

# The End Of The Last Days

By Matt Leasher

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In the decades that followed the rebirth of Israel as a nation in 1948, Bible prophecy scholars have been declaring the realization that we are in the last days and that Christ is coming soon. But as the decades continue to roll by many have become weary of the message that we are in the last days and have presumed Christ's return to be far off. The problem with the people that are losing hope in Christ's soon return is that perhaps they do not understand just exactly what the last days are in light of the big picture.

Hebrews 1:1-2 tells us that the period known as being the “**last days**” began when Jesus Christ came into the world.

*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, (Hebrews 1:1-2).*

The Holy Spirit inspired the writer of Hebrews to inform us that the last days began nearly 2,000 years ago. What does that mean to us now? Many people, (including myself), believe that God works in dispensations and that the time period of man's governing the earth is 6,000 years divided into three sections. The first 2,000 years being approximately from Adam to Abraham. The next 2,000 years approximately from Abraham to Christ and the last 2,000 years, (hence the **last days**) being from Christ to the present. This could very well be the reason that the New Testament writers often referenced their day as being the **last days**, however to us it was nearly 2,000 years ago. Even though it seems so long ago to us for them to be referring to their day as the last days it was still within that last 2,000-year dispensation. They were just at the beginning of it. They knew about these dispensations. They knew that they were in the beginning section of the period of the

last days. If that was nearly 2,000 years ago then that means that we are at the **last** section of that same period known as the **last days**.

In 2 Peter 3:8 and Psalm 90:4 it tells us that “a day with the Lord is as a thousand years.” I don’t believe this is just an arbitrary statement. I believe this is written so that we can use it as a measuring rod for knowing the timetable of God’s plan for the redemption of mankind. So if a day is as a thousand years with the Lord then it may be that the six days of creation written in Genesis reflect the 6,000 years of man’s governing the world and that the 7<sup>th</sup> day of rest is the 1,000 year reign of Christ on earth that is written about in Revelation 20.

Hebrews 4:1-5 informs us that there is a period still yet to come that has been promised by God as a time of rest for His people.

*Therefore, **since a promise remains of entering His rest**, let us fear lest any on you seem to have come short of it. For indeed the gospel was preached to us as well as to them but the word which they heard did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in those who heard it. For we who have believed do enter that rest, as He has said: “So I swore in My wrath, they shall not enter My rest,” although the works were finished from the foundation of the world. **For He has spoken in a certain place of the seventh day in this way: “And God rested on the seventh day from all His works”**; and again in this place: “They shall not enter My rest.”*

*(Hebrews 4:1-5 emphasis added)*

Notice that this promise of rest for God’s people is about entering into **His rest** and the writer of Hebrews quotes the Genesis creation account of the 7<sup>th</sup> Day as he informs us about this coming period of rest. The writer switches back and forth from the 1<sup>st</sup> person to the 3<sup>rd</sup> person. The people that are being spoke about in the 3<sup>rd</sup> person that will not enter into His rest are those that were rebellious with hardened hearts that were in the wilderness for 40 years during the Exodus as he is quoting from Psalm 95 there.

The apostle Paul spoke of the “the fullness of time” in a manner that seems to support that God’s overall plan for man is set up in specific dispensations of time. In Galatians chapter 4 Paul is describing the timing in which God sent His Son into the world and he phrases it like this:

*“But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, that we may receive the adoption as sons.” (Galatians 4:4-5)*

If God’s dispensations for man are of three 2,000 year periods and Christ’s coming into the world was at the transition point from the 2<sup>nd</sup> period into the 3<sup>rd</sup> period which we are currently near the end of, then the phrase, “*when the fullness of time had come*” in the above verse seems to support this notion. Paul seems to be telling us that a certain dispensation of time had to be fulfilled before the Son of God could then come into the world, hence – a divine appointment! This implies that there is a predetermined scripted course of events that God has in place for us to know our position in history – or rather *His story!*

Israel becoming a nation again in 1948 is certainly the end time sign letting us know that things are beginning to wrap up and that we are coming close to the end of this last 2,000-year period. Since all of the prophecies about the return of the Lord in the end times involve Israel being back in their land we know that we are close to His return since Israel has re-emerged unto the world scene. Lets take a brief look at the scenario in the last days that involve Israel by going backwards from the time that the Lord Jesus Christ will be reigning on earth.

When Christ the Lord returns He will sit on His throne in Jerusalem, (see Ezekiel 43:7, Zechariah 14:16-21 and Matthew 19:28). His throne will be in the rebuilt Temple that will be in Israel. All of the nations of the world will be gathered to the Valley of Jehoshaphat, which is in Israel, traditionally in the Kidron Valley between the Temple Mount and the Mount of Olives. There the Lord will enter into judgment with them on account of His people and His heritage Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations and divided up His land, (Joel 3:1-2 *paraphrased*). This is likely where the “Sheep & Goat” Judgment will take place,

(Matthew 25:31-46). Just prior to this the Lord Jesus Christ will have physically returned to the earth to intervene and cut short the battle of Armageddon, a.k.a. Megiddo which is a real place in Israel, (Revelation 16:16). Here Christ will destroy the antichrist and false prophet and have Satan bound for 1,000 years. He will also save the human race from extinction for if He did not cut the days short of this battle no human flesh would survive, (Matthew 24:22). Three and a half years prior to this event the antichrist will have entered the rebuilt Temple in Jerusalem and will have declared himself to be God, (2 Thessalonians 2:4 & Matthew 24:15). Just prior to the antichrist entering the Temple the Two Witnesses appointed by God will be prophesying in Jerusalem probably right on the Temple Mount according to Revelation 11, for the first three and a half years of the Tribulation. So when we trace the prophesied end time events backwards from when the Lord will reign on earth to the beginning of the Tribulation we can see that Israel is the centerpiece of all that is to come in the last days.

Before God's 6,000-year plan for mankind is finished there will be 7 years of Tribulation on the earth as never has been before, (Matthew 24:21). This period of Tribulation is a time of testing for those that were too stubborn to come to Christ during the Age of Grace and a final time of purging Israel in preparation for the Kingdom of Christ to be set up there. Israel will finally come to know Christ as their Savior, (Zechariah 12:10). This will also be a time where God will purge the world of evil and wickedness ushering in a period of restoration in which the world will be restored to its formal state of perfection as it was in the time of Adam and Eve just after the creation.

The Rapture of the church is the next thing to take place on the prophetic calendar. There are no signs or events that must precede the Rapture. However, the Rapture must first occur before the antichrist can be revealed (2 Thessalonians 2:7-8), and before any of the Tribulation events can begin and yet we can see many of the Tribulation events being set up and falling into place on the world scene today. This is how we know that the Rapture is VERY close. What are some of the things that we are currently witnessing being set up that will occur in the Tribulation? Let's take a look at just a few of them.

1.) The current turmoil of the world economy – As I am writing this the current international world markets are collectively plummeting and the economy is failing on a global scale as never before. In the Tribulation the economy will be in dire straits. See Revelation 6:6 and James 5:1-6. This will result in a financially vulnerable world that will somehow allow a “one world order” where a world dictator takes control of all buying and selling known as the antichrist or “the beast”, (Revelation 13:11-18).

2.) The increase of earthquakes - Jesus told us that one of the things we are to watch out for, as a sign of His soon return, is the increase of *earthquakes in various places*, (Matthew 24:7). We live in a technological time where an earthquake can take place on the other side of the world and we will know about it in minutes. Back in Jesus’ day if an earthquake occurred on the other side of the world you would probably never hear about it. So we know that this prophecy is intended for our day and the use of technology has certainly kept us informed of the increase in earthquakes that we are witnessing and in various places!

3.) Cashless society - A mere 30 years or so ago it was hard to conceive how a world leader known as the antichrist would be able to monitor everyone so that they could not buy or sell unless they had his mark on their hand or forehead. Now with technology as advanced as it has quickly become not only is it possible but it is in the process of being set up! Cash would have to be eliminated for the antichrist to be able to electronically monitor all buying and selling. These days it is common for people to get paid on payday have their check electronically direct deposited and use their debit or credit card to spend that money without ever touching cash. The whole time all of their transactions are being documented. Cash could be eliminated and it wouldn’t really change the average way of life all that much. One of the motivations for the elimination of cash would be to end the war on drugs as all drug deals are done anonymously with cash as well as most other black markets. The country of Poland is purposely striving to become a cashless society by the year 2014!

4.) Technology - While technology has done wonders in the field of science and medicine, technology is also greatly assisting to help set up the system that the antichrist will use to control the world and everyone

in it. The microchip is already being used in some places in Europe to contain a person's personal information such as health records, citizenship status, police records, etc., and is about the size of a grain of rice that is implanted into the person's hand. It is also being used as a scanning device for entrance into secured buildings and identification. The micro chipping of animals to monitor their whereabouts has been in use for years so the same technique could just as well be used for humans in the future. Skeptics often say that it would be impossible for the antichrist to microchip everyone on earth but what they are forgetting is that with the combination of the Rapture and all of the people that will be killed in the early part of the Tribulation, (Revelation 6), there won't be nearly as many people on earth as there is now when the time comes that this would be implemented, (Revelation 13). Not to mention that there will be quite a few people that will not take the mark of the beast as well, (Revelation 20:4).

5.) Israel's enemies - All of the alliances that the Bible prophets have foretold would be against Israel in the last days are currently in place now. There is Russia, Turkey and Iran for the Gog-Magog War and Lebanon, Syria, Jordan (Palestinians), and Gaza for the Psalm 83 War. The time is also ripe for the fulfillment of a nuclear destruction of Damascus that seems to be strongly predicted in Isaiah 17. Damascus happens to be a current popular meeting place at the crossroads for all of these nations that plot against Israel. Egypt also has just recently broken its frail alliance with Israel adding to the list of nations that are against Israel. Libya is also mentioned as being in conjunction with the Gog-Magog posse, (Ezekiel 38:5), and we are currently witnessing the changing of the guard occurring there. In the end, the prophet Zechariah predicts that ALL of the nations of the world will eventually be against Israel, (Zechariah 12:3), but the nations that are predicted to be coalitions in the wars against Israel that shall usher in the beginning of the Tribulation are now currently in place.

These are just a few of the many things that point to the soon to come Tribulation period. To the average person most of this goes by unnoticed but to the Bible believing watchmen these things are screaming at us! They scream at us because we know that the Rapture will precede all of these things and that Christ has commanded us to watch for these things so that we'll know it is near and be able to warn others. It is our duty!

The apostle John is a perfect role model as being a New Testament watchman warning the brethren about being watchful in the times we live in. In his first epistle he said this:

*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. (1 John 2:18)*

John's warning about the coming antichrist is stated as being in the "**last hour**" which is where we are currently at in history. John certainly knew the judgments that would be coming upon the world, being the writer of the book of Revelation, (Christ being the author). So if John is warning us almost 2,000 years ago that the antichrist is coming then how much closer are we to it now! He warns us that *many* antichrists have come by which we know that it is the **last hour**. According to John, an antichrist is "*he that denies that Jesus is the Christ and denies the Father and the Son,*" (1 John 2:22). Obviously there can't be an "anti-christ" unless there was first a "Christ" (which means "anointed one"), and we know that to be Jesus of Nazareth and as I mentioned earlier in this article, the "**last days**" began when Jesus Christ was sent into this world.

When the last days are mentioned in the Old Testament it is usually phrased as "**in the latter days**" which implies a future time or dispensation, (see for example Deuteronomy 4:30 and 31:29), but when the last days are mentioned in the New Testament it is usually phrased as "**in these last days**" as being in a present era or dispensation, (see for example the above verse from 1 John 2:18 and Hebrews 1:1-2). This is further indication that "**the last days**" is a period or dispensation and not just an arbitrary statement that we are not able to know the time of. In fact, Daniel 8:19 confirms that the end of this age is for an "***appointed***" time.

*"And he said, "Look I am making known to you what shall happen in the latter time of the indignation; for at the appointed time the end shall be."* (Daniel 8:19)

The angel told Daniel that the end of this age of indignation is set for an appointed time, which means that there has been a preordained appointment made for the end time events that are to come. There is nothing arbitrary about it. We live in a predetermined age that has been predetermined by the sovereign Lord. See also Acts 17:31.

Many people tend to let their watchful guard down because of the statement that Jesus made saying that we don't know the day or the hour of His return and that only the Father knows that day and hour, (Matthew 24:36). This is true but Jesus also commands us to be watchful of the times and seasons so that that Day does not come upon us as a snare, (Luke 21:35 & Mark 13:35-37). There are more admonitions from our Lord Jesus about watching the times and seasons than there are about not knowing the day or the hour. In fact, Jesus rebuked the people of His day for not knowing the time of their visitation, (Messiah Jesus' first advent), even though they could predict the weather by watching the sky, (Luke 12:54-56). The only way the people would have known who He was and when He would be there is by searching the Scriptures and they only had the Old Testament at that time. So how much more should we be aware of the times we are living in pertaining to His Second Coming by searching the Scriptures that we have now. In the Old Testament Christ was concealed but we have the New Testament where Christ is revealed. The apostle Paul assured us that we who are Bible believing followers of Christ would not be in darkness concerning His return.

*But you, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this Day should overtake you as a thief. (1 Thessalonians 5:4)*

Judging from the time table that God has provided us in His Word, the signs He told us to watch for and the current events that are going on around the world, we can clearly see that we are not only living in the period of the "last days" but we are at the **end of the last days!** We are in the latter section of the last set out of three sets of 2,000-year periods. Due to discrepancies and differences in the early first few century calendars it is difficult to precisely pinpoint *exactly* where we are on God's timeline of His 6,000 year plan. However, we do know that Christ was walking this earth 2,000 years ago. While we may not know the day

or the hour we certainly know the season that we are living in and that should be more than enough to have us all looking up!

*“Now when these things begin to happen, look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption draws near.” (Luke 21:28)*