

The Most Important End Time Theme – A Jesus Centered Storyline

I. The Revelation of Jesus

- a. The most important theme related to the end times is the subject of Jesus and His leadership. The book in the Bible that gives the details about the end of the age is called “The Revelation of Jesus Christ”. Notice it’s not called, “The Revelation of the Church”, or “The Revelation of Time Charts”. We study the end times to encounter Jesus, who is a real man on a real throne and is really coming back to literally rule and reign. When we approach the end time scriptures with an emphasis on Jesus’ leadership, we find that not only do they have relevance at the end of the age, but also in our current day-to-day lives.

(Revelation 1:1 NASB), “The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show to His bond-servants, the things which must soon take place; and He sent and communicated it by His angel to His bond-servant John,”

- b. Psalm 2 is a concise overview of the end of the age and is one of the most important prophetic scriptures for the Church to grasp in this hour. This Psalm puts a bright spotlight on Jesus and His leadership specifically at the end of the age. A firm grasp on Psalm 2 will enable the Church to respond rightly to:
1) Jesus’ leadership at the end of the age 2) the coming (and current) rage of the nations

(Psalm 2:1-12 NASB), “Why are the nations restless And the peoples plotting in vain? 2 The kings of the earth take their stand And the rulers conspire together Against the Lord and against His Anointed, saying, 3 “Let’s tear their shackles apart And throw their ropes away from us!” 4 He who sits in the heavens laughs, The Lord scoffs at them. 5 Then He will speak to them in His anger And terrify them in His fury, saying, 6 “But as for Me, I have installed My King Upon Zion, My holy mountain.” 7 “I will announce the decree of the Lord: He said to Me, ‘You are My Son, Today I have fathered You. 8 Ask it of Me, and I will certainly give the nations as Your inheritance, And the ends of the earth as Your possession. 9 You shall break them with a rod of iron, You shall shatter them like earthenware.” 10 Now then, you kings, use insight; Let yourselves be instructed, you judges of the earth. 11 Serve the Lord with reverence And rejoice with trembling. 12 Kiss the Son, that He not be angry and you perish on the way, For His wrath may be kindled quickly. How blessed are all who take refuge in Him!”

- i. Part 1 (Verses 1-3) – The Nations will rage against Jesus because they believe His ways are a restraint. The raging nations will throw the restraint of Biblical values off and operate in the fullness of wickedness and sin.
 - ii. Part 2 (Verses 4-6) – The Father is not worried about or threatened by the rage of the nations. In His infinite wisdom, He installed His Son (Jesus), as King of the Nations.
 - iii. Part 3 (Verses 7-9) – The leadership of Jesus begins with His own intercession, and finds fulfillment in His true and righteous judgment on the nations.
 - iv. Part 4 (Verse 10-12) – The only worthy response to the leadership of Jesus is to serve Him with reverence and rejoice with the fear of the Lord. We are to “Kiss the Son” and take refuge in Him.
- c. The Church at the end of the age will thrive in the midst of the raging nations and judgments of God, not because we’ve gathered guns, soup, and toilet paper, but because we’ve cultivated intimacy by “kissing the Son” and being “kissed by the kisses of His Word”. The doorway to being a righteous, radiant, & victorious bride at the end of the age is unlocked only with the key of intimacy.

(Revelation 19:7-8 NASB), “Let’s rejoice and be glad and give the glory to Him, because the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His bride has prepared herself.” 8 It was given to her to clothe herself in fine linen, bright and clean; for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.”

II. Jesus Was A Model for the End Time Church to Embrace Death

- a. Jesus' style of leadership was to model what He taught (ex. He didn't just say to pray for the sick he actually healed the sick). The life vision of Jesus was to pour himself out, and endure suffering that He might be with the one He loves always. Jesus willingly endured rejection and the cross to model whole hearted love for the Church, knowing she'd be persecuted throughout history, and also at the end of the age.

(Isaiah 53:12 NASB), "... Because He poured out His life unto death, And was counted with wrongdoers; Yet He Himself bore the sin of many, And interceded for the wrongdoers."

(John 3:16 NASB), "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him will not perish, but have eternal life."

(Ephesians 5:25-27 NASB), "Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her, 26 so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, 27 that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless."

(Hebrews 12:1-3 NASB), "Therefore, since we also have such a great cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let's rid ourselves of every obstacle and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let's run with endurance the race that is set before us, 2 looking only at Jesus, the originator and perfecter of the faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. 3 For consider Him who has endured such hostility by sinners against Himself, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart."

(John 15:13 NASB), "Greater love has no one than this, that a person will lay down his life for his friends."

- b. The book of Revelation depicts an end time Church that overcomes the rage of Satan and the Antichrist through the Blood of the Lamb, the word of their testimony, and by not loving their lives even to the point of death. The Church will follow the example of Jesus and lay her life down because she is sick with love. The Bible describes an end time Church that is not mostly concerned with how easy or comfortable God will make their lives now or at the end of the age. It describes a bride so sick with love that she's ready to give her live up for the One who gave His life. *The bride's hope isn't even in supernatural provision and protection, it's in a Person.*

(Revelation 12:11 NASB), "And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb and because of the word of their testimony, and they did not love their life even when faced with death."

- c. God's chosen method and first step for victory is death. There can not be resurrection with out there first being death. The way that we access the power of His resurrections is to fellowship in His sufferings and be conformed to death. We spiritually died when we were converted, but many believers at the end of the age will be confronted with the literal threat of death. Despite the institutionalized killing of believers at the end of the age, Jesus calls the Church to be faithful, and points out that there are specific promises reserved for those that are martyred under the reign of the Antichrist.

(Revelation 2:10-11 NASB), "Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, so that you will be tested, and you will have tribulation for ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life."

(Revelation 20:4 NASB), "Then I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was given to them. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony of Jesus and because of the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received the mark on their foreheads and on their hands; and they came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years."

III. Laying Hold of Jesus' Heart In Regards To The End-Time Drama

- a. Studying the storyline of the end times divorced from encountering His heart, will leave us vulnerable to offense when things don't go exactly as we thought they would. As we study the 150 chapters on the end times, our focus must be on Jesus rather than on time charts and head knowledge. If studying the end times is not producing an obsession with Jesus and a longing for His return, then you're not approaching the end time scriptures rightly. Laying hold of the heart of Jesus will enable us to follow His leadership and walk worthy of His calling for us.

(Colossians 1:9-10 NASB), "...asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will [What He most deeply desires at the heart level] in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, 10 so that you will walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God"

- b. Not only do we have to hear these teachings about scripture, we have to connect our hearts to these chapters and verses in the written word and bring them to the Living Word in conversation. We have to wrestle with these verses and ask for spiritual wisdom and understanding in the prayer room, both in the corporate setting as well as in the personal setting. The primary reason I teach on the end of the age is to get those listening into the prayer room, so that they will pursue the emotions and affection behind these Bible verses.

(1 Peter 4:7 NASB), "The end of all things is near; therefore, be of sound judgment and sober spirit for the purpose of prayer."

- c. The other means to connecting with the heart of Jesus through end time Bible verses is through fasting. The quickest way to produce longing for Jesus in your heart is to fast for the return of the Bridegroom. Jesus was clear that when the Bridegroom (Jesus) was taken away, His disciples (you and I) would fast. Fasting doesn't earn us anything, but positions us to connect with God on the heart level more effectively (often more quickly), which leads to breakthrough. Fasting and longing for the Bridegroom is a privilege that we've been invited to partake in during this current age (we won't fast when we're with the Bridegroom in the age to come).

(Matthew 9:14-15 NASB), "Then the disciples of John came to Him, asking, "Why do we and the Pharisees fast, but Your disciples do not fast?" 15 And Jesus said to them, "The attendants of the groom cannot mourn as long as the groom is with them, can they? But the days will come when the groom is taken away from them, and then they will fast."

- d. The Global Bridegroom Fast – I want to call our community to participate in the Global Bridegroom Fast. Hundreds (maybe thousands) of houses of prayer and praying communities around the world participate in the Global Bridegroom Fast. While fasting, we'll also focus on and contend in prayer for: 1) the fulfillment of Biblical end time prophecies, 2) the advancement of the Global Prayer Movement, 3) and the return of the Bridegroom.
 - i. The Global Bridegroom Fast is held the first Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday of every month during the months of January to November, and the first Monday through Sunday of December, making a total of forty days of fasting each year.
 - ii. In addition to the fast, I want to challenge and encourage you to join us in the prayer room each day of the fast. When we separate fasting from prayer we're actually just doing a diet.
 - iii. Not only will our hearts be more connected to His heart through fasting, but through prayer and fasting we literally hasten the day of His return.

(2 Peter 3:11-12 NASB), "Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, 12 looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God..."

Questions For Discussion

1. When you read *Revelation 12:11*, what do you feel or experience when you read the words, “*and they did not love their life even when faced with death*”? Are you ready to face the rage of the nations and the persecution of the Antichrist?
2. In light of 1 Peter 4:7 how will you enhance your commitment to the place of prayer both in the corporate setting and in the personal setting? How will you turn these bible verses into conversation with Jesus?

(1 Peter 4:7 NASB), “The end of all things is near; therefore, be of sound judgment and sober spirit for the purpose of prayer.”

3. Share a time where you experienced breakthrough as a result of fasting. What excites you (or terrifies you) about the Global Bridegroom Fast? Will you be participating in the Global Bridegroom Fast?