

Christ Reformation Church

Tillamook, Oregon

You Must be Born Again!

“The habit of preachers today is to address their people as though they were all Christians and just need instruction...men and women are being treated as saved who never knew they were lost.” [Lloyd-Jones]

*“In my lifetime I did not care to hear that word that cut me most, and showed me my lost estate aright. I was vexed to hear my sins mentioned, and laid to my charge. I loved him best, who deceived me most; who said, Peace, peace, when there was no such thing.” (Jer. 5:30,31).
[Bunyan, John. A FEW SIGHS FROM HELL]*

www.sermonaudio.com/crc

www.unholycharade.com (blog)

www.lightfordarktimes.com (blog)

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Are We in the Last Days?

July 14, 2024

Sermon Text: 1 John 2:18

Scripture Reading: 2 Peter 3:1-13

Children, it is the last hour, and as you have heard that antichrist is coming, so now many antichrists have come. Therefore

**we know that it is the last hour.
(1Jn 2:18)**

Yesterday I was asked to participate in a talk show, the topic of which was, *Are we in the last days?* It was only a 20 minute segment with 3 of us participating, so needless to say we only dealt with the question briefly, but still with a lot of clarity.

The host of the show said that he regularly receives this question from people who follow him and

this is not necessarily a Christian program, so the audience, while conservative politically and in other ways, is not a typical Christian audience. Nevertheless, as the show host said, people are regularly asking this question – *are we in the end times?*

In a nutshell, the short answer is – *yes and no!* Let's see if we can sort out why this is the answer.

A Definition

When people use the terms “last days,” or “end times,” they don't necessarily mean the same thing.

- Some people mean by these terms, *the end of everything.* Due to some cataclysmic event like a meteor strike or massive global ice age for example, the world becomes a cold, lifeless rock devoid of life. This is the thing that fuels the radical green movement and similar groups – they are driven by fear.

- Other people see the end times as a point in human history in which world war destroys civilization and a new barbarism as depicted in Hollywood productions like Mad Max ensues.
- Then there is the recurring, evolving, cyclical notion which maintains that the world will revert back to some kind of primal state, beginning still another cycle of advance to civilization (cf Battlestar Gallactica as an example)
- Still others don't even use the term at all because they believe that the world is going to go on as it is forever (see 2 Peter 3:3-4 on this).

All of these views share one primary characteristic in regard to the end times – and that is *fear*. Fear of a pandemic, fear of nuclear war, fear of economic collapse and resulting famine, fear of some astronomical or meteorological event destroying everything. This

is where man is *without Christ*. A fear of death, under the bondage of the devil.

But the Bible's definition of the last days or end times is much different. It is this:

The last days is that period in human history which extends from the resurrection of Christ to His Second Coming. It is the Church age. We are living in the last days.

You see it in several places in the Bible:

“And in the last days it shall be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams; (Act 2:17)

But understand this, that in the last days there will come times of difficulty. (2Ti 3:1)

Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in

these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world. (Heb 1:1-2)

knowing this first of all, that scoffers will come in the last days with scoffing, following their own sinful desires. (2Pe 3:3)

Children, it is the last hour, and as you have heard that antichrist is coming, so now many antichrists have come. Therefore we know that it is the last hour. (1Jn 2:18)

The Alpha and Omega Points

The Bible does not present any type of cyclical view of history. It tells us that history is linear. And that line of history has a beginning point (alpha point) and an end point (omega). In other words, this present world is not going to go on forever. But neither will this mean that there will be *nothingness*. There will be a new heavens and a new earth and a new humanity in Christ.

We see this alpha and omega in Scriptures such as:

And he said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give from the spring of the water of life without payment. (Rev 21:6)

God tells us that He (Christ uses the same title) is *the first and the last*. He is the one who brought all things into being in a point of time and He is the one who will bring this present world to an end.

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. (Rev 21:1)

And again:

But go your way till the end. And you shall rest and shall stand in your allotted place at the end of the days." (Dan 12:13)

And as we read earlier:

But by the same word the heavens and earth that now exist are stored up for fire, being kept until the day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly.

But do not overlook this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.

But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed.

Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness, waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set on fire and dissolved, and the heavenly

bodies will melt as they burn! But according to his promise we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells. (2Pe 3:7-13)

So there is an end point to this present world. The question we are dealing with now is, *are we close to that end point?* That is, *is the return of Christ close?*

No one Knows, But be Ready

No one knows, and none of us can know, the day or hour when Christ is coming again:

Mat 24:36 “But concerning that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only.

The Olivet Discourse, Matthew chapters 24-25, is Jesus’ largest recorded teaching on the last days and His return. It is by no means an easy section of Scripture to understand in detail, but the major points are plain. And one of those points is certainly this:

No one knows when He is coming again, but we are to constantly live in a state of anticipation and readiness for His return.

Jesus went to great pains to teach us and warn us about this. For instance:

Mat 25:1-13 “Then the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom. (2) Five of them were foolish, and five were wise. (3) For when the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them, (4) but the wise took flasks of oil with their lamps.

(5) As the bridegroom was delayed, they all became drowsy and slept. (6) But at midnight there was a cry, ‘Here is the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.’ (7) Then all those virgins rose 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, ‘Since there will not be enough

for us and for you, go rather to the dealers and buy for yourselves.' (10) And while they were going to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the marriage feast, and the door was shut.

(11) Afterward the other virgins came also, saying, 'Lord, lord, open to us.' (12) But he answered, 'Truly, I say to you, I do not know you.' (13) **Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour.**

Those who reject Christ, as the Olivet Discourse ends, will go away into eternal punishment. To hell.

There Are Signs However That His Return is Near

There are signs and indicators however that the Bible tells us are things we can expect as His return draws near. We are certainly seeing these things today and it is not at all far-fetched to believe Christ's second coming is close. And there are signs which have not happened

yet which tell us that His return is not today. Let's look at these things.

1. The Last Days (the Church age) will have certain characteristics throughout

Mat 24:3-14 As he sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately, saying, "Tell us, when will these things be, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?"

False Christs and False Prophets

(4) And Jesus answered them, "See that no one leads you astray. (5) For many will come in my name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and they will lead many astray.

Wars Throughout this Age along with Cataclysms in Nature

(6) And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not alarmed, for this must take place, but the end is not yet. (7) For nation will rise against

nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and there will be famines and earthquakes in various places. (8) All these are but the beginning of the birth pains.

Hatred of Christ and His People - Persecution

(9) “Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and put you to death, and you will be hated by all nations for my name's sake.

Apostasy and Betrayal Even in the Visible Church

(10) And then many will fall away and betray one another and hate one another. (11) And many false prophets will arise and lead many astray.

Increased Lawlessness

(12) And because lawlessness will be increased, the love of many will grow cold. (13) But the one who endures to the end will be saved.

The Preaching of the Gospel

(14) And this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.

This then is what we can expect in this present age, in these Last Days.

But there are more specific signs which indicate that we will have entered the “last of the last days.” These are:

1. The Appearance of the Man of Lawlessness, the Antichrist

While the spirit of the Antichrist (Satan) is presently active all through the church age -

1Jn 2:18-19 Children, it is the last hour, and as you have heard that antichrist is coming, so now many antichrists have come. Therefore we know that it is the last hour. (19) They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us. But they went out, that it might become plain that they all are

not of us.

NOTE: Their primary arena of operation is within the visible church.

Nevertheless, THE Antichrist has not yet appeared and he must appear before Christ comes again.

2Th 2:3-9 Let no one deceive you in any way. For that day will not come, unless the rebellion comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, (4) who opposes and exalts himself against every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, proclaiming himself to be God. (5) Do you not remember that when I was still with you I told you these things? (6) And you know what is restraining him now so that he may be revealed in his time. (7) For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work. Only he who now restrains it will do so until he is out of the way. (8) And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will kill with the breath of

his mouth and bring to nothing by the appearance of his coming. (9) The coming of the lawless one is by the activity of Satan with all power and false signs and wonders,

There IS a one-world kingdom coming and it will be the achievement of the Antichrist with the permission of the Lord for a short time. Every little antichrist down through history has tried to establish a world kingdom, to rule all the nations. None have succeeded. They rise and they fall. BUT the Antichrist, this man of lawlessness, will establish that kingdom:

Rev 13:1-8 And I saw a beast rising out of the sea, with ten horns and seven heads, with ten diadems on its horns and blasphemous names on its heads. (2) And the beast that I saw was like a leopard; its feet were like a bear's, and its mouth was like a lion's mouth. And to it the dragon gave his power and his throne and great authority. (3) One of its heads seemed to have a mortal wound, but its

mortal wound was healed,
and the whole earth marveled as they followed the beast. (4) And they worshiped the dragon, for he had given his authority to the beast, and they worshiped the beast, saying, “Who is like the beast, and who can fight against it?”

(5) And the beast was given a mouth uttering haughty and blasphemous words, and it was allowed to exercise authority for forty-two months. (6) It opened its mouth to utter blasphemies against God, blaspheming his name and his dwelling, that is, those who dwell in heaven.

(7) Also it was allowed to make war on the saints and to conquer them. And authority was given it over every tribe and people and language and nation, (8) and all who dwell on earth will worship it, everyone whose name has not been written before the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who was slain.

Hatred of Christianity and Christians is on the increase, even in “Christian” nations like ours.

2. Globalism

Another sign then that indicates we are drawing closer and closer to these things is the increase of the Tower of Babel – that is, this ideology of *globalism*. No borders. A one world economy and currency. A one world religion. And if I am not mistaken, these things are on the increase rapidly.

3. Apostasy From the Truth

2Th 2:3 Let no one in any way deceive you, for it will not come unless the apostasy comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction,

There will be, as the time of Christ’s return comes near, this great apostasy in connection with the Antichrist. This is a falling away from the faith and it is committed by those who once claimed or who still claim to be Christians. We see it around us

today, but apparently this apostasy coming will be great. The Antichrist will set himself up to be worshipped and many if not most people who claim to be Christians will worship this false Christ. Rome certainly is characterized by this antichrist spirit, so much so that the Reformers believed that the Pope was the Antichrist.

4. Increased Lawlessness and Violence

Do we see this happening today around us? Of course. The Antichrist is characterized as the man of *lawlessness*. Satan is the lawless one and he promotes lawlessness. Along with it is an increase in violence, all of which we see happening today. This is the same thing that happened in Noah's day and resulted in the Flood which is a picture of the final judgment to come:

Gen 6:11-13 Now the earth was corrupt in the sight of God, and the earth was filled with violence. (12) And God looked on the earth, and behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted their

way upon the earth. (13) Then God said to Noah, "The end of all flesh has come before Me; for the earth is filled with violence because of them; and behold, I am about to destroy them with the earth.

There are, in other words, numbers of signs identified in Scripture which are signs of the last of the last days. As they increase, we can know that Christ is drawing near.

But whatever century human beings live in, all are warned to be ready to meet Christ. We are to live looking for Him and loving His appearance. Most people are not ready, and they will not be ready when He comes. Most people who pass out of this world now by dying were not ready to meet Him and they are in hell right now.

Most people are aware of these things. They sense that a Judgment Day is coming. But they put it out of their minds and refuse to leave their sins and this world to follow Christ. DON'T YOU BE ONE OF THEM. HE IS COMING, AND IT COULD BE TODAY.