

WHAT ARE THE LAST DAYS?

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Through the years, there has been much controversy over the “Last Days” and what that term means. Many in the religious world believe the last days refer to the time period when Jesus will rule upon David’s throne from Jerusalem for one thousand years, or that it is the time immediately prior to the return of the Lord.

There have been three religious dispensations or ages throughout the time that man has been in existence. The first was the Patriarchal age. During this period of time, God spoke to the head of the family in order to give instruction. An example of this is found in Gen. 18:19. This age lasted about 2,500 years from Adam to Moses. Under this rule, God’s laws were few in comparison to those that would come later. Paul declared, “And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent” (Acts 17:30). Though the laws were few and simple in nature, God still required complete obedience to His commandments (Heb. 2:2-3).

The second religious dispensation is known as the Mosaic age or the time of the Jews. This system was different in that, instead of a family system, God installed a national one. No longer would the father be the priest that would offer sacrifice for the family as Job did (Job 1:5). The Hebrews writer stated, “For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law” (Heb. 7:12). Therefore, the Law of Moses came into authority. Another difference was, that under this covenant, the laws of God were committed to writing. This law was never intended to be a permanent covenant between God and his people, but was instead to be a very temporary arrangement. Paul said, “For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh” (Rom. 8:3). The Hebrews writer said, “For *it is* not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins” (Heb. 10:4). Upon the death of Jesus the Old Law ceased to exist (Col. 2:14).

The third (and current) religious dispensation is the Christian Age or the “Last Days.” During the “Last Days” or the age of Christ, He has been given **all** authority over mankind (Mt. 28:18-20, emphasis mine) and it is Him that we are to hear and to heed. The Hebrews writer affirmed, “God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these **last days** spoken unto us by *his* Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; Who being the brightness of *his* glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high” (Heb. 1:1-3, emphasis mine).

The New Testament writers often used the expression “the last days” to refer to the time between Christ’s ascension to heaven and His return at the end of time. The first time we read these words is when Peter said on the Day of Pentecost, “But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; And it shall come to pass in the **last days**, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams” (Acts 2:16-17, emphasis mine).

There are many other passages that support the fact that the world is now in the last days and has been for almost two thousand years. To Timothy Paul said, “This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come” (2 Tim. 3:1). His statement points to the fact that these perilous times would occur

during the Christian age. These passages combined with others declare without doubt that the last days were in effect then just as they are now. Because of being in the last days, Peter said, “Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts” (2 Pet. 3:3). Again, it is clear that these writers were referring to the Christian age.

Within the “Last Days” there will ultimately be a “Last Day.” That will be the most important day in the history of man and will come with swiftness and surety (Mt. 25:31-34; Acts 1:9-11; 1 Thess. 4:16). On the last day, not only will judgment be passed, but this earth will be destroyed (2 Pet. 3:10). That is the reason Peter continued his statement, “*Seeing then that* all these things shall be dissolved, what manner *of persons* ought ye to be in *all* holy conversation and godliness” (2 Pet. 3:11).

At that time, the Lord will give unto every person their just rewards. We must make sure that we are ready for the “Last Day” as we live in the “Last Days.”