

7 Characteristics of the Coming King, Part 1

Scripture: Luke 17:22

Code: 42-223

I would like for you to take your Bible and turn to the seventeenth chapter of the gospel of Luke, if you will, Luke chapter 17. And we're going to begin to look at a marvelous passage of Scripture, the words of our Lord Jesus concerning His Second Coming, His return to earth.

The text begins in verse 22 as Jesus speaks to His followers, Luke 17:22. "And He said to the disciples, 'The days shall come when you will long to see one of the days of the Son of Man and you will not see it. And they will say to you...Look there, look here. Do not go away and do not run after them for just as the lightning when it flashes out of one part of the sky shines to the other part of the sky, so will the Son of Man be in His day. But first He must suffer many things and be rejected by this generation. And just as it happened in the days of Noah, so it shall be also in the days of the Son of Man, they were eating, they were drinking, they were marrying, they were being given in marriage until the day that Noah entered the ark and the flood came and destroyed them all. It was same as happened in the days of Lot. They were eating, they were drinking, they were buying, they were selling, they were planting, they were building. But on the day that Lot went out from Sodom, it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all. It will be just the same on the day that the Son of Man is revealed. On that day, let not the one who is on the housetop and whose goods are in the house go down to take them away. And likewise, let not the one who is the field turn back. Remember Lot's wife. Whoever seeks to keep his life shall lose it. Whoever loses his life shall preserve it. I tell you, on that night there will be two men in one bed, one will be taken and the other will be left. There will be two women grinding at the same place, one will be taken and the other will be left. Two men will be in the field, one will be taken and the other will be left.' And answering, they said to Him, 'Where, Lord?' And He said to them, 'Where the body is, there also will the vultures be gathered.'"

Every true Christian who has any understanding of the Scripture and any mature love for Christ and the glory of Christ, longs for His return. The Second Coming is the culmination of the life and work of our Lord Jesus. It is His exaltation. It is where He sets aside His long humiliation and is exalted before the whole world. As those who love Christ, we long for that day to come. We desire the time when Jesus will return in all His majesty and in all His glory to rule and to reign over this entire earth. In fact, as a church, we are like the Thessalonian church of whom it is written, "They were waiting for God's Son from heaven whom He raised from the dead." We wait for the coming of the Lord Jesus from heaven.

But it is not just that we wait. We wait with anticipation. In Titus chapter 2 it says this, that we are to live sensibly, verse 12, righteously and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus. We aren't just waiting, we are looking, we are anticipating, we are eager for Him to return. We aren't just waiting and we aren't just looking, there's something even beyond that.

Back in 2 Timothy and chapter 4, we read this. Paul says, "There is laid up for me in the future the crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing." We don't just wait. We don't just look. We love His appearing. We say with the Apostle John in Revelation 22:20, "Even so, come Lord Jesus." We don't just wait. We don't just look. We don't just love. We plead for His return. We pray for His return. Any time we pray, "Thy Kingdom come," it embraces that final eschatological event when the Lord Jesus will return to earth. We live as believers in expectation. We live in anticipation of that glorious event with all of its features. We're grieved at the way the world treats the Lord Jesus Christ. We're continually grieved at the way the Lord is treated in the world. We want Him to be vindicated. We want Him to be exalted. We want Him to take what is rightfully His. We want Him to break the seals of the little scroll as it tells us in the book of Revelation, the title deed to the earth, and take it back for He is rightfully King of kings and Lord of lords. We want Him to break the back of the usurper Satan and all his demon hosts. We want Him to take over the kingdoms of this world and make them the kingdoms of our Lord and the kingdom of His Christ.

But we understand now from the study of the Word of God that there are two phases or two aspects to our Lord's rule, to our Lord's Kingdom. There is, first of all, the spiritual Kingdom which has to be established, and then there can be the physical kingdom. There is, first of all, the personal kingdom, and then there can be the universal kingdom. The first time Jesus came, He came to establish His spiritual kingdom which He continues to build one soul at a time. The only way the Kingdom of Christ, the Kingdom of God advances in this age is one soul at a time, one person at a time embracing Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. That is the only way the Kingdom moves forward. And it is moving forward spiritually in the world. Daily people are being added to the church who are being saved, as it tells us in the second chapter of Acts. The Lord is building His Kingdom. And we pray "Thy Kingdom come," we also embrace the spiritual advance. There are people today who think you can advance the Kingdom of God on earth politically by getting control of human institutions, by moralizing a culture. They're wrong. There are some people who think you advance the Kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ by a nominal assembly and unification of all supposed Christians, removing any doctrinal distinctions and accepting any belief in God or Christ. You cannot advance the Kingdom that way whatsoever, all you do is corrupt the church with alliances that are not from God but from Satan, light and darkness have no fellowship. Only one way does the Kingdom advance, it advances through personal salvation one soul at a time.

The second time Jesus comes, however, the Kingdom will be worldwide...it will be universal,...it will be visible. It is invisible today. It is not visible, people can't see it, they can't know it. The glorious manifestation of the children of God has not yet occurred. And so the world does not see us for who we really are, and sadly, very sadly, there are people who claim to be Christians who are not at all Christians, who skew people's understanding of what the Kingdom of God really is. But the Kingdom advances invisibly in the hearts and souls of those who truly are regenerated and converted through the gospel of Jesus Christ. This Kingdom will continue to expand as we said last time, continue to grow until the Lord gathers in all whom He has chosen, all whom He has predestined, are called and justified. And when they are all called in and the time is right and only He knows the time, "No man knows the day nor the hour," our Lord Jesus said, then Jesus will come a second time and establish the visible, universal, earthly Kingdom.

However, that Kingdom will be only for those who are in His spiritual Kingdom. When the earthly Kingdom of our Lord is established, only those who are part of the spiritual Kingdom and who are alive at that moment will be taken into that Kingdom. Christ will return with all those who are in His Kingdom who are already in heaven, and they will return with Him. And so they will be glorified saints living with the earthly saints but only saints, only those who belong to God will be in that Kingdom.

As a footnote, it is interesting to understand that there will be people born during the Millennial Kingdom described in Revelation 20 and laid out by the prophets of the Old Testament as to its nature and character. There will be people born into that Kingdom because those who are saved when Christ returns will not be destroyed in judgment, they will go alive into the Kingdom, they will have children. Some of their children, many of their children will not embrace Christ though He's in Jerusalem present in the world sitting on the throne, ruling there and the world is dominated by righteousness and peace and blessing and joy and the Kingdom is represented and mediated by glorified saints as well as living saints...they still will not believe and they will come together at the end of that thousand years led by Satan who will be released from being bound for most of that thousand years. He will lead a final rebellion against Jesus Christ which will be ended by the power of Christ, the entire universe as we know it will melt with fervent heat and an atomic implosion and the Lord will create the new heaven and the new earth, the eternal state, for the dwelling of the righteous.

But the Kingdom to come will only be for those initially who are in His spiritual Kingdom. Our Lord then in His teaching turns from the present spiritual Kingdom of which He speaks in verses 20 and 21 and at the end of verse 21 describes it as the Kingdom of God within you, to the Kingdom of God outside of you, that universal Kingdom that is visible on earth. And beginning in verse 22 He describes the nature of that Kingdom.

Now what you have here is not a description of the sequence of events leading up to that Kingdom. It is not sequential. It is not chronological. It is not like Luke 21. When we get to Luke 21 we're going to

see a much more chronological presentation of the events that lead up to the arrival of the King. But here there's a description of the nature of that Kingdom. And not so much even the nature of the Kingdom as the nature of the judgment that precedes the Kingdom. So we have in this text then a description of judgment...of judgment.

The Bible clearly tells us that Jesus will come, that Jesus will return to earth. And I want to help you understand that before we look at the text briefly. And it's going to take us a few weeks to get through it. But look at Acts 1...Acts chapter 1. And there is a very important text here in this chapter along with our understanding of the Kingdom, this text is very helpful. You already know there's a spiritual Kingdom, you already know there is coming a universal Kingdom. There is an invisible Kingdom, there is coming a visible Kingdom. Christ reigns and is unseen. He will reign and be seen. The disciples want to know when that will come. They know about the spiritual Kingdom, they're part of the spiritual Kingdom. The Kingdom is within them because the Trinity dwells within them. But they want to know when that final phase is going to come. And so in verse 6 of Acts 1 they ask Him, "Lord, is it at this time You are restoring the Kingdom to Israel?" We understand the spiritual Kingdom, we get that part. But is the final phase, that glorious promised Kingdom, is it coming at this time?

He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or epochs which the Father has fixed by His own authority." Which is a nice way of saying, "It's none of your business. It's not helpful for you to know that. God does not choose to reveal that to you."

"But in the meantime," and this is wonderful, "you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, even to the remotest part of the earth." In the meantime, you are going to be witnesses with the gospel, Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and the world used for the advancement of the spiritual Kingdom until that epoch day when Christ returns to establish His earthly Kingdom.

While they were in the middle of this discussion, verse 9, an amazing thing happened. "He was lifted up while they were looking on and a cloud received Him out of their sight." He just went up, He ascended right up into the clouds and disappeared. And it says in verse 10, "As they were gazing intently," very strong Greek verb, they were transfixed, their eyes were glued on the ascending Christ...physically, literally, bodily ascending into the air, up beyond their view, hidden by the clouds. They were gazing intently into the sky while He was departing. "And behold, two men in white clothing stood beside them." Two angels appeared and they said this, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into the sky?" At first that sounds like a silly question, where would you be looking if somebody was going up? But it isn't implying that they were out of line to be looking, it was a question directed at their sense of loss, that the longing in their hearts, the sadness that they were feeling was evident to God and therefore made evident to the angels. They say, "Why are you looking longingly as if you are losing Him? This Jesus who has been taken up from you into heaven will come in just the same way as you have watched Him go into heaven." How is He going to come? Literally,

physically, bodily right out of the clouds right down to this earth. That's exactly what it says, that's exactly what it means. We believe in the bodily return of the Lord Jesus Christ literally, physically. The same Christ that went up is going to come down in the same way He went up. This prophecy along with all other promises and prophecies and warnings of the Second Coming is as unmistakable as any other teaching in the Scripture. The prophecies of the return of Jesus Christ to establish His glorious Kingdom are not vague, they are not obscure, they're not hard to understand, they're not complicated, they're not mysterious, they're not hidden. They are straightforward, clear, factual, historical just like everything else recorded in the Scripture. Scripture is specific, precise, unambiguous about the Second Coming as about all past redemptive history recorded in the Old Testament and in the New Testament as well.

If you just take the same principles of interpretation that you would use to interpret any other part of the Bible, just use the normal rules of language and interpret eschatological passages the way you interpret all other passages, it is going to yield you the reasonable, literal sense in which God intended us to understand these things. It means precisely what it says. The Bible is a precise book. Genesis is astonishingly precise. And there is a precise detailed account of creation. And I've said some months ago, if you just take the first verse of Genesis, the precision is staggering.

It was 1903 Herbert Spencer died, the great scientist who was given all kinds of awards for his categorization, *filia* and *filium*, being able to put things in their appropriate category. The scientific world hailed him because he discovered, or he observed that everything that is knowable fits into five categories. You put them in this order...time, force, action, space, matter....time, force, action, space, matter. Everything in the universe fits into those categories. Well, Herbert, we want to applaud you but that's Genesis 1:1. "In the beginning...that's time...God...that's force...created...that's action...the heavens...that's space...and the earth...that's matter." The precision of the Bible is staggering and goes from there into a detailed explanation of creation by the revelation of God Himself, the Creator. It is precise.

When you get into the history of the patriarchs in the book of Genesis, it is precise. The history of the Flood is precise. The history from Abraham on is precise. Everything else is precise. There's precision in the Law and the history books. There's precision in the Psalms and the books of literature that we call poetry. And there is precision in the prophets. And there's precision in the details of the gospel record and in the book of Acts and in the epistles. And there will be the same kind of precision in every eschatological passage, as well as in the book of Revelation to be interpreted by the same normal principles of interpretation you interpret any language, leaving room for what is obviously figurative.

And you can't just dismiss prophetic language that has to do with the end of the age and the return of Jesus Christ as being obscure and hidden when it is so specifically described. Nothing that I read you in this text of Luke is at all obscure. Everything I read you there is clear and straightforward and you

will see as we work our way through it how precise and applicable it is. The Bible means exactly what it says, no matter what the particular subject on which it is speaking.

I would go beyond that to say that the Second Coming of Jesus Christ is a cardinal doctrine of Christianity. It is not an optional one. It is not a minor issue. I was having a phone conversation on a conference call this last week with some very, very able pastors and preachers and theologians. And the discussion came up about the future. And the question was posed...what about the future? And one who is a very bright and astute and well respected theologian said, "Well, if I was a post-millennialist I would think it was going to happen this way...the Kingdom would come and Jesus would come after the Kingdom. If I was a pre-millennialist I would think that Jesus is going to come and set up His Kingdom. But since I'm neither, I have no idea." That's not acceptable. That's not acceptable. If you don't have an idea, then you need to go to the Word of God until you do have an idea. This is what God has revealed to us. And the final glory of Jesus Christ matters. I think the end of the story matters. God is not precise from the beginning till He gets to the end and just kind of mumbles the whole ending. God doesn't let you write your own ending either. It's not a lot of mystery to which you can give any interpretation. The Second Coming of Jesus Christ is the end of the story. It is the final exaltation of the Lord and Savior, the King of kings. It matters. The end of the story matters. The end of the story is everything. It is the glory of Christ that is the end of the story. It matters a lot. And the divinely ordered and the divinely to be executed climax of redemptive history will be as precise and purposeful as every sing...everything else that God does and everything else that God says. And that's why in the book of Revelation which some people think to be a hopeless mystery needlessly, by the way, it says this, "Blessed is he who reads and those who hear or understand the words of the prophecy and heed the things that are written in it." You read it, you understand it, and you better do what it says. That means it assumes that you are responsible for it.

You might say, "Well how can anybody be responsible for the book of Revelation, it's so confusing?" It isn't if you read it at face value. You will see what is clearly figurative language through here but you will also get a very clear and direct message for which the Lord holds us accountable. Remember, the book of Revelation was given to seven pastors of seven churches in Asia Minor to be read to seven congregations who weren't some kind of spiritual scholastics, they were normal folk, five of the seven were on the brink of extinction as churches because of their sinfulness. And these are just people like people in all eras of the church's history who were required to read it, understand it and heed it. To abandon in practice, or to abandon in interpretation the promises of Christ's Second Coming is to diminish the Word of God and to diminish the glory of Christ for this is the most glorious moment in Scripture, that's why it's the end. This is the most glorious moment and event in the life of Christ. Still very popular today among professing Christians and among preachers and scholars of some kind or another to feel noble about having no idea about the end. And some have even gone so far as to deny there will be a Second Coming. They deny that it's even going to happen. And there are some who suggest that, "Yes, there will be a Second Coming but it's just spiritual talk. He comes every time somebody's saved. And it's that...it's the Second Coming only in the sense that He comes spiritually

into the hearts of those who believe."

There are others who believe He's not coming in the future because He already came. That the Second Coming actually occurred in 70 A.D. when Titus Vespasian came and destroyed Jerusalem and Jesus came in that He brought the Romans in to destroy Jerusalem. That is the Second Coming and we are now living in the Kingdom.

That's a hard sell. That's a hard sell. You show me where the exaltation of Jesus Christ in the whole earth is. You show me where the Kingdom of righteousness and peace pervades the earth.

But that's the view. That's a very popular view. And that what's in the book of Revelation describes things in a mysterious way that happened in 70 A.D. And so there won't be any further coming of the Lord, He'll just come into hearts and eventually the earth will kind of run down and wind down, it will all kind of trickle and fizzle out. We'll all die of hair spray in the ozone.

It's not what I read in my Bible. That's not how the glory of Jesus Christ is to be lifted up. And then because you have the cult groups who say He's coming in a certain year and when it's not obvious to everybody, they say He came but He came secretly. Oh really? He came secretly? That's not what He promised to do. He said when He came every eye would...what?...would see Him.

And then there are those people, you remember them in 1988? There was a big book written He's coming. "Eighty-Eight Reasons Why Jesus Will Come in '88," and a whole lot of folks got on the roof and put their pajamas on, they were ready to go. And He didn't come.

You've got other cult groups who have all kinds of strange views about His coming.

And then there are those people on the other side, they don't deny His coming, they affirm the Second Coming but they bury the biblical truth under fantasy and fiction. So it's so overdone that you can't find your way to the biblical truth. They over-speculate on the time, they over-speculate on the purpose...or on the person. They over-speculate on the headlines. Every little thing that happens in the Middle East, they want to preach a sermon on why this is a sign that Jesus is coming in the next week, month, year. We've read it all. I remember when Mussolini was going to be the Antichrist. I read books, old books about that, although I was only three during that period of time. I read books on that. And then it was Hitler who was going to be the Antichrist. And it's on and on and on, Henry Kissinger, Saddam Hussein, whoever. Over-identifying people, over-analyzing, mingling guesses about details with biblical truth.

Take the Bible literally. Take it exactly for what it says and leave it at that. We don't know the day or the hour...we already read that. But we do know this. There will be a Kingdom and Christ will come and set it up. That's why I'm not a post-millennialist. I don't believe that we're going to establish the

Kingdom of Christ over the whole earth and when we've done it, He'll show up. The Jews didn't believe that. They believed the King came and set up His Kingdom. What kind of King is there who has a Kingdom set up by somebody else and comes and takes it? That's not Scripture.

If you take just the book of Revelation, you have the church on earth in chapters 1, 2 and 3. You have the church in heaven in chapters 4 and 5 gathered around the throne. How did the church get to heaven? Rapture. In chapter 6 you come back down to earth and what happens? All hell breaks loose in a series of judgments...seven sealed judgments. Seals are broken and out of them comes seven judgments. Out of the seventh seal, toward the end of the seven-year period comes seven trumpet blasts, further judgments, more intense. Out of the seventh trumpet comes seven bowl judgments, slosh bowls, they're just dumped on the earth, rapid fire at the very end. And that's the horrors of the pre-cursor judgments to the great day of the Lord. You go through Revelation 6 to 19 and you have all those judgments being poured out. And then in chapter 19 verse 11, Christ comes out of heaven. And then in chapter 20, sets up His Kingdom. His Kingdom is for a thousand years after which He puts down the rebellion by Satan and those born in the Kingdom who rejected Him, destroys the whole universe and creates the new heaven and the new earth. Chronology is laid out, simple, straightforward.

I've told you before. I flew to Kazakstan, got off the plane, taught for a week people I've never seen in another part of the world. The first pastors conference in central Asia, I taught eschatology, I taught this pattern of what the Bible reveals about the coming of Christ and they said to me, after all of that, "You believe exactly what we believe." And I said, "Sure, because you're reading the Bible." Because that's the way the Bible lays it out.

Jesus will come. He will set up His Kingdom. He will reign in this world. This is not a minor theme, this is the story at its greatest moment. This is Christ's high hour.

Unless you think those things aren't going to be literally fulfilled that are laid out, remind yourself of this...every Old Testament prophecy related to Jesus Christ was fulfilled...that was fulfilled in His first coming was fulfilled literally. The Old Testament said He would be born of a virgin, Isaiah 7. He was. The Old Testament says He will be born in Bethlehem, Micah. He was. The Old Testament said again and again He would be a Son of David. He was and the genealogies are laid out in Matthew and Luke to prove it. The Old Testament said He would ride a donkey's colt to His mock coronation. And He did. The Old Testament said He'd be betrayed by a friend. The Old Testament said He would be stricken and His followers would be scattered. The Old Testament said He would be sold for 30 pieces of silver, and He was. The Old Testament even laid out the details of His crucifixion in Psalm 22. Everything. The Old Testament said that God would not allow His holy One to see corruption, He would come out of the grave, He would show Him the path of life, there would be a resurrection. Those were fulfilled with absolute precision historic accuracy.

So why would we think that prophecies related to the Second Coming are just some kind of mystery talk with no literal real fulfillment? When you read your New Testament, you read through Matthew, Mark, and Luke and John in the gospels, you're going to read occasionally this statement, "That the Scripture might be fulfilled...that the Scripture might be fulfilled....that the Scripture might be fulfilled."

I'd like to just drag you through that. There's a reason for that, so that you will learn to know this, that when God says something, He does it. And He does it in such a way that you can see the fulfillment and connect the dots to the promise. And when Scripture says there are things that are going to occur at the Second Coming, that's exactly what is going to occur. And those people then will see in those unfolding events that the Scripture is being fulfilled.

Now the Jews, remember this, they expected this Kingdom, this final, earthly, universal, dominating Kingdom. They expected the Messiah to come and set up His Kingdom. They weren't interested in a spiritual Kingdom, they didn't think they were outside of it. They thought they were already the people of God by race and by religion and by ceremony and by circumcision. They didn't need somebody to die for their sins. They didn't need that. They didn't need a Savior other than God. Jesus didn't do what they expected the Messiah to do. He didn't come and what they thought would happen would be He'd kill all the Gentiles and all the ungodly in a great holocaust of divine judgment as the prophets said He would. And He would save Israel, take His throne in Jerusalem, establish Israel as the glorious nation and rule the whole world. There would be absolute triumph in Israel, glory for everyone, joy, blessing, knowledge, all the things the prophets said would fill the earth and they never really thought about the issues of the Old Testament that talked about the need for a Savior, like Psalm 22, Isaiah 53, etc., etc.

So in verses 21 and 20...er, 20 and 21, Jesus says to them, "Wait a minute, the Kingdom of God is not coming with signs to be observed." You're looking for the wrong phase. You're looking for the wrong aspect. You're looking for the second aspect. In verse 21 He says, "You can't...nobody is going to be able to say here it is or there it is, for behold, the Kingdom of God is within you." First comes the spiritual Kingdom. First comes the reign and rule of Christ in the heart of individuals and only...listen...only those who are part of the spiritual Kingdom will ever enter into the earthly Kingdom. Only those who are a part of the personal Kingdom will be in the universal Kingdom because the spiritual Kingdom is growing and growing and growing one soul at a time until it's complete. And when it's complete, it will be time for Christ to come back, judge all the ungodly, take all the living who are in the spiritual Kingdom into this glorious millennial earthly reign. When He comes back, all of us who are glorified, if we're in heaven at that time, will also come back with Him. And so saints glorified and saints still alive in their earthly form will make up that Kingdom. There will be no ungodly people in that Kingdom. Scripture is explicit about that at the beginning. There will be people who have children who will rebel, as I told you, as time goes on and they will be judged at the end. And so our Lord is saying to them, in a sense, if you're not in the spiritual Kingdom, you will never even see the glorious

fulfillment of the Old Testament promise.

Christ came, died, providing a sacrifice for sin, rose from the dead as the affirmation of the Father's satisfaction of His sacrifice in order that He might provide the means by which people could come into His spiritual Kingdom or that His spiritual Kingdom could come into them as we are indwelt by the Trinity, as we learned last time. All through human history He gathers His spiritual Kingdom and one day He comes back and the final form of the spiritual Kingdom will be His earthly reign.

There's another misconception that the Jews had. They thought when Jesus came, all Jews...or when the Messiah came rather...all Jews were going to be embraced and welcomed into the Kingdom because of their Abrahamic ancestry. They thought it was going to be a celebration. They thought it was going to be a party to end all parties, that it was going to be a triumph. They didn't look at the passages in Zechariah, for example, about how God says He's going to have to purge two thirds of the Jewish rebels out and only one third are even going into that Kingdom. And so the...the character of the language here and what I read you, verses 22 to 37, is that this Kingdom isn't going to be any party until it is, first of all, deadly. What He says is frightening...frightening. In fact, at the end of this section in verse 37, the disciples say, "Where, Lord, where is it going to be?" And He says, "Just look for the vultures, wherever the carnage is, wherever the corpses are, wherever the dead are, that's...that's where I'm going to be coming." Before He ever takes the true believers into the glory of that final Kingdom, along with the ones who have returned with Him from heaven, there's going to be carnage the likes of which the world has never seen. Carnage is so extensive, you'll notice verse 34, at night there will be two men in a bed, one taken, another left. The next verse, two women grinding in the same place, women did their grinding of bread in the daytime, men did their sleeping in the night. When Jesus comes, part of the world will be in night and part of the world will be in day. Some will be sleeping and some will be working, and that means it is a worldwide holocaust, a worldwide holocaust. It is a holocaust of such massive proportions that it can be likened to Noah...likened to Noah. The whole world was drowned, except eight people. Or it can be likened to Lot, everybody in the entire area of Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities of the plain was buried under fire and brimstone except Lot and his two daughters....massive, massive frightening, horrific judgment.

So the Kingdom of peace would come. The Kingdom of comfort and ease and joy and celebration and righteousness and reward would come. But before it arrived there would be a horrific judgment on all those people who are not part of the spiritual Kingdom. When the day of the Lord comes, it's a day of terrible judgment. But prior to that time, that terrible last judgment, there will be warnings. That's what we're told in Matthew 24 and 25, we'll hear it again in Luke 21, that there will be a series of judgment events leading up to the final one, kind of preliminary judgments, warning judgments. And you would like to think that when those judgments come, as described in Revelation 6 through 19, that people would repent and repent. But the truth is, Revelation says under those preliminary judgments they curse God...they curse God.

The final coming of Christ in this horrifying judgment, the picture of which is in Revelation 19 with the carnage at His feet, prior to that there will be escalating trouble, escalating wickedness, escalating evil, but escalating judgment described in those seals, trumpets, and bowl judgments of Revelation. There will be people who repent. In fact, there will be a mass of people who repent during that period of time from every tongue, tribe, people and nation, Revelation says. But the majority of the world will curse God. Only those who are in the spiritual Kingdom will enter that glorious final Kingdom. So our Lord's message to the disciples and the Pharisees are always listening, was to describe the nature of that event. Not as a big party and a big celebration but as a frightening fearful event of judgment.

Now look at the text for a minute, and at least I can introduce it to you. Jesus teaches us seven truths about the nature of His coming in judgment, seven truths. First one, it will be desired...it will be desired. There are people who will want it to happen. Secondly, it will be visible...it will be visible. Thirdly, it will be delayed...it will be delayed. Fourthly, it will be unexpected. It will be desired, visible, delayed, unexpected, it will be revealing. It really will disclose the hearts of everyone. Sixth, it will be divisive. And seventh, it will be deadly. Desired, visible, delayed, unexpected, revealing, divisive and deadly. And we're going to work our way through this.

Let me just have you look at the first one, just as an introduction, so we can at least get our feet in the water here. Jesus' coming will be desired, verse 22. "He said to the disciples, 'The day shall come when you shall long to see one of the days of the Son of Man and you will not see it.'"

He says to the disciples, and He must be speaking of disciples who were in the Kingdom cause they're the only ones who will desire this to come. There will be days, He says, when you will long to see one of the days of the Son of Man and you will not see it. Can I just make a couple of comments? Son of Man is a Messianic term connected to the coming of Messiah to establish His Kingdom and it comes from that great passage in Daniel chapter 7 where in verse 13 Daniel says, "I kept looking in the night visions and behold, with the clouds of heaven, one like a Son of Man was coming and He came to the Ancient of Days, who is God, was presented before Him, to Him was 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. His Kingdom is one which will not be destroyed."

So the prophetic language of Daniel chapter 7 is that the Son of Man is going to come. He is the Messiah and set up His glorious and everlasting Kingdom. That's why Jesus chooses to use the description of Himself in this prophetic passage, Son of Man. Although He commonly used it to emphasize His humanity, here it connects Him with the prophecy of Daniel 7. "And the day is going to come...days are going to come when you will long, *epithumeo* from which we get *epithumia*, desire, sometimes even lustful desire, but the word itself could be good or bad, it means a strong driving consuming passion. You will passionately long to see one of the days of the Son of Man. Some

people think "one" meaning the first day of the unfolding days of the great day of the Lord concerning judgment and the establishment of the Kingdom.

A time is going to come when you're going to be like those under the altar in Revelation 6:10, "How long, O Lord, how long...how long? When are You going to come and establish Your Kingdom?" Or are you going to say with John, Revelation 22:20, "Even so, come Lord Jesus," because you're waiting, you're waiting, looking, you're waiting loving, you're waiting pleading for Him to come. You long to see it. You have the strong desire.

And the idea here is not just for your own good and your own release and your own freedom, but it is that you would see Christ glorified. It's the attitude of Psalm 69, David says, "Reproach...the reproach that falls on you has fallen on me. Zeal for your house has eaten me up." And what he means by that is I can't endure existence, O God, if You're being dishonored. My passion and my love for You and Your house is tearing me up because You're being dishonored. And Jesus, you remember, in the gospel of John when He made a whip and cleaned out the temple. He said, "The zeal for Your house has eaten me up. The reproaches that fall on you have fallen on Me." In other words, I felt Your pain when You're dishonored.

And I tell you, Jesus is still being dishonored. God is still being dishonored in places that claim to be His own house. You've seen it in the news the last couple of days. What a horrific travesty on the glory of Jesus Christ, to be so dishonored by someone who pretends to proclaim His name and live to His honor and His glory. And when you think about the coming of Christ, it's not about me, it's not about I want my reward, I want to get to heaven, it's about loving the Lord enough to desire His glory and saying, "How long, O Lord, will You allow Yourself to be humiliated by those who claim to represent You?" How long will You take this kind of humiliation? Lord, be glorified. Lord, be honored, Lord, be exalted. You are worthy.

There's a weariness in this world and the longer you live in this world, the more weary you become with the reproaches that come on the glorious, magnificent name of Jesus Christ. I understand what it is to be among those who long to see one of the days of the Son of Man. And it's not limiting it, just one out of several days. It's ready to see that great day with all the days that encompass it. Just a little technicality. It says, "One of the days of the Son of Man," plural because it will be an extended time with extended events. But if you go bound...down to verse 24, it's referred to as "The Son of Man in His day," singular. In verse 26, "The days of the Son of Man," but in verse 30, "The day that the Son of Man is revealed." You can look at it as a day, an epic, or you can look at it as days, a sequence of events within that epic. You find the same pattern exactly in the use of day and days for illustrations in a number of places, but in Amos 8:11, "Behold, days are coming, declares the Lord God, when I will send a famine," verse 13, "in that day," and he goes on to describe it further.

So it is a day in the sense that it is an event. We could say this is the day of Christ's return, and we could say, these are the days of those events related to His return. And so we look for the day when He comes and the days when He judges and sets up His glorious Kingdom. But He says this in verse 22, you won't see it, it's delayed. Jesus tells a parable in Luke 20 verse 9, He says, "There was a man who had a vineyard and he went away on a journey for a long time." It's a parable about the Second Coming...it's a long time...it's a long time. We long for Christ to be glorified. We haven't seen it yet. Saints longed before us longed for it. They haven't seen it yet. We're all under the altar, "How long, O Lord, how long?" James 5:7 says, "Be patient to the coming of the Lord. Be patient and strengthen your heart." God's timing is perfect.

So the first thing we learn about this event is it's going to be desired and we're the people because we understand it...we anticipate it...we love it...we long for it. We understand that we're going to want Him to be glorified and it's not going to happen until God's perfect timing. When it does happen, second point, it will be visible globally. And for that, you have to wait till next time. Let's pray.

We do say with the Apostle John, "Even so, come Lord Jesus." We say with the martyrs under the altar in Revelation 6, "How long, O Lord, how long will You endure humiliation? How long will you allow the righteous to suffer? How long will you take the blasphemy and the abuse? How long will Your name be reproached and dishonored?" And we say with our Lord, "The reproaches that fall on You, O God, fall on us." We feel the pain of Your humiliation. We feel the pain of You being dishonored. And so we cry, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus." Not for us, but for Your glory and for that day when we will worship You perfectly.

The end of the story matters, it matters more than anything else. We thank You that You've laid it out for us. Help us to live in the light of its reality, knowing that all these things could begin at any moment. The people in Noah's time had plenty of warning and they only awoke when it was too late. People in Lot's time, plenty of warning from that preacher of righteousness named Lot, and they only awoke when it was too late. We pray that we would be ready for the inevitable and we who know Christ long for the day of His glory. Even so, come Lord Jesus. Amen.

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