

Understanding the Times

Purpose: The study series is designed to give an overview of the interpretive approaches to understanding end times prophecy. It presents commonly held views discussing their strengths and weaknesses. The study will emphasise practical application to living out one's faith in anticipation of Christ's return. The topic will be presented from a Christian evangelical perspective.

Format: Teaching, small group discussion, and question and answer.

Duration: Ten 90 minute sessions

Activities and Assessment:

- Weekly reading of relevant Bible passages and relevant articles.
- Small group discussions to explore different theological positions and their implications.
- Final project: Students create a personal "End-Times Theology and Living" reflection paper, applying the lessons learned to their own faith journey.

Schedule:

- 5:45pm: Shared Dinner
- 6:30pm: Teaching, Small Group Discussion, Q&A
- 8:00pm: Conclude

Week 1: Introduction to Eschatology – Sunday 11th February

- Overview of eschatology and its importance in Christian theology.
- Different interpretive approaches: Preterist, Historicist, Futurist, and Idealist.
- Key biblical passages for each approach: Daniel 9, Matthew 24, Luke 21, Revelation 20.
- Application: Understanding the importance of studying end-times for spiritual growth and living with an eternal perspective.

Week 2: Historicist and Idealist Views – Sunday 18th February

- Exploration of Historicist and Idealist approaches.
- Historical context of prophecies and their symbolic interpretation.
- Key biblical passages: Revelation 13, Daniel 7.
- Application: Finding spiritual truths applicable throughout history.

Week 3: Post-Millennialism and Amillennialism – Sunday 25th February

- Overview of Post-Millennialism and Amillennialism.
- Understanding of the millennium as symbolic or future golden age.
- Key biblical passages: Revelation 20:1-10, Isaiah 65:17-25, Matthew 13:24-30.
- Application: Focus on the Kingdom of God as a present reality and its implications.

Week 4: Pre-Millennialism – Sunday 3rd March

- Introduction to Pre-Millennialism.
- Explanation of the rapture, tribulation, and millennium.

- Key biblical passages: Daniel 9:24-27, 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18, Revelation 7:9-17.
- Application: Living in anticipation of Christ's imminent return.

Week 5: Signs of the End-Times – Sunday 10th March

- Study of Jesus' teachings on signs of the end in Matthew 24 and Luke 21.
- Analysis of global events in light of biblical prophecies.
- Discussion on discerning the times without date-setting.
- Application: Living as watchful and discerning believers while trusting God's sovereignty.

Week 6: The Role of Israel – Sunday 17th March

- Examination of the role of Israel in end-times theology.
- Covenantal significance of Israel's restoration.
- Key passages: Romans 11, Ezekiel 37.
- Application: Understanding God's enduring plan for Israel and the Church.

Week 7: The Antichrist and Tribulation – Sunday 14^t March

- Study of the Antichrist figure and the Great Tribulation.
- Comparison of different views on the identity of the Antichrist.
- Key passages: 2 Thessalonians 2, Revelation 13.
- Application: Remaining steadfast in faith during times of trial.

Week 8: The Final Judgment – Sunday 7th April

- Exploration of the final judgment and resurrection.
- Understanding of the judgment of believers and non-believers.
- Key passages: Revelation 20:11-15, 1 Corinthians 3:10-15, 1 Corinthians 15:50-58.
- Application: Living with a sense of accountability and eternity in mind.

Week 9: New Heaven and New Earth – Sunday 14th April

- Study of the new creation and eternal state.
- Comparison of various interpretations of the new heaven and new earth.
- Key passages: Revelation 21, 2 Peter 3:10-13.
- Application: Hope in the promise of God's restoration and renewal.

Week 10: Living in Light of End-Times – Sunday 21st April

- Practical application of end-times theology to daily living: urgency, hope, and preparedness.
- Discussion on how studying end-times impacts faith, evangelism, and relationships.
- Discuss ethical implications, social justice, and environmental responsibility.
- Examine passages: Matthew 25:31-46, Titus 2:11-15.
- Application: Engage in acts of compassion, justice, and evangelism motivated by the ultimate hope.