Part 1 – Scoffers and Doctrines of Demons

Part 1 will lay the groundwork for loving the truth and overcoming the scoffing and mocking stemming from eschatological errors. I will also debunk Preterism and the Seven-Mountain Mandate, which are becoming increasingly popular in the Charismatic Church.

1 – Loving the Truth

Peter gave a sobering warning about the end of the age. He said, "Know this first of all, that in the last days mockers will come with their mocking, following after their own lusts, and saying, 'Where is the promise of His coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all continues just as it was from the beginning of creation'" (2 Pet. 3:3-4).

If you examine the context closely, these mockers and scoffers arise *within* the church—not from the world. How do we know? Because they claim the church fathers as *their* fathers, and later, we see they distort the Scriptures (Pet. 3:16).

What does this mocking and scoffing sound like? Here's an example from Kris Vallotton, a leader at Bethel, in Redding, California. On his blog, Kris lists his eight eschatological core values.¹ After each statement, I will provide my comments in italics. Keep in mind Kris believes most of the prophecies of Matthew 24 and the book of Revelation have already been fulfilled.

1. I will not embrace an end-time worldview that re-empowers a disempowered devil.

This is a subtle jab at Futurists—those who believe in a future fulfillment of Matthew 24 and the book of Revelation. Based on this statement, Futurists are somehow giving the devil power he was stripped of at the cross. Since Futurists believe the devil will be cast to earth and will rage against the nations for 3.5 years, we are supposedly re-empowering the devil who has already been defeated.

2. I will not accept an eschatology that takes away my children's future, and creates mindsets that undermine the mentality of leaving a legacy.

Just because some Futurists are negative and pessimistic about the future, have run to the hills waiting for the rapture, and have abdicated their responsibility to plan for a successful and blessed future, doesn't mean the majority have. As a Futurist, I am both watching for the signs pointing to Jesus' return and preparing for a blessed future.

3. I will not tolerate any theology that sabotages the clear command of Jesus to make disciples of all nations and the Lord's Prayer that earth would be like heaven.

Just because some Futurists have abandoned their missional calling to disciple nations as they wait to be raptured away, doesn't mean the majority have. Many Futurists have surrendered their lives to make disciples in the nations. I am a Futurist and help run a missions organization that has trained thousands of pastors in Africa.

4. I will not allow any interpretation of the scriptures that destroys hope for the nations and undermines our command to restore ruined cities.

As a Futurist, I believe the end times will be the best of times and the worst of times at the same time. I believe we will witness the greatest outpouring of the Spirit, even surpassing the book of Acts. I also believe we will witness God's ultimate intention fulfilled as the church experiences her finest hour. But I also believe the end times will be the most challenging time in history.

5. I will not embrace an eschatology that changes the nature of a good God.

According to this statement, Futurists change the nature of God's goodness because they believe Jesus will release judgments upon the world during the last 3.5 years of this age. As a Futurist, I believe in both God's kindness and His severity; His incredible love and His fearful judgments; His indescribable goodness and His fierce wrath.

6. I refuse to embrace any mindset that celebrates bad news as a sign of the times and a necessary requirement for the return of Jesus.

As a Futurist, I have never celebrated bad news as a sign of the times. I grieve over bad news just like most. I don't rejoice in wars, famines, pestilence, or earthquakes. I honestly don't think many

Futurists do. I know these are necessary requirements for Jesus' return, but I certainly don't take any pleasure in destruction.

7. I am opposed to any doctrinal position that pushes the promises of God into a time zone that can't be obtained in my generation and therefore takes away any responsibility I have to believe God for them in my lifetime.

As a Futurist, there are obviously some promises that will not be realized in this age. These will only be fulfilled when the God-Man, Christ Jesus, returns and reigns over the nations from Jerusalem. However, I do believe in a last-days outpouring of the Spirit, which will surpass the book of Acts. I will explain why in a later session, but this outpouring of the Spirit will be experienced all over the world, marked by great signs in the heavens and miraculous signs on the earth (Joel 2:28-31).

8. I don't believe that the last days are a time of judgment, nor do I believe God gave the church the right to call for wrath for sinful cities. There is a day of judgment in which GOD will judge man, not us.

As a Futurist, I strongly disagree the last days will be free from God's judgments. Jesus said His return would be just like the days of Noah. As you know, the days of Noah resulted in a worldwide flood that destroyed most of the world. Furthermore, in Revelation 6-19, we see Jesus releasing seal, trumpet, and bowl judgments. I do agree God will judge the nations, not man. I also agree the church is not called to release wrath on sinful cities. That's obviously the Lord's job, not ours.

In summary, there is an obvious tone of scoffing and mocking toward Futurists in these statements. If time permitted, I could list several more examples from other leaders. Nevertheless, as I will explain in a minute, this type of scoffing stems from how the prophetic Scriptures are interpreted.

The Source of Scoffing

Over the past 10 years, the mocking and scoffing within the church toward Futurists has definitely increased. Peter said it stems from distorting prophetic scriptures. Let me explain.

Peter said, "The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance. . . . regard the patience of our Lord as salvation; just as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given him, wrote to you" (2 Pet. 3:9,15). Notice that Peter brought Paul's teachings into the picture. What teachings did Peter reference? One verse later, we find the answer. Peter said that Paul spoke "in them of these things" (2 Pet. 3:16). "In them" refers to Paul's epistles and "of these things" corresponds to Peter's emphasis in the chapter. Namely, the end times and the events surrounding the Lord's return. For all who have read Paul's epistles, you know Paul talked often about the coming of the Lord and the end of the age.

Next, Peter confirmed what we all realize. End-time teachings are sometimes "hard to understand" (2 Pet. 3:16). I think we would all agree, right? Who would disagree that the harlot and the beast who carries her in Revelation 17-18 is mysterious, complicated, and hard to grasp? Because of the complexity of eschatology, notice carefully, "the untaught and unstable distort, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures [not related to the end times], to their own destruction" (2 Pet. 3:16, emphasis mine).

Did you catch that? The *untaught*—those who have not been trained in eschatology—distort eschatology. This is the primary reason why there is so much confusion and controversy when it comes to understanding the end times. The *untaught* are teaching what they haven't been trained to teach. No wonder they are spreading lies and deception in the body of Christ. They are confidently asserting cherry-picked Bible verses that seem to support their theology while ignoring multitudes of other Scriptures contradicting what they teach.

In short, the mocking, scoffing spirit spreading within the church, especially the Charismatic church so eager for revival and city transformation, is the result of distorted teachings about the end times.

With this in mind, listen carefully to the warning from a true apostle. Peter said, "You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, be on your guard so that you are not carried away by the error of unprincipled men and fall from your own steadfastness" (2 Pet. 3:17). Why is studying the end times important? Because if we aren't grounded in the truth, we can easily be "carried away by the error" and "fall from [our] own

steadfastness." Thus, studying the truth about the end times keeps us from falling away from the faith and helps us maintain our devotion to Jesus Christ.

Preparing Our Hearts for Truth

This class is a journey to understanding the end times. For us to embrace end-time truths from Scripture, *trust me*. . . you will undoubtedly have to unlearn many things you have been taught. This has definitely been the case for me.

Twenty-five-plus years into my study of the end times, I now realize many things I believed for years are not true. They are not clearly taught in Scripture. I just blindly accepted them as the truth without close examination.

From my experience and journey, I want to share six things that will help prepare your heart to receive the truth. I encourage you to plant these truths deep into your heart. You will need these later as we seek after the truth about whether or not Matthew 24 and the book of Revelation have been fulfilled; whether the nations will be conquered and Christianized by a great revival prior to Christ's return; Israel's role in the end times; the final worldwide empire that will give rise to the antichrist; and the timing of the rapture.

That said, here are six things that will help prepare your heart to receive the truth.

1. Love the truth.

A deep love for the truth is the only safeguard against deception. Speaking about the end times, Paul said those who don't "love . . . the truth" will be deceived by "a deluding influence" to "believe what is false" (2 Thess. 2:10-11). The most sobering part of this statement is "God will send upon them a deluding influence so that they will believe what is false" (2 Thess. 2:11).

Our good God of love, mercy, and grace—not the evil devil of hate, rage, condemnation, and destruction—will send a deluding influence upon those who don't love the truth. This is sobering. But it shows us how much the Lord values the love of the truth.

As we prepare to learn about the end times, pause for a moment and ask the Lord to give you a deep love for the truth. A love for the truth that creates hunger, passion, and a quest for the uncompromised reality of what Scripture teaches.

2. Love the truth more than your favorite minister, ministry, or movement.

I can't tell you how often this has burned me. In the past, perhaps because of insecurity or not wanting to walk alone, I embraced teachings not consistent with Scripture. This included teachings related to the rapture, Israel, and other end-time teachings.

At times, it was because I was impressed by an eloquent and intelligent teacher with a large influence. I thought *this has to be true because this teacher is smart, a great communicator, and he has a worldwide following.* At other times, I was enamored by a prophetic minister's revelation and encounters, so I concluded *this must be true because they are hearing so clearly from the Lord*.

Wanting to belong to something bigger than myself, I embraced unbiblical ideas simply out of a desire to be identified with a larger movement or ministry. Though longing to be connected to something bigger than ourselves is a God-given desire, we have to discern who we connect with, prizing truth above unity.

This is especially true about the end times. I can't tell you how often a smart, well-versed, eloquent communicator twists the Scriptures, cherry-picking them from their original context to fit their already determined theology. Then, those who listen to their teaching, think to themselves *this has to be true because he is so smart, knows the Word of God so well, and is famous. Who am I to question this?* This has happened to me several times. And I assure you this takes place often in the body of Christ today.

We can't exchange the truth for a lie simply because our favorite teacher, preacher, ministry, or movement promotes something contrary to Scripture. We have to search for, study, and embrace the truth for ourselves. We can't just accept a teaching because someone famous says it is true and uses a handful of verses to support their conclusions.

Before going further, let me ask you an honest question. Are you more committed to a prominent leader, a growing movement, or to a charismatic personality than the clear teaching of Scripture?

As we deconstruct the false teaching spreading in the Charismatic church, my hunch is you will likely have a spiritual hero who embraces and promotes false end-time teachings. Will you believe what they teach just because you like them or have been blessed by their ministry? Will you hold to it because you identify with their movement or denomination? Or will you carefully examine the teaching in light of Scripture and hold fast to the truth? Will you love the truth more than you love being part of a movement that seems to have God's favor and anointing on it?

In my pursuit of understanding the end times, I have definitely had to prioritize truth above some of my spiritual heroes' teachings. I have had to prize truth above my favorite denominations and movements. For me, clinging to the truth revealed in Scripture trumps fitting in with popular ministries and influencers.

3. Loving the truth is more important than unity.

In my thirty years of wholeheartedly following Christ, there is nothing more precious to me than organic unity. When brothers and sisters in the Lord fellowship together around the person of Christ and the truth revealed in the Word of God, there's nothing quite like it. You can sense the joy of heaven and the presence of Christ coming into these precious moments.

Paul called it the "unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Eph. 4:3). David said, "How good and how pleasant it is for brothers to dwell together in unity" (Ps. 133:1). There's nothing sweeter than eating and fellowshipping with other Christ followers who are pursuing the Lord and the truth in Jesus wholeheartedly.

Before His crucifixion, Jesus earnestly prayed that we would all be one, just as He and the Father are one (John 17:21). I'm convinced this will be fulfilled before the Lord returns and I can't wait to see it. I want to be right at the center of it.

As much as I love how the Spirit creates organic unity, I must warn you. There is a false unity movement presently at work in the church. This false unity movement will increase in the days ahead, ultimately leading to *many* in the church playing the harlot with the Babylonian one-world religion (Rev. 17-18). I will describe this in more detail later.

The powers of darkness are crafty and strategic. They know the Lord will unify the church around Christ and the uncompromised Word of God. But if we aren't discerning, demonic powers will manipulate our love and compassion for one another and other movements and denominations into a false unity, where we compromise the truth in God's Word. The devil and his dark angels will subtly guilt us into unity, heaping condemnation upon us for not working together with others who believe different than we do. Underneath such a noble aspiration for unity is a crafty deception, leading to adulterating the Word of God.

This is already happening in an increasing way in the church. *Many* have already adopted the mantra that unity is more important than doctrine. Unity is more important than agreeing on the truth in God's Word. Now, I am not saying we have to agree perfectly with everyone before we can have the oneness Jesus prayed for. I don't expect that to happen this side of eternity. At the same time, there are certain truths that can't be abandoned for the sake of unity.

There are three doctrines of demons I will quickly mention here. These should never be embraced or compromised for the sake of unity. These are: Universalism (all religions lead to salvation), hyper-grace (taking God's grace to an unbiblical extreme), and Preterism (the teaching that all or most of the prophetic Scriptures were fulfilled in 70 A.D.). As I'll explain in a later session, these three false doctrines, which I consider to be doctrines of demons, will cause *many* in the church to fornicate with harlot Babylon before Christ returns.

Undoubtedly, some will question why I included Preterism with these other two doctrines. Hopefully this will become clear in the next session. For now, I want to encourage you to make alliances carefully. Be prayerful and discerning about who you listen to, where you go to church, and who you allow to influence your thinking. Be on guard against the fear of deception and the subtleness of deception. Never compromise truth for unity. This is never God's pathway to making us one.

If you want to follow Christ and the truth as it is found in Jesus, there are times when you will have to come outside the camp of popular Christian movements and ministries. There are times when you will have to walk alone down the narrow path leading to life. As you embrace this reality, beware of the Elijah mentality, thinking you are the only one walking the straight and narrow way. Just as in the days of Elijah, when the Lord told him 7,000 haven't bowed the knee to Baal, the Lord has a remnant today.

Hebrews 13:13-14 states, "Let us go out to Him outside the camp, bearing His reproach. For here we do not have a lasting city, but we are seeking the city which is to come." If our hearts are set upon the heavenly Jerusalem, the bridal city Jesus is preparing for His bride, there will be many times we have to come outside the camp of mainstream Christianity to seek the Lord in the wilderness. This is especially true about discovering the truth about the end times. Will you come outside the camp of what is popular, trendy, and influential to seek Jesus and His truth? If we refuse to come outside the camp, we could easily embrace

popular end-time teachings laced with error, unaware we are believing a lie. Are you willing to walk alone, if necessary, to believe the uncompromised truth of Scripture?

4. Study prophetic scriptures for yourself with a humble, teachable heart.

Let me share with you a common experience related to eschatology. I have seen this error repeated numerous times. A gifted teacher will come across a few handpicked Scriptures that seem to teach a certain truth about the rapture, the antichrist, the kingdom of God, or some other end-time teaching. They will write books about it, create videos on it, and become somewhat famous by their new teaching. Even if someone comes along and destroys their theory by the clear teaching of Scripture, it is almost impossible for these teachers to abandon their false teaching. By now, it has become their identity, a major source of income, and it has made them popular.

As you seek to understand the end times, beware of the hidden agendas and motives behind teachers who purport certain doctrines. Don't just gullibly accept what they say. Examine everything carefully. Be like the believers at Berea, who were "noble-minded," "received the word with great eagerness," and who examined "the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so" (Acts 17:11).

Please don't automatically accept what anyone says as absolute truth, including me! Examine it thoroughly in the Scripture yourself. At the same time, please don't reject what I teach in this class or another teaches just because your favorite teacher or movement taught something contrary. Each of us have the responsibility to examine everything carefully and hold fast to what is good (1 Thess. 5:21).

Each of us have a responsibility to "study to" show yourself "approved unto God . . . rightly dividing the word of truth" (2 Tim. 2:15, KJV). Come to conclusions about eschatology because you have studied them for yourself in Scripture rather than accepting blindly what someone taught. Don't be gullible but teachable. Don't be dogmatic but humble.

Start this journey toward understanding the end times with a blank slate, ready to receive the truth. Let go of all your preconceived ideas, your accumulated knowledge of the end times, and the end-time teachings you have embraced over the years. Release your own opinions, prejudices, assumptions, and presumptions. Start with a blank sheet of paper and let the Spirit write the truth from His Word on it.

Let me explain from my own experience. As already mentioned, I have studied the end times in-depth for many years. But over the past 10 years, my focus shifted to God's eternal purpose, the indwelling life of Christ, and the way of the cross. Several weeks prior to writing this class, I made a decision to start with a blank slate. Everything I just encouraged you to do, I did. I let go of my preconceived ideas, my accumulated knowledge of the end times, and the end-time teachings I embraced over the years. I released my opinions, prejudices, assumptions, and presumptions. Wanting a fresh start, I broke free from every other influence, teaching, doctrine, and movement. I thought to myself *I am going to walk alone, if necessary, to embrace the truth.* Clearing my mind and heart from all the past clutter, I went to God's Word, the best I could, without any preconceived ideas.

I spent much time in prayer, asking the Lord to reveal the truth to me about the rapture, the antichrist, the harlot Babylon, and many other end-time subjects. I have to tell you ... the experience was *amazing*. My eyes were opened wide to the truth. The Lord met me and revealed things I have never seen before. Now, more than ever, I have clarity of the days leading to the Lord's glorious return. I want to encourage you to do the same as we begin this journey of understanding the end times.

5. Break free from end-time doctrines of demons.

Paul, writing about the end times, said, "The Spirit explicitly says that in the later times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons" (1 Tim. 4:1). We live in the day when this Scripture is being fulfilled right before our eyes.

To be clear, a doctrine of demons is a teaching inspired by hell, designed to lead as many as possible to "fall away from the faith." It is a craftily-arranged teaching, making use of Scriptures taken out of context, to promote ideas that are inconsistent with Scripture. In future sessions, we will examine carefully several end-time doctrines of demons. These are: Preterism, Post-Millennialism, the Seven-Mountain Mandate, and Replacement Theology.

In 2009, when I wrote a class on the end times for training pastors in Africa, I debated whether to mention some of these end-time errors. The only one I decided to mention was Replacement Theology (the teaching that the church has replaced Israel in God's prophetic agenda).

To be honest, I decided not mention the others because only a fringe element embraced these. At least that was my perception back then. Because most still believed in a Futurist view of end-time prophecy and I didn't want to teach anything irrelevant, I only talked about Replacement Theology. Eleven years later, *my how things have changed*. I'm shocked at how many respected, influential, intelligent, and godly leaders have embraced and promoted Preterism, Post-Millennialism, the Seven-Mountain Mandate, and Replacement Theology.

Millions in the Charismatic church now believe some of these false end-time teachings, which I believe are doctrines of demons designed by hell, which will lead to a massive end-time apostasy in the church.

Because eschatological errors are now widespread, it's vital to first breakdown the false before we can establish the true. The Lord told Jeremiah, "I have appointed you this day over the nations and over the kingdoms, to pluck up and to break down, to destroy and to overthrow, to build and to plant" (Jer. 1:10). Notice carefully, before we can build and plant, we first have to pluck up, break down, destroy, and overthrow. Applied to eschatology, we first have to take the hammer of God's Word and start swinging away at doctrines of demons entrenched in the church (Jer. 23:29).

Our church recently purchased an office building and renovated it into a church. I will never forget our demolition today. We wielded sledgehammers, tore down walls, pulled out sheetrock, ripped up carpet, and dismantled ceiling tiles. It looked like a disaster zone for several weeks before the new layout could be constructed. When we finished this renovation project, the final product was beautiful.

The same is true with eschatology. Before we can establish the truth revealed in God's Word and assemble the 10,000-piece jigsaw puzzle, we first have to dismantle, with the hammer of God's Word, the false teachings many have now embraced.

6. Embrace theological tension and don't overact to eschatological extremes.

Remember the Rubik's Cube? This 3-D puzzle became popular when I was growing up. Having an analytical mind, I loved trying to solve the Rubik's Cube. I spent untold hours trying to solve this complex puzzle. I think I solved it once or twice without using a step-by-step guide.

If you have ever tried to solve the Rubik's Cube, you know how frustrating it can be. You twist and turn repeatedly until you finally have one side that's red and another that's white. You think *I am about to solve this*. But then you realize the edge pieces of the white side don't align with the blue or the green side. And you are back to the drawing board.

Solving the mystery of God's end-time plan in Scripture is somewhat like a Rubik's Cube. Every side must align. The minute you think you have arrived at the truth about a particular subject, such as the rapture or the antichrist, you realize it fails to correlate with other verses about this topic. What you see in the book of Revelation must align with the books of Daniel, Isaiah, and all the other prophets. Quite often you think *this is the truth*. But then you realize other Scriptures contradict your conclusions.

Bottom line: We can't cherry-pick of our favorite end-time verses to formulate doctrines. Scripture must interpret Scripture and the full counsel of God's Word must support our conclusions. This requires embracing theological tension. A truth revealed in the book of Revelation, though at first might seem to contradict a truth in the book of Daniel, is perhaps part of the paradox of God.

Speaking of a paradox, let me define it quickly, since many end-time truths are paradoxical.

A paradox is a self-contradictory statement that upon further investigation is found to be true. The Bible is filled with paradoxes. A few examples are: exaltation through humility; strength through weakness; receiving through giving; freedom through serving; gaining by losing; living by dying; and finding by losing.

A few end-time paradoxes are: the Lord has blinded Israel and chosen Israel; the beast (antichrist) is both a person and a kingdom; we are overcomers in Christ and we must overcome; the kingdom is now but not yet; the Lord will reveal both His kindness and His severity at the end of the age; and Jesus is both a shepherd who gently comforts His people and a warrior who will kill His enemies with fierce vengeance.

End-time truths are often paradoxical. They are found in the messy middle where the circles come together, as in a Venn diagram. In case you are unfamiliar with a Venn diagram, it's an illustration using circles to show the relationship between different elements. Circles that overlap have a commonality, and where all the circles converge, there you have the sweet spot. End-time truths are found where the circles converge. They are found in the tension between different theological ideas.

Unfortunately, people have a difficult time embracing tension. They go to either one extreme or another. For example, many Preterists, who believe most prophecies were fulfilled in 70 A.D., arrived at this conclusion because of an overreaction to believers taking an end-time teaching to an unbiblical extreme. For example, some evangelical eschatology paints a picture of the end-time church as defeated, divided,

and powerless, hiding in a bunker in the remote countryside, having no cultural impact as they wait hopelessly until Jesus comes to rapture them away.

I am a Futurist—I believe most of the prophecies in Matthew 24, the book of Revelation, and the book of Daniel will be fulfilled in the future. But I also believe the church, at least a remnant, will be glorious, mature, purified, unified, passionate, pure, and powerful before Jesus returns. I believe the end times will be the church's finest hour. When you embrace the tension in Scripture, it's possible to believe in both a victorious end-time church and the future fulfillment of end-time prophecy.

Another example is people's overreaction to Israel. For centuries, the church believed in Replacement Theology. Because the Jewish people were driven out of their homeland for over 1,800 years, church leaders through history substituted the church in place of Israel when interpreting the Old Testament prophets. Then, when Israel became a nation again in 1948, many rejected Replacement Theology and became zealous for Israel. Unfortunately, many evangelicals have become overzealous for Israel, believing Israel can do no wrong. Due to this unbalanced view of Israel, where the Jews eclipsed Christ, numerous believers have shifted to the opposite end of the spectrum, once again embracing Replacement Theology. But the truth lies in the middle, where the circles come together.

We must reject two forms of Replacement Theology. First, when we interpret the Old Testament prophets, we can't substitute the church in place of Israel. Second, we cannot allow the Jewish people or the nation of Israel to eclipse Christ. Jesus is the only answer for Israel and the nations. In fact, Isaiah called the Messiah, whom we know to be Jesus Christ, Israel (Isa. 49:3). Meaning Jesus Christ is the One to whom all the promises in the Old Testament prophets were made and fulfilled (2 Cor. 1:20). Jesus Christ, who is fully God and fully a Jewish Man, is the only reason Israel is being restored. Jesus is the King of the Jews and when He returns, He will restore Israel and make Jerusalem the praise of the entire earth (Isa. 62:7).

The truth is God has chosen Israel as His servant and He will use Israel to accomplish His end-time purposes (Isa. 41:9). But this doesn't mean the Jewish people can be saved apart from faith in Christ nor does it mean everything Israel does is righteous. Far from it. Israel's government is just as crooked and depraved as every other world government, America included.

Moving On . . .

Now that we have laid the groundwork for loving the truth, we are ready to move on to debunking two increasingly popular doctrines of demons: Preterism and the Seven-Mountain Mandate. In the next session, I will debunk Preterism, and in Session 3, I will debunk the Seven-Mountain Mandate.

¹ https://www.krisvallotton.com/my-8-eschatological-core-values