

“The Last Days” revisited

Appendix A

THE NEW TESTAMENT CONFIRMATION OF ~~The Old Testament standard behind the statement, “in these last Days”~~ by the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews

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I. INTRODUCTION

Nearly everyday in the world in which we live we hear (in one form or another) the mantra:

We are living in **the last days**, the end is near, and time is running out. The Bible is full of prophecies that are being fulfilled daily that all point to the fact that we are indeed living in **the last days**. Christians who read the Bible with regularity, and attend a ekklesia that preaches the Word of God in its undiluted form have an awareness within them that the time that we are living in is indeed **the last days!**¹

However, many “Christians who read the Bible with regularity, and attend a ekklesia that preaches the Word of God in its undiluted form” have **no such** “awareness within them that the time in which we are currently living in is indeed **the last days!**” *We understand the Bible in an entirely different manner.*

The purpose of this paper is to demonstrate that the people who preach and those who believe the above mantra, are seriously in error, and that this “awareness within them” is a false witness!

¹ Extracted from a message by Rev. T. J. Shockley printed in the November 13, 2001 issue of the Dakota Herald published weekly in Lemmon, South Dakota.

We will demonstrate that the people living in the twenty first century are not living in the “last days.” We will also demonstrate that “the last days” were prophesied in the Old Testament and that they did in fact occur in the first century, and that the biblical term “**the last days**” as used in the New Testament **always refers to the last days of the Mosaic Marriage Covenant consummated at Mt. Sinai and nothing else!**

Many Christians have told this writer that “in the end our different understanding of what the Bible teaches about **the last days** doesn’t really matter,” while that may be true; in reality **it does matter a great deal between now and “the end.”** (Whatever and whenever that might be.) Even as this document is being produced local, area, national and international decisions, based on the erroneous eschatological teachings of Billy Graham, Hal Lindsey, Dr. Tim LaHaye, etc., are being made. These decisions have a great effect upon each one of us as George W. Bush clearly demonstrated in his press conference tonight (03-07-03)!

However, the mantra continues:

We are living in **the last days**, YHWH is coming soon. He told those who watched Him ascend that He would return again. I believe we are just about at that point where this current age of Jesus being bodily in heaven and believers being bodily on earth is about to end, and we shall be changed and be with Him, and just in case you didn’t happen to know what season it is friend, I want to tell you today that time is running out. Don’t take my word for it; **look into the calendar of God’s Word for your self.**² (Emphasis added)

The above statement could easily be expanded by quotes from thousands³ of believers, and it reveals a terrific aberration in the thinking of these multiplied thousands of Christians. *The notion that the biblical phrase “the last days” refers to the time of the twenty first century in which we now live is **an error of epoch portions.***

² Ibid.

³ This view has dominated every Christian group that this author was involved with and most books he read for the first fifty five years of his life, and has currently reached epidemic proportions as a result of the ‘Left Behind’ mania.

The advice to “look into the calendar of God’s Word for your self” is good advice. Many have practiced this excellent advice for many years and have looked long and deeply into Yahweh’s Word. Yahweh’s truth may be known! We have His word now, so His Truth may be known now, **if we are only willing to see and hear it.**⁴ And when it is known, we shall all know that the New Testament phrase “**the last days**” always and only refers to **the last days** of the Mosaic Marriage Covenant which the author of the letter to the Hebrews clearly states was, “getting old and decaying...ready to vanish away,”⁵ in “**the last days**” even as he wrote his letter to those **first century** Hebrew Christians. In this paper we shall present what we have found out about “the last days or last times.”

II. Argument

While we definitely affirm the need for each person to study the Word of God for himself, **we recognize that unfortunately far too many people do not do that.** Of those who do, most read and study the New Testament of the Bible as *if it were written from God directly to them with a total disregard for what the first century authors expected their first century readers to understand from what they had written.* This is especially true when it comes to the study of the “**last days.**”

What then is the real biblical time and event meaning of the phrase “*the last day?*”

⁴ Matthew 13:11-17.

⁵ Hebrews 8:13.” “In speaking of a new covenant, he made the first one obsolete. And what is obsolete and growing old is about to vanish away.” (Heb 8:13)

Many Christians, from the apostolic fathers to the present have erroneously assumed that it has reference to the last day of life on this earth, and the end of the geo-physical cosmos, but is this really the proper time and event reference for this phrase? The erroneous notion that the phrase “**the last days**” and its equivalents in Scripture is referencing the end of planet earth has led to much confusion and conflict in our world, especially in the ekklesia.

Three incorrect views of the last days

The highly respected Christian theologian, apologist and author C. S. Lewis stated:

The grounds for modern embarrassment about this (second coming) doctrine fall into two groups, which may be called the theoretical and the practical.

... “Say what you like,” we shall be told, “the **apocalyptic** (last days) **beliefs** of the first Christians have been *proved* to be **false**. **It is clear from the New Testament that they all expected the Second Coming in their own lifetime**. And, worse still, they had a reason, and one which you will find very embarrassing. Their Master had told them so. He shared, and indeed created, their ***delusion***. He said in so many words, ‘this generation shall not pass till all these things be done’. And **He was wrong**. He clearly knew no more about the end of the world than anyone else.”

It is certainly the **most embarrassing verse in the Bible**.⁶ (Comments and emphasis added)

This is an incredible statement. C. S. Lewis ostensibly believed that Jesus Christ, the Sovereign Son of God; God in flesh, could be ignorant, wrong, delusional, misleading and a source of delusion in others. His Jesus was certainly a different Jesus than the one we see in the Scriptures and whom we are instructed to love, worship, and serve therein. Our Sovereign Lord **Jesus Christ is incapable of being wrong** in any way about anything! Anything less is not the Jesus Christ of the Bible.

⁶ The World’s Last Night, and Other Essays, C. S. Lewis, Harcourt, Brace, and Company.

The much more liberal Rudolf Bultmann, considered by some to be “the most influential New Testament scholar of the twentieth century,”⁷ approached this obvious dilemma from a different angle than Lewis. Bultmann believed that the supernatural events of the New Testament were simply “mythology.” He believed that it was impossible to “use electric lights and radios and, in the event of illness, avail ourselves of modern medical and clinical means and at the same time believe in the spirit and wonder world of the New Testament...we must be clear that we can represent this as the attitude of Christian faith only by making the Christian proclamation unintelligible and impossible for our contemporaries.”⁸ Thus, bound by this foolishness, Bultmann had no recourse except to believe that “[m]ythical eschatology is finished basically by the simple fact that **Christ’s parousia did not take place immediately as the New Testament expected it to...**”⁹ (Emphasis added)

Amazingly, Bertrand Russell, the renowned atheist concurred with C. S. Lewis’ and Rudolf Bultmann’s assessment of this situation as he wrote:

I am concerned with Christ as He appears in the Gospels, taking the Gospel narrative as it stands,...He certainly thought His second coming would occur in clouds of glory before **the death of all the people who were living at that time**. There are a great many texts that prove that. He says, for instance, “Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel till the Son of Man be come.” Then He says, “There are some standing here which shall not taste death till the Son of Man comes into His kingdom”; and there are a lot of places where it is quite clear that **He believed that His second coming would happen during the lifetime of many then living**. That was the belief of His earlier followers, and it was the basis of a good deal of His moral teaching...**He thought that the second coming was going to be very soon**...In that respect, clearly He was not so wise as some other people have been and He was certainly not superlatively wise.¹⁰ (Emphasis added)

⁷ Bultmann, Rudolf, *New Testament & Mythology and other basic writings*, selected, edited, and translated by Schubert M. Ogden, back cover.

⁸ Ibid, page 4.

⁹ Ibid, page 5.

¹⁰ Russell, Bertrand, *Why I Am Not a Christian*, edited by Paul Edwards, A Touchstone Book, Simon and Schuster, pages 16-17.

The three examples given above demonstrate that when evangelical, liberal, and atheistic readers tackle the New Testament they readily see that the New Testament clearly teaches that the “last days” were to occur during that first century generation. However, they generally seem to miss the obvious conclusion that these things did in fact occur during the first century. Of course, the reason they missed the obvious first century fulfillment of all the events to which Christ referred was because they were all aware and accepting of the erroneous teaching by the ekklesia that the phrase “**last days**” and its various equivalents was referencing the “**last days**” of the **entire heaven and earth cosmos**.

The truth, of course, is that this verse, “this generation shall not pass till all these things be done” is **not** an embarrassment, the apocalyptic beliefs of Jesus Christ and the first century Christians have **not been proven false, nor mythological** rather it is C. S. Lewis, Rudolph Bultmann, Bertrand Russell, and all who think like them that are proven wrong.

However, with Bultmann and Russell in agreement, Lewis correctly stated, “**It is clear from the New Testament that they all** (first century Christians) **expected the Second Coming in their own lifetime**”. He was also correct in stating, “**they had a reason...Their Master had told them so.**” This begs the question: Why did Jesus tell His disciples that the “**last days**” which would include His second coming would occur in their lifetime? Is it possible, yea even probable that Jesus did not see the “**last days**” as the end of the earthly cosmos, but instead He properly understood the “last days” to be the days for the fulfillment of prophecies Moses and the other Hebrew prophets had given Israel about the end of the cosmos of the Mosaic Marriage

Covenant and that the cosmic ending language used to describe this end of the Mosaic Marriage Covenant cosmos was in keeping with similar language used by these prophets in the Old Testament.

Moses repeatedly told the Israelites that received “the Law” at Sinai that the cosmos of the Law (Mosaic Marriage Covenant) would end at a period of time which Moses referred to as the “**last days**,”¹¹ as did Jeremiah¹², Ezekiel¹³, Daniel,¹⁴ and Hosea¹⁵.” Thus it appears that the phrase “the last days” is actually referring to an end time event completely different than the fiery destruction of the planet and its universe as is taught by so many modern religio-science fiction Bible prophecy teachers.

The phrase “the last days’ was in fact referring to another end time event, the end of the shadows¹⁶ of the Mosaic Marriage Covenant in the fiery destruction¹⁷ of the temple and the city of Jerusalem; and their replacement with the realities of the New Covenant in the blood of Jesus.¹⁸

This correct answer comes from the Scriptures; so let us see what the Scriptures have to say about this!

Many Scriptures provide us with instruction in this matter. However, because of time and space constraints, we will only be able to look at a few of these Scripture passages here.

The last days as presented in the Old Testament

¹¹ Note the similarity to the NT phrase “last days” in Nu.24:14, Deut.4:30, 31:29

¹² Jeremiah 23:20, 30:24, 48:47, 49:39

¹³ Ezekiel 38:16

¹⁴ Daniel 2:28; 10:14

¹⁵ Hosea 3:5

¹⁶ See Colossians 2:17, Hebrews 8:5, and 10:1.

¹⁷ 2Peter 3:7, 10-12

¹⁸ See Luke 22:20; 1Corinthians 11:25.

The first Old Testament passage, of the many that establish that the last days would occur in the first century, is Genesis 49. Verse 1 states that “Jacob called unto his sons, and said, gather yourselves together, that I may tell you *that* which shall befall you in the **last days**.” (Emphasis added) The direct correlation between Jacob’s prophecy to his sons, especially the prophecy to Judah, and the New Testament letter to the Hebrews is no accident. Jacob prophesied that Judah would be praised by his brethren and that the sceptre would not depart from him until the coming of Shiloh. Jacob’s use of Shiloh, which is a euphemism for the Messiah, in this prophecy established that the gathering of the people unto the Messiah would occur in the last days¹⁹ and then the praise and the obedience of the people would properly be given to the Messiah. Jacob prophesied concerning the “last days of the Mosaic Marriage Covenant and the advent of the Messiah which is the basic theme underlying the letter to the Hebrews.

Many try to get around this clear “last days” statement by various devices, however, the declaration of Jacob/Israel to his son Judah in verses 8-12 clearly and unequivocally connects this “last days” statement to the days of Jesus Christ in the first century,²⁰ including His Parousia: “He washed His garments in wine, and His clothes in the blood of grapes” (v.11b, cf. Revelation 14:14-20; 19:15, et al.).

Moses told the children of Israel that he knew “that after his death” they would “utterly corrupt themselves...do evil...and turn aside from” Yahweh’s way “to provoke Him to wrath...and evil will befall you in **the last days**.”²¹ The Hebrew word translated

¹⁹ Simmons, Kurt, Esq., “The Last Times,” Preterist Central. Com, p. 1.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ See the full context of Deuteronomy 4:25-31; 31:29-30; cf. Leviticus 26.

last in these verses is ‘achariyth pronounced akh-ar-eeth’ and Hebrew lexicons²² generally define this word as “end” or “last.” While it is sometimes translated into various other words it is preponderantly translated “end” in most English translations. Thus Moses’ use of this word in the above passage and others²³ is an obvious reference to the end or last days of the Mosaic Marriage Covenant. This is perhaps most clearly established by Moses’ statement “*when you are in tribulation*, and all these things have come upon you in the last (end) days;”²⁴ thus showing clearly that Moses fully expected “tribulation” and “last days to be conjoined in a fashion similar to that found in the New Testament.”²⁵

Moses begins this Deuteronomy 4:25 with the statement:

"When you shall beget children and children's children and you shall have **remained long in the land...**"

The above statement clearly implies many generations and a **long time** in the land before they "shall corrupt *themselves* by making graven images...and do[ing] evil in the sight of Yahweh your God and provoke[ing] Him unto anger." (Cf. 2Kings 17:7-18, 21-23)

While stressing many generations and a **long time** in the land in verse 25 Moses now changes his emphasis to **soon** in verse 26 as a result of the fulfillment of the events in verse 25c and states:

"I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day (i.e. the time when they have done all the things itemized in verse 25 to provoke God unto anger - 2Kings 17:7-18, 21-23) that **you shall soon** (i.e. soon after they had provoked God unto anger) utterly **perish from off the land...**you shall utterly **be destroyed** and YHWH shall **scatter you among the gentiles** (cf.

²² Examples: Online Bible Hebrew Lexicon, New American Standard Hebrew Lexicon online, Strong's Hebrew Lexicon online and many others.

²³ See Numbers 24:14 and Deuteronomy 4:30

²⁴ Deuteronomy 4:30.

²⁵ Cf. Matthew 24:29-31, et al.

Hosea 8:8; Amos 8:8-9) and you shall be left few in number among the gentiles where YHWH shall lead you." (Emphasis and comments added.)

While it is true as some say that "Israel sinned. God punished her. She repented, and cried for relief, and God delivered her," several times in her history; there is only one time in the history of the children of Israel when they were "scattered among the Nations/gentiles" and these events were completely fulfilled as a result of idolatry and harlotry and God destroyed (Amos 9:8) the kingdom of Israel (i.e. caused to cease the kingdom of the house of Israel - Hosea 1:4c) and scattered her among the Nations/gentiles (Hosea 8:8; Amos 7:11; 9:9; et al.). That one and only time was, of course, when Israel was taken into the Assyrian Captivity, Exile, and Diaspora in the 8th century B.C.

When the Assyrians finished with Israel there was "none left but the staff of Judah" (2Kings 17:18c; 18:13) which was Jerusalem, the capital city of Judah (2Kings 19: 30-31) which God spared by divine intervention (2Kings 20:6) in fulfillment of His promise (cf. Amos 9:8b; 2Kings 20:6; Isaiah 37:7, 35-38) to Hezekiah. Israel had been completely "carried away" and placed in the cities of the Nations/gentiles (2Kings 17:6) and the author of 2Kings specifically states that this was done "because they obeyed not the voice of YHWH their God, but transgressed His covenant, and **all that Moses the servant of YHWH commanded...**" (18:12).

In verse 29 Moses continues, "But if from there (i.e. their Diaspora among the gentiles) you shall seek YHWH your God you shall find, If you seek him with all your heart and with all your soul (Cf. Matthew 22:37; Mark 12:30; Luke 10:27).

Now Moses comes to verse 30:

When you are in tribulation (distress because) **all these things have come upon you in the last days**; if you turn to YHWH your God and shall be obedient unto His voice... He will not forsake you... (For YHWH your God is a merciful God)" "and so all Israel shall be saved" (Rom 11:26).

It seems to this writer that taken as a whole in context and within the context of the whole Biblical story of Israel that this passage must be a prophecy about the "last days" of the Mosaic Covenant as are several others in the Old Testament. (See Appendix A for a list of these Old Testament prophecies about the "last days.")

Next we shall look at passages found in the book of Daniel. In Daniel chapter two (2) we read that Nebuchadnezzar, the Chaldean king of the Great Babylonian Empire, had a dream that troubled him greatly. Thus he ordered the wise men of his empire to tell him what the dream was, and then to explain what the dream meant. None of them could tell the king his dream, and the king ordered them slain, however, Daniel, actually Daniel's God – Yahweh - intervened through Daniel and saved them.

The dream and the explanation of the dream were "revealed unto Daniel in a night vision." (2:19) Thus Daniel informed the king that "there is a God in heaven that reveals secrets, and makes known to the king Nebuchadnezzar what shall be in **the last days**...(emphasis added)"²⁶ of the Mosaic Marriage Covenant. Daniel then explained to the king that he dreamed of a great, bright image that resembled a man. The head of the image was of gold, the chest and arms were of silver, his thighs were of brass (32), the legs were iron, and the feet were of iron and clay mixed (33). Then the king saw a stone, cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet and broke the feet into pieces (34), and the entire image crumbled into pieces and disappeared.

²⁶ Daniel 2:28, emphasis added

However, the stone that smote the image became a great kingdom, and filled the whole earth (35).

Daniel informs the king that the image represented four great kingdoms that would each in turn rule the covenant world, and that he (Nebuchadnezzar) was the “head of gold, the first and greatest kingdom.”⁽³⁸⁾ And after him there shall arise another kingdom (silver) inferior to him, and the third kingdom (brass) would precede the kingdom of iron which had the feet of iron (Romans) and clay (Jews) which symbolized a kingdom which would be partly strong and partly broken (v.42) because of Daniel’s people the Jews being intermingled with the other people of the kingdom (v.43).

Daniel also explained that a fifth kingdom; “the stone” kingdom which would “fill the whole earth” (v.34-35), would be established “during the days of the kings” (v.44) of these kingdoms (when) “the God of heaven shall set up a (unique new covenant) kingdom which shall never be destroyed...and it shall stand for ever.” The New Testament conclusively demonstrates that this “stone kingdom” was established during the days of the early kings of the Roman Empire, which would seem to establish Daniel’s fourth kingdom as the Roman Empire.

In Daniel chapter seven we read of a vision Daniel had during the third year of the reign of King Belshazzar of Babylon. In this vision he saw four great kingdoms, which were depicted as great beasts. These great kingdoms were the same kingdoms that were represented by Nebuchadnezzar’s great image. A messenger from Yahweh explained the meaning of the vision to Daniel.

According to Yahweh’s messenger “the fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom” (7:23). This fourth kingdom of “iron teeth” (7:7) is the same kingdom of iron of

Nebuchadnezzar's great image. Daniel's vision reveals the additional information that from this fourth kingdom eleven "horns/kings" "will arise"²⁷ and that the eleventh "horn/king" will make war with the saints for three and one half years (7:21-25).

In Daniel 2:44 we read that:

...in the days of these kings the God of heaven shall set up a **kingdom (the 5th), which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but** it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, **and it shall stand for ever.** Forasmuch as you saw that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it broke in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold; the great God has made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter: and the dream *is* certain, and the interpretation thereof sure. (Daniel 2:44-45, emphasis and comments added)

Please note that this kingdom of heaven as established by Yahweh through Jesus Christ **has no end.** It is an everlasting kingdom. The apostle Paul refers to this kingdom in Ephesians 3:21 as the Ekklesia of Jesus Christ for all generations, age of the ages.

In the seventh chapter Daniel describes his own vision about these kingdoms: The first portion of his vision looks far into the future to the time of the ascension of Jesus Christ!

I saw in the night visions, and, behold, *one* like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And **there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom,** that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: **his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom which shall not be destroyed.** (Daniel 7:13-14, emphasis and comments added)

The second portion covers that period of time that effectually brings an end to the authority of four human kingdoms over the house of Judah (Jews), and the full implementation of the new kingdom both of which occurred at the destruction of the

²⁷ Hartman, Louis F. and Di Lella, Alexander A., The Book of Daniel, Hartman, The Anchor Bible, Doubleday, New York, 1977, p.204.

Jewish temple, the city of Jerusalem, and the breaking of the power of the Jews (Daniel 12:7) in the first century.

But the judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and to destroy *it* **unto the end**. (Daniel 7:26-27, emphasis and comments added)

Many people have incorrectly assumed that the phrase “the end” is a reference to the end of planet earth [world], however, the context of Daniel and the greater context of the Old Testament demonstrates that this is a reference to the end of the Mosaic Marriage Covenant.

In chapter 10 Daniel records another vision and states that a messenger from Yahweh came to him and stated, “Now I am come to make you understand what shall befall your people (the Jews) in **the last days**: for yet the vision is for many days.”²⁸ Thus Daniel came to understand that the ultimate fulfillment of these visions would not occur until a “long”²⁹ time in the future.

The passages above have a negative connotation of the last days with a focus on the destruction of the Jewish state. There is, however, a much more positive side to this “last days” picture. The last days, in addition to the judgment of God, also marks the establishment of the Messianic kingdom. Thus there are two other Old Testament passages that we think must certainly be included here:

And it shall come to pass in **the last days** *that* the mountain (kingdom) of Yahweh’s house shall be established in the top of the mountains (kingdoms), and shall be exalted above the hills (little kingdoms); and all gentiles shall flow unto it. (Isaiah 2:2, emphasis added)

But in **the last days** it shall come to pass, *that* the mountain (kingdom) of the house of Yahweh shall be established in the top of the mountains (kingdoms), and it shall be exalted above the hills (little kingdoms); and people shall flow unto it. (Micah 4:1, emphasis added)

²⁸ Daniel 10:14, emphasis added

²⁹ Daniel 10:1

It is generally understood by Bible scholars that the lexeme “mountain” as used in these two passages is a symbol for the “kingdom of God.” Thus, this mountain of Yahweh’s house is the New Testament kingdom of Yahweh. The two Scripture passages shown above clearly demonstrate that: the kingdom of Yahweh, i.e. the Messianic kingdom, of which Daniel wrote in such detail, will be established in the “**last days**” of the Mosaic Marriage Covenant.

In the N. T. the apostle Paul speaks about this 5th kingdom and confirms its duration.

Unto him glory in the ekklesia by Christ Jesus throughout all generations, **the age** (“*without end*” KJV) of the ages. Amen. (Ephesians 3:21)

We have now demonstrated from Yahweh’s Holy Word that **there is no end to the 5th kingdom that was established by Jesus Christ** during the days of the kings of fourth kingdom which was the Roman kingdom. Because this 5th kingdom **does not have an end**, Martha’s phrase “at the last day” in John 11 cannot possibly be referring to the last day of life on planet earth! It appears that many Christians have misunderstood and misapplied the phrase “**the last day(s)**” as it is used in the New Testament. This may have occurred because *we have neglected to properly study the Old Testament*.

From the Old Testament we have learned the true identity and timing of the “last days”. While we do not have the space in this paper to continue to discuss each of these Old Testament passages in detail, we list them in an appendix of this paper so that the reader may see them as a complete unit. A similar, careful analysis of each of

these passages will conclusively demonstrate the accuracy and truth of our present argument.

Above it has been demonstrated that from Moses through the prophets of Israel there was a consistent expectation of the “**last days**” of the Mosaic Marriage Covenant. As the time passed, the Hebrew prophets revealed that the Mosaic Marriage Covenant would end with the advent of the Messiah and His inauguration of the New Marriage Covenant through which the Messiah would claim his bride, spotless and pure.

The last days according to the New Testament

The New Testament author of the letter to the Hebrews, fully conscious of the Old Testament prophecies about the last days³⁰ picking up where the writers of the Old Testament left off, confirms what has been written above about the Old Testament’s declaration of the last days as they pertain to the last days of the Mosaic Marriage Covenant which is the true meaning and referent of the phrase “the last days.” He states:

Yahweh, who at various times and in different ways spoke in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Has **in these last days** spoken unto us by *his* Son, whom he has appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the ages.....but now once in the end of the AGE (last times) He has appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. (Hebrews 1:1-2, 9:26, emphasis added)

This direct correlation between the “last days” prophecies in the Old Testament, especially Jacob’s prophecy, and this statement in the letter to the Hebrews is no accident. The apostle Peter also confirmed this correlation between the Old Testament “last days” prophecies and the New Testament:

(Jesus) who was foreordained before the foundation of the world was **manifest in these last times for you...the end of all things is at hand...** (1Peter 1:20, 4:7, emphasis added)

³⁰ “The Last Times,” Simmons, Kurt, Esq. p.1.

In the historical context of the New Testament, the authors of New Testament Scriptures are writing to first century Christians that are living in the Roman Empire, c. 45-68 AD. For almost thirty (30) years the Christians within the Roman Empire had been undergoing bitter opposition and persecution at the hands of that faction of Judaism that had rejected their Messiah. This persecution had begun in Jerusalem with the stoning of Stephen³¹ and continued to escalate as the persecutors followed the Christians wherever they went³² throughout the Roman Empire. Many Christians that had fled to Rome had experienced this persecution and Paul knew that it was going to get a lot worse in the days ahead as the Roman government had joined the Jews in persecution of the Christians.

With that thought in mind, Paul wrote to Timothy:

Now the Spirit speaks expressly, that in **the last times** some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; ... This know also, that in **the last days** perilous times shall come. (1Timothy 4:1-2 & 2Timothy 3:1, emphasis added)

Contrary to modern opinion³³, Paul was not writing these words to Timothy about some event that was going to take place 2000 or more years in the future. The “last times – last days” of which Paul wrote were the same “last days” which Peter spoke of in Acts 2:17, wrote about in 2Peter 3:3, which the writer of Hebrews wrote of in Hebrews 1:2, and of which James referred to in James 5:3. Each of these writers, as well as Paul, lived and wrote in the first century. Their writings were intended to inform other people

³¹ Acts 7

³² Acts 8:1ff, et al.

³³ Breese, Dave, Living in These Last Days, pages 16, 22, & 34. (This is only one example; hundreds more could be produced. See footnote #3 above)

who **lived in the first century about events that were going to take place soon,**³⁴ **while many of the people then living**³⁵ **would still be alive.**

All of those first century people lived in the “**last days**” of the Mosaic Marriage Covenant which was given at Mount Sinai c.1491 BC³⁶ as an addendum to the Covenant Yahweh had made with Abraham 430 years earlier.³⁷

According to the passages quoted above, Jesus Christ, Peter and all the first century people lived in the “last days” or the “last times”! “Every reference in the New Testament to the ‘last days,’ or equivalents ‘last times, last hour,’ refers to that same time period in which its writers were living then and there, in that first century. There are no exceptions. Check them out (Heb 1:2; Acts2:17; 1 Ti 4:1; 2 Ti 3:1; Jas 5:3; 2 Pet 3:3; 1 Pet 1:5, 20; Jude 1:8; 1 Jn2:18). Beyond any doubt, these writers saw themselves as living in the ‘last days.’”³⁸ Therefore, according to the clear and plain teaching of Scripture the “**last days**” or the “**last times**” were the days of the first century during the lifetime of Jesus Christ, and His first century followers. *The New Testament does not address the subject of any other “last times” or “last days”.*

However, the New Testament does tell us several things about the “last days” of the first century. Peter declares that the prophecy in Joel had been fulfilled by the events at Pentecost. The Holy Spirit had been poured out “in the last days.”³⁹

³⁴ Revelation 1:1, 3; 22:6-7, 10, 12, & 20, et al.

³⁵ Matthew 16:27-28; Luke 9:26-27, et al.

³⁶ Exodus 19ff

³⁷ Galatians 3:17

³⁸ Noë, John, *Shattering the ‘Left Behind’ Delusion*, pp. 72-73.

³⁹ Acts 2:17; cf. Joel 2:28.

The apostle Paul explained to Timothy, his son in the faith, that he would see “some depart from the faith”⁴⁰ because of the “perilous times” would come during “the last days.”⁴¹

The apostle Peter warned the first century Christians saved out of the Diaspora that many “scoffers, walking after their own lusts” would come during these “last days.”⁴²

James warned the rich Jews of his day that their “gold and silver [was] cankered” and would “witness against [them]” because they had “heaped together treasure for the last days.”⁴³

According to the Bible verses referenced above:

- Yahweh would “pour out His spirit upon all flesh” during “the last days”. All Theologians agree, the Spirit was poured out upon the Jewish Christians at Pentecost (Acts 2:1-5) and upon the gentile Christians at the time of the Roman centurion, Cornelius’ salvation. (Acts 10:44-45, see 1-45) Therefore, the Bible clearly and plainly teaches that the “**last days**” were in the first century, but somehow most Christians have missed the point that this action plainly declared that the last days were taking place during the life times of these first century believers, not in the present days in which they read those words.
- “Perilous times shall come in **the last days**”. The perilous times of which Paul wrote occurred during the period of 63 - 70 AD and ended with the destruction of Jerusalem just as Jesus Christ (Matt.23:1-38; 24:2 & 4-34, etc.),

⁴⁰ 1Timothy 4:1.

⁴¹ 2Timothy 3:1.

⁴² 2 Peter 3:3; cf. 1Peter 1:1-2, 2:9-11.

⁴³ James 5:3; cf. Matthew 6:19-21.

Daniel (9:26-27; 10:30-35; 12:1 & 9-11), and several New Testament writers prophesied.

- James tells the rich men **of his day** that they had “heaped treasure together for **the last days**”.
- Peter tells the Christian recipients (the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia) of his letters that “scoffers...shall come in **the last days**” i.e. in their lifetime - **the last days** of the Mosaic marriage covenant which was then drawing to a close (Heb.8:13) even as Peter wrote his letters, and ended in 70 AD with the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple just as Jesus foretold in Matthew 24 and the parallel passages in Mark and Luke. ““These last days’ perfectly coincided with the days and work of the Messiah in ending the Old Covenant Jewish age. Its whole type-and-shadow and animal sacrifice system was destroyed and left ‘desolate’ (Heb 8:5; 9:19; Mt 23:38). Its Temple complex was torn down stone-by-stone (Mt 24:2). Emphatically, Jesus had prophesied that all this and much more would happen in the ‘this generation,’ lifetime of his hearers (Mt 16:28; 24:3-34). And it did.”⁴⁴

Thus all these things occurred in the “**last days**” i.e. first century New Testament times as all New Testament writers attested!

⁴⁴ Ibid, p.73, see also p.75-76.

Also, it is obvious from Paul's writings that he understood that the people of his day were living in *an age that was about to end* and that **another age without an end was about to begin**. Note what Paul wrote:

Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in **THIS AGE (the age in which Jesus Christ, the apostles and all first century Christians lived)**, but also in **THAT (age) which is to come (the kingdom age which followed immediately after "this age" ended in 70 AD)**:...That in the ages **TO COME** He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in *His* kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. (Ephesians 1:21 & 2:7, emphasis and comment added)

Without question, the New Testament writers concluded that the last days began with the Jesus event. This conclusion is explicitly stated by several New Testament authors, and it is implicit in nearly every document in the New Testament.⁴⁵

Jesus told His disciples that:

the Son of man shall come in the glory of His Father...There be some standing here, **which shall not taste of death, UNTIL** they see the Son of man coming **in His kingdom**...Verily I say unto you (the first century disciples), This (first century) **generation** shall not pass **until** all these things be fulfilled. (Matt.16:27a-28, 24:34, emphasis and comments added)

Jesus Christ was absolutely correct, that first century generation did not pass away until all those things (including His "Parousia") were fulfilled. **The "Parousia" of Jesus Christ occurred in the first century AD, *Jesus Christ is not coming anytime soon in the twenty first century.***

At this point every student of the Bible should be able to answer a very pertinent question - **The end of what?** - with a very certain answer. "The term the '**last days**' and all related terms in the New Testament always refers to the end of the Mosaic **age** NOT THE END OF HISTORY AND/OR THE END OF PLANET EARTH!"

⁴⁵ Lewis, Daniel J., 3 Crucial Questions about the Last Days, p. 50.

The author of the letter to the Hebrews having expressed this same conclusion about the end; gives us the additional information that Jesus Christ had appeared “once in the **end of the age...to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself** (emphasis added).”⁴⁶

The apostle Paul also confirms that the “end of the age” came “upon” the people within his ministry during the first century.⁴⁷

From the two passages of Scripture referenced above, we can clearly see that the writers of the New Testament certainly understood **that they, the first century Christians**, were living in “**the end of the age.**” The Scriptures also make it clear that a new age would come as soon as that present age (the age in which they lived) ended. The author of Hebrews wrote about this “**age to come**” in Hebrews 2:5 & 6:5 when he wrote:

For unto the messengers he has not put in subjection **the world to come**, whereof we speak. (Hebrews 2:5, emphasis added)

For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, 5 And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of **the age about to come**,... (Hebrews 6:4-5, “about” - Gk. mello, is in the original, emphasis added)

In Hebrews 6:5 the Greek word aion (Strong’s #165) translated “world” in the KJV means “age” and is so translated in many translations.

This “**world about to come**” is also mentioned in the following passages:

And whosoever speaks a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaks against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, nor in **the world about to come**. (Mt. 12:32, emphasis added)

But he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in **the world to come** eternal life. (Mr. 10:30, emphasis added)

Who shall not receive manifold more in this present time, and in **the world to come** life everlasting. (Lu. 18:30, emphasis added)

⁴⁶ Hebrews 9:26.

⁴⁷ 1 Corinthians 10:11.

At this point the question is: **what age was about to end, there and then, in the first century?** It obviously could not have been the end of “the ekklesia age” because it was the age “about to come” at that time in the first century as we have demonstrated above. Without going into all the details here, it should be obvious to all good students of the Bible that **Christ was to appear at the end of the age that began at Mount Sinai** when Moses mediated the Marriage Covenant between Yahweh and Israel. This Marriage Covenant age which we could call “the law age” began with the giving of the Marriage Law at Mount Sinai and ended with the destruction of the temple of the law and the city of the law (Jerusalem) in 70 AD **just as Yahweh, through the prophets had prophesied that it would. It was also at that time that the New Marriage Covenant established in the Blood of Jesus Christ became fully operational through the resurrection of those that were Christ’s at his 70 AD coming** (1 Cor. 15:20-23) **and the marriage supper of the Lamb which followed** (Matt.22:1-10; Lu.12:36-40; Rev.19:1-9, 21:1-2 & 9-27).

The Scriptures declare that “**...Christ is the end of the law** (age) for **righteousness to every one that believes.**” (Rom.10:4) However, Paul and the author of the letter to the Hebrews makes it very clear that although the New Marriage Covenant existed with a betrothal (2 Cor. 11:2) of the faithful, to Christ, the Bride Groom, the old marriage covenant relationship was still “**decaying and waxing old and was about ready to vanish away**” (Heb. 8:13) when he wrote his letter to those first century Hebrew Christians in c. 64 AD. The Mosaic Marriage Covenant relationship was ended in September of 70 AD when the Jewish temple and city of Jerusalem were completely

destroyed, the land of Judaea was laid waste, and the power of the Jews was broken (Dan.12:7).

With the above in mind we can now see that Jesus Christ Himself clearly tells us when the “last day” would occur. In Matthew 24 the disciples come to Jesus and ask him a very important and often misunderstood three part question:

And as he sat upon the Mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what *shall be* the sign of your parousia (reigning presence), and of the **end of the age** (Strong's #165)? (Matthew 24:3, comment and emphasis added)

In His answer to that portion of the question about the “end of the age,” Jesus stated:

And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and **then shall the end come**. (Matthew 24:14, emphasis added)

Now all we need to do is find out when the Gospel was “preached in all the world” and we will know when the end was **about** to occur. **The “last day” of course, will be the last day of that age, the Mosaic Marriage Covenant age.**

The apostle Paul clearly established when the Gospel of the Kingdom was preached in all the world.

First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of **throughout the whole world**. (Romans 1:8, emphasis added)

But I say, have they not heard? Yes verily, their sound went **into all the earth**, and their words unto **the ends of the world**. (Romans 10:18, emphasis added)

But now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to **all nations** for the obedience of faith: (Romans 16:26, emphasis added)

Which is come unto you, as *it is* in **all the world**; and brings forth fruit, as *it doth* also in you, since the day ye heard *of it*, and knew the grace of God in truth: (Colossians 1:6, emphasis added)

If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and *be* not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which you have heard, *and* which was preached to **every creature which is under heaven**; whereof I Paul am made a minister; (Colossians 1:23, emphasis added)

III. SUMMARY

Our study has attempted to demonstrate that the “Gospel of the kingdom” was preached to “**all nations (of) all the world**” and was heard by “**every creature which is under heaven** during Paul’s life and ministry to the Nations/Gentiles.” The “**end of the age**” which the disciples asked about as recorded in Matthew, Mark, and Luke came right on schedule, just when Jesus Christ said it would, soon after Paul’s death when the Jewish temple and their city, Jerusalem was destroyed by the Roman army in 70 AD.

This careful comparison of the use of the phrases “the last days” as found in the Old Testament and “the last days” and similar phrases as found in the New Testament clearly demonstrates that the meaning of these phrases in both Testaments are the same and their referent is the same - **The last days of the Mosaic Marriage Covenant which Yahweh made with Israel at Mt. Sinai and not the last days of the 5th kingdom (ekklesia) age set up through Jesus Christ during the days of the kings of the Roman empire at the end of the Mosaic Marriage Covenant age; just as Daniel had prophesied!**

If any reader has a problem with these conclusions on this matter we respectfully request that you take it up with the apostle Paul; as he clearly taught that the “Gospel of the Kingdom (was) preached in all the world” before his ministry to the Nations/Gentiles was concluded, and with Jesus who said that the end of the age would come soon after the Gospel of the kingdom had been “preached in all the world...⁴⁸” **Accordingly, “the end of age” of the Mosaic Marriage covenant and the resurrection at “the last day”**

⁴⁸ Matthew 24:14 -- “And this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole civilized world (i.e. the Roman Empire, etc.) as a witness to all nations, and then the end will come.” (Mt 24:14)

of that covenant arrived right on schedule just as it had been prophesied by the prophets (Dan. 12:2 & 13, et al.) **and confirmed by Jesus Christ!**

In the first century Peter wrote to the first century Christians that “the end of all things is at hand” (1Peter 4:7). If “the end of all things” was at hand in the first century, then it is certainly foolish of us today to believe that, 1930 plus years later, “the end” that was “at hand” then did not occur in the first century, but is going to occur soon in the twenty first century. Remember that Jesus Christ stated repeatedly that “all these things will be fulfilled in this generation” **meaning His generation**. Jesus Christ was thirty two or three years old when He made these statements relative to that generation. Forty years later that generation would be in their forties to seventies. That generation with “all things” of the Mosaic Marriage Covenant was about to end and all those things did end just exactly as they were prophesied to end. If they did not end, then it would appear that Jesus Christ and all His “inspired” writers were either confused or deliberately lied to the people of the first century and subsequently to us.

I can accept the idea that the ekklesia has been wrong about these things for nearly two thousand years, **BUT I CANNOT ACCEPT THE IDEA THAT JESUS CHRIST - YAH ENFLESHED - AND ALL OF HIS “SPIRIT INSPIRED” WRITERS COULD HAVE BEEN CONFUSED, MISTAKEN, OR THAT THEY LIED TO ALL OF US** (from the first century unto today). It, therefore, becomes obvious that our old traditional ideas about the “**last days**” being the end of this material, physical “heaven and earth” **have been WRONG!!!!**

We need to adjust our theology/eschatology to fit the Scriptures, we have tried long enough *to make the Scriptures fit our traditional misunderstandings and **that has miserably failed.***

The paper above was written in partial fulfillment of the requirements for my PhD program in Biblical Studies.