

GATECITY CHURCH

UNDERSTANDING THE END TIMES, PT. 10

NOVEMBER 12TH, 2023 – HAZEN STEVENS

- I. 4 time frames reviewed: Headlines, Big Ideas & Key Take-Aways
 - A. Jesus gave three major teachings in the Gospels. They are the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7), The Upper Room Discourse (John 13-17), and the Olivet Discourse (Matthew 24-25, Luke 21, Mark 13). We are going to approach our study of the Olivet Discourse by working through the four key timeframes that Jesus identifies. They are: 1. The Beginning of Birth Pangs 2. The Great Tribulation 3. After the Tribulation 4. The Age to Come.
 - B. In this review session we will give a headline, summary, and tease out big ideas from each timeframe, lastly give some practical take-aways on how we should consider living in response to what we have learned.
- II. **Beginning of Birth Pangs Headline:** A time to cling to truth as deception and adversity is on the rise: Get ready and gather oil.
 - A. Beginning of Birth Pangs (Sorrows) – The season of time prior to the Tribulation. Jesus identifies seven global trends that will be the signs of this timeframe. He details these signs so that watchful believers can identify this season of time, not fall into deception, but stay anchored to truth and peace.
 1. Just as natural birth pangs prepare a woman's body to birth a child, these prophetic birth pangs prepare the earth to usher in the return of the Lord and birth the Kingdom of God upon the earth.
 2. Over the last one hundred years the events that Jesus described as the beginning of birth pangs have become very discernible considering the rest of human history. Each of these trends has existed since the first century. However, when you look into each you find that they have all accelerated way in frequency and intensity over the last one hundred years. (See detailed notes from session 2)
 3. The specific trends are: (1) Deception, (2) Wars and rumors of wars, (3) Nation rising against nation (4) Kingdom rising against kingdom, (5) Famines, (6) Pestilences, (7) Earthquakes or tempests
 4. 4 Admonitions for this period: Matthew 24: **4** And Jesus answered and said to them, **"See to it that no one misleads you. 5** For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and they will mislead many people. **6** And you will be hearing of wars and rumors of wars. **See that you are not alarmed, for those things must take place, but that is not yet the end. 7** For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and there will be famines and earthquakes in various places. **8** But all these things are *merely* the beginning of birth pains.
 - B. **Big Ideas:** For those that find themselves living in the time of the beginning of birth pangs, it is not a time to be alarmed, but to cling to truth as deception is on the rise. This is the time to gather oil for the greater challenges ahead.
 - C. **Take-Aways:** This is a season to go deep in God's word, so that you can discern truth from error as deception is on the rise.
- III. **The Great Tribulation Headline:** The most difficult time in human history, will require great endurance and heroic leadership: **Burn brightly until the end!**
 - A. (Great) Tribulation – Jesus referred to as tribulation and great tribulation interchangeably. It is a time that is marked by many intense trials for believers, the rise of the anti-christ, and the increase of lawlessness in the earth, mass deception, the judgments of God (seals and trumpet judgements), a mass apostasy within the Church, as well as the final outpouring of the Holy Spirit and the proclamation of the Gospel to every tribe, tongue, people, and nation.
 1. Summary: This will be the season of greatest trial that the world has ever seen, lasting approximately 7 years with a dramatic escalation at the midpoint. The seven year period is likely going to be inaugurated with a peace-treaty that sets up the anti-christ's empire and a season of relative 'false peace and safety' but in which there will still be persecution for believers, but relative calm for the nations in comparison to the turmoil of the preceding season of 'birth pangs'. This 'false peace' will be shattered at the mid-point. At that time the anti-christ will commit the 'abomination of desolation' be possessed by satan and call all nations to worship him as God, a great persecution of Jews will break out, two witness will appear at Jerusalem, and the beginning of

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the seal and trumpets judgements from revelation will commence. This season concludes with the seventh trumpet return of Christ.

2. Admonition: Matthew 24: 9 “Then they will hand you over to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations because of My name. **10** And at that time many will fall away, and they will [g]betray one another and hate one another. **11** And many false prophets will rise up and mislead many people. **12** And because lawlessness is increased, **most people’s love will become cold.** **13** But **the one who endures to the end is the one who will be saved.** **14** This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole [j]world as a testimony to all the nations, and then the end will come...**25 Behold, I have told you in advance.** **26** So if they say to you, ‘Behold, He is in the wilderness,’ do not go out; *or*, ‘Behold, He is in the inner rooms,’ do not believe *them*. **27 For just as the lightning comes from the east and flashes as far as the west, so will the coming of the Son of Man be.**

B. **Big Idea:** The intense difficulty of this season will lead many to be offended, led astray by deception and sin, and many who have loved God will grow cold in their love and turn away from Him because they don’t understand His leadership. They will ‘run out of oil’ right before the bridegroom comes. Then at the conclusion of this time, He will split the sky and return in a manner unbelievably dramatic and visible to redeem and reward the saints.

1. Luke 21:27 Then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. **28** Now when these things begin to happen, **look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption draws near.”**
2. **Matthew 25** “And at midnight a cry was *heard*: ‘Behold, the bridegroom [a]is coming; go out to meet him!’ 7 Then all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps. 8 And the foolish said to the wise, ‘Give us *some* of your oil, for our lamps are going out.’ 9 **But the wise answered, saying, ‘No, lest there should not be enough for us and you; but go rather to those who sell, and buy for yourselves.’** **10 And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came,** and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding; and the door was shut.

C. **Take-away:** The fellowship we cultivate now through adverse seasons is what we will draw on to sustain us through coming trials. Fellowship with God cannot be gathered in a hurry in the final ‘moments’ of this age, those who want to endure through the greatest challenges of human history, and even lead others through the adversity *must prepare spiritually now to have intimacy and understanding.* That hour will require heroic leadership, we set our resolve for then with *how we live now.*

1. Daniel 12:3 **Those who are wise** will shine like the brightness of the heavens, and **those who lead many to righteousness,** like the stars for ever and ever.

IV. **The Post Tribulation Headline:** Your redemption has come, Christ has come to reward: **Literally burn brightly with glorious reward!**

- A. After the Tribulation – A short season of time that serves as the transition period from this age to the next. This season includes Jesus’ Return, the catching up and glorification of the saints, the Armageddon campaign, the judgment of those who are alive on the earth and setting up of Jesus’ throne on earth to initiate His reign.
- B. The 7th trumpet will sound. Immediately, the Lord will descend from heaven with a shout and with the voice of an Archangel (1 Thes 4:16). Jesus will appear in the sky, coming upon the glory clouds of heaven, with His angels in flaming fire (Mat 24:30, 2 Thes 1:7-8). The saints who have died, Old and New Testament, will be resurrected and the saints who are alive will be changed (1 Cor 15:51- 52). Each will be caught up together in the air (1 Thes 4:16-17). They will be gathered together from the ends of the heavens by the angels of God to meet the Lord in the air (Mat 24:31, 1 Thes 4:17).
1. Matthew 16:**27** For the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will **reward each according to his works.**

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2. 1 Corinthians 3:13 each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is. 14 **If anyone's work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward.**
- C. **Big Idea:** We will all be rewarded in the resurrection according to our faithfulness, love, and obedience to Jesus in this age. Even the smallest of actions done in love will have implications on your eternal reward revealed in the Glory of your resurrection and reward.
- D. **Take-away:** Daily think about this future day, and let it fill you with hope and expectation that not one act of faithful love will go unacknowledged. Let it spur you to live for heavenly reward, that is measurable, tangible and eternal.
- V. The Age to Come Headline: The restoration of all things has come, and **you have a part to play!**
 - A. Age to Come – Jesus referred to this season as the resurrection(Mat 22:30), that age (Luke 20:35), the joy of your Lord (Mat 25:21, 23), the kingdom prepared from the foundation of the world (Mat 25:34), the kingdom of God (Luke 21:31).
 1. Jesus is the King of kings (Rev. 19:16; 17:14; 15:3). He will personally govern the Kingdom from Jerusalem establishing the culture and values of the Kingdom of God across every sphere of society in every nation (Rev. 2:26-27; 3:21; 5:10; 20:4-6; 22:5; Mt. 19:28; 20:21-23; 25:23; Lk. 19:17-19; 22:29-30; 1 Cor. 6:2-3; 2 Tim. 2:12; Rom 8:17). The earth will continue for a literal 1000-year period of time (Rev 20:1-6), known as the millennium. This season on the earth will include many dynamic. Features: 1. Satan Bound (Rev 20:2-3), 2. Worldwide Glory (Hab 2:14, 11:9) 3. Worldwide Justice (Isaiah 9:7, 16:5), 4. Worldwide Peace (Isaiah 9:7), 5. Healing (Isaiah 35:3-6), 6. Curse lifted (Isaiah 11:6-9, Isaiah 65:20), 7. Jerusalem the Praise of the earth (Isa 62:7, Zech 2:10-12)
 - B. **Big Idea:** There is a time coming in which God will restore all things, and we will get to enjoy and participate in that restoration process. The ages to come are going to be full of incredible seasons of discovery, transformation, and purpose. We will have dominion and tend the earth and nations like our descendant Adam was intended to tend the garden.
 1. 1 Corinthians 6:2 – “Do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if the world will be judged by you, are you unworthy to judge the smallest matters.”
 2. Isaiah 61:3 To grant those who mourn *in Zion*, Giving them a garland instead of ashes, The oil of gladness instead of mourning, The cloak of praise instead of a disheartened spirit. So they will be called [d]oaks of righteousness, The planting of the Lord, that He may be glorified. 4 Then they will rebuild the ancient ruins, They will raise up the former devastations; And they will repair the ruined cities, The desolations of many generations.
 - C. **Take-away:** Knowing that there is a time of full redemption and restoration realized on the earth gives us **hope** to endure during difficult, unjust, and dark days ahead. We fix our hope on Jesus and His coming kingdom, and this gives us freedom and liberty to not count the cost of righteousness in this age. You don't always win in this life for doing what's right, but you will be rewarded for it in the next. Furthermore, the wicked will be punished.
 1. Acts 3:19 21 **whom heaven must receive until the [b]period of restoration of all things, about which God spoke by the mouths of His holy prophets from ancient times.**
 2. **Revelation 21:3** And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Look! God’s dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. 4 ‘He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death’ [b] or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away”...7 **Those who are victorious will inherit all this,** and I will be their God and they will be my children. 8 But the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, the idolaters and all liars—they will be consigned to the fiery lake of burning sulfur. This is the second death.”