

# Canopy of Prayer

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Author

Ian Jeal

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## Dear Prayer Partners in Europe

Matt. 24:3-5, "Tell us," they said, "when will this happen, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?" Jesus answered: "Watch out that no one deceives you. For many will come in my name, claiming, 'I am the Messiah,' and will deceive many."

In these days, many believe that there has been a shift towards the approaching of the end times. If this is true, then these verses are surely a reminder that we need to be alert to what is happening, not only in our own lives, but in our countries and continent as well. We may be fervent in our desire to see Christian values demonstrated in the way we are governed, and that is good, but "If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal." Cor. 13:1

## What might deception look like in Europe?

This is a provocative title and I do not profess to have all the answers but it is surely a question to which we should each be seeking the Lord's answers.



As far as our continent is concerned, and particularly the EU, we could ask these questions: With the end of the Brexit process, does this also bring to an end to the difficult relationships within the remaining 27 member states? Will more countries want to break away? And are we seeing the beginning of the end of the EU, as some Eurosceptics have predicted?

Since the very beginning of the EU project there have always been tensions. We should expect nothing less when there is an attempt to bring nations together in unity. But, as the founding fathers understood, to bring together people in unity and peace is a noble cause.

Indeed it is a scriptural one as we see in Romans 12:18, "If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone."

In the past the EU has seen tensions between the countries of the North and South, between the work ethic of the more liberal Scandinavian and Germanic nations and the Latin and more conservative temperament of those in the south. Today there is probably more of a tension between the newer member states from Central/Eastern Europe and the old guard of Western Europe. Those from the newer countries are often wary of the more dominant nations, as they see this reflecting their experience of past authoritarian governments and are worried about their new found freedoms which they aspired to in joining the EU. Let us not forget that many of these newer member countries were led out of the oppression of communism and dictatorship by men and women who had held on to their faith for more than 40 years. Here too though there may be a problem in that the desire to hold on to this freedom can open the door to those who are strong. At the moment this is through populist right leaning leaders who may introduce more tension and even suppression, the very things that those nations hoped they'd escaped.

Throughout the world the rise of populist politics could represent a problem to perceived freedoms and comes at a cost. Those who hold power seem to be increasingly seeking ways to suppress the very benefits that democracy has brought. By moving away from debate and consensus and reducing willingness to compromise national interests, perhaps we are risking the very stability we have come to enjoy.

Democracy is not perfect, but it has played its part in maintaining peace in Europe for the past 70 years, along with a desire to cooperate/integrate. In fact the promotion of democracy is a foundation of the Council of the Europe and a pre-requisite for its 47 member states.

Let us not be deceived by the selfishness of our own hearts with a "Me first" attitude and a desire that our own nation be favoured or that ours is the only right way of thinking. Instead let us remember only Christ will bring true unity, Ephesians 1:9-10, "he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, to be put into effect when the times reach their fulfilment—to bring unity to all things in heaven and on earth under Christ."

In the meantime let us continue to be salt and light.

Let us pray

1. That the Lord would help us as individuals not to be deceived by our own desires and cultural backgrounds.
2. That all member states and their leaders of the EU would remember the desire of the founding fathers to seek unity and peace between the nations through dialogue and consensus.
3. That we would rediscover the values of our continent that were founded on the gospel of Christ, and that we should love one another, as individuals and as nations.



**Armin Laschet, the new leader of the Christian Democrats in Germany is a pleasant man, personally based on a living Catholic faith, he is an experienced politician, Prime Minister of the biggest federal state, possibly the next German chancellor, a clear European, interested in a balanced policy between West and East.**

## Additional Prayer Points:-

1. As tensions rise over the rollout of the Covid 19 vaccination programmes across the continent, let us pray that equitable solutions may be found.
2. Pray for the relationship between Europe and the new administration of President Joe Biden in the United States.

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**CONTACT:** Canopy of Prayer, Ian & Jill Jeal, Corrie Oosterhuis, Nick Pease, Ortwin Schweitzer  
[info@canopyofprayer.eu](mailto:info@canopyofprayer.eu)  
[www.canopyofprayer.eu](http://www.canopyofprayer.eu)

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