

# The Coming of the Kingdom of God (Part 3)

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[ 0 : 00 ] Luke 17, and we've been there for a little while.

Took a little break from it last week because of Mother's Day. But we want to get back to that. And so Luke 17 in our text, the larger text, though we've already looked at a good bit of it over the last few weeks, the larger text is verses 20 to 37.

So I want to go ahead and read the entire text, even though our focus tonight, or this morning rather, hopefully it won't take until tonight. This morning will be the latter part of this particular passage.

So starting then with verse 20, you can follow along in your Bibles as I read. Now when he was asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, he answered them and said, The kingdom of God does not come with observation, nor will they say, See here or see there, for indeed the kingdom of God is within you.

Then he said to the disciples, The days will come when you will desire to see one of the days of the Son of Man, and you will not see it.

[ 1 : 23 ] And they will say to you, Look here or look there. Do not go after them or follow them. For as the lightning that flashes out of one part under heaven shines to the other part under heaven, so also the Son of Man will be in his day.

But first he must suffer many things and be rejected by this generation. And as it was in the days of Noah, so it will be also in the days of the Son of Man.

They ate, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all. Likewise, as it was also in the days of Lot, they ate, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they built.

But on the day that Lot went out of Sodom, it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all. Even so will it be in the day when the Son of Man is revealed.

In that day, he who is on the housetop and his goods are in the house, let him not come down to take them away. And likewise, the one who is in the field, let him not turn back.

[ 2 : 34 ] Remember Lot's wife? Whoever seeks to save his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life will preserve it. I tell you, in that night, there will be two men in one bed.

The one will be taken and the other will be left. Two women will be grinding together, the one will be taken and the other left. Two men will be in the field, the one will be taken and the other left.

And they answered and said to him, Where, Lord? So he said to them, Wherever the body is, there the eagles will be gathered together.

All right. So there is the entire passage, and we've already looked at a good bit of it. We want to get the rest of it here this morning.

And maybe just by way of a little bit of review and also maybe some foundation laying for what Jesus is really saying in this passage to us, let me just say that, again, the principal subject is what?

[ 3 : 40 ] It's the kingdom of God. All right. That's the principal subject. It's very easy to see. And maybe even more specifically, I would say, the coming of the kingdom of God.

And we could accurately say, I think, that the coming of the kingdom of God is identified by the coming of the king, regardless of one's theology, that is in terms of eschatology, the doctrine of end times.

Clearly, Jesus is teaching here that the identification or the way to identify the kingdom is to identify the coming of its king. And so to find the kingdom, first locate the king.

Because where you find the king, you also find the kingdom. The kingdom. In whatever sense we understand of the kingdom or in whatever aspect of the kingdom we may be talking about at any given time.

The king and his kingdom go together. And in a sense, that's what the Pharisees failed to understand. They had no, really, in one sense, had no capacity to understand it.

[ 4 : 48 ] They were looking for the arrival of the kingdom of God. The Pharisees were looking for that. All of the Jews were looking for that.

And sadly, they're looking for it still today. But they were looking for the kingdom of God. And so here they are. They're asking Jesus when the kingdom of God would come.

And think about it. The king of the kingdom is standing right in front of them. And they want to know when the kingdom of God is coming. Because they didn't understand something.

Or they refused to understand and believe something. Because the Pharisees, in particular, and really most Jews, they didn't believe Jesus was the king of anything. Even though many of his followers were already proclaiming this and others were speculating this.

And even you could see the implication of it in Jesus' words. They didn't believe that Jesus was any king. much less the king. The king of the kingdom. The Messiah.

[ 5 : 54 ] And he certainly was not going to be their king. That's just where they were. And yet, you must understand, they were looking for the king.

They were earnestly looking for the king. Longing for the king to come. That is, for the Messiah to come. They were looking for the Messiah. But they were completely ignorant about how he would come, at least initially.

They were ignorant about that. You see, in their understanding of prophecy, they thought that supernatural signs and wonders would be the precursor to the Messiah's coming.

In their understanding of Old Testament prophecy, they thought that the Messiah, the king, would come as a great military captain and he would muster the armies of Israel.

They thought that all the enemies of Israel would be put down. That they would be really destroyed. Specifically, the Romans, because they were the most immediate enemy of Israel at the time.

[ 7 : 00 ] And they thought that Messiah would bring all the nations under his sovereign rule and reign. And they thought that when the Messiah came, he would establish righteousness on the earth.

And to them, essentially, it would be the restoration of the Mosaic law upon the entire planet. And they thought that the place would be the, rather the earth would be one of peace.

And it would be, peace would be then ruling on the earth under the king of peace, the Messiah. And I would say to you that they were not all that far off.

They were not wrong about all of that. For them, it really was a matter of timing. One day, Messiah will come in supernatural wonder.

And one day, Messiah will come in glory and might. Not as he came the first time in humility and in human frailty and weakness.

[ 8 : 09 ] He will come in all glory and might. And one day, Messiah will put down all his enemies judging the nations. And one day, Messiah will bring all the nations under his rule and his reign.

And one day, Messiah will establish righteousness once again upon this earth. And one day, Messiah will establish peace on earth for a thousand years.

Isaiah 11, verses 6 through 10 speaks of this. The wolf shall dwell with the lamb. The leopard shall lie down with the young goat. The calf and the lion and the fattened calf together.

And the little child shall lead them. The cow and the bear shall graze, graze together. Their young shall lie down together. And the lion shall eat straw like the ox.

The nursing child shall, we're talking about an infant, shall play over the hole of a cobra. The weaned child, that would be a toddler, shall put his hand on the adder's den.

[ 9 : 16 ] They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain. For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. And in that day, the root of Jesse, who's that by the way?

That's Jesus. The root of Jesse, who shall stand as a signal for all the peoples. Of him shall the nations inquire. That is, all nations will come to him for judgment.

And his resting place shall be glorious. And the prophecy goes on from there. See, this was the kingdom that the Pharisees were looking for when Jesus came the first time.

They were looking for an earthly king, a physical king, a person, a king, to sit on a real throne and govern and sovereign, be sovereign over an earthly kingdom.

That's what they were looking for when Jesus came the first time. And this is behind their question that they posed to Jesus, not that they had any belief whatsoever that Jesus was the king they were looking for.

[10:24] They were really kind of trying to trick him or make some kind of statement to him. This is what they were looking for, an earthly king, an earthly kingdom.

And really, I would say to you that for all their shortcomings, and they had many of them, the Pharisees did interpret the Bible literally.

They had that kind of hermeneutic. They looked at Scripture and they interpreted biblical prophecy, to be fulfilled literally. Their eschatology was basically premillennial.

I really believe that. Just like most of us here today. Premillennial. Now, you do understand that there are a number of other views concerning the millennium, that subject of the millennium, the second coming of Christ, and most of them can be identified by their respective prefixes.

You know, there's amillennial, postmillennial, premillennial, and so the prefix kind of clues you in as to their view, their respective views on the millennium.

[11:33] And so there are those who are amillennial, or amillennial. A being the negative prefix, means no, or not. And so the amillennialists do not believe in a literal millennium, that is a literal 1,000 year reign of Christ on this earth.

They don't hold to that view. And by the way, I would say, not only with this view, but also the other view I'm going to give you, that there are many godly, committed, Christ-honoring, Bible-believing Christians who hold to some of these views.

Now I think they're wrong, but on this particular view, but that doesn't make them non-Christian, okay? They're not heretics. But this is what they believe.

They believe, amillennialists believe that the, quote, millennium is to be interpreted in a figurative way, if interpreted at all.

That it's symbolic, it's figurative. The millennium could have started maybe at the resurrection of Christ, and it just basically, is a reference to this present age in which we live right now.

[12:44] So, in their view, any sensible millennium is present, it's right now, and that's why sometimes it's called now millennialism. That it's right now.

And so, amillennialists do not believe in a literal reign of Christ for a thousand years on this earth. then there are those who are postmillennial.

Postmillennial. Post is the prefix, and it means, of course, after. And so, in their view, the second coming of Christ, the actual coming, the bodily return of the Lord Jesus Christ, will occur at the close of the millennium, in some sense of the term millennium.

Because like the amillennialists, the pre, or excuse me, postmillennialists, do not believe in a literal 1,000 year kingdom on this earth. They don't hold to that.

Some believe that it is just simply a reference to the, a figurative reference to the church age, and, you know, with an indetermined, undetermined length of time.

[13:49] And then there are some who believe that it is some golden age of the church. And nearly all postmillennialists believe that the world will become gradually more and more Christianized.

Which is a little difficult to swallow in our day, isn't it? And really this is why some would characterize postmillennialism as simply optimistic amillennialism.

That is, you know, the near total Christianization of this world and then the king will come. The second coming, the bodily return of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And there are other views as well that we won't mention here this morning. Some that don't even believe in any second coming whatsoever and some who believe that it's already taken place and so forth.

And we don't need to get into all of that. Now, to me, and I'm just being honest with you, the problem with both of those views is in their hermeneutics.

[14:51] What hermeneutics? Just their principles of biblical interpretation. interpretation. Because they seem to want to apply sound biblical interpretation to everything but eschatology.

To everything but the doctrine of last things. And so they want to interpret the Bible literally until it comes to those prophecies concerning the second coming or the end times.

And then they want to interpret those prophecies as figurative or symbolic. You know, you just think about this logically. The Old Testament prophesied that Jesus would be born of a virgin and guess what?

He was. Literally. Not figuratively. And the Old Testament prophesied that Jesus would be born in a city called Bethlehem and guess what?

He was. Literally. And the Old Testament prophesied that Jesus would enter Jerusalem riding on a donkey and he did. And the Old Testament prophesied that Jesus would be betrayed by a friend for 30 pieces of silver and guess what?

[16:01] He was. Literally. The Old Testament also prophesied that Jesus would be crucified. And that he would be crucified with criminals. And that not a bone in his body would be broken which was contrary to the custom of crucifixion in his day.

And guess what? All that happened. Literally. And the Old Testament prophesied what Jesus would say as he was hanging upon the cross. You can find that in Psalm 22.

And guess what? He said all of those things. And on and on we could go. And so why then, this is my question, why do some scholars think that prophecy, prophecies related to the second coming, are really just kind of mystery talk?

Or figurative or symbolic with no literal fulfillment. And here's another problem actually. And this gets closer to the point of the text here.

The other problem is that the amillennialists and premillennialists, in my opinion, get the cart before the horse. Because both amillennialists and postmillennialists, I meant to say post a while ago by the way, amillennialists and postmillennialists, you just say that a hundred times without stopping, they put the kingdom, that is the literal visible kingdom of Christ, they put that before the king, before he comes.

[17:33] And that doesn't make any sense. Now there's a sense in which the kingdom comes as Jesus has already informed the Pharisees, comes in an invisible way, in a kind of an initial way.

It comes in the hearts, in the hearts wherever Jesus Christ is recognized and obeyed as king. That's where the kingdom resides. And right now the kingdom does reside within us.

But we're talking about the actual fulfillment, the consummation, the visible establishment of his kingdom. It can't come before the king comes.

It comes after he comes. So Jesus will come and then set up his kingdom and he will reign over his kingdom for a thousand years and that's the premillennial view.

And you can see this really in the book of Revelation even though for a lot of God's people they think that the book of Revelation is too hard to understand. But let me just give it to you in a nutshell.

[18:36] You have the church on earth in chapters 1, 2, and 3, letters to the churches and so forth. You have the church in heaven starting with chapters 4 and 5.

The church is in heaven. You know, and they stay there by the way until you get to chapter 19 of the book of Revelation. Now how did the church get to heaven? Well, the rapture in my view.

The rapture of the church and I believe Revelation 4, 1 alludes to that. After these things, that is after John's vision of the church, the seven churches, he says, I looked and behold a door standing open in heaven and the first voice that I heard was like a trumpet speaking with me.

By the way, he harkens to 1 Thessalonians 4, 16, the trump of God. That passage I think clearly is referring to the rapture, the catching away of the church.

So he hears the trump of God or our voice, the trumpet speaking to him and what does it say?

Come up here and I will show you things which must take place after this.

[19:46] That is after what? After the church. Those chapters on the church. After this. And so then we see what happens on the earth as John sees what is happening on the earth in chapters 6 through 19 where God unleashes a series of judgments each really three phases of judgments each one becoming more intense as you go along.

You have seal judgments followed by trumpet judgments followed by bowl judgments and then Christ comes out of heaven in chapter 19 verse 11 and he sets up his kingdom in chapter 20 where he will rule for a thousand years.

That's what chapter 20 says. After which Satan will be loosed and judged all in one fell swoop and God destroys the universe the present universe and creates a new heaven and a new earth in chapters 21 and 22.

It just seems so simple. When you lay it out that way pretty clear. And listen every prophecy related to the first coming of the Lord Jesus Christ was filled literally.

Literally. And so every prophecy related to the second coming the events all the events that are associated with the second coming all of those prophecies will be fulfilled literally I believe and that includes what Jesus says about the second coming in our passage this morning and we'd better get to it.

[ 21 : 18 ] Now thinking about this text that I read so long ago you've now forgotten it. Thinking about this text let me point out just a few things before we get back to the exposition of it.

First of all in this passage the kingdom of God is viewed as a whole encompassing both comings the first and second coming.

And so second Jesus focused on the first coming in his his response to the Pharisees question. He focused on the first coming. He says it does not come by observation.

It's invisible. It is within. And then he focuses on the second coming in his instructions to the disciples.

He says you're not going to see it in your lifetime. It's future. It's coming later. And all will see it. It's visible. And then third and this is really the crucial thing in regard to our understanding of the of Jesus point in this passage.

[ 22 : 29 ] Third thing I would say is that though the coming of the kingdom of God will be I mean it will bring tremendous blessing.

Though the coming of the kingdom of God will bring many incredibly wonderful things and blessed things for those believing subjects of his kingdom.

And we look forward to that and the wonder of that though that is true. The emphasis in this text is not that. Sadly I say I guess not sadly we can't say that the word of God is something we ought to think sad.

But the reality is his emphasis here is judgment. The judgment at his second coming. There are many things associated with the second coming.

many things the Bible teaches us that will be in connection with the consummation of all things. His coming. It will begin I believe with the rapture of the church and then successive events take place and tribulation and so forth.

[ 23 : 39 ] And judgments and and resurrection and so forth. Though that's a part of it. Jesus is speaking here about his judgment.

The judgment at his coming and it's absolutely crucial that we understand that about this passage this morning. Otherwise I think we'll misinterpret it. And we'll make the words mean something that Jesus did not intend.

All right so in verses 22 to 37 where he is speaking to his disciples his subject is his future coming, his second coming.

And by the way the disciples only knew about one coming. They only understood one coming. In large part the second coming or a two part coming is a mystery in the Old Testament.

Though you can find it there. It is obscure. Even this entire age we're living in right now the church age is a mystery in the Old Testament. And so the disciples like all other Jews the Pharisees included only saw one coming.

[ 24 : 47 ] They didn't see a second coming. And so everything the Bible taught about the coming of Christ they thought was going to take place in that first coming. All right we understand that don't we. They only knew about this first coming not the second one.

And as I've already said now Jesus is revealing to them the this particular aspect of his second coming which is judgment. judgment. And so I would say to you and this kind of flies in the face of a lot of people's theology even those who are pre-millennial.

I would say to you that don't look for the church in this passage. It's not in here. Not in this. He's not talking about the church. Or really anything associated with the church.

And also don't look for the rapture in this passage as some see. Pop theology tells us. The rapture is not in this passage. And I'll point that out a little bit later as well.

And also I don't think you need to see be looking for the tribulation or anything associated with the tribulation other than the culmination of it the end of it when Christ comes. So don't see those things.

[ 26 : 04 ] Now these are again events that come under kind of the overall all subject to the second coming. But Jesus has fast forwarded through many of these things.

And he has come to the time of his visible, visible, dynamic, glorious return to this earth.

This is where he is in this passage. And it will mark the end of the tribulation. Yes, in the beginning of his millennial reign. But among other things that will take place at this time, it will be a time of judgment.

I keep saying that. I want you to understand this. His subject is judgment at his coming. And so Jesus says three things about this, his second coming. Three things in this passage.

And we looked at the first one last time, which was two weeks ago. And it's this. His second coming will be unmistakable. It will be unmistakable.

[ 27 : 08 ] One day he will come. He will come. And he left through the clouds. Remember in Acts chapter 1. And he left through the clouds, leaving his disciples standing there gawking up into the sky.

And he will one day return through the clouds, according to Daniel chapter 7. And it will be unmistakable. It will be visible to all. He says in verse 24 to illustrate this.

He says, For as the lightning that flashes out of one part under heaven shines to the other part under heaven, so also the Son of Man will be in his day. That is, in the day of his coming. So it will be unmistakable.

There will be no way to miss it. It will happen. That doesn't mean you're going to be ready for it. And that leads us to the next thing. But it will be unmistakable. All will see it. All around the globe. It's not going to be something will happen over there, over there, over here.

It will be all over the world. All will see it. It will be unmistakable. And then number two, the second coming will be unpredictable.

[ 28 : 14 ] Unpredictable, at least for the unbelieving world at that time. Unpredictable. Jesus gives us two familiar examples from the Old Testament and we know quite a lot about each of these two.

He mentions Noah. We know the story about Noah and the ark and the flood and all that. And so he uses Noah as an example here. And he says, just think about Noah. And he says in verse 26, for as and as it was in the days of Noah, so it will be also in the days of the Son of Man.

That is specifically in the day the Messiah comes again. And so what was characteristic of the days of Noah? Well, we have a lot of thoughts in our mind about what was characteristic of the people of Noah's day, but Jesus mentioned some things.

In verse 27, they ate, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage. Anything evil about those things?

Well, no. Nothing evil about those things. But then what happened to them? Not what happened to Noah and his family. We know what happened to them, but what happened to the people of this world? Well, he says that they continued on to do those things, eating, drinking, marrying, giving in marriage.

[ 29 : 33 ] They continued on to do those things until, until when? Until the day that Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all. So there's Noah's example.

What's Jesus' point? Well, let's bring Lot in, the next example, and then we'll see what the point of all this is. Second, Jesus mentions Lot.

We know a little bit about Lot, maybe less than we do about Noah, but we certainly know about Sodom and Gomorrah and that whole story, right? Well, he says in verse 28, likewise as it was also in the days of Lot.

And what was characteristic of the days of Lot? Well, he says they ate, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they built, they did all of those things.

By the way, I won't make too much of this, but it's interesting that Jesus did not say that the people of Sodom would be marrying and being given in marriage. Did you notice that? Why would that be? Well, the sin of Sodom was Sodomy.

[ 30 : 36 ] Now, we don't call it Sodomy today. It's homosexuality. God doesn't recognize any marriage among homosexuals. Not then, not today, by the way. And again, anything evil, though, about the things that are mentioned here, you know, about what the people of Lot's day or in Sodom were doing.

Well, nothing evil about that. Nothing wicked about those kinds of activities. But what happened to them? Again, not what happened to Lot and his family, or at least most of his family members. What happened to the people of Sodom? Verse 29, On the day that Lot went out of Sodom, it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all. Even so will it be in the day when the Son of Man is revealed, that is, at his second coming.

All right, so then, what is Jesus' point? Well, we could make some kind of general observations, I think, and they would be correct. I mean, both men lived among wicked people.

Right? Sodom, people of the world in Noah's day. Both men and their families lived among wicked people. All right, so that's true of both of those examples. Also, we could say that both men and their families, minus one family member, both were spared when the judgment of God fell upon these wicked people.

[ 32 : 04 ] They were spared. Right? And we can say that about both of those stories. And then we could say this, and this is the real key thing. Key, that is, in regard to what Jesus is teaching here and the point he is making.

In both cases, no one expected the judgment of God. no one was looking for it. Everyone was caught off guard, caught by surprise.

No one, they were completely unable to predict it. Now, there was no spectacular series of warnings to precede God's judgment.

It came upon them suddenly. And the only, really, I guess you could say the only warning they may have had, and I'm sure did have, was the word of God.

God's revelation. I think we can assume, I'll just give Lot the benefit of the doubt, that he at least initially gave testimony to the one true God, Yahweh God, and we know that Noah did.

[ 33 : 12 ] Noah was a preacher of righteousness for 120 years, the Bible tells us. All right, so, it begs the question, is the word of God enough to warn people of God's pending judgment?

Is it enough? Or do we need signs and wonders and, you know, is the word of God enough? Well, of course we know it is.

It was enough for the people of Nineveh, remember? Jonah preached a pretty feeble message, in my opinion, at least based upon the words we have in the text.

And what happened? They all repented. Even required the animals to repent. You know, to fast and repent. So the word of God is enough.

Now, they had that in that day, but they were not expecting this. They had completely, they were completely caught off guard. They could not have predicted it.

[ 34 : 09 ] And what about the day when Jesus returns? The second time the people of the world in that day, whenever that day is going to be, in the future sometime.

What about the people then? What will characterize the people of that day? Well, they're going to be going about doing the usual things of life. That's what the two examples serve to tell us.

Everybody's going to be just doing the usual thing, eating and drinking and marrying and buying and selling and planting and building and all of those things. And again, there's nothing intrinsically evil about any of those things at all.

Now, it's certainly true that just like the people of Noah's day and Lot's day, the people on this planet, when Jesus returns a second time, most of them are going to be very evil and wicked, unbelieving.

That's certainly true, but that's just not what Jesus is emphasizing here. Not yet, anyway. And so the point is, just like the people of Noah and Lot's day, the people of the Son of Man's day, that is the day when He comes again, those people will be completely caught off guard.

[ 35 : 21 ] The second coming will be unpredictable and the reason is people cannot predict what they don't believe. What they don't believe. People are not looking for something that they do not believe will ever happen or will ever come.

And the reason why the people living in Jesus' day, the day when Jesus returns, why they will be caught completely by surprise, the reason is because their lives will be so fixed on the things of this world.

Not just the amoral things, eating, drinking, but all the other things as well. They'll be fixated on that and they will not be looking for the king at his coming, they will be looking at the things that pertain to their own lives.

They're not going to be looking for his judgment. That's his point. It's unpredictable for them. And so the second coming will be unmistakable and yet for the unbelieving world of that day when Jesus returns, the second coming, his second coming, will be unpredictable.

And then third, the second coming will be unavoidable. It will be unavoidable, that is, in its initial purpose.

[ 36 : 45 ] And that purpose is judgment. Horrific judgment. Something that even movies today could not portray.

Horrorific judgment. And it will be unavoidable. And so quickly, let me just highlight three points Jesus is making concerning what will happen when he returns.

Three things. The first one is this, the fidelity revealed in the hearts of people. The fidelity, the fidelity of one's heart.

I'm talking about when Jesus comes, the true desires and devotion of the heart will be revealed at that time. For what it really is. The fidelity revealed.

Look, look at what he says in verses 31 and 33. In that day, what day is it? The day of his coming. He who is on the housetop and his goods are in the house, let him not come down to take them away.

[ 37 : 56 ] And likewise, the one who is in the field, let him not turn back. There's just been much made of this that has extended way beyond what Jesus' point is.

And a lot of times we just make a mistake and try to look at all the various details of this and try to attach it to things that don't really apply here. Jesus is just making one point here. That's what we need to get at.

And it's consistent with the whole context of this particular passage. all these instructions that he's giving his disciples. And the point is that the sure sign of where one's heart lies is revealed by what one wants most when the end comes.

What one is fixed on even at judgment day. When judgment comes. When they see judgment come. So here's a person on the rooftop.

Doesn't say what they're doing. Doesn't matter. That detail's not important. But they see the judgment falling. The judgment coming. And that person's first thought is to go down into the house and grab some worldly possession.

[ 39 : 09 ] And then this person, here's a person working out into the field. These are just normal things that people do. And that's what people are going to be doing when Jesus comes. saying they're just normal life things.

But it's how they respond to the coming of the end. The coming of judgment. That's the point here. And so here's a person out in the field working and sees the judgment coming.

And what is that person's first thought? My possessions. And runs home to grab them. And to seal the point, he says, remember Lot's wife?

Now you know what happened to Lot's wife, don't you? God graciously sends Lot and his family out of wicked Sodom while he pours out his judgment and destroys the people and the entire city. But as they are leaving Lot's wife, turns back, maybe more than just a look back, maybe she's turning back.

[ 40 : 21 ] And God changes her into a pillar of salt. There are a lot of interesting kind of speculative things about all that.

But the point is this. She turned back and Lot's wife has become the poster child for all those who have come this close to. salvation and have turned back because their affections lie here in the things of this life.

And that's why I don't know what she was turning back. Maybe she left her sewing machine at the house and it was brand new and she had to go back and get it. I don't know. It doesn't matter. But her heart was still there and her affections on things of this world.

And that is his point in both the illustration. He says, and just so you understand, remember Lot's wife and what happened to her? See, Lot's wife, I mean, what happened?

Her true fidelity was revealed at that very point. Her true heart, desire, and devotion was revealed as the judgment of God was coming down.

[ 41 : 31 ] And that's how it will be at the second coming of Christ. That's what Jesus is saying. He said in verse 33, whoever seeks to save his life, that is, save all that pertains to his life, will lose it.

If that's how you are wired, if that's who you are, saving what you have, saving your life, then you're going to lose it.

And whoever loses his life will preserve it, will save it, will keep it. It's totally contrary to the old adage, finders, keepers, losers, weepers.

With God, it's finders, weepers, losers, keepers. And this is his point, the fidelity that will be revealed at that day.

There will be no mistake. God's justice will be absolutely correct. And his judgment will be warranted.

[ 42 : 34 ] The fidelity revealed. And then second, the futility revealed. That is, the futility of escaping God's judgment.

Any attempt will be futile. In the first place, it's going to come so suddenly that there's no possibility of escape. Jesus said in verse 34, I tell you, in that night, there will be two men in one bed.

The one will be taken and the other will be left. By the way, I don't think Jesus is making some moral statement here. I know we'd like to find that here.

That is some moral statement about homosexuality or some moral revelation about how things will be at that day. Homosexual, homosexuality be rampant.

Now, I happen to believe that it will be rampant in that day. It's already there. That's not what his point is. The word men here, two men lying in a bed, the word men is not in the Greek text.

[ 43 : 37 ] Most translations have it in italics that lets you know that the word men is not there. And so, literally, it just reads two in one bed. Now, that could be two men. It could be two women.

It could be a man and a wife. And then, even if that's not good enough for you, don't think of, you know, the culture of that day like you would think of it in our day.

You know, big houses and everybody's got their own bedroom, their own bed. Most people slept in the same room in the house. Men with men and women with women and not just family members but also servants and they'd all be insane.

So, it's very conceivable two men would be in the same bed. But they're lying together there on the floor. All right, so the point is not a moral thing here.

And then he goes on to say verse 35, two women will be grinding together. The one will be taken and the other left. Then you have verse 36 and King James and New King James and that's not in the best manuscripts for the Gospel of Luke but you don't have to worry about it.

[ 44 : 43 ] It is in Matthew chapter 24 verse 40. So, it does belong there but the point, you know, is this. That Jesus is going to come and of course we already know it will be visibly worldwide.

And so, in at least half of the world it's going to be dark and the other half is going to be light. And so, you know, for two people it's going to be night time and they're going to be doing what you naturally do at night.

They're going to be sleeping. And then, on the other half of the world you have two people there mentioned and it's daytime and they're doing what's normal for daytime and that's working. Alright, so they're working.

Some are sleeping, some are working but it will come upon all and it will come unexpectedly and it will come unavoidably and one is taken and the other is left.

Now, here's where I really get in trouble. Because I happen to know that a bunch of you have read the series Left Behind. I'm not going to do a polling here.

[ 45 : 51 ] And, you know, I've been very kind of cordial with those who have asked me about it and I haven't said very much but I'm not a big fan of Left Behind series, okay?

Let's just put it out there. Not that I disagree with Tim LaHaye's eschatology. I just lost my mic here. You see, see there, Pastor, you're wrong.

That's what happens to you. Well, at least lightning didn't come down. But anyway, here's the point. Here's what I want you to understand about this text. And you can disagree with me and afterward you can apologize. No, I'm just kidding. I really am just kidding.

But contrary to popular theology, theology, if you happen to be there at Jesus' second coming, and by the way, I hope you're not.

[ 46 : 54 ] I hope you're not. I'm not going to be. I don't believe the church will be here other than to understand that the church will be coming with him. We're not going to be dwellers on the planet at that time when Jesus comes again.

All right? So, that aside, if you are here when Jesus comes at his visible, bodily, down to the planet return, if you are here then, then you're going to want to be left behind.

You're not going to want to be taken. You want to be left behind. these verses, you see, are not referring to the rapture of the church just before the tribulation.

Jesus has gone past that. He's at his second coming. These verses apply to that. His second coming. Just before he inaugurates his kingdom.

And the proof of that really is in a parallel passage in Matthew chapter 24 and verse 37. We're not going to go back there and look at it, but there you'll find out that the one taken, taken is the one who's taken in judgment.

[ 48 : 12 ] Taken away in judgment. And so in Luke 17, 34 to 37, the one left behind enters the kingdom of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, and the one taken, and by the way, that's not the church, those are those who are saved during the tribulation.

And at the close of tribulation would be those who are saved. And so those who are left behind at his coming will enter into the millennium, the kingdom of our Lord and Savior.

The one taken is taken in judgment. Taken in judgment. judgment. An escape will be futile. By the way, it will be a physical judgment to begin with.

And that leads to the third and final thing, the fatality revealed. The fatality. This judgment that will come on the world of unbelievers when Jesus returns will initially be physical, a physical judgment. Mostly explained by the battle of Armageddon. And that will occur at the close of the tribulation and before the coming of our Lord.

[ 49 : 42 ] It occurs right there, almost simultaneously. And Jesus' disciples, you see, they asked where, Lord? Where? That is, where will this take place?

this judgment. Where will this judgment happen? And Jesus responds, where you see the eagles. All right, now some of you have something other than the new King James and King James and your Bible says vultures. And that is correct.

That is correct. I'm not going to get into this morning, explain why the King James, the new King James uses the word eagles there, but suffice it to say that eagles, they don't go after carrying dead things.

Eagles don't eat dead things. Vultures do, and the idea here is vultures. And there's a little quirky thing with the word and so forth and manuscripts and such, and we're not going to get into that. Vultures is the right understanding.

[ 50 : 48 ] And so, you always know where the corpses are when you see the vultures, the carrion.

And again, I don't believe this is figurative. I believe it's literal. And it's pretty gruesome when you think about it.

Just as it was very gruesome when the flood destroyed millions, perhaps billions of people on this planet. Just as gruesome as those destroyed in Sodom.

So there's precedence for this. It comes physically. The judgment, his judgment at his coming will be worldwide and the carnage will be horrific.

extensive. I know we don't like to think about that. You know, God destroying people, unbelievers, and their bodies just lying everywhere around the planet, the vultures eating them.

[ 52 : 06 ] Well, even that pales in significance to eternity in hell. Huh? And so the carnage will be extensive at his coming.

And Jesus is saying, where you see the vultures feeding on the dead corpses lying on the ground, that's where my judgment has fallen. And it will be everywhere.

And Jesus wants us to know, us today, before there is going to be a glorious kingdom on this earth, before that happens, that glorious 1,000 blessed years of Christ's reign on this planet, and then after that, the eternal state, new heaven, new earth, before all that wonderful part comes, the Messiah will come, and he will bring a horrific, terrifying destruction upon the unbelieving at his return.

And so what? What should we think? I think Peter puts it perfectly for us. 2 Peter 3, verse 11, Peter says, therefore, since all these things will be destroyed, I mean all these things, one day there will be, since they will all be destroyed, what sort of persons ought you to be?

To be in holy conduct and godliness, what sort of person should you be? I mean just based upon and hearing and coming to face-to-face with what Jesus is saying is coming in the future, what kind of person ought we to be here now?

[ 54 : 13 ] That's the question. In holy conduct and godliness, looking for, Peter says, hastening the coming of the day of God, the day of the Lord.

That's the challenge for us today. Thank you.