



**Luke 17:20-37**  
***Will you be ready?***

20 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;

21 "nor will they say, 'See here!' or 'See there!' For indeed, the kingdom of God is within you."

22 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.

23 "And they will say to you, 'Look here!' or 'Look there!' Do not go after them or follow them.

24 "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.

25 "But first He must suffer many things and be rejected by this generation.

26 "And as it was in the days of Noah, so it will be also in the days of the Son of Man:

27 "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.

28 "Likewise as it was also in the days of Lot: They ate, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they built;

29 "but on the day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all.

30 "Even so will it be in the day when the Son of Man is revealed.

31 "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.

32 "Remember Lot's wife.

33 "Whoever seeks to save his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life will preserve it.

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.

35 "Two women will be grinding together: the one will be taken and the other left.

36 "Two men will be in the field: the one will be taken and the other left."

37 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."

*Last week we looked at verses 20-25 of this section of chapter 17, today we will finish by considering the teaching of verses 26-37.*

In these verses Jesus is telling his disciples that the day of his return will come suddenly like a thief in night and without warning, and therefore he is counsels them to be ready to be prepared to be awake.

Jesus begins by mentioning Noah, because of course Noah was warned that the flood was coming and told to prepare for it by building an ark and Peter tells us that even as he was faithfully building that Ark, that he was a "preacher of righteousness" warning the men of his time to flee from the wrath to come. And yet despite these warnings the men did not listen, they assumed that life would go on as it

always has and so he was widely ignored until the deluge came and 40 days and nights of rain showed them how wrong they had been.

Ok, maybe that was an aberration, maybe the men prior to the time of the flood were just particularly stupid. I mean what idiot, having been warned of the approach of a Tsunami would just roll-over on his beach blanket and start putting on another layer of sunscreen? Well friends, unfortunately it is still in the nature of men to ignore warnings of impending doom, and I fear it always will be. Why do I say that?

Well, again and again in the history of the world, people have been warned of the approach of a terrible cataclysm and yet while they have time to flee, they do not do so. On August 24, 79 AD Mt. Vesuvius erupted and in the space of only a few hours entirely buried the cities of Pompeii and Herculaneum both of which stood almost directly beneath the Volcano. For 16 years prior to the eruption however, historians report that the region was shaken by earthquakes and even in the 1<sup>st</sup> century there were those who understood this was a sign that an active Volcano was about to erupt. But perhaps the worst case of stupidity in the face of impending disaster concerned the eruption of a Volcano on the Caribbean Island of Martinique in 1902:

Here is an account of the events: "In April of 1902, the mountain by St. Pierre began to give off powdery ash that fell onto the city like gray snow. Residents were soon complaining of sore throats and trouble breathing. On May 5, boiling mud tore out of the volcano, carrying fifty-ton boulders and burying forty workers in a sugar mill. Despite all these warnings, the governor of the island insisted no danger existed. ***To prevent panic and evacuation, he sent 1,500 troops to keep residents from leaving.*** On May 8, a bright and clear day, the volcano blew apart. An eyewitness from a ship in the harbor wrote, "There was no warning. The side of the volcano was ripped out and there was hurled straight toward us a solid wall of flame. It sounded like a thousand cannons. The wave of fire was on us and over us like a flash of lightning. The town vanished before our eyes." The mountain blast apart on the side facing St. Pierre, flooding the city with a cloud of superheated gas. The intense heat, hotter than 1,000 degrees Fahrenheit, carbonized many objects. A single breath by a human meant death. After the cloud passed and the oxygen supply returned, the city erupted into flames. Out of a city of 30,000, only 2 men lived."

They had plenty of warnings, they had time, and yet when the cataclysm came it caught them unprepared. They were asleep to the danger. Jesus clearly doesn't want that to be the case with his people. So what does he do? He tells you to be ready! And to make sure that you are he has created something of an early warning system through the ministers of the gospel.

The job of a sentry is to warn of the approach of danger. If he sees a threat approaching he sounds the alarm so that they will not be taken unawares. That is why it is so vital that a sentry not fall asleep at his post. If he does so, the lives of others are immediately put in danger. Now the Word tells us in Ezekiel 33 that one of the most important functions of a minister is to function as a watchman to warn people of the approach of judgment. In fact, if he did not do so and the people perished then their blood was on his hands. But if he blows the trumpet and they do nothing, then he shall be held blameless. So as a preacher if I were to proclaim everything in the else in the bible, but to leave out the critical fact that there is a day of judgment appointed for all men, then I would fail in my calling. That is why Paul says in Acts 20:26-27 ***"Therefore I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all men. For I have not shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God."***

Now I've said all of this because as we unpack the doctrines that are taught in these verses, point by point, I do not want you for a moment to look at this in some sort of objective or analytical way. That would be like being in Kansas with your family, hearing the tornado warning siren go off and then engaging in a discussion, along the lines of "Ah, that's the tornado warning siren, a government appointed system designed to give warning of the approach of cyclonic winds judged to be dangerous to human life. What are your thoughts on the system honey? How do you believe it could be improved?" Such a discussion would utterly miss the point *YOU ARE IN IMMINENT PERIL!* A sane man would scoop up the kids and head for the shelter! In the same way apply these 5 points to your situation now!

- 1) **The Return of Christ will, as we have seen, be sudden:** and as was the case in the time of Noah and Lot, all things will continue on as they always have. Ordinary life will continue, but the emphasis here is on the fact that worldlings will be utterly consumed with the external things of this life. I want you to take a hard look at the list Jesus gives us of things that will preoccupy the attention of the doomed "eating, drinking, marrying, selling, planting, building" none of these things are in and of themselves sinful, but the fact that this is all that they care about spells their doom. Most of the people who hear and reject the gospel message aren't outrageous sinners, they just couldn't care less, they are utterly fixated on the dust. They have no interest in that which is eternal so they take no time to prepare for their appointment with their creator.
- 2) **The Return of Christ will be a time of disaster for the unprepared:** There is a reason why Christ uses the example of the flood and the destruction of Sodom as analogies for his return, for in those events his people who were prepared were delivered, while the wicked both great and small were utterly destroyed.

*Rev. 6:12 I looked when He opened the sixth seal, and behold, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became like blood.*

*13 And the stars of heaven fell to the earth, as a fig tree drops its late figs when it is shaken by a mighty wind.*

*14 Then the sky receded as a scroll when it is rolled up, and every mountain and island was moved out of its place.*

*15 And the kings of the earth, the great men, the rich men, the commanders, the mighty men, every slave and every free man, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains,*

*16 and said to the mountains and rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb!"*

*17 "For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?"*

- 3) **The love of the things of this world will be fatal even to members of the visible church:** You remember what happened to Lot's wife? She was warned to flee from the destruction of Sodom, she started to flee, and then she looked back. She showed that while her body had left Sodom, that is where her heart still lived and as a result she was destroyed. You cannot put your hand to the plow and turn back, you cannot serve God and money, a divided heart, a heart that seeks to serve God and idols will be as fatal to you in the end as a heart that doesn't love him at all. Hold on to those idols and eventually they will turn you out of the way, they will turn you away from following God. Demas seemed to be a faithful follower of Christ, but in the end *"Demas has forsaken me, having loved this present world"*

Kids what do you think will be the most important thing you can do as you grow up? To have an important job? To be popular? To be great at sports? To live in a nice house? To marry a nice person?

To have good manners? To raise good children? No your most important duty is *to love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength*. That is what Jesus called the first and greatest commandment – *seek first the kingdom of God and all these things will added to you*.

**4) The day of judgment will be the great day of separation between the wheat and the tares:**

Jesus makes that point that even though people may have worked together (you have the example of women grinding grain, two men working in the field) or be in the same family (sleeping in the same house) or even I would add be the same church, what will matter in the last day will be their relationship to Christ. Did they have a heart for him? On that day only those who are the sons of God will be gathered into the kingdom.

*Matt. 13:37 He answered and said to them: "He who sows the good seed is the Son of Man.*

*38 "The field is the world, the good seeds are the sons of the kingdom, but the tares are the sons of the wicked one.*

*39 "The enemy who sowed them is the devil, the harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are the angels.*

*40 "Therefore as the tares are gathered and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of this age.*

*41 "The Son of Man will send out His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and those who practice lawlessness,*

*42 "and will cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth.*

*43 "Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears to hear, let him hear!*

**5) The day of judgment will be the beginning of an eternity in hell for the unsaved.**

The emphasis here as in all warnings of judgment is not on the glories of heaven for the saved but on the dangers of hell to the unprepared. The disciples ask where will the unsaved be left and Jesus answers:

*37 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."*

*Isa 66: 24 "And they shall go forth and look Upon the corpses of the men Who have transgressed against Me. For their worm does not die, And their fire is not quenched. They shall be an abhorrence to all flesh."*

*Rev. 19:17 Then I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the birds that fly in the midst of heaven, "Come and gather together for the supper of the great God,*

*18 "that you may eat the flesh of kings, the flesh of captains, the flesh of mighty men, the flesh of horses and of those who sit on them, and the flesh of all people, free and slave, both small and great."*

*19 And I saw the beast, the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him who sat on the horse and against His army.*

*20 Then the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who worked signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image. These two were cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone.*

*21 And the rest were killed with the sword which proceeded from the mouth of Him who sat on the horse. And all the birds were filled with their flesh.*

**Applications:**

Consider yourself – are you ready?

*Zeph. 2:3 Seek the LORD, all you meek of the earth, Who have upheld His justice. Seek righteousness, seek humility. It may be that you will be hidden In the day of the LORD's anger.*

Consider your friends and family – are they ready?

*NKJ 1 Thessalonians 5:1 But concerning the times and the seasons, brethren, you have no need that I should write to you.*

*2 For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night.*

*3 For when they say, "Peace and safety!" then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape.*

*4 But you, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this Day should overtake you as a thief.*

*5 You are all sons of light and sons of the day. We are not of the night nor of darkness.*

*6 Therefore let us not sleep, as others do, but let us watch and be sober.*

*7 For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk are drunk at night.*

*8 But let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet the hope of salvation.*

*9 For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ,*

*10 who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him.*