

The coming of the Kingdom

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[0 : 00] Now turn to the Gospel of Luke, chapter 17, and we shall read again verses 20 and 21. Luke 17, and at verse 20.

And when he was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come, he answered them and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with observation, neither shall they say, lo here or lo there, for behold the kingdom of God is within you.

It's 1990, 1990 years after the first coming of Christ.

Jesus said he was going to come again. When will he come? Will he come before the year 2000?

If you thought he was going to come in the next 10 years, would you not live a very different life to the kind of life you're living at present? But then there's something inside you which tells you that Christ won't come again for hundreds of years.

[1 : 44] There's a little voice inside your own brain that says to you, You've got plenty of time to seek the Lord, plenty of time to do good in the future.

And yet God is saying, Thou fool, This night thy soul shall be required of days.

Then whose shall all these things be? Thou fool. I wonder are you a fool Who's putting off these things? Putting away consideration Of death?

Of eternity? Of the judgment? Of your responsibility before God? Maybe you say that's a very morbid subject with which to begin the new year.

What a sad and miserable topic you pick for the first Sunday in 1990. And yet, as we go through the Gospels, we find chapter after chapter dealing with this subject.

[3 : 07] Here we find another half chapter on the subject of death and eternity. Jesus, you see, was always talking about judgment and the end of the world.

Why was he talking about it so much? Simply because it's vital. Because it's of absolute importance that a person makes peace with God while they have the chance.

An eternity of happiness is before those who seek the Lord today.

An eternity of misery awaits those who neglect this duty. And Jesus loves us. And that's why Jesus, time and time again, comes back to this subject.

This world will end. There will be a judgment day. We must prepare for it. And it's because I love you too that I keep talking about this subject.

[4 : 16] It's so important. We can't ignore it. There's nothing more important. We must make our peace with God. Otherwise, we will perish.

When will the kingdom of God come? The Old Testament prophets had been talking of the coming of the kingdom.

They often foretold the coming of the Messiah, the Son of God, the King of Israel. And during the time between the Old Testament and the New Testament, there was a lot of discussion going on.

The apocalyptic, prophetic individuals spoke of the great days of the future, of the coming of the Messiah, the Rabbis.

They discussed these matters as well. And so there was a heightened sense of expectation amongst the people at this time.

[5 : 22] Everybody seemed to have this feeling that it wouldn't be long before Messiah would appear and the kingdom of God would be ushered in.

And so the Pharisees come to Jesus and they say to him, when will the kingdom of God come? And Jesus answers in a very interesting way.

He says basically, the kingdom of God has come. It's come already. The kingdom of God is within you. You Pharisees, you leaders of the Jews are looking for a great fanfare of the king.

And the sudden emergence of a warrior king who will mount his chariot or his war horse and lead the children of Israel to defeat the Romans and to set up a very earthly kingdom in this world.

That says Jesus. That's not the kingdom of God. The kingdom of God is within you. God's kingdom is not an earthly kingdom. It's within you.

[6 : 36] And what did he mean when he said, the kingdom of God is within you? Well, he meant this. He meant that Christ the king was within them, was there among them.

He had come. Jesus, God's son, the Messiah, was there within them. And he was establishing his kingdom within them.

He was converting his people. He was gathering, building up his church, setting apart his disciples as the spiritual kingdom.

The kingdom of God is within you. It is within your heart. It's an internal kingdom. It's not some outward kingdom like the Romans or the Greek.

It's a kingdom in people's hearts that includes all kinds of people from all different tribes and kingdoms in this one great spiritual, internal kingdom.

[7 : 46] It's the kingdom of those who come to realize that Jesus is the king and accept him as their lord and master.

The kingdom of God has come. It's among you. It's in you. Is God's kingdom in your heart?

Have you come to accept Jesus as lord? Who is the master of your life? Who tells you what to do? Is it yourself?

Or is it Christ? Who rules? The king? The great king of kings? Or yourself?

Sadly, too many people want to be master of their own fate and destiny. The captain of their own souls. They want to choose out their own life and their own pleasures and their own ways and their own enjoyment.

[8 : 48] And they're not prepared to submit to the king. The kingdom has come. But there's many people outside of the kingdom. Wonder are you in it?

Having accepted Christ as the sole lord and master of your life. further, Jesus says, one day this invisible kingdom, this spiritual kingdom, will become manifest.

It will be revealed. It will be seen and displayed. One day there will be a public form to the kingdom. kingdom. But that will be the end of the world.

When the Messiah comes for the second time. He came the first time, humble, lowly, just an ordinary looking person. And he set up and established his kingdom, his church.

But one day Christ will come again. Then all his glory, yes, with a fanfare of trumpets, then he will descend from heaven with a shout, with a voice of the archangel, the sounding of the trumpet of God.

[10 : 14] The dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with the dead into the air to meet the Lord who's coming.

God's coming. But when it comes in this last great form, it will not come with observation.

It won't be a gradual progression, a slow disclosure. It won't be people saying, Jesus, we know, is going to come again in a year's time.

Or he's coming again next week. Or it won't be, now we know Jesus is coming tomorrow. Or even in an hour's time. He will come as the lightning shining out of one end of heaven to the other.

He will come suddenly with no way of predicting his coming. days. And then Jesus tells us that there will be dark days first.

[11 : 24] Days when the devil seems to reign. Days when wicked men prosper. Days when atheism and false religion prevail throughout the world.

Or so it would seem. Days when the followers of Christ will long for a day of the Son of Man and shall not see it.

They will long for a day of Christ's power. Some ways like that today. We long for a day of the Son of Man. We long to see his power shaking people out of their unbelief.

Turning people from their godless ways. we long to see a day of power, of Christ, of his spirit, of revival.

A day when God's church, we ourselves, will become zealous, enthusiastic, and excited about our religion.

[12 : 31] A day when the unconverted will be saved. they shall long for a day of the Son of Man. But the day of the Son of Man, spoken of here, they shall not see it.

Sometimes it would seem that the day is delayed. It's kept back. Kept back from some. The people will say, some of them, see here, see there, Christ has come.

He is over here, He's over there, He's living in this country, in that country. It's false. Many false Christs and false prophets will arise.

But when Christ comes again, His second coming won't be veiled. It will be bright as the lightning and obvious to all.

Every eye shall see Him and everyone will know that yes, the Messiah is here. and then Jesus says, but first Christ must suffer.

[13 : 39] He must die on the cross. He must complete His first coming before the second coming will arrive. And this of course Jesus has done.

He has completed His first coming. He has ascended up to heaven and He says, behold, I come quickly and my reward is with me to give unto every man according as his works shall be.

Christ is coming. Are you saying, come quickly? We're longing for you to come, Lord. We're longing for you to end this wicked world. We're longing for you to end the sin in our own hearts.

Come, Lord Jesus. Come, bring in your eternal kingdom. Come quickly. You're longing for it. The bringing in of the eternity of heaven.

Are you saying, wait, Christ. Wait, Lord Jesus. Give me a little bit more time. Some things I want to do, some pleasures I want to enjoy, some good things in life that I haven't achieved yet.

[14 : 53] And then after that, then I'll seek the Lord and I'll make my peace with you. And then you can come. But give me a little bit more time. Oh, don't come. Don't come yet.

Don't come this year. Don't come this week. Hang on, Jesus. Wait a little time. That's your attitude. Fear lest Christ should come again.

When he comes, all those who are fearful and unbelieving will be cast into hell, into the lake of fire.

But those who say, come Lord Jesus, those who trust in him and are longing for his coming, to them he will say, well done, good and faithful servant.

Enter in to the joy of your Lord. Enjoy what I have prepared for you. God will come to this world.

[16 : 06] It will be as in the days of Noah. They ate and they drank, they married, and they were given in marriage until the day that Noah entered the ark.

that good man for 120 years was building this ark and at the same time preaching to people, telling them to turn from their wicked ways, to seek the Lord, to join with him, to believe what God was saying, to trust his word, and to be saved.

For 120 years he was warning people of the danger they were in, but they didn't listen. that old foggy, what does he know?

They didn't listen. They rejected him. That's silly, all his feuds, old-fashioned. And then one day Noah entered the ark.

They were still busy in all their daily activities. Noah entered the ark and they didn't bat an island until the rain began to fall and the earth began to shake and the oceans began to rise and the fountains of the deep world poured out and the whole world was in chaos and it was too late to come trying to get into the ark.

[17 : 32] Or as it was in the days of Lot, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded. There's nothing wrong with buying and selling, planting and building, eating and drinking.

These are all proper activities. The trouble is if that becomes our all, if that becomes the all-absorbing thing in our lives, the physical, the earthly, the worldly, if that's all that matters to us, then we're lost.

They bought, they sold, they planted, they builded until the day that Lot left Sodom. And then fire and brimstone came down from heaven and destroyed them all.

So shall it be at the end of the world. The last day of the world's existence, what kind of day will it be?

I'm sure the crowds will be at the sales, the roads will be busy, the type writers and word processors will be clicking away in the offices, students, students will be studying at their desks, the machines in the factories will be going, the building sites will be busy, and suddenly Christ will come.

[19 : 01] Just as the lightning flashes across the sky, just as quickly, Christ will appear, breaking into the unbelief of men and women, and suddenly everyone will realize that God is, that his word is true, and that Christ is judge.

those in danger, verse 31, he who is upon the house top, let him not come down and enter the house to get his stuff out, he is out in the field, let him not return home to get his cloak or his coat, those whose hearts are set upon the things of his world, when Christ comes, you might be relaxing as people in the east were doing, on the flat tops of their houses, or you might be busy in the field, when Christ comes, there is no time then to go running to your house to gather your stuff, and those whose hearts are set upon these things, they will be left, that those whose hearts are set upon Christ, and those whose hearts do not love these passing, trivial things,

Christ will come and they will go with him. Remember Lot's wife, she is a fascinating individual, she escaped from Sodom, she left that town which was doomed to be destroyed, she left it in body, but her heart was still in Sodom, and so she was destroyed, she looked back, she longed for Sodom, she loved Sodom.

Wonder are you like Lot's wife, looking back, looking to your joys and pleasures, looking to the Sodom of this world, your heart set on these things, and unaware of the danger, unaware of the judgment day.

he who will seek to save his life shall lose it, and whosoever shall lose his life shall preserve it.

[22 : 07] The person who treasures this life, the person who clings to it, who thinks that this life is all that matters, that person will lose his life.

and the person who loses his life here will find it. No wonder do you cling to your life.

Are you saying to yourself, when I'm a little bit older, then I'll seek the Lord, I'll make my peace with God, but meantime you're clinging to the life you're living, clinging to your pleasures and clinging to your sins.

Whosoever shall save his life and cling to his life, he will lose it, cast into hell. But whosoever shall lose his life, whosoever will give up the pleasures of this world and the idols of this life, he shall find it, he shall find eternal life with God.

Those who are in danger, those whose hearts are set upon material things and pleasures, those whose minds are set upon the sodom of this world, who are clinging to a sinful life, not prepared to give it up, when Jesus says, repent and be converted.

[23 : 43] so that your sins will be blotted out. But you're hanging on, hanging on to your old life. You don't want to give it up, not yet. So you hang on to it till it's too late.

■■■■■ longevity, notice the clear cut division that has made.

Two people will be in one bed, one will be taken, and another left. Two women grinding at the mill, one taken, another left.

two folk out in the field working together one taken, another left when Christ comes the division will cut across every natural tie of this life it will cut across our work relationship our workmates some of those who work with us will be taken with God another's left it will cut across our friendship two bare, two women working at the mill together sharing their day's work friends together and one will be taken another left it will cut across the marriage bed two in bed one taken another left

Christ's people are taken with themselves and the rest are left behind there will be no humming and hawing when Christ comes no negotiations no arguments when Christ comes there will be no middle ground no third group of decent, upright people who aren't bad enough to be thrown into hell that haven't trusted in Jesus in order to get to heaven there will be no third group there's only the two those who are taken and those who are left and the disciples say to him where will they be left Lord where will they be left and he said unto them wheresoever the body is thither will the eagles be gathered together he uses a kind of proverb that they had at that time wherever the catapult is the vultures will gather wherever the sinner the rotten sinner is the vultures of God's wrath will come and tear and destroy their solemn words wheresoever the body is there will the eagles be gathered together

[27 : 03] I wonder will the eagles of God's wrath tear at you another year past another decade behind it the day of our death is closer the day of our eternity is certainly a lot near are you still unconverted day after day week after week year after year passing still unconverted Christ is trying to warn us here for these solemn words he's calling us to consider our way to remember the uncertainty of life and the absolute certainty of judgment and eternity we will all have to give account are we ready are we prepared remember Lot's wife she almost escaped she got out of sodden but she perished but she perished some of you have almost escaped the world and the sins of the world you've come to church but is your heart still in sodden although you're in church have you given your heart to Christ surely it's time for you to seek the Lord time that you made your peace with him time that you sought him and found him and he offers himself to everyone who wants him look to me look to me and be saved believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved with your trust in him and be sure that you are saved and go on making sure that you are saved and don't be amongst those who start off well and then fall back returning like a dog to its vomit again as the sow that is washed returning to wallowing in the mire don't be like that turn your back upon sin forever turn your face to the Lord make your peace with God take him as your saviour trust in him for time and for eternity let us pray gracious and ever blessed God we thank thee thou hast given us so many warnings in thy word and we thank thee that thou hast given us so much time in order to repent help us all to repent and to go on repenting and to go on living for thee trusting in Jesus and giving our heart to him and we know that if we do we will be saved whatever happens we will be saved whenever Christ comes whether he comes today or whether he comes a thousand years from today we will be saved help us then to trust in Jesus in his name we pray

Amen