

Does the Bible Really Say That Things Will Only Get Worse?

I concluded my recent article on “The 10 Commitments of a Jesus Revolutionary” with these words: “Let’s work together with the Lord to see a Jesus revolution sweep the nation—and the nations.”

In response, “Princess” wrote, “I hate to be a bearer of bad tidings, but I read my Bible, and there is not going to be any moral, cultural or spiritual revolution. There is going to be a great falling away, which is happening now. Someone has been listening to too many dominionists. Are you still going to be faithful, as almost everyone around you compromises? I pray that I have grace to stand.”

I really appreciate Princess’s challenge for us to stand firm in the midst of compromise and apostasy—it’s a message I constantly preach as well—and yes, we will all need God’s grace to keep us strong in the coming days.

And without a doubt, we are in the midst of a great falling away here in America (and some other countries), and there are verses that seem to speak of a final end-time rebellion against God.

But like Princess, I read my Bible too, and I find a very different picture painted there, one that speaks of great outpouring and great harvest alongside of great darkness and great apostasy.

And I’m actually not listening to any “dominionists.” (To be honest, “dominionist” is a term normally used by critics who claim that born-again Christians are trying to take over the world.)

I'm doing my best to listen to the Spirit and to base my beliefs on the Word, and to the core of my being, I believe it is the Lord who is stirring my heart and the hearts of His people to seek Him for a sweeping revival that will bring holy upheaval to the nation.

Where is it written in the Word that this will not happen? Where does the Bible say that it cannot happen?

Consider these five simple points.

1. Even if you believe the Bible speaks of a mass apostasy in the last generation, who says we are that last generation?

When I got saved in 1971, people were reading Hal Lindsey's *Late Great Planet Earth* and saying, "This is it! These are the last seconds of the last days! Look at what has happened to the young people of our nation! Look at the signs in Israel! Jesus is coming any minute!"

More than 40 years later, we are still here, and my oldest grandchild is 12—meaning just four years younger than I was when I got saved. That is a sobering thought.

And 40 years ago, when many believers were saying, "It's all over! We're out of here!" radical feminists and gay activists and others were saying, "Let's write our revolution into law"—and they did.

2. Jesus did warn about end-time apostasy, but He also promised end-time harvest.

I have no problem with the idea that the warnings of Jesus in Matthew 24:1-13 can apply to the final generation as well as to the generation He was addressing in the first century. But let's not forget Matthew 24:14, which states, "And this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come" (ESV).

And let's remember that the Great Commission is to make disciples of all nations and that the authority of Jesus is to the ends of the earth until the end of the age. It is by His authority that we preach and live and serve (Matt. 28:18-20). Jesus also taught that "the harvest is the end of the age" (Matt. 13:39), speaking of the final reaping of both good and evil.

3. We have been living in the "last days" since Jesus began His earthly ministry, and the last days are marked by extreme evil and extreme outpouring.

When Paul warned Timothy that "in the last days perilous times shall come" (2 Tim. 3:1, KJV), he was talking about the days in which they were living, as the context (and common sense) make clear. Just read the final words of Paul's exhortation to his spiritual son in 2 Timothy 3:5: "Avoid such people" (ESV)—meaning, wicked people like this who are living in these last days. John even said "it is the last hour" (1 John 2:18; see also Heb. 1:2; 1 Cor. 10:11; Jacob [James] 5:3; 1 Pet. 1:20).

But let's not forget the words of Peter in Acts 2:17-21: "And in the last days it shall be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams; even on my male servants and female servants in those days I will pour out my Spirit, and they shall prophesy. ... And it shall come to pass that everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved."

Peter actually added the words "in the last days" to Joel's prophecy (see Joel 2:28-32), telling us the last days had already begun and that the last days would be characterized by a great outpouring of the Spirit and a massive harvest of souls.

4. The true church worldwide is not in a Laodicean state.

Without a doubt, the church of America and Europe very much fits the picture of the Laodicean church in Revelation 3:14-22, thinking we are rich and healthy when we are actually bankrupt and blind.

But most of the true church around the world fits the picture of Smyrna, not wealthy in material goods but spiritually rich in the midst of persecution (Rev. 2:8-11). And while the number of professing Christians in America and Europe continues to decline, in Asia and Africa and Latin America the numbers continue to soar, with more people coming to faith in the last 25 years than at any time in world history.

And even for the believers in Laodicea, Jesus promised great spiritual restoration if they would repent (Rev. 3:18-21).

5. The mindset of the New Testament is a mindset of victory and faith.

Jesus said the gates of hell would not prevail against his messianic congregation, the church (Matt. 16:18). Paul proclaimed, "The night is far gone; the day is at hand" (Rom. 13:12). And John wrote that "the darkness is passing away and the true light is already shining" (1 John 2:8).

I expect God's holy light to shine more and more every day, no matter how dark the world gets, for "the path of the righteous is like the light of dawn, which shines brighter and brighter until full day" (Prov. 4:18).

And whatever Satan and this world mean for evil, God can turn for good. As Catherine Booth said many years ago, "The waters are rising, but so am I. I am not going under but over."

On with it, in Jesus' name!

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