

FIVE LAST DAYS TEMPATIONS

The confluence of events that started in 2020 and extend now into 2021 have blessed us by reminding us that we are in the last days. The technology, thinking, immorality, tensions, wickedness, global connectedness and cooperation, and circumstances of our times have clearly revealed the imminent possibility of what was prophesied in Revelation. I say we have been blessed by this reminder because living in the last days simply means we are closer to our beloved King Jesus returning to rule and reign. How marvelous!

There are several temptations in these last days that we need to be aware of and fight against, that we might take advantage of this, God's finest hour. Here are five of the most sinister.

1. BABEL BEFORE BIBLE

We must not prefer the bad news over the good news. We should go to the Bible before breakfast, before social media, before the news. We must resist the temptation to fill our minds with the nonsense and worries of our time instead of with the word of God. The morning (nightly, Twitter, constant) news does not fill us with the Spirit of God. Let's turn off the Babel and turn to the Bible. Let's be deaf to the demonic chatter of our times and tune our ears to the sweet sound of the Scripture.

2. WITHDRAWAL OVER WITNESS

This truly is God's finest hour. There are more Muslims getting saved globally now than ever before. There are more unreached peoples turning to Jesus now than ever in history. God is doing amazing things in the world—unprecedented in all of history. This is the time to engage the world, not withdraw from it. This is the time to shine. This is the time to preach Christ, the hope of nations. We must resist the urge to hide and whimper, to hide in holes and hoard our resources. There has never been a better, clearer time to represent Jesus. We are not to passively wait for Jesus to come and rescue us; rather, we are meant to spend our last days rescuing the perishing. The best days for world missions will be the last days of the world. The end comes when the gospel is preached to all nations. Let's not withdraw our witness at this most opportune of all times.

3. WORRY OVER WORSHIP

The Christian response to being overwhelmed is praise. When the armies are too big, we send out the worship team who lift up their voices and magnify Jehovah. When the prison is too dark, we sing out psalms of praise for all to hear. In these last days we cannot spend our remaining energy and breath on complaining or moaning or crying or endlessly rehearsing all the scary scenarios. No! We must lift up our heads and shout out praises to the Most High. Now is the time to praise. Worry is quiet and pitiful. Praise is loud. Lift up your heads! Your redemption draws nigh! The last days shall be days of faith, not fear, for the redeemed. We will not look out for ourselves; we will look up for the King. May He find us shouting praise when He returns. The last days are not days of silence for the apostolic people of God. Let us open our preaching mouths and roar! It's about to get good.

4. SURVIVAL OVER SANCTIFICATION

It really is okay to go home to heaven with a hand, foot, or head cut off. It's okay in these last days to lose our freedoms, possessions, homes, lands, finances, honor, reputation, even our very life. God is intentionally granting us a dissatisfaction with a range of good things that we might long for His appearing. We are not meant to survive by surrendering our holiness. We must not compromise. Let us stand for Him boldly, even if that means we fall swiftly. The goal is not to be the last one standing; the goal is that we only bow to Jesus. Let us rejoice as each successive liberty and luxury is stripped away. This wicked world is simply undressing us for heaven. We go home naked anyway, so let's not fight those who are helping us get there. In these days of horror, we yet have our blessed hope!

5. DRIFT OVER DEVOTION

Dr. Jim Bradford points out that spiritual drift/complacency is a sign of our times and only becomes worse as the days become uncertain and spiritual warfare increases. The upheaval of the last days will tempt God's people to take their eyes off of Jesus. The last book of the Bible, Revelation, gets its title from the opening phrase of the book, "the Revelation of Jesus Christ," with "revelation" literally meaning "unveiling." The book, and hence the last days, are intended to unveil Jesus to us. There has never been a better time to focus on Jesus, to see Him clearly, to devote and lavish our time and attention on Him, to see Him unveiled in all His glory. In these last days we have an unprecedented opportunity to see Jesus in new, fresh, and glorious ways. Let's not drift away from staring at Him in wonder and in hope.

These are the last days—and aren't they great? There has never been a better time to be Jesus-centered, Bible-based, missions-hearted, praise-propelled, faith-filled, Spirit-empowered, and heaven-bound.