

AUGUST 21st, 2016

VIDEO: -OLOGY INTRO

SLIDE 1

INTRODUCTION

Good Morning! Welcome to Fox Valley Christian Church!

We have come to the final two weeks of our series on what we believe. We are looking at the End Times. Last week we talked about the Millennium and how it relates to the End Times, this week we are going to talk about Jesus' second coming, and finally next week we are going to talk about Heaven and Hell.

I am going to give you the same reminders that I gave you last week.

- We are talking about prophecy, so this makes it difficult to have any sort of certainty. We are going to do our best.
- I am going to walk through the Biblical evidence that we have, but I am just one person talking about prophecy and things much greater than myself. I will do my best.
- God is victorious.

The main thing that we are going to look at with Jesus' second coming is the main thing that people want to know. When is He coming? What is the evidence of His return? How will we know when the End is really near?

HOW THE WORLD VIEWS THE END TIMES

Last week I told you that of all the views of the Millennium that Dispensational Premillennialism was the one that is the most Biblically inaccurate. It is the one that I would say is a dangerous view. Unfortunately, it is also the one that most unknowing people base their view of the End Times off of. Why?

Well, it all started in 1948 when Israel became a nation and then in 1967 when Israel regained control of the temple site. The eyes of the world began to shift to Israel and to prophecies about the End Times that seemed to put the nation of Israel at the very center.

Then in 1995 the Left Behind series was released and sold over 40 million copies, all the while giving us the view that the End Times are going to center around the physical nation of Israel. If we just keep our eyes on Israel, keep our eyes on the Middle East, keep our eyes on any peace treaties or wars that come out of that area ... this view in summary says:

The stage for Christ's return will be set by

- Israel's return to its homeland
- The temple will be rebuilt
- The ancient Roman Empire will be rebuilt consisting of European nations
- This will all be headed by the Antichrist, who will make a pact with Israel
- There will be 3.5 years of peace

- Then the Antichrist will break the peace and there will be 3.5 years of tribulation and war, leading to the battle of Armageddon
- Then millions of Chinese march toward Israel, the Antichrist with a European army marches toward Israel ... and amidst fighting and destruction many Jews are converted.
- Then just as Israel is about to be completely overwhelmed, Christ returns, rescues the believing Jews, and annihilates the enemy.

Is this the kind of scenario that we can expect to precede Christ's coming? Is this the picture that prophecy paints for us?

No. This will be a horrible time and there will be conflict and warfare, but we are talking about prophecy. Prophecy was never meant to be dissected literally.

NUMBERS 12:6-8

SLIDE 2

⁶And he said, "Hear my words: If there is a prophet among you, I the Lord make myself known to him in a vision; I speak with him in a dream. ⁷Not so with my servant Moses. He is faithful in all my house.

SLIDE 3

⁸With him I speak mouth to mouth, clearly, and not in riddles, and he beholds the form of the Lord. Why then were you not afraid to speak against my servant Moses?"

HOSEA 12:10

SLIDE 4

¹⁰I spoke to the prophets; it was I who multiplied visions, and through the prophets gave parables.

God tells us that He speaks through riddles and parables when He gives prophecy. We have to understand that first. We have seen through so many prophecies where God speaks of physical things to describe something spiritual that is happening. That is what we are seeing in God's description of the End Times. Sure there will be physical things happening, but the spiritual state of the World is how we will know that the End is coming.

So then, how are we to interpret what will happen just before Jesus comes? What are the signs that His return is soon?

WHAT ARE THE SIGNS OF THE TIMES?

Last week I told you that it is my opinion that the Millennium is now and that Satan is bound, the First resurrection happened when Christ defeated death, and we are now reigning with Him with a purpose, on mission.

But when we look at the Millennium, it ends with Satan being loosed.

REVELATION 20:7-10

SLIDE 5

⁷And when the thousand years are ended, Satan will be released from his prison

SLIDE 6

⁸and will come out to deceive the nations that are at the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them for battle; their number is like the sand of the sea.

SLIDE 7

⁹And they marched up over the broad plain of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city, but fire came down from heaven and consumed them,

SLIDE 8

¹⁰and the devil who had deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur where the beast and the false prophet were, and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.

Verse 3, just prior to this tells us that Satan will be released for a little while.

FALSEHOOD

And the reason, the intent is to deceive the nations and gather them for battle.

2 THESSALONIANS 2:9-12

SLIDE 9

⁹The coming of the lawless one is by the activity of Satan with all power and false signs and wonders,

SLIDE 10

¹⁰and with all wicked deception for those who are perishing, because they refused to love the truth and so be saved.

SLIDE 11

¹¹Therefore God sends them a strong delusion, so that they may believe what is false, ¹²in order that all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

See the first sign of the End Times that we see is FALSEHOOD. It is lies. This is consistent with who Satan is. It is consistent with the nature of our enemy. Satan is going to be active, very active, and his main strategy is deception.

SLIDE 12

This era will be marked by a battle for our minds.

- Revelation 20:8 tells us that Satan will go forth to “deceive the nations”
- We are told False Christ’s will arise
- We are told that there will be antichrist’s, those against Christ, who are deceivers by nature
- There will be a man of lawlessness and according to 2 Thessalonians, his followers believe what is false

The end of time will be known more by what is happening in university classrooms, the media, and even in Churches than by developments in the Middle East.

This will be a time when lies and deception are polluting all of the places that we go to for knowledge and information and to seek what is true and right.

WICKEDNESS

The second mark of the End of Time will be wickedness. This will be a great and disgusting time of wickedness. If the falsehood is a battle for our minds, then this will be a battle for our wills. Satan has always been a master of temptation, and the temptation of the end times will be unprecedented.

2 THESSALONIANS 2:1-8

SLIDE 13

¹Now concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered together to him, we ask you, brothers,

SLIDE 14

²not to be quickly shaken in mind or alarmed, either by a spirit or a spoken word, or a letter seeming to be from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come.

SLIDE 15

³Let no one deceive you in any way. For that day will not come, unless the rebellion comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction,

SLIDE 16

⁴who opposes and exalts himself against every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, proclaiming himself to be God.

SLIDE 17

⁵Do you not remember that when I was still with you I told you these things? ⁶And you know what is restraining him now so that he may be revealed in his time.

SLIDE 18

⁷For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work. Only he who now restrains it will do so until he is out of the way.

SLIDE 19

⁸And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will kill with the breath of his mouth and bring to nothing by the appearance of his coming.

There will be a rebellion, there will be a man of lawlessness, the son of destruction ... He will tempt the world. Listen to what Paul says about this time:

2 TIMOTHY 3:1-5

SLIDE 20

¹But understand this, that in the last days there will come times of difficulty. ²For people will be lovers of self, lovers of money, proud, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy,

SLIDE 21

³heartless, unappeasable, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not loving good, ⁴treacherous, reckless, swollen with conceit, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God,

SLIDE 22

⁵having the appearance of godliness, but denying its power. Avoid such people.

The presence of sin in the end will be so intense and so pervasive that many will just take it for granted and accept it as normal. This means that for Christians the temptation to accept such wickedness and even participate in it will be both subtle and powerful.

SLIDE 23

PERSECUTION

The final sign of the end time will be persecution. This will be the battle for our lives. The deceptions of Satan is to amass an army that will launch war against God.

This does not mean that it will be a military war or a military conflict. It might turn into that, but the war that wages will be a spiritual war. It might look like social ostracizing, emotional bullying, intellectual ridicule, and economic injustice ... all directed against Christians. Why? Because they are Christians.

MATTHEW 24:9

SLIDE 24

⁹"Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and put you to death, and you will be hated by all nations for my name's sake.

It might also take the form of extreme physical attacks, such as slavery and martyrdom. John saw the harlot of Babylon in prophecy and the prophetic words say that she was:

REVELATION 17:6

SLIDE 25

⁶And I saw the woman, drunk with the blood of the saints, the blood of the martyrs of Jesus.

There will be an assault and persecution on the people of God.

SLIDE 26

SO IS IT NOW?

Here is the tricky thing about the signs of the End Times, here is the tricky thing about the prophecies that we see. They are pretty ambiguous, aren't they?

Some of you have to be sitting here saying ... it sounds like the end is now.

Falsehood, oh yeah. There is falsehood for sure. The rise and spread of false religions and philosophies in the Western world in the last 200 years is historically unprecedented.

(Communism, existentialism, pragmatism, it goes on.

Wickedness, definitely. Just look at what is going on in our world.

- The hate, the killings, but it's more than that isn't it?
- Look at what is on television. Morality has changed, even in the last 20 years morality has changed. What used to be sin is now acceptable. And it is unacceptable to say it is sin.
- Government-supported abortion
- Internet pornography
- Apathy toward divorce
- Gay liberation

Our world continues to get more and more wicked, to become more and more lawless, and we (Christians) are teaching outdated practices and principles according to the world.

Persecution, unfortunately. There are widespread intentional attacks on Christians.

- Christians are being ridiculed in media; we are either wimps, hypocrites, or really creepy. Just turn on your favorite show ... you'll see it.
- Christians are losing their jobs because of their beliefs.
- Christians are losing their lives and being martyred.

So then, what can we say? Is this the last days?

Here is the tricky thing ... the answer to that is simply ... maybe, maybe not.

God's description of the state of End Times was ambiguous. At any point in history someone could say, this is it. The end is here. Look at the world. Look at the wickedness. Look at the persecutions.

See God gave us signs, but He wants us to be prepared now. Always ready. Why? Because the end is near and Jesus will come. He wants us ready.

If we are living in the end times, then we need to be more prepared than any people have ever been prepared. The lies and wickedness are going to be powerful and convincing.

If we are not living in the end times, and if it begins in our lifetime ... we need to be prepared. Because if this isn't it ... then I can't imagine how convincing the lies will be. I can't imagine how wicked the world will be. I can't imagine how horrible the persecution will be.

If we never experience the end times, our children or grandchildren might. And we need to prepare them. Shame on us if we are lazy and self-serving only to set them up for the worst time period in the history of the world completely unprepared.

God wants us ready ... He wants us prepared. So what do we do? How do we prepare?

PREPARED

We can defend against Satan's deception and falsehood by knowing, believing and loving the truth.

JOHN 8:31-32

SLIDE 27

³¹So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed him, "If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, ³²and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."

We can be ready for the wickedness and the attack on our wills by depending totally on God and His Spirit to keep us morally strong and we must get in the habit of practicing righteousness now.

1 JOHN 4:4

SLIDE 28

⁴Little children, you are from God and have overcome them, for he who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.

Since we know that it will involve persecution, we must learn to simply trust God, His power, and His promises no matter what our circumstances are.

ROMANS 8:28

SLIDE 29

²⁸And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.

And we can take comfort knowing that Christ will be victorious, destroying all his enemies at his coming.

2 THESSALONIANS 1:7-10

SLIDE 30

⁷and to grant relief to you who are afflicted as well as to us, when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels

SLIDE 31

⁸in flaming fire, inflicting vengeance on those who do not know God and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus.

SLIDE 32

⁹They will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might,

SLIDE 33

¹⁰when he comes on that day to be glorified in his saints, and to be marveled at among all who have believed, because our testimony to you was believed.

2 THESSALONIANS 2:8

SLIDE 34

⁸And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will kill with the breath of his mouth and bring to nothing by the appearance of his coming.

REVELATION 20:9

SLIDE 35

⁹And they marched up over the broad plain of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city, but fire came down from heaven and consumed them,

SLIDE 36

PRAY

COMMUNION MEDITATION

Something here