

7 Characteristics of the Coming King, Part 2

Scripture: Luke 17:23-25

Code: 42-224

We come this morning to this wonderful seventeenth chapter of Luke's gospel. Luke chapter 17 and our theme is the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. We're dealing with verses 22 through verse 37...Luke 17:22 through 37. This is a prolonged presentation of our Lord's Second Coming that comes from His own lips. You might say this is Jesus on His Second Coming. We are hearing it straight from the Lord Himself. It is not a presentation of the chronology of His Second Coming, or the sequential events. There will be a more sequential, chronological presentation by our Lord in the twenty-first chapter of the gospel of Luke. But here we have not a chronological treatment of His coming but a description of it. This is to help us with the nature of that event. And in one particular aspect, and that is that it will be a judgment. While we as believers look forward to the Second Coming of Jesus Christ because it will bring Him glory, and because He will establish His Kingdom on earth and He will bind Satan and righteousness and truth and peace will prevail over the earth as He reigns spiritually and physically in Jerusalem over the world, and that's all positive, and that Kingdom will be launched only with those who are the Savior's own by faith, we look forward to that. We look forward to the Kingdom aspects of Christ's return. We long for that day when we will reign with Him and enjoy the fullness of all the blessings and promises originally given to the patriarchs and to David and even to the prophets in the New Covenant. But that's not all that occurs in the Second Coming of Christ. It's not just the Kingdom and glory and blessing and prosperity and righteousness and peace prevailing in the earth, before that happens there will be the most horrific consummate complete devastating judgment the world has ever, or will ever know. And so as our Lord talks about Second Coming in this particular text, it is a focus on the judgment. It is looking at the nature of His return as a judgment event. This is all precipitated by the fact that Jesus talked about the Kingdom all the time. He preached about the Kingdom all the time. And in a mocking, scoffing way, the Pharisees say to Him in the query that is certainly in their minds if not on their lips, verse 20, "When is the Kingdom of God coming?" You keep talking about it. I think it's a sarcastic, scornful, mocking approach because they had already rejected Him as their King and their Messiah and He was much an unlikely King, He didn't appear to be the King they had anticipated by all their understanding of Old Testament prophecy. There was no splendor. There was no glory. There was...there were no signs in earth and signs in heaven of massive proportions and He attacked their religion rather than confirming it, for all those reasons and others they had rejected Him as King. And now I think in a mocking way, they ask, "When is that Kingdom you keep talking about going to come?" And He answers them, "It's not coming with signs to be observed. The first phase of this Kingdom is not external, it's not universal, it's not physical, rather...verse 21...He says the Kingdom of God is within you.

The first phase of His Kingdom is spiritual, personal, internal. And if you're not a part of that Kingdom, you will never be a part of that external, worldwide, physical Kingdom. We talked about the internal, personal Kingdom, verses 20 and 21, and now we're talking about the external, visible, manifest, earthly reign of the Lord Jesus Christ. He launches, in a sense, that first Kingdom in His first coming. He launches that second aspect in His Second Coming. It is crucial then to any understanding of the life and ministry of Jesus to major on the Second Coming. In fact, one could argue that it is the most important of all doctrines because it is the consummation of all doctrines. Every other doctrine, every other element in redemptive history ends up with the glorification of Christ in His Kingdom which is earthly and then in its final phase eternal. It cannot be minimized. Because it is important, it is laid out for us clearly. It is not obscure in Scripture. It is not hard to find. It is all over the place, both in the Old Testament and in the New Testament and with amazing specificity. Our contemporary evangelical world has become comfortable with the fact that there are all kinds of views of the Second Coming of Jesus Christ as if it is an absolute possibility to understand the reality of it. In fact, books are written which share the multiple views and the multiple perspectives of almost every aspect of the return of the Lord Jesus Christ, as if God had not spoken clearly on the matter. So it's important for us to get a good biblical sound solid look at this massively significant event...the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And to start with something that is very clear and very straightforward and unmistakable, let me read a verse from Acts 1 and it's verse 11. Just listen to this. Jesus had ascended into heaven. He was standing there in one moment talking with His disciples and after He had completed what He had to say, He began to go up, just ascending into heaven by His divine power. He went up and as He went up, they gazed intently, staring with a fixed gaze at this phenomenal occurrence and He disappeared in the clouds. That is the ascension of Jesus described for us there in Acts 1.

While they were in that startled stunned condition of gazing at Jesus leaving, two angels appear. And this is what the angels said, "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." That is unmistakable, unambiguous, crystal clear. He went up physically, bodily, literally, visibly and disappeared behind the clouds. That is precisely the way He will come back...through the clouds visibly, physically, bodily, literally coming down and placing His feet on the Mount of Olives. This is not mystical and there's no secret meaning to this. It is a promise of the literal, physical, bodily, visible return of Jesus Christ to earth. And this is the great culminating moment in God's redemptive history. It must happen. It cannot be set aside.

Let me just give you a few things that demand the Second Coming of Christ. And I want...I want to secure your foundation before we look at our text. First of all, the promise of God demands that Jesus Christ return...the promise of God demands that Jesus Christ return. In the Old Testament God made a number of promises that there would come a Messiah who would set up an everlasting Kingdom. In 2 Samuel 7 this Messiah, this King was to be in the line of the great King David and He was to come

and establish His Kingdom and build a house and establish a throne that would last forever, 2 Samuel chapter 7. In Psalm 2 God actually speaks. In fact, He speaks out of anger, verse 6 of Psalm 2, "As for Me, I have installed My King upon Zion, My holy mountain. I will surely tell of the decree of the Lord, He said to me...writes the psalmist...Thou art My Son, today I have begotten Thee, ask of Me and I will surely give the nations as Thine inheritance."

God says I will establish My King upon Zion, My holy mountain. God says to His own Son, "You are My Son, today I have begotten You. Ask Me and I will give you the nations as Your inheritance, the very ends of the earth as Your possession." The first time Jesus came, that did not happen...that did not happen. Of the three hundred plus messianic prophecies related to the coming of Jesus Christ, about a third of them were fulfilled in the first coming. That leaves two thirds...about two hundred plus...that have not been fulfilled. That necessitates a second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ by the very promise of God. The integrity of God, the credibility of God, the truthfulness of God demands that Jesus Christ return and fulfill those prophecies.

Secondly, the teaching of Jesus demands that He return...the teaching of Jesus Himself. If you were to jump ahead a little and look at Luke 21, you would hear the words of our Lord as He speaks of His own Second Coming, verse 25 of Luke 21, "There will be signs in sun and moon and stars and upon the earth dismay among nations and perplexity at the roaring of the sea and the waves, men fainting from fear and the expectation of the things which are coming upon the world, for the powers of the heaven will be shaken and then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. But when these things begin to take place, straighten up and lift up your heads because your redemption is drawing near." Here Jesus discloses His own Second Coming.

You have a parallel passage to that in Mark 13. You have a parallel passage to that in Matthew chapter 24. In Luke 17 Jesus Himself is speaking here about the days of the revealing of the Son of Man, verse 30. In John 14 He said, "If I go away, I will come again and receive you unto Myself that where I am there you may be also." The trustworthiness of God demands the Second Coming and the trustworthiness of Jesus demands the Second Coming.

Thirdly, the word of the Spirit demands the Second Coming. The Spirit is the author of Scripture, all prophecies of the Second Coming are written down by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit who is then the divine member of the Trinity assigned the responsibility to inspire the writers to write and the Spirit then has spoken in the Word and every prophecy calling for the Second Coming is a prophecy that has come by means of the Spirit to us in the written Word. And therefore, the Spirit who says He will come, being trustworthy, necessitates that coming.

In Revelation chapter 3 and in verse 11, you don't need to turn to it, I'll just mention it to you. Jesus says, Revelation 3:11, "I am coming quickly. Hold fast what you have in order that no one take your crown." On this occasion He's speaking about His coming which is a plus for those who believe, for

those who believe to hold on to their crowns so that when He's here they receive a full reward. Two verses later, our Lord Himself says, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches." When He writes a letter to the church, it is a letter that comes by way of the Spirit. So listen to what the Spirit says about the Lord coming quickly.

The promise of God, the teaching of Jesus, the Word of the Spirit demands the Second Coming. God's plan for the church demands a Second Coming. It cannot be over for the church. John 14, I just mentioned to you that He will come and receive us to Himself. He is now preparing a place for us. First Thessalonians 4, "If we believe Jesus died," verse 14, "and rose again, even so, God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep in Jesus. Here is how it's going to happen. The Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, the voice of the archangel, the trumpet of God and the dead in Christ shall rise first we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with Him in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and thus we shall always be with the Lord." The great Rapture of the church. This is God's plan for the church. The history of the church culminates when the Lord calls for His church. John 14, 1 Thessalonians 4 and 1 Corinthians 15, "In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye we're changed and transported into heaven." That's what triggers the events surrounding the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. His plan for the church demands that the church be gathered to Him in glory and then according to Revelation chapter 19, after having been gathered to Him in glory, before He comes all the way to earth to set up His Kingdom and judge the ungodly, we spend some time with Him in fellowship and when He comes, we come with Him. Revelation 19 pictures Him. Heaven opens in verse 11, Revelation 19, a white horse, the one sitting on it is called Faithful and True. In righteousness He judges and wages war. He comes, first of all, in judgment. And it tells us in verse 14, "The armies which are in heaven," that would be all the believers gathered there, "clothed in fine linen, white and clean," I think the clothing of the redeemed, "Following Him on white horses." He comes for us and then later we come with Him. He comes back with His glorified church and all the glorified saints. The plan for the church demands that Christ come for His church, that He bring His church to Himself in glory and then return to earth with His glorified saints to dwell here in His Kingdom.

But not just the church, the future of Israel also demands that Jesus come again. And that is laid out for us, perhaps as clearly as anywhere, by the prophet Zechariah. In Zechariah chapter 12 and verse 10 we read this, "Looking at the future, I will pour out on the House of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and supplication so that they will look on Me whom they have pierced and they will mourn for Him as one mourns for an only son and they will weep bitterly over Him like the bitter weeping of a firstborn." In the future, the people of Israel are going to recognize what they did to their Messiah. They're going to recognize they pierced their own God and they're going to mourn. And it will be a great mourning. The land will mourn. Every family will mourn. The wives will mourn. The families here and there by name will mourn. And in that day, chapter 13 verse 1, a fountain will be open for the House of David, the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for impurity. Salvation will come. They'll recognize Christ. They'll recognize the sin of rejection. They'll embrace

the true gospel. They will be cleansed. And then, chapter 14 follows up, verse 4, "In that day His feet...that is the Lord who goes forth out of heaven...will stand on the Mount of Olives which is in front of Jerusalem on the east, and the Mount of Olives will be split in its middle from east to west by a large valley so that half the mountain will move toward the north, the other half toward the south." Once Israel understands what they have done, turns to their Messiah, they are saved and that triggers the final return of the Lord who comes out of heaven in judgment and as well to establish His glorious Kingdom. Verse 9, chapter 14, "The Lord will be King over all the earth. In that day the Lord will be the only one and His name the only one." The future of Israel demands a Second Coming to establish the promised Kingdom which will occur after Israel's salvation.

There's another very important matter that demands the return of Christ, let's call it the corruption of the world. The last chapter of world history cannot be the one we're living in now. For anybody to say this is the final Kingdom, to me is ludicrous. The final chapter has not yet been written. The corruption of the world in the hands of the evil usurper, Satan, is not the last part of God's history of redemption. In fact, 2 Thessalonians chapter 1 verse 7 tells us that the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire. It's not just the Lord that comes back. It's not just the glorified saints that come back. It's the angels who come in flaming fire as part of the judgment, dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus and these will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power when He comes to be glorified in His saints on that day. So it's two-fold. He comes to be glorified in His saints, to establish His Kingdom, comes with His saints, comes to meet His saints who have come to believe here on earth and saints alive and saints glorified go into that glorious Kingdom, but not until there is judgment. And none of this happens until Israel has come to embrace the Lord Jesus Christ. This corrupt and evil world will be judged when the Lord comes back and the paradise lost will be the paradise regained. That's why in Revelation 6:10, the martyrs under the altar saying, "How long, O Lord? How long are You going to wait until You vindicate Yourself? Until You come and destroy the wicked and the ungodly.

And that leads us to the next demand for the Second Coming, the exaltation of Jesus Christ. This world has not seen the last of Jesus. They have made Him in to a cartoon character today. They mock Him freely. They scorn Him. They reject Him. They treat Him with trifling attitudes and indifference. But they have not seen the last of Him. In Matthew chapter 24 and verse 29, Jesus says, "Immediately after of the Tribulation of those days, the sun will be darkened, the moon will not give its light. The stars will fall from the sky and the powers of the heaven will be shaken." The sky as we know it will go into collapse. It will become black, blacker than ever in history. And then, "The sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky." He will light up the sky. "And all the tribes of the earth will mourn and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky with power and great glory." He's coming with great glory, massive glory. Not the humility He came with in the humble stable in Bethlehem.

So when you're talking about the Second Coming, you're talking about something that must happen. The promise of God demands it. The teaching of Jesus demands it. The Word of the Spirit demands it. The church demands it. The future of Israel demands it. The corruption of the world demands it. The vindication and exaltation of Jesus Christ demands it. And the destruction of Satan demands it...the destruction of Satan demands it. Genesis 3:15 says that though the enemy will bruise the heel of the Messiah, the Messiah will crush his head. He will crush his head. We read in the twentieth chapter of Revelation how that when the Lord Jesus returns, He ties Satan up in a great chain and throws him into a pit with all the demons, after which he's loosed for a little season and then thrown forever into the eternal Lake of Fire prepared for the devil and his angels and all others who reject Christ. The destruction of Satan demands that Jesus come back, that He take the scroll as described in Revelation chapter 5, unroll the scroll which is the Title Deed to the earth. And each time one of the seven seals is broken, judgment will come on the face of the earth. He will mete out that judgment as He takes back what is rightfully His from Satan, the usurper.

And finally, the hope of the saints demands it. First Thessalonians 1:10, "We wait for the coming of the Lord." Titus 2:13, "We are looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." You will dismantle evangelical doctrine, you will dismantle the gospel without a proper understanding of the consummate significance of the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. Yes, it's wonderful to celebrate the internal Kingdom, the personal, spiritual Kingdom. Yes, it's essential to have the King dwelling within you. It's essential to have the Trinity take up residence in your heart, to have Christ in you and the Father make His abode there and the Spirit take up residence. That's essential to be a part of that spiritual Kingdom. But it does not preclude that final, physical, universal, external Kingdom. In the first one, Christ reigns over an individual's life. In the second one He reigns over the whole world. Both are critical to the purposes of God.

But in spite of this, and because of it, because it is the way the story ends, and because it is the truth, it is attacked.

Just like the deity of Jesus is attacked, like the Trinity is attacked, like the gospel of grace is attacked, like every true doctrine is attacked, this one is attacked. And as we get closer and closer to the day that it's going to happen, perhaps the more frequent the attacks become.

Look at 2 Peter chapter 3 for a moment. This gives you a perspective. And it's been a long time since we discussed the Second Coming of the Lord, so it's good to fill in the good and necessary components of a foundation for a sound, biblical eschatology. In 2 Peter chapter 3 and verse 3, Peter says this, "Know this, first of all," get this in your head, don't be surprised, expect it, "it is certain that in the last days, the days since Messiah's first coming, in the last days mockers will come with their mocking, following after their own lusts, driven by their own lusts, their own ignorance," and here's what they say, "Where is the promise of His coming?" They mock the Second Coming of Jesus. They

mock His return. They scoff at it. And their argument is the argument of uniformitarianism, that everything is always the same, nothing cataclysmic ever happens. Verse 4, "Ever since the fathers fell asleep, all continues just as it was from the beginning of creation." Nothing ever changes. This is the theory of uniformitarianism that feeds evolution, everything goes along the same pace, nothing ever varies, nothing ever changes, everything is simply going at the same speed all the time. That's their theory. Their idea is, nothing like this could ever happen because it never has happened. Which is a pretty ridiculous argument. It's like saying, "I won't die, I never have."

But they're even wrong about their supposed uniformitarianism, for when they maintain this, verse 5 says, it escapes their notice conveniently that by the Word of God the heavens existed long ago and the earth was formed out of water and by water. And what he's referring to is creation. They forget that this world as we know it is not a product of continuity, of forces moving at a uniform rate. This universe, this earth on which we live is the result of a massive cataclysm called creation in which in six days God created a mature universe with full-grown adults and full-grown animals and plants, and full-grown systems all life systems in full power of operation and absolutely perfect. And He did it in six twenty-four-hour days. That is a cataclysm in which everything was sped up at an infinite rate by the creative power of God. Everything is not operating on a uniform time basis.

Further, he says at the end of verse 6...or at the end of verse 5 that the shaping of this earth as we know it was done as God moved the water and the earth around. He formed it and shaped it in the great creation, first it was all covered with water, then He brought up the continents and put the water where He wanted the water to go and shaped the earth by moving the water around. And speaking of water, he goes on in verse 6 to refer to the Flood through which the world at that time was destroyed, being flooded with water. All things have not continued the same since the beginning. You have two great cataclysms...the cataclysm of creation in six days, and the cataclysm of the Flood in which God literally reshaped the surface the earth, broke up the masses of land and reappointed the water to new places. The water came pouring up from underneath the earth, pouring down from the canopy over the earth and shaped the earth as we know it today. These were cataclysmic events.

And just as there have been these cataclysmic events in the past, verse 7, the present heavens and earth by His word are being reserved for fire, kept for the day of judgment, destruction of ungodly men. There's coming a cataclysm in the future that's going to be, in a sense, the reverse of creation, it's going to be the uncreation. And the entire universe implodes. Verse 8, "Don't let this one fact escape your notice." What's that? Beloved, with the Lord, one day is like a thousand years and a thousand years is one day.

Somebody is going to say, "Well He hasn't come and it's been two thousand years since Jesus was here. And where is He? He hasn't come. He isn't going to come. Everything is going to continue the same way it is, we're all going just to keep going along this way." There are even evangelical Christians who believe that. There's not going to be any cataclysmic return of Jesus Christ to this

earth, it hasn't happened, it won't happen. But you forget, God is eternal, and with God one day is a thousand years and a thousand years is one day. And he says then in verse 9, "The Lord is not slow about His promise." That's not the issue, as some count slowness. "But is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but all to come to repentance." The Lord is not going to come until all have come to repentance. The patience of God is waiting for the completion of the redeemed. But...verse 10, "When it happens the day of the Lord will come like a thief in which the heavens will pass away with a roar, the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, the earth and its works will be burned up." Don't be foolish. Don't join the mockers. It's going to happen.

Then he poses the important question in verse 11, "Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness?" You better be ready, looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God on account of which the heavens will be destroyed by burning and the elements will melt with intense heat. That's an atomic explosion when God splits all the atoms in this created universe and it goes out of existence.

Yes, there will be a return of Jesus Christ. Yes, He will come. He will come for His church and gather us to Himself. Then on earth will come a series of judgments, precursors to the day of the Lord that comes at the end of that seven-year period. When Christ returns He will return because Israel has come to salvation, along with vast multitudes across the earth. He will return. He will judge all the ungodly. And He will then set up His glorious Kingdom. It's really unmistakable. It's not hard to understand, it's hard to misunderstand. You have to do all kinds of convoluted things to come up with anything else. Now let's go back to Luke 17.

Is our Lord concerned that we understand the Second Coming? Absolutely, as we're going to find out starting here in chapter 17 verse 22, all the way through chapter 21, we're going to be running into His teaching on this great coming event. He wants us to understand that He is coming. And as I said, in this particular section, it is not the sequence, or the chronology, it's the nature of the event. And in particular here, He focuses on the judgment aspect of it...the judgment aspect of it because we need to understand the terror of the Lord. The disciples to whom He says this, according to verse 22, need to understand it. The Pharisees who are there listening need to understand it, that if you're not in the spiritual Kingdom, you'll never be in the material Kingdom. If you're not in the internal Kingdom, you'll never be in the external Kingdom. They need to understand this is a reality. And, of course, as I told you last time, the Jews were all thinking, "We're already in. When the Lord comes we're going to be part of the Kingdom." And what He's saying to them is, what you're going to do is experience devastating judgment, you'll never see the Kingdom. If you're not in the spiritual Kingdom, you'll never be in the physical Kingdom. If you're not in the personal Kingdom, you'll never be in the universal Kingdom. And so, it's really warning that He lays out here, describing the judgment nature of the Kingdom.

Now, last time we talked about verse 22 and we said...there are several points that I laid out for you. First of all, He wants us to understanding that Jesus' coming will be desired by believers. So in verse 22, "The days will come when you long to see one of the days of the Son of Man, you will not see it." You'll desire it, and it's true, we wait for His coming, we long for His coming, we look for His coming. We say with the Apostle John, "Even so, come Lord Jesus." We looked at that last time.

The second point that I want you to see, and be patient with me because this is important enough for us to work our way slowly through it. I'm not going to sermonize this, I just want to unfold the passage for you. But the second point is, Jesus' coming will not only be desired by believers, and that we know to be true, but it will be visible globally...it will be visible globally. Look at verse 23, "And they will say to you, 'Look here, or look there, do not go away, do not run after them.'" If somebody comes along and says, "Jesus is coming over there...Oh, Jesus is coming over here, or He has come over there, or He has already come over here," do not go away. Don't run after them." Don't head off at their bidding into those directions. For...verse 24, "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."

Now His first coming was quiet and obscure in Bethlehem in a manger with no real fanfare. But the second time He comes there won't just be a few folks who know about it. The next time He comes, everybody is going to know about it because it's going to be visible all over the world. And this is a good warning because even believers come to the point where we get a little eager for the coming of the Lord, we get a little susceptible to the deception. I remember when people running out buying prophecy books that Jesus was going to come in this generation and it started in 1948 and a generation is 40 years so He's got to be here by 1988 and all kinds of people were anticipating that. There have been lots of people who have predicted that He's going to come. There are people who say, Christian people who say, well He already came, He came in 70 A.D., that's the only coming that He'll ever have and it was a spiritual one. Or there are those Christians who say He comes whenever somebody is saved and that's it. You can't see it, the world can't see it but it's happening spiritually. There are some cults who say He came at a certain time and did some cleansing work and established a false religion while He was here...strange thing for Him to do. And only the people who were in the secret knowledge know that. There are all kinds of views.

But this simply obliterates all of that. Whenever a false teacher says, "Look there...Look here," don't believe them. Again in chapter 21 and verse 8, Jesus says, "See to it that you be not misled for many will come in My name saying, 'I am He,' and the time is at hand, don't go after them." Don't go after them....don't chase every so-called Messiah, every so-called date. Don't run after everybody who says, "I am the Messiah," or who says, "The Lord is at hand, He's coming here, He's coming now," don't do that.

Again in Matthew 24, the same warning is given by our Lord. It's...starts in verse...well we'll start it in verse 23, "If anyone says to you, 'Behold, here is the Christ,' or 'There He is,' don't believe Him. False

Christs, false prophets will arise, show many signs and wonders so as to mislead, if possible, even the elect. I've told you in advance, if you...if therefore they say to you, 'Behold He is in the wilderness,' don't go over there. Or, 'Behold, He's in the inner rooms,' don't believe them." Why? "For just as the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so shall the coming of the Son of Man be." What's He saying? He's saying, it's not going to be anything somebody has to point out to you, it's going to be obvious. It's like lightning, it's like a lightning storm and it starts at one end of the sky and flashes across to the other end of the sky. That's the imagery here. The Second Coming of Christ is not some secret event that happened in the destruction of Jerusalem. It was not some private thing that occurred to a group of apostles. It was...it is not something that happens personally to individual believers. It is a worldwide event that is visible. Reject all other ideas. Reject all other ideas. When the King returns to judge and when He returns to set up His Kingdom, no one will need to give us the secret knowledge. Everybody is going to know. It's going to be like lightning flashing from one end of the sky to the other end of the sky, and it's a Greek idiom that means precisely that.

How visible will it be? Turn to Revelation chapter 1. We already read in Matthew chapter 24 how visible it's going to be. How could it be mistaken when just what I read you it tells us there that, verse 29, the sun will be darkened, the moon will not give its light, the stars will fall from the sky. The powers of the heavens will be shaken. That ought to be clear to everybody. Nobody could possibly miss the collapse of the universe. "And then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky."

But look at Revelation 1:7. "Behold, He is coming with the clouds and every eye will see Him, even those who pierced Him and those who belong to the company of those who rejected Him, all unbelievers, all the tribes of the earth will mourn over Him, even so amen, it is time for His vindication. Let the unbelievers mourn." Every eye will see Him.

Well there's no question that when Jesus comes, nobody is going to be wondering if it happened. Again chapter 19, we looked at earlier, "Heaven opens, out comes a white horse. Sitting on the horse...horse is one called Faithful and True." Then He comes. Now remember, the universe is black and dark. There's no sky, as we know it. There are not stars, no moon, no sun as we know it. The whole thing rolls up. One blazing, flaming Shekinah light, the sign of the Son of Man in heaven, He appears. He is distinguishable in this vision as one whose eyes are a flame of fire. "On His head are many diadems, verse 12, a name written on Him which no one knows except Himself. I can't tell you how many people have asked me what that name is. He's clothed with a robe dipped in blood. His name is called The Word of God.. It's another name. And the armies which are in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, following Him on white horses. Out of His mouth comes a white sword. With it He will smite the nations, rule them with a rod of iron. Tread the winepress with the fierce wrath of God the Almighty, on His robe, on His thigh, has a name written King of kings and Lord of lords."

There's no question that this is going to be visible globally. It's like lightning, it goes from one end of the sky to the other. It's unmistakable. Everybody who can see, sees the lightning. And the lightning expresses suddenness and unmistakable visibility. Now remember, this is not the Rapture. The Rapture is that event where the Lord takes His church to glory, then starts the judgment, precursors to the day of the Lord, redeems Israel and a massive multitude, as we learn in the book of Revelation. And when that time is completed and Israel has come to faith, a fountain of cleansing has been opened to them, then He comes back to bring the promised Kingdom for them and for all the saints and establishes His Kingdom on earth after having judged the world of ungodly men and women.

There's one other point in Luke 17 that I would just mention to you. And we will move a little faster, but these were very foundational truths for today. A third point, His coming will be desired, His coming will be visible, thirdly, His coming will be delayed...it will be delayed. Verse 25, "But first He must suffer many things and be rejected by this generation." First He must suffer many things and be rejected by this generation.

It's good that He said that. He said it often. I won't take you through every time He said it, but just in Luke's gospel He told them He was going to suffer...Luke 9; Luke 12; Luke 13. It comes up again in chapter 18 and, of course, look back at it in chapter 24. In chapter 24 verses 6 to 8, the women who came and realized what had happened to their Lord, it says, remembered what He had said. It helped to strengthen them. He kept telling them, "I'm going to suffer...I'm going to suffer." He would have to suffer for sin as a substitute or there wouldn't be any internal Kingdom or external Kingdom because He had to redeem His own who would then inhabit His Kingdom. And so He cannot set up His Kingdom until He suffers. And, He says, He must be rejected by this nation, this *genea*, this nation. What nation? Israel....Israel. The Pharisees, of course, but the nation Israel, they rejected Him. And as long as they keep rejecting Him, then He does not come to establish the Kingdom.

How did He characterize that generation? With great sadness. Chapter 9 verse 41 He said, "O unbelieving and perverse generation." You are an unbelieving faithless perverse nation, speaking of Israel. Chapter 11 and verse 29, "This nation is a wicked nation, perverse, faithless, wicked." Chapter 11 verse 50, "The blood of all the prophets shed since the foundation of the world may be charged against this nation. From the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah who perished between the altar and the house of God, I tell you, it will be charged against this generation." They murdered the prophets. They killed the prophets. They killed their Messiah. It is a perverse and faithless and wicked and murderous generation. Chapter 7 verses 31 and 32 He said, "You're an obstinate generation." No matter...you're like children, somebody wants to play a game with happiness and you won't play. Somebody wants to play a game of sadness, and you won't play. You're just indifferent, apathetic and obstinate. This is the generation that rejected Jesus Christ.

When the rejection of Jesus Christ by Israel ends and Israel is saved and they will be, all Israel will be saved. Paul says that in Romans absolutely unequivocally. Then they will be purged from their sins

and the Kingdom will come. Not until.

Now we're not waiting for that because the Rapture of the church happens first, then the judgments begin to fall on the earth. And it's during that time of Tribulation, that seventieth week of Daniel, that Israel is converted. There's nothing that needs to happen prophetically before the Rapture...and we're gone. And then all hell at the hands of God breaks out in this world. But He cannot come until He suffers many things...His death, but also His rejection, ongoing rejection by the people to whom the Covenant of a Kingdom was first promised. There will be a day when Israel repents and believes and are cleansed and receives that glorious Kingdom and we'll come back with Christ to establish that Kingdom and reign forever with Him.

Our Lord's coming will be desired. It is desired, visible, no one will miss it and delayed until God's time is perfect for the salvation of Israel. Next time we'll look at His coming will be unexpected, okay?

Father, we thank You for the Word and its clarity. It's hard to understand how people can be confused about what is so clear. Save us from overspeculating about minutia in details and overanalyzing the things that are happening around us in our day. Help us to live just in the glory of the coming of the Lord Jesus, knowing that it will happen just as surely as the first coming happened and as every other promise in Scripture is true, this one is as well. And we look for that day, we long for it all to begin. We long for You to come and take Your church so that we can fellowship with You and that You can begin the purging and salvation of Israel that leads to the return of Christ and His exaltation and the establishment of His glorious Kingdom. So we say with John, "Even so, come Lord Jesus," and may we who know these things to be true be the kind of persons we ought to be, believing in Christ and living as He would have us to live. We thank You in His name. Amen.

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