

Come And See Part 9

The End Times

Luke 21:5-37

Memory Verses: Mark 13:13

MANUSCRIPT

Introduction (Me, We, & the Struggle)

As we mentioned last week, the holiday of Easter is over but the spirit of Easter should last all year long. Jesus didn't just die on the cross and raise again from the dead so that we could be saved from hell and then sit around and wait for heaven. As we discussed last week he then ascended into heaven to intercede on our behalf and to send himself back to us in the form of the Holy Spirit to help us escape sin and know and live out His Word! **Easter is living every single day in the death and resurrection of Christ through the Holy Spirit as He empowers us to live out and share the Gospel to see the lost saved and God glorified!**

He lived, he died, he was resurrected, he ascended into Heaven, and he sent us the Holy Spirit... so now what? What's next? Well, according to the scripture the End Times is next. And, not next as in some future event... but next as in we are living in it now! Look with me at **Luke 21:29-33**.

Now we could easily spend the entirety of our sermon just on this one passage. Some have said that Luke 21:32 is quite possibly the most controversial verse in the entire Bible. I don't necessarily want to wrestle with all of the possible interpretations here, though if you have questions I'm always available to do my best to answer them. Suffice to say that I believe that the best interpretation for the word "generation" here is the time frame from the destruction of the temple in AD 70 and the second coming of Christ after the great tribulation period. In laymen's terms, the end times began when the temple in Jerusalem was destroyed for the second and final time. We are living in the end times and according to the signs there can be no doubt. Look with me in **Luke 21:5-19**.

False prophets, wars and rumors of wars, natural disasters, pandemics, persecution, and betrayal? You will be hated for the name of Christ? We are in the end times and have been for the last 2000 years. But as we move closer to the end it is becoming all the more apparent that we are in the end of the end times. And so, the question isn't whether or not we are near the end, the question is, how does the end change the way the church ministers. Look in **Matthew 24:13-14**. **The church must endure, and the church must evangelize! Now is not the time to close up shop, now is the time to get after it like we've never gotten after it before! In the shadow of Easter we don't need rest and relaxation. No, more than anything we need revival! We may be rejected**

by the world but we still hold the cure for the world. Now is the time we are needed most and so we must rise up, find our strength in the power of the Holy Spirit and charge the gates of hell. The End Is truly near, but so is a new beginning in Christ. From the ashes of this world a new world is being born. **Our prayer is this: as the world falls down around us, let it fall, as all things must, at the feet of Jesus Christ.**

Today we are going to look at three periods of the end times and how God wants us as the church to respond.

Teaching (Expand on the Problem, God)

The first thing we see here is that... **The Beginning of the End Times Spread The Church To The World**. Let's look at **Luke 21:20-24**.

When Jesus is talking about the end times, most theologians agree that he is speaking while looking at two different horizons. The first would be the first century contextual horizon and the second would be the future tribulation horizon. Meaning, what he said would happen would happen in one way during the generation of the disciples and in another way during the coming tribulation period. When he said that the walls of the temple would come down he was directly looking at 70AD when the Romans conquered Jerusalem and tore down the temple. Reiterated here in **Matthew 24:1-2, Mark 13:1-2**. This, as stated earlier, is the official beginning of the end times.

Jesus describes this time of persecution in 70AD in detail. Jerusalem will be surrounded by armies. The people will flee into the mountains. The people will be led captive by all nations. And, Jerusalem will be trampled by Gentiles. Of course the disciples weren't insulated from this persecution. **Mark 13:9-10**, and **Matthew 24:9** draw a direct line to these consequences towards the disciples and the church in general. All of the disciples were delivered over to the Romans, all of them were persecuted for their witness of Christ, and all of them were put to death with the exception of John who was exiled on a deserted island. And what did this great persecution do to the church itself? It spread it out to the nations and to the world!

The early church loved one another to such an extent that they naturally did not want to branch out to the world, but by this great persecution the great commission is forced upon them. Look again at **Mark 13:10, Matthew 24:14**. Before the end of the end times the gospel must first be proclaimed to all nations. At the beginning of the end times it is made clear the criteria by which those times would end, we must reach the whole world and then Jesus will come again. Guess what? The job isn't done. The beginning of the end spread the church to the world, now as we near the end of the end times the world is coming to the church and still we are struggling to share the Gospel. We must get after it. **Just as the early church had a responsibility to share the Gospel with the whole world, we are responsible to finish that mission. Our prayer is this: as the world**

falls down around us, let it fall, as all things must, at the feet of Jesus Christ.

The next thing we need to see is that... **The Current End Times Test The Church's Endurance**. Look with me at **Luke 17:20-21**. The kingdom of God; the end times, are already here. What exactly does that look like for us? **Matthew 24:3-13** shows us.

Let's use Mark 13 to break this down. In **Mark 13:3-6** we see that we must endure false prophets. Those preaching different gospels like the prosperity gospel, that teaches that your faith is proved by health and wealth, or gospels of works like Jehovah's witnesses, or those who profess gospels of mockery like Mormons, Muslims, must be avoided at all costs. We may not struggle with the pull towards The Church of Latter Day Saints or Muhammad but I assure you we will be pulled towards one of the many spins on true faith that we see in our culture today. The hardest ones for us to endure will be those on television who seem like evangelicals who are merely moralist, universalist, motivational speakers. I could give you names if you need them, but I shouldn't have to. You should be studying to show yourselves approved so you know false teaching when you see it. How do we endure false teaching? Don't be led astray, focus on Christ.

In **Mark 13:7-8a** we see that we must endure wars and rumors of wars. Over the course of the current end times we have already endured a lot of wars, haven't we? Just in the history of our country we have endured the Revolutionary War, the Civil War, World War 1, World War 2, The Korean War, The Vietnam War, The Cold War, and the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. And now we are currently watching war unfold in Ukraine waiting to see if we will be pulled into that. We may or we may not, it matters not, because regardless, there will be more wars coming. So how do we endure the coming wars? Don't be alarmed, Christ is in control.

In **Mark 13:8b** we see that we must endure natural disasters. We have endured all kinds of natural disasters like hurricanes, earthquakes, and tornadoes. We have just come out of a two year long pandemic. Guess what, they will increase and are increasing, and its not because of climate change... it's because we are in the end times. So how do we endure? Don't be afraid, Christ is in control.

Then in **Mark 13:11-13** we see that we must endure persecution and betrayal. You may be tempted to say that this isn't happening right now, but you would be very wrong. This is happening and has been happening for the last 2000 years in various countries around the world. Today in Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Iran, North Korea, China, and India Christians will be beaten, starved, tortured, and killed for their faith in Jesus. And don't be naive, it will happen to us sooner than later. Even

now we can see the tidal wave of hatred towards believers coming faster than ever before. Their hatred will increase as we stand strong in our beliefs. So how do we endure this persecution? Don't be anxious, Christ is in control.

Luke 21:34-37 gives us more ways we can endure these things. **Accountability, watch lest you fall. Attitude; think on things above so that you aren't weighed down. Attention; be in the word and on the look out for the signs so you aren't surprised. Alertness; remain awake in prayer. And stay Above reproach; being pure and righteous and ready to stand before Christ at all times.** The bottom line is this... **there is no doubt that we are living in the end times, and they will no doubt test our faith, but when we endure we show the world that Jesus is the only thing we bow down to. Our prayer is this: as the world falls down around us, let it fall, as all things must, at the feet of Jesus Christ.**

The last thing we need to see today is that... **The Future End Times Will Reveal True Christians**. According to **Luke 12:54-56** we should be able to interpret the signs of the times. We should be able to recognize that we are growing ever closer to the end times tribulation. The Tribulation period, a seven year period outlined in the book of Revelation, is the final end times period. This is the second horizon Jesus was speaking of when he spoke of the end times, and when it comes to the tribulation period there are two perspectives, that of the Jews and that of the Gentiles. Jesus addresses the Jewish perspective. Look with me at **Matthew 24:15-27**.

In accordance with Daniel and Revelation it appears there will be a sacrilegious abomination done in a rebuilt temple by the anti-Christ during the midway point of the tribulation. What it is exactly cannot be known, but most likely it will be idolatrous in nature. Then there will be a 3 ½ year period called the great tribulation period... the worse part of a 7 year tribulation. Some will be saved during this time period and then the Son of Man will come again with the true believers.

When will these times begin? Look at **Luke 17:22-29**. The simple answer was that no one knows. We are given some hints though... it will be like the days of Noah when everyone lived according to their own ways and then the flood caught them by surprise. It will be like the city of Sodom where very few feared God and the city was surprised when fire and sulphur fell from the sky. It will catch most people off guard.

So why is the end times coming? What's the point of the tribulation period? I can think of one; to reveal the true believers. Look at Luke 17:22. In one way, the disciples literally wanted to see Christ in the flesh but they couldn't because Jesus ascended and would be gone a long time period. In another way, figuratively, there will be people who want to see Christ according to their own design, but they won't see the real Christ because they can't. Everyone wants to see the truth, unfortunately many only want to

see their own truth. They will miss seeing the Christ they want to see until it is too late. The point is... the true believers will be revealed.

Before the tribulation true Christians will be revealed through the rapture. During the tribulation the elect will be saved as the days are cut short. After the tribulation the saved will come back with Christ as part of the second coming. **The tribulation is the final reaping of God's elect.**

Our prayer is this: as the world falls down around us, let it fall, as all things must, at the feet of Jesus Christ.

Application

It is not getting better, it is going to get worse. So how do we respond? We must have revival. We need to be revived to fulfill our mission and in urgency reap as many in the harvest as possible! The time to go to work is now! This isn't a cruise to the finish, this is a fight to the finish! How are you fighting? **Our prayer is this: as the world falls down around us, let it fall, as all things must, at the feet of Jesus Christ**

Conclusion

Billy Graham says this concerning the end times. "We are like people under a sentence of death, waiting for the date to be set. We sense that something is about to happen. We know that things cannot go on as they are. History has reached an impasse. We are now on a collision course. Something is about to give. I believe that this world, as we know it, will come to an end...This is not fanciful imagination but the clear and repeated testimony of the Bible. The Bible tells us that the state of the world will grow darker as we near the end of the age. History is going somewhere. And we know full well that He who does all things well will bring beauty from the ashes of world chaos. A new world is being born. A new social order will emerge when Christ comes back. A fabulous future is on the way. When the "evil day" comes, we do not have to be dependent upon the circumstances around us, but rather on the resources of God. The end will come with the return of Jesus Christ...That is why a Christian can be an optimist. That is why a Christian can smile in the midst of all that is happening...We know what the end will be: the triumph of the Lord Jesus Christ.