

ARE WE IN THE TIME OF THE END?

JAMIE MCNAB

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We've looked in the last few weeks at some examples of poor Bible translations ... or scriptural passages that are commonly misunderstood.

Continuing that general theme today ... but with a look at Bible prophecy ... and in particular ... some phrases that are probably used rather carelessly.

From time to time we look at prophecy. It's not our number one topic because it has limited impact on our day-to-day lives (for now!!). But ... nevertheless ... it is a significant part of scripture.

About 25%—33% of the Bible is prophecy ... so we can't totally ignore it.

Of the 260 chapters in the New Testament ... there are over 300 references to Jesus' future return ... which is yet future and thus prophecy.

We have New Testament warnings to be familiar with prophecy.

Luke 21:29-31

29 Then He spoke to them a parable: "Look at the fig tree, and all the trees.

30 When they are already budding, you see and know for yourselves that summer is now near.

31 So you also, when you see these things happening, know that the kingdom of God is near.

What things should we be looking at? We should see prophetic signs.

Luke 21:34-36

34 "But take heed to yourselves, lest your hearts be weighed down with carousing, drunkenness, and cares of this life, and that Day come on you (believers/disciples) unexpectedly.

35 For it will come as a snare on all those who dwell on the face of the whole earth.

36 Watch therefore, and pray always that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man."

WATCH!! PAY ATTENTION!!

Matthew 24:11-16

- 11 Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many.
12 And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold.
13 **But he who endures to the end shall be saved.**
14 And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.
15 **“Therefore when you see the abomination of desolation,”** spoken of by Daniel the prophet, **standing in the holy place**” (whoever reads, let him understand),
16 “then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains.

When YOU SEE Daniel’s Abomination of Desolation.

Matthew 24:21-22

- 21 **For then there will be great tribulation,** such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be.
22 And **unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect’s sake those days will be shortened.**

GREAT TRIBULATION.

We need an understanding of Daniel. Prophecy is therefore important.

Revelation 1:1-3

- 1 **The Revelation of Jesus Christ,** which God gave Him to show His servants—things which must shortly take place. And He sent and signified it by His angel to His servant John,
2 who bore witness to the word of God, and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, to all things that he saw.
3 **Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of this prophecy,** and keep those things which are written in it; for the time is near.

I am not going into any detail today about specific prophecy. I just want to clarify a couple of expressions we commonly come across ... but perhaps use rather loosely.

Question. Are we living in the TIME OF THE END?

If you look around the Internet ... many web sites answer “Yes”. Tim Lahaye Book: “ARE WE LIVING IN THE END TIMES”? He tells us ...Yes ... and the next event is the rapture ... which could be any hour!

I saw one YouTube video entitled “50 REASONS WE ARE IN THE END TIME”.

So ... are we in the “Time of The End”? Yes ... and No.

First ... let’s examine an associated expression — “The Last Days” (or “The Latter Days” — the same in the original Hebrew).

We’ll see it refers to a very open-ended and general period of time ... covering centuries and even millennia ... and actually started long ago!

Deuteronomy 4:26-31

26 I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day, that you will soon utterly perish from the land which you cross over the Jordan to possess; you will not prolong your days in it, but will be utterly destroyed.

27 And the Lord will scatter you among the peoples, and you will be left few in number among the nations where the Lord will drive you.

28 And there you will serve gods, the work of men’s hands, wood and stone, which neither see nor hear nor eat nor smell.

29 But from there you will seek the Lord your God, and you will find Him if you seek Him with all your heart and with all your soul.

30 When you are in distress (*tribulation*), and all these things come upon you in the latter days, when you turn to the Lord your God and obey His voice

31 (for the Lord your God is a merciful God), He will not forsake you nor destroy you, nor forget the covenant of your fathers which He swore to them.

“These things” came upon Israel and Judah prior to 500BC ... “Latter Days”.

Deuteronomy 31:22-29

22 Therefore Moses wrote this song the same day, and taught it to the children of Israel.

23 Then He inaugurated Joshua the son of Nun, and said, “Be strong and of good courage; for you shall bring the children of Israel into the land of which I swore to them, and I will be with you.”

24 So it was, when Moses had completed writing the words of this law in a book, when they were finished,

25 that Moses commanded the Levites, who bore the ark of the covenant of the Lord, saying:

26 **“Take this Book of the Law, and put it beside the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God, that it may be there as a witness against you;**

27 **for I know your rebellion and your stiff neck. If today, while I am yet alive with you, you have been rebellious against the Lord, then how much more after my death?**

28 Gather to me all the elders of your tribes, and your officers, that I may speak these words in their hearing and call heaven and earth to witness against them.

29 For I know that after my death you will become utterly corrupt, and turn aside from the way which I have commanded you. **And evil will befall you in the latter days,** because you will do evil in the sight of the Lord, to provoke Him to anger through the work of your hands.”

“Evil ... in the latter days” — started soon after Moses’ death — maybe one or two generations later.

Daniel 2:28

28 **But there is a God in heaven who reveals secrets, and He has made known to King Nebuchadnezzar what will be in the latter days.** Your dream, and the visions of your head upon your bed, were these:

Daniel starts to reveal to Nebuchadnezzar what the future holds for the LATTER DAYS — Persian Empire... Greek Empire ... Iron Empire ... then:

The Kingdom of God.

Daniel 2:44

44 **And in the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed;** and the kingdom shall not be left to other people; **it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever.**

“Latter Days” seems to span many centuries ... right up to the return of Jesus Christ and the setting up of God’s Kingdom.

Isaiah 2:1-4

1 The word that Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem.

2 Now it shall come to pass in the latter days

That the mountain of the Lord's house
Shall be established on the top of the mountains,
And shall be exalted above the hills;
And all nations shall flow to it.

3 Many people shall come and say,
"Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord,
To the house of the God of Jacob;

He will teach us His ways,
And we shall walk in His paths."
For out of Zion shall go forth the law,
And the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.

4 He shall judge between the nations,
And rebuke many people;

They shall beat their swords into plowshares,
And their spears into pruning hooks;
Nation shall not lift up sword against nation,
Neither shall they learn war anymore.

The Latter Days includes the Millennium (KJV = "Last Days").

We might think — from our perspective in the 21st century — that Latter Days (or Last Days) equals the final 50 or 100 years? That is not how the Bible uses that expression.

Hebrews 1:1-2

1 God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets,

2 has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds;

"These last days" = 1st century!

2 Timothy 3:1-5

1 But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come:

2 For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy,

3 unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good,

4 traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God,

5 having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away!

“Last Days” would affect people in Timothy’s time ... and right up to today.

So ... when the Bible talks of Latter Days or Last Days ... they started centuries ago ... and continue now. Given a 7,000 year plan (?) ... then anything in the last 3,500 years is the “Latter Half”! ☺

Having said that ... the Jehovah Witnesses’ teach that the “Last Days” began in 1914. (The start of the First World War). They are wrong.

But what about the “Time of The End”? Is that just the same? A very general period?

Not if we go by the Bible! The Bible uses this expression for a very specific period of time only.

It appears only 5 times in the whole Bible — and all of them in the Book of Daniel.

Let’s have a look.

But ... bear in mind we’re now looking at Prophecy. We should be and can be familiar with the narrative — what the Bible says — but should be cautious as to exactly how it might apply in the “real world”. Keep speculation to a minimum ... and recognise when we are speculating. ☺

Daniel 8:15-19

15 **Then it happened, when I, Daniel, had seen the vision and was seeking the meaning, that suddenly there stood before me one having the appearance of a man.**

16 And I heard a man’s voice between the banks of the Ulai, who called, and said, **“Gabriel, make this man understand the vision.”**

17 So he came near where I stood, and when he came I was afraid and fell on my face; but he said to me, **“Understand, son of man, that the vision refers to the time of the end.”**

18 Now, as he was speaking with me, I was in a deep sleep with my face to the ground; but he touched me, and stood me upright.

19 And he said, "**Look, I am making known to you what shall happen in the latter time of the indignation; for at the appointed time the end shall be.**"

Hopefully ... we are familiar with the vision of the Ram and the He-Goat (Iran and Turkey?) battling each other. Iran is going to launch a big war in the Middle East sometime in the future ... maybe the near future.

The fulfillment is in the "Time of The End".

It won't be a surprise to see that the "Time of The End" is literally accurate. **It is the time of the very end.** But we'll see that it's not a vague period of 20–30–50–100 years. It is a specific period.

So ... when is the Time of The End?

Daniel 12:4

4 "**But you, Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book until the time of the end;** many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase."

Seal the prophecies till the "Time of The End". And we're not there yet! So some aspects of Daniel's prophecies are still concealed from us — until we are in the Time of The End.

So explanations of the Book of Daniel from 50 years ago ... "Great" commentators of the 1700's and 1800's are likely to be way off the mark — that was not the "Time of The End".

How long is the "Time of The End"?

Daniel 12:5-13

5 Then I, Daniel, looked; and there stood two others, one on this riverbank and the other on that riverbank.

6 And one said to the man clothed in linen, who was above the waters of the river, "**How long shall the fulfillment of these wonders be?**"

7 Then I heard the man clothed in linen, who was above the waters of the river, when he held up his right hand and his left hand to heaven, and swore by Him who lives forever, that **it shall be for a time, times, and half a time;**

and when the power of the holy people has been completely shattered, all these things shall be finished. (*Time, times and half a time = 3½ years*)

8 Although I heard, I did not understand. Then I said, “My lord, what shall be the end of these things?”

9 And he said, “**Go your way, Daniel, for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end.**

10 Many shall be purified, made white, and refined, but the wicked shall do wickedly; and none of the wicked shall understand, but the wise shall understand.

11 “**And from the time that the daily sacrifice is taken away, and the abomination of desolation is set up, there shall be one thousand two hundred and ninety days.** (1290 days)

12 **Blessed is he who waits, and comes to the one thousand three hundred and thirty-five days.** (1335 days)

13 “But you, go your way till the end; for you shall rest, and will arise to your inheritance at the end of the days.”

It is not clear how we are to use the various numbers of days! Time ... times and half a time is 3½ years which probably equals 1260 days (if we use so-called prophetic years of 360 days). But the actual year today is 365¼ days. The Hebrew Calendar year can vary from around 355 days to around 385 days. Which one? I tend to think it is 1260.

Then we have 1290 and 1335? How do these fit together? It may be information that is still sealed up — because we are not there yet?

However ... the “Time of The End” is approximately 3½ years long. It’s the close of this age. It’s the final 3½ years of the fairly lengthy “Last Days”!

So — No — we are not yet in the “Time of The End”!!

We’re heading towards it. But when it starts ... it runs for 3½ years only.

We saw earlier Jesus’ reference to be watching out for the Abomination of Desolation ... spoken of by the prophet Daniel.

Daniel 9:24

24 “**Seventy weeks are determined.** (70 x 7 *Shabua* = 490 years)
For your people and for your holy city,

Daniel 9:26-27

26 “And **after the sixty-two weeks**

Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself;

And the people of the prince who is to come

Shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. (*The Anti Christ*)

The end of it shall be with a flood,

And till the end of the war desolations are determined.

27 **Then he (*the wicked prince who is to come ... NOT JESUS!*) shall**

confirm a treaty with many for one week;

But in the middle of the week

He shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering.

And on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate,

Even until the consummation, which is determined,

Is poured out on the desolate.”

Verse 27: Confirm a covenant — or agreement — or a treaty — for 7 years.

But in the middle of the week — The Abomination of Desolation and cessation of sacrifices at mid-way = 3½ years.

This is when the “Time of The End” begins. And lasts for 3½ years (as confirmed in Daniel 12).

There are a couple more references in Daniel.

Daniel 11:31

31 And forces shall be mustered by him, and they shall defile the sanctuary

fortress; then **they shall take away the daily sacrifices, and place there the**

abomination of desolation.

The Abomination of Desolation (starts the 3½ year Time of The End).

Daniel 11:32-35

32 Those who do wickedly against the covenant he shall corrupt with flattery; but **the people who know their God shall be strong, and carry out great exploits.**

33 **And those of the people who understand shall instruct many; yet for many**

days they shall fall by sword and flame, by captivity and plundering. (*A rough time for believers*)

34 Now when they fall, they shall be aided with a little help; but many shall join with them by intrigue.

35 **And some of those of understanding shall fall, to refine them, purify them, and make them white, until the time of the end; because it is still for the appointed time.**

There are 2 ways of looking at these verses. Either the troubles to overtake the believers in the period up to the final 3½ years (which wouldn't make sense to me) — or ... a time of trouble and harassment during the final 3½ years. The Hebrew word for UNTIL (KJV: even to) in verse 35 can be translated as “during”. **So the reference may be to persecution and betrayal during the “Time of The End”?**

There might be a clue in the broader context of Daniel?

Daniel 7:21-22

21 **“I was watching; and the same horn was making war against the saints, and prevailing against them,**

22 **until the Ancient of Days came,** and a judgment was made in favor of the saints of the Most High, and the time came for the saints to possess the kingdom.

Daniel 7:25

25 **He (*this little horn*) shall speak pompous words against the Most High, Shall persecute the saints of the Most High, And shall intend to change times and law. Then the saints shall be given into his hand For a time and times and half a time.**

Persecute for time and times and half a time! In other words — the “Time of The End”.

So ... in context ... the most likely explanation of Daniel 11:31-35 is that it all belongs in the final 3½ years — the “Time of The End”.

Our final review of the “Time of The End”.

Daniel 11:40-41

40 "**At the time of the end the king of the South shall attack him; and the king of the North shall come against him like a whirlwind**, with chariots, horsemen, and with many ships; and he shall enter the countries, overwhelm them, and pass through.

41 He shall also enter the Glorious Land, and many countries shall be overthrown; but these shall escape from his hand: Edom, Moab, and the prominent people of Ammon.

The King of the South attacks the king of the North ... **but not till the final 3½ years**. Not before!

That final 3½ years is going to be a very busy time!

Let's be aware of the difference between what the Bible calls The Last Days — or Latter Days — and what it calls "The Time of The End". They are not interchangeable — not synonymous.

In casual speech we may be interchanging the terms — and refer to end-times and "Time of The End" in a fairly loose way. That's okay to a point — **but let's be aware that when the Bible refers to "The Time of The End" ... it has a specific period in mind.**

It is only used in Daniel. The 3½ year period that commences with the Abomination of Desolation to Jesus' return — and the end of this age.

So. Are we in "The Time of The End"? No. But it may not be far away.