

## ***It Is the Last Hour***

1 John 2:18-19

### **Are we living in the 'end times'?**

- 1. There is much confusion about this topic.** Eschatology = theological study of the end times
  - NT times: "The Lord has already returned!" (2 Thes. 2:1-2) or "The Lord will never return!" (2 Pet. 3:3)
  - Today: "The Lord will never return!" or "The Lord is coming at any moment! Here are the details...."
- 2. This topic has been used by some in the church to manipulate people.**
  - Intellectual or theological 'Gnosticism': 'I have secret knowledge about these things.'
- 3. Confusion about this topic has prompted some to question the truth of God's word: Was John wrong?**

### **The Bible teaches that we are living in the "last days" of history.**

- 1. The Bible says the end times started with the first coming Jesus Christ. 1 Pet 1:20-21; Heb 1:1-2; 9:26**
  - In the NT, phrases such as "last days", "end times", and "end of the ages" are linked to Christ's first coming.

-1 Peter 1:20-21: *He... has appeared in these last times for the sake of you who through Him are believers in God.*

-Hebrews 1:1-2: *Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son....*

-Hebrews 9:26: *...he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.*
- 2. The "last days" are marked by rebellion, unbelief & mocking of Jesus' return. 2 Pet 3:3-9; 2 Tim 3:1-5**
- 3. The "last days" are a time when God's Spirit is spreading to all the nations of the world.**
  - Acts 2:17f: *And it shall be in the last days that I will pour forth of My Spirit on all mankind...* (Rf. Joel 2:28f)
  - 1 Cor. 10:11: *...and they were written for our instruction, upon whom the ends of the ages have come*

→ Summary: We are living in the last days: they began 2000 years ago when Christ came.

### **THE COMING OF GOD'S KINGDOM**

- 1. The INAUGURATION of the Kingdom** (the beginning of the end).
  - Jesus: *The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the Gospel.* Mk 1:15
  - At the synagogue in Nazareth, Jesus said he was the fulfillment of OT prophecy of the kingdom. Lk 4:18-21
  - Paul referred to his day as the 'fulfillment' of time. Galatians 4:4-5
- 2. The CONTINUATION of the Kingdom** (the 'in-between time' in which we now live).
  - Jesus taught there would be an 'in-between' time between His resurrection and His return. Jn 16:5f;
  - Jesus said he would send his Spirit to his followers during this time to fill, teach, and comfort them.
  - This 'in-between' time is for God's Kingdom to expand & Satan's realm to be destroyed. Mt 6:10,13; 12:29
  - The kingdom parables give pictures of this 'in-between' time. See especially Mt.13
    - the wheat & tares: the Kingdom a mixture of wheat (good) and tares (bad) until the harvest (v.24-30)
    - the mustard seed: the Kingdom appears insignificant (small) but is becoming the largest (v.31-32)
    - the fish net: the Kingdom is in a time of gathering people from every nation (v.47-50)
- 3. The CONSUMATION of the Kingdom** (the end of the end).
  - Jesus promised He would return. Acts 1:11; John 14:1-4
  - Revelation promises that the Kingdom of God will come in all its fullness. Rev. 21:10f
  - The present heavens and earth will be destroyed; there will be a new heavens and earth created—characterized by righteousness and peace. 2 Peter 3:11-13; Isaiah 11:6-10; 65:17-25; Rev. 21:1f

→ Summary: The "last days" is an 'in-between' time as we await the return of Jesus Christ.

  - Sometimes called the "Now, but not yet" or the "Already, but not yet" time of the Kingdom.