

Contents

1	The Cosmic Controversy— <i>March 31–April 6</i> —————	6
2	Daniel and the End Time— <i>April 7–13</i> —————	14
3	Jesus and the Book of Revelation— <i>April 14–20</i> —————	22
4	Salvation and the End Time— <i>April 21–27</i> —————	30
5	Christ in the Heavenly Sanctuary— <i>April 28–May 4</i> —————	38
6	The “Change” of the Law— <i>May 5–11</i> —————	46
7	Matthew 24 and 25— <i>May 12–18</i> —————	56
8	Worship the Creator— <i>May 19–25</i> —————	64
9	End-Time Deceptions— <i>May 26–June 1</i> —————	72
10	America and Babylon— <i>June 2–8</i> —————	80
11	God’s Seal or the Beast’s Mark?— <i>June 9–15</i> —————	88
12	Babylon and Armageddon— <i>June 16–22</i> —————	96
13	The Return of Our Lord Jesus— <i>June 23–29</i> —————	104

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Christ and the End of Days

In the final hours of Jesus' earthly sojourn in human flesh, He spoke these words of comfort to the disciples:

“Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also. And where I go you know, and the way you know'” (*John 14:1–4, NKJV*).

Although they certainly didn't understand fully the meaning of what He said nor the time in which His promise would be fulfilled, the men surely drew comfort from Jesus' words. *A room in His Father's house? A place that Jesus Himself was preparing for them?* Surely this would be better than wherever they might find themselves in this world now.

Indeed, not too long before, as He sat with the disciples, Jesus gave them a quick survey of what would happen before He returned. It was a “history of the future,” and it was not pretty. Wars, rumors of wars, nation against nation, famines, and earthquakes were all, Jesus said, just “the beginning of sorrows” (*Matt. 24:8*). Persecutions, betrayals, deceptions, and trials were on the horizon, as well.

Today, from our vantage point in the flow of history, we can see that nearly all of what Jesus warned about has come to pass, just as He predicted. We can see the fulfillment of two major time prophecies, as well. The first is the “time and times

and the dividing of time” of Daniel 7:25 (*see also Rev. 12:6, 14; 13:5; Num. 14:34*), which began in the sixth century A.D. (A.D. 538) and ended in the late eighteenth century (A.D. 1798). Then, too, the longest time prophecy, or the 2,300 days of Daniel 8:14, reached its fulfillment in the year 1844.

Surely, then, we now are living in “the end of the days” (*Dan. 12:13*). But while we do not know when the end—climaxing with the second coming of Jesus—will come, we don’t need to know. We need to know only that it will come, and that when it does, we must be prepared.

How should we prepare? Perhaps the best answer is found in this text: “As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him” (*Col. 2:6, NKJV*). In other words, with so many world events, so many headlines, and so many theories about end times, it’s easy to get diverted, to focus too much on the things that we think are leading to Christ’s coming instead of on Christ Himself, who alone is the key to our preparation.

The more we focus on Jesus, the more we become like Him, and the more we obey Him, the more prepared we will be for all that awaits us.

This quarter the main focus is on Jesus, but in the context of the last days and how to be prepared for them. Yes, we need to look at historical dates, at world events, and at history itself because the Bible talks about all of these things in relation to the end. But even in this context, the Bible talks about Jesus Himself, who He is, what He has done for us, what He does in us, and what He will do when He does return. Christ and Him crucified must be the center of our faith; or, as Paul said: “For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified” (*1 Cor. 2:2, NKJV*). After all, the more we focus on Jesus, the more we become like Him, and the more we obey Him, the more prepared we will be for all that awaits us. This holds true both in the immediate future and in the end, the day when we do enter the “place” that Jesus has prepared for those who love Him.

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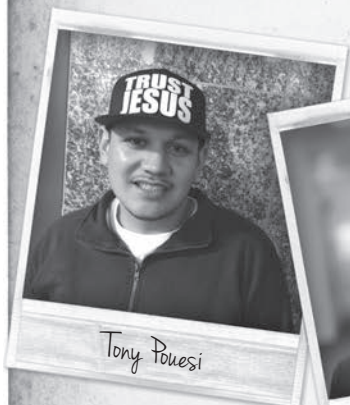
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What do these three people have in common? They love Jesus and are sharing Him with others across North America and beyond!

Read about these three people in this quarter's Adult Sabbath School Study Guide, and more about the Thirteen Sabbath Offering projects in the Youth and Adult Mission Quarterly

(bit.ly/adultmission) and the Children's Mission Quarterly (bit.ly/childrensmision).

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