

***“That Blessed Hope”
Eschatology Matters***

Introduction:

1. Last Sunday:
 - We Spent Some Time Introducing:
 - What Will Be Our Focus In Sunday School This Year:
 - “Eschatology” - Which Simply Means:
 - The Biblical Study Of:
 - The Last Things Or The End Times!
 - Its About Biblical Prophecy!
- One Of The Things:
 - That I Want To Review From Last Week:
 - Is How We Are To Approach:
 - This Kind Of Study:
 - Because - It Can Be A Very Difficult Thing!
 - **So - As We Go Forward:**
 - Remember That:
 - It Is OK For Christians:
 - To Debate These Things:
 - And Even To Disagree About Them:
 - As Long As We Are Driven Back To God’s Word!
 - It Is Never OK To Let:
 - The Study Of Eschatology To:
 - Lead To Division - Which All Too Often:
 - Then Leads To:
 - The Discouragement Of God’s People!
 - Because - God Meant For Us:
 - To Take “Comfort” In His Words:
 - About The Future!
- And - I Think This Will Be The Case For Us:
 - Through This Study:
 - If We Look At It Through The Lense Of:
 - **What Will Be Our Theme Verse:**
 - Titus 2:13 - “Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ!”
- After All - It Is Jesus Christ:
 - Who Is The “Essence Of Eschatology!”
 - His Return - To Earth!
 - His Reception - Of His People!
 - His Reign - Forever!
2. Well - This Morning:
 - I Want To Move On From:
 - The **What** Of Eschatology:
 - What It Is! To:
 - The **Why**:
 - That Is - Why Are We Doing This Study?
 - I Think That:
 - The English Puritan - Richard Sibbes Had It Right:
 - When He Wrote This:
 - **“God reserves the best for the last – and a Christian’s *last* is his *best*!** God will have it so, for the comfort of Christians, that every day they live, they may think, my best is to come, that every day they rise, they may think, I am nearer to heaven one day than I was before, I am nearer death, and therefore nearer to Christ. What a solace is this to a gracious heart! A Christian is a happy man in his life, but happier in his death, because then he goes to Christ, to be with Christ.”
- So - With This In Mind:
 - That “A Christian’s Last Is His Best!”

- I Think That We Will Find That:
 - The Study Of The End Times:
 - In Light Of Christ & His Return:
 - Is All About 7 Things!

*First - It Is About:

1. **Our Promises:**

- That We Find All Throughout The Bible!
 - Michael Vlach - Professor Of Theology - The Master's Seminary - Using Some Of His Outline Today:
 - "Eschatology Is A Major Part Of God's **Story!**"
 - And - What Does Any Good Story:
 - Have In It?
 - A Beginning!
 - A Middle!
 - An End!
 - So - We Find That The Story Of God's Plan For This World:
 - Includes The Past, Present & The Future!
 - And The Bible Addresses:
 - With All Three Parts:
 - In God's Story!
- And One Of The Exciting Things:
 - About Biblical Prophecy Is:
 - That We Find Promises Of The Past:
 - That Were Once:
 - Still In The **Future!**
 - In Other Words:
 - There Are Many Promises & Prophecies:
 - That Have Already Been Fulfilled!
 - Think About The Prophecies:
 - **That God Gave To Daniel - In Daniel 2:**
 - Through The Dreams Of King Nebuchadnezzar In Babylon:
 - About The Future Kingdoms Of This World!
 - Image - Head Of Gold - Chest & Arms Of Silver - Belly & Thighs Of Brass - Legs Of Iron - Feet Mixed With Iron & Clay!
 - Well - Some Of Those Kingdoms:
 - Have Already Come & Gone!
 - Like Babylon / Empire Of The Medes & Persians / Greece & Alexander The Great / Mighty Rome!
 - Yet - There Is Still More To Come:
 - In Those Prophecies!
 - And - Not Only Can This Help Us:
 - In Our Own Understanding Of Unfulfilled Prophecy:
 - But - It Should Also Increase Our Hope As Christians!
 - **Because - "Hope" Itself:**
 - Is A Forward-Looking Word!
 - Romans 8:24-25 - "For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? / But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it!"
 - And So - In The Study Of Biblical Prophecy:
 - We Focus On The Gracious Promises Of God:
 - For His People!
 - Because Whatever God Promises:
 - "He [Is] Able Also To Perform!" (Romans 4:21)

* Second - This Study Is About:

2. **Our Purpose:**

- That We Have As God's People & As The Church!
 - According To Acts 20:27 - Paul Wrote:

- “For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God!”
- Biblical Prophecy:
 - Is Part Of The “Whole **Counsel** Of God!”
 - And We Must Not Ignore It:
 - Just Because:
 - We May Not Fully Understand:
 - All That The Bible Says About The End Times!
- In Fact - At The Very Beginning:
 - Of The Last Book Of The Bible:
 - **In Revelation 1:3 - The Apostle John Wrote:**
 - “**Blessed** is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand!”
 - So - There Is A Special Blessing:
 - Reserved For Those who:
 - Read & Hear & Keep:
 - What Is Written In This Special Book Of Prophecy!
 - And - We Must Not Rob:
 - God’s People Of This Blessing!
 - It Is Our Purpose As A Church:
 - To “Declare” – “All The Counsel Of God!”

* Third - This Study Is About:

3. **Our Perplexity:**

- In Matters Of Eschatology!
 - One Reason We Are Going Through It This Year:
 - Is Because Its Interesting!
 - And - Its Challenging:
 - To Our Minds!
 - I Think Its Safe To Say:
 - That In Biblical Prophecy:
 - There Is More Meat In It:
 - Than Milk!
 - And Even Though:
 - We Should Continue To:
 - “Desire The Sincere Milk Of The Word, That [We] May Grow Thereby!”
 - Christians Still Need:
 - The Meat As Well!
 - And - The Meat Of Biblical Prophecy:
 - Will Help Us Do What We Are Told To Do:
 - **In 1 Peter 1:13 - “Gird Up The Loins Of Your **Mind!**”**
 - And Peter Specifically References:
 - The End Times & The Second Coming Of Christ - “Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ!”
 - It Is Good For God’s People:
 - To Exercise Our Minds:
 - With Biblical Truth:
 - And That Includes The Perplexities & Complexities Of:
 - Biblical Prophecy!

* Fourth - Our Study Will Be About:

4. **Our Preparation:**

- For That Great Event:
 - Of Biblical Prophecy:
 - The **Return** Of Jesus Christ!
 - His Second Coming!
- We Are To Be Prepared For:
 - **His Return!**

- This Is What Jesus Told His Disciples:
 - In Matthew 13:33-36 - "Take ye heed, **watch** and pray: for ye know not when the time is. / For the Son of man is as a man taking a far journey, who left his house, and gave authority to his servants, and to every man his work, and commanded the porter to watch. / Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cockcrowing, or in the morning: / Lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping!"
- Are You Preparing For The Return Of Christ:
 - By Watching & Praying?
 - My Desire Is That Through This Study:
 - We Will Do So More!
- In Matthew 25 - Jesus Gave Us:
 - His Parable Of The Ten Virgins:
 - For This Very Reason!
 - The 5 Wise Virgins:
 - Were Found Waiting For The Coming Of The Bridegroom:
 - "With [Their] Lamps All Trimmed And Bright!"
 - But - The 5 Foolish Virgins:
 - Had Not Enough Oil For Their Lamps!
 - So - When - 25:10 - "The bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut!" - And - "Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. / But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not. / Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh!"
 - We Need To Keep Preparing For:
 - The Coming Of The Lord!

* Fifth - Our Study Will Be About:

5. **Our Purification!**

- Even As The Apostle John Wrote:
 - In 1 John 3:2-3 - "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. / And every man that hath this **hope** in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure!"
 - This Purification Is Closely Related To:
 - Our Preparation:
 - For Christ's Return!
 - "Blessed be God for the prospect of a land of peace where sin and every sorrow will be excluded. There we shall have a day without cloud and without night. The sun shall go down no more, the voice of war shall be heard no more. The inhabitants shall feel pain no more, shall weep no more, shall go out no more. Then no more unsanctified, and therefore no more unsatisfied desires. Oh what a state of love, life, and joy when we see Jesus as He is! And by beholding Him we are changed into His image and made like Him. This day shall come. This day will come. This day approaches nearer every hour!" (John Newton)
 - **IE:** And We See From This That - The Future Ought To Impact The Present - In One Way - Like Children Quickly Cleaning Up The House - When They Know Their Parents Will Soon Be Home From A Trip!
 - But - For Believers - We Strive To Be Holy:
 - Not Primarily Out Of Fear:
 - But Out Of Love!
 - And - God Himself:
 - Helps & Enables Us:
 - To "Purify" Ourselves:
 - Through His Grace & Spirit!
 - So - Our Desire Should Be:
 - To Be More & More Holy:
 - As He Is Holy:
 - So That When We See Jesus:
 - In All Of His Glory:
 - There Will Be No Shame, Only Celebration!
 - Even As John Also Wrote:
 - In 1 John 2:28 - "And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have

confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming!”

- Are You Today - In Preparation:
 - For Christ's Return:
 - “Purifying [Yourself], Even As He Is Pure?”

* Sixth - Our Study Is For:

6. **Our Perspective!**

- **IE:** As People - We Constantly Need Reminders - Because We Constantly Forget Things! Whoever Invented Post-It Notes Was An Accidental Genius!

- Well - All Of The Points Of Prophecy:
 - That We Have In The Bible:
 - Serve As Spiritual Post-It Notes:
 - To Remind Us:
 - Of What Really Matters In Life!

- We See This In:

- 2 Peter 3:10-14 - “But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. / 11 Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, / 12 Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? / 13 Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. / 14 Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless!”

- We Live In A World:

- Full Of **Distractions!**
 - But - When You Keep:
 - The Coming Of The Lord:
 - In View - It Will Help You:
 - Stay The Course In Your Life For Christ!

- You Will See:

- People:
 - With Different Eyes!

- You Will Hold Your:

- Possessions:
 - With Different Hands!

- You Will Experience Your:

- Problems:
 - With A Different Attitude!

- And - This Is The Perspective:

- We Can Only Get:
 - When We Look At Things:
 - From The End View - When:
 - Jesus Himself Will “Make All Things New!” (Revelation 21:5)

* Seventh - Our Study Is For:

7. **Our Proclamation:**

- To This World - That Is Oblivious To The Truths:
 - Concerning The End Times!
 - But - Regardless Of What They Think:
 - We Still Have A Responsibility:

- **To Witness!**

- Not Just In What We Say:
 - But In How We Live:
 - In Light Of The Future!

- Even As Abraham & The Other Patriarchs:

- As Mentioned In:
 - Hebrews 11:13-16 - “These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and

confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. / 14 For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country. / 15 And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned. / 16 But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city!"

- We Witness To The World:
 - When We Look For And Live For:
 - "A Better Country" That Is Heavenly!
 - But - We Also Have A Responsibility:
- **To Warn!**
 - Like What We Read This Week:
 - In The Pilgrims Progress - When The Evangelist Handed The Pilgrim A Parchment Roll:
 - That Said - From Luke 3:7 - "Fly – Flee From The Wrath To Come!"

Conclusion:

1. So - This Is Why:
 - We Are Going To Study:
 - Eschatology This Year!
 - And May Each One Of These Reasons:
 - Be Fulfilled:
 - In Our Hearts!
2. Next Week:
 - Look At The Different Approaches:
 - To Study The End Times!

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