

CHAPTER 2

What to Expect in the Days Ahead

What should we expect in the days ahead? What does the Bible tell us about the coming days? Will the world situation get better or will it get worse? Are the coming days going to be easy days or difficult days? What should we expect in the days and years before Jesus Christ returns for His believers (John 14:3)?

War or Peace?

Did the Lord Jesus tell us to expect war or peace on this earth in the coming days (Matthew 24:6)? _____ Circle the correct answer from Matthew 24:6. Jesus said that wars and rumours (reports) of wars...

- a. Will not come to pass
- b. May not come to pass
- c. May come to pass
- d. Must come to pass

Should the believer be troubled by this prediction (Matthew 24:6)? _____ Are the nations of the world going to be at peace with each other (Matthew 24:7)? _____ Jesus has told us what to expect. Should we be surprised or shocked when we hear about such things in the news? _____ Think of yourself in school. If you came to class thinking that there will not be any quiz, would you be surprised if the teacher handed out paper and gave you a quiz? Would you be ready for it? But if the teacher had warned you a week before that there would be a quiz, would you be surprised when the paper was handed out? Would you be prepared? If you are not prepared whose fault would it be? The Lord Jesus said that wars must come to pass. The believer knows what to expect.

Should we expect wars to last forever? In Isaiah 9:6 (at the end of the verse) the Lord Jesus is called "The Prince of _____." When the Prince of Peace comes to this earth will wars continue, or will He put an end to war (Psalm 46:9; Isaiah 2:4)?

Poverty

Poverty is a serious problem in our world today. The world is filled with poor people, people who lack food and clothing and money. Have you ever seen people who are poor? Have you ever seen people begging for food or money? Have you ever seen pictures of starving children?

In John 12:3 we learn that Mary took a very expensive ointment and poured it over Jesus' feet. Was Judas glad that she did this for the Lord (John 12:4-5)? _____ Judas said that the ointment should have been sold and the money given to the _____ (John 12:5). Was Judas really concerned about the poor (John 12:6)? _____ Who did he really want the money to be given to (John 12:6)? _____ Jesus then said that Mary had done the right thing (John 12:7-8). According to Jesus' words, should we expect to have poor people around today? _____ Should we be surprised when we see poor people? _____ Jesus has told us to expect these things.

Disease, Decay and Death

Our world is under a curse and God put this curse on the world because of man's sin. You can read about this curse in Genesis chapter 3. All of creation is affected by this curse. In Romans 8:22 we learn that "the whole _____ groaneth and travaileth in _____ together until now."

All of the animals and plants are in bondage to the laws of disease and decay and death. The animals are killing and being killed. They are eating and being eaten. Plants are being eaten too, and those that are not eaten soon die and decay. **EVERYTHING IS UNDER THE CURSE OF DEATH** (including animals, plants and people). We learn in Romans 8:19-23 that the creation will not be delivered or set free from this bondage until Christ returns. When Christ is on earth as King things will be quite different. Read Isaiah 11:6-9. Are these animals killing and being killed? _____ Is the description of Isaiah 11:6-9 an accurate description of the animal kingdom today? _____ The story is told of a Russian zoo keeper who once said, "We keep a wolf and a lamb together in the same cage!" The people who heard this said, "How can this be?" He then explained: "It's really true, although we have to put a new lamb in every day!" But when Christ is King over all the world, the lions and wolves and tigers and bears will not even need to be in cages!

There are many people today who think that man will somehow solve the problem of disease and death. It is true that scientists have made many wonderful discoveries and have found cures for many diseases, but no one has solved the problem of death. ALL MEN DIE, including the scientists and the doctors. The Bible says that "death passed upon _____ men" (Romans 5:12). The curse in Genesis 3:19 says: "For dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." All men will die and go back to dust!

There are people today who think that the problem of death will someday be solved. Some are even having their bodies frozen when they die. These frozen bodies are then stored in a very cold place. These people hope that someday someone will invent a cure for death so that their bodies will be thawed out and restored to life. Should we expect this to ever happen? Who is the only Person who can call forth the dead (see John 5:28-29)?

We are living in a world of disease and decay and death, and this will not change until Christ returns. We should expect this to be so! Someday things will be different and God will give His believers bodies that will never die or never decay and never have diseases (see 1 Corinthians 15:52-54)!

Difficult Days

God has told us just what to expect in the days ahead: "This know also, that in the last days _____ times shall come" (2 Timothy 3:1). The word "PERILOUS" means "hard" or "difficult." We should not expect easy times! The Bible tells us that the days ahead will be hard and difficult.

Jesus told us to expect the same thing. He said, "In the world ye shall have _____ (trouble, difficulty, distress, problems)" (John 16:33). Jesus

never said that the road ahead would be an easy road. Read what Jesus told his own disciples (John 15:18-21; 16:2).

Even though the times are difficult times, do we need to be troubled or afraid (John 14:27)?
_____ Is there peace in the middle of the trouble (John 16:33)? _____ Do we have to fear what men might do to us (Hebrews 13:6)? Do we have to face the difficulties alone (Matthew 28:20)? _____ Do we have the strength that we need (Philippians 4:13)? _____

Man's Sinfulness

Let's look at 2 Timothy 3:13: "But _____ men and seducers shall wax _____ and _____ deceiving and being deceived." Why isn't the world getting better and better? Why are conditions getting worse and worse? The evil men and women who live on planet earth are the problem. The only way to have a better world is to have better people!

Why are the last days going to be so perilous and difficult (see 2 Timothy 3:1)? Is it because the government is so bad? Is it because our rulers and leaders are so bad? Is it because Russia or Iraq or China or North Korea or some other country is so bad? Men always try to blame someone or something else for the difficult days we live in, but the real reason is found in 2 Timothy 3:2-4. Why are the last days so difficult and hard? It is because of **sinful, selfish men and women!** Let's look at 2 Timothy 3:2-4:

For Men Shall Be . . .

1. **lovers of their own selves**--selfish, self-centered, seeking to please self
2. **covetous**--lovers of money, greedy, worshiping the dollar bill
3. **boasters**--those who love to brag about themselves and about what they are going to do
4. **proud**--a person who considers himself above others and tries to lift himself above others, even if it means stepping on others
5. **blasphemers**--those who speak against God, and drag His good Name into the mud, and speak of God in an irreverent way
6. **disobedient to parents**--those who do not obey or honor their parents, those who are rebellious in the home
7. **unthankful**--ungrateful, not appreciating all the blessings received, not thankful for all of God's goodness (Rom. 1:21)
8. **unholy**--no respect for anything that is sacred
9. **without natural affection**--without that love and affection that

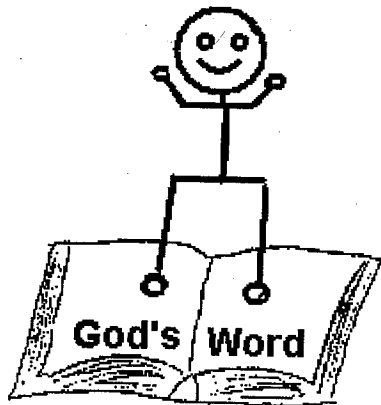
should be shown in the family (the love that a mother has for her child, that a father has for his son, or that a young person should have for his brother or sister or parents)

10. **trucebreakers**--those who refuse to make peace, who would rather be at war with you, who would rather be your enemy than your friend
11. **false accusers**--those who say false things about a person
12. **incontinent**--not having self control
13. **fierce**--savage, brutal, untamed like a wild animal
14. **despisers of that which is good**--no love for what is good and right
15. **traitors**--one who betrays another (like Judas), pretends to be your friend but later he lets you down and is not your friend at all
16. **heady**--those who do things in a hasty way without much thinking; they will act first and think later
17. **highminded**--puffed up, swollen with pride, conceited
18. **lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God**--pleasure seekers rather than God-seekers

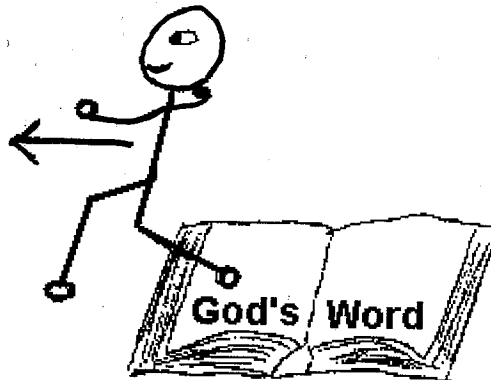
Men shall be sinful and selfish! As you think about this list, think also about yourself. ARE YOU PART OF THE PROBLEM? Are **you** guilty of any of these things (see especially numbers 1,6,7 & 18)? If so, what should you do about it? What **are** you going to do about it? The world's greatest problem is not something on the outside, but it is something on the INSIDE (see Mark 7:21-23).

Who Is Standing On The Bible?

Let's learn something else about these difficult days we live in. The Bible says in 1 Timothy 4:1, "That in the latter times some shall _____ from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of demons." The devil loves to deceive men and draw them away from the truth. This verse is telling us that there will be some who will depart from God's truth. They were once standing on God's truth but then they walked away:



Standing on the Bible



Walking Away and Departing from the Truth

Read the following statements that a person might make. If the person is believing God's Word, put the letter **B** in the space. If the person is not believing God's Word, put the letters **NB** in the space:

_____	Jesus Christ is the Son of God (Matthew 16:16).
_____	Jesus Christ was the greatest man that ever lived but He was not God.
_____	Adam was the first man, but he evolved from ape-like creatures.
_____	Man was created directly by God and did not evolve from lower forms of life (Genesis 1:27).
_____	God is a loving God and He would never send anyone to hell.
_____	Those who refuse to believe in Christ will perish (John 3:16).
_____	There are many ways to get to heaven, and all the religions in the world are teaching men the same truth about God.
_____	Jesus is the only way to heaven and those who want to get to God must go through Him (John 14:6).
_____	The Bible is true because God cannot lie (John 17:17; Titus 1:2).

_____	The Bible has some nice stories in it with some good lessons for us, but the Bible also contains many mistakes and factual errors.
_____	To be saved a person must live a good life and keep the Ten Commandments.
_____	To be saved a person must admit that he is a sinner and must call out to God and ask God to save him (Luke 18:13; Rom.10:13).
_____	Jesus is coming again (John 14:3).
_____	The early Christians thought that Jesus would come again. However, they must have been wrong because it has been about 2000 years and He has not come yet.

Watch Out For The False Teachers!

In 2 Peter 2:1 Peter said, "there shall be _____ among you." Do you think these teachers will teach the truth? _____ In 1 John 4:1 we are told that "many _____ prophets are gone out into the _____." We learned about false prophets in the last chapter of these notes. Do false prophets give people God's true message?

In Acts 20:29-30 Paul warned the Ephesians that false teachers would come. What kind of animal does he compare them to (Acts 20:29)? _____ Just as wolves destroy sheep, so false teachers seek to destroy believers by getting them to turn away from the Lord and not believe His Word. These false teachers would come from without (Acts 20:29) and they would also arise from within (Acts 20:30).

How can we tell if a person is a FALSE TEACHER? First must listen very carefully to what the teacher is saying and then we must ask these questions: "Is this really what the Bible says?" "Does the Bible really teach this?" "Did this teacher get these ideas from the Bible or from somewhere else?"

Can the Bible ever be wrong? _____ Can the Bible ever teach something that is not true? _____ Can a teacher ever be wrong? _____ Can a teacher ever teach something that is not true? _____

Suppose a person were to come to your door and tell you this: "Jesus Christ is a great angel but He is not God." Is this what the Bible says (John 1:1; Titus 2:13)? _____ Does this person agree with what the Bible says? _____ Is this person teaching the truth? _____ See our study entitled, **The Deity of Christ**.

Remember, the devil may use people to try to deceive you and trick you, but God's Word (the Bible) will never deceive you or trick you. Whenever you are taught something (even by your Pastor or your parents or your Sunday School teacher), go to the Bible and see if it is really so (see Acts 17:11). Don't blindly believe everything you are taught. Check it out for yourself and compare it with God's Word to see if that is really what God says.

Itching Ears

Timothy was a Pastor. According to 2 Timothy 4:2, what did Paul tell Timothy to preach? (Circle the correct answer.)

- a. His own ideas
- b. Whatever he felt like preaching
- c. The Word (the Bible)
- d. Whatever the people wanted him to preach
- e. Whatever would please the people and make them happy

People need God's Word whether they like what it says or not! Sinners need God's Word just like sick people need medicine. Some medicine tastes good and some medicine tastes terrible. But no matter how it tastes, the sick person needs to take the medicine so that it will give your body what it needs. God's Word is what the sinner needs.

In 2 Timothy 4:3 we learn that the time will come when people will not want S _____ D _____. Sinners will not want the medicine found in God's Word which can make them healthy. These people have "itching E _____" (2 Timothy 4:3). This means that they only want to hear nice things preached. They only want to swallow good tasting medicine even if what they really need is the bad tasting medicine. They do not want teachers who will tell them the truth. They want teachers who will tell them what they want to hear.

Read the following statements. Put the letter "L" if this is what sinners would LIKE to hear. Put the letter "N" if this is what sinners NEED to hear.

_____	All men will go to heaven someday.
_____	Only those who repent and believe in Jesus will be saved.
_____	All those who refuse to believe in Jesus will go to hell.
_____	God is a loving God and would never send anyone to hell.
_____	Sin is not so bad. Sins are just mistakes that people make.

	Sin is so terrible that God had to send His beloved Son to die on the cross to pay the penalty for our sins.
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Many people today do not really want to know what God says in the Bible. The next time you see people going to different churches on Sunday, see how many of them are carrying Bibles in their hands. And how many of them who do carry a Bible will thoughtfully read it, study it, understand it, use it, and do what it says?

We Can Expect Mockers

Notice what Peter tells us in 2 Peter 3:3: "Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days S_____. The word "SCOFFERS" means "MOCKERS, those who make fun." These mockers will make fun of our Lord's promise that He will come again. They will say, "Where is the _____ of His _____?" (2 Peter 3:4).

In the days of Noah do you think there were mockers? Do you think people made fun of Noah? Perhaps they said, "Where is this rain that Noah promised? We don't see any rain! Noah, you are a fool to build an ark where there is no water!" But when the door of the ark was shut and when it was too late to enter and when the rain started coming down and getting deeper, how many people do you think were still laughing? Suddenly it was no longer funny.

The same principle is true today. People may laugh and think that it is foolish to think that Jesus Christ is really going to return. But when He does return to judge this world, suddenly people will not be laughing any more. Who will be laughing then (Psalm 2:4; Psalm 37:12-13; Proverbs 1:24-28)? _____ Remember, God always has the **last laugh!**

We Can Expect That People Will Be Saved

God is in the saving business! This is why Christ came into this world (John 3:17). Even today God is building His church (Matthew 16:18) and saving all those who come to God through Christ (Hebrews 7:25). God is not willing that any should _____ (2 Peter 3:9). These are difficult days, but God is at work in this world and God has a message of good news for all men: "whosoever believeth in Him (Christ) should not perish but have _____" (John 3:16).

Have you believed in Christ? Have you received Him as your Saviour? See John 1:12. Have your sins been forgiven (Acts 10:43)? Are you standing upon His Word? Are you staying upon His Word?
