

## WILL YOU BE A SURVIVOR OF THE LAST DAYS?

### *Note to the speaker:*

Convey the urgency of our times. Prove conclusively that we are in the last days. Motivate all to take positive action in order to be among the survivors

### **WE MUST BE CONCERNED ABOUT SURVIVING LAST DAYS** (4 min.)

A person who willfully ignores a clear warning and so loses his life is foolish (*g87 7/8 3*)

Today, Jehovah's Witnesses preach worldwide about the last days

Are we *really* in the last days? Is there proof? How will it affect you and your loved ones?

In first century C.E., surviving last days should have been of great concern to Jews

Jewish system of things, with its temple and priesthood, entered last days in 29 C.E. (*w82 5/1 13*)

John the Baptizer and Jesus and his disciples warned Jews that destruction was coming in that generation

Most of those Jews failed to heed the clear warning (Read Luke 19:43, 44)

Those who recognized last days and took right action survived the destruction

It is wise to examine what happened in first century C.E. and see if there is a lesson here for us

### **JEWS SHOULD HAVE KNOWN ABOUT LAST DAYS** (12 min.)

Jehovah in prophecy clearly warned the Jews of the last days, linking them with the coming of the Messiah (Read Daniel 9:25a, gist of verses 26, 27) (*it-2 899-904; w82 5/1 13*)

All Jewish hopes and expectations focused on the Messiah, so this prophecy would have been of intense interest, not something that Jews would have overlooked

Prophecy of 70 weeks of years pinpointed the year Messiah would come, 29 C.E.

Evidence is that many Jews then were expecting Messiah to appear (Lu 3:15; *w84 12/1 9-10*)

From 29 C.E. on, evidence mounted showing that Jesus was Messiah

This indicated that the Jewish system of things had entered the last days

Proved that prophecies identifying Jesus as Messiah were fulfilled

Miracles and teaching evidenced he was Messiah (Joh 7:39-41; 9:17, 31-33)

In view of Daniel 9:26, 27, the Jews should have realized that they had entered the last days

Jesus plainly foretold the destruction of the Jewish system of things and enumerated events to take place in the last days preceding it (Read Matthew 23:37, 38; 24:1-8) (*w70 42-5*)

Did Jesus' prophecy come true, confirming that the Jewish system was in its last days? Did Matthew chapter 24 have an application then? (*g80 9/8 17-18; kc 106-8*)

Outpouring of holy spirit at Pentecost 33 C.E., along with associated miraculous gifts, also proved that the Jews were living in the last days (Joe 2:28-32)

In response to the Jews' inquiry as to meaning of what occurred, Peter showed it meant those were the "last days" (Read Acts 2:12, 16, 17, 20)

News of it would have spread rapidly, so whole city would have been alerted

Jews who heard these warnings had ample proof; should have acted and kept living

Warning included advice to flee when Jerusalem was surrounded (Lu 21:20-22)

When Romans under Cestius Gallus came in 66 C.E., Jews were still able to take lifesaving action

Roman armies withdrew; thus, those recognizing last days had opportunity to flee

Jews in other places could have heeded warning by not visiting Jerusalem

In 70 C.E., Romans returned and brought last days to destructive climax

It meant disaster for those Jews who ignored the warning about last days (*g80 9/8 16-18*)

Lack of faith, not lack of evidence, led many Jews to ignore warning of last days

Their recognizing last days and acting accordingly or not involved life

We are still faced, however, with question: Did application extend beyond then to today?

### **PROPHECY ABOUT CONCLUSION OF SYSTEM APPLIES TODAY TOO** (8 min.)

Facts of history prove that much of Matthew 24 had miniature fulfillment in last days from 33 C.E. to 70 C.E. (With open Bible, *briefly* outline Matthew 24:4-22) (*rs 234-43*)

Portions of prophecy remained unfulfilled, pointing to fulfillment at *later* time (*kc 108-9*)

Revelation chapter 6 also points *forward* to the crowning of Jesus at a time of war, food shortage, and plague on earth (*re 93-8*)

Was written over quarter of century *after* end of Jewish system

The agreement of details in Revelation 6 with Matthew 24 proves that Jesus' prophecy in Matthew 24 would also have a *future* application

Leaves unanswered the question: When is the second application, or fulfillment?

Jehovah's Witnesses have shown from Bible and history that major application of Matthew 24 has been since establishment of the Kingdom in heaven in 1914

World wars, food shortages, earthquakes, preaching, confirm application (*gm* 136-42, 147-8)

Question still remains: What do last days mean to us?

### **WE ARE LIVING IN LAST DAYS** (14 min.)

References to "last days" in Bible are not limited to the last days of the Jewish system of things

Another prophecy about "last days" is found in 2 Timothy 3:1-7 (Read verse 1, gist of verses 2-7)

Paul describes course and attitudes to prevail among ones *claiming to be Christian* in the last days

Paul was *not* referring to last days of the Jewish system of things (*kc* 105-6; *it-2* 206-7; *w76* 512)

Does this prophecy of "last days" in 2 Timothy 3:1-7 actually apply *now*?

If it definitely does apply now, a lifesaving course is also necessary now

Jesus' illustration of the wheat and weeds aids us in understanding and seeing application of "last days" of 2 Timothy 3:1 (Relate Matthew 13:24-30)

The "wheat" from fine seed meant "sons of the kingdom," his loyal followers (Mt 13:37-43)

The "weeds" were imitation Christians that would become mixed in with loyal ones; they would be allowed to come to full growth, being left until time of "harvest"

As is true of 2 Timothy 3, these "weeds" pointed forward to an apostasy

But the "conclusion of a system of things" referred to in Matthew 13 could not mean the Jewish system, even in a preliminary way; it must have been another conclusion, a future conclusion of another system

Destruction of Jerusalem in 70 C.E. affected Jews, not persons falsely claiming to be following "the Son of man," Jesus Christ

Apostate, imitation Christians did not spring into full bloom until much later

So the "conclusion" mentioned in Matthew 13 must apply at a time future from the death of the apostles; this foretold "conclusion" is the one that began in 1914 (*w81* 8/1 22)

We can all agree that now, during the conclusion of Satan's wicked system of things, the results of apostasy on part of persons falsely claiming to be Christian are clearly evident, as weeds are easily identifiable at harvesttime, when they have reached full growth

This full fruitage of wickedness on the part of *professed* Christians is described in 2 Timothy 3:1-7

It is thus reasonable that the application of the prophecy in 2 Timothy 3:1-7 is *now*

Now, with more professed Christians (weeds) than ever before, we see an unprecedented amount of lawlessness, wickedness

Distinction between "weeds" (professed Christians) and "wheat" (true Christians) is clear

Bible prophecy thus clearly establishes that we are living in the last days

Paul's prophecy combines with Jesus' illustration of the wheat and weeds to prove that the end of wickedness will shortly come

### **ACTION IS REQUIRED IF WE ARE TO SURVIVE THE LAST DAYS** (7 min.)

It is absolutely essential that we show by our godly conduct and devotion that we realize that these are "the last days" (Read 2 Peter 3:3, 4, 10a, 11, 12a) (*w06* 12/15 16-18)

Ridiculers abound, as they must have in Jerusalem just prior to its destruction in 70 C.E.

For many sincere people who realize that the climactic destruction of this system is impending, changes in their way of life are necessary (*w89* 10/1 13)

"Holy acts of conduct" are vital; may mean adjusting one's way of life to meet the high standards of God found in his Word

"Deeds of godly devotion" are required by God; involve sharing in the Kingdom preaching that Jesus foretold for this time (Mt 24:14)

Jehovah's Witnesses are happy to aid you through a free study of the Bible in your home

For those already serving Jehovah in last days, it is imperative to keep alert, not be preoccupied with the cares of daily life

Need to ask self: 'Am I zealous in preaching and teaching, knowing and believing that these are the last days? Does the reality of the last days affect my daily life and my plans for the future?'

Jesus too pointed out the danger of preoccupation with normal affairs of life—eating, drinking, marrying; he stressed the need to be alert (Mt 24:38, 42)

Already have tremendous blessing in that we know we are in last days, living at conclusion of system of things, and we are already doing God's will; now must be alert and steadfast that we may be survivors (Read 2 Peter 3:14) (*w86* 5/1 15-20)

(Adhere closely to the outlined material, and observe the indicated timing of each section. Not all cited texts need to be read)