

Why We May Not be Living in the Last Days

I love to speak to others about my pervading hope for spiritual awakening. Despite all of the great darkness and unrest, I see the gospel spreading throughout the earth. The beauty and wonder of Jesus is literally transforming the nations.

Nevertheless, when I share things like this, there are those who seem to find fault. They have a hard time accepting my heartfelt optimism.

I was talking with a well-meaning leader just the other the other day who began discounting my outlook. He said, "J.D., your view is preposterous. Don't you notice how terrible things really are? Don't you know what the Bible says? 'In the last days perilous times will come'" (2 Tim. 3:1).

Another man suggested that I was a "scoffer." He said, "Don't you know what Jude, the half-brother of Jesus, declared? 'In the last days there will be scoffers who will walk after their own ungodly desires' (Jude 1:18). If you don't see things getting worse, you're nothing more than a scoffer—rejecting the Word of God."

Many insist that the Bible foretells disaster and trouble—particularly as we descend into the "last days." They're convinced that, in the grand biblical narrative, cataclysm and destruction are imminent. It seems that there can be no goodness or hope in "perilous times."

This kind of worldview is understandable. A superficial reading of the New Testament would certainly suggest this disruptive reality. However, things are not always as they appear.

The term “last days” is arguably one of the most misunderstood phrases in the Bible. Contrary to popular opinion, it’s not talking about the end of the world, but the end of the “old covenant” era.

Rather than referring to the destruction of the earth, it is a depiction of the “last days” of the Temple, animal sacrifices and Levitical priesthood. Much of the talk in passages such as 2 Timothy 3:1 and Jude 1:18 speaks to the unrest and volatility that took place during this tumultuous transition. It was to be the “last days” of an religious era—the end of all that they knew and experienced. Nevertheless, it was also the beginning of new era that brings beauty and wonder.

It might surprise you to hear this, but the writer of Hebrews makes it clear that the “last days” were transpiring in the first century. He declares to his audience that the revelation of Messiah was being received, “in these last days” (Heb. 1:2). Elaborating on what he meant by this, he goes on to declare that “Jesus has now obtained a more superior ministry, since the covenant he mediates is founded on better promises” (Heb. 8:6).

The phrase “last days” or “end of the age” is really about a first-century transition to the New Covenant order. It is the end of what was and the beginning of something new!

It really comes down to this: it was the “last days” for them, not us.

This biblical phrase was never meant to be used as an excuse to distract the good news of Jesus’ gospel. {eoa}

J.D. King, *author and speaker, is the director of the World Revival Network.*