# It Is Written

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## The Harvest Is Past

By Jarrod Jacobs

"*The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved*" (Jeremiah 8:20 KJV). In context, these words were spoken by people desperate for someone to deliver them from the consequences of their decisions. Some Bible versions even use phrases like "we have not been delivered," "rescued," and "we have not been helped" in place of the word "saved" used in the KJV. It seems people had recognized God's power to help them (Jeremiah 8:14) but understood it was too late now (Jeremiah 8:15). Now, these people, God's people, realize they had run out of chances. "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved." What a tragedy!

I suppose there are no sadder words in the English language than "no hope." They are used by Paul in Ephesians 2:12 when he describes the spiritual state of people who are outside of Christ. This is the way these people in Jeremiah's day were! Though they were God's children, they continued to reject God through idolatry (Jeremiah 8:2). They "hold fast deceit, they refuse to return" was another charge against the people (Jeremiah 8:5). In addition to these, we read of their stubbornness when they rejected "the old paths" in Jeremiah 6:16!

I understand that God extends a time of patience to allow people to see the error of their ways and repent (II Peter 3:9; Romans 2:4). God extended such patience to the Canaanites (Genesis 15:16). He did this with the Egyptians, allowing them not only 430 years to correct their error and adding ten more plagues as a means of giving the Pharaoh every last chance to free the Israelites. We have seen God's longsuffering in other areas of life, and it was evident when He dealt with the Israelites during these years of the divided kingdom!

Yet, God's long-suffering is not eternal. For example, there was a day when God shut the door to the ark, and none were allowed in (Genesis 7:16). Even in the parable of the ten virgins, the door was shut after a period of time, and five virgins remained outside of the wedding feast (Matthew 25:10). In Jeremiah 8, we see the people lament because summer is over and the harvest is past. In other words, it is too late now!

When we look in the New Testament, the urgency to become a Christian is apparent. After urging people to "save yourselves from this untoward generation" (Acts 2:40), Acts 2:41 says about 3000 were baptized when they gladly received the word. The language here leaves us with the understanding that they were baptized right then. They did not put it off. Again, when the Philippian jailor wanted to be saved, he was taken "straightway … the same hour of the night" to do it (Acts 16:25, 33-34). The apostle Paul wrote to the Corinthians and told them, "now is the accepted time, behold now is the day of salvation" (II Corinthians 6:2). The Hebrew writer also emphasized taking immediate action when he wrote, "today if you will hear his voice, harden not your hearts" (Hebrews 3:7-8, 15).

Procrastination has no place in the Lord's plan of salvation. We have no lease on life and know not what might happen in our future (Proverbs 27:1). Thus we need to take advantage of the "here and now" before it is gone. The Israelites learned the hard way what it means when the "harvest is past." Don't you make that mistake! Be saved today while you still can (Acts 22:16). If you need to repent and return to your Lord, your first love, then do it while the breath is in your body. You don't know when your life's "summer" will be ended!

# The End-Times

By Terry Wane Benton

Many do not realize that scriptures have a context, and cannot be applied to everything one wishes. The “end-times” is one of the most abused topics of the Bible. Many take verses out of context. If you take a verse out of context, forget the immediate people first written to, and what they were to understand from the words written to them, you will likely misunderstand and misapply the Scriptures to something far removed from what the earliest readers understood.

If I take “the end” that Ezekiel talked about to Israel (Ezekiel 7) and took it from the original context (the coming Babylonian invasion) and applied it to modern times, I will have perverted the original intent. The earliest readers would not have understood that Ezekiel was writing about 2021 AD. He was writing about 586BC. The “end” was the end of Israel and her Jerusalem temple before the Babylonians destroyed her temple and took her captive for 70 years. It was “end-times” for Israel in that time.

They had another “end-times” during the Roman period. This was described in Matthew 24:1-34. Another time of the end of Judaism is discussed here and it would happen in that very generation (Matthew 24:34). It happened in AD 70. The signs to look for were fulfilled in the events leading up to that end of Judaism.

These signs are now being misapplied again. People are taking these warnings that belonged to the first century leading up to the fall of Jerusalem, and are now taking them out of context and applying them to world events now. They did this before and during WWI, before and during WWII, and are doing it again now.

There are no signs to look for pertaining to the end of the world. All the signs were pertaining to the end of Judaism and her temple system, not the end of the world. The end of Babylon is not the end of the world. The end of Jerusalem is not the end of the world. Signs for the end of Jerusalem are not the end signs for us.

Keep each context in place. The Lord can come at any time, but there are no clues you can look for that are sure to signal that final earth day.

# "Troublers in Israel"

By Joe Fitch

"Then it happened, when Ahab saw Elijah, that Ahab said to him, "Is that you, O troubler of Israel?" And he answered, "I have not troubled Israel, but you and your father's house have, in that you have forsaken the commandments of the Lord" (1 Kings 18:17). No, Elijah was no "troubler," but as in his day, there are many that trouble God's people today.

Did you ever hear a factious man confess his sin? An old priest claimed in his confessional, he had heard every sin confessed – except covetousness. I add that in my years, I never heard a troubler confess his sin - his own "besetting sin" - his contention and factiousness.

Did you ever see a factious man - a troubler quit? The church is filled with drunks who quit - fornicators who quit - homosexuals who quit - liars who quit - cheats who quit. People have quit just about every sin to serve Jesus. You can easily point to them. Who do you point to as a troubler who quit his troubling? Mostly, I think, they quit when they die!

Paul instructs: "Reject a divisive man after the first and second admonition, knowing that such a person is warped and sinning, being self-condemned" (Tit.3:10). "Reject" seems the anticipated and fixed end to this matter - after admonishing him twice. Little or no hope is extended for restoring him. Cut your losses! Damage control! Is this one of those "impossible" to "renew them to repentance" situations? (Heb.6:4). It sounds like it! - final and scary possibility!

A troubler of Israel may not see himself as contentious or factious - brethren may not identify the scoundrel as their problem, but God does! He will surely "...repay with tribulation those who trouble you" (2 Thes.1:6). Don't dare dabble with becoming a troubler in Israel!