In spite of whatever demonic force is over this area, in spite of how we feel, whether good or bad about the state of the ministry and in spite of outward circumstances, I believe every meeting in this place should bring in the Presence of the Living Christ of God. I am not longer interested in outward results or signs or wonders as I am in PRESENCE, and I believe we are entering a season when He will graciously come to visit us in these meetings in this place and in our individual lives when we forgive others and walk in love. I long for a visit from JESUS, the only One who really matters!

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Prayer Study 340

THE LAST DAYS

PART ONE

<u>Matthew 25:1-13</u>

Then the kingdom of heaven shall be likened to ten virgins who took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom. Five of them were foolish (thoughtless, without forethought) and five of them were wise (sensible, intelligent, and prudent). For when the foolish took their lamps, they did not take any (extra) oil with them; but the wise took flasks of oil along with them [also] with their lamps. When the bridegroom lingered and was slow in coming, they all began nodding their heads, and they fell asleep. But at midnight there was a shout, Behold, the bridegroom! Go out to meet him! Then all those virgins got up and put their own lamps in order. And the foolish said to the wise, give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out. But the wise replied, These will not be enough for us and for you; go instead to the dealers and buy for yourselves. But while they were going away to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were prepared went in with him to the marriage feast; and the door was shut. Later the other virgins also came and said, Lord, Lord, open [the door] to us! But He replied, I solemnly declare to you, I do not know you [I am not acquainted with you]. Watch therefore [give strict attention and be cautious and active], for you know neither the day nor the hour when the Son of Man will come.

1. Why do we start a study on the Last Days with a story about the kingdom of heaven? Because the culmination of the Last Days will be the Second Coming and the Marriage Supper of the Lamb.
2. Virgins symbolize the Church people (many theologians disagree with this and say they represent the Jewish people. I believe the parable has an immediate and local meaning but also a wider and universal meaning).

There are many in the Church today who think they are saved but have no real relationship with Jesus.

3. Lamps symbolize one's witness for Christ.
4. Oil symbolizes the Holy Spirit.
5. Notice that all the virgins, whether wise or foolish, nodded off to sleep as they awaited the Bridegroom.
6. The Bridegroom came at midnight.
7. The foolish virgins did not take enough oil because they thought the Bridegroom would come sooner than he did.
8. We cannot borrow a relationship with Jesus. When He comes, it will be too late for those who have not accepted His gift of salvation.
9. We do not know the day nor the hour when Jesus will come, but we can know the season if we are sensitive in the Spirit and know the signs of the times. In fact Jesus chided the Pharisees and Sadducees for knowing the signs for weather patterns, but not the signs of the times: "***When it is evening you say, 'It will be fair weather, for the sky is red'; and in the morning, 'It will be foul weather today, for the sky is threatening .' Hypocrites! You know how to discern the face of the sky, but you cannot discern the signs of the times*** (Matthew 16:2b-3).

To expand on #9,I think that it is very important that, at the beginning of this study of the Last Days, which will culminate in the coming of Jesus, we realize that no one knows the day Jesus will come. Many people have made predictions, but, of course, none of these predictions have come true. In many cases they have wounded the Body of Christ and will be accountable for false prophecy. ***But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only*** (Matthew 24:36).

Two Kinds of Seekers of Truth (Acts 17:1-12)

1. **The Thessalonians**
   a. They looked to prove Paul wrong and to divide the people.
   b. This focus closes one down to the Spirit's teachings.
2. **The Bereans**
   a. They looked to reconcile what Paul was teaching with Bible to see if those things were so.
   b. This focus opens one up to all the Spirit has to say.

As we go over this study, I encourage you to be a Berean and to judge everything taught by the Word of God.

Definition of Biblical Terms Concerning the Last Days

1. **The Day of the Lord**

Alas for the day! For the day of the Lord is at hand and as a destruction from the Almighty shall it come (Joel 1:15).

But of the times and seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write un to you. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the LORD so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, "Peace and safety," then sudden destruction cometh upon them as travail upon a woman with a child, and they shall not escape. But ye brethren are not in darkness that that day should overtake you as a thief (1st Thessalonians 5:2-4).

The Day of the Lord, therefore, is a period of time (not just one day) in history at the end of the age in the last days when the Lord openly intervenes in the affairs of men. It is an apocalyptic term and also a prophetic term and is thought to be the Lord's outpouring of His wrath (see Psalm 2) and will be characterized by catastrophic weather and earthly calamities such as plagues, famines, pestilence, and drought. (see Isaiah 2:12, Isaiah 13:6-9, Amos 5:18-20, Jeremiah 46:10, 1st Corinthians 5:5, 1st Thessalonians 5:2, 2nd Peter 3:8-10). According to Jay Atkinson of The Latter Rain Ministries, "It is that time between the age of evil, in which we presently live and which will be destroyed, and the golden age of peace and justice, the future Millennial Kingdom to come on the earth. It is the fall of the old order and the ushering in of the new." Joel tells us that this will come as a destruction from the Almighty, a day of wrath and fierce anger, trouble and distress, a day of gloom and thick darkness for the proud, the rich, and the lofty. Joel also asked the question in Joel 2:11, "Who can endure it?" And indeed, without the fullness of the Holy Spirit we will not be able to endure it and will not stand. The Day of the Lord will culminate in the final shaking and sifting of the Church, the fall of the Babylonian World System, the fullness of the Latter Rain, and the coming forth of the Bride who has made herself ready. The Bride will come out of the closet and meet the Bridegroom.

The Day of the Lord comes as a thief in the night. The scriptures emphasize that many in the Church will be asleep and unprepared. The Word says that they that sleep, sleep in the night. This is when the thief comes. We must wake-up from our spiritual slumber and be ready. Many think that we have already entered the beginnings of this day.

2. **Babylon**

Babylon's very name means *confusion* (by mixing) Thus Babylon symbolizes religious confusion, what Satan is doing on the earth, and the World System (Revelation 18, Genesis 11:1-9). John writes in Revelation 18:1-5: *After these things I saw another angel coming down from heaven, having great authority, and the earth was illuminated with his glory. And he cried mightily with a loud voice, saying, "Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and has become a dwelling place of demons, a prison for every foul spirit, and a cage for every unclean and hated bird! For all the nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth have become rich through the abundance of her luxury." And I heard another voice from heaven saying, "Come out of her, my people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues. For her sins have reached to heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities.*

In the natural Babylon was a city of Iraq noted for materialism and sensual pleasure. It is located just south of modern-day Baghdad. The king of Babylon is Satan, who often comes as an angel of light (2nd Corinthians 11:14) since he is the prince of this world (Ephesians 2:2).

3. Zion

Zion in the natural is a mountain just outside Jerusalem. Zion symbolizes the place where the remnant company will walk spiritually. It is for those sold out ones who passionately want Jesus more than even life itself. Zion is a holy place (Psalm 2:6), the dwelling of the Lord (Psalm 9:11, 74:2, 76:2), a place of the Glory of the Lord (Psalm 102:16), the rod of His strength (Psalm 110:2), a place of His blessing (Psalm 128:5), a place of singing (Psalm 127:3), a place of joy (Psalm 149:2), a place of shouting (Isaiah 12:6), a place of quick answers from the Lord (Isaiah 30:19), a place of the fire of the Lord (Isaiah31:9), a place where sinners and hypocrites are full of fear (Isaiah 33:14), a place of salvation (Isaiah 46:13), a place of joy and goodness and comfort (Isaiah 51:3), a place from where the Redeemer shall come (Isaiah 50:20), a place where the sons of those who have afflicted you and despised you will bow down at your feet and call you 'THE ZION OF THE HOLY ONE OF ISRAEL (Isaiah 60:14), a place of beauty for ashes and the oil of joy for mourning and the garment of praise for the Spirit of Heaviness (Isaiah 61:3), a place of quick birthing and bringing forth her children-as soon as Zion travails, she brought forth her children (Isaiah 66:8), a place of restoration of the backslidden (Jeremiah 3:14), a place to blow the trumpet, sanctify a fast, call a solemn assembly (Joel 2:1& 2:15), a place of the former and latter rain (Joel 2:23), a place where the Lord will

restore what the enemy has taken (Joel 2:24), a place of deliverance (Joel 2:32, Obadiah 17), a place of hope and strength (Joel 3:16), a place of travail and birthing (Micah 4:10), and a place where the beauty of God shines (Psalm 50:2). Every one of us should be walking or at least aspire to be in spiritual Zion.

1st Corinthians 15:46 tells us *first the natural and then the spiritual.* What this tells us is that things that are in the natural often type spiritual things and/or point to what the Lord is about to do in the spiritual. Israel, Jerusalem, and Zion are natural place which type the different types in the Body of Christ. Israel types the Outer Court of 30 fold Christian; Jerusalem types the Inner Court or 60 fold Christian; Zion types the Holy of Holies or the 100 fold Christian.

4. The Former and Latter Rain

Rain in the Bible represents revival, refreshing, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, and the Word. Seasonal rainfall, the former rain (rain at planting time which softens up the soil for the plowman) and the latter rain (rain at spring time, which is the time to harvest the crops), are important prophetic symbols of the Last Days.

The Jews believe that rain is a source of blessing that comes from God Himself, from the heavens. The Baal worshipers associated Baal with springs, wells, and stream, but only Yahweh could give and was the rainmaker (Jeremiah 14:22). This was proven to the Jewish people by Elijah in 1st Kings 18:17-40 in his showdown with the Baal priests. Rain is the first blessing promised to Jacob's land (Genesis 27:28) and to Israel (Deuteronomy 28:12). The decent of rain is likened to the blessings of the kingdom (Psalm 72:6-7). In contrast, the presence of clouds and wind without rain is likened to a man who "boasts of a gift he does not give" (Proverbs 25:14), which is fake and phony "appearance" religion.

The former rain usually begins in mid or late October but may be delayed until January. Again these rains are the seed planting time and cause a fall in temperature and produce a brilliance in the sky. In Israel, plowing is done after the early rains have softened the earth. The plowman represents the evangelist. The farmer must wait for the rains before he can plow the ground. Job said, "They waited for me as for the rain" (Job 29:33). Jeremiah described the lack of rain: "There was no rain in the earth, the ploughmen were ashamed; they covered their heads" (Jeremiah 14:4). Once the rain has come, the industrious farmer will start his plowing. "The sluggard will not plow by reason of the cold' (Proverbs 20:4). (How many refuse to evangelize because of some inconvenience, such as the cold, and

because of being out of their comfort zone?) Such a man will retreat into his house and enjoy the warmth of the fire, but he will miss the harvest.

The latter or spring rain or harvest rain begins between April and early May. Latter rain showers are the last showers of the rainy season. The wheat harvest takes place in May so these rains are associated with harvest. By the middle of August the fruit is gathered, and from that time until the former rains, the weather is scorching hot and dry, much like a Georgia Indian summer. Nothing can more expressively represent spiritual blessings than copious showers after this trying time of heat and drought.

5. Last Days

The Last Days refers to the final end of time of the Church on earth. In some sense, the Last Days includes the entire period of time between the first and the second comings of Christ. From the very day our Lord rose from the dead, these were the last days. Certainly we are now in the Last Days, but in addition we are living at the end of the Age or the final days of the Last Days. During these days that we now live, there will be recurrent cycles of distress. We are experiencing these times right now. They are days when people long for peace but are beset with anxiety about the future. In the closing parts of chapter 3 and chapter 4 of 2nd Timothy, Paul shows Timothy the twofold way out of these snares of the enemy. We are to (1) be patient in suffering and (2) be persistent in truth. He tells Timothy to preach the Word, be prepared in season and out of season, correct, rebuke, and encourage with great patience and careful instruction.

6. The End of the Age

With everything in me, I believe we are living at the end of the age. In spite of all the chaos and calamity that is going to break out more and more in our life times, we should not walk in fear. If we truly know the Savior, we know perfect love. Perfect love casts out fear (1st John 4:18), and the antithesis of fear is faith, without which it is impossible to please God (Hebrews 11:6). Faith, by they way, works or is motivated by love: *For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but faith working through love* (Galatians 5:6).

Another way of looking at the End of the Age is to understand that it is the last of the Last Days. We have already seen that no one knows the day nor the hour of the Second Coming, but we can know the season, and many believe that Jesus will come in the lifetimes of many living today. The final

prophetic fulfillments of unfulfilled Biblical prophecy could happen very rapidly.

Take heed that no man deceive you. For many shall come in My name saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many. And ye shall hear of wars and rumors of wars; see that ye be not troubled; for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation shall rise against nation and kingdom against kingdom; and there shall be famines and pestilences and earthquakes in divers places. All these are the beginning of sorrows. Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted and shall kill you; and ye shall be hated of all nations for My name's sake. And then shall many be offended and shall betray one another and shall hate one another. And many false prophets shall rise and shall deceive many. And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold. But he that endure unto the end, the same shall be saved (Matthew 244-13).

Throughout the Scriptures dealing with the end of the Church age, there were three characteristics of this time that were most often mentioned. They are apostasy, false christs, and false prophets. We have already seen many examples of these three.

Signs of the Times

Some of the "Signs of the Times" concerning the End of the Age were prophesied thousands of years ago. This is not an exhaustive list but a few examples.

1. People will run to and fro (Daniel 12:4).
2. The Spirit will be outpoured on all flesh (Joel 2:28).
3. There will be universal apostasy (2nd Thessalonians 2:1-4).
4. The Gospel will be watered down with preachers preaching the doctrines of men rather than those of God (Matthew 15:9, Mark 7:7, Colossians 2:2, Hebrews 13:9, 1st Timothy 4:1).
5. False prophets and false christs will arise and deceive many (Matthew 24:11, Matthew 24:24).
6. Good will be called evil, and evil will be called good (Isaiah 5:20).
7. The Gospel will be preached to all nations (Matthew 24:14 and Revelations 14:6-7).
8. Worldly knowledge will increase (Daniel 12:4).
9. Israel has been restored (1948) as a political state (Deuteronomy 28:64 & 30:3; Jeremiah 29:14 & 20:3; Isaiah 43:5-6; Ezekiel 36:24; Amos 9:14-15).
10. Earthquakes, floods, famines, plagues, diseases will come, such as the world has never seen (Matthew 24, Luke 21).

11. Wars will increase to a level where war is practically in every land and there will be no peace (Matthew 24 and Luke 21).
12. There will be an increase in wickedness, murder and crime and a parallel increase in the belief in the occult (Matthew 24:9, Mark 13:9).
13. People will not believe the signs of the times. Even some Christians scoff at the 2nd Coming of Jesus in this generation (2nd Peter 3:3-4, Matthew 16:1-4).
14. Christians will be increasingly persecuted (Matthew 24:9, Mark 13:9).
15. There will be unusual phenomenon which the Bible refers to as Signs and Wonders in the heavens (Mark 13:25).
16. Sin will abound and the love of many shall grow cold (Matthew 24:12).
17. The Gospel of the Kingdom shall be preached in all the world. (***And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come***-Matthew 24:14).
18. The Lord God will use His people, especially the Remnant Company, which is sold out to Him, to make His enemies His footstool (Psalm 110:1).
19. Perilous or difficult times will come. (*You may as well know this too, Timothy, that in the last days it is going to be very difficult to be a Christian. For people will love only themselves and their money; they will be proud and boastful, sneering at God, disobedient to parents, ungrateful to them and thoroughly bad. They will be hardheaded and never give in to others; they will be constant liars and troublemakers and will think nothing of immorality. They will be rough and cruel and sneer at those who try to be good. They will betray their friends; they will be hotheaded, puffed up with pride, and prefer good times to worshiping God. They will go to church, yes, but they won't really believe anything they hear. Don't be taken in by people like that* (2nd Timothy3:1-5-Living Bible).
20. The days will be like the days of Noah and the days of Lot (Luke 17:26-32).

He's Coming Back

John to the seven churches which are in Asia; Grace be unto you and peace from Him who is, and who was, and who is to come, and from the seven spirits who are before His throne; And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness and the first begotten of the dead and the prince of the kings of earth. Unto Him that loveth us and washed us from our sins in His own blood. And hath made a kingdom of priests unto God and His Father, to

Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen. Behold, He cometh with clouds and every eye shall see Him, and they also who pierced Him and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him. Even so Amen. ***"I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending," saith*** *the Lord who is and was and who is to come, the Almighty.* Revelation 1:4-8

He who testifieth these things saith, ***"Surely, I come quickly."*** *Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.* Revelation 22:20

REVELATION IS THE ONLY BOOK IN THE BIBLE PERSONALLY SENT BY GOD IN HEAVEN TO THE CHURCH ON THE EARTH!

If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema [cursed]. *Maranatha* [Our Lord Cometh]. 1st Corinthians 16:22

Quote of the Week

"In a very short time, the United States will be pushed to the sidelines of world events. All of this is taking place just ahead of the emergence of the prophesied Antichrist. Satan's representative on earth will consolidate his power and establish his dictatorship, first over the revived Roman Empire and soon after that over the entire world. And the American Empire, which rose to power with the blessing of God, will be so weak that it won't play a notable role in the culminating events of the last days. America is facing a complete economic meltdown. The United States will not be completely destroyed. The nation will survive the coming collapse, but the nation that will emerge from this catastrophic reversal will bear little resemblance to the global empire that we have come to associate with America."

The late author Grant R. Jeffrey

Song of the Week

I want to see Israel marching.
I want to hear the Kingdom call!
I want to see Zion's mountain.
I want to see Great Babylon fall!
I want to see Jesus reigning,
Upon King David's royal throne.
O, won't that be a glorious sight to see,
When Israel comes marching home!