

## **Being on the Right Side of History**

### Biblical Eschatology Notebook

#### Introductory Concepts

1. Terminology
  - a. Eschatology – study of the “end times”
  - b. Biblical Theology – the study of the Bible’s storyline and the message of God to His people through the story of Scripture
  
2. The importance of eschatology: *the Bible talks about what happens in the end, but why?*
  - a. To shows us God’s character
    - i. He created the world for a purpose, and He will bring that purpose to pass
    - ii. He is totally completely **good**, and. His goodness will reign uninhibited forever in a world completely rid of evil
    - iii. He is completely just, and will bring justice to reign publicly and righteously
    - iv. He is immeasurably merciful, quick to forgive, and compassionate towards His beloved people
  - b. To teach us how to live in this age
    - i. To show us what to expect in this age, and thus manage our expectations
    - ii. To show us where things are going so when they go there, we won’t follow the culture in where it goes
    - iii. To prepare us for difficulty and suffering, so it does not catch us unaware
    - iv. To bring us to trust God, knowing that He has directed all that happens, and He will bring all evil to an end in justice
    - v. To help us to live for an eternal age and not for this temporary age with its temporary pleasures
  
3. Basic Principles
  - a. We want to be *in the Scriptures* as much as possible – we will de-emphasize man-deduced schematizations most of the time
  - b. We want to let Scripture interpret Scripture as much as possible – compare passages, look for shared concepts between passages, and put things into the context of the greater story
  - c. We want to be honest about what is clear and what is more ambiguous, emphasize what Scripture emphasizes, and humble where we disagree with other Christians
  - d. We always want to maintain the goal of being mastered by Scripture more than being masters of Scripture

#### **Part 1: A Biblical Theology of the “End Times”**

- I. Explicit references to “the end of days” in Scripture (usually translated ‘*latter days*’ or ‘*last days*’) “Latter days” in the Old Testament
  - a. Genesis 49:1 – Jacob’s prophecy concerning the future of the tribes of Israel
  - b. Numbers 24:14 – Balaam’s prophecy about a star and scepter of Israel
  - c. Deuteronomy 4:30 – When in tribulation, Israel will return to Yahweh and obey Him
  - d. Isaiah 2:2 – People from all nations will come to the mountain of God
  - e. Isaiah 9:1 (“latter time”) – Light will come to Israel in the darkness as the promised Son/King arises
  - f. Jeremiah 48:47, 49:39 – the LORD will restore the fortunes of some of the surrounding nations after they are punished

- g. Ezekiel 38:16 – Israel is attacked by enemy nations (Gog, etc.)
    - i. Also Ezekiel 38:8 (“latter years”)
  - h. Daniel 2:28 – A series of empires will rise and fall, and the Divine kingdom will be set up
  - i. Daniel 10:14 – The antichrist will come, and the saints will be persecuted
  - j. Daniel 12:2 (“at that time” referring to 10:14) – All will be resurrected from the dead
  - k. Hosea 3:4-5 – Israel will return from exile and seek the LORD and David their king
  - l. Micah 4:1 – the mountain of the temple will be established as the highest mountain, and many nations will flock to God there
- II. Conclusions from OT references to “the end of days”
- a. Israel will return from Exile, and will be purified and seek the LORD
  - b. God’s Kingdom will be established under the Davidic King
  - c. God will pour out His Spirit on His people, Israel
  - d. A series of empires and rulers will rise and fall under God’s judgment
    - i. There will be persecution of God’s people from the “nations” and the “antichrist”/ “Gog”
  - e. The LORD will restore the nations of the earth as they come to Him in Israel
- III. “Last days” in the New Testament
- a. John 6:39, 40, 44, 54 (“last day”) – Christ will raise His people from the dead (also John 11:24)
  - b. John 12:48 (“last day”) – Christ will judge those who refuse to believe
  - c. Acts 2:17 (Joel 2:28-32) – God will pour out His Spirit on “all flesh” and **all** who calls on His Name will be saved
  - d. 1 Corinthians 10:11 – Israel is an example/warning for us “on whom the end of the ages has come”
  - e. Galatians 4:4-7 /Ephesians 1:9-10 – Christ came “in the fullness of time”
  - f. 1 Timothy 4:1 (“latter times”) – Some will depart from the faith
  - g. 2 Timothy 3:1 – There will be times of difficulty due to rebellion against God
  - h. Hebrews 1:2 – God has spoken to us by His Son
  - i. James 5:3 – What we do now is done in the “last days”; the rich persecutors of the church are warned about the temporary nature of their pursuits
  - j. 1 Peter 1:5 (“last time”) – Our salvation will be revealed
  - k. 1 Peter 1:20 (“last times”) – Christ was made manifest
  - l. 2 Peter 3:3/ Jude 17-19 – Scoffers come following their sinful desires and causing divisions in the church
  - m. 1 John 2:18 (“last hour”) – The antichrist is coming, and many antichrists have come
- IV. Conclusions from NT reference to “last days”
- a. With the coming of Messiah (the life, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus), we are now in “the last days”
    - i. With the coming of Christ also comes the antichrist(s)
    - ii. With the coming of the True Prophet, we come to expect false prophet(s)
  - b. The “last days” are a time of tribulation – false teachers/false teaching, deception, and persecution – and this time has come (more on this in later weeks)
  - c. The “last days” usher in the end-time promises of the Spirit, the Temple, and resurrection
  - d. Often, references to the “last days” in the plural refer to what has already begun, while references to the “last day” in the singular refer to the future consummated form of the latter days (Beale)

“NT theology is essentially end-time theology. The better we understand that the end times have begun and that they’re going on, the better we’re going to understand other doctrines.” – G.K. Beale

V. Summary

- a. We live in a time of “inaugurated eschatology”: the “already-not yet”
- b. **Every** major biblical theme can only be understood in light of this “already-not yet” end-time understanding
  - i. Every major biblical theme hits its apex in Christ
  - ii. Every major biblical theme culminates in the new creation