

Lesson 10: Idols, Christ, and Antichrist

The last lesson in Western Civilization – overview of church history with two areas of application:

The Cultural Imperialism of the West

The Culture Wars in the West

What should Christians think about these developments?

Overview of Church History

We have two inspired books of church history:

Acts – the spread of the word

Revelation – the persecution of the church (tribulation) and the judgment of the world (wrath)

Strange Contrasts: Christ (Lamb) and Antichrist (Beast), Babylon (harlot) and New Jerusalem (bride)

Odd Picture of Triumph and Defeat:

Triumph – Athanasius – the idols of Egypt have fallen! *Would this apologetic backfire against us today?*

Defeat – “It was also *given to him* to make war with the saints and to *overcome them*” (Rev. 13:7).

The prophetic pattern of the antichrist (our first lesson from Daniel) keeps us from discouragement.

Sum: C. H. Spurgeon – postmillennial or not? (cf. Iain Murray, *The Forgotten Spurgeon*, app.)

Pattern: Idols—Christ—Antichrist

Gentile World: Monotheism → polytheism/idolatry (cf. Psalms 96-97, demons – 1 Cor. 8-10)

“All the kings of the earth will give thanks to You, O LORD,
when they have heard the words of Your mouth” (Ps. 138:6). } When is this fulfilled?
In history or Millennium?

Frontier Missions (Isa. 52:15; Rom. 15:21) – examples in Acts (e.g. proconsul Sergius Paulus)

British Isles – Patrick, Ethelbert of Kent, Oswald of Northumbria—*more sincere than Constantine?*

Worldwide: Picts → *Peace Child* – basis for economic growth (cf. Schlossberg – against envy)

Illus. Korea (1800s), then South Korea vs. North Korea today – the mystery of triumph/defeat!

Secular Wave: Antichrist – e.g. South Korea moving from praying church to worldliness of the West

Pattern: Religion leads to prosperity, but prosperity leads to apostasy (Dt. 32; Hos. 13:6 – cf. Puritans).

Homo Adorans – Man in a man is worshipped – cf. American coins, statues (NY → Mt. Rushmore)

Question – The Cultural Imperialism of the West?

Western Abuse: e.g. British chai tea in India and opium in China, and American “toxic charity” (R. Lupton).

Should the mission of the church apologize for spread of western values?

Ans. William Carey – salt and light in India (Mangalwadi), although Elisabeth Elliot among “Aucas.”

Singapore Trip – much that is “West” is not really western but Christian (e.g. linear history):

e.g. Stoicism → free will, personality (Charles Norris Cochrane – Augustine, *Confessions*)

e.g. clemency → compassion (Peter Bolt on Mark)

Many Lines, One Line: color line, cash line, or any culture line vs. the Christ line (Gen. 3:15 → Mt. 10:34)

Illus. CQ Meeting – the horseshoe of privilege, the baseball bat, and Gentile arrogance against the Jews

Question – The Culture Wars in the West?

Christ: Not on His own, but shares the throne (Ps. 110:1)—judges rulers today (Rev. 1:5; Acts 12; Ps. 2:10-12).

Church: Christ as fulfillment of Israel (Rom. 11 – two entrances) – the mystery of Gentile full membership

Implications: Church – as Christ suffered and then reigns in resurrection, so Christians also

Nations – as blessing and curse is hinged to Abraham’s seed, so politics today

In light of the Antichrist phase, what should we as individual Christians do? Corporate church do?

Yes, the sovereignty of God and inevitable death—but medical analogy (our body), revival (Carl Henry).

Caution of Extremes: Need discernment against reaction to one side of error (especially given Pr. 28:5):

Social Cause > Gospel – e.g. co-belligerents in the prolife movement → co-opted racial reconciliation

Social Gospel reaction – focus on the gospel only and sing louder over the Nazi trains or Jim Crow

Ephesians 6 – armor of the Messiah for justice (Isa. 11, 59), but against spiritual enemies w/ spiritual weapons:

1. Pray – Psalm 82/imprecatory psalms vs. a basis for breaking the law (cf. Titus 3:1-2; 1 Pt. 2:13-17)

2. Speak – “It is not lawful...” (John the Baptist) and proclaim liberty in Christ (Isa. 61:1ff)

3. Action – church equips (Eph. 4:11-12) and Christians permeate (Titus vision)—salt and light.

Callings: e.g. Wilberforce as MP vs. Wilberforce as Christian in literature (Hannah More)

Sum: We do not expect to win *culturally*, but *missionally*—we should walk in the paradox of triumph (2 Cor. msg).