

## **The Trinitarian Testimony of Jesus' Coming**

Luke 21:8

42-253

This morning it's our wonderful privilege to return to the 21st chapter of the gospel of Luke. You can take your Bible or one near you there in the pew, and turn to Luke chapter 21.

As you well know because we've been working our way through the gospel of Luke, we find ourselves in the 21st chapter of Luke on a Wednesday, unlike any other Wednesday. This is Wednesday of Passion Week, the final week of our Lord's life. On Thursday there will be preparations and a Passover meal held with Jesus and His disciples and He will give them His great spiritual legacy in the upper room teaching. He will be betrayed, and on Friday He will be crucified. On Sunday He will rise again. But this is Wednesday. It is twilight on that Wednesday and Jesus is with His disciples now. He has left the hateful rulers behind after numerous confrontations with them in which they had endeavored to discredit Him publicly so they could have cause for the Romans to execute Him. All unsuccessful and so in order to execute Him they had to fabricate and lie, come up with false accusations. He has left them behind. He has left behind the crowd still indifferent, still uncommitted even after all that Jesus had said and done, leaving the temple with only His disciples.

From now on He will speak only to them. It is twilight then on that Wednesday. They are gathered around Him on the Mount of Olives. And from a human viewpoint, it looked as if all their hopes and ambitions and desires for Him had been smashed and crushed. In a combination of very evident and obvious hatred and hostility from the leaders and at best indifference from the crowd, it was a far cry from their expectation that Jesus would come and be hailed and received as the true Messiah, as it seemed He might be on that very Monday when He came into Jerusalem. But the crowd was growing colder and colder toward Him and eventually they would cry, "Crucify Him, crucify Him," and commiserate with the leaders in His own execution.

This wasn't the way they expected it to turn out. And as they leave the temple, we pick up the story in verse 5. "Some were talking about the temple, that it was adorned with beautiful stones and votive gifts. He said, 'As for these things which you're looking at, the days will come in which there will not be left one stone upon another which will not be torn down.'" Walking away from the temple, looking back at that magnificent facility; Jesus says, "It's all coming down." The temple, the city, the people, the nation, and, by the way, it is a long-term judgment. He had said this before, that Jerusalem would be judged by God and that it would remain under that judgment and the desolation of that judgment until the Jewish people embraced their Messiah. He said, "Your nation is desolate and it will be desolate until you say, 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord.'" And so, the desolation that was pronounced upon that temple and that city remains to this day. It is not the city of God, it is still a city under divine judgment. It has no temple, it has no faith in the Messiah, Jesus Christ, and so it remains in desolation.

They didn't expect that. There was no way that they would have expected that any judgment on that

temple, any judgment on that city or nation would last this long. They knew the Lord was displeased because on Tuesday, the day before this, He had cleansed the temple. He had run out the buyers and the sellers who had turned His Father's house, which is a house of prayer, into a den of thieves, cave of robbers. They knew He was displeased. They knew the populace and the leaders had rejected Him. But their assumption was that whatever judgment is going to come is going to come and immediately be relieved by a restoration and a revival and an establishment of the reign of Messiah. It all is going to come together. They had no idea of this great interval of several millennia. And so, when they hear about the coming destruction, which began in 70 A.D., forty years after this, when the Romans destroyed the temple and the city and the nation, they questioned Him, saying, "Teacher when, therefore, will these things be? And what will be the sign when these things are about to take place?" And Matthew's account of this same conversation adds, "What will be the sign of Your coming and the end of the age?" They thought the judgment and the signs of judgment and the coming of Christ in glory and the end of the age and the establishment of the messianic age was all going to happen at the same time, certainly in Jesus' lifetime because He was the Messiah and therefore in their own lifetime as well. And that's why even after His resurrection, when they were meeting with Him, they said, "Will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" Is it now? Is it now? They expected it all to happen then. And if there was going to be judgment, the judgment would come. It would then be relieved and Christ would be present to establish His kingdom of righteousness as promised in the Old Testament.

But Jesus says in verse 8, and I just want us to look at this, this morning, and we'll expand it a lot, "See to it that you be not misled." You are in a very vulnerable position. You have an intense hope for all fulfillment of messianic promise. You can therefore be verily easy misled. You can be deceived. Your enthusiasm for this, your expectation of this puts you in a very vulnerable place. "Do not be misled, for many will come in My name, claiming to be Me and represent Me saying, 'I am He,' and saying, 'The time is at hand.' Do not go after them."

Here is a hint that His coming is a long way off. It has to be a long way off because in the meantime they're in a danger of being deceived because they have so much anticipation and eagerness and in that anticipation and eagerness, there will be many who come and make false claims to be the Messiah, false claims that this is the time of His coming and establishing His kingdom. He says, "Do not go after them." In verse 9, He says, "When you hear of wars and disturbances, do not be terrified, for these things must take place first, but the end does not follow immediately." And here He says, whatever you expect, it isn't coming soon. They're going to be wars, disturbances, terrifying things. There are going to be many, many false claimants to be Messiah, many saying the time is now, the time is now, the time is now. Don't be misled. The end does not follow immediately. It's a long way off.

Is He coming at all? Look at verse 27, "You will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory." Yes, He is coming. You will see Him coming. "But before that, many things must take place." Starting in verse 9 and running all the way to verse 27, He describes the preliminaries to His coming. Then he describes His coming and then He describes how to prepare for His coming. This then is a sermon by Jesus about His own return in which He warns us to realize it's a long way off. There are many preliminary things that are going to happen before He comes. He will come and then says, here's how to prepare for His coming. We're going to work our way through all of this. And by the way, Mark 13 has a parallel account to this and an even more full account of this is found in Matthew chapter 24 and 25, the largest record of our Lord's conversation with the disciples about His return. This is so important. The timing of this is absolutely critical because it looks to the disciples

and I'm sure it looked to everybody else as if the last chapter on Jesus was about to be written in two days. He would die on a cross and that is the end of that. The people had not responded to Him. The leaders had not received Him. In fact, just the opposite; they resented and despised Him. This is not the scenario that everybody expected, even those who were true believers anticipating the coming of Messiah. It wasn't going in the right direction. He leaves the temple alone with only His disciples following Him. That's all He has after this full ministry of three years, after this tremendously intense week and this wild reception on Monday, there's just the disciples, a few left.

On the side of the Mount of Olives in the twilight and Jesus says, this is not the last chapter. This is not the last chapter. I'll come, I will return when the desolation is over, I will return. When Israel looks on the one they pierced and mourns for Him as an only Son, as Zechariah put it, when they say, "Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord," I will return and I will fulfill all the promise.

It is said that future predictive prophecy occupies one fifth of Scripture, not a small amount. Of that one fifth of Scripture which is predictive prophecy, one third of that speaks of the return of the Lord Jesus Christ to judge sinners and to reward and reign with the righteous. So one third of the one fifth is focused on the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. There are about 660 general prophecies in the Bible. Half of them are about Jesus Christ. Of the 330 that are about Christ, 110 of them are about His first coming and 220 of them are about His Second Coming. So there is a huge amount of Scripture that focuses on the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. Another sort of statistical way to look at the importance of this subject is, out of the forty-six Old Testament prophets, ten of them spoke of matters related to His first coming. Thirty-six of them spoke of matters related to His Second Coming. Someone has estimated that over 1500 verses in the Old Testament look to the return of the Messiah in glory and judgment. One out of every twenty-five verses in the New Testament relates to Christ's return. For every time Christ mentions His first coming, He mentions His second coming eight times. That is every time the New Testament mentions His first coming, it mentions His second coming eight times. Our Lord referred to it twenty times and there are over fifty times in the New Testament we are warned that He's coming. He's coming.

In spite of that, look at 2 Peter 3 for a moment. In spite of that, and because of that, because it is a cardinal doctrine of Christianity, because it is a foundational truth of Christianity, because in a sense it is the main truth, because at the end of the story is the point for the story, the end of the story is the reason for the story, because it is so important, you would know that the enemy of God would assault it. And so we find in verse 3 of 2 Peter 3, Peter saying this, "Know this, first of all, that in the last days..." What is that? The time since Messiah came. When Jesus came the first time, that inaugurated the last days. As the other writers tell us, Christ appeared once in the end of the age. Or as John says, "Little children, it is the last time." We're living in messianic times, so these are the last days.

"In the last days, mockers will come with their mocking following after their own lusts and saying, "Where is the promise of His coming?" Scoffers and mockers will deny the Second Coming of Jesus Christ because it is associated with accountability and judgment and they want to continue to live in full, lavish indulgence in their own lusts and therefore they don't want to contemplate any coming judge and judgment. And so, cultivating their own lusts, they mock the idea. Their argument is pretty basic. They say this, "Ever since the fathers fell asleep, all continues just as it was from the beginning of creation." This is the argument of uniformity. What do you mean Jesus is coming and He's going to judge the world and destroy the earth and give a new and renovated earth to...to His glorious kingdom and then create a New Heaven and a New Earth? That's not going to happen. No

such change will ever come." Reason: It never has happened. Which is like saying: "I'm not going to die. I never have. I'm not going to get cancer, I never have. I'm not going to have a heart attack, I never have." This is a very simplistic argument. Why should we believe that? Nothing has ever changed since the creation. That's what evolutionists would have you believe. It all just goes along the same way.

However, says Peter, "When they maintain this" verse 5 "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 through which the world at that time was destroyed, being flooded by water." Did they forget that all things have not continued from the beginning as they were? There was a worldwide universal flood that drowned the entire human race with the exception of eight people. Pretty significant, I think. Have they willfully overlooked that? They have a model for total judgment. They have a model for massive devastation. And next time, verse 7, it's coming by fire not by water. By fire will come the Day of Judgment and destruction of ungodly men. Unless you think because a couple of thousand years have gone by since Jesus pronounced these judgments, then be reminded of verse 8. "Don't let this one fact escape your notice, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years and a thousand years as one day."

The day of the Lord, he says in verse 10, will come like a thief with stealth and the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat and the earth and His work shall be burned up. It's coming. And verse 13 says, we are looking for a new heaven and a new earth. So in spite of the scoffers, in spite of the mockers who wanted to continue in the expression of their own lusts, don't like the concept of the idea of accountability to God, don't like to think of facing a judge, they will. But they conveniently eliminate it from the realm of acceptable possibilities because it impinges upon their sin.

We are being warned a lot in this society. In my life growing up...I've been around long enough to know. I don't remember so many warnings. Just about everything you buy has a warning on it, doesn't it? Everything. We have warning labels coming at us from everywhere. And we're constantly being warned by... warned by the doomsayers, warned about pollution is going to destroy our planet. Pollution is going to...petroleum products of some kind are going to destroy our planet. Or carbon poisoning, or some other kind of toxic waste, or melting ice caps or nuclear war or global warming. And we hear it all the time, just endless. Some meteor is going to crash into the earth and scatter us into the universe into oblivion. I'm actually waiting to get a call from CNN or NBC or somewhere saying, "John, we have just discovered that there's a massive amount of reliable evidence that Jesus is coming back to judge sinners and destroy the earth. Could you please come on and explain this to us?" Folks, I'm not holding my breath. Christian yoga, maybe, but not that.

And I'll tell you in all honesty, I'm working hard at it. I'm really trying to believe the scientists. I do understand the value of science. I'm trying just to figure out which ones to believe because the ones that are linked to all the doomsday prophecies are loaded with so many suppositions that I'm not just exactly sure how objective any of this information is, but when it's all said and done, I will just tell you this...and I'm ready, if CNN wants me any time, to say, "None of that is going to destroy this world. This world will be destroyed by its Creator Himself." As I've said to these people on occasion, if you think we're messing up the planet, wait till you see what Jesus does when He gets here. Heaven is going to unleash incomprehensible, devastating judgment power, first of all, on all the ungodly in this world, then on the planet itself, restoring it, giving it a new life in which then Christ reigns for a thousand years, then it is completely imploded in a nuclear holocaust in which it disintegrates into

nothingness and is replaced by a new heaven and a new earth, that's how it ends. And it's all associated with the return of Jesus Christ. And there is massive evidence, reliable evidence, evidence from the most reliable source in the universe, God. This is the Word of the Creator, Sustainer, and Consummator of everything that exists. Let Him tell me the future. He who wrote it, let Him tell me. He who created it, He who sustains it, let Him tell me how it ends. And that's the truth from God.

The present earth will not be destroyed by anything inanimate, no pollution, no hydro-carbons, no bombs, no meteors, no ocean inundation, no earthquakes. The earth will be attacked by its maker for it is a disposable planet, only to serve for a few thousand years and be gone. He will return first to gather His own into heaven. Then to punish sinners in a fiery destruction that is detailed for us in the Old and New Testaments. He will then in a renovated world after the destruction is over, set up His kingdom for a thousand years, after which He will create a new heaven and a new earth where all who belong to Him will dwell in sinless perfection and perfect joy and peace forever, while the unbelieving spend forever in hell. That's where we're headed. And we can't be too far away.

So in our text, this is what Jesus is going to tell us about. He's coming. He's going to point us in the direction of preliminary events and how to be prepared. But before we look at the warning itself in Luke 21, let's remind ourselves that this is not new. Let's go back to Luke chapter 12, Luke chapter 12 verse 35, "Be dressed in readiness, keep your lamps lit." These are the words of Jesus, "Be like men who are waiting for their master when he returns from a wedding feast so that they may immediately open the door to Him when He knocks and comes...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. 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 you do not expect."

Turn to chapter 17, chapter 17 and verse 22, Jesus again says to His disciples, "The days will come when you will long to see one of the days of the Son of Man, you will not see it." You'll wish I were here. You'll wish I was around. I won't be. And they will say to you, "Look here, look there, here's the Messiah, there's the Messiah. Here's the kingdom, there's the kingdom. Do not go away and do not run after them. You will know when I come." Don't let anybody tell you it happened in 70 A.D. like the preterists do. Don't let anybody tell you it happened in 1880 or 1920-something, and it was a spiritual coming, like the cults do. Don't let anybody tell you that He's here, you just can't recognize Him. You'll recognize Him because verse 24 says, "When He comes, it will be like lightning flashing out of one part of the sky, shining to the other part of the sky, so will the Son of Man be in that day. But first He must suffer many things and be rejected by this generation." So first He comes, He's rejected, He suffers for sin. Then is a long period of time before He comes again. And why is He waiting all of this time? Peter answers that question in the text we looked at earlier, "The Lord is not slow concerning His promise as some men count slowness, but is long-suffering, not willing that any should perish." This is the time when He gathers in His redeemed church.

And so, Jesus has said much about this. He has given ample warning about this. In chapter 19, just as He was leaving Jericho after healing Zacchaeus on His way into Jerusalem for this Passover, He says, "A certain nobleman went to a distant country to receive a kingdom for himself and then return." He's talking about Himself. He's going away and he will return. "But there were citizens,"

verse 14 says, "who hated him, sent a delegation after him saying, 'We don't want this man to reign over us.' And it came about that when he returned after receiving the kingdom, he ordered that these slaves to whom he had given the money be called to him in order that he might know what business they had done." It's accounting time, and you remember that. It's accounting time. The rest of the parable tells about he confronts what people did while he was gone, and it all comes down to verse 26. "Everyone who has shall be given more." Those who were faithful shall receive blessing. "But from the one who doesn't have, even what he does have will be taken away. These enemies of mine who did not want me to reign over them, bring them here and slay them in my presence."

So our Lord has given very strong warning about His coming. It is a coming of blessing for the saints. It is a coming of judgment for the world. And the moment again is so poignant. Let's go back, for a moment, to Luke 21. It's so poignant at this moment that Jesus give the most comprehensive, complete treatment of His Second Coming that He ever gave in His ministry. It was imperative for Him to tell them that they had not seen the last chapter. He not only would die, not only would rise, but after a long time He would return.

Now when we contemplate this big picture, I...I.. I want to back away from the text for a minute before we get into it. I want to give you the big picture of the Second Coming. I am committed to the fact, and I'm sure you are if you know the Bible at all, that this is a cardinal doctrine of the Christian faith, not to be mocked at or scoffed at. The end of the story is the reason for the story. This is the great glory of Christ yet to come. It will happen, Jesus will return. God's person demands it. God's program demands it. And God's priorities demand it. Those three things: God's person, God's program and God's priority. We're going to work our way through that a little bit.

Let's start with God's person. And we could extend this, but I'll endeavor not to do that unduly because we only have a little time this morning. First of all, the promise of God the Father demands it. The promise of God the Father demands it. God who is truth, God who speaks only truth, God who is the God of truth, God who cannot lie, God who has spoken and His Word is trustworthy, God who always does what He purposes to do, of Him it is said, 1 Kings 8:56, "There has never failed one word of His good promise." The God of all truth has promised this glorious return of Christ. He promised many things in the Old Testament concerning His first coming. And what is important to recognize is they all took place literally, literally, actually, really. You can't spiritualize the Second Coming because in His first coming all the prophecies were fulfilled literally; therefore in the second aspect of His coming, literal is the key interpretive idea.

For example, God promised that Jesus would be born of a virgin, Isaiah 7:14. He was. Micah 5:2, God promised He would be born at Bethlehem. He was. In Hosea 11:1 God said, "Out of Egypt I have called My Son." Jesus fleeing to Egypt to avoid Herod was then brought back from out of Egypt actually. Isaiah 11:2 says He would be anointed with the Holy Spirit, and He was at His baptism. We remember that. Zechariah 9:9, God said He would enter Jerusalem riding on the colt, the foal of an ass, and He did. Psalm 41:9 and 55:12 says that He would be betrayed by His own friend. He was, Judas. Zechariah 13:7, that He would be forsaken by His followers who would flee. They did. Zechariah 11:12: that He would be sold for 30 pieces of silver. He was. That with that silver a potter's field would be purchased. And that's exactly what was done with the money. Isaiah chapter 50 and verse 6 says He would be spit on and scourged. Psalm 22 that He would be crucified. Psalm 34:20 that not a bone of Him would be broken. Psalm 69:21 that He would be given vinegar to drink. Psalm 22 that His hands and feet would be pierced. Again Psalm 22: that His garments would be parted and lots would be cast for them. And that's exactly what the Roman soldiers did. Psalm 16:10: that

He would be raised from the dead, and He was.

All of these prophecies literally, physically, actually fulfilled in time and space; they're not just spiritual ideals, they are real prophecies that had real fulfillment. And they set the standard for all Old Testament prophecies and the 220 that are not yet fulfilled will be just as literal and just as real as those 110 that are. The character of God is at stake. God said He would do things at His first coming through the prophets and the writers of the Old Testament, and He did. There were things that God said that had not been fulfilled when Jesus completed His earthly ministry. For example, Genesis 49:10. In Genesis 49:10 God the author of Scripture, it is the Word of the Lord, says, that "when Shiloh comes," that is Messiah, "the one whose right it is to rule, unto Him shall the gathering of the people be," the gathering of the nations. That certainly did not happen in His first coming. Quite the opposite. Not only did the nations not gather to Him, but "He came unto His own and His own received Him not. He was in the world; the world was made by Him. The world knew Him not." That prophecy has to be fulfilled. Shiloh, Messiah, the one whose right it is to rule, must come and the whole world gather to Him and bow at His feet, and they will.

In Psalm 2 we read in verse 6, "But as for me" this is God speaking "I have installed My King upon Zion, My holy mountain," meaning the Messiah, God installing the Messiah upon Zion, "My holy mountain." That is obviously not true today. On Mount Zion is the remnants of Herod's footings, the empty place where once dwelt the temple where a mosque to Allah competes with vestiges of the temple of old. The King, God's King, is certainly not installed upon the holy mountain in Zion.

Further Psalm 2 says, "I will tell the decree of the Lord, He said to me You're My Son, today I have begotten You. Ask of Me, I'll surely give the nations as Your inheritance. The very ends of the earth as Your possession. You shall break them with a rod of iron and shatter them like earthenware." He doesn't rule the world with a rod of iron at this time. He is not the one who rules over this earth and in whose possession are all the nations of the earth. In fact, the truth of the matter is, Satan is the prince of the power of the air who is now the ruler of this world temporarily. That prophecy certainly has not been fulfilled.

In Isaiah 9, and we could look at Isaiah for a moment because there are many important prophecies in Isaiah, but a familiar one in Isaiah 9. "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given and the government shall rest on His shoulders." That is, He will be the unilateral ruler of all. "His name will be wonderful counselor, mighty God, eternal Father, Prince of peace." And then this government is defined. "There will be no end to the increase of His government or of peace. He will rule and bring peace that has no end. He will sit on the throne of David over His kingdom, establish it, uphold it with justice and righteousness from then on and forever more." Listen: That has not happened. When Jesus left the first time, He left without having established any kingdom on this earth. He did not sit and has not yet sat on the throne of David in Jerusalem, ruling a redeemed Israel and a world dominated by righteousness and peace.

Matthew 25:31, "Jesus says, 'When the Son of Man shall come in His glory and all the holy angels with Him, then shall He sit on the throne.'" "Then" is the key word. That throne will be given to Him when He comes, not in a manger, not all alone, but when He comes in the company of all the holy angels, not in humble baby form, but in full glory. Then will He sit on the throne. He came in humiliation the first time. He must then come in full glory attended by the angelic host and even accompanied by the redeemed saints who have been raptured previously. He comes to establish His kingdom and glory. Very different characteristics to that coming.

In Micah chapter 4, "In the last days when the mountain of the house of the Lord is established in the world, in the earth, nations will come and go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob that He may teach us about His ways that we may walk in His paths, for from Zion will go forth the law, even the Word of the Lord from Jerusalem." That has not happened. Jewish people are apostate. They do not believe in the Messiah. They do not proclaim the Word of the Lord.

Further, He will judge between many nations, render decisions for mighty distant nations. "Nations will hammer their swords into plowshares, their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not lift up sword against nation and never again will they train for war." And the whole world will walk in the name of the Lord our God forever and ever. That hasn't happened, nor has anything remotely like that happened.

Isaiah 33:20 says, "Jerusalem will be a city of peace." That hasn't happened. Isaiah 35 says, "Nature will be dramatically changed. The desert will be turned into a flourishing garden." Zechariah 14 says, the mountain will be split in Jerusalem, creating valleys running west and east to the desert to the sea, and water will flow both directions. That hasn't happened. Isaiah 45:23 says, the world will bow their knee to the Messiah. That hasn't happened. Jeremiah 23 says, "He will be a great King over all the earth." That hasn't happened. Daniel 7:13-14 says, He will be given by God the Father dominion that knows no limit and no end. That hasn't happened. It has to happen. God's Word is at stake.

"God is not a man that He should lie," Numbers 23:19. "Let God be true and every man a liar," says Paul. "God who cannot lie." God has declared this. And Genesis 18, I think, records a good way to understand this. In Genesis 18 God acknowledges that Abraham is His friend, that Abraham had walked with God in faith and God had not withheld from Abraham anything He planned to do. God was about to wipe out Sodom and Gomorrah, obliterate them. He did not want Abraham's faith shaken. So He revealed His plan so that when it happened Abraham's faith was not only not shaken, it was confirmed because what God had said God did. And in Genesis 18:17 God says, "Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do?" No. Because when I do it, Abraham will know that I speak the truth. So God didn't hide all the prophecies about the first coming. We saw them all come to pass so that we would trust Him for what is yet to come.

The promises of God require the Second Coming. Secondly, the statements of Jesus require the Second Coming. He said He was coming. I just took you through it in Luke alone, Luke 12, Luke 17, Luke 19, and here the full text of Luke 21. It's also recorded, parallel accounts in Mark, parallel accounts in Matthew, even more extensive there, and John, John. In John 13 on that Passover night on the following Thursday from the Wednesday in which Jesus spoke of His Second Coming, Jesus was speaking about His death in verse 31, John 13, "Now is the Son of Man glorified and God is glorified in Him." He saw His death as the path to glory. "Little children," verse 33, "I am with you a little while longer," just a little while, really a couple of days, then after the resurrection 40 days before the ascension. "I'm with you just a little while, you'll seek Me and as I said to the Jews I now say to you, where I'm going you can't come." I'm going to be gone. Verse 36, "Simon Peter said to Him, 'Lord, where You going?' Jesus said, 'Where I go you can't follow Me now. But you shall follow later.'" Later? Yes, because I'm coming back. Look at chapter 14. "Let not your heart be troubled, believe in God, believe in Me. In My Father's house are many dwelling places. If it were not so I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, receive you to Myself that where I am there you may be also."

Matthew, Mark, Luke, John: Every one of the gospels record the promise of Jesus that I'm coming, I'm coming, I'm coming. But maybe my favorite concise promise comes sixty years later, sixty years after these promises in visions given to John and recorded in the book of Revelation, for in the book of Revelation six times there's a quote from the mouth of Jesus. Here's the quote, six times, "Behold, I come quickly." That's His reiterated promise, His last promise, His final word about His coming from heaven. There's no change in the plan. As the character of God is at stake, as the integrity of God is at stake, as the truthfulness of God is at stake in the promises that He made of the coming of Christ to set up His kingdom, so the character of Jesus is at stake, the integrity of Jesus is at stake, the trustworthiness of Jesus is at stake who keeps saying He's coming. To deny His coming is to deny His virtue, His character. The Redeemer must return because of the promise of the Father, because of the promise of the Son, thirdly, because of the promise of the Holy Spirit.

All through the Old Testament God was promising. All through the gospels Jesus is promising the Second Coming. And then came the apostles and their letters and they begin to write. And what did they say? First Corinthians 1, "I thank my God always concerning you for the grace of God given you in Christ Jesus. In everything you're enriched in Him in all speech and all knowledge, even as the testimony concerning Christ was confirmed to you, so that you're not lacking in any gift, waiting eagerly the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ." Philippians 3:20 and 21: He's coming and He's coming to give you a glorified body like His own body. Colossians 3, He's going to appear from heaven. First Thessalonians chapter 4, There's going to be a trumpet, there's going to be the voice of the archangel, we're all going to be called together to be with Him in glory. John says we're going to see Him like He is, be changed into His image.

The coming of Jesus Christ is a consistent theme through all the epistles themselves. And the Holy Spirit is the author of Scripture. Is Jesus coming? Yes. How do we know He's coming? It is the testimony of the most reliable source in existence, the Trinity, God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit. So when I say to you I'm waiting to go on CNN and tell them that I have reliable testimony to the fact that none of the things that people think are going to destroy this world, what's actually going to do it is the return of Jesus Christ, I am accurate in saying I represent the most reliable source, none other than God the Trinity. Now that's God's person. Next time we'll look at God's program which calls for the Second Coming.

Father, we thank You for a wonderful morning. What a joy and privilege to worship You, beautiful music, wonderful, encouraging testimony to Your blessing upon Your Word, great fellowship, sweet communion of the saints. We thank You, Lord, for hearing our prayers, for infusing our worship with Your power. We thank You for how You come to us in the lives of all these precious people. We thank You that Christ lives in them and when we interact with them, we interact with our Lord. Thank You for the truth of Your Word. We thank You that we know the end. We know where everything in history is going. And we know who's in charge of it all. We...We understand Your patience until people come to repentance. We understand Your patience until You've gathered in the redeemed. But we would say with John, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus." Oh Lord, come, take Your glory. May the world see who You really are, who we really are in the glorious manifestation of Your own person and the glorious manifestation of the children of God. And until that time, may we be faithful, knowing these things are coming to pass. May we be the kind of people that bring You glory and honor and draw others to gospel salvation.

Now, Father, give us a great day and confirm into our hearts these glorious realities. History has already been prewritten. We are so thrilled to be able to watch it unfold, even as Abraham did

because we, too, are Your friends and You want to strengthen our faith. And as we see the things that go on in the world, they point clearly in the direction of the unfolding of what You have promised. May we be faithful until Jesus comes to bring Him glory, we pray in His name. Amen.

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