

House Group Notes

9th May 2017



Ichthus Values, Characteristics & Distinctives Session 11: Theology Part 3 of 3 - Eschatological

Introduction

As part of our series looking at Ichthus' values, characteristics and distinctives we have been looking at the foundations of Ichthus' "theology", which are radical, christocentric and eschatological.

Briefly recap and summarise Radical and Christocentric

Today we will look at the last foundation of Ichthus' theology, eschatological. Before we define it and look at the topic in detail, we will re-read the statement about Ichthus' theological values taken from our website.

Read the statement below taken from Ichthus' website:

THEOLOGY: RADICAL, CHRISTOCENTRIC, ESCHATOLOGICAL.

We seek to make known the reasons behind what we do and experience in our lives in Christ. This is our theology or study of God. It is 'radical' in that it continuously resorts to our 'roots' in the Bible and the early church. Equally it is 'Christocentric' in that we look for Jesus in all of the Bible and in our experience of the Spirit of God (John 5:39-40; Luke 24:26-47). When we say our theology is 'Eschatological' we mean that while Jesus has brought in the Kingdom of God it is not yet manifest or operating in its fullness. This is why we pray 'Your Kingdom come'. When Jesus returns we will see and experience the fullness of the kingdom of God, which at present we see only in part.

Eschatological

It is made up of two Greek words: ἔσχατος (eschatos) meaning "last" and λόγος (logos) meaning "word/reason/logic/understanding". So putting them together it forms "The understanding of the last days". Which is why the Oxford English Dictionary defines it as "The part of theology concerned with death, judgment, and the final destiny of the soul and of humankind."

Briefly Discuss:

- Do you think your average everyday person cares about this subject?
- Why do you think this is one of the foundations of Ichthus' theology?
- Do you think the world is as it should be? If no, what's wrong with it?
- Do you agree with the statement from Ichthus' website "... while Jesus has brought in the Kingdom of God it is not yet manifest or operating in its fullness"? Why?

We know that Jesus' death on the cross has brought in His kingdom by defeating sin, sickness, death and evil, and redeeming humanity to make it possible for us to be reconciled into a right

relationship with the Lord. However, it is a now and not yet kingdom. We don't see it fully realised in the world around us today. That's why we get verses in the bible like the following:

Read Luke 4:5-8 (context – Jesus' temptations) and 2 Corinthians 4:4

We believe Satan still has a lot of power in the world today and is ruling on earth while Jesus rules in heaven. Ichthus has a "warfare" or "battle" theology, this is something we will look at in more detail as part of this series in a month or two. Essentially, Jesus has won the war, but there are still skirmishes and battles to see off Satan entirely. We look forward to the day when Jesus returns and will deal with evil once and for all.

The Future – Read Revelation 21 – As it's a long beautiful passage I would suggest picking one good reader to read it all.

Discuss:

- What does this passage make you think of?
- How does this passage make you feel?

This beautiful passage in Revelation is where we are heading, however, as we know, we're not there yet. As Christians we have a part to play and a responsibility to bring Jesus' kingdom in, and hasten this day we see in Revelation 21.

Read Matthew 24:14, 28:19-20 & 6:9-13

Discuss:

- From these passages what things can we do to bring in God's kingdom?
e.g. Preach the gospel, make disciples, pray "your kingdom come, your will be done", go to the ends of the earth, baptise people, etc."
- Can you think of anything else?
e.g. prophesy, love one another, help those in need, ultimately live like Jesus did.

Pray together for the Lord's kingdom to come!