

Are We Living In Our "Last Days"

King Hezekiah was told by the prophet Isaiah to "Set your house in order, for you shall die and not live" (2 Kings 20:1; Isaiah 38:1). Rather than give up, "Hezekiah turned his face toward the wall, and prayed to the LORD" and "wept bitterly" (2 Kings 20:2-3; Isaiah 38:2, 3). God responded by telling Hezekiah through Isaiah, "I have heard your prayer, I have seen your tears; surely I will add to your days fifteen years" (2 Kings 20:5-6; Isaiah 38:4, 5). As a "sign" that his life would be extended, obviously a miraculous indication at Hezekiah's request, God moved the shadow of the sun backwards 10 degrees on the dial of Ahaz (2 Kings 20:7-11; Isaiah 38:7, 8). Hezekiah, it seems, took for granted this "gift" of his life's extension, and reacted rather badly.

"In those days Hezekiah was sick and near death, and he prayed to the LORD; and He spoke to him and gave him a sign. But Hezekiah did not repay according to the favor shown him, for his heart was lifted up; therefore wrath was looming over him and over Judah and Jerusalem" 2 Chronicles 32:24-25.

1. God no longer gives, nor identifies, such miraculous "signs" to prove the truthfulness of His words.

1) Jesus physically showed Himself to Thomas, but that evidence is written in the Book of John that we might also believe:

"And after eight days His disciples were again inside, and Thomas with them. Jesus came, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, 'Peace to you!' Then He said to Thomas, 'Reach your finger here, and look at My hands; and reach your hand here, and put it into My side. Do not be unbelieving, but believing.' And Thomas answered and said to Him, 'My Lord and my God!' Jesus said to him, 'Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.' And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name" John 20:26-31;

2) "The faith" has been "once for all delivered to the saints." Therefore there is(are) no addition(s) to "the faith" coming from God, and there are no other faiths that are equal to the revealed faith in the Bible.

"Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints" Jude 3.

The written Scriptures contain all the miracles necessary for faith, and if properly examined and understood, are completely adequate for the inquiring mind.

2. The written Word of God does teach us: a) the limitations of life; b) the certainty of death; and c) the finality of Judgment to follow.

a) Psalm 90:12: "So teach us to number our days, That we may gain a heart of wisdom;" Proverbs 27:1: "Do not boast about tomorrow, For you do not know what a day may bring forth;"

b) Ecclesiastes 9:5-6: "For the living know that they will die; But the dead know nothing, And they have no more reward, For the memory of them is forgotten. Also their love, their hatred, and their envy have now perished; Nevermore will they have a share In anything done under the sun;" Ecclesiastes 12:5: "For man goes to his eternal home, And the mourners go about the streets;"

c) Ecclesiastes 11:9: "Rejoice, O young man, in your youth, And let your heart cheer you in the days of your youth; Walk in the ways of your heart, And in the sight of your eyes; But know that for all these God will bring you into judgment;" Ecclesiastes 12:13-14: "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep His commandments, For this is man's all. For God will bring every work into judgment, Including every secret thing, Whether good or evil;" Romans 14:10: "But why do you judge your brother? Or why do you show contempt for your brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ."

3. On the other hand, God may (and often does!) providentially provide indications of impending destruction or death to give us time to:
"Set Our House In Order."

What if, instead of an inspired prophet like Isaiah coming to us, God gave us the same warning through:

- a)** friends or parents warning us of destructive behaviors;
- b)** medical information about dangerous health issues we are having;
- c)** knowledge of wars, conflicts, and violence on our neighborhood streets and around the world;
- d)** and ongoing disturbances and disasters upon the earth (earthquakes, tornadoes, hurricanes, torrential rains, etc.)? According to Haggai 1:11; 2:17; and Deuteronomy 11:16-17, God has used drought, blight, mildew, and hail against people to humble them, and would surely use these again.

If God were speaking directly to us today through an inspired prophet, He would again say: "Set your house in order, for you shall die and not live." But, then, maybe He has. Maybe God has already given us the last 15 years of our lives, but did not send a prophet to tell us when it started. We do know, from Ezekiel 18:32, that God said, "For I have no pleasure in the death of one who dies," says the Lord GOD. "Therefore turn and live!" It is true that, in 2 Peter 3:9, the Lord "is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance."

4. What if He has already given us an extension on our lives because we asked Him to? What are we doing to "set our house in order?"

a) Throw out the trash. Ephesians 4:31-32: "Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God in Christ forgave you." An unforgiving spirit for past slights ("unforgiving"), our self-righteous judgments of

others ("unmerciful"), the evil intent to harm those who harm us ("maliciousness"), all must go, along with all our other sins (Romans 1:28-32). Genuine repentance is sorrow for offending God and His Law (2 Corinthians 7:9-10). It is followed, not with personal relief or a feeling of "getting by this time," but by manifestations pleasing to God (2 Corinthians 7:11).

b) Insurance. First, provide yourself "fire insurance" by avoiding Hell.

Psalm 9:17: "The wicked shall be turned into hell, And all the nations that forget God;" Mark 16:15-16: "And He said to them, 'Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. 'He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned.'" Then, gather your relatives and close friends to be "present before God, to hear all the things commanded you by God" (Acts 10:24, 33).

c) Then serve God with whatever life we have left. Hebrews 12:28:

"Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear."

Are we already living in our "last days?"

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