
BIBLE TALK

This week the question is: **Have the "last days" begun?** (This is part one of a two part series.)

Many people are looking at the events of recent days and conclude we are in the "last days." They predict 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, Jerry Jenkins, 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 supposed 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.

If you will notice carefully from this passage, Jesus started by saying, "*Take heed that no one deceives you.*" This should put us in the "*alert mode.*" What are we likely to be deceived by? Jesus said in verse six: "*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.*"

In other words, when we hear about wars and rumors of wars, these are not signs of anything. "*The end is not yet,*" Jesus said. These are not signs of anything because Jesus is teaching us this is how ordinary life will be in a fallen world. From the beginning of civilization men have been warring and fighting because men are sinners and have fallen from their original state of innocence. So the Lord is telling us specifically in Matthew 24:1-8 about things that are not signs of anything:

- Wars and rumors of wars
- One nation rising up against another nation
- Famines
- Pestilences
- Earthquakes, etc.

These are signs of nothing. These things merely describe life in a fallen world, but they are not signs that Jesus is about to come—so says Jesus Himself.

We will stop here for this week and continue next time with part two of this study.

Announcements

Well ... thanks for listening to our message this week. We invite you to visit our website www.WillOfTheLord.com. There you may download the notes and the audio file of the message you just listened to.

Call again next week when we consider a new subject on **Bible Talk**.