

Session 1

Why We Value Understanding the Biblical View of the End Times

I. A FEW FOUNDATIONAL THOUGHTS

- A. The IHOPKC leadership team does not ask anyone to accept our views blindly. Rather, we urge all to refuse ideas that they cannot clearly see in Scripture themselves—***be a Berean*** (Acts 17:11).
- B. Our understanding of the end times is not complete—we seek to learn from other ministries.
- C. The IHOPKC team holds convictions which differ from the popular view that the Church may be raptured at any time and will, thus, miss the revival and crisis in the Tribulation (Rev. 7:9). We honor the genuineness and godliness of many who hold this view but see it as a mistake that will leave multitudes spiritually unprepared when negative events escalate in the end times.

II. WHY UNDERSTANDING THE BIBLICAL VIEW OF THE END TIMES IS IMPORTANT

- A. ***Unique dynamics***: The generation of Jesus' return will have unique dynamics—unprecedented *pressures* (shaking, sin, darkness) and an unprecedented *outpouring of the Spirit* and revival. It will be a unique generation when there will be *more people* on earth than at any time in history.
²For behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and deep darkness the people; but the Lord will arise over you, and His glory will be seen upon you. (Isa. 60:2)
- B. ***Biblical reasons***: Scripture highlights one generation *much more* than any other. By far the *most described* generation in God's plan is the generation that will be alive when Jesus returns. It is the main focus in over ***150 chapters in the Bible*** (see mikebickle.org/resources/resource/2888 for a list of these chapters).

C. **Pastoral reasons:** People must understand the **biblical narrative** for *what* will happen and *why* it will happen, or they will by default embrace a **secular narrative** of the events, making them more vulnerable to being overcome by fear, offense, lust, and deception. By understanding the biblical narrative of the end times, God's people will be better equipped to process the escalating pressures in a way that will help them to thrive spiritually and grow in love.

1. Jesus highlighted **four issues** that will challenge many people's faith in the end times: **Fear** (Lk. 21:26), **Offense** (Mt. 24:10), **Lust** (Lk. 21:34), and **Deception** (Mt. 24:11)—**F.O.L.D.**

²⁶"...men's hearts failing them from fear...³⁴"**But take heed to yourselves, lest your hearts be weighed down with carousing [lust, immorality, pleasure, etc.], drunkenness... and that Day [Jesus' second coming] come on you unexpectedly."** (Lk. 21:26, 34)

¹⁰"Then many will be offended...¹¹**Many false prophets will rise up and deceive many."** (Mt. 24:10-11)

2. The end-time falling away will be one of the most tragic and serious events in history. Paul presented it as being as obvious and significant as the appearing of the Antichrist on the world stage (2 Thes. 2:3).

³**Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day [Jesus' return] will not come unless the falling away comes first and the man of sin [Antichrist] is revealed. (2 Thes. 2:3)**

The result of escalating fear, offense, lust, and deception will result in some believers falling away from the faith (1 Tim. 4:1-2; 2 Tim. 3:1-7; 4:3-5; Heb. 6:4-6; 10:26-31, 39; 2 Pet. 2:1-3, 20-22; 3:17).

- D. **Prophetic reasons:** The biblical signs of the times include events and trends that are predicted in Scripture. Jesus, the apostles, and the OT prophets prophesied *signs of the times*—these signs will alert God’s people (who are alive in the generation of Jesus’ return) of His soon return.
1. Jesus **commanded** one generation to **“know”** that His return was near—the generation living when **all** 22 signs prophesied in Matthew 24:5-28 and Luke 21:8-36 occur.
³³“When you see all these things, know that it is near—at the doors! ³⁴...this generation will by no means pass away till all these things take place... ³⁶Of that day and hour no one knows.” (Mt. 24:33-36)
 2. **The timing:** In the generation that Jesus returns, **“all”** 22 signs will accelerate in a way that can be **“seen”** by the global Body of Christ. Now, for the first time in history, most of these 22 signs of the times are increasing and making headline news on a global level.
 3. The Lord indicated that a generation may last up to 100 years (Gen. 15:13-16).
- E. **The promise of increased understanding (Jer. 23:20; Dan. 11:33):** Since the Lord can accurately foretell the details of His end-time plan, we know that He has power over them and is able to use them redemptively for the good of His people. By having a biblical picture of the unique dynamics of the end times, God’s people will be equipped with right expectations and understanding of various negative events.
1. The Lord will raise up **“people of understanding”** who will help others understand the biblical narrative related to the end times (Dan. 11:33; 12:10). This promise is available to all believers. **“Many”** will be hungry for answers from God’s Word.
³³“And those of the people who understand [end-time messengers] shall instruct many; yet for many days they shall fall [be martyred] by sword and flame, by captivity... ³⁵to refine them, purify them...until the time of the end.” (Dan. 11:33-35)
 2. God will give His people **“perfect,”** or mature, understanding of His end-time judgments (Jer. 23:20).
²⁰The anger of the Lord [His judgments] will not turn back until He has executed...the thoughts of His heart. In the latter days you will understand it perfectly. (Jer. 23:20)
- F. Jesus is returning as a **King** with power, a **Bridegroom** with desire for deep relationship with His people, and a **Judge** with zeal to remove all that hinders love. There are no contradictions in Him.

III. THE LORD'S "JUSTICE MASTER PLAN" FOR HUMAN HISTORY

- A. The Lord's end-time "justice master plan" includes positive and seemingly "negative" activities. Isaiah prophesied that the Messiah would establish justice in all the nations (Isa. 42:1, 4).
- ¹*"I have put My Spirit upon Him; He will bring forth justice to the Gentiles [all nations]...*
⁴*He [Jesus] will not...be discouraged, till He has established justice in the earth..." (Isa. 42:1, 4)*
- B. *The positive activities* include an unprecedented *outpouring of the Spirit's presence and power*, evangelism, physical healing, the restoration of broken lives, godly legislation, and more.
- C. *The "negative" activities* include the Lord disciplining His people and judging His enemies.
1. The Lord will *discipline the Church and national Israel* to awaken them to fully receive the love of God and to respond to Jesus in obedience and bridal partnership (Rev. 19:7). (Note: Both Jews and Gentile are only saved through Jesus—becoming one New Man; Eph. 2:15).
 2. The Lord will *raise up the Antichrist* who will mobilize an unprecedented *persecution* of the Church and Israel (many will be imprisoned or martyred). This will result in both a great *falling away* from the faith and the purifying of the Church and Israel (Dan. 11:35).
 3. The Lord will *judge the Antichrist's empire* for its wickedness and persecution of the Church and Israel (Rev. 19:2), resulting in an unprecedented *destruction of the nations* (under the Antichrist) and the death of *half* of the earth's population (Rev. 6:8; 9:15).
 4. The Lord will allow *demonic activity* and *man's sin to come to fullness*, thus giving one generation the unique opportunity to choose to fully love God or to pursue the deep things of Satan and sin (Dan. 8:23; Mt. 24:9-22).
- ⁹*"They will...kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for My name's sake. ¹⁰And then many will be offended...¹¹ false prophets will...deceive many...¹⁴This gospel of the kingdom will be preached...to all the nations...²¹There will be great tribulation... ²²Unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved." (Mt. 24:9-22)*

- D. The Lord's "justice master plan" will result in a **purified Church** loving and obeying Jesus as a **prepared Bride** (Dan. 11:33-35; Rev. 19:7), **a great harvest of souls** (Rev. 7:9), **Israel's national salvation** and millennial calling (Isa. 60), **Satan being cast into prison** (Rev. 20:1-3), and the earth being filled with **God's glory** (Hab. 2:14), including every sphere of society being filled with **love and justice** and the **garden of Eden** conditions being restored to the environment.
- E. **Optimum environment:** God is establishing the optimum environment for His people to walk in love and purity. *God uses the least severe means to bring the greatest number of people to the deepest level of love.* Because Jesus is in control of all things, He will cause negative events to work for good (Rom. 8:28; cf. Gen. 50:20). He will use persecution and death in a glorious, redemptive way. What the devil means for evil, God will use for good to train His people.
- ²⁸***And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God... (Rom. 8:28)***
- F. In the end times, justice will be a primary theme in *both* kingdoms—God's *and* Satan's.
1. Satan will raise up a counterfeit justice movement in the end times using biblical terminology. We recommend Stuart Greaves' book, *False Justice*. The distorted-grace message opens wide the door for false justice by promoting a Christianity that is not based on what the Bible says about Jesus and His salvation and that does not call for genuine repentance.
 2. God's justice can only be understood by those who have an eternal perspective. False justice is focused on gaining temporary comfort and benefits without regard for the age to come.
- G. Jesus anchored His mandate to bring justice to the earth to night-and-day prayer (Lk. 18:7-8). The parable in Luke 18:1-8 is connected to the Isaiah 42:4 prophecy of Jesus releasing justice in the earth. The context of this parable is the end-time injustice of the Antichrist being stopped when the Son of Man comes (18:8) to defeat the Antichrist's empire (Lk. 17:27, 37; Rev. 19:19).
- ⁷***“Will not God bring about justice for His elect who cry to Him day and night...? ⁸When the Son of Man comes, will He find faith [agreement] on the earth?” (Lk. 18:7-8, NASB)***

IV. THE MESSENGER CALLING: TO PREPARE THE WAY OF THE LORD (ISA. 40:3-5)

- A. The messenger calling—to prepare people spiritually to receive the Lord’s leadership by making straight a “spiritual highway of truth” for God—is applicable at Jesus’ first and second comings. God is raising up messengers—via speaking, singing, writing, sharing, social media, acting, etc.
- ³***Prepare the way of the LORD; make straight in the desert a highway for our God.*** ⁴***Every valley shall be exalted and...the crooked places shall be made straight...*** ⁵***the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together.*** (Isa. 40:3-5)
- B. ***All flesh shall see it together***: Isaiah set this “messenger calling” (40:3) in an end-time context when all nations will see God’s glory together (40:5) in the context of Jesus’ return. John’s ministry was very important, but it was only a partial fulfillment of the 40:3-5 prophecy.
- C. The Spirit is raising up messengers to prepare people spiritually to walk in agreement with God in the context of Jesus’ return. John the Baptist modeled the way to prepare a spiritual highway for God (Lk. 3:1-17), emphasizing a 2-fold message: ***calling people to repent*** (agreeing with *God’s values*; Lk. 3:8-14) and ***announcing Jesus’ coming*** (agreeing with *God’s plans*; Lk. 3:16-17).
- D. The forerunner message prepares people to walk in agreement with the Lord’s values and plans so that they can fully participate with Him in releasing His glory. This spiritual highway is a ***highway of purity*** (God’s values) and a ***highway of understanding*** (of God’s plans).
- E. ***Make straight***: Isaiah issued a call to the Lord’s messengers to “make straight a highway of truth” by preparing people spiritually to respond to Jesus’ coming (40:3-5). The Lord’s messengers are to ***make the message straight, or clear, by removing any ambiguity***. They are to boldly, clearly, and tenderly proclaim God’s values and plans. This includes speaking God’s truth in relation to issues associated with the current cultural wars along with events related to Jesus’ return.