

THE 'LAST DAYS' ACCORDING TO THE OLD TESTAMENT

Wednesday Night Series on Eschatology Westminster Presbyterian Church

“Ours in a religion whose center of gravity lies beyond the grave in the world to come.”
- Geerhardus Vos, *Grace and Glory*, 165.

I. Introduction

- A. From the Greek term *eschatos* [‘last’], *eschatology* refers to the “doctrine of the last things.”
- B. But biblical eschatology does not focus on *last things* so much as it does on *ultimate things*!
- C. The Ultimate Goal = God’s glory revealed in an *unbreakable* bond of fellowship with a holy people in a holy place under an obedient covenant representative!
 1. Creation was “very good,” but not yet “the best.”

“There is an absolute end posited for the universe before and apart from sin. The universe, as created, was only a beginning . . . [The goal was] an absolute, perfect, ethical relation to God and a supernaturalizing of man and the world.” – G. Vos, *The Eschatology of the OT*, p. 73.

2. The Tree of Life

WCF 7.2 – The first covenant made with man was a covenant of works, wherein life was promised to Adam; and in him to his posterity, upon condition of perfect and personal obedience.

Gen 3:24 – “He drove out the man, and at the east of the garden of Eden he placed the cherubim and a flaming sword that turned every way to guard the way to the tree of life.”

Rev 2:7 – “To the one who conquers I will grant to eat of the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God.’

Luke 23:43 – “And he said to him, ‘Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in paradise.’”

II. The “Last Days” According to the Old Testament

- A. Concluding of present order and introduction of a final eternal order of things marked by the coming of the Messiah and the establishment of God’s kingdom.
 1. The Use of “Prophetic Idiom” in “last days” prophecies: The OT prophets spoke of future realities of Christ and his work in “Old Testament-y” ways.

Is 2:2–3 – “It shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the house of the LORD shall be established as the highest of the mountains, and shall be lifted up above the hills; and all the nations shall flow to it, ³ and many peoples shall come...”

Hos 3:5 – “*Afterward the children of Israel shall return and seek the LORD their God, and David their king, and they shall come in fear to the LORD and to his goodness in the latter days.*”

Jer 23:5 – “*Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, and he shall reign as king and deal wisely, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land.*”

2. The Use of “Prophetic Perspective” in “last days” prophecies.

Joel 2:28–31 – “*And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions. ²⁹ Even on the male and female servants in those days I will pour out my Spirit.*

³⁰ *And I will show wonders in the heavens and on the earth, blood and fire and columns of smoke. ³¹ The sun shall be turned to darkness, and the moon to blood, before the great and awesome day of the LORD comes.*

³² *And it shall come to pass that everyone who calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved.”*

Acts 2:14–21 – “*But Peter, standing with the eleven, lifted up his voice and addressed them: “Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and give ear to my words. ¹⁵ For these people are not drunk, as you suppose, since it is only the third hour of the day. ¹⁶ But this is what was uttered through the prophet Joel:*

¹⁷ “*And 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; ¹⁸ even on my male servants and female servants in those days I will pour out my Spirit, and they shall prophesy.*

¹⁹ *And I will show wonders in the heavens above and signs on the earth below, blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke; ²⁰ the sun shall be turned to darkness and the moon to blood, before the day of the Lord comes, the great and magnificent day.*

²¹ *And it shall come to pass that everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.”*

III. Review and Conclusion

- A. Biblical eschatology does not refer to a mere appendix to history, but is central to God’s plan for creation from the very beginning. *Q. What do you truly long for?*
- B. Biblical eschatology frames and defines the work of Christ after the fall. *Q. Are you on the “right side of history”?*
- C. There is an increasingly rich disclosure of this one eschatological hope across the Old Testament era, especially thru “last days” prophecies, which are fulfilled in Jesus Christ.

Heb 11:39–40 – “*And all these, though commended through their faith, did not receive what was promised, ⁴⁰ since God had provided something better for us, that apart from us they should not be made perfect.*”