



# Are We Living In The Last Days?

DISCOVERING GOD'S WORD BIBLE STUDY SERIES

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Are we living in the “last days?” You do not have to look far to find doomsday prophecies based on interpretations of the “last days.” Indeed, the Bible does talk about the “last days.” However, are we living in the last days *right now* – and what applications should we make of the answer?

## Bible Passages

Before considering the applications we should make concerning what the Bible teaches on this subject, let's spend some time considering the passages which identify the “last days.”

**(1) Matthew 24:3-14:** “Now as He sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, ‘Tell us, when will these things be? And what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?’ And Jesus answered and said to them: ‘Take heed that no one deceives you. For many will come in My name, saying, “I am the Christ,” and will deceive many. And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not troubled; for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places. All these are the beginning of sorrows. Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for My name's sake. And then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another. Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many. And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold. But he who endures to the end shall be saved. And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.’”

This chapter in Matthew (along with Luke 21) is commonly used to identify signs of the “last days.” We are often told that we are living in the last days because of the wars and rumors of wars, the famines, the pestilences, the earthquakes, the false teaching, and all of the evil things which happen today. However, Matthew 24 actually discusses two things. Notice that Jesus was

answering more than one question (in verse 3). First, in this section, Jesus was providing signs concerning the destruction of Jerusalem (which occurred in 70 A.D.). In verse 34, Jesus said that generation would not pass away before these things would take place. Then, in verse 36, Jesus begins to answer their question concerning His return. He says, “of that day and hour no one knows.” So, even though there are wars, famines, earthquakes, etc., these are not special signs that we are living in the “last days” – these were signs of Jerusalem’s impending destruction.

**(2) 2 Timothy 3:1-7:** “But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away! For of this sort are those who creep into households and make captives of gullible women loaded down with sins, led away by various lusts, always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.”

Many folks will look to these verses of Scripture in order to claim that we must be living in the “last days” today – because the world is full of the sorts of characteristics identified in this text. While this *does* demonstrate that we are living in the last days, also notice that Paul instructed Timothy, “from such people turn away!” Therefore, Timothy would even live during these last days! Furthermore, in verse 8, there is an example of two individuals who resisted the truth and had corrupt minds – even at that time.

**(3) 1 John 2:18-19:** “Little children, it is the last hour; and as you have heard that the Antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come, by which we know that it is the last hour. They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us; but they went out that they might be made manifest, that none of them were of us.”

Though some will claim that the Antichrist is a sign of Christ’s coming and the end of the world, notice the language in this text. John said that it was “the last hour” and that “many antichrists have come, by which we know that it is the last hour.” So, John said that he was living in the last times – almost 2,000 years ago!

**(4) Jude 1:17-19:** “But you, beloved, remember the words which were spoken before by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ: how they told you that there would be mockers in the last time who would walk according to their own ungodly lusts. These are sensual persons, who cause divisions, not having the Spirit.”

Again, Jude makes reference to the “last time.” However, notice that Jude is writing these words in the context of warning Christians about false teachers (read verses 3-4). So, Jude is simply pointing out that the false teachers who were present at that time were the fulfillment of what the apostles of Christ had promised – things which would happen in the “last time.”

**(5) 2 Peter 3:3-4:** “knowing this first: that scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts, and saying, ‘Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation.’”

Peter says that there would be scoffers who would come in the “last days” and scoff at the promise of Christ’s coming. However, notice that Peter says (in verse 5), “For this they willfully forget...” So, Peter was identifying things that were transpiring at that point in time!

**(6) 1 Peter 1:19-20:** “but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot. He indeed was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you.”

Notice carefully that Jesus had been “foreordained before the foundation of the world.” That is, God had an eternal plan of salvation He would accomplish through Jesus Christ. However, Jesus came “in these last times.” Therefore, Jesus’ coming would be for those who would live in these last times.

**(7) Hebrews 1:1-2:** “God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds.”

In earlier times, God revealed His will to the people in various ways. However, He now speaks to us through His Son (who lived on this earth and revealed the will of God). However, notice that this was even true when the book of Hebrews was written.

**(8) Acts 2:15-17:** “For these are not drunk, as you suppose, since it is only the third hour of the day. But this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: ‘And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, That I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh; Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, Your young men shall see visions, Your old men shall dream dreams.’”

On the Day of Pentecost in Acts 2, the Holy Spirit came upon the apostles and they began to speak in tongues. The Jews who were in Jerusalem for this occasion then began to question what was transpiring. Some were even questioning whether the apostles were drunk. In response, Peter quotes an Old Testament prophecy by Joel (in Joel 2:28-32) about things which would “come to pass in the last days.” However, notice specifically that Peter states the events which were transpiring at that time marked the fulfillment of Joel’s prophecy concerning the “last days”!

## **Applications**

After considering these passages about the “last days,” there are a number of conclusions that are reached. Some of these conclusions are correct applications of the texts while others are improper applications of the texts.

Certainly, an incorrect application of these texts would be to use them in such a way to try to identify a specific time when Jesus will return. There have been many individuals and religious groups who have attempted to use these passages as specific time indicators for when Jesus would return. However, despite the fact that the things which are going on throughout the world today are discussed in some of these passages, we must also observe the fact that these same things were going on in the 1<sup>st</sup> century! The wickedness in this world today is nothing new (remember, God wanted to destroy the world because of its wickedness thousands of years ago in Genesis 6)! Read Romans 1:28-32 to further see that the wicked things going on today are the same types of sinful things that were going on nearly 2,000 years ago!

Though it is improper to use these passages as time indicators for Christ's return (suggesting that His return is certainly in the very near future), these passages do warn us that Christ's return is imminent and that we are living in the "last days." The Christian/Gospel Age (that we are living in) is the last period of time before Jesus returns. This period began on the Day of Pentecost in Acts 2 (approximately 33 A.D.) and continues today. Therefore, we should be warned that these things (such as found in 2 Timothy 3:1-7) will be going on and that Jesus Christ is coming soon; but, that we do not know when He is coming – any more than the Christians in the 1<sup>st</sup> century knew when He was coming. It may be today – or it may be thousands of years in the future! The Scriptures simply do not tell us when He will come. They just warn us to be ready at all times (see Matthew 24:42-44)!

## **Conclusion**

Yes, we are living in the "last days." However, these "last days" began nearly 2,000 years ago. There is not going to be another time period after this Gospel Age is complete. Furthermore, we do not know when Jesus Christ will return – and must be prepared at all times! Let us embrace these truths and reject those false prophecies made by improper interpretations of these passages (Romans 16:17-18)!

### **Discovering God's Word Bible Study Series**

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