

Waiting for the Master's Return, Part 1

Scripture: Luke 12:35-40

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We come now to the Word of God and the twelfth chapter of the gospel of Luke...Luke chapter 12. And our text for this morning is verses 35 through 40...Luke chapter 12 verses 35 through 40. Let me read this text for you and we'll set it in your minds.

"Be dressed in readiness and keep your lamps alight and be like men who are waiting for their master when he returns from the wedding feast so that they may immediately open the door to him when he comes and knocks. Blessed are those slaves whom the master shall find on the alert when he comes. Truly I say to you that he will gird himself to serve and have them recline at the table and will come up and wait on them. Whether he comes in the second watch or even in the third and finds them so, blessed are those slaves. And be sure of this, that if the head of the house had known at what hour the thief was coming, he would not have allowed his house to be broken into. You too be ready for the Son of Man is coming at an hour that you do not expect."

The Bible teaches that the Lord Jesus Christ will come to earth some day to bring human history to its end, to take the righteous to be with Him, to establish His Kingdom and to punish the wicked. This is how the world as we know it ends. This is how history finishes. And the Bible is as clear on the Second Coming of Jesus Christ, His coming in glory and His coming in judgment, as it is on the deity of Jesus Christ. That is to say the Bible is as clear on His Second coming as it was on His first coming. In fact, the return of Jesus Christ to this world in the future is a cardinal doctrine of the Christian faith. We cannot talk about the great doctrines of Christianity without the final affirmation of the doctrine of the Second Coming.

In some ways, the doctrine of the Second Coming is the most important doctrine in the Christian faith because it features the culmination of all redemptive history. It looks at the judgment of the wicked, the blessing of the righteous, and most of all, the final and permanent and everlasting exaltation and glory of the King of kings and Lord of lords, the Savior Jesus Christ. All other doctrines lead up to that one. That's the finale, that's the culmination, that is the purpose for which all other elements of redemptive history were designed. History has a clear and unambiguous end, and the purpose of God before history began will be fulfilled when it's over. Every detail as predicted in Scripture will be fulfilled with absolute precision. The story of this world and God's redemptive saga has an ending and that ending is already written, already planned, already designed by God. It will be as precise and

purposeful and exact as every other aspect of God's work. And anyone who minimizes or anyone who depreciates or twists or obscures or abandons the truth concerning Christ's glorious return has not only departed from Christian doctrine, biblical truth, but has come perilously close to having breached a severe warning at the end of the book of Revelation which says, "If anybody adds to anything written in this book, it shall be added to him the plagues that are written in it. And if anybody takes away from what is written in this book, God shall take away his part from the tree of life in the holy city." It's a perilous thing to tamper with the doctrine of the Second Coming.

And yet, there are many well-intended Christian people who do just that. They tamper with this doctrine, believing that Genesis 1 and 2 is a very precise account of how it all started, they somehow are convinced that the ending is unclear, wanting to hold to an exacting interpretation say of the creation account, and an exacting interpretation of the Flood account, and an exacting interpretation of the history of Israel in the Old Testament, and an exacting interpretation of the birth and the life and the death of Jesus Christ, and an exacting interpretation of Pauline theology and Petrine theology and Johannine theology and everything else that's written in the New Testament, they somehow feel that when you get to eschatology and the story of the end, we're permitted to just pick from all kinds of options. And in fact, this tampering with the Second Coming of Jesus Christ, this corruption of biblical prophecy has in some ways reached a very tragic point. There is among evangelicals today a popular new approach to the Second Coming called hyper-preterism, or full preterism.

Now the word preterist is not a word we use, maybe we should. It's a really good word, it's an old, old English word, you'll find it way back in...in Webster's Dictionary from fifty years ago, you'll even find it way back in the Dictionary of Oxford University in England, it's been around a while, and the word preterist, an Old English noun, is defined this way, "A person whose chief interest is in the past...a person whose chief interest is in the past." Now if you are a person whose chief interest is in the past, you come to a rather difficult dilemma in dealing with prophecy and that's why we call certain people in theology preterists because they want to push all that is future in Scripture back into the past. That's what preterism does. Preterism is a view of prophecy that says it's already been fulfilled. In fact, both Webster and the Oxford Dictionary under the word preterist say this, "In theology a preterist is someone who believes the prophecies in Revelation have already been fulfilled." This is not new. But it is on the rise today. It is on the ascent. Hyper-preterism takes everything that is prophetic and pushes it into the past. It is all called realized eschatology, that is everything that's connected to the eschaton which is the Greek word for the last things, all eschatology has already been realized.

You say, "Well what do they mean by that?" Well they mean this, Christ is not coming, He already came. There will be no Rapture. There will be no Tribulation. There will be no abomination of desolations. There will be no trumpet judgments. There will be no seal judgments. There will be no bowl judgments. There will be no earthly millennium. There will be no Armageddon. There will be no resurrection and there will be no Great White Throne. That is to say, that's all already past. This amazing view means that we are now living somewhere in the Concordance, or the Maps. Or just

maybe in the blank pages behind the maps.

You say, "How could anyone come to such a conclusion reading the Bible?" Well you can't. You have to be taught this by somebody who doesn't want to take the Bible at what it says. But what they are saying is, all of this was fulfilled in 70 A.D. when the Roman General Titus came in and destroyed Jerusalem and the following destruction of the land of Israel. They say that was the return of Jesus Christ, that was the Second Coming. And, of course, anybody who is thinking at all would immediately ask the question, "I fail to see how Christ received glory in that occasion." And they also say, "We are now living in the new heavens and the new earth." Frankly, that's a hard sell since clearly things seem to be getting worse.

You say, "Well this is bizarre. Is this new?" No. Paul wrote Timothy in 2 Timothy 2, he said there are some men named Hymenaeus and Philetus, men who have gone astray from the truth saying the resurrection has already taken place. Wow...they were preterists. They said the resurrection already was in the past. And that was contrary to the truth.

Now, these people are very studious about this, they write tomes about this. And it's amazing how they take the book of Revelation, the book of Daniel, Isaiah, Ezekiel, the Olivet Discourse of Jesus and try to find something that happened in the history around the destruction of Jerusalem that connects with all those biblical texts. And, of course, no two preterists agree because if the Bible doesn't mean what it says, then what it means is completely open to personal opinion, and so no two agree...which is usually a dead giveaway that they're wrong. And it's actually in some ways most humorous to read the various writings of preterists who are trying to connect biblical prophecy about the coming of Jesus Christ with the history around 70 A.D. and how they endeavor to do that.

Now there are others, unlike the preterists, who work at it so scholastically and historically and studiously. There are others who are not at all theological about their indifference toward the future coming of Jesus Christ. They...in fact, they probably wouldn't deny that Jesus is coming. They probably wouldn't say He already came. But they view the Second Coming as sort of an optional doctrine, it's kind of a second-class thing. It's really not very practical. They are much more interested in the here and now, they're much more interested in their own well-being, their own self-esteem, their own success. They're...they're really after what might help them right here and they don't really see whether speculating about the return of Jesus in some nebulous tomorrow has really any value to them. It is, however, a good read if you need some Christian fiction. Man-centered theology, earthbound Christianity, psychology, pragmatism, sanctified materialism, health, prosperity, teaching really doesn't...doesn't draw the Second Coming into play.

This was illustrated to me, I was in London, as you know, a few weeks ago, or a week ago, and did a talk radio program. And I hadn't done live talk in London which was kind of fun because I was hearing from people in a completely different culture and environment and it was enjoyable to answer the

questions and the first question I was asked, and this was going to be replayed again and again, they told me, because it's of interest, was "What do you think of the church, the Anglican Church, the church ordaining a homosexual bishop?" And I said, "Well," I said, "the right answer to that is that the church didn't ordain a homosexual bishop, not the true church, not the church of the Lord Jesus Christ, not the body of Christ whose head is the Lord and Savior. Maybe the church of Satan would do that, but not the church of Jesus Christ."

Well that provoked no small amount of interest. But...(applause)...the truth of the matter is, that that, of course, is a false church. And I said, "It's sad." I said, "What's...what's sad is they do it in the name of Jesus Christ and it brings such reproach on Him." So we had a bit of a discussion on that, which was interesting. And then somebody called up and said this, I'm just kind of getting to this point, this lady called up and said, "I've been listening to you and I don't think you believe in the health, wealth gospel." Well we've been broadcasting in...in London covering now all of England by the digital extension for a number of years. And I said, "Well, you...you...you've got that right...you've got that right." And I said, "I just want to tell you some good news, I just want you to know that what Jesus Christ has provided for you is not so temporary and so superficial as to be concerned about your health and your wealth in this life. He's got something infinitely beyond that, that you're going to enjoy in the life to come in the glory after He returns."

"I knew it...I knew you didn't believe in the health, wealth..." and she lit off into me. She couldn't have been less interested in the doctrine of the Second Coming. And frankly, less interested in the glory of Christ. This is not uncommon. Do people really think this life is the most important one? This vapor that appears for a little time then vanishes? Do people really think that God has planned something for the future that is less interesting and less blessed than life here? Do people think that God whose infinite mind wrote the Bible with supernatural precision to tell the story of redemption from the beginning to the end and that it all culminates in a sort of optional ending? You can pick whatever one you want and write your own ending to God's book? Do these people really think that diminishing the glory of Christ as our coming King doesn't matter to Him? I am disturbed by the evolutionists because they steal the glory of Christ as the Creator. And I'm equally concerned about these people who diminish the Second Coming because they steal the glory of Christ as the Consummator? Do people think that living for some earthly benefit comes anywhere close to the joy of anticipating the glories that Christ will deliver when He comes?

Well I guess the answer to those question is many people do...many people do. And frankly they are interested in eschatology it seems to be only as fiction. I mean, the proof is for all to see. I know, I wrote a book on the Second Coming and a handful of people read it. It's just the biblical truth about the future while twenty-five million read the fiction. Now, of course, on the other hand you have these people who don't ignore the Second Coming, they just sensationalize it. They're not taking away, they're adding to. That's pretty dangerous stuff. Makes me a little nervous, fiction about the Second Coming makes me about as nervous as fiction about the virgin birth...or fiction about justification or

fiction about sanctification. Not really too much for fiction about any cardinal element of Christianity. But you have these people who are comfortable fictionalizing holy truths. Some people are happy to set dates. How many goofy people have come along and done that? Then they get all their followers on the roof with their pajamas on ready for the rapture that never happens. Then there are those people who somehow want to offer themselves as profoundly insightful so that they can see in every single current event in every newspaper some fulfillment of some prophecy. Now this too tampers with this great truth.

The Second Coming is nothing to be played with, and that takes us into our text. Verse 40, that was just to get you ready for this, verse 40, "You too be ready for the Son of Man is coming at an hour that you do not expect...the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect." This is a statement that's very brief...very brief. In fact, it only really says two things, a certain event at an uncertain time. A certain event at an uncertain time. But it opens up the door for us to take another look at this cardinal truth. It stands alongside the deity of Christ, the virgin birth of Christ, the sinless humanity of Christ, the substitutionary death of Christ, the physical resurrection of Christ, the bodily ascension of Christ, the high priestly work of Christ and everything else that's cardinal to our faith. It is very important. The Lord didn't put it in here because it's not important. Do you remember what we're doing here in this particular section? Sometimes we have to climb out of this little passage and get the big picture here, what's going on because the Bible is...the only way to really understand the Bible is verse by verse by verse going through because then it's always in its context and you're getting it the way it was intended to be understood.

Now remember, Jesus started teaching at the beginning of chapter 12. This is one long discourse that runs to chapter 13 verse 9. And He is speaking to disciples. That means small "d" and not the Apostles, and not necessarily those who had already put their trust in Him, but learners, people who were still there, still learning, still open. Some had come to faith, some were in the process and some would probably turn and leave. But they were still open and still listening and still learning, and therefore, this is a call to them to come all the way to the Kingdom, to come all the way to the Kingdom. It's a call to them to embrace Him as Messiah. And it has elements that are absolutely important. If you are going to come into the Kingdom, if you are going to acknowledge the truth, if you're going to see Me as Messiah...He says...first of all, verse 1, you must abandon the influence of the Pharisees. If you're going to come to the truth, you've got to shake the influence of false teaching. You've got to leave the damning influence of false religion behind you. You've got to come out of whatever false system you're in.

That's valid even today. Everybody comes to the truth out of some false system of belief because everybody believes in something.

Secondly, He says, you have to stop fearing men and being intimidated by men and you have to start fearing God who has the authority to throw you into hell, verses 4 and 5. You then have to confess

Jesus Christ as Lord before men...you then, verses 8 and 9, have to trust in the Holy Spirit, verses 10 to 12. You then have to avoid the love of money and become rich toward God, verses 15 through 21. You then must abandon the anxiety and the worry and the fear that comes from being preoccupied with this world so that you can seek the Kingdom, verse 31.

To put it another way, Jesus says you want to come to Me, you want to come into the Kingdom, false religion, fear of man, love of money, preoccupation with the world has to be set aside. Those are the kinds of things that prevent the sinner from coming to salvation. And just to motivate you, I'm coming back and you don't know when.

You can't be indifferent toward the future. You can't have lethargy toward the future. You've got to be ready for the future. And the future that He's talking about is His return in glory. Oh He was there, He had come, but they knew that this was not the glorious coming of Messiah. As the disciples said to Him in Acts 1, "Is this the time You're going to bring us the Kingdom?" Jesus is saying you...you have to live realizing that the end is near...it can happen at any time. You want to be in My Kingdom, you have to have a heavenly perspective, you've got to be more concerned about the fear of God than the fear of man. You have to confess Christ, trust in the Holy Spirit, be rich toward God, seek His Kingdom and look for His coming. Anticipation of the Second Coming is motivation. Everything is not just going to go along the way it always has. There's going to be an invasion in this world. There's going to be an invasion from outer space in this world. There's going to be an invasion of the Lord Jesus Christ in final judgment. And the Bible describes it in the most horrific terms.

Now Jesus just cracks the door on this great doctrine of the Second Coming which has so much scripture written about it. And He says just two things that I want you to remember this morning, a certain event, an uncertain time. Go to verse 40. "The Son of Man is coming." That is an absolute fact. The Son of Man is coming.

Now if you were a Jew standing there that day, and you heard Him say that, where would your mind go? Son of Man is coming. You say, "o ben adam(??) in Hebrew, son of man. That's used in Psalm 8, "What is man that thou art mindful of him and the son of man that thou visitest him," and son of man there is used to speak of the insignificance of man. It's used by Ezekiel over and over again...he calls himself son of man, son of man, son of man, son of man to emphasize his utter humanness as compared to the greatness of God. The Jews certainly were aware that Son of Man indicated one who was in every sense human. But there was something way beyond that that dominated their comprehension of the title son of man.

To help you with that, turn back to Daniel chapter 7 and only just need a brief look. In connection with Messiah, they knew that Son of Man was a title, it was a title that belonged to the Messiah who was coming. "The Son of Man is coming," really is a reiteration of Daniel 7:13. Daniel is having visions and in verse 13 he says, "I kept looking in the night visions and behold, with the clouds of heaven one like

a Son of Man was coming." Wow. Now we know that Jesus' words in Luke 12:40 are taken right out of Daniel 7. He is reiterating the promise of Daniel 7 that with clouds of heaven, one day a Son of Man is coming. And in the vision he comes up to the Ancient of Days who is God, is presented before Him and to Him and this will occur in His coming and given dominion, glory and a Kingdom that all the peoples, nations, and men of every language might serve Him, His dominion is an everlasting dominion which will not pass away and His Kingdom is one which will not be destroyed. He is coming. He will have dominion over the whole earth. He will have power over all. And He will establish an eternal Kingdom never to be destroyed. This is a great Messianic prophecy that all the Jews knew. They knew then Son of Man as a title for Messiah connected to Him coming in glory to establish the Kingdom His Father had given to Him. Jesus referred to Himself constantly as Son of Man, Son of Man, Son of Man and while on the one hand you might say it emphasized His humanity, far more than that it emphasized His Messiahship. In fact, He who is Son of Man is a substitute for the word "I." Instead of saying "I this...and I that... and I..." He said, "The Son of Man this...the Son of Man that...the Son of Man..." Just drilling it in, drilling it in, drilling it in that He is the Messiah.

In fact, in Mark's gospel chapter 2 He says in verse 10, "I have..." He just had said to this man, "Your sins are forgiven. Arise, take up your bed and walk," "In order that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins, I said that." The Son of Man has the power to forgive sin. In verse 28 of Mark 2, "The Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath." In the fourteenth chapter of Mark's gospel, verse 61, "The High Priest said to Him, 'Are You Christ, the Son of the blessed One?' He said, 'I am and you shall see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of power and coming with the clouds of heaven.'" And that is a direct connection to Daniel 7:13 and 14.

The Son of Man then was a title. It belonged to Messiah, God's Son, the blessed One, come to forgive sin, Lord over the Sabbath and coming to establish His Kingdom. He is the Messiah who forgives sin. He is the Messiah who rules. He is the Messiah who returns in glorious dominion over all creation and establishes an everlasting Kingdom. And here then is the reminder, you better be ready for the Son of Man is coming in an hour when you don't expect it. This is a powerful motivation. Let me illustrate that to you. Matthew 16, you remember Matthew 16, the parallel to Luke 9. Listen to what it says. Verse 24, this is a gospel invitation. This is a typical one. We see it in, as I'll point out, in Luke 9 in a minute. "If anyone wishes to come after Me," Jesus said...You want to follow Me? "Let him deny himself, take up his cross and follow Me." Self-denial, self-hatred, we've gone through all of that, submission, sacrifice, giving up everything. Jesus calls it, "Whoever wishes to save his life shall lose it. Whoever loses his life for My sake shall find it." So it's the end of you, it's the abandonment of your life. "And what would a man be profited if he gained the whole world and forfeited his soul? What will a man give in exchange for his soul?"

And then immediately after that invitation, here's the motivation, next verse, Matthew 16:27, "For the Son of Man is going to come in the glory of His Father with His angels and will then recompense every man according to His deeds." You better respond. You better deny yourself, take up your cross,

follow Me. You better do it now because the Son of Man is going to come and He will recompense every man according to his deeds.

When He comes there will be the righteous blessed and there will be the wicked cursed. That was part and parcel of gospel invitation. It couldn't be separated.

Now look over at Luke chapter 9 which we have considered many times in our study of Luke because it's so critical. The language is parallel. Luke 9:23, "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, take up his cross, follow Me. Whoever wishes to save his life shall lose it, whoever loses his life for My sake is the one who will save it. What has a man profited if he gains the whole world, loses or forfeits himself." Verse 26, "For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words, of him will the Son of Man be ashamed when He comes in His glory and the glory of the Father and of the holy angels." Again the motivation is He's coming, He's coming, He's coming and there will be an accounting.

So, you see, the Lord Himself uses His Second Coming as a motivation for people to respond to the gospel. He is the Messiah. As the Son of Man He forgives sin. As the Son of Man He is Lord even over the Sabbath. And as the Son of Man, He is the one to return and establish the glory of His Kingdom.

Listen to Luke 21:34 the words of Jesus. "Be on guard that your hearts may not be weighted down with dissipation and drunkenness and the worries of life and that day come on you suddenly like a trap, for it will come upon all those who dwell on the face of all the earth, but keep on the alert at all times, praying in order that you may have strength to escape all these things that are about to take place and to stand before the Son of Man." Warning after warning after warning, He's coming, He's coming, He's coming, He's coming...a certain event.

Now go back to Luke 12 and the second thing that I want you to see, just briefly, is a certain event at an uncertain time. "The Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect." At an hour you do not expect. In Acts 1 the disciples said, "When shall these things be?" And Jesus' answer to them was very straightforward. "It's not for you to know times or epochs which the Father has fixed by His own power." None of your business. You don't need to know. You don't need to know. Yet all through the years of my teaching, people say to me, "You think Christ is going to come this year? Next year?" I don't know. I had somebody recently say to me, "Do you ever get a feeling that Jesus might be coming?" I don't even understand that. What are you talking about? I don't...my theology is not based on feeling. I do know this about His coming, I don't know when He's coming and neither does anybody else. In fact, in Matthew 24:36 it says, "Of that day and hour, no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only." And in Mark 13:32 and 33 it says, "No one knows, not even the angels nor the Son." In the self-imposed restriction of His own omniscience that the Lord placed upon Himself in His incarnation, He didn't even have that knowledge when He was here on earth. I don't know when He's going to come. But all believers throughout all the messianic era since He first

came have been living with the realization He could come at any minute.

You say, "Wait a minute, aren't there signs that have to happen? You know, isn't there a lot of stuff laid out in the book of Daniel?" Yeah. "And Ezekiel?" Yeah. "And Isaiah?" That's exactly right. "And aren't there things in the minor prophets?" Sure. "And isn't there a lot in the Olivet Discourse that Jesus preached and the gospels? And aren't there some things that, you know, laid out chronologically in the book of Revelation, like seals that are broken and trumpets that are blown, and then bowls that are poured out? Isn't there a sequence of things like that?" Yeah, absolutely. "Aren't there birth pangs and signs as Jesus said?" Yeah, sure. But still the day and the hour no one knows. And even more importantly, even though we know, there's a period of seven years called the Tribulation. There's a half of that period, twelve hundred and sixty days, 42 months, the Bible says, three and a half years called The Great Tribulation. We know that. There's even some days laid out in Daniel for the burial of the dead that are destroyed in the return of Christ in Revelation 19. There's a thousand-year Kingdom, we know some of those things, we know the chronological sequence that unfolds in Revelation. We still don't know when it starts. We know there are events within that great, great event of the Second Coming which has many aspects. But we know the Second Coming begins with one monumental event, the Rapture of the church. That event is secret and mysterious and no sign precedes it, just the trump and the voice of the archangel and we're gone. And then the judgment hits, climaxed, of course, with the return of Jesus Christ with His saints to establish His glorious Kingdom and destroy all the ungodly that are left after the horrors of the Tribulation have already destroyed a third of the earth and a fourth of the earth, and more. We don't know the day or the hour.

It could be what...I guess the figure of speech is called a synecdoche. A synecdoche is a figure of speech in which part of something is used to speak of the whole so that day or hour really speaks of the whole of the events that accompany the Second Coming, starting with the Rapture of the church. We don't know when it begins. And even once it gets going we don't know day and hour in which Jesus comes, but we certainly don't know when it's launched with the Rapture. That's why the church has always lived with the idea that His coming is imminent...imminent. He's gone to prepare a place for us and He's going to come and take us to be with Himself. In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye we're going to be changed and taken into heaven. "The dead in Christ are going to rise first and we who are alive and remain are caught up," that starts the whole sequence of events around the Second Coming. And the church has always considered that to be imminent.

I mean, that is the testimony of the writers of Scripture. If you read, for example, the Apostle Paul writing to Titus, he says this, "We're looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus." We're looking for it. We're looking for it. And when Paul wrote about the Rapture, he talked about it using "we," thinking, of course, there was every reason to believe it could happen in his lifetime. When James talked about the future, he talked about it as if it could happen at any time, James 5:7, "Be patient therefore, brethren, to the coming of the Lord." Be patient, strengthen your hearts, the coming of the Lord is at hand. When Peter wrote about it in 1

Peter chapter 4...that was James 5:7 to 9...1 Peter chapter 4 verse 7, "The end of all things is at hand," it's imminent, it's near. "Be of sound judgment." When John wrote about it, 1 John chapter 2 verse 18, "Children, it is the last hour." Verse 28, "Now, little children, abide in Him so that when He appears we may have confidence and not shrink away from Him in shame at His coming." He could come at any moment, at any moment. They all lived in light of that. Even the book of Revelation opens up, "The Revelation of Jesus Christ which God gave to him to show to His bondservants the things which must shortly take place." And Hebrews 10 says, "We ought to stimulate one another to love and good works, and all the more as you see the day approaching."

You say, "Wait a minute. Aren't these people misled? I mean, look two thousand years have gone by, you mean Christians are always living like Jesus could come and take them at any moment, at any moment all this stuff could happen. That's pretty...that's pretty hard to believe, I mean two thousand years."

Let me help you with that. Turn to 2 Peter chapter 3...2 Peter chapter 3, "Now..." or we'll go over to verse 3, "Knowing this, first of all," Peter says, "that in the last days," we could say preterists could come with their preterism saying where's the promise of His coming?" There are always going to be scoffers who say, "Look, He's not coming. Come on, you guys have been waiting and waiting two thousand years, He's not coming." Jesus had a nice notion, a nice idea but obviously was misguided. "Everything goes on as it always has, ever since the fathers fell asleep, everything continues as it was from the beginning." The theory of uniformity, everything is exactly the same, it just goes on exactly the same. Everything is uniform, etc., etc., etc.

Really. "For when they maintain this, it escapes their notice that by the Word of God the heavens existed long ago and the earth was formed out of water and by water." Oh, that's creation. They think everything just goes along at the same pace, have they forgotten creation? Creation can't be measured by any law of uniformity since God created everything in the universe in six days. That's what we call catastrophism, catastrophic creation, not uniformity. Evolution is uniformity...umph, umph, umph, umph, umph, that's not biblical. Or maybe they've forgotten the Flood. Verse 6, that the world was destroyed. That's not uniformity. The whole face of the planet as well as the sky and the seas was dramatically changed in one incredible deluge. You can't believe in uniformity, you have to believe that the world is the way it is today because of catastrophic creation and catastrophic recreation in the Flood. And you have to believe in a coming catastrophe, verse 7, the present heavens and earth as we know them now, are reserved for fire for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men. And some day, as Peter says a little later, all the elements are going to melt with fervent heat. God is going to uncreate the universe in an atomic explosion that's going to wipe it completely out of existence. All things do not continue the way they always have.

Well, you say, "But...but He said He's coming and it's two thousand years." Verse 8, here's the key. "Do not let this one fact escape your notice, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as...what?...a

thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." You're talking about the eternal God who is beyond time. You say, "But still, what's He waiting for?" You know, we want to crawl under the altar with the saints in Revelation, "How long, O Lord, how long...how long? When You going to come? When are You going to glorify Yourself? When You going to judge the ungodly? When are You going to vindicate Your name and manifest the glory of Your people? How long? What's He waiting for?"

Verse 9 tells you what He's waiting for. "The Lord is not slow about His promise as some count slowness." Some people accuse God of not...just not getting around to it, maybe, "But is patient toward you." You? Who are you? The ones He's writing to. Who are they? Verse 1 chapter 1, "Those who have received a faith of the same kind as ours by the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ." You believers, what is God waiting for? Listen to me, He's waiting for you because He does not wish that any of His own who have been chosen perish, but that all come to repentance, and God cannot come, He cannot return, Jesus can't return until all the elect are redeemed. That's what He's waiting for. The reason for His delay is not that He's negligent, it's not that He's careless, it's not that He's doing other things. He'll come when His bride for His Son is complete. He'll come when redemption is over. The fact that two thousand years have elapsed is utterly irrelevant to the doctrine of eminence, still imminent. I don't know when He's coming, but I'll tell you this, it's sooner than it's ever been. A certain event, an uncertain times.

One other comment from Luke and that is to ask the question. So what are we supposed to do now in the light of this? And that's how Jesus begins that verse, verse 40. "You too be ready." Be ready. How do you get ready? Abandon false religion, fear God, confess Christ, trust the Holy Spirit, be rich toward God, leave the world behind, seek His spiritual Kingdom, that's how you get ready. He's coming and His coming is certain and powerfully and for the purpose of motivation...motivating every generation, its timing is uncertain. And so the message is, you better be ready...you better be ready. And in verses 35 to 39 He gives us four analogies of what readiness looks like. And if you come back in two weeks, we'll go through them. Let's pray.

Father, we certainly are sorry for any attitude in our hearts that diminished the glory of Christ in His Second Coming. We would repent of any sins of indifference toward that great reality, of any way we might have tarnished it, ignored it, or just set it aside as if it were some kind of second class doctrine. We want to be among those of whom Paul said they love His appearing. We want to be like John who said, "Even so, come Lord Jesus, come quickly so that we can see You, vindicated, glorified, praised, honored, triumphant." Help us to follow these critical calls of the Lord Jesus that He's laid out in this discourse so that we live out that powerful statement in verse 31, "Seek the Kingdom...seek the Kingdom." And we know that You'll add everything to it. Help us to live in the light of our Savior's soon return, holding lightly to everything in this life and having our heart and our treasure and our affections in heaven. And, Father, we pray that even today there will be some who in the light of Your return to judge the ungodly and to bless Your own will embrace Christ as Lord.

As we close the service, the prayer room will be open to my right under the exist sign. There will be some folks there who can talk with you and pray with you about becoming a Christian, about being ready for the Lord's return. We'd love to do that. If you have questions about the church or any other spiritual need, our prayer room is open and you can come after the quiet organ postlude that brings our service to its end.

Father, now we do commit the truth to You and our own lives as well. May You work a work in all our hearts and may we live in joyous anticipation of the return of Christ, knowing that he that has this hope in Him purifies himself even as He is pure. And to that end we pray, for Your glory, in Christ's name.

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