

## The Gospel According to Luke

Luke 17:20-37

Parallel Readings: Matthew 24:17-41 and Mark 13:14-27

Sermon #74  
April 19, 2020

### Second Coming of Christ

We previously studied verses 20 and 21 of Luke chapter 17 to discover Jesus' answer to the Pharisees' question of when the Kingdom of God would occur. Reading verses, 20 and 21, "Being asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, he answered them, 'The kingdom of God is not coming in ways that can be observed,<sup>21</sup> nor will they say, "Look, here it is!" or "There!" for behold, **the kingdom of God is in the midst of you.**' " Remember, Jesus said if you are looking for the kingdom to begin in the future, you are already mistaken because the Kingdom of God is here now. We discussed the reality of God's Kingdom being a spiritual kingdom and not of this world. The Kingdom of God came with Christ's first coming and is in our midst.

Please open your Bibles to Luke chapter 17 verses 22 to 37. Here Jesus addresses His disciples and begins to teach them what they need to know about the Kingdom of God and his second coming. The Kingdom of God began with His first coming and will be complete at His second coming.

There is one issue before we start, that I want to address. As if the second coming is not challenging enough to teach, we have a manuscript issue to look at. The first thing that I want you to notice is that in some of your Bibles you may not have a verse 36 or in some of your Bibles verse 36 may be [bracketed] or in *italics*. The reason for this is the translators of your Bible are telling you that that verse is not found in the oldest manuscripts. Now lest that cause you some problem, I want to let you know that verse 36 is also found in Matthew chapter 24, verse 40. Many

theologians believe verse 36 in Luke was added by a scribe a century or 2 later. Most modern translations exclude verse 36, but there is no question as to whether what is said in Luke 17:36 is biblical or not. Whether we read verse 36 or not, whether we look to Matthew's text, which has it or Luke's Gospel which does not, what God reveals through Matthew and Luke is saying the same thing either way - there are people close to each other and one is taken, one is not, because one is saved and one is not.

The second coming of our Lord is that event that all of God's people wait for in anticipation and, as we discussed, we are waiting not as the world waits, but in preparation for the return of our King. We are to take to heart Paul's instruction to Titus in chapter 2, verses 11 to 14, "For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, <sup>12</sup> training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, <sup>13</sup> waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, <sup>14</sup> who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works." My beloved, we are to live "godly lives" in preparation, renouncing "ungodliness and worldly passions" and do "good works" for the glory of God, "waiting for our blessed hope", the return of King Jesus.

Let me pray for us as we prepare to hear God's Word today.



My beloved, now hear God's Word concerning the second coming of Christ from Luke chapter 17 beginning at verse 22, Jesus "said to the disciples, 'The days are coming when you will desire to see one of the days of the Son of Man, and you will not see it. <sup>23</sup> And they will say to you, "Look, there" or "Look, here!" Do not go out or follow them. <sup>24</sup> For as the lightning flashes and lights up the sky from one

side to the other, so will the Son of Man be in his day. <sup>25</sup> But first he must suffer many things and be rejected by this generation. <sup>26</sup> Just as it was in the days of Noah, so will it be in the days of the Son of Man. <sup>27</sup> They were eating and drinking and marrying and being given in marriage, until the day when Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all. <sup>28</sup> Likewise, just as it was in the days of Lot—they were eating and drinking, buying and selling, planting and building, <sup>29</sup> but on the day when Lot went out from Sodom, fire and sulfur rained from heaven and destroyed them all— <sup>30</sup> so will it be on the day when the Son of Man is revealed. <sup>31</sup> On that day, let the one who is on the housetop, with his goods in the house, not come down to take them away, and likewise let the one who is in the field not turn back. <sup>32</sup> Remember Lot's wife. <sup>33</sup> Whoever seeks to preserve his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life will keep it. <sup>34</sup> I tell you, in that night there will be two in one bed. One will be taken and the other left. <sup>35</sup> There will be two women grinding together. One will be taken and the other left. <sup>36</sup> [*Two men will be in the field; one will be taken and the other will be left.*] (NASB) {Mt:24:40}

<sup>37</sup> And they said to him, 'Where, Lord?' He said to them, 'Where the corpse is, there the vultures will gather.' " (ESV) Amen.

## **The Second Coming will be Recognizable**

In verses 22 to 24 we know when Jesus returns the whole world will know. Until His return there will be many calling attention to themselves' saying, **“Look, there’ or ‘Look, here!’ Do not go out or follow them.”** There have been many predictions of the day of Jesus’ return. They have all proven wrong and for me since, Jesus said in Matthew chapter 24, verse 36, **“But concerning that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only.”**, I discard these predications. Jesus is clear, we are not to follow such people. I could name many false teachers and prophets in our own time, but just know,

Jesus said, “**Do not go out or follow them.**” We need not seek out the details and predictions because Jesus says His second coming is an event that will see be unmistakable, recognizable, no one can miss it and when it happens everyone on planet earth will know. Jesus says it will be as evident as someone looking up into the night sky when lightning shoots across. New Mexico is known for its brilliant lightning storms that light up the sky from horizon to horizon. For a fraction of a second the whole sky lights up. Jesus says do not get off track by seeking some prediction on the supposed details of His second coming, because this will only lead to confusion and conflict. The reality of the second coming is that Jesus is coming back and when He does everyone will know.

Jesus knew throughout history, throughout the Church Age, the time from His resurrection until His return, His followers, as they endure tribulations and trials in life, would long for His return. So, He clearly warns us not to be taken in by these end-times screams by false self-serving prophets who in reality serve the evil one. Prepare, be ready, live each day as if He will return, but do NOT get involved in end-time false prophecies. The Apostle John made this certain in the 1<sup>st</sup> chapter of Revelation, verses 5 to 7, “**To him, Jesus Christ, who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood <sup>6</sup> and made us a kingdom, priests to his God and Father, to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen. (Amen, means ‘truly or indeed it is true’)** <sup>7</sup> **Behold, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him, and all tribes of the earth will wail on account of him. Even so. Amen.**” Our Lord Jesus’ appearing will be seen by “every eye” on planet earth; the chosen will celebrate and the world “will wail”!

Just as we can take no credit for our salvation, for it is by the grace and mercy of God that we are saved, so too, we have no control of when Jesus returns. Being overly concerned with end-time prophecies keeps one from spending time

understanding Scripture, how God's grace works in our lives and sharing the Gospel of good news with the lost.

## **The Cross and the Second Coming**

Jesus wants the disciples that were with him and for us who are His disciples today to have an understanding of life in the end-times. Reading verse 25, Jesus said, **“first he must suffer many things and be rejected by this generation.”**

Jesus' concern is that His followers not be so obsessed with His return that they forget His cross. His point so far is to not yearn for the second coming to the point of chasing after things predicted about it. We are not to chase after signs like the Jews, they always were looking, always one more miraculous sign, but, my brothers and sisters, we are to understand and be grounded in the cross. If we have a solid grasp on the cross and the Gospel of Christ, then the second coming will be our blessed hope. We will not have to figure it out ahead of time but as Paul wrote to Titus, we are to live for God's glory while we wait and prepare for the appearing of our Lord.

The text uses language that should help us understand that the cross and Jesus' suffering is not foreign to the divine plan of God to bring about the exaltation of His Son but rather it is an integral part of God's plan. The appearing of our Lord comes after the cross. The cross is as much a part of God's divine decree as is His Son glorious second coming. It says in verse 25, **“But first he must suffer many things and be rejected...”** The reason for this suffering, is in part, that God's Kingdom stands in tension with the world or as Jesus says, **“...this generation.”** When Jesus uses the phrase, **“this generation”**, He has in mind the generation who did not believe in the days of Noah, the people during the days of Lot, the Israelites who journeyed in the wilderness and the present generation that

did not believe John the Baptist, God's last Old Testament prophet nor Jesus the Christ, the Son of the Living God and by implication each generation since Jesus' resurrection which includes our generation.

The cross comes before the glorious return of Christ. That may seem like an inane point to make, but understand it is a deeply important point. We must lock into our minds that before the second coming takes place, the elect must be ransomed. God's chosen and called must be freed. This is the point of the cross here in this text. Only through suffering was God's will fully accomplished in Jesus' life. If we consider this, then as believers and followers of Jesus we understand our lives will also be subject to suffering. It was through suffering - that the joy of Jesus and his glory is revealed. It was through Jesus' suffering and resurrection that His present glory and His future glory at the second coming is revealed. It is our suffering and steadfast holding to our faith that Christ's glory is often revealed to the fallen world. As the writer of Hebrew instructed in the opening 2 verses of chapter 12, here is, my beloved, what we are to live as witnesses of Christ to the world, *“Therefore, (we know when we read the word “Therefore” in the scriptures it is saying here comes an important point – pay attention) Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, <sup>2</sup> looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.”* We are to live for Jesus' glory, we are to live in the present and know our future hope is in Jesus' return.

Do you see the contrast Jesus presents to his disciples in Luke passage? The disciples have their heads in the clouds desperately craving the final consummation

of God's redemptive plan and then Jesus pulls them back into reality by saying, the first thing that must happen is my death by crucifixion. Do not get ahead of God's divine plan. Suffering precedes glory. This is a massive truth for us today. Do not be so caught up with end-times signs and predictions that you neglect the cross and the gospel. Because for the ones who do not understand the cross and the gospel - the appearing of Christ is not the blessed hope, but the day of judgment.

A person may have an elaborate eschatological structure and system they follow but if they do not understand the Gospel, it works for their destruction. Please understand there is the temptation to try and figure out all the details of Christ's return because as believers we do long for our Lord's return. However, often those who study end-times views end up forgetting the importance of the cross and the fact that we are called not to have the second coming figured out but we are called to love Christ and live our lives now for His glory while we prepare for His return.

This is why, if anyone here is waiting for me to lay out an end-times system or schedule in detail, I am sorry but your wait will be in vain, because it is not going to happen. Here is what I believe, we are in the end-times, whether that is a year, 5 years, 50 years or 500. So, we know Jesus is returning but until that day we must roll up our sleeves and get to work for the Kingdom of God.



### **The Blessed Hope of the Second Coming**

The point that I believe is clear in the next 7 verses, is for every generation from the past to the present time and for future generations, most people do not pay attention to what God says and demonstrates. Reading at verse 26, **“Just as it was in the days of Noah, so will it be in the days of the Son of Man. <sup>27</sup> They were eating and drinking and marrying and being given in marriage, until the day when Noah**

entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all. <sup>28</sup> Likewise, just as it was in the days of Lot—they were eating and drinking, buying and selling, planting and building, <sup>29</sup> but on the day when Lot went out from Sodom, fire and sulfur rained from heaven and destroyed them all— <sup>30</sup> so will it be on the day when the Son of Man is revealed. <sup>31</sup> On that day, let the one who is on the housetop, with his goods in the house, not come down to take them away, and likewise let the one who is in the field not turn back. <sup>32</sup> Remember Lot's wife.” In the days of Noah, by faith he and his family spent about 100 years to build the ark and during that time he warned the people and preached to them about God. The people's response was to mock Noah and his God and live their lives without heeding God's warnings. The same is true for most people today. However, God is forever faithful and he sent the flood and destroyed those who were not his people. The people of Noah's time loved their wicked lifestyle more than they loved God their Creator.

Jesus emphasizes his point by continuing with the generation of Lot. The people of Sodom were going about their daily lives; **they were eating and drinking, buying and selling, planting and building**”. They loved the world more than God and so, as God determined they died in judgment, not by flooding the world, but by fire from heaven. Even Lot's wife who escaped the fire could not let go of the world and did not heed God's instructions, she could not let go of Sodom, looking back she suffered judgment.

Jesus continues driving home his point, saying in verses 31 and 32, **“On that day, let the one who is on the housetop, with his goods in the house, not come down to take them away, and likewise let the one who is in the field not turn back. <sup>32</sup> Remember Lot's wife.”** As believers **“On that day”** our lives are to have been lived with a love for Christ above the world because of Christ sacrifice and by our living under His kingship our reward is heaven. If you are on your roof at His



coming do not run downstairs to retrieve your worldly stuff, for it is worthless. Listen to me now, for those who love the world more the Christ, more than living the Word of God, no matter whether they call themselves Christian or not, the second coming Christ will be a horrible day of eternal judgment.

If you walked the streets taking a poll by laying out the doctrines of hell and heaven and then asked each person what would they choose, I am sure almost everyone would choose heaven. Understand this is not what the choice is here in Luke's text and frankly, it is not the choice found elsewhere in the Bible. There is a pronounced difference between the desire for heaven for a believer and unbeliever. What unbelievers have you ever met who thought there might be a place called hell and would not choose heaven? Here is the difference; a believer values heaven above the world because of their love for Christ. The unbeliever appreciates heaven only more than hell. To the ungodly person, there is nothing more desirable than this world and therefore, that person only chooses heaven over hell and not heaven over the world. The result is the unbeliever will not have heaven by such a self-serving choice. It reminds me of Blood, Sweat and Tears' song *And When I Die* lyrics; **"I can swear there ain't no Heaven, but I pray there ain't no hell."** This is the thinking of the lost world.

This is what Jesus is saying, people if your life is focused on the stuff of this world; as the people of Noah's day **"eating and drinking and marrying and being given in marriage"** or the people of Lot's day **"eating and drinking, buying and selling, planting and building"** or those who have accumulated **"goods in the house"**, meaning the material things of this world, those people have gotten what they wanted, but it is not heaven, it is judgment that is their reward. Heaven is the blessed hope only for those who treasure Christ over the things of this world.

Jesus now moves even further on with what it means to believe in him as the Messiah, God the Son, Lord and Savior. Reading verses 33 to 37, “ ‘Whoever seeks to preserve his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life will keep it.’ <sup>34</sup> I tell you, in that night there will be two in one bed. One will be taken and the other left. <sup>35</sup> There will be two women grinding together. One will be taken and the other left. <sup>37</sup> And they said to him, ‘Where, Lord?’ He said to them, ‘Where the corpse is, there the vultures will gather.’ ”

In verse 33 the Greek word “*psyche*” is translated as “life”. The Greek means the efforts or process to save one’s life. Now what Jesus is telling us is that if all our focus and efforts in this world are the things pertaining to preserving our own life and even making our life more comfortable at the expense of caring for our souls, we will lose the life we have tried so hard to preserve. Rather than caring first and foremost about the things of this world and being concerned with the preservation of our mortal lives, such as food, water and shelter, Jesus wants us to be foremost concerned about our souls, for our eternal life.

Jesus’ examples here deal with those who are close to each other, “there will be two in one bed” and yet, one has cared more for the things of Christ and the other for the things of the world. At the second coming one will come to Jesus and one will receive judgment. One is like Noah faithful to God and the other is like the people who disregarded the message of salvation. We must always remember that the second coming is the blessed hope for all of God’s people but for everyone else the second coming means horrible eternal judgment.



This brings us to the last verse, verse 37. After hearing Jesus, the disciples ask, “Where, Lord?” They are still focused on where and when His kingdom will be. Jesus responds to their question, answering, “Where the corpse is, there the

**vultures will gather.”** Jesus’ answer comes from a proverb these disciples apparently understood but whose meaning has been lost over time. There is much conflict among the theologians over it’s meaning. In context what Jesus said about Noah and Lot, I believe Jesus is saying, just like God’s swift judgment of the people in Noah and Lot’s time, so too, will be the judgment be at Christ’s return. Just as dead bodies attract vultures, so too, will the spiritually dead invite God’ swift judgement.

The simple truth is the Jesus offers salvation to every generation, as Paul made clear, in Romans chapter 1 beginning in verse 18, **“For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. <sup>19</sup> For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. <sup>20</sup> For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So **they are without excuse.**”** If one has their arms wrapped around and embracing the things of the world they will end up like the corrupt world, dying and dead. Believers are to wrap their arms around Christ, live the Bible and live by God’s Spirit and love Christ above anything of this world and when this is done, the reward is heaven.

Remember, His coming cannot be missed, it will be unmistakable. We must never get so caught up in all the end-times systems and predictions which cause one to lose sight of the cross and the Gospel. Jesus warns us that if His coming is to be the blessed hope we must love h

im more than the world and even more than our lives.

The Lord Jesus is pleading with all believers when He says, do not be so connected to this world that when I come you cannot let go of your stuff. Jesus

warns us because in mercy He is calling people of every nation to embrace him and love him more than they love the things of this world. Let go of your grip on material goods and embrace Christ. Live for His glory and when He comes again, we will be ready. If we are ready, His coming will truly be the blessed hope. Amen and amen!