
BIBLE TALK

This week we continue with the question: **Have the "last days" begun?**

In our first study we noticed in **Matthew 24:1-8** that Jesus gave "signs that are not signs." Let me repeat that for emphasis. Jesus gave signs that are not signs of anything. He spoke of:

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

But then, after mentioning all of these "signs" He told us that these things are not signs of anything. Notice what He said. In verse six the Lord said:

⁶ "... See that you are not troubled; for all these things must come to pass, but **the end is not yet.**

These events which people commonly think of as "signs of the end of time" are not signs of the end of time at all. "The end is not yet," Jesus said. Again, in verse eight the Lord said:

⁸ "All these are the beginning of sorrows.

These earthquakes and wars and famines are only the beginning of many sorrows that will come along throughout the gospel age. In fact, these are sorrows that have existed from the beginning of creation after sin entered into the world.

But we move on now. Our question is: ***Have the last days begun?***

The Last Days

The Bible uses the phrase "*last days*" as a description of the gospel age which began when Jesus came to earth the first time in the first century. From the time the Lord came into the world the first time, until the time that He returns the second time, this period is called "*the last days*" in scripture.

In other words, the Bible sees the coming of Jesus into the world the first time as a pivotal point. Things changed forever when the Lord was born into this world in the city of Bethlehem in the days of Herod the King. Until the birth of the Lord, God's people were anticipating the coming of a Savior. All the prophets of the OT were prophesying of His coming to save us. All the laws of Moses, the tabernacle worship, the animal sacrifices, the festival days of the Jewish calendar—all of these things were pointing to the coming of the Lord. When the Lord came, the last days arrived. With the birth of the Lord came the fulfillment of God's promises to save us through His Son. Listen to the following two passages.

The first passage: Acts 2:16-17

Before I read this passage, let me preface it by saying this was the Day of Pentecost which occurred fifty days after the Lord's resurrection. The Holy Spirit was poured out on the apostles and they began to speak in tongues. When unbelievers heard the apostles speaking in tongues, they accused the apostles of being drunk with wine. But Peter explained the true cause of their miraculous abilities:

Acts 2:16-17

¹⁶ "But this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel:
¹⁷ 'And it **shall come to pass in the last days**, says God, That I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh; Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, Your young men shall see visions, Your old men shall dream dreams.

Peter said the miraculous powers given to the apostles pointed to the "*last days*" that were prophesied by the OT prophets. So the last days had already begun.

The second passage: Hebrews 1:1-2

Hebrews 1:1-2

¹ God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets,
² has in **these last days** spoken to us by *His* Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds;

This corroborates what Peter said in Acts 2. The "*last days*" began in the days of the Lord's first coming. In essence, we have been

living in the last days of earth's history for about two thousand years. The world will come to an end one day when Jesus returns from heaven to destroy the earth (2 Peter 3:10-12) and take His people to heaven (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18), but there will be no signs of when this will occur. When people talk about the "*last days*," they usually mean the final days of the world's history just before the Lord returns and destroys the earth, but when the Bible speaks of the "*last days*," it is speaking about the gospel age when Jesus came the first time and established His church and the gospel era. Those last days began in Bethlehem in the days of Herod the King.

Announcements

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