
BIBLE TALK

This week the question is: **Have the “last days” begun?**

Many people are looking at the events of recent days and have concluded that we are in the “last days.” They are predicting that the “Battle of Armageddon,” or the “Tribulation Period,” or the “Rapture,” or some other event is about to occur.

All of these suppositions are based on a system of interpretation called “dispensational-premillennialism.” With this system of interpretation, certain passages from the NT are taken to be predictions of what is happening in our day and time. All of this is made popular by authors like Tim LaHaye, Hal Lindsey, Billy Graham, and others.

Our question this week is simply this: **Does the Bible specifically give signs of the end of time and are we now living in those times?**

SIGNS OF THE END

First, does the Bible give specific signs of the end of time? The answer is: NO. Several times we are told:

1 Thessalonians 5:1-2

¹ But concerning the times and the seasons, brethren, you have no need that I should write to you.

² For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night.

Just a simple question here? The Lord said His second return would be like a “thief in the night.” Does a “thief in the night” usually give warning signs or indicator signs that he is approaching? Of course not.

The Lord's point is that He will return unexpectedly and therefore it behooves everyone to be ready constantly and watching. Jesus said:

Mark 13:35-37

³⁵ "Watch therefore, for **you do not know when the master of the house is coming**; in the evening, at midnight, at the crowing of the rooster, or in the morning;

³⁶ "lest, coming suddenly, he find you sleeping.

³⁷ "And what I say to you, I say to all: Watch!"

Since we cannot know when the Master is going to return, it is foolish for men to read Bible passages and think they can determine how close His return might be. The system of interpretation called "dispensational-premillennialism" is an extremely speculative and subjective system of interpretation.

THE "LAST DAYS"

But what about those passages which seem to speak about signs of the "last days"? How are we suppose to understand them?

We have time to just look at one such passage. Please notice:

Matthew 24:1-8

¹ Then Jesus went out and departed from the temple, and His disciples came up to show Him the buildings of the temple.

² And Jesus said to them, "Do you not see all these things? Assuredly, I say to you, not one stone shall be left here upon another, that shall not be thrown down."

³ 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?"

⁴ And Jesus answered and said to them: "Take heed that no one deceives you.

⁵ "For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will deceive many.

⁶ "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.

⁷ "For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places.

⁸ "All these are the beginning of sorrows.

In v6 Jesus gives signs to look for – wars, rumors of wars, and so forth. Many people interpret these to be signs of the end of time. But look carefully at the context and you will see what Jesus is speaking about.

In v3 the disciples ask three questions:

- When will these things be?
- What will be the sign of Your coming?
- What will be the signs of the end of the age?

The question, "*When will these things be?*", refers to the destruction of the temple and the city of Jerusalem. This occurred in AD 70. when the Roman army came and destroyed the city – just as Jesus predicted here. Notice:

Matthew 24

¹⁶ "then let **those who are in Judea** flee to the mountains.

²⁰ "And pray that your flight may not be in winter or on the Sabbath.

"those in Judea" – helps us to see that these signs are not of the end of the world, but are signs of destruction coming to Judea.

"the Sabbath" – refers to those living inside the walls of Jerusalem. On the Sabbath day the gates of the city were shut. If the Roman army came while the gates of the city were closed, the disciples of the Lord could not escape. Hence, the Lord told the disciples to pray that these things would not happen on the Sabbath.

So there would be absolutely no misunderstanding, notice:

Matthew 24:34

³⁴ "Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all these things take place.

“this generation” – refers to those people living during the lifetime of Jesus. See Mt. 11:16 and Mt. 12:41-42 as examples of how this phrase is used.

Jesus is telling us that everything prophesied before v34 will occur during the lifetime of that generation which lived in the first century. All these signs, which are commonly taken for signs of the “end of time” are actually signs of Jerusalem’s destruction.

The Lord then began to speak of the end of the world in v36. Notice:

Matthew 24:36

³⁶ "But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only.

In other words, there are no signs of the end of the world.

SUMMARY

In summary, the events of recent weeks have been terrible, but the Bible did not specifically predict them. Each passing day we are obviously one day nearer the end of the world than the day before, but there are no signs given to indicate the end of the world. The Lord will come as *“a thief in the night”* and we must all be constantly watching and waiting lest that day come upon us unaware.

All of the hype and sensational books which are being written are not based on accurate Bible interpretation. They are strictly speculative and rest solely upon the opinions of mere, uninspired men.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

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