

LAST DAYS

2 Tim. 3:1-9

As we consider “the last days” we need to keep in mind that sometimes the Lord is referring to the entire age and other times He is speaking of the final days of this age. The context determines which.

Professing Christianity as the world usually sees it is not much different to them. Too often, in the professing church there is no visible difference in what is advertised as Christianity and what the world has. This is not the way the Lord wants it to be.

The church at Laodicea is a picture of the professing church of the last days just before the rapture (Rev. 3:14-20). It has a form of godliness but is very much like the world. As a matter of fact, the Lord is standing outside knocking at the door waiting for someone to respond to Him.

The Lord left us with the promise and the hope of His imminent return. **Acts 1:11**, “...Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.” **1 Thessalonians 4:16**, “For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:”

He left us no signs as to when this event will take place. He made His return imminent so that we would always be ready. He can come at any moment. **1 Thessalonians 5:1-2**, “But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night.” This means that He may come at any moment without any further warning. It has been that way since He ascended back to heaven and will remain that way until He comes for us at the rapture. We cannot know the day nor the hour when He will come for us. We are warned to be ready at all times.

Our text speaks of the last days. Sometimes the Lord is referring to the entire age and other times He is speaking of the final days of the age. The context must determine which.

I. THE LAST DAYS ARE THE ENTIRE AGE.

This age began at the resurrection of Christ and will end when He returns and sets up His kingdom here on earth. On the day of Pentecost this is what Peter refers to (Acts 2:14-21). Joel’s prophecy included the tribulation period.

The primary work of the Lord in this age is the building of His church. This occupies all but seven years of the age. When the church is completed, the Lord will remove it from the earth at the rapture. He will judge the world and return and setup His kingdom.

A. In these days God is speaking by His Son (Hebrews 1:1-4).

- 1. He is not speaking by dreams and visions.*
- 2. He is not speaking by signs and wonders.*
- 3. He is speaking by His Son Who is the Word and Who is revealed in His written Word.*

B. In these days there will be a major departure from the faith (1 Tim. 4:1-3).

Jude 3, “Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.” The faith is the body of truth that has been delivered to us by the apostles and others who have gone before us. It is the sound doctrine of the word of God. There is but one faith, and when men depart from it all kinds of evil results.

- 1. This departure is led by seducing spirits.*
- 2. This departure began in the 4th century led by Constantine.*

Rome had become the headquarters of the Babylonian religion. The chief priest when established in Rome took the title Pontifex Maximus, and this was imprinted on his mitre. When Julius Caesar (who like all

young Romans of good family, was an initiate) had become the head of the State, he was elected Pontifex Maximus, and this title was then held by all the Roman emperors down to Constantine the Great, who was at one and the same time, head of the church at Rome (he declared Christianity the state religion) and high priest of the Babylonian religion. The title was afterwards conferred upon the bishops of Rome, and is borne by the pope today, who is thus declared to be, not the successor of the fisherman-apostle Peter, but the direct successor of the high priest of the Babylonian mysteries, and servant of the fish god Dagon, for whom he wears, like his idolatrous predecessors, the fisherman's ring.

3. *This departure brings in doctrines of devils.*

- a. Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats
- b. Idolatry, worship before images
- c. Praying to saints
- d. Worship of the Virgin Mary
- e. Salvation by sacraments
- f. Purgatory

This is called Roman Catholicism and incorporates the Babylonian practices and teachings and places the truth of the Holy Scriptures into the hands of the pope who decides what is right and wrong. On many points the truth has been wholly obscured, while idolatrous practices are imposed upon the people as Christian sacraments, and heathen philosophies take the place of gospel instruction.

II. THE LAST DAYS ARE THE FINAL DAYS BEFORE THE RAPTURE.

The Lord left us no signs as to when the rapture will take place. He did, however, leave us some revelation concerning the condition within the professing church in the last days as the age draws to a close. We can know these conditions and not be surprised at His coming. **1 Thessalonians 5:4-5**, "But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness."

As we see those conditions developing all around us it should wake us up. **1 Thessalonians 5:6-9**, "Therefore let us not sleep, as *do* others; but let us watch and be sober. For they that sleep sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night. But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation. For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ,"

A. There will be perilous times.

2 Timothy 3:1-3, "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good,"

B. There will be a form of godliness.

2 Timothy 3:4-5, "Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away."

C. There will be rejection of sound doctrine.

2 Timothy 4:2-4, "Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away *their* ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables."

D. There will be rejection of Biblical standards and morals.

Jude 18-19, "How that they told you there should be mockers in the last time, who should walk after their own ungodly lusts. These be they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit."

E. There will denial of Christ.

2 Peter 2:1-3, "But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and

bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not.”

John refers to these as antichrists. **1 John 2:18-19**, “Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time. They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would *no doubt* have continued with us: but *they went out*, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us.” **1 John 4:3**, “And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that *spirit* of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world.”

E. There will be scoffers denying Christ's return.

2 Peter 3:3-4, “Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after 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 the creation.”

III. THE LAST DAYS ARE A TREMENDOUS CHALLENGE TO US (Heb. 10:19-25).

As perilous times come upon us, we must remain faithful to our Lord and keep our eyes on Him knowing that He is in control.

A. We must draw near in full assurance (v.22).

Proverbs 3:5-7, “Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths. Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the LORD, and depart from evil.”

B. We must be faithful to our profession of faith (v.23).

We must grow in grace and add to our faith. **2 Peter 3:17-18**, “Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know *these things* before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own stedfastness. But grow in grace, and *in* the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him *be* glory both now and for ever. Amen.”

C. We must be faithful to our church (v.24-25).

D. We must be faithful to keep ourselves unspotted from the world.

2 Peter 3:14, “Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless.” **2 Corinthians 6:17**, “Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you,”

If the Christian's life is not noticeably different from the world in a godly way, then the world cannot see any need for change. **1 Peter 2:11-12**, “Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul; Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation.”

E. We must be faithful to redeem the time.

Ephesians 5:14-17, “Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light. See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, Redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is.” **Colossians 4:5-6**, “Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time. Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man.”

Redeeming the time means to buy up the opportunities. We buy up every opportunity we get to witness to those around us and do our best to win them to Christ.