

The Last Days
Dr. Thomas M. Strouse

Introduction

“This amazing 2000-year-old prophecy describes the skepticism that prevails in the 21st century...(II Pet. 3:3). The prophecy indicates that the 19th century marked **the beginning of the ‘last days’ of the church age**, because it was in the 19th century that this prophecy began to be fulfilled to perfection. The 19th century witnessed the explosion of skepticism in the form of theological modernism, humanism, Unitarianism, Darwinian evolution, communism and agnosticism.” David Cloud, *O Timothy*, Vol. 29, Issue 10, Oct. 2012, p. 2.

Biblical Exposition

I. There are several expressions for “*the last days*” (ταῖς ἔσχαταις ἡμέραις).

A. “*The last day*” (15x)

1. “*And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at **the last day***” (Jn. 6:39).

2. “*He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in **the last day***” (Jn.12:48).

B. “*The latter days*” (13x)

1. “*When thou art in tribulation, and all these things are come upon thee, even in **the latter days**, if thou turn to the LORD thy God, and shalt be obedient unto his voice*” (Dt. 4:30).

2. “*But there is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets, and maketh known to the king Nebuchadnezzar what shall be in **the latter days**. Thy dream, and the visions of thy head upon thy bed, are these*” (Dan. 2:28).

C. “*The last days*” (9x)

1. “*And Jacob called unto his sons, and said, Gather yourselves together, that I may tell you that which shall befall you in **the last days***” (Gen. 49:1; cf. v. 10).

2. “*And it shall come to pass in **the last days**, that the mountain of the LORD'S house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it*” (Isa. 2:2)

3. “*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 2:17)

4. “*This know also, that in **the last days** perilous times shall come*” (II Tim. 3:1)

5. “*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*” (Heb. 1:2)

6. “*Knowing this first, that there shall come in **the last days** scoffers, walking after their own lusts*” (II Pet. 3:3)

D. “*The latter times*” (1x): “*Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in **the latter times** some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils*” (I Tim. 4:1).

E. “*The last time*” (4x).

1. “*Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time*” (I Pet. 1:5).

2. “*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*” (I Jn. 2:18).

3. “*How that they told you there should be mockers in the last time, who should walk after their own ungodly lusts*” (Jude 1:18).

II. The OT looked to the last days as the time when Messiah would come (Gen. 49:1, 10).

A. His Coming was seen as singular (Isa. 61:1-3)

B. Christ taught about His two comings (Lk. 4:18-21).

C. Likewise there are two comings of the Holy Spirit (Joel 2:28; Acts 2:28-32; Ezk. 39:29).

III. The last days began with the first coming of Christ (Heb. 1:2 and I Jn. 2:18).

IV. Apostasy will increase with intensity throughout the period between the First and Second Advents:

“But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived” (II Tim. 3:13).

V. Errors about the last days come from the faulty Protestant notion of Church Ages.

1. Protestants and protestantized Baptists have taught that there are seven church ages based on the seven churches of Asia.

2. They teach that we are currently in the Laodicean Church Age (i.e., the last age before the Rapture of the Church [*sic*] and therefore, “we are in the last days”). “Though every saved person is part of the body of Christ in a mystical and eternal sense...the NT therefore focuses on the church as an assembly,” and “I believe we are living today both in the Philadelphian and the Laodicean age.” David Cloud, *Revelation: Advanced Bible Study Series*, pp. 58 and 75, respectively.

Conclusion

The last days began with the first coming of the Messiah-King. The OT prophets viewed the Advent of the Lord as singular. The NT revealed that there are two comings of Christ and two comings of the Holy Spirit. The last days, starting with the First Advent, will increase in apostasy until the Second Advent of Christ. The last days did not begin in the 19th century, but in the first century. Proper biblical exegesis reveals the nature of the NT church which supports the eschatological truth in rightly dividing the word of God.