

The Last Days re-visited

Lloyd Dale - 2002

Chapter one

THE RELIGIOUS, CULTURAL, AND SOCIETAL FAILURE OF DISPENSATIONAL ESCHATOLOGY

We have become completely convinced that the way eschatology has been taught and perceived in this country, especially since about 1917, has had a devastating impact on “the Church” in American and on American society. Contrary to what most Americans seem to think, **there are definite cultural implications that are produced by the manner in which eschatology is perceived and taught.** It is our considered judgment that prophecy teaching, as described herein, is a major cause of the “post-modern, post-Christian” developments in America today.

Far too many Americans read the Bible, especially the New Testament, as if it were a Book that was written directly by God to them today. Please do not misunderstand us, we hold a very high view of the Bible and we do recognize that it is profitable for us today. However, before it can be applied to us today, **we must first understand what each author meant for his intended first readers to understand from what he had written.** An excellent example of this is II Tim. 3:1-9. Paul wrote this letter to Timothy about 65 AD. It is clear from this letter and numerous other statements made by Paul and other New Testament writers that **THEY**; not we (the people of the 20th century), **were living in “the last days”**. Note especially Heb.1:1-2; 9:26-28; I Jn.2:18; and I Pet.1:20 etc.

For far too long the “pop prophecy” writers and others have ignored and/or otherwise rejected these **literal, clear and definite time indicators.** If we are willing to accept the time indicators which Jesus Christ gave us (Matt.10:22-23; 16:27-28; 23:36; & 24:34; 26:64; etc.) as the Apostle Paul and the other New Testament writers did, we will know that **THEY**, not we, **were living in the “last days,”** i. e. the “last generation” of the Mosaic Marriage Covenant system (world).

The false notion that “we are living in the last days” of planet earth (which, as we write, radio news reported that more than 80% of Americans believe that we are living in the last days) is and has been for many years a primary cause of the “Christian” withdrawal from the public square. This withdrawal, “to wait for the culture to get bad enough (II Tim.3:1-9, in their view) for the rapture to occur”, effectively anesthetized Christians from what was happening in the culture around them.

In his book “Revival” Owen Roberts states, “no matter what cultural or spiritual indicator we look at, it is certain that **the American church is having trouble in the spiritual warfare department.**”

- We are second, behind Brazil, in the number of “incoming missionaries.”
- Per capita giving today, in the midst of “prosperity”, is less than it was in the great depression.
- We hear all this nonsense that crime is the result of poverty. We are the wealthiest nation on earth and incarcerate a greater per cent of our population than any other nation on earth.
- North America is the only continent on the face of the earth where the national Christian population is not growing exponentially. Last year 250,000 out of 300,000 evangelical churches did not see one person come to faith.

The system of “End Times Prophecy,” now known as dispensational eschatology, which was Introduced by Morgan Edwards c. 1760 and popularized in this country in the early portion of the twentieth century has had a devastating effect on Biblical living in America.

In the book mentioned above, Owens lists 25 indicators of a backslidden condition. Most of those indicators of a backslidden condition have effectively been brought into our culture as the result of the “last days madness” that has paralyzed American Christians for the past 75 years. This condition was greatly exacerbated following the “Israel becoming a nation” event in 1948.

When American Christians began to believe erroneously that they were living in the “last generation” and thus, began to believe falsely that 2Timothy 3:1-9 was written directly to them; as a warning to them of the cultural conditions that must come to exist in “the last days;” prayer began to cease to be a vital weapon of the Christian life. The quest for Biblical truth was effectively neutralized and they became content with the knowledge of eternal things they thought that they had already acquired.

The false notion of a “rapture in this generation” that would take Christians out of the cultural mess they envisioned as the imaginary anti-christ took over and did his thing justified their almost total immersion into sports and entertainment. The dulling effect of this process effectually permitted the indulgence of sins of the body and the mind without any apparent tinge of conscience and Christian aspirations of holiness ceased to be dominant in their life and thinking.

It became easier to mouth the words of Christian songs without thought and/or heart. The prevalent use of the Lord’s name being taken in vain in society became normal because, after all Paul told Timothy that, that was the way it would be in our generation of “the last days.” As this desensitizing process continued it became easier and easier to watch degrading movies, T. V. and read debilitating literature. It then became easy to permit the slightest excuse to be sufficient to keep them from their spiritual duty and

opportunities. It became normal to accept their lack of spiritual power and not seek for it because “the Bible tells us that it is going to happen this way and there is nothing that we can do about it”. So the “salt” lost its savor as Christians adjusted happily to the world’s life style and easily permitted injustice and human misery to exist unchallenged around them while they watched the church fall into spiritual declension and permitted the word of God to lose its power.

They perceived themselves to be rich in grace and mercy and marveled that they were to be the godly generation to be raptured out of this crazy world. Their tears dried up and the hard, cold facts of their miserable spiritual existence cannot unleash them.

We readily admit that the above scenario is apparent in each individual by widely varying degrees. We are describing **a general trend in society as the result of this falsely perceived “last days” madness** not the reaction of any particular individual.

We are not living in the “last days”. We are not “the terminal generation”. Jerry Falwell and millions of Americans have unfortunately been deceived, the anti-christ is not alive today and Christ will not come back in ten years or less.

Properly read and understood, the New Testament clearly and decisively teaches that the Parousia of Jesus Christ was to and in fact did occur in the first century. These facts revealed in the New Testament are ably presented by several current scholars and authors.