**Developping a mind-set for the end times**

**Session Two – Knowing what is to come**

**1) Jesus commands us to watch for the signs of the End Times**

a) ‘Now learn this lesson from the fig-tree: as soon as its twigs become tender and its leaves come out, you know that summer is near. Even so, when you see all these things (signs of the end), you know that it is near, right at the door…. Therefore keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come”.

(Matt. 24, 32-42)

b) Jesus himself **commands us** 8 times in different places in the gospel to watch and be ready. His command is to watch for the signs and to prepare for what is to come. (Mt. 24:42; 25:13; Mk. 13:9, 33, 34, 35, 37; Lk. 21:36)

Jesus also told **3 Parables** about the need to watching and be ready for the end times. (Matt. 24, 32-35; Matt. 25, 1-13; Luke 12, 35-40)

Scripture also commands us to prepare and watch in at least two of the other books of the Bible (Rev. 16:15; 1 Thes. 5:6;).

c) There are over **150 chapters** in the Bible in which the **end times is the main subject.** There is almost twice as much material written about Jesus’ second coming than his first coming (89 chapters in the 4 gospels).

**2) We should expect all of the Bible’s prophecies to all be fulfilled**

a) The Bible gives 737 historical prophecies, covering subjects like the rise and fall of cities & empires, the outbreak of wars at home and abroad, even naming specific people who would be prominent in their generation long before they were born.

b) 593 of these have already come true (80%!). The remaining 144 (20%) prophecies relate to the end of the world, and are still future to us today. If 593 prophecies out of 593 have come true so far, there is no reason to believe that the future prophecies won’t come to pass.

c) Some people interpret all the prophetic events of the end times as symbolic, thinking that they won’t actually take place as described.

d) The Bible wasn’t written for clever theologians but for ordinary people. Much of it was written by ordinary people who just described in simple words what they saw or experienced.

e) Whilst it is true that there is some symbolism in the prophetic books, there isn’t as much as people imagine. Many of the symbols are explained in the text or in other passages of the scripture. The general rule is that scripture should be read at face value unless there is a reason to do otherwise.

f) The difficulty with end times prophecies is not that people can’t understand the symbols, but that people can’t believe that the things predicted will actually happen.

**3) The end times will be the time of the greatest troubles in history**

a) There will be an intensification and acceleration of the world’s troubles as the end draws nearer.

b) Around ¾ of the earth’s population will be killed in a short space of time. That’s over 120 times more destructive than the 2nd World war or 1000 times more destructive than COVID 19.

c) In the opening days of the tribulation period, ¼ of the world’s population will die by war, famine, plague and the wild beasts of the earth.

“They were given power over a quarter of the earth to kill by sword, famine and plague, and by the wild beasts of the earth” (Rev. 6:8)

d) There will be dramatic, angelic intervention in the world’s population, with 1/3 of mankind killed in just one event.

“The four angels…were released to kill a third of mankind”. (Rev. 9:15).

If you put those 2 events together, over half the population of the world will die. Based on today’s population figures, that’s 4 billion people, or 3.1 million per day throughout the 7 years of the tribulation period.

e) **We know that in the other cataclysmic events, many more millions will die**.

“hail and fire mixed with blood was hurled down on the earth. A third of the earth was burned up, a third of the trees were burned up, and all the green grass was burned up.” (Revelation 8, 7)

Losing 1/3 of the world’s crops and animals would have a huge impact of human life, not to mention those directly killed by the fire falling from the skies.

f) “Something like a huge mountain, all ablaze, was thrown into the sea. A third of the sea turned into blood, a third of the living creatures in the sea died, and a third of the ships were destroyed”. (Rev. 8, 8-9)

More than 3.5 billion people depend on the ocean for their primary source of food.

g) “a great star, blazing like a torch, fell from the sky on a third of the rivers and on the springs of water – the name of the star is Wormwood. A third of the waters turned bitter, and many people died from the waters that had become bitter.” (Rev. 8, 10-11)

h) Through the combination of these factors plus the persecution of the anti-christ, who will kill millions of Christians, the earth will become almost empty of people.

“The LORD makes the earth empty (of people)…. The land shall be entirely emptied. The inhabitants of the earth are burned, and few men are left. (Isa. 24:1-6).

The day of the LORD comes…to lay the land desolate; He will destroy its sinners from it..I will punish the world… I will make a mortal more rare than gold... (Isa. 13:9-12)

“If those days had not been cut short, no one would survive” (Matthew 24, 22).

4) **The world’s infra-structure, businesses and social structures will start falling apart.**

a) If COVID 19 had a huge impact on the welfare of the world, imagine what impact the events of the tribulation period will have, with damaged infra-structure, severe lack of resources, massive staff shortages, frequent power outages, global conflict and civil unrest.

b) One small example; By 2050, 35% of the world’s power will be generated by wind turbines.

“After this I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding back the four winds of the earth to prevent any wind from blowing on the land or on the sea or on any tree.” (Rev. 7, 1)

**5) There will be a great increase of wickedness and global insecurity, creating the climate in which the Antichrist can come to power**

a) The chaos, famine and insecurity will bring out the worst in most people causing a significant increase in wickedness

Both Jesus and Paul talked about “the increase of wickedness” in the end times. (Matt. 24, 12; 2 Tim. 3, 1-5)

b) The Antichrist will use the chaos and pain of those days to build a platform of power for himself. People will look to him as a Messiah to unite them and save them from their distress.

c) Once secure, he will start using his unprecedented political, military and economic power to seek to destroy those refuse to worship him. One of his titles in the Bible is the “Son of Destruction” (2 Thessalonians 2, 3) because he will kill so many individuals and war against many nations and cities.

d) The antichrist’s domination will be strengthened by a man that the Bible calls “The False Prophet”.

“He (False Prophet) performs great signs, so that he even makes fire come down from heaven… And he deceives those who dwell on the earth by those signs”

(Rev. 13, 13-14)

e) In the middle of the tribulation period, he will set “the abomination of desolation” in the Jerusalem temple. The Antichrist’s image will combine cutting edge technology and supernatural demonic elements that will cause the image to actually breathe and speak.

“(The false prophet) ordered them to set up an image in honour of the beast (antichrist). The (false prophet) was given power to give breath to the image of the first beast, so that the image could speak and cause all who refused to worship the image to be killed. “ (Rev. 13, 14-15)

f) The false prophet will force everyone to worship the antichrist.

**6) In the midst of the worst trouble, God will protect His people**

a) The plagues and the wrath of God are aimed at the antichrist and his followers, not believers. God will make a clear, visible distinction between those who know Jesus and those who don’t.

b) Even in the Great tribulation period, the word of God will be true for all those who believe it.

You will not fear the arrow that flies by day, nor the pestilence that stalks in the darkness. A thousand may fall at your side, ten thousand at your right hand, but it will not come near you. You will only observe with your eyes and see the punishment of the wicked.” (Psalm 91, 4-8).

c) **There will be supernatural protection for believers.** The book of revelation specifically tells us that “Goshen Principle” will apply to believers.

“I will set apart the land of Goshen, in which My people dwell, that no swarms of flies shall be there...I will make a difference between My people and your people”.

(Exod. 8:22-23. Rev. 9, 3-5)

d) **There will be supernatural provision for God’s people**.

 God will manifest His provision as He did in the Exodus.

As in the days when you came out of...Egypt, I will show them wonders. (Micah 7:15)

e) **Though many will be imprisoned and martyred for their faith, others will be miraculously protected.**

“The woman fled into the wilderness to a place prepared for her by God, where she might be taken care of for 1,260 days” (Rev 12, 6).

**7) God’s word will be heard like at no time in history**

a) Through the troubles, the plagues and signs that God sends, the earth will become full of the knowledge of the glory of the Lord.

“For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.” (Habakkuk 2, 14)

b) **God’s people will boldly proclaim God’s word like at no time in history.**

“In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy

c) **God will raise up the two witnesses**

I will appoint my two witnesses, and they will prophesy for 1,260 days, clothed in sackcloth.’  If anyone tries to harm them, fire comes from their mouths and devours their enemies” (Rev. 11, 3-5).