

TOPIC: END TIMES 1

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SUMMARY OF MESSAGE

This week, 4 major things happened - red dust in Sydney, typhoon in Philippines, earthquake/tsunami in Samoa, earthquake in Padang, Sumatra and Iran's launching of the missile that has ability to reach Israel.

We are living in perilous and turbulent times but these are also exciting times. In this regard, we need to have a correct biblical worldview regarding such happenings. All of them are a result of the fallen-ness of man and have nothing to do with God.

Passage for reading: Matthew 24:4-14. There are 3 'ends' mentioned. The first 'end' is found in verse 6, the second in verse 13 and the last in verse 14. Verse 8 says famines, pestilences and earthquakes are the beginning of sorrows. It is like a mother giving birth. The contractions experienced will grow with greater intensity towards the time of birth. This is what we see happening now. Since 1948, everything has intensified in depth and breadth. We see believers being offended, marriages on the rocks, personality differences and clashes. Some, due to offenses, have left the church. We must not be like that but be unoffendable.

1 Cor 14:40. ' Let all things be done decently and in order. '

Our God is a God of order. We need to know the whole counsel of God from Genesis to Revelations. For believers rooted in scriptures and who walk in the Spirit for revelation and illumination, it would not be a surprise but for those walking otherwise, it would be and they would be asking questions, "Why God? Why this and that thing happened?" We need to understand God's dealings with 3 groups of people:

a) Israel as a Nation b) The Gentile nations c) The Church.

A) God's dealing with Israel as a Nation

Passage: Exodus 12:40-42. Here Moses was leading Israel out of Egypt, going out from her as a nation. Israel went to Egypt as a big family but came out after 430 years as a Nation.

B) God's dealing with the Gentiles

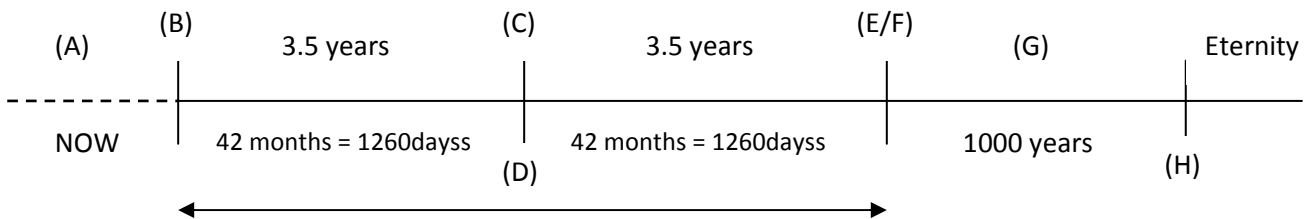
Passage: Acts 1:8, Luke 21:24

Luke 21:24 says, 'And Jerusalem will be trampled until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.' When will this be fulfilled? This would happen when all who call on Him will be saved. When all has added up, that's the end. It will be initially fulfilled at the rapture and then in the 7 years where the multitudes will be saved.

C. God's dealing with the Church

The church first comprised of Jewish believers. Today they are called the Messianic Jews. The vast Israelis however, remain hardened. In Acts 2, the Gentiles were added to the church. With the fall of the temple in AD 70, the Jewish believers were persecuted and scattered, carrying the gospel to the nations. In Romans 9 to 11, Israel will return to the Lord and all Israel will be saved, especially during the 7 years and in particular the last 3 and half years where their eyes will be opened to see Jesus as their Messiah. (See Romans 11:25-26)

God has established His time-table for Man on this earth. 37% of the Bible consists of prophetic scriptures. Look at the End Time-line:



(A): NOW = The Church Age

The church age comprises:

1. The Life and Ministry of the Lord Jesus
2. The Age of the Church from Pentecost to the Rapture.

70 weeks are determined for Israel. 69 weeks have been fulfilled. The 70th week (7 years) is suspended till the end times. (Daniel 9:24-27)

(B): The rapture for the saints

These are the overcomers.

The cycles and patterns of God's dealings give us an idea of His time-table. One big clue is found in the 7 feasts of Israel.

- 1) The Passover - 1 Cor 5:7 – Jesus as the Passover Lamb.
2. Unleavened Bread – John 6:35 – Jesus, the Bread that came down from heaven, without sin.
3. First Fruits – 1 Cor 15:20 – Jesus' resurrection.
4. Pentecost – Acts 2:1-4 – The Indwelling Holy Spirit
5. Trumpets – 1 Cor 15:51-55, 1 Thess 4:16-17 - This is what we are looking for.
6. Atonement – All Israel will be saved
7. Tabernacles – God dwelling with us for eternity.

Why this order?

- The law of Harvests & First Fruits
- The 14 stages of a Jewish wedding
- Not one rapture but several
- The difference between God's dealings with Israel, Gentiles and the Church.

What's the likely scenario? Senior Pastor's hypothesis is as follows:

Ezekiel 38-39 mention the battle of Gog and Magog. In the verses, we have the mention of 'prince' and 'king'. The 'prince' represents a principality, a demonic being. In the natural, there is also a king. Cross reference to Ezekiel 28, there is also the mention of the prince of Tyre (v2, 12).

Looking at the map, the places mentioned in Ezekiel 38 correspond to the nations today as follows:

OT Names

Today's Names

Persia	Iran
Cush	Ethiopia & Sudan
Put	Libya
Gomer	Region of South Turkey
Togarmah	Turkey
Meshech & Tubal	Moscow – Russian – East Turkey



Scenario: Radical extreme terrorists may launch their weapons of mass destruction on Israel. In retaliating, Israel may blow the up Damascus and the world will react against Israel. In the battle by Gog and Magog, God will intervene and save Israel. The stage of events will eventually trigger the Rapture for the saints. The Bride of Christ will be raptured and the Anti-Christ revealed. He will orchestrate the signing of a seven-year Peace treaty with Israel.

[C]: Mid 7 years

At mid of 7 years, the Anti-Christ will break the treaty with Israel and commit the abomination in the tabernacle. This will trigger the greater tribulation of the last 3 and half years.

Israel is today, all prepared to build the temple. There are a lot of theories regarding its exact location. It will be exactly at where the cross was located, at Mount Moriah. During the 7 years, otherwise also known as the Time of Jacob's Trouble, the 7 seals, 7 trumpets and 7 bowls will take place. One may note that there is a distinction between the wrath of Satan and the wrath of the Lamb.

This period of 7 years will see a movement, going from a lesser to a greater tribulation.

(D): Other things happening in heaven:

1. Judgment Seat of Christ. (2 Cor 5:10-11)
2. Marriage Supper of the Lamb (Rev 19:7), taking place after mid-tribulation.

(E): End of 7 Years

On earth, at end of 7 years, the battle of Armageddon takes place. An army of 200 million will cross over river Euphrates. God will intervene to save Israel again. See Zechariah 14:1-5. He will set His feet on Mount of Olives which will split into two, from east to west. Incidentally, the fault lines of Mt Olives have already been identified by geologists. With the split, the Mediterranean Sea will be connected to the Dead Sea. Zechariah:5 says, 'Thus the LORD my God will come, and all the saints with You.' This coming of Christ is the Second Advent.

What's the manner of the battle?

Read Zechariah 14:12-13 which likely paints the scenario of a chemical-nuclear war where eyes shall dissolve in the sockets and tongues dissolve in the mouths.

Revelation 19:11-19 gives us a picture of things happening in parallel.

11Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. **12**His eyes were like a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself. **13**He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God. **14**And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses. **15**Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. **16**And He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written: **KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.** **17**Then I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the birds that fly in the midst of heaven, "Come and gather together for the supper of the great God, **18**that you may eat the flesh of kings, the flesh of captains, the flesh of mighty men, the flesh of horses and of those who sit on them, and the flesh of all people, free and slave, both small and great." **19**And I saw the beast, the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him who sat on the horse and against His army.

The beast and the false prophet will be captured and cast alive into the lake of fire. (Rev 19: 20) At the end of 7 years, Satan will be bound and cast into the bottomless pit for 1000 years. Satan and his demonic hosts will have no direct influence on man during these 1000 years. Despite this, man will still rebel.

(G): The Millennium Kingdom

During the 1000 years, the saints will be reigning in the Millennium Kingdom with resurrected bodies. On earth, life goes on for those who survive the battle of Armageddon. Life span will be extended with people living a long time as in the days prior to Noah's flood. . Those who live on will still be exercising their human volition.

See Revelations 20:4-6. Reigning is a reward for overcomers, for the Bride of Christ. These who have a part in the first resurrection are blessed.

(H): Towards the end of the 1000 years

At end of 1000 years, Satan will be released and he will incite these people to rebel. (Rev 20:7-10) However, fire will come down from God and devour them. The devil will be cast into the lake of fire.

The great white throne judgment and other judgments will take place.

Rev 20:11

Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them.

The dead will be raised in this second resurrection and be judged. Death and Hades which are principalities, will be thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death. Anyone not found in the Book of Life will be cast into the lake of fire.

(I): Eternity

Read up Rev 21:1-5

The tabernacle of God will come down in the reconstructed earth. The geography of earth will be changed. God will dwell with man! He will wipe away every tear from our eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain for the former things have passed away. He will make all things new.

Isaiah 65:17

'For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; and the former shall not be remembered or come to mind.'

Conclusion

What is this all about?

Ephesians 5:15-18

'See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be unwise but understand what the will of the Lord is. And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation but be filled with the Spirit.'

If we know for a fact that God is coming back in 9 years' or 21 years' time, how will we change our life styles? There is the grace and also the severity of God.

1 Peter 4:7

'The end of all things is near; therefore be serious and discipline yourselves for the sake of your prayers. Above all, maintain constant love for one another, for love covers a multitude of sins. Be hospitable to one another without complaining. Like good stewards of the manifold grace of God, serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received. Whoever speaks must do so with the strength that God supplies, so that God may be glorified in all things through Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory and the power forever and ever. Amen.'

We may have different views regarding the manner of tribulation but the main thing is not to argue about whose view is right. We know these things will come to pass and hence, we need to redeem the time, to walk circumspectly and not to be foolish but be wise.

1. Do you think we are living in the last days? If why, why? If no, why not?

2. Given the prophetic elements of Scriptures, what is the purpose of God telling us in advance what's going to happen? How does knowing the future shape or affect the way we live today?

3. What kind of message do you get as you read about the events of the last days? Do you see it as

- His season
- the season of the greatest world evangelization ever to take place
- the season where the saints will overcome the devil
- the season where darkness will indeed pass away or...

Do you perceive the future with confusion and anxiety? Share your thoughts.

4. In the light of the end times, what kind of applications can you draw from Ephesians 5:15-18?

5. Share anything else that you might have gleaned from the message.

No condemnation, no comparison, no competition but only encouragement...