

ARE WE SEEING SIGNS OF THE END TIMES?

It's Important to Understand the Times so We Know What to Do

"...from Issachar, men who understood the times and knew what Israel should do..."
– 1 Chronicles 12:32 (NIV)

The vision you have is irrelevant if you don't know the season or times you are in. Understanding the times comes first-- You don't know what to do until you understand the times you are in.

Ask yourself the question: Am I leading in ways that don't match the seasons?

During the End Times, We Will See Two Main Shifts Happen in Culture:

1. Increase of Wickedness
2. Increase of the Advancement of the Gospel
 - a. Technology today is advancing the Gospel at an impressive rate
 - b. We are living in a harvest generation**
 - i. In 1970 there were 1.2 billion Christians, and in 2020 there were 2.6 billion Christians.¹
 1. More people have come to Christ in the last 50 year than in the previous 1,970 years combined.
 - ii. In the 193 sovereign nations of the world, the Church is growing faster than population in 176 of them. There are 17 that are not experiencing rapid growth: 5 are in decline and 12 are in stasis. America is one of the 12 where the gospel is not declining, but we are not growing either.

What Do We Do with the Season We Are In?

1. Don't Be Afraid

"When these things begin to take place, stand up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near." – Luke 21:28 (NIV)

It's not a horror story, it's a love story. Jesus is coming back to be with us.

¹ <https://www.gordonconwell.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/13/2019/04/2ChristianityinitsGlobalContext.pdf>

2. We Need to Respond to the Decline of Culture

How do we be in the culture but not OF the culture and not miss the opportunities that are in the Church right now?

Because of the Church, we see an impact in the world around us. Every place the Gospel advances, we see people coming out of extreme poverty.

- In 1990, **52%** of the world was considered to be in extreme poverty.
- In 2017 only **16%** of the world was in extreme poverty.
- Currently in 2022, only **9.2%** of the world is in extreme poverty. ²

Almost 100% of the decline in extreme poverty is found in newly Christianized countries.

90% of the remaining extreme poverty that still exists is found in the regions of the world where there are no local churches, missionaries, or Bibles.

In 1885, there was only **1 church planting movement** in the Muslim world.

Between 1980 and 2000 there were **11 church planting movements** in the Muslim world.

From 2000 to 2012 there were **69 church planting movements** in the Muslim world. ³

- This is why we are seeing a radical conversion to Christianity in these regions of the world.

Are These the Last Days?

Everyone is currently living in the only days that they have.

If you would change what you were doing if you knew we were in the End Days, go ahead and make that change now!

“But 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 done 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 ¹² as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming. That day will bring about the destruction of the heavens by fire, and the elements will melt in the heat.” - 2 Peter 3:10-12 (NIV)

² <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/poverty>

³ <https://www.onechallenge.org/2020/09/29/movements-toward-christ/>

What Kind of People Ought We to Be?

1. We Must **Live Holy**
2. We Must **Look Forward to the Day of God**
3. We Must **Participate in Speeding Its Coming**
 - a. You can play a role in when the Lord returns.
 - b. Jesus is ready to be wed to His Bride, the Church.
 - c. *“The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead, he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.” – 2 Peter 3:9 (NIV)*
 - d. **How Do We Do This?**
 - i. We get the one more that He is constantly longing for.

We Need to Follow God, Not Culture.

- Culture is beginning to have its affect not just on the world, but on the Church too
- We must grapple with how much of the secular we will allow in our lives

We must balance grace and truth

- Truth without grace is mean.
- Grace without truth is meaningless.
- Grace and truth together are good medicine.

“Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord’s will is.” – Ephesians 5:15-17

If you understood the days we are in, you would realize there are massive opportunities for the advancement of the Gospel.

What We Invest into at Church of the Highlands:

1. Building Projects
2. Next Generation (Highlands College)
3. Local Missions (Your City)
 - a. Prison Ministry, Dream Centers, etc.
4. National Missions (Your Nation)
 - a. Church planting and leadership development (ARC and Highlands Resources)
5. Global Missions
 - a. One of our main focuses is [Illuminations Bible Project](#)
 - b. We could be the generation that gets the Bible into the hands of every language by 2035.

PODCAST RESOURCES

- [Second Coming Message Series](#)
- [Illuminations Bible Project](#)

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- [GrowLeader Regionals](#)
- [Monthly Mentoring with Pastor Chris](#)
- [GrowLeader Conference 2023](#)
- [The Wesleyan Investment Foundation](#)
- [GAC Family Network](#)
- [Compassion International](#)
- [Previous Episodes](#)
- [Show Notes](#)
- [Free Church Resources](#)
- [Highlands College](#)