is the Lord is doing, repent and return to Him.

We have prayed and God has answered out prayer that He would remove those who were preventing us from reaching the children we are now reaching in the Good News Club we are involved in.

We do indeed pray that the Lord would destroy the abortion industry in this nation as well as the euthanasia industry which is also now beginning to grow. Meanwhile, in every case. We also pray that

those who are involved will find Jesus as their savior. Phillips adds that “Christians of course pray that God would protect the unborn babies threatened with slaughter and for God to thwart plans to advance this evil, as well as to vindicate justice by judging those who will not repent.” (Phillips 2020, 85)

And of course, we then have to wait on the Lord and allow Him to do what He would do in His time, not ours. That means we do not go out and try and help God move things along faster by being stupid. Do not flip tables unless He is guiding and directing to do so.

Here is the thing, we are praying against evil, we are praying against false teachers and that God would break their evil.

At the same time, we also realize that but for the grace of God, that could be you or me. Paul dealt with this, in multiple realms.

How did Paul deal with those who would teach other than sound doctrine. There is the example we see of Alexander. Who is this guy?

1 Timothy 1:18–20
“This charge I entrust to you, Timothy, my child, in accordance with the prophecies previously made about you, that by them you may wage the good warfare, holding faith and a good conscience. **By rejecting this, some have made shipwreck of their faith, among whom are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I have handed over to Satan that they may learn not to blaspheme.**” (ESV)

Handing someone over to Satan would pretty much falls into this same category as praying against the evil they do. This is not the only place Paul talked to Timothy about Alexander. He was apparently, a serious false teacher and troublemaker for the early church.

2 Timothy 4:14–15
“Alexander the coppersmith did me great harm; the Lord will repay him according to his deeds. Beware of him yourself, for he strongly opposed our message.” (ESV)

There are indeed those times where it is the right thing to pray for God’s justice to take place. Yes, we pray for those involved to be saved, but we also ask for God’s justice to be manifest too.

Jesus discussed this in His letter to the church in Thyatira, one of the seven letters He wrote in the book of Revelation. In it, we see how He deals with those who would prey on the flock while being part of the flock. The church is busy for the Lord, but they have allowed this.

Revelation 2:20–23
“But **I have this complaint against you. You are permitting that woman—that Jezebel who calls herself a prophet—to lead my servants astray.** She teaches them to commit sexual sin and to eat food offered to idols. **I gave her time to repent, but she does not want to turn away from her immorality. Therefore, I will throw her on a bed of suffering, and those who commit adultery with her will suffer greatly unless they repent and turn away from her evil deeds. I will strike her children dead.** Then all the churches will know that I am the one who searches out the thoughts and intentions of every person. And I will give to each of you whatever you deserve.” (NLT)

And unfortunately, Jezebel is alive and well and lying to whomever will listen about the alleged bad stuff being done by those who stand for the word of God.

We do indeed pray against those who stand in support of sin, evil, wickedness and want to mislead us to turn to another gospel away from Christ. But we also pray for those who are the purveyors of this activity

that they would find the Lord and be saved. And here is the thing, they are being saved. Steven Bancarz was a serious purveyor of new age religion, until he met Jesus. Here is the change Jesus did.

“Steven Bancarz is the former founder and writer at spiritscienceandmetaphysics.com. After an encounter with Jesus Christ, he quit his job as a New Age writer back in 2015, giving his life fully to the Lord. Steven has since founded Reasons for Jesus as an apologetics website, is the co-author of the The Second Coming of the New Age, and has been featured on programs like The 700 Club and 100 Huntley Street. He pastored Young Adults in his home church for three years, and currently creates Christian content on YouTube.” (Bancarz 2017)

Again, we have been looking at the question, thanks to living in the last days and wondering about table flipping, about praying for and against those who stand against the Lord. Steven Bancarz is one of many who have come to Jesus Christ from a previous background of hostility towards Jesus Christ and those who serve Him.

James Boice summarizes what we have been discussing here about prayer in the last days, “we need to remember that regardless of the attitude we take, justice is going to be done. God sees the evil, and he will punish it. The blood of the martyrs will be avenged. Every good and every evil deed will receive their different but most appropriate rewards. Although this is indeed an age of grace, an age in which to proclaim the gospel of God’s free salvation from sin through the work of Jesus Christ, we should remember that it is not endless. Judgment will be done. Therefore, we should both warn people of this judgment and be diligent in taking the gospel to those who are without it.” (Boice 2005, 656-657)

Paul has indeed outlined our work for us and who the enemy truly is.

Ephesians 6:12
“For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.” (NASB 2020)

It is this enemy who goes about establishing beachheads in those that our culture considers to be power brokers today, and they are not all politicians. They may talk about freedom, but who they are and who they are serving has this goal the want God out of the picture.

Psalm 2:3–4
“Let’s tear their shackles apart And throw their ropes away from us!” He who sits in the heavens laughs, The Lord scoffs at them.” (NASB 2020)

We are praying, pretty much in alignment with David, Paul, Peter, Jesus and others, that God’s will be done and that means we pray against and rely on the Lord to deal with the sources of injustice, wickedness, and evil.

We do indeed pray for those there to be saved, but we also pray that God’s will be done, and for those who refuse to repent, that is indeed judgment.

As we pray, there is this also, the promises we see in Romans 8.

Romans 8:26–27
“Now in the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know what to pray for as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words; and He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.” (NASB 2020)

Let's pray

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