



BULLEEN BAPTIST CHURCH

Cnr Marcus & Thompsons Roads, LWR TEMPLESTOWE VIC 3107
03 9850 9633 / www.bulleenbaptist.org.au

SERIES : "THE LAST THINGS"

Study 8 : "How Then Should We Live?" - September 18, 2006

Notes by Rev. Gary Lockyer

INTRODUCTION : to the series

The "Last Things" is a Series on God's ultimate purposes for his people and his creation. The Series will pick up on the main themes through the Scriptures; themes which find their ultimate fulfilment when Jesus returns to the world. Then the whole of creation is renewed, his people are "clothed with immortality," and God reigns supreme.

INTRODUCTION : to Study 8

Today's Scripture Reading is the same as last week's plus an additional few verses - 2 Peter 3:10-14, below, with the theme of this Study underlined.

The day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare.

Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming.

... we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness. ... since you are looking forward to this, make every effort to be found spotless, blameless and at peace with him.

2Pt3:10-14

From last Week's Study we saw that the victory that Jesus won on the cross not only redeemed his people, but also the whole of creation (Rom8:19-23). When Jesus comes again, we will not only have our bodies transformed into those that are fit for eternity (1Cor15:35, 42-53; 1Th4:13-17) but, as this reference from 2 Peter indicates, we will be with the Lord forever on a renewed earth.

In light of this extraordinary event, the QUESTION, "What kind of people ought we be?" 2Pt3:11

In other words, what IMPLICATIONS does Jesus' Return have for us?

The ANSWER? : that we should live "holy and godly lives" (also 2Pt3:11)

A. OUR GENERAL RESPONSE ... to what God has done in Christ.

Notice the words "spotless and blameless" in 2Pt3:14? These are different words for the same concept - the "holy and godly" of verse 11. Paul has the same emphasis:

But you ... pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness ... I charge you to keep this command without spot or blame until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ. 1Th6:11-14

The same use of "without spot or blame" in connection with the Lord's Return is to be found also in 1Th3:13, 5:23, 1Cor1:8 and Php1:10

A COMMON THEME

Do we expect that there may be some unique response required of us in the light of Jesus Return? In fact the response is not NEW (or unique!)

Therefore, I urge you brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God ... Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind ... Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. Be devoted to one another ... honour one another ... keep your spiritual fervour, serving the Lord. Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. Share with God's people who are in need. Practice hospitality. Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn. Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited. Do not repay anyone evil for evil ... live at peace with everyone. from Rom12:1-18

Here we have the same concept of "living holy and godly lives", but FLESHED out.

Notice the MOTIVATION in verse 1 : "in view of God's mercy" - This verse is the "hinge" in Romans between Paul's teaching on the death of Christ & its ethical implications in our lives : "Therefore"

Peter and Paul encourage us to live "holy and godly lives" in response to the promised Return of Jesus. No need to explain what that meant because we already know from Romans 12 - and everywhere else in the NT where the ethical implications of following Jesus are explored.

How should we live in anticipation of Jesus' Return?

The same way that we are to live in response to his death for us.

In this sense, our response to Jesus coming again is : BUSINESS AS USUAL!

This is not to MAKE LIGHT of Christ's Return but to HIGHLIGHT consistent Christian living as the appropriate response to both the first and second comings of Jesus.

Think of it as our consistent response to God's "bookends of GRACE"

B. SPECIFIC RESPONSES ... in the light of Jesus' Return.

Don't WORRY, but TRUST : Jn14:1-3

"Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me ... I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me.

Don't WEAKEN or WAVER, but stand FIRM : 1Cor15:1-4, 58

Now, brothers, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. ... that Christ died for our sins ... that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day. ... stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labour in the Lord is not in vain.

Don't be IGNORANT, but be ENCOURAGED : 1Th4:13, 5:10-11

Brothers, we do not want you to be ignorant about those who fall asleep, or to grieve like the rest of men, who have no hope ... He died for us so that, whether we are awake or asleep, we may live together with him. Therefore encourage one another and build each other up.

C. IDENTIFYING THE "LAST DAYS"

What are we to make of statements from people that Jesus will definitely return in their lifetimes?

"I firmly expect to be alive when Jesus Christ comes back to earth." Pat Robertson
www.cbnindia.org/200Questions/article.php?topic=11

"Hear what the bible has to say about the time before Christ's Return : "In the last days difficult times will come." (2Tm3:1-4). This is a strong indictment of the era in which we live." Hal Lindsay, "The Late Great Planet Earth" (1972)

"Never in the history of the world until this twentieth century have these prophecies ... been fulfilled. ... Never ... have we known such conditions before ... hence we have another great sign of the End-Time actually in our midst." Oswald J. Smith "What Lies Ahead." (1948) p.17

Has not faith withered away among mankind? How many foolish things are seen among youth ... there have been hunger and plagues, violent movements of nations and signs ... predicted by the Lord. They have already been fulfilled and there is no other which remains, except the advent of the wicked one in the completion of the Roman kingdom. Ephraem The Syrian. c370AD

What do these authors have in common?

1. That Jesus gave a list of signs in Matthew 24:1-31 (Investigated in Study 11, October 15.)
2. That the phrase "Last Days" refers to a short period of time that precedes Jesus' Return.

Only 5 references : Acts 2:17; Heb1:2; 2Tm3:1; Jam5:3; 2 Ptr3:3. All refer to the Author & readers own time - explicitly (the first two), or in context (the last three). Same for related terms - "last times" (1Tm4:1 and 1Ptr1:20), "last hour" (1Jn2:18-19) and "end of the ages" (Heb9:26, 1Cor10:11) "

Without exception, "Last Days" and related terms designate the ENTIRE time span between Jesus' first and second comings. There is no Biblical authority for any other meaning! Therefore there are no signs of Jesus impending return. The "signs" people see are common to all eras - which is why they are always wrong.

Remember Jesus? *"No one knows..."* The Bible does not tell us everything there is to know, ("COMPLETE knowledge"), but everything we need to know ("SUFFICIENT Knowledge") so that in spite of our fears or circumstances, we have the assurance that "nothing is able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Rom8 : 39) The problem is not that the Bible are unclear in what they affirm. Rather, insatiable human curiosity wants to know the details in areas where God has chosen to remain silent.

Searching for signs? No. Rather "Business as usual" - living for Christ