

03-24-2019

**Message: Be Patiently Prepared for Christ, Our Coming King**

**Text: Luke 17:20-37**

## **Introduction**

A. Members of Three Rivers Baptist Church, past and present, were all born citizens of various countries - Raf Anzenberger, a citizen of France, Beth Everett, a citizen of Barbados, Yoshi Johnson, a citizen of Japan, Bob Stacey, a citizen of Canada, Cecilia Nilsson, a citizen of Argentina, Marge Almack, a citizen of England, Ashley Elmore, a citizen of the United States, etc. No matter of what country we were born a citizen, we all have had one citizenship in common - we were all born citizens of the kingdom of this world, a kingdom of darkness, which lies under the power of the ruler of this world, the evil one, the devil.

1 John 5:19 We know that we are of God, and that **the whole world lies in the power of the evil one.**

B. That creates many problems for us, the main one being that all of this world's citizens will pass away with the destruction of this world and its ruler.

1 John 2:16 For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world. <sup>17</sup> **The world is passing away, and also its lusts;**

C. But the good news, the gospel of Christ's kingdom is that God is causing people of every tribe and nation to be born again by His Spirit unto a faith in God's Son, Jesus, whereby we receive the forgiveness of our sins, a righteous standing before God, fellowship with His Son, and an inheritance with Christ as citizens His eternal kingdom that will not pass away.

Colossians 1:13 For **He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, <sup>14</sup> in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.**

D. When will this kingdom come? When do we enter this eternal kingdom? Some Pharisees, religious leaders in Israel, asked Jesus this question, yet lacked open ears and open hearts to hear these following words of Jesus, and thus failed to recognize and enter the blessings of the Kingdom of God. What did they miss seeing/hearing that we, for our own souls' sake must not miss?

## **I. 17:20-21 God's promised kingdom has come, inaugurated by the person and work of Jesus.**

A. As we noted earlier in Luke's gospel, God's Old Testament prophets proclaimed the good

news of God's coming kingdom. But God's spokespersons could not proclaim "the kingdom of God is at hand" until the promised king appeared on earth's scene. ("Mountain" in Isa. 2:2 is a metaphor for "kingdom.")

Isaiah 2:2 Now **it will come about** that **in the last days the mountain of the house of the LORD will be established as the chief of the mountains**, and will be raised above the hills; and all the nations will stream to it.

Luke 16:16 "The Law and the Prophets *were proclaimed* until John; **since that time the gospel of the kingdom of God has been preached**, and **everyone is forcing his way into it**.

Matthew 3:1 Now in those days John the Baptist came, preaching in the wilderness of Judea, saying,<sup>2</sup> **"Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."**

Mark 1:14 Now after John had been taken into custody, Jesus came into Galilee, **preaching the gospel of God**,<sup>15</sup> and saying, **"The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel."**

- B. Luke 17:20,21 The Pharisees were looking for God's promised kingdom, and asked Jesus when it would come. But the fact that the Pharisees asked Jesus when God's kingdom will come indicates that they have failed to recognize the presence of God's kingdom in the person of Messiah Jesus. The sign of the kingdom's presence was standing right in their midst - the sign was Jesus, Heaven's promised King.

Luke 17:20 Now having been questioned by the Pharisees as to **when the kingdom of God was coming**, He answered them and said, "The kingdom of God is not coming with signs to be observed;<sup>21</sup> nor will they say, 'Look, here *it is!*' or, 'There *it is!*' For **behold, the kingdom of God is (Gk: entos) in your midst**."

Luke 11:20 "But if I cast out demons by the finger of God, **then the kingdom of God has come upon you**.

- C. As a result, they were failing to enter God's kingdom by failing to recognize, repent, and receive God's promised King - Jesus. What about us? We become citizens of Christ's kingdom through repentance and faith in Him, a faith that receives and obeys Him as Lord.

Matthew 7:21 "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' **will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven**.

John 3:35 "The Father loves the Son **and has given all things into His hand**.<sup>36</sup> "He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but **he who does not obey the Son will not see life**, but the wrath of God abides on him."

- D. So Christ's kingdom, present in the person of Jesus, now manifests itself in the body of Jesus, His church, through His presence by His Spirit that indwells her. God's kingdom encompasses more than His church, but it includes His church. All kingdom citizens are all members of Christ's universal church on earth or in heaven (Heb 12:22,23).

1 Corinthians 3:16 Do you not know that **you (plural) are a temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?**

Romans 14:17 for **the kingdom of God is** not eating and drinking, but **righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.**

Matthew 18:20 "For where two or three have gathered together in My name, **I am there in their midst.**"

Hebrews 12:22 But **you have come to Mount Zion** and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to myriads of angels,<sup>23</sup> **to the general assembly and church of the firstborn (plural) who are enrolled in heaven,** and to God, the Judge of all, and to the spirits of *the* righteous made perfect,

## **II. 17:22-25 Be prepared to endure hardships and suffering during a delay in the kingdom's consummation at the return of Jesus.**

Luke 17:22 And He said to the disciples, "**The days will come when you will long to see one of the days of the Son of Man, and you will not see it.**"<sup>23</sup> "They will say to you, 'Look there! Look here!' Do not go away, and do not run after *them*."<sup>24</sup> "For just like the lightning, when it flashes out of one part of the sky, shines to the other part of the sky, 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.**

- A. While Christ has come and inaugurated His kingdom as a present reality, don't expect to immediately experience Christ's kingdom in its consummated fulness. The King, and you, must first suffer many things.
1. Verses 22 & 25 indicate that there will be a delay in the consummation of God's kingdom. "The days of the Son of Man" refer to the time of Christ's consummated kingdom, which He brings to fulness at His glorious return. Cf. verses 26 & 30, where these days begin with Christ's "revelation" (apokalupto).

Luke 17:26 "And just as it happened in the days of Noah, so **it will be also in the days of the Son of Man:**"<sup>27</sup> they were eating, they were drinking, they were marrying, they were being given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and **the flood came and destroyed them all.**"<sup>28</sup> "It was the same as happened in the days of Lot: they were eating, they were drinking, they were buying, they were selling, they were planting, they were building;<sup>29</sup> but on the day that Lot went out from Sodom it rained **fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all.**"<sup>30</sup> **It will be just the same on the**

**day that the Son of Man is revealed (apokalupto).**

2. Verse 22 might indicate that the apostles would not live to see Christ's return (Jesus told Peter he would not live to see it, John 21:18,19; 2 Peter 1:14), and that His disciples would experience troubles, sorrows, persecutions, causing them to long for Christ to be revealed in glory. Jesus already told them a mystery of the kingdom, that it would have small, humble beginnings, like a mustard seed.

Luke 17:22 And He said to the disciples, "The days will come when **you will long to see** one of the days of the Son of Man, **and you will not see it.**

Luke 13:18-21 So He was saying, "What is the kingdom of God like, and to what shall I compare it? <sup>19</sup> "It is like a mustard seed, which a man took and threw into his own garden; and it grew and became a tree, and THE BIRDS OF THE AIR NESTED IN ITS BRANCHES."

- B. 17:23,24 Don't let anyone deceive you that Christ has come. No one will need to tell you. Christ's glorious return will be as evident to everyone as lightning that flashes from one end of the sky to the other on a darkened night.

Luke 17:23 "They will say to you, 'Look there! Look here!' **Do not go away, and do not run after them.** <sup>24</sup> "For just like the lightning, when it flashes out of one part of the sky, shines to the other part of the sky, **so will the Son of Man be in His day.**

**III. 17:26-30 Don't be unaware and unprepared with the rest of the world for Christ's return.**

Luke 17:26 "**And just as it happened in the days of Noah, so it will be also in the days of the Son of Man:** <sup>27</sup> they were eating, they were drinking, they were marrying, they were being given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and **the flood came and destroyed them all.** <sup>28</sup> "**It was the same as happened in the days of Lot:** they were eating, they were drinking, they were buying, they were selling, they were planting, they were building; <sup>29</sup> but on the day that Lot went out from Sodom **it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all.** <sup>30</sup> "**It will be just the same on the day that the Son of Man is revealed (apokalupto).**

- A. The world will be unprepared for Christ's return to judge the world in righteousness. Everything will look the same, just as it did before God destroyed the world with a flood, and just before God destroyed Sodom. Those intermediate judgments of God are intended to warn humanity to avoid God's final judgment of a world that rejects His Son as Lord. But the unbelieving world expects no consequences for its rejection of Christ's lordship over it.

(A word to parents: we love our children when we impose consequences for disobedience and foolishness. We functionally hate our children when we don't.

Proverbs 13:24 He who withholds his rod hates his son, but he who loves him disciplines him diligently.

When we impose disciplinary consequences upon even our very young toddlers, we are teaching them an experiential knowledge that disobedience results in consequences, so that when they are old enough to understand Jesus's words of warning, they will have an experiential knowledge of consequences to help them appreciate the need to avoid God's final consequences for rebelling against Christ as Lord.)

- B. Christ's return in glory will bring sudden destruction, not to believers, but to unbelievers. Christ will come like a thief, bringing sudden, unexpected loss to unbelievers. But Christ will not come like a thief to believers (1 Thess 5:4).

1 Thessalonians 5:1 Now as to the times and the epochs, brethren, you have no need of anything to be written to you.<sup>2</sup> For you yourselves know full well that **the day of the Lord will come just like a thief in the night.**<sup>3</sup> **While they are saying, "Peace and safety!" then destruction will come upon them suddenly** like labor pains upon a woman with child, and they will not escape.<sup>4</sup> **But you, brethren, are not in darkness, that the day would overtake you like a thief;**

- C. 2 Thess 1:5-10 It is not until Christ is revealed from heaven that believers will experience eternal relief and unbelievers will experience eternal destruction.

2 Thessalonians 1:5 *This is* a plain indication of God's righteous judgment so that you will be considered worthy of **the kingdom of God, for which indeed you are suffering.**<sup>6</sup> For after all it is *only* just for God to repay with affliction those who afflict you,<sup>7</sup> **and to give relief to you who are afflicted** and to us as well **when the Lord Jesus will be revealed (apokalupto) from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire,**<sup>8</sup> dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus.<sup>9</sup> **These will pay the penalty of eternal destruction,** away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power,<sup>10</sup> **when He comes to be glorified in His saints on that day,** and to be marveled at among all who have believed-- for our testimony to you was believed.

#### IV. 17:31-37 Jesus warns and encourages us to not turn back from following Him, but to continue being ready by trusting in Him.

- A. Don't delay following Christ and don't turn back from following Christ.

Luke 17:31 "On that day, the one who is on the housetop and whose goods are in the house **must not go down to take them out;** and likewise the one who is in the field **must not turn back.**<sup>32</sup> **Remember Lot's wife.**<sup>33</sup> **Whoever seeks to keep his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life will preserve it.**

1. Metaphors use familiar war language, urging that we must be prepared to enter the kingdom now, we must not delay, and “must not turn back.” There will be no time or opportunity to enter the kingdom once Christ is revealed from heaven. The way to be prepared for Christ’s return is to enter now and remain now in His kingdom by faith in Him.

Jeremiah 49:30 **Run away, flee!** Dwell in the depths, O inhabitants of Hazor," declares the LORD; **For Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon has formed a plan against you** and devised a scheme against you.

Jeremiah 51:6 **Flee from the midst of Babylon, and each of you save his life! Do not be destroyed in her punishment,** for this is the LORD'S time of vengeance; He is going to render recompense to her.

2. Those who attempt to preserve their lives by turning away from Christ as Lord will lose their lives, but those willing to lose their lives for Christ sake will preserve their lives. (Illustration: A weakened elderly lady and her young grandson trapped on the 4<sup>th</sup> floor in an apartment fire, makes it to the window where successive fire fighters climb a ladder and urge, first the grandson, then her, to take his hand and trust him to carry him/her down the ladder. The grandson is fearful of the height, yet trusts the fire fighter and is carried to safety. The grandmother initially reaches the next fire fighter, but then seeing the height becomes afraid of falling, and pushes back inside to preserve her life, only to lose it.)
- B. Christ will separate unbelievers from believers unto their destruction. The point is the same, whether we understand to “be taken” or “to be left” is unto salvation or unto destruction. Since Noah and Lot were taken out of the path of destruction, to be taken might be unto salvation.

Luke 17:34 "I tell you, on that night there will be two in one bed; one will be taken and the other will be left.<sup>35</sup> "There will be two women grinding at the same place; one will be taken and the other will be left.<sup>36</sup> *"Two men will be in the field; one will be taken and the other will be left."*

Matthew 25:31 "But **when the Son of Man comes in His glory,** and all the angels with Him, then **He will sit on His glorious throne.**<sup>32</sup> **All the nations will be gathered before Him; and He will separate them from one another,** as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats;<sup>33</sup> and He will put the sheep on His right, and the goats on the left.<sup>34</sup> "Then the King will say to those on His right, 'Come, you who are blessed of My Father, **inherit the kingdom prepared for you** from the foundation of the world.

- C. 17:37 Again, Christ return will be as apparent to all as a dead carcass is evident to all by the vultures circling overhead. The context of the parallel text in Matthew helps us understand this statement.

Luke 17:37 And answering they said to Him, "**Where, Lord?**" And He said to them, "**Where the body is, there also the vultures will be gathered.**"

Matthew 24:26 "So if they say to you, 'Behold, He is in the wilderness,' do not go out, *or*, 'Behold, He is in the inner rooms,' do not believe *them*.<sup>27</sup> "For just as the lightning comes from the east and flashes even to the west, so will the coming of the Son of Man be.<sup>28</sup>  
**Wherever the corpse is, there the vultures will gather.**

## Conclusion

- A. Appreciating intermediate judgments on sin prepares us to avoid God's ultimate judgment on sin.

Luke 13:1 Now on the same occasion there were some present who reported to Him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mixed with their sacrifices.<sup>2</sup> And Jesus said to them, "Do you suppose that these Galileans were *greater* sinners than all *other* Galileans because they suffered this *fate*?<sup>3</sup> "I tell you, no, but **unless you repent, you will all likewise perish.**

- B. Don't make this world your home - it is passing away. There is no future here. (Show video of cliff collapse ) Where is your citizenship today?

1 John 2:15 Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.<sup>16</sup> For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world.<sup>17</sup> **The world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever.**

Philippians 3:20 **For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ;**<sup>21</sup> who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself.