



## [Matthew 10:16](#)

(16) I am sending you out like sheep among wolves. Therefore be as shrewd as snakes and as innocent as doves.

*New International Version*

Christ's mandate to us that we become "wise as serpents and harmless as doves" implies that we must develop discernment, the ability to detect motivation and the spirits that motivate. The gift of discerning the spirits will become increasingly important as we approach the end of this age because deception will be the hallmark of these extremely dangerous times.

In the Olivet Prophecy, the disciples ask [Jesus](#) to reveal the sign of His return. Jesus does not give one sign but several. At the top of the list, he warns the disciples of deception, and follows it up with warnings of [false prophets](#), false [miracles](#), and the warning not to be deceived (see [Matthew 24:4-5](#), 11, 23-26).

We deduce from this last warning that false "Christian" ministers and ministries will have the capability of performing convincing lying wonders and signs. These [false ministers](#) will demonstrate power—[occult](#) power—for the specific purpose of leading all people astray, including the most sincere believer.

We have a clear warning from the apostle Paul that the battles we face on a daily basis cannot be won by conventional weapons that we can attain from [the world](#). The weapons we must seek should be spiritual, having the power to destroy arguments and every false claim that sets itself up against the knowledge of [God](#) and God's Word ([II Corinthians 10:3-5](#)).

— David F. Maas

**To learn more, see:**  
[The Gift of Discerning Spirits](#)

**Related Topics:**

[Avoiding False Apostles](#)

[Deception](#)

[Discerning Between Good and Evil](#)

[Discerning the Spirits](#)

[Discernment](#)

[Discernment, Growing in](#)

[Discernment, Physical](#)

[Discernment, Spiritual](#)

[False Ministers/Prophets](#)

[False Miracles](#)

[Gift of Discernment](#)

[Olivet Prophecy](#)

[Spiritual Weapons](#)

[Wise as Serpents, Harmless as Doves](#)