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WHAT'S HAPPENING IN THE END TIMES?

Session 1: Keeping the Big Picture in Mind

I. Keeping a Big Picture Mindset

The chief end of man is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever.

It's all about Him, His plan and His glory.

- A. It's absolutely vital that we keep a big picture focus as we study the End Times. When we lose this focus, we tend to put ourselves at the center of the focus, glorifying ourselves rather than God.

There are four blind men who discover an elephant. Since the men have never encountered an elephant, they grope about, seeking to understand and describe this new phenomenon. One grasps the trunk and concludes it is a snake. Another explores one of the elephant's legs and describes it as a tree. A third finds the elephant's tail and announces that it is a rope. And the fourth blind man, after discovering the elephant's side, concludes that it is, after all, a wall.

Each in his blindness is describing the same thing: an elephant. Yet each describes the same thing in a radically different way.

How does this apply to us?

B. Levites

We have to work together towards our common goal:

We are the staff for 2017. We are brothers and sisters in Christ. We have to pay attention to the needs of each other as well as counselors and kids. Separately we may come to false conclusions, like the blind men, that our goal is to make kids obey, make sure our area is functioning without paying attention to other areas, have as much fun as possible, or meet my own needs at the expense of others.

But our real goal is far different: fun with kids and planting the seed of the Gospel

C. End Times

We have to keep our eyes on the goal: glorifying God and finding our joy in God.

If you focus on one area of eschatology, you are prone to become blind to other areas and lose sight of God's glory in His plan. If you lose sight of the End Times as God's plan then you will put yourself in the center of the story instead of God's glory.

II. 1 Peter 1:1-2 (EXILED FOR A PURPOSE)

- A. Elect exiles - God's chosen people
- B. According to foreknowledge - exile/hard times come to us all
- C. In sanctification of the spirit - when seen and lived correctly it leads to growth in holiness
- D. For obedience to Christ and His unique/narrow salvation - exiled because of radical life

III. 1 Peter 1:3-5 (BLESSED BE GOD, OUR HOPE)

- A. Blessed be God, Father of Jesus! - Exclamation
- B. His great mercy - we are born again - to a living hope - through Jesus' resurrection
 - 1. This means God delights to give us hope, we who had no hope, through the death of His Son
- C. Our inheritance is holiness in Christ - partial now to us but full to God now
 - 1. Our inheritance without Christ is perishable, defiled, fading
- D. God's power guards us through our faith in the unseen dimension of our salvation
 - 1. We will what God sees when Jesus returns
 - 2. What's Actually Happening in God's End Time Plan?
A lot! The End Times is much more than a rapture of the church and a meek and mild Jesus returning to rule and reign on earth.
 - a) Signs of the Times (Mt. 24)
 - b) Rebuilding David's Fallen Tent/Tabernacle (Amos 9/Acts 15)
 - c) Holy Spirit (Joel 2/Acts 2)
 - d) Jesus Receives the Scroll and Opens the Seals (Revelation 5-6)
 - e) The Great Tribulation (Martyrdom, Antichrist, False Prophet, Judgements)
 - f) Jesus' Second Coming
 - g) 2 Great Suppers (Dead Rebels and the Marriage Supper of the Lamb)
 - h) Millennial Reign
 - i) Release, Rebellion and the Great White Throne Judgement
 - j) New Heaven & New Earth

IV. 1 Peter 1:6-7 (TRIALS = PRAISE)

- A. Rejoice in necessary trials that reveal and produce genuine faith that is precious to God
- B. The result of trials that lead to genuine faith = praise, honor and glory to God in Jesus
 - 1. We see this in the book of Job

V. 1 Peter 1:8-9 (BLIND FAITH)

- A. God is glorified in our trust/faith/love/belief though we have not seen Him
- B. Outcome of faith is salvation

VI. 1 Peter 1:10-12 (BIG PICTURE)

- A. Salvation through faith in Christ was prophesied in the OT

- B. The prophets labored to live righteous and allow Christ's spirit to reveal through them the good news for NT believers that the Angels even long to look into

VII. 1 Peter 1:13-21 (LIVING HOLY)

- A. Prepare for action and be sober-minded/focus/count the cost with vision and knowledge of the full grace of God's holiness in you
- B. Be obedient as trusting children - don't be conformed to your previous, ignorant (fleshly) desires but be holy as the One who saved you is holy
- C. Our hope is in the God who judges impartially - so live with respect that He sees Christ when He looks at you
- D. We were ransomed from our futile/sinful ways by the precious/imperishable blood of Christ, chosen before the foundation of the world to be manifest in these last days for the sake of redemption of all who believe unto the glory of God

VIII. 1 Peter 1:22-25 (THE SUPREMACY OF GOD'S WORD)

- A. Our obedience to the truth (God's Word) purifies our faith and leads us to live in brotherly love
- B. This is not natural but comes from a pure, born again heart that abides in the living Word of God
- C. Flesh fades but the Word of God remains forever