The second coming

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[0:00] Now we might turn our thoughts to the Gospel according to Luke chapter 17 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.
And so on. The kingdom of God cometh not with observation. Now man is by nature an inquisitive creature.
He's always seeking to know more than he already does know. And the mind of man is anxious to explore the unknown, the mysterious.
And although the future is hid from him, it doesn't prevent man from trying to discover what the immediate days or weeks or years may hold for him.
[1:11] Now ever since the days of Christ, men have wondered about the end of the world. When would it take place? How would it happen?

And it was this spirit of curiosity that prompted the Pharisees to come to Jesus with this question about the kingdom of God.
When will the end come? When will God's kingdom be inaugurated? When will the final cataclysmic take place which will usher in a new age?
And they thought, you see, of that kingdom in terms of politics, in terms of materialism. And here, you see, Christ shatters their illusion and tells them that the kingdom of God is something that is not political, neither is it materialistic.
The kingdom of God, he says, is something that is spiritual. The kingdom of God is within you. That's where the kingdom of God begins.
[2:26] In new creatures being made. In a new society of men and women being developed. That's how the kingdom of God begins. But our Lord goes on to tell his disciples of that momentous event that is going to take place at the end of world history when Christ himself will return.

With great power and in great glory. Now, undoubtedly, the second coming of Christ and when we talk about the second coming of Christ we are talking about that coming of our Lord Jesus at the end of the world.
And when we talk about the second coming of Christ let's remember that it's a very difficult subject. And the Bible doesn't present us with a completely clear picture about it.
What the Bible does do is this it states emphatically that Christ will come again. And the Bible does tell us how Christ is going to come.
Behold, it says, He cometh with clouds and every eye shall see him. And they also who pierced him and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him.
[3:53] The Bible doesn't tell us when he will come. And it won't do for anyone of us to dare to predict when our Lord is going to come.

God in his wisdom has chosen not to reveal that moment to us. But he will come. And in some way that we don't understand, every eye will see the descending Christ.
All kindreds of the earth will see him as he makes his appearance through the skies and as he comes back to this place, this world.
Now, there are three different positions that people have taken with regard to the second coming of Christ. And in theological circles, they call them the pre-, the post-, and the amillennial theories.
Now, I don't suppose you know very much about these theories, but just let me explain very briefly, very simply what they mean. The post-millennial theory, you see, a millennium is a thousand years.
[5:11] And the Bible speaks about a thousand years of blessing that's to come upon the earth.
And men have wondered about this thousand years of blessing, this long period of time when unprecedented blessing is going to come to the world of men.

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Now, the question is, will Christ come before that period of unprecedented blessing? Or will Christ come after that period of unprecedented blessing?
And that's where the post- and the pre-millennial theories hinge on. If you are a pre-millennialist, then it means that you believe that Christ is going to come before the millennium.
If you are a post-millennialist, you believe that Christ is going to come after the millennium. But if you are a ne-millennialist or a now-millennialist, as the Americans call it, it means that you don't believe in a millennium at all.
That we are, in a sense, living through the millennium and that Christ will come at any moment. Well, we can't be dogmatic upon these things.
[6:31] I suppose that in the Free Church of Scotland, although there are men who believe in the pre-millennial position, the majority of men would take the post-millennial view.

But it's not a thing that we dogmatize on in the Free Church. We leave it an open question. Leave it to your wisdom, to your discretion, to the guidance that God may give to you with regard to this doctrine.
But what we can say from this section of the Gospel of Luke, and that is this, that there is the certainty of Christ's return. And we are also told here the conditions that will prevail when our Lord returns to the earth.
Now, let's just think of these things for a few moments together. First of all, let's think of the certainty of Christ's coming. Now, Jesus warns his disciples of his sufferings and of his rejection by that generation of Jews.
And he also speaks about the tribulation that would follow his death on the cross. And of course, the tribulation that our Lord was referring to after his death on the cross was the terrible tribulation that the Jewish people went through round about the year 70 AD when the Roman legions marched against Jerusalem and took it.
[8:21] And when the Jewish people were besieged within their city for months, when the Roman legions virtually starved them out, and when these Jewish people began to turn cannibal in order to survive, and Jesus predicted, do you see, he says, the stones of this temple?

Not one of these stones, he says, will be thrown down till all these things be fulfilled which I am speaking to you about. And this magnificent temple that you are trusting in, it will be leveled to the ground.
And so it was by the Roman legions. And they only left the wailing wall which is there to this day where the Jews go and weep, longing for the return of their Messiah, little realizing that their Messiah has already come and that they rejected him and that all their suffering that they have suffered and my, how the Jewish people have suffered, all the suffering that they have suffered is because of their rejection of Christ.
His blood be on us and on our children. Very well, his blood is on them and on their children too. and will be and will remain so until they repent and return to Christ. And so here Jesus tells of his own coming again.
[10:05] And he tells us that it will not be in humiliation as it was at his birth, at his advent, but that it will be with power and in great glory.

If you turn to the gospel according to Matthew, you will read there how it says, they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.
Or turn again to Paul's second letter to the Thessalonians, chapter 1, at verse 7, and you read how the apostle gives us a description of the coming of Christ in these terms.
the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his power when he shall be glorified in his saints and be admired in all them that believe in that day.
What a day! there Christ is coming back from heaven, attended with his mighty angels in flaming fire.
[11:32] No wonder the world will be struck with awe. Never a sight like this has ever been seen. And it's going to be seen by all on that great day.

And the coming of Christ is absolutely certain. And Jesus here warns his disciples that they are not to be misled by exact dates or predictions of his imminent appearance.
And this is what he says to his disciples. They shall say to you, see here, see there.

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Go not after them nor follow them. And this is one of the dangers you see that we may be exposed to if we believe in the second coming of Christ as we all do in this church.
That we might be taken up with this question of dates to the exclusion of others. And that's when we begin to speculate dangerously on a subject about which we know nothing.
[12:49] Christ Jesus doesn't tell us when he will come but just that it will be with a suddenness and that there will be that he will be seen universally by all men.

Listen to what he has to say. As the lightning that lighteneth out of one part under heaven shineth unto the other part under heaven. See the lightning flash?
See it darting with rapidity from one end of the heaven to the other? another. That's how it will be says Christ when I will come back.
With a suddenness. Every eye shall see him and they also which pierced him and all kindreds of the earth shall mourn because of him says John in his apocalyptic vision.
You see there will be nothing secretive nothing obscure about the appearance of our Lord. Every eye will see him and I don't know how that's going to be but it's going to happen.
[14:10] I suppose we can take we can we can consider the technological achievements of our present age and we marvel at these achievements.

We can sit down in front of a television set and see what's going on in Israel at this present moment if the news is about Israel if it's about Australia if it's about New Zealand if it's about the North Pole by means of satellites by means of these various means of communication we can see what's happening just now in these various places if we're tuned into it.
Now it's not that God requires technological advance and I don't suppose that it will be by technological advance that we will see him but in some mysterious way God will make it possible for every eye to see Christ as he comes descending through the clouds back to earth.
But let's consider the conditions that will prevail at his coming. The question is asked will there be signs to indicate to us that the second advent is imminent?
Are we able to say that because certain things have taken place or are taking place therefore Christ's advent is almost upon us?
[15:55] Let's go back and listen to Jesus. This is what he says there shall be signs in the sun and in the moon and in the stars.

Do you see all these natural phenomena the sun, the moon, the stars? You begin to see things happening a disruption in the natural order of things.
And then Jesus goes on to say and on the earth without even looking up to the skies on the earth says Jesus there will be distress of nations distress of nations with perplexity the sea and the waves roaring a dislocation of natural of nature of the natural order of things men's hearts failing them for fear and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth for the powers of heaven shall be shaken if you want to find out where that is it's in Luke chapter 21 verse 25 so that if you care to look up the words of Jesus there is where you'll find it.
And our Lord indicates too that for all that these commotions taking place in nature in the events of history that in spite of all that men will be heedless indifferent as far as he is concerned and to illustrate the mood that will prevail at that time Jesus points us back in history to two never to be forgotten events that took place long long ago.
What are these events? events? They are the events in history that had to do with Noah and with Lot and he is referring you see to the cataclysmic judgment that overcame the world in the days of Noah and if you go back to the days of Noah says Jesus you will discover that at that time when God's cataclysmic judgment overcame the world men were in an unprepared state for it.
[18:45] And says Jesus the same attitude prevailed when the terrible fires of God's wrath fell upon Sodom and Gomorrah the men of that time were indifferent to God and says Jesus that is the mood that will characterize the world when I come back again.

Sometimes you know and I've been quoting some of these things to you and if you've been listening to me I suppose some of you have been saying you know minister some of these things that you've said and quoted from the Bible seem so like the times that we are living in aren't they?
The commotions that are taking place the earthquakes in diverse places the perplexity among nations the almost fear and the dread and the apprehension of this present generation with the holocaust of a nuclear threat poised over them wondering what is to become of this day and age towards the end of this century that we are living in.

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go back to Noah's day Genesis chapter 6 verse 5 it says God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually go to Genesis chapter 18 and read the story about Sodom and Gomorrah listen to what God said the Lord said their sin this sin of homosexuality these sexual aberrations that are taking place in Sodom and Gomorrah their sin is very grievous.
my word what about today legalized homosexuality legalized abortion legalized permissiveness legalized pornography where do we stop their sin is very grievous violence corruption immorality bestiality dishonesty all these forms of wickedness characterized the days of Noah and the days of Sodom and Gomorrah and yet these people were unprepared for the cataclysmic judgments of God that overcame them and here our Lord speaks to us and he says to us that's what it's going to be like when I return as it was in the days of Noah so shall it be in the days of the Son of Man as it was in the days of Lot in Sodom so shall it be in the days of the Son of Man now although there was all that violence and bestiality in those times the awful permissiveness that characterized
[22:43] Noah's day and Lot's day yet the leading feature that was characteristic of these ages was this not so much the wickedness but the indifference to God the unbelief the false security of these people Jesus says in Noah's day they did eat they drank they married wives they were given in marriage until the day that Noah entered into the they weren't concerned not a bit of it eating drinking marrying building homes making homes that's all they were concerned about God had been left out of their thoughts in similar fashion in Lot's day they did eat they drank they bought they sold they planted they built but the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and God destroyed them all we can say that the conditions that will prevail when Christ returns will approximate to the conditions that prevailed in that ancient antediluvian age and in that age of Lot there will be worldliness indifference as far as

God is concerned unpreparedness they didn't take God seriously and just in the same way they won't take God seriously when the end of the world comes when the Son of Man cometh said Jesus on one occasion shall he find faith on the earth will there be any at all who will be exercising faith when I come back again or listen again to Peter in his epistle warning about the last days there shall come in the last days scoffers walking after their own lusts and saying where is the promise of his coming for since the fathers fell asleep all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation and listen to Paul writing his letter to the Thessalonians once again the day of the Lord he says shall come as a thief in the night you don't know when a thief is coming do you you don't know the thief is there until he's suddenly upon you the day of the
Lord so cometh as a thief in the night for when they shall say peace and safety then sudden destruction cometh upon them and they shall not escape but just another word you might say why is all this going to happen what's the purpose in it all what's the purpose in our Lord's return well there is a purpose you see in our Lord's return it's for judgment and for the establishment of the final order you see this present order is not the final order thank God for it my if this was the final order of all things and if the world was just to be like this forever and ever and ever and ever and ever my wouldn't be worth having a world like this would it thank God he is going to bring in another order wherein dwelleth righteousness but we've said that the coming of Christ is for the purpose of judgment for some when Christ comes it will be night time they will be in bed the one taking the other left for others it will be the day time they will be working in the field one will be taken the other left you see what our
Lord is saying is this that when he comes the great division will take place those on the right those on the left those who are the sheep those who are the goats in in in Matthew chapter 25 this is what Jesus says when the son of man shall come in his glory and all the holy angels with him then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory and before him shall be gathered all nations and he shall separate them one from another as a shepherd divided his sheep from the goats and he shall set the sheep on his right hand the goats on the left then shall the king say unto them on the right hand come ye blessed of my father inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world and when that takes place
Christ will deliver up the kingdom to God the Father now because it is to be such an all important event having eternal consequences for one and all of us Jesus warns us that we are to be in a state of readiness remember he says Lot's wife and why are we to remember that woman well for this reason we are to remember you see her opportunities Lot's wife she was married to a God fearing man she was warned by God in a special manner she was prayed for by the mighty Abraham she

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was entertained by the angels she was almost saved they literally had dragged her out of the city and she was almost saved but you see with the salt particles descending she was solidified encased in salt she became a pillar of salt and
[29:55] Jesus says remember her the poor pathetic woman who had all the chances and she wasn't saved I think of the poor pathetic free church people who have all the chances they're not saved I suppose there are heathen people in Africa who would say would to God we had the chance that these people have people in other countries who would say would to God we had their opportunity to come to Christ and if we could draw aside the veil of hell and allow the damned to speak to us they would say what an opportunity you have why don't you make use of it remember

Lot's wife her heart you see was in Sodom she loved the things of a perishing world she displayed a shocking sense of unbelief to God's warnings and this is what is happening you see among so many free church people I can't go and speak like this to Church of Scotland people because I don't know them and I don't know their setup I hear about the evangelicals in the Church of Scotland I thank God for them I thank God for the mighty work that's going on in that church but that church is not my responsibility at the present moment my responsibility is towards my own church towards the people who belong to us as a church and I say this that the people in the free church of Scotland have great opportunities more than most
Christ is being offered to them and yet free church people today are rejecting Christ and saying I've listened to you minister I've noticed that you've been getting a bit excited but I go on my merry way into the world and I go on in my godlessness poor you poor pathetic you I'm sorry for you you must take god seriously take heed to yourselves says Jesus lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness and the cares of this life so that that day come upon you unawares for as a snare shall it come upon all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth watch ye therefore and pray always that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass and to stand before the son of man man
I don't know when he is coming but it does say in the book of revelation Jesus speaks like this behold I come quickly I'll be coming in a moment with quickness my reward is with me to give every man according as his work shall be he's coming Christ is coming are you ready for it supposing it was to happen it's 12 minutes 12 o'clock it's 7 minutes past 12 suppose it were to happen at 12 30 supposing it were to happen at 3 in the afternoon are you ready could come quickly
I don't know when it's going to come but can you say amen even so come Lord Jesus in other words are you looking forward with expectation to it because for you if you are a Christian it's going to be the greatest event that ever has happened when the new world and the new heaven the new earth the new society will begin there shall be no more hunger no more sorrow no more crying no more pain the former things have passed away all things have become new isn't it going to be wonderful and just about finished you're afraid of the nuclear bomb you say
[35:35] God grant that a thing like that will never fall on Britain because if it does we're finished and if you've got a young family you say to yourself God grant that it may not happen in their time that they might be able to go through life and enjoy just as I've enjoyed life but you can't be sure can you and when that diabolical mushroom cloud begins to form doesn't it spell disaster and the end but in the new society of God there are no atomic weapons there will be no nuclear explosions there will be no pollution of the atmosphere no pollution of the world that is to come they shall live and reign with Christ forever and forever will you be there let us pray oh

Lord our God we pray that we might indeed be numbered among those who will be in that glorious future kingdom where God is all in all and where Christ is at the center of his people where that new world will have Christ ruling and governing it and where the people of God shall know more sorrow nor death nor crying nor pain be with one and all of us take us to our homes in safety come out again with us in the evening for Jesus sake we ask it Amen

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