

## The Meaning of the Last Days

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2013

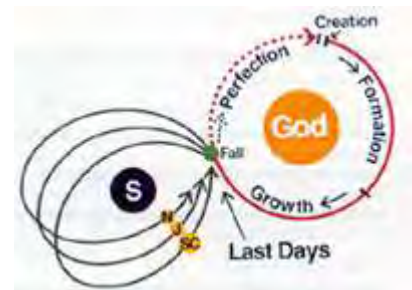
Next, we will look into the consummation of human history. At the end of the world, Will heaven and earth literally burn up and melt, the sun and moon lose their light and the stars fall from heaven as described in the Bible? Will the dead literally rise from the grave, and will all living people be raised up to the clouds to meet Jesus in the air? Or, like in many parts of the Bible, are these symbolic or metaphorical? Let us examine these prophecies of the Last Days, keeping in mind the purpose of God's creation, the facts of the fall, and God's purpose of restoring this fallen world.



If Adam and Eve had perfected themselves in the Garden of Eden by observing God's commandment, they would have become the origin of the ideal family and produced children of goodness. The center of their thought and action would have been God and they would have formed the Kingdom of Heaven on earth in which only God's sovereignty of goodness would have reigned. If this had occurred, their individual and family histories, as well as the ensuing history, would have been histories of goodness. God has sought this history of goodness.

However, because of the fall of the first human ancestors, sin began and they formed the family that God had not purposed, and thus Satan came to rule man and the world. This world then became hell on earth, full of sin and pain, and each individual and family, up to the world itself, has given rise to a history full of contradiction and sin.

The human history God desired was the history of goodness, but at the onset, history began contrary to His desire. Would God then leave the world as it is? No, God wants to achieve the world of His original intent through His providence of salvation. Thus, we call the period of transition from the sinful world of satanic sovereignty into the original world of God's sovereignty the end of the world, or the Last Days.



The Last Days are the time of change from the fallen hell on earth into the Kingdom of Heaven on earth, where the ideal of creation is realized. Therefore, the Last Days are not only the time of fear when earthly catastrophes occur, but also, the time of joy for which the original mind of each person has been waiting since the beginning of human history. Since God cannot just leave this world of evil and hell as it is and begin another world of goodness and heaven, a time of judgment, a time of destroying sinful things, must accompany the Last Days.

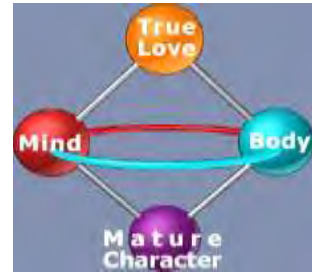
### The Present Days are the Last Days



Based on an overall view of the history of God's Dispensation for Restoration, we can know that we are now living in the actual age of the Second coming. This will be explained more fully in the chapter "The Second Coming". However, we can also know that our time is the Last Days by observing events in the world around us. As Jesus said, "From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near. So also, when you see these things, you know that he is near, at the very gates." (Mt 24:32, 33)

What kinds of signs would indicate that we are in the Last Days? The goal of human history is the establishment of God's ideal world, which is the world based on the realization of the Three Blessings. The Last Days is when the evil world is destroyed, but it is also the time just prior to the establishment of the ideal world. Therefore, if our era is the Last Days, we should be able to see signs in the world that the Tree Blessings are being realized. Based on this understanding, we will show that we are now living in the Last Days. Let us examine our era in light of the Three Blessings.

The first Blessing is that each person can perfect his character and become one in heart with God. In God's ideal, such a person is to enjoy complete freedom of thought and action and is to embody original love and have the character and value of a child of God and a lord of the Creation. Thus he would live the life that is lived in the Kingdom of Heaven. However, because of the Fall, man could not realize the First Blessing. The Last Days is the last stage in God's dispensation to restore each fallen person as a person of perfected character.



In the present era, fallen man is developing a deep inner thirst for restoring the contents of the First Blessing as a reality in his life. This inclination is evident in the recent worldwide interest in new faiths and in movements toward universal love, liberty, equality, and human rights and dignity. The real purpose underlying these trends is not the restoration of man's external and superficial freedoms or values. It is for man to restore the original love, original value, and original freedom which were endowed at his creation, but then lost. The conclusion of God's dispensation in the Last Days will bring about the realization of the First Blessing.

We can also know that the present days are the Last Days when we see the restoration of the First Blessing in the restoration of man's spiritual state. We have already explained that each person is created to become one in heart with God and to be able to fully communicate with the spirit world when he has perfected himself. However, before the Fall, Adam and Eve were able to communicate with God and the spirit world, although their capabilities were not completely developed. Because of the Fall, Adam and Eve and all of their descendants, that is all of mankind, fell into a state where they are insensitive to the presence of God. But as the Bible indicates, communication with the spirit world will be restored in the Last Days: ""... in the last days ... I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams; ... on my menservants and my maidservants in those days I will pour out my Spirit; and they shall prophesy"" (Acts 2: 17,18). Recent increases in spiritual experiences and psychic phenomena worldwide reflect the restoration of man's heart and spirit to the level that Adam and Eve enjoyed just prior to the Fall and indicate that man is on the verge of restoring the First Blessing.



God's Second Blessing to man was the ability for Adam and Eve to perfect themselves as the True Parents and create an ideal family, and then one society and one world centered on that family -- in other words, the ability to create the model family and to make the world one family. The basic unit of that world is the ideal family. Through it God's dominion of love will transform the world into one of a unified culture centered on true love.

However, Adam and Eve fell and became parents with Original Sin, and thus all of mankind became children with natures of evil and realized a world under an evil sovereignty. Therefore, God has worked through religion and through developing the external aspects of civilization to guide man toward the establishment of this unified culture and one world family.

Historically, many different cultures have come into existence. Through time, however, higher cultures have emerged centered on rising new religions. Through a process of absorption of the varied and numerous lower cultures by the higher and more universal ones, a consolidation of cultures has taken place. As a result, there are only four major cultures remaining: Christian, Moslem, Far Eastern (based on Buddhism, Confucianism, and Taoism), and Hindu.



This convergent flow of history shows the trend toward man's establishing one world culture -- and that God's Second Blessing is being restored. The world of one culture centered on God's true love will be realized when all people become brothers and sisters, with God as their parent. Based on this viewpoint, Christianity is the central religion in the work to fulfill God's Dispensation for Restoration because Christianity introduced God as the parent of all mankind, because it awaits the Messiah, who comes to establish one culture, and because it has worked to unite the world as one family.

As a result of God's dispensational work, man since World War II has, to an unprecedented extent, become aware of the need for international cooperation and world government. This awareness has given rise to the United Nations and many international commissions and organizations, and concerned with international standards and internal control of everything from nutrition and food resources to the use and resources of the seas, from atomic power and ecology to international law, from concern for the welfare of children (e.g., international adoption agencies and UNICEF) and disaster aid (e.g., International Red Cross) to world health (e.g., the World Health Organization) and world economy (e.g., the International Monetary Fund and World Bank), and a multitude of others. Economic interdependence and cooperation have developed to such an extent that the well-developed nations are to a great degree the marketplaces for the people of the world. Thus we find ourselves living in a world community, where the races, nationalities, languages, customs, cultures, and products of the world intermingle and harmonize as never before.



Because of the tremendous advances in transportation and communications, the world has "shrunk" to such an extent that we can travel to almost any part of the world in a few hours. (Just fifty or sixty years earlier, in the scope of that same few hours, our "world" was perhaps a hundred miles in radius.) With this ease of travel, travel to other countries has increased tremendously, bringing about unprecedented interaction and mutual understanding and harmony among different peoples and their customs, bringing us to the threshold of a unified world.

In this century there has been unprecedented development among many peoples worldwide of tolerance and understanding of other people and of a spirit of love. It is God's dispensation to restore the Second Blessing that has given rise to such attitudes. It also led to the benevolent treatment of the defeated nations by the democratic victors after World War II and the granting of independence to colonies and territories; it has led to foreign aid



programs, to increasing ecumenism, to inter-cultural exchange, and to interracial and international marriages and adoption of children. All of these show the trend toward the restoration of God's Second Blessing to man -- the blessing of true love among people and the establishment of one world family.

All of these hopes and trends will reach fruition when the final gifts of history arrive, the Lord of the Second coming and the new universal ideology that he brings, in other words the gifts of God's Heart and the God-centered ideology. No home can be truly a home without parents; so man's desires for harmony and love will only be fulfilled when God and the Messiah can stand in the position of man's parents.



God's third Blessing to man is the right and ability of a perfect person to have spiritual and physical dominion over the Creation, that is, both internal and external dominion. Internal dominion over the Creation means dominion through love. External dominion is man's use and development of the Creation for his life through the means of science and technology. Evidence that the present time is the Last Days, and therefore the stage just prior to the restoration of God's Third Blessing, can be seen in the developing concern and love for nature and also in the tremendous development of science and technology.

Originally, man's appreciation and love for the Creation are proportional to the growth of his spirit. Evidence of the restoration of man's love for the Creation can be seen in the ecology and conservation movements, in societies for the prevention of cruelty to animals, in drives to restore polluted areas, and in organizations and clubs formed for the appreciation of nature.

Through science and technology, man is restoring his external dominion over the Creation. Tremendous scientific progress has taken place in this century. Through this man has been gaining control over disease and over the sea, land, air, and even outer space. Man is also on the verge of being able to create an ideal standard of living for all people through such things as mass production, high yield crops, transformation of deserts to farmlands, and environmental control. Use of the ocean floor and even both polar caps are also examples of man's ability to turn the Creation into an ideal home.

We can see that the Three Blessings are in the process of being restored to mankind. Thus we can see that the establishment of God's ideal world is upon us -- that we are in the Last Days.