

## End Times – Lesson Three

So last week we started looking at the signs of Jesus' return and we only got to one, and that was false Christ's and Prophets – and it's interesting because one of the things I was talking about was false teachers in the church and I mentioned the Emergent or Progressive church – that was on Thursday, well one on of my podcasts that I listen to, Friday's podcast - you'll never guess what it was about? The Title "Progressive Christianity – Coming to a church near you." A progressive church in Nashville Tennessee – GracePointe Church, had caused a firestorm in a social media post where the pastor posted this... (Meme)

So, let's just quickly look at this and then we'll move on because I know some of you really want me to get to the lesson on the rapture before the rapture.

On one side is a column that says the Bible Isn't, and on the Other side is a column that says the Bible is. So let's look at these and see what we think – The Bible isn't

- The Word of God (human book, words about God, you might be inspired by something you read in it, but it's not inspired by God in its entirety. Although some might say it is inspired and then say it's inspired like JI Packer's knowing God or AW Tozer's Pursuit of God or something CS Lewis wrote. They re-define the term – remember we talked about that last week – Where progressives re-define terms – and a woman by the name of Hillary Ferare of Mama Bear Apologetics came up with a term for this – she calls this linguistic theft. She defines linguistic theft as "someone who purposely hijacks words, changes their definition, and then uses those same words as tools of propaganda." But look - (2 Tim 3:16-17 "16 All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, 17 that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work." All scripture is God breathed – or breathed

out by God, that comes from a single Greek word theopneustos which literally means “breath of God” or “inspired by God” theos is God and pneuma means spirit or breath. So we need to watch out for linguistic theft – really in everything today, but especially when dealing with false religions, false teachers, false prophets.

- Self-Interpreting - So what that phrase traditionally means – what we as Christians mean when we say that the Bible is self-interpreting is that we come to the Bible with the assumption that the primary author is God. It is divinely inspired – it was breathed out by God through these individual authors – and we know God isn’t confused, God does not lie, God does not make mistakes, so therefore His Word is not confused, His Word does not lie, His Word does not make mistakes. So, when we say that it’s self-interpreting, we know that if there’s a verse that’s maybe unclear about something we interpret that verse in light of other verses that are clearer. In other words – we don’t just read a Bible verse. Because we know that the Bible, even though written by many different unique individuals, speaks with one voice.
- Science Book – That’s true – although science is revealed in the Bible – it’s not a science book – that’s not the purpose of the Bible – the Bible was written to tell us who God is and what He has done. Not how or when He did those things. Often – when you are dealing with the lies of the enemies – He mixes truth in with the lies – because the best lies contain, at the very least a foundation of truth. When Adam and Eve sinned – Satan mixed truth in with lies – you won’t surely die – and they didn’t drop dead when they ate the forbidden fruit – but they died spiritually, and under the curse they did eventually die physically where they originally weren’t meant to.
- An Answer/Rule book – again – partially true – the purpose of the Bible, as I just said, is to tell us about who God is and what He’s done for us, it’s not to go to when we want to know how to get our

teenage son to do better in school. But at the same time, there are many answers in the Bible and there is a model of how we should live as children of God – but what that ultimately shows us is that we can't live up to God's standard – which is why we need a savior.

- Inerrant/Infallible – We've talked about this already, just now and in several other studies, yes there are copyist errors, we know that and we know where they are and 98% of them are misspellings, grammatical errors or something simple like that – and the other 2% - what that was trying to relay is either found elsewhere in the Bible or its unimportant – but the Gospel message, the main message of the Bible is inerrant and infallible. We have thousands and thousands of manuscripts so that we know that what we have is what was written – that we can compare through textual criticism.

Then it goes to what the Bible is

- A Product of Community – and here's that linguistic theft again – because it is, in the sense that a community of writers wrote the Bible, but that's not what progressives mean when they say that – what they mean is that whatever the community decides is the best meaning is what the Bible means – in other words – the truth of the Bible is relative and not absolute.
- A Library of Texts- true – it's not just one book – it's a library of 66 different books
- Multi-vocal – partially true – many different unique and individual authors with unique and individual personalities wrote the different books of the Bible – so when they say multi-vocal they mean multi human vocal - BUT – they were inspired by God and so throughout the Bible there is really one voice – God's.
- A Human Response to God – In his book “A new kind of Christianity” early emergent church leader Brian McLaren

compared the scriptures to fossils in layers of sediment – so in essence we need to dig out those fossils, dust them off, we need to analyze and understand what our spiritual ancestors believed about God in their times and places. But now, according to McLaren, we've come to a higher and wiser view of God so we can look back and decide if they got that part about God right or wrong. But that's not what Jesus believed – He quoted Scripture, When he went head to head with the pharisees or the Sadducees he would tell them – you've got it wrong – haven't you read your scriptures? When He was tempted in the wilderness by Satan – what did He do? He quoted Scripture.

- Last – that the Bible is Living and Dynamic. And we would agree – but in progressive circles this means that the interpretations will change, the meanings of the words will change in our modern context compared to when they were written. And of course, application will be a bit different, we face different things than they did in the first century and before – we're facing different obstacles – but the truths that are communicated in Scripture don't change. They are eternal.

So, as you can see – this is out there and it's growing – in non-denominational churches like ours and even in mainline denominations. Be alert – when you see things like this the alarm bells and red flags should be going off.

Anyway – that's why I spent an entire lesson on that topic and even the beginning of this one – because as we'll see later today – this isn't going away – it's going to get worse.

Let's talk about the other signs – how we'll know we're in the season when Jesus will return. And I want to tell you that these are signs that both will be prevalent before Jesus return leading up to the rapture – and even going into the tribulation period okay – and it will culminate with Jesus return. So we've had false Christ's and prophets (or teachers) –

And as we talk about these signs, many of them we can say – yes – they’ve been happening ever since Jesus was here the first time – even before that – But Jesus tells us, and this is found in Matthew 24:8, the end of Mark 13:8 that these signs will be as birth pangs. Ladies, what are birth pangs like? They start out – you feel it and they’re far apart, and then the closer it gets to the baby being born they get closer and closer together and more intense. So keep that in mind as we look at these signs. False Christ’s, teachers, apostles...

The next one is found in Matthew 24:6-7; Mark 13:7-8 and Luke 21:9-10 **Wars and Rumors of Wars, nation will rise up against nation and kingdom against kingdom.** And Jesus says “**See that you are not alarmed, for this must take place but the end is not yet.**”

Wars have always been a part of History. There have actually only been about 13 years of actual peace throughout recorded time but if you look at the pattern over time you see that there are more and more as time progresses, like Birth Pains. With the 20th and 21st Centuries being some of the most dangerous times. From Prehistoric times to 1AD there were approximately 65 wars (several thousand years). From 1 – 1500 AD there were 79 (1500 years), from 1501 – 1899 there were 427 (400 years), from 1900 to 2006 (106 years) there had been approximately 178 with 24 still active. By 2007 the number jumped to 228 (+50) – today there are 80 more for a total of 308 (121 years) there are 40 still active (almost double). And that’s only wars and armed conflicts – This doesn’t include rumors of war. If we break that down into ratio’s - .01, .05, 1.06, 2.13, 5.74

Matthew 24:7 continues with **There will be famines and earthquakes in various places.** Luke 21:11 adds **Pestilences.**

## **Famines**

Currently we are faced with severe drought and famine conditions throughout portions of Africa, India and Southeast Asia. Because of

severe drought, millions of acres of fertile, agricultural land have been transformed into a wasteland. Large quantities of topsoil are lost each year. Rainforests that provide valuable oxygen are disappearing. Our Ozone is being thinned and has holes in it due to pollution and climate change adds to the problem. To top it off, the World's population is booming and now we have, and we'll get to this in a minute – but Corona Virus compounds the situation.

## **Earthquakes**

I'm only going to deal with major earthquakes, because first, I don't have time to compile the data for minor earthquakes, plus they happen all the time – but In our century we have experienced an unparalleled increase in the frequency and intensity of “Killer” earthquakes that register 6.5 or higher on the Richter scale. The reported number of severe earthquakes between 1900 and 1970 totaled only 37. In the 70's there were 56 reported, in the 80's 74, the 90's 125 and from 2000 to 2009 there were actually more than 201 because from 2000-2007 I only had stats for magnitude 7 or higher. (I couldn't find statistics for 6.5's-6.9) and then this past decade it's doubled to about 505!

## **Pestilences**

In our generation through 2007, health officials had discovered more than 25 new infectious diseases for which there are no know cures or treatments. We have Sexually Transmitted Diseases that are rampant including the deadly Aids Virus, Ebola, West Nile Virus, Mad Cow Disease, Avian Bird Flu, and many more - plus many diseases of the past such as bubonic plague, small pox, diphtheria, yellow fever and malaria are reemerging as strains that are resistant to standard treatments. Diseases that were once thought wiped out like polio, measles and mumps are coming back and Then of course since then – Covid-19 which has essentially shut down the world.

## **Increased Persecution, Lawlessness & Hatred**

Mt 24:9-13

**<sup>9</sup>“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. <sup>10</sup> And then many will fall away and betray one another and hate one another. <sup>11</sup> And many false prophets will arise and lead many astray. <sup>12</sup> And because lawlessness will be increased, the love of many will grow cold. <sup>13</sup> But the one who endures to the end will be saved.”**

Let me ask you – are we seeing persecution today? Are we seeing our Christian values being threatened with cancel culture? With the increased venomous hatred and attacks of the LGBTQ+ community? With the increased hatred and vitriol from the pro-choice pro abortion community? This so called “Equality Act”, if this passes the Senate could be the start of the end for religious freedom in this country.

Mark 13:9

**“But be on your guard. For they will deliver you over to councils, and you will be beaten in synagogues, and you will stand before governors and kings for my sake, to bear witness before them.**

Mark 13:12–13

**12 And brother will deliver brother over to death, and the father his child, and children will rise against parents and have them put to death. 13 And you will be hated by all for my name’s sake. But the one who endures to the end will be saved.**

Luke 21:12

**But before all this they will lay their hands on you and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues and prisons, and you will be brought before kings and governors for my name’s sake.**

Luke 21:16

**You will be delivered up even by parents and brothers and relatives and friends, and some of you they will put to death.**

Now some of that will be happening during the tribulation itself – but can you see where we're heading?

How about Romans 1:18-31

Romans 1:18–31

**18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. 19 For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. 20 For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse. 21 For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. 22 Claiming to be wise, they became fools, 23 and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things. 24 Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves, 25 because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen. 26 For this reason God gave them up to dishonorable passions. For their women exchanged natural relations for those that are contrary to nature; 27 and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another, men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in themselves the due penalty for their error. 28 And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a**

**debased mind to do what ought not to be done. 29 They were filled with all manner of unrighteousness, evil, covetousness, malice. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, maliciousness. They are gossips, 30 slanderers, haters of God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, 31 foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless.**

I've mention this before – listen to 2 Timothy 3:1–8

**1 But understand this, that in the last days there will come times of difficulty. 2 For people will be lovers of self, lovers of money, proud, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, 3 heartless, unappeasable, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not loving good, 4 treacherous, reckless, swollen with conceit, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, 5 having the appearance of godliness, but denying its power. Avoid such people. 6 For among them are those who creep into households and capture weak women, burdened with sins and led astray by various passions, 7 always learning and never able to arrive at a knowledge of the truth. 8 Just as Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses, so these men also oppose the truth, men corrupted in mind and disqualified regarding the faith.**

I mean – we could talk about all of these – but this is a vivid and perfect description of the times we live in today.

Jesus said “As it was in the days of Noah – and as it was in the days of Lot” so will the coming of the son of Man be. Well what was it like in the days of Noah before God flooded the earth? Before God destroyed Sodom? People were living sinful lives - extreme wickedness – anti God – just like today.

## **Global Evangelism**

### **Mt 24:14**

**“<sup>14</sup> 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.”**

Currently Many TV and Radio Evangelists are on the air in Every single country in the world. Every year more than 300 million Bibles, New Testaments and Scripture portions are distributed throughout the world.

There is a growing number of “older” pastors being called into the ministry, and Christianity is growing. Statisticians in Switzerland recorded that in the 1940’s only 1 in 32 people claimed an affiliation with Christianity, In 1997 that number had grown to 1 in 10 and Megachurches were springing up all over the world. The evangelical church grew from only 41 million in 1934 to over 600 million in 2006.

It’s now starting to decline – but why is that? Because there will be a great apostacy or falling away – MT 24:9 **“and many will fall away”**

1 Timothy 4:1–2

**1 Now the Spirit expressly says that in later times some will depart from the faith by devoting themselves to deceitful spirits and teachings of demons, 2 through the insincerity of liars whose consciences are seared,**

2 Timothy 4:3–4

**3 For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, 4 and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths.**

## **Knowledge & Technology**

Daniel 12:4

**“But you, Daniel, shut up the words and seal the book, until the time of the end. Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase.”**

Nahum 2:4

**“<sup>4</sup> The chariots race madly through the streets; they rush to and fro through the squares; they gleam like torches; they dart like lightning.”**

### **Some important and essential things**

Verses 15-31 are talking about during the tribulation period itself so we'll come back to that another time but jumping down to Mt 24:32-34

**<sup>32</sup> “From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts out its leaves, you know that summer is near. <sup>33</sup> So also, when you see all these things, you know that he is near, at the very gates. <sup>34</sup> Truly, I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place.”**

Specifically verse 34, but we'll know that it's time, like the fig tree when it puts out its leaves we know summer is near – or hear in the north country of the US – when the buds start coming out in trees spring is near – vs 34 says that this generation will not pass away until **all** these things take place.

So the generation that sees Jesus return will be the one that sees all the signs occurring. And it was impossible for all the signs to have been seen prior to 1948, because Israel ceased to be a nation in 70AD. The fig tree was used as a metaphor in the Bible for Israel and so this is another clue – when you see the branch put out its leaves etc – well

Israel was reborn May 14, 1948 – then Jerusalem was brought back in under the flag of Israel in June 8, 1967 – and finally recognized as its capital once again just a few years ago by President Trump. Summer is near.

SO! Next week – we are going to talk about the Rapture!

Read

1 Cor 15:51-54

1 Th 4:13-17

1 Jn 4:4

2 Th 2:6-8

Mt 24: 40-44

Ge 7:1-5

There is actually a lot more but that will give you some things to be thinking about as we go into next week