

# Some Will Depart

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Preacher: Chris Oswald

[ 0 : 00 ] Thank him who has given me strength, Christ Jesus our Lord, because he judged me faithful, appointing me to his service, though formerly I was a blasphemer, persecutor, and insolent opponent. But I received mercy, because I had acted ignorantly in unbelief, and the grace of our Lord overflowed for me with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus.

This saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the foremost.

But I received mercy for this reason, that in me, as the foremost, Jesus Christ might display his perfect patience as an example to those who were to believe in him for eternal life.

To the king of the ages, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen. You may be seated.

We'll dismiss our kids to children's ministry, and if you'll open your Bibles to the book of 1 Timothy, chapter 4, 1 Timothy chapter 4. We'll be reading this morning from 1 Timothy chapter 4, verses 1 through 4.

[ 1 : 22 ] Now the Spirit expressly says that in the latter times, some will depart from the faith by devoting themselves to deceitful spirits and teachings of demons.

Through the insincerity of liars whose consciences are seared, who forbid marriage and require abstinence from foods, that God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth.

For everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving, for it is made holy by the word of God in prayer.

This message will just have two points. We really, I ran out of time to, our allotted time for me to preach to you only contains so much opportunity, and so our two points this morning, one will be in the latter times, a discussion of what that means, and then the second one will be some will depart from the faith.

That's the second point. I bring that to you because I had a chance to sort of, this is the great thing about being a pastor, as opposed to just a preacher. You can run things up the flagpole in private conversations with church members before you preach, and you can get a sense of like, does this make sense to you?

[ 2 : 45 ] Do I need to figure out another way to say this? So on and so forth. It's just a wonderful gift from God to walk in community with people and have the preaching ministry and the pastoral ministry be the same ministry.

And so I want to caution you that every single time I ran the following up the flagpole, I got deer in the headlights looks. And I would just go back and work on it again and so on and so forth.

But this first point, I think, will be probably an introduction to a new idea for many of you, and I won't seek to persuade you of anything this morning, but just perhaps introduce a new way of thinking about something.

You know how it is. Words are just placeholders for our kind of, as we read them, we can accidentally sort of put our own meaning into a word without even realizing we're doing it and just kind of move on.

What I want to suggest to you this morning is that the phrase latter times, as used by Paul here, is one of those places that we're just getting wrong. We're just putting meaning into that word that isn't actually the meaning that Paul has.

[ 3 : 51 ] And so, again, won't go super polemic on this, just want to make you aware that something else may indeed be going on, in fact, I believe it is, in at least a number of the occasions when the phrase latter times or last days, I don't think there's any distinction.

When these phrases appear, I think something that you might not know is happening is happening. There's the Princess Bride quote. You keep using that word.

I do not think that word means what you think it means. And so that's what I want to talk about, at least first. We have all kinds of evidence.

I'm going to walk you through the evidence. We have all kinds of evidence that the phrase last days or latter times is very often, if not always, referring not to the distant future, but to something that was happening in the lifetime of the early church.

So let me put that before you. I said that we have multiple layers of evidence for this. And one of the layers is simply that, you know, a remarkable thing will happen when you start reading your Bible with the assumption that the apostles did not have ADD.

[ 5 : 11 ] It's basically like, like, I don't think the Apostle Paul is cursed with the same thing that my pastor is. Because what will happen is suddenly you expect continuity from one passage to the next.

And so one of the light-weighted evidences, weighted lightly in my case, that this is actually the last days is actually what Paul's talking about is happening in his time, is like he was, he offers us no clue that he has just switched subjects.

Did he just jump into discussion of eschatology? Paul doesn't talk about eschatology like that. He usually talks about it in answering a question, and so on and so forth. So one of the kind of lightly-weighted ideas here is just like, boy, it'd be interesting that he, the record just skipped a few songs.

And suddenly now we're talking about eschatology. There's actually multiple layers of textual evidence as well. In the verse itself, in verse one, we see the latter times some will, for future tense, from the faith by devoting themselves.

And then by the time we get to verse two, we're in the present tense. And really we stay in the present tense from there forward. Another good evidence for this is just that the whole book is about this local church's behavior and the false teaching that is taking place there.

[ 6 : 32 ] But this idea of this, that the church could use the phrase later times to refer to their times is something I want to establish more because I just think it'll affect your reading of the Bible in substantial ways.

One commentator writes, the phrase with the verb in the future tense might at first incline one to think that Paul is warning about something yet to come.

But the New Testament community used futuristic-sounding language to describe the present age. Paul is speaking about a present phenomenon using emphatic future language characteristic of prophecy that he goes on to an argument addressed to a present situation and that he urges Timothy to instruct the church members in this regard here and now to substantiate this understanding.

A lot of Christians and a lot of even pastors and a few Bible commentators read the last days and they just assume they import their understanding into that phrase and really don't ask, like, what is Paul talking about?

What is Paul trying to communicate here? And I want to show you that this phrase is routinely used to refer to the present church age, the present apostolic age, and not some future age by the apostles themselves.

[ 8 : 01 ] So for instance, we have Pentecost. The people are gathered in the upper room, they're fasting and praying, the Holy Spirit falls upon them and they begin speaking in the many tongues of languages and it's quite a stir and people are trying to explain what's going on.

We can hear all these people talking in our own language and some kind of cynical, you know, smart person says, oh, they're drunk.

You know, they're drunk. And Peter says in verse 14, men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let it be known to you and give ear to my words, for these people are not drunk, as you suppose, since it is only the third hour of the day.

Wouldn't stop a lot of people, I know, but okay. But this is what was uttered through the prophet Joel. So essentially, Peter's like, here's what's happening.

Here's what's happening right now in front of you. In the last days, it shall be, God declares, that I will pour out my spirit on all flesh and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy and your young men shall see visions and your old men shall dream dreams.

[ 9 : 13 ] Even on my male servants and female servants in those days, I will pour out my spirit and they shall prophesy. And I will show wonders in the heavens above and signs on the earth below, blood, fire, vapor of smoke.

The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the day of the Lord comes, the great and magnificent day. And it shall come to pass that everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved. So the phrase last days there, where Peter says, this is what's happening.

Let me explain it to you. This is the fulfillment of Joel 2.28. Joel 2.28 says that in the last days, the following is going to happen and it's happening. But the thing that's interesting is that when you go back either in the Septuagint or in the Hebrew to the Old Testament to Joel, it doesn't say in the last days.

It says it shall come to pass. So Paul is, or Peter, through his apostolic privilege, he would know, he is choosing to say, these are the last days.

Again, if your head is so full of Black Hawk helicopters and Antichrist with barcode scanners, what I'm saying is going to sound super weird because you're putting years and years of indoctrination into Bible terms, but don't think I'm saying what I'm not saying.

[ 10 : 33 ] They referred, though, Peter did, to that as the last days. So here's kind of a way to think about this. How were those days the last days? And I'll show you a bunch of other scriptures where this is happening as well.

But let's just try to grab some handles for like, in what ways would the apostles see these as the last days? So you may have heard someone say that the early church, including Paul, thought that the return of Christ was imminent.

That's false in the most important way. They did not think that they were living in the moment immediately hinged upon the final consummation, the final return of Christ.

They did think they were living in the last days. These are two different things. It's like, what do you mean by that? I thought those were the same things. I've grown up, it's the same thing on the chart I saw in Sunday school.

It's like, well, okay. Some things were ending in that moment. Just think about this for yourself before I kind of give you some, what was ending?

[ 11 : 45 ] What was coming to an end? There were things that were ending, right? One of the things that is remarkable about God's word that we sleep on, and isn't controversial at all, it's just we just don't think about it, is that there's really only ever been two kings over the whole earth.

you know, we've had all these changes of government, we've had all these countries rise and fall and so forth, but there's really been two global kings the whole time.

Adam and Jesus, the second Adam. In December, on December 10th, James White's going to be here preaching, and I asked him to preach on Isaiah 9-6, because it's going to start our Christmas series.

And Isaiah 9-6 is, for us, a child is born, to us, a son is given, and the government shall be on his shoulder. What's that mean? It's not, it doesn't say government, it says the government.

Well, the understanding is that Jesus has come as the second Adam. See, we would be mistaken to fully think of Adam as one of us, he's the best of us.

[ 12 : 54 ] That's the right, he's the king. he's the only one who ever had entire dominion, who was given entire dominion over the entire world. And, then a second government was introduced at the coming of Christ.

We have another kingdom, the kingdom has come, the king has come, and so, one of the things that the apostles could mean is that by the end, is this is the end of that former age under Adam, and the beginning of a new age under Christ.

You know, there is a, there's a verse that you might have heard of, it's in Matthew 28, that begins with, Jesus said to him, all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.

Have you heard this one? Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I've commanded you, and behold, I am with you to the end of the age.

Two questions might pop up as you're reading that. Who had the authority before Jesus did? Because it had just been given to Jesus. And the second one would be, what is the age he's talking about?

[ 14 : 05 ] Even to the end of the age. So, my best understanding is that Adam slash the devil had the authority before, and Jesus has the authority now.

And the age that Jesus is referring to is the age that has just begun, which is the age of Christ. I don't think it's accidental or incidental. We've been using the word adjacent.

I don't think this is just coincidental or adjacent. That A.D. and B.C. stuck. Because I think really what we're talking about are two, is a fundamental shift that took place at the first coming of Jesus.

I believe that when Jesus says, I'm with you, even to the end of the age, he's saying, I'm with you all the way through my total reign. But he could mean the other.

There's this period of time where these two things are running parallel, the kingdom of Adam and the kingdom of God. It wouldn't be a mistake. You could be very biblically faithful to say, I think that's still where we are.

[ 15 : 11 ] That'd be fine. There's other ways to think about that, but that wouldn't be a problem. The big thing that you won't want to miss is that a thing had come to the end and the apostles were very aware of something ending.

By the way, I have this theory there that there's a reason why the new world order sounds so creepy to us because it is. I think there's been two world orders throughout the history of the world.

the reign of Adam and the reign of Christ. And so, what I think Klaus Schwab and the other bros want to do, when they say new world order, why does it send shivers down my spine?

Here's what I finally figured out because they want three periods of history. They want AD, BC, and UN. they want that third one to be as resoundingly significant as the last one and as total.

So, there's this idea that something ended with the coming of Christ. And, in some ways, I think we can say that when the apostles used last days to refer to their days, their meaning this thing that came to an end.

[ 16 : 35 ] I want to leave that intentionally a bit sketchy because there's still some questions there. But there's another way to see this that's even more clear. And that would be that what has ended is the mystery.

What has ended is the mystery. And that would be very contextually connected, right? Because Paul had just before told us about the mystery of godliness.

And last week we said that really what's happening when a mystery is being revealed is layer after layer after layer is being unpeeled. And then finally the central thing is happening.

And so what they could mean, because I'm going to show you a bunch of other instances where the apostles are clearly talking about their time as the last times, is what seems pretty clear actually from some of these verses which you'll hear, is that the last times are the mystery has been revealed.

The last days of the mystery being a mystery. The new days of the mystery being fully revealed. Listen to Hebrews 1. Long ago at many times and in many ways God spoke to our fathers by the prophets.

[ 17 : 50 ] Verse 2. But in these last days he has spoken to us by his son whom he appointed the heir of all things through whom he also created the world.

And I think if you read the next two chapters of Hebrews you'd see that that's not a throwaway line. 1 Peter 1. 20. He was foreknown before the foundation of the world but was made manifest in the last times for the sake of you.

So what we've got is Jesus was known the whole time to be the mystery but in these last times he was made manifest. He became visible.

He became real to you. In the last times for the sake of you who through him are believers in God who raised him from the dead and gave him glory so that your faith and hope are in God.

In Ephesians 1 which we've talked about the parallel between Ephesians and 1 Timothy both addressing the church in Ephesus probably. In Ephesians 1 7 through 10 we have this in him we have redemption through his blood the forgiveness of our trespasses according to the riches of his grace which he lavished upon us in all wisdom and insight making known to us the mystery of his will so there's the mystery again according to his purpose which he set forth in Christ as a plan for the fullness of time to unite all things in him things in heaven and on earth so I think when we see the apostles using last days or last times and there doesn't seem to be any kind of need to differentiate between those when they're using those and it's clear from the context that they're talking about the present the strongest assertion I could make to you is that the lastness of the last days for them is the mystery is revealed the whole point of history has opened up to us the centrality of



Mark 1 verse 14 through 15 now after John was arrested Jesus came into Galilee proclaiming the gospel of God and saying the time is fulfilled see how something being fulfilled would be also the same as something the end of something the time is fulfilled the kingdom of God is at hand repent and believe in the gospel so what the latter time seems to be here and we really need to get back to this verse the latter time seems to be this moment when Jesus became the undeniable center of the universe and God attested to it by the raising of him from the dead and he will return to judge Jesus will return to judge the living and the dead the undeniable center of the universe is Jesus Christ now there was a guy named Simeon not long after Jesus got pulled out of the barn as a baby there was a guy named Simeon who said this child is appointed for the fall and rising of many in Israel so what we see here in this verse in 1st Timothy 4 is this idea that the revelation of Jesus as God will save some and cause others to stumble the revelation of Jesus as God will save some and cause others to stumble so I've given you this sort of general category like there's multiple times where the apostles use last days last times to refer to their times like what's going on there for sure for sure they mean the end of the mystery it could mean more than that but they definitely mean that well that's a category now let me give you a subcategory that fits inside of that and that is a set of verses that talk about people revolting away from Jesus because he was revealed so there's a subset of verses that the apostles where they still use the phrase end times last time so on but they're referring to people reacting negatively to realizing that Jesus is the center of the universe okay so what was this verse is this

[ 26 : 32 ] Jude Jude 17 but you must remember beloved the predictions of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ they said to you in the last time there will be scoffers following their own ungodly passions why is Jude saying just so you know in 2024 the last days are going to come and you just want to know that the scoffers are on their way no they're dealing with the problems that are happening in their church as Jesus Christ displaces every other religion because it is simply an insurmountably different thing the revelation of Jesus as the center of all things is throwing some people off their game and some of them will be saved and some of them will stumble 2 Peter 3 this is how the second letter this is now the second letter that I'm writing to you beloved in both of them I am stirring up your sincere mind by way of reminder that you should remember the predictions of the holy prophets and commandment of the

Lord and Savior through your apostles knowing this first of all that scoffers will come in the last days with scoffing again you've really got to jump through some hoops to see all of these verses air mailed all the way to the end of history when it really looks like these are pastoral men speaking to their congregations about the conditions they're experiencing at that time first timothy chapter 4 verses 1 through 5 is our text this is this is in that same category of telling people hey now that Jesus has obviously changed everything some are going to get saved and some are going to stumble first timothy our text fits into that category now the spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith by devoting themselves to deceitful spirits and teachings of demons so we spend the majority of our time dealing with the thing that is the most awkward for us that we're not used to thinking about but we do need to get on the rest of the passage is important too and the spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith so it turns out especially because

Jesus is the new thing there were many in Jesus earthly ministry and many in the first century many today who were simply test driving Jesus does that make sense like what is apostasy apostasy is the moment you realize someone was taking Jesus for a test drive they hadn't bought him they weren't owning they hadn't committed they were leasing I guess you could say or something like that and you don't know who owns it and who leases until the leases get turned in you're like oh I thought you owned your car it's like no I was just taking it for a test drive it's like oh I thought you owned Jesus like no I was just trying him out that's what Paul's dealing with people who were test driving Jesus and this is Paul's great concern with the Galatians and whoever wrote Hebrews is dealing with the very same thing people can test drive Jesus they can try him out and then they can decide

I'm gonna pass I like the old ways better there's only two ways Jesus and the old way just remember that all the new ways are old ways they're just repeated errors there's two ways the old ways and Jesus the most progressive thing you could do if any of you are into that is to trust Jesus he's the newest thing he's the big idea that's different than all the other ideas now I want you to see what happens when someone rejects Jesus text tells us that they go in a direction that you may be surprised to find you might expect someone to depart from Jesus and head to the nearest gentleman's club but no very often people who reject Jesus head right to the rule book what's going on there when you reject

Jesus you reject the father Jesus has made this clear but when you reject Jesus you reject the view of God you reject the view of God you can only get with Jesus and that is the God who gives freely and you're returning to Adam's false God more precisely Eve's false God the God who withholds you have two options if you walk with Jesus and you stick with Jesus and you meditate on Jesus and you revel in Jesus as the peak of everything as the truly remarkable thing if you delight in the reign of Jesus for the rest of your life you will see God and the thing you'll see when you see God is very generous but if you reject Jesus then you will fall under the delusion of a false God who is stingy begrudging overly scrupulous who only approves of people who live like

[ 32 : 19 ] Scrooge who only approves the only way you could ever get that God's approval is if you deny yourself God because that's who he is he's a denier he's he's a stingy God and that is exactly the false God the serpent put on Eve a God who is holding back a God who operates from a limited sum game and so if you reject Jesus you lose this image of the God who is fundamentally preposterously shockingly generous and you return back to the spiritual Egypt to your masters who are always withholding it's the stingy gods who forbid marriage and require abstinence from certain foods and when people are serving a stingy God they will look stingy and they will look resource conservation rules restraint self denial so on and so forth there's a rule for all those things but the person who is serving a stingy

God that is their religion it's like how do people get that way well they stop seeing Jesus as the incredible remarkable evidence of a God who is fundamentally generous so why are these people like even first of all why are demons teaching that you shouldn't get married and you should abstain from foods and why are people even interested in that I thought we were supposed to do like felt needs ministries and have smoke shows and you know laser shows and everything that'll really get them in no it turns out like what people really want is self righteousness this you can pack any place with that that's why the demons are interested in it it says all the wrong things about God it's a fundamental lie about the very nature of God but when you hold on to this idea that

Jesus is the shocking thing he's the surprise he is the pivotal the realization that God became flesh to save you that's the big news not what's going to happen tomorrow or a thousand years from now with a trumpet or without a trumpet or whatever you think all the headlines happened all the really big headlines happened everything else is like just a way that the massive news of the incarnation plays out down the road but the massive news has already happened the invasion has already taken place you tell me when it'll be done I'm open to that what I know is the most important thing is Aslan is on the move God's feet are on the ground like they've already touched down and when you lose the wonder of that you inevitably lose the implication the main implication you mean

God is that good and when you lose the you mean God is that good you start this nonsense where you like voluntarily leave the feast to go back to the gulag and eat the gruel because at least in that context you're self righteous and the God who you're serving is the kind of God who would be impressed with you eating gruel when there's perfectly good fried chicken right there so what I'm saying is is that this austerity is actually no surprise this austerity is simply what happens when someone departs from Jesus because Jesus is the great evidence of God's generosity this is what Paul's been talking about we don't want to get too focused on this back end here where Paul's saying everything's good if it's received well and so on and so forth that's all true because of a certain way that



God is but the certain way that God is is best revealed it is revealed in fried chicken but it's best revealed in Jesus great indeed Paul wrote right before we got to now the spirit expressly says great indeed we confess is the mystery of godliness he was manifested in the flesh vindicated by the spirit seen by angels proclaimed among the nations believed on in the world and taken up into glory this is what keeps us in feast mode this is what keeps us celebrating!

[ 37 : 23 ] This is what gives us joy I want you to just understand something and understand that we're so dumb that we could get bored by this but that's our problem it's not the problem of the actual truth I want you to understand something super clear with me this morning I hope will bring you to the feast of God and be done with all these stingy false gods who are holding out on you God gave himself blood so that he could spill it for you God gave himself a face so that it could be punched for you God gave himself a head so that head could be pierced with thorns for you God made himself a back so that that back could be scourged he gave himself a human body capable of dying so that he could die for you this is the headline of all the headlines this is the news of all the news this is the centerpiece of reality the day and days when

God took on flesh and gave himself up to purchase you from sin what ended in that time a lot of things ended at that time a lot of things ended at that time one of the things that ended is the what can we bring phenomenon you guys know the what can we bring phenomenon we're all hospitable people we know about this phenomenon you invite someone over for dinner and they text what can we bring so friends I don't know if everyone here is saved you may just be here investigating Christ and thinking that today you know you're just test driving let me just tell you like I preach a lot of sermons I think this would be a really good day to stop test driving but how does that work so understand what the offer is you get to sit at the table the feast of

God a generous God a God who spared not his own son but freely gave him up for you you get to sit at that table the rest of your life and for all eternity only deal is you can't ask what can I bring that's all we need to do right now folks if you're!

here and you've never given your life to Jesus and don't get me wrong there's a million things to figure out there's a million questions to answer the thing is that it would be better for you if you answered those while you were eating at the feast and all you need to do to get into the feast is to believe that Jesus Christ is your Lord and Savior that he gave himself up for you so this would be a good day to understand that the God who created all things including fried chicken someone here is going to eat fried chicken today the God who created all things is screaming out to you don't believe the devil's lies that if you trust me you will lose anything you lose in the short term is nothing compared to what you will gain in the long term he gave himself a body to give his body up for you he's worth your trust

I know there are many things that it's hard to understand about the faith we talked about some of those today but let's all make sure we're sitting at the table together John 1 14 another incarnation passage and the word became flesh and dwelt among us and we have seen his glory glory as of the only son from the father full of grace and truth John bore witness about him and cried out this was he of whom I said he who comes after me ranks before me because he was before me from his from his fullness verse 16 from his fullness we have all received grace upon grace course upon course of God's richest blessing served up to you by the master of the universe Jesus Christ and so I want to make sure that today you understand test driving probably you've had enough just today if you've never surrendered yourself to

[ 42 : 28 ] Jesus I strongly encourage you to do that today I promise you details will come he will help you but boy let's make sure that you understand what the whole point of the whole universe really is what has God been doing all this time he's been making much of his son so I want to invite you to come maybe for the very first time you have given your life to Jesus I want to invite you to come to this table which is just more of what I've been telling you it's just more evidence of everything I've been saying that God gave himself up freely so that you could be saved and that this bread represents the body of Jesus and this wine represents the blood of Jesus both of which were literally created to give so we have this incredible privilege right now to end this Christ centered sermon with a

Christ centered act to come and partake of the table let me pray father God I praise your holy name that the point of the universe is Jesus Christ in whom for whom by whom through whom all roads all points of meaning lead to the excellencies of Jesus Christ we praise your name Lord that you are the author and perfecter not only of our faith but of all of history and that you have been patiently with perfect authority and wisdom and skill leading this world in providence to make much of Jesus Christ and those that are in him and God I pray that you would bless those who come and partake of this table today may their hearts be warmed by the generosity of the God who gave his own son we love you Lord amen!