

# ***STUDIES IN THE END TIMES – GARY WIENS***

## ***SESSION 1: WHY WE SHOULD STUDY THE END-TIMES***

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### **I. INTRODUCTION**

- A. In the weekly sessions to follow, we will give an overview of what the Bible teaches about the End-Times. We will cover only the most important trends, people and events of the End-Times, both the positive and negative ones.
- B. We will not have time to go deep in each theme that is covered in this series. There are articles on the IHOP-Kansas City website that provide a more in-depth scriptural basis for our teachings. There you will be able to ask questions and to find recommended books on the End-Times. See [www.IHOP.org](http://www.IHOP.org).
- C. I do not ask anyone to quickly accept my views; rather I urge you think for yourself. Truth is never hurt by careful scrutiny but rather it is confirmed. When we own the truth, it will uphold us in the time of coming pressure. You must boldly challenge all the ideas that are being taught in this course. Refuse any that you cannot clearly see in Scripture for yourself. I have 3 positions on what I say about the End-Times: biblical conviction, informed opinion, and personal theory.
- D. The Bereans searched the Scriptures to see if the things that Paul said were so (Acts 17:10-11).  
***Acts 17:11 These were more fair-minded than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so.***
- E. If you are new in studying the End-Times, be prepared for the reality that the Jesus seen in many End-Time Scriptures is very different from the Jesus that some think of. Jesus is not a heavenly Santa Claus committed to making life easy in this age. He is a zealous Bridegroom King coming to establish His Father's glory, to vindicate His persecuted Bride (Rev. 19:2) and to replace all the evil governments on earth. Therefore, He will dash nations to pieces that refuse His leadership (Ps. 2:8-9; 110:6; Isa. 63:1-6; 2 Thessalonians 1:6-10). Jesus' love as a passionate Bridegroom is fierce. It is important that we are loyal to what Scripture says, rather than to Christian traditions or religious sentiments.

***Revelation 19:2 For true and righteous are His judgments, because He has judged the great harlot who corrupted the earth with her fornication; and He has avenged on her the blood of His servants shed by her."***

***Psalms 2:8-9 Ask of Me, and I will give You the nations for Your inheritance, and the ends of the earth for Your possession. 9 You shall break them with a rod of iron; You shall dash them to pieces like a potter's vessel."***

***Psalms 110:6 He shall judge among the nations, He shall fill the places with dead bodies, He shall execute the heads of many countries.***

***Isaiah 63:1-6 Who is this who comes from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah, this One who is glorious in His apparel, traveling in the greatness of His strength? — "I who speak in righteousness, mighty to save." 2 Why is Your apparel red, and Your garments like one who***

*treads in the winepress? 3 "I have trodden the winepress alone, and from the peoples no one was with Me. For I have trodden them in My anger, and trampled them in My fury; their blood is sprinkled upon My garments, and I have stained all My robes. 4 For the day of vengeance is in My heart, and the year of My redeemed has come. 5 I looked, but there was no one to help, and I wondered that there was no one to uphold; therefore My own arm brought salvation for Me; and My own fury, it sustained Me. 6 I have trodden down the peoples in My anger, made them drunk in My fury, and brought down their strength to the earth."*

*2 Thessalonians 1:6–10 . . . it is a righteous thing with God to repay with tribulation those who trouble you, 7 and to give you who are troubled rest with us when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, 8 in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. 9 These shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power, 10 when He comes, in that Day, to be glorified in His saints and to be admired among all those who believe, because our testimony among you was believed.*

- F. The most controversial point in this course is found in my conviction that Church will go through the Tribulation (in great victory and power). This differs from the popular pre-tribulation rapture view that teaches that the Church will be raptured at any minute and will therefore miss the great End-Time revival and crisis. The Bible teaches that the Church will be raptured. The issue is one of timing. The Church will be raptured at the end of the Tribulation, rather than at its beginning.
- G. I honor the godliness and wisdom of many who hold the pre-tribulation Rapture view, but I see it as a serious mistake that will leave many unprepared and even offended at Jesus in the coming time of worldwide pressure and revival. We disagree in a spirit of love and meekness not in a spirit of debate. The reality of the Rapture and the Great Tribulation is too weighty to reduce it to an argumentative spirit.

## II. FOUR WAYS THAT THE GENERATION IN WHICH THE LORD RETURNS IS UNIQUE

- A. First, we must study the End-Times because the generation in which the Lord returns is the most dramatic generation in human history with two great extremes. Before Jesus returns, the nations will witness the greatest revival and the most severe pressures (God's judgments, Satan's rage, man's sin) that have ever been seen.
- B. Second, we must study the End-Times because the generation in which the Lord returns most manifests Jesus' heart and leadership openly to the nations. The four Gospels (totaling 89 chapters) give us a record of Jesus' heart and power at His first coming when He accomplished redemption. In a similar way, the end of the age (over 150 chapters in the Bible) reveals Jesus' heart and power as He takes over the leadership of the whole earth. The Gospels and the End-Time Scriptures reveal the same Jesus operating in the same power of the Holy Spirit. The Book of Revelation is called the revelation of Jesus because it reveals His heart, power and leadership.

*Revelation 1:1 The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show His servants...*

- C. Third, we study the End-Times because the generation in which the Lord returns is the most written about generation in Scripture. Over 150 chapters in the Bible have the End-Times as their main or significant theme. Scripture gives significant divine info about the End-Times. Jesus spoke more about the last generation of natural history than the generation that He was born in. Why? To prepare the Bride to be victorious in love and power during the most dramatic time in world history.
- D. Fourth, we must study the End-Times because the generation in which the Lord returns is the generation that God has announced with the most prophetic signs. They will increase in intensity as we get closer to Jesus' return. These prophetic signs include supernatural signs in the heavens and on earth, natural signs in nature (earthquakes, etc.) and trends in society, and political, military, religious, scientific, technological, and economic developments. God calls it wisdom to understand to these things (Rev. 17:9) because it is an issue of life and death for us.

***Revelation 13:18 Here is wisdom. Let him who has understanding calculate the number of the Beast.***

- E. The Scripture requires those in the generation the Lord returns to know the prophetic signs and to respond appropriately. Jesus and Paul emphasized the know-ability of the prophetic signs of the End-Times (Mt. 24:32-34; Lk. 21:25-29; 1 Thes. 5:1-6; 2 Thes. 2:1-11).

***Matthew 24:32-33 Now learn this parable from the fig tree: When its branch has already become tender and puts forth leaves, you know that summer is near. 33 So you also, when you see all these things, know that it is near--at the doors!***

***Luke 21:25-28 There will be signs in the sun...and in the stars; and on the earth distress of nations...26 men's hearts failing them from fear...for the powers of heaven will be shaken. 27 Then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power...28 Now when these things begin to happen, look up (have a heavenly perspective) and lift up your heads (be encouraged in faith), because your redemption draws near...***

***1 Thessalonians 5:1-6 Concerning the times and the seasons, you have no need that I should write to you. 2 For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night...4 But you, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this Day should overtake you as a thief. 5 You are all sons of light and sons of the day... 6 Therefore...let us watch...***

***2 Thessalonians 2:1-11 Now, brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, we ask you, 2 not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled, . . . as though the day of Christ had come. 3 Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, 4 who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God. . . . 6 And now you know what is restraining, that he may be revealed in his own time. 7 For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only He who now restrains will do so until He is taken out of the way. 8 And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the***

***breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming. 9 The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, 10 and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved.***

God promised to give prophetic signs in the generation that the Lord returns as an expression of His mercy, so people can make the necessary preparations for what is coming. These prophetic signs serve the Church like a weather station that signals trouble before it comes so people can prepare and save lives. The example of the Southeast Asia Tsunami caused by the Sumatra earthquake on Dec. 26, 2004 illustrates this. Most of those who died could have been saved simply by knowing an hour earlier that the tsunami was coming.

- F. Jesus rebuked Israel for being unable to read the prophetic signs at Jesus' first coming (Mt. 16:3). Jesus taught that Israel came under judgment for being unresponsive to God because they did not know the time of their visitation from God.

***Matthew 16:3 and in the morning, 'It will be foul weather today, for the sky is red and threatening.' Hypocrites! You know how to discern the face of the sky, but you cannot discern the signs of the times.***

***Luke 19:43-44 For days will come...when your enemies will...44 level you, and your children to the ground...because you did not know the time of your visitation.***

- G. The prepared prophetic Church alone will have the answer to keep many from being offended at God in the End-Times. **We must be able to answer why a God of love would allow and even orchestrate some of the events in the Great Tribulation.** The purpose of God's judgments is to remove all that hinders love so that multitudes would be saved and grow mature in love.
- H. ***The principle of God's love in judgment:*** God uses the least severe means to reach the greatest number of people at the deepest level of love without violating anyone's free will in training the future rulers of the earth.

### III. FOUR COMMON LIES RELATED TO END-TIME PROPHECY

- A. The first common lie is that End-Time prophecy is not relevant, but is only for the curious. Gaining understanding about the End-Times is a key to preparing the Church to be victorious in the most extreme glory and pressure in history. It provides us with a compass in the storm. Having understanding about the End-Times will be an issue life or death to many in that hour.
- B. The second common lie is that most End-Time prophecy is to be interpreted symbolically instead of taken literally. The events and numbers in Revelation are to be understood in their plain meaning (literal) unless the Scripture specifically indicates that they are symbolic (Rev. 1:20; 5:6; 11:8; 12:1, 3, 9; 17:7, 9).

***Revelation 1:20 The mystery of the seven stars which you saw in My right hand, and the seven golden lampstands: The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands which you saw are the seven churches.***

*Revelation 5:6 And I looked, and behold, in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as though it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent out into all the earth.*

*Revelation 11:8 And their dead bodies will lie in the street of the great city which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified.*

*Revelation 12:1,3,9 Now a great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a garland of twelve stars. . . . 3 And another sign appeared in heaven: behold, a great, fiery red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and seven diadems on his heads. . . . 9 So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.*

*Revelation 17:7,9 But the angel said to me, "Why did you marvel? I will tell you the mystery of the woman and of the beast that carries her, which has the seven heads and the ten horns. . . . Here is the mind which has wisdom: The seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman sits.*

- C. The third common lie is that End-Time prophecies are impossible to understand except only by scholars. The Scriptures on the End-Times were written to be understood by all. The majority of people throughout history have been uneducated peasants.
- D. The fourth common lie of End-Time prophecy is that the Church in every generation believed they were the final generation. (I believe we are in the beginning stages of the End-Times. I do not know whether the Tribulation will begin in 5 years or 50 years).
- E. It is true that small numbers (probably less than 1%) of many generations thought they were at the end. Only in the generation of the early apostles was there a universal sense among the majority of God's people that they would see the return of Jesus. This is beginning to happen again in the Body of Christ across the earth for only the second time in history.

#### IV. SEVEN REASON WHY WE MUST UNDERSTAND THE END-TIMES

- A. ***Certainty of victory*** – The Church will be victorious in love with power during the most dramatic time in history. This prepares the Church to participate in the coming revival instead of giving up or drawing back. It is worth the effort because the Church will be victorious. Our lives and labors matter and will prevail. We gain courage when we see End-Time prophecy fulfilled before our eyes. We must understand it before we can discern its fulfillment. This encourages us that God is in control and that He cares for us. This gives us courage to proclaim to others.
- B. ***Confidence in sovereignty*** – God is fully in control of the End-Time crisis and is never surprised. The result of this is that we live in peace instead of making decisions in the coming crisis with fear with panic. We cannot see clearly with the smoke of fear and panic in our eyes.
- C. ***Continuity*** – Understanding the dynamic continuity of our present character and works to the age to come is vital. We see this continuity in the teaching of the Tribulation and the Millennium.

- D. **Fascination** – With revelation of the beauty of Jesus (Isa. 4:2; 28:5; 33:17) in seeing His leadership (love, wisdom and power) in His dramatic plans for the End-Times. In this, Jesus combines human free will, satanic rage and God's sovereignty to produce the great Harvest and the victorious Church without ever violating God's justice or man's free will. The more we understand about Jesus' leadership in the End-Times the more we are fascinated with Him.

*Isaiah 4:2 In that day the Branch of the LORD shall be beautiful and glorious; And the fruit of the earth shall be excellent and appealing for those of Israel who have escaped.*

*Isaiah 28:5 In that day the LORD of hosts will be for a crown of glory and a diadem of beauty to the remnant of His people,*

*Isaiah 33:17 Your eyes will see the King in His beauty; they will see the land that is very far off.*

- E. **Direction** – Having a compass in a storm at sea is an issue of life and death. This helps us have right expectations for the future that include victory and hardship. With understanding, we are adequately braced for what is coming and thus are emotionally and mentally prepared to endure the glory and the pressure. We make right choices now because we have a right vision (expectancy) for life during this historic time. With understanding we are warned and thus have discernment of what seductions to avoid or what not to do.

For example, we must refuse the positive persuasions to take the mark of the Beast, or to participate in the seemingly prosperous economic and religious enterprises of Babylon the Great Harlot. The prophetic Church will be the light of truth in the darkest hour in history. God will raise up forerunners as part of His mercy for others.

- F. **Urgency** – with understanding of the End-Time Scriptures we grow in faith that our intercession will minimize evil and increase victory in specific geographic areas (Joel 2:12-18). Our prayers can change history and lead many to salvation and protection. Understanding causes us to have urgency to live a life of prayer and to cultivate spiritual depth (going deep in understanding of the End-Times). Moses' prayers released and stopped God's judgments (Exodus 7-12).

*Joel 2:12-18 "Now, therefore," says the LORD, "Turn to Me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning." 13 So rend your heart, and not your garments; return to the LORD your God, for He is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness; And He relents from doing harm. 14 Who knows if He will turn and relent, and leave a blessing behind Him — a grain offering and a drink offering for the LORD your God? 15 Blow the trumpet in Zion, consecrate a fast, call a sacred assembly; 16 Gather the people, sanctify the congregation, assemble the elders, gather the children and nursing babes; let the bridegroom go out from his chamber, and the bride from her dressing room. 17 Let the priests, who minister to the LORD, weep between the porch and the altar; let them say, "Spare Your people, O LORD, and do not give Your heritage to reproach, that the nations should rule over them. Why should they say among the peoples, 'Where is their God?'" 18 Then the LORD will be zealous for His land, and pity His people.*

- G. ***Confidence to study*** – As we grasp the truths of the End-Times, then we have confidence and zeal to go deeper in our study of other End-Time passages. One of the biggest hindrances today is the conclusion that End-Time prophecy is too difficult to understand, so why even try.