

END TIMES

Practical Heavenly Mindedness

13 STUDIES FOR INDIVIDUALS OR GROUPS



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1

The Last Days Are Here!

Acts 2

Like small children on a long journey, when we think about end times, we keep asking, “Are we almost there?”

GROUP DISCUSSION. What world events and life experiences have contributed to your view of the future of the human race and the future of planet earth? Are you optimistic or pessimistic? Why?

PERSONAL REFLECTION. What do you think and how do you feel when someone says, “The end of the world is near”?

According to the apostles of Jesus, the last days began with the ascension of Jesus to heaven and the outpouring of the Spirit on the church. And we have been in the last days ever since—almost two thousand years of last days! Indeed, the last days will continue until Christ comes again. It is hard to keep a balanced perspective on this. This study shows that in one sense we have “arrived,” but in another sense we are still waiting. To keep the balance we must learn how to live “to the hilt” in these days of fulfillment while waiting hopefully for the last of the last days. *Read Acts 2:1-41.*

1. Jesus has been crucified and resurrected. He has also ascended into heaven out of sight (1:9). What happens to the waiting disciples to assure them that Jesus will continue to expand his worldwide mission?

2. The Feast of Pentecost (fifty days after the Passover) was one of the three great festivals of Israel. Why do you think Luke, the author, is careful to note the countries of origin represented by the visitors to Jerusalem for this great feast (vv. 9-11)?

3. When, if ever, have you experienced deep fellowship with people from other races and cultures whom you would normally have difficulty communicating with?

4. With what arguments does Peter counter the charge that he and his friends were intoxicated (v. 13)?

5. Peter explains the strange events of this feast day in terms of the Old Testament prophecy of Joel (Joel 2:28-31). What evidence does Peter give that he is correct in claiming the “day of the Lord” (v. 20, the last days) has arrived? (Note that he quotes Psalm 16:8-11 and Psalm 110:1, which are generally regarded as pointing to the Messiah.)

6. The “day of the LORD” (the last days) in Joel 2:1 is a day of both searing judgment on evildoers and gracious salvation and fulfillment for true servants of God (Joel 2:28-31). Interpreting this passage, Peter does not pronounce irrevocable doom on unbelievers and the executioners of Jesus, but rather stresses the grace of the day of the Lord. Why do you think he does this?

What hope does this bring for people today who are currently rejecting Jesus as their Lord and Savior?

7. What must people do to respond to the arrival of the last days (v. 38)?

8. What evidence in the text suggests that the Spirit outpoured on Pentecost is now the permanent endowment of the church for its mission in the world?

What indication is there that Pentecost might be a one-time event?

9. In very few places of the world today are people asking Christians, “What shall we do?” (v. 37). Why do you think this is so?

10. Read Acts 2:42-47. What clues do we have in the passage to explain the growth of the church (v. 47) then and today?

11. What does living “in the last days” now mean to you?

Ask the Holy Spirit to continue to fill the church with love, joy and empowered mission.

Now or Later

Years after the first Pentecost the apostle Paul was racing across the Mediterranean to present a love gift from the Gentile churches to the relatively poor Jewish believers in Palestine. He was determined to do this in the annual feast of Pentecost. Read Acts 20:16; 21:4-14; Romans 15:23-29; 2 Corinthians 8-9. Why do you think presenting this gift at Pentecost might be important for Paul and for the wider church? In what ways would this ministry of giving constitute an authentic extension of the Spirit’s outpouring on Pentecost? Community of language leads to community of property (Acts 2:42-47). Some dimensions of the community life of the first Christians reflect the emergency situation of pilgrims stranded in Jerusalem after the feast or not wanting to go home and leave this new community. What, however, are the dimensions of living in the last days that can be applied to your own life in this present age?

*A Christian is a controlled drunk,
purposively intoxicated with the joy of the life
which is perpetually created by God himself.*

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