

A MINISTRY FOR HUNGRY SAINTS

THE GOSPEL OF LUKE

✝ THE BOOK OF LUKE

WHAT WE MOST ASSUREDLY BELIEVE

WORD OF TRUTH MINISTRIES, ASSOCIATED

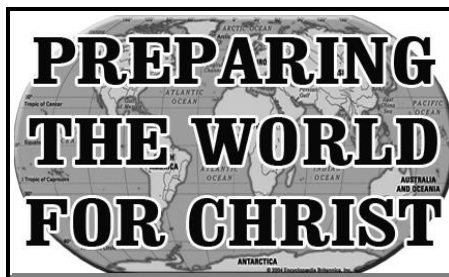
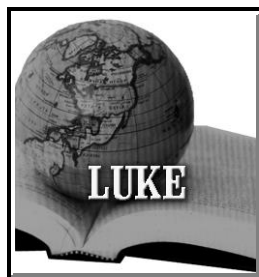
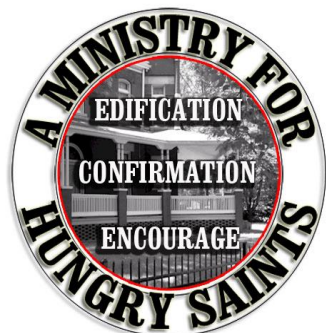
An overview of the Gospel of Luke, by Given O. Blakely

LESSON NUMBER 54

COMMENTARY ON: 17:20-37

THE KINGDOM AND THE COMING OF CHRIST

Jesus is asked when the Kingdom of God will come. He responds by saying it does not come with observation, yet is in their very midst. Neither can men point out the Kingdom of God, so that people are able to see it, and know its presence. He then speaks of a time when they will desire just a single day when the Son of Man is obvious, but will not be able to do so. Additionally He says there is coming a time when they will desire to see just one favorable day of the Son of Man, but shall not be able to do so. He then parallels the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah to His coming. While the Son of God is not obvious to them at that time, there is coming a time when He will appear in all of His glory, and every eye will see Him. However, for those who are convinced of Him for the first time, that appearing will be the harbinger of their eternal exclusion and condemnation. An eternal separation will take place at that time.

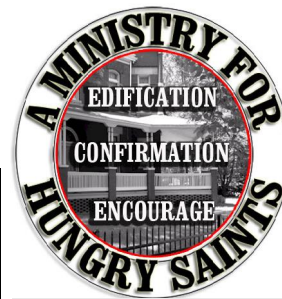


Since May, 1993, a ministry instituted for the encouragement of believers in Christ



The Book of Luke, 3/31/17

Lesson Number 54



54 VERSIONS OF THE ENGLISH SCRIPTURES

ABP=Apostolic Bible Polygot m(1992); ALT=Analytical-Literal Translation (2005); AMPLIFIED=Amplified Bible (1965); ABP=Apostolic Bible Polygot with Greek Interlinear (2003); ASV=American Standard Version (1901); BBE=Bible in Basic English (1949); BRENT=Brenton's English Septuagint; CEB=Common English Bible (2011); CEV=Contemporary English Version (1995); DRA=Douay-Rheims (1899); EMTV=English Majority Text (2002); ERV=English Revised Version (1885); ETH=Etheridge Translation (1849); ETRV=Easy to Read (1999); ESV=English Standard Version (2001); GENEVA=Geneva Bible (1599); GNB=Good News (1966); GSNT=Goodspeed (1923); GWN=God's Word (1995); IE=International English (1973); NIRV=New Int'l Readers Version (1998); ISV=International Standard Version (1967); JPS=Jewish Publication Society (1917); JUB=Jubilee Bible (2003); KJV=King James Version (1611); LITV=Literary Translation of the Bible (1976); LEW=Lewis Translation (1896); LIVING=Living Bible (1971); MESSAGE=The Message (1993); MGI=Peshitta Translation (2006); MIT=Idiomatic Version; MKJV=Modern KJV (1962); MONTGOMERY=Montgomery's New Testament (2001); MRD=Peshitta-James Murdock Translation (1852); NAB=New American Bible (2002); NASB=New American Standard Bible (1977); NAU=New American Standard Bible (1995); NIB=New International Bible; NIV=New International Version (1984); NJB=New Jerusalem Bible (1985); NKJV=New King James Version (1979); NLT=New Living Translation (1996); NOY=George Noyes Bible (1869); NRSV=New Revised Standard Version (1989); PHILLIPS=J.B. Phillips New Testament (1962); PNT=Bishop's New Testament (1955); ROT=Rotherham Bible (1909); RPTE=Revised Patriarchal Greek Orthodox New Testament; RSV=Revised Standard Version (1952); TNK=J.P. Tanakj (1985); WEB=Webster Bible (1833); WEYMOUTH=Weymouth's New Testament (1903); WILLIAMS=William's New Testament (1937); TYNDALE=Tyndale's Bible (1526); WYCLIFFE=Wycliffe New Testament (1382); YLT=Young's Literal Translation (1862)

GREEK LEXICON LEGEND

FRIBERG; LOUW-NIDA; LIDDELL SCOTT; THAYER; VGNT GREEK DICTIONARY; GINGRICH, DANKER,

A MINISTRY INITIATED IN MAY 1993, AND DEDICATED TO STRENGTHENING THOSE WHO ARE IN CHRIST, BY BUILDING THEIR FAITH, ENHANCING THEIR JOY, AND STABILIZING THEIR HOPE, ENABLING THEM TO WORK OUT THEIR SALVATION WITH FEAR AND TREMBLING.

PERSUADED OF THE NECESSITY OF KNOWING THE CERTAINTY OF THE THINGS WE BELIEVE, LUKE MAKES US MORE FIRM BY BUTTRESSING OUR FAITH, AND CONFIRMING WE HAVE NOT EMBRACED FABLES.

DISCLAIMER: The quoting of other translations is not to be taken as a condoning of them. My purpose is rather to show the remarkable diversity, and sometimes outright contradictions that exist among these various versions of Scripture. Our understanding of the Word of God ultimately depends upon our comprehension of the Lord Himself and His eternal purpose. Where this understanding is not present, we are shut out to scholasticism and conjecture, both of which are of the world, not of God.

THE KINGDOM AND THE COMING OF CHRIST

“ Luke 17:20 *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.²¹ Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you.²² And He said unto the disciples, The days will come, when ye shall desire to see one of the days of the Son of Man, and ye shall not see it.²³ And they shall say to you, See here; or, see there: go not after them, nor follow them.²⁴ For as the lightning, that lighteneth out of the one part under heaven, shineth unto the other part under heaven; so shall also the Son of man be in His day.²⁵ But first must He suffer many things, and be rejected of this generation.²⁶ And as it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of Man.²⁷ They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all.²⁸ Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded;²⁹ But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all.³⁰ Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of Man is revealed.³¹ In that day, He which shall be upon the housetop, and his stuff in the house, let him not come down to take it away: and he that is in the field, let him likewise not return back.³² Remember Lot's wife.³³ Whosoever shall seek to save his life shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his life shall preserve it.³⁴ I tell you, in that night there shall be two men in one bed; the one shall be taken, and the other shall be left.³⁵ Two women shall be grinding together; the one shall be taken, and the other left.³⁶ Two men shall be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left.³⁷ And they answered and said unto him, Where, Lord? And He said unto them, Wheresoever the body is, thither will the eagles be gathered together.” Luke 17:20-37*

INTRODUCTION

A BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE TEXT

Jesus is asked when the Kingdom of God will come. He responds by saying it does not come with observation, yet is in their very midst. Neither can men point out the Kingdom of God, so that people are able to see

it, and know its presence. He then speaks of a time when they will desire just a single day when the Son of Man is obvious, but will not be able to do so. Additionally He says there is coming a time when they will desire to see just one favorable day of the Son of Man,

but shall not be able to do so. He goes on to parallel the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah to His coming. While the Son of God is not obvious to them at that time, there is coming a time when He will appear in all of His glory, and every eye will see Him. However, for

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those who are convinced of Him for the first time, that appearing will be the harbinger of their eternal exclusion and condemnation. An eternal separation will take place at that time.

THE KINGDOM OF GOD

The "*Kingdom of God*" is a pivotal subject in God's purpose and dealings with humanity – particularly since John the Baptist. Eight hundred years before Christ, David prayed, "*Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: the scepter of Thy kingdom is a right scepter*" (Psa 45:6). That is the first mentioning of God's Kingdom in Scripture. The next direct mention of this Kingdom was made by Nebuchadnezzar. After being humbled by God in an epochal

judgment, He said, "*How great are His signs! and how mighty are His wonders! His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and His dominion is from generation to generation*" (Dan 4:3).

The point is that sin had so alienated man from God, that they were not prepared to hear about the Kingdom of God. There were hints of it where the coming Messiah was spoken of as a King (Psa 2:6; 24:8-10; Zech 9:9), one that had dominion (Dan 7:14), one that would rule (Psa 110:2; Isa 32:1; Zech 6:12-13), and One upon whose shoulders the Government would be placed (Isa 9:6-7). But in those times – the first four thousand years of human history – very little was known about "*the kingdom of God*," for very little had been revealed about it.

However, upon the commencement of the ministry of John the Baptist, and the ministry of Jesus which began six months later, the people to whom, they preached heard much about "*the Kingdom of God*" and "*the Kingdom of heaven*" – one and the same Kingdom. "*The Kingdom of God*" views it as the One governing it. "*The Kingdom of heaven*" views it from the standpoint of its control center.

In the Gospels, where the ministries of John the Baptist and Jesus are recorded, "*the Kingdom of God*" is mentioned fifty-four times, and "*the Kingdom of Heaven*" is mentioned thirty-two times. So far as Divine authority is concerned, this Kingdom has no borders. There is no place on earth, above the earth, or under the earth where God does not rule with absolute and unquestioned power and authority. There is no personality or group of personalities that do not submit to Him – willingly or unwillingly.

THE GREATEST KINGDOM

The Kingdom of God is the greatest Kingdom, the most significant domain, and the most important reign. It will outlast all other kingdoms, forcing them into oblivion.

Wikipedia lists over 150 kingdoms that have become extinct (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_empires). Some lasted for over one thousand years:

- ⇨ Byzantine Empire, 1,453 years
- ⇨ Caliphate of Córdoba, 1,031 years
- ⇨ Chagatai Khanate, 1,687 years
- ⇨ Chola Dynasty, 1,629 years
- ⇨ Pandyan Empire, 1,858 years

Some lasted several hundred years:

- ⇨ Aksumite Empire, 790 years
- ⇨ Armenian Empire, 618 years
- ⇨ Benin Empire, 457 years
- ⇨ Bornu Empire, 506 years
- ⇨ Carthaginian Empire, 504 years
- ⇨ Chera Dynasty, 600 years
- ⇨ Danish colonial empire, 600 years
- ⇨ Ethiopian Empire, 837 years
- ⇨ Frankish Empire, 700 years
- ⇨ Goguryeo, 705 years

The four global kingdoms revealed to Daniel lasted as follows:

- ⇨ Babylon, 606-535 BC, 70 years
- ⇨ Medio-Persian, 200+ years
- ⇨ Grecian, 332-146 BC, 186 years
- ⇨ Roman, 26 B.C.-1453 AD., 1,479 years

By way of comparison, the Kingdom of God is an "*everlasting kingdom*" (Psa 145:13; Dan 4:3; 7:27; 2 Pet 1:11). In other words, it is immediately identified with God Himself, who is "*the Everlasting God*" (Gen 21:33; Isa 40:28; Rom 16:26). When all other kingdoms have been totally removed, the Kingdom of God will remain.

WHEN SHALL THE KINGDOM OF GOD COME?

“ Luke 17:20 *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."

HE WAS DEMANDED

"And when He was demanded of the Pharisees . . ."

Other versions read, "He was asked,"^{NKJV} "having been questioned,"^{NASB} "put questions to him about,"^{BBE} and "was questioned from the Pharisee."^{ETH}

The word translated in the King James Version as "demanded" (it is also translated that way in other versions) comes from a word meaning *to accost one with an inquiry, put a question to, inquire of, ask, interrogate; to address one with a request or demand; to ask of or demand of one*,^{THAYER} *as a legal technical term interrogate, examine, question*,^{FRIBERG} *to interrogate*.^{GINGRICH}

NOT AN ACADEMIC QUESTION

This was not a casual question, or kind of academic pursuit. Furthermore, it was not -primarily prompted by their knowledge of Scripture.

In Moses and the Prophets very little was said about "the Kingdom of God." In fact that expression is not found from Genesis through Malachi in any standard version of Scripture. There are references to "His Kingdom" (Psa 103:19; 145:12; Isa 9:7; Dan 4:3,34; 6:26). In the revealed interpretation of Pharaoh's dream, Daniel said, "And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever" (Dan 2:44). However, for the most part, there was not much known about God's Kingdom.

This question was promoted by the preaching of John the Baptist and Jesus Himself. Both of them came preaching, "the Kingdom of God is at hand" (Matt 3:2; Mk 1:14-15; Matt 4:17).

To this point in the Gospel of Luke

Jesus has referred to the "Kingdom" twelve times (Lk 4:43; 6:20; 7:28; 8:1; 9:27; 9:60,62; 10:9,11; 11:2,17,20). It is said that He "went throughout every city and village, preaching and showing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God" (Luke 8:1). He had sent the twelve disciples out "to preach the kingdom of God, and to heal the sick" (Luke 9:2). When people followed Him, "He received them, and spake unto them of the kingdom of God" (Luke 9:11). You could not be around Jesus and not hear of "the Kingdom of God." He spoke parables declaring what the Kingdom of God was like, and likened to (Matt 13:31,33, 44,45,57,52; 20:1,22; Mk 4:30; Lk 13:18,20).

He spoke of seeking this kingdom (Matt 6:33), and entering this kingdom (Matt 19:24; Mk 9:47; John 3:5).

The Pharisees were not asking in order to really know, but were taking the position of a lawyer who was attempting to discredit the Lord Jesus. There was a tone of mockery in their words. They had not been teaching about "the kingdom of God," and what Jesus said about it was nothing more than theological rubbish to them.

They further interrogated Jesus as though He was inferior to them, and owed them an explanation for why He had been teaching the people in such a manner.

WHEN THE KINGDOM OF GOD SHOULD COME

" . . . when the kingdom of God should come . . ."

Again, this was not prompted by their consideration of Daniel's word of prophecy, but by the words of John the Baptist and Jesus: "the kingdom of God is at hand" (Mk 1:15), and "the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matt 3:2; 4:17). Also, after hearing Jesus, the people "thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear" (Luke 19:11).

How powerful the preaching of Jesus was to move people to think in such a manner! There was a certain

"expectation" among some of the people (Lk 3:15) – a sense they were on the precipice of some great work of God. When Jesus was born, there were some people in Jerusalem who "looked for redemption" (Lk 2:38). When Jesus died, "Joseph of Arimathaea, an honorable counselor, which also waited for the kingdom of God" (Mark 15:43).

However, none of these things could be said of the Pharisees. They were not looking for God to do something He had promised. Their religion was not one that promoted expectation, anticipation, or hope.

Today, that same type of religion has developed – one in which expectation, and the prospect of Divine workings are not present. Let it be clear that this kind of condition is not one produced by the Gospel, and is not the posture of faith.

THE KINGDOM COMETH NOT WITH OBSERVATION

" . . . He answered them and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with observation."

Other versions read, "The kingdom of God is not coming with signs to be observed,"^{NASB} "The kingdom of God is not coming with things that can be observed,"^{NRSV} "isn't coming with signs that are easily noticed,"^{CEB} "does not come with visible signs,"^{CJB} "does not emerge into one's line of vision,"^{MIT} "can't be detected by visible signs,"^{NLT} and "with signs to be observed or with visible display."^{AMPLIFIED}

Even though Jesus is quite clear in these words, to this very day there are professing Christians that are being taught the Kingdom of God will come with observation. Jesus Himself will sit upon a physical throne, in the geographical Jerusalem, and be accessible to people in the flesh. However, this simply it not true. We are to allow Jesus to shape the manner in which we think about the Kingdom of God and how it comes.

AN EXAMPLE AMONG US

A significant percentage of the

people among us at The Word of Truth Fellowship, have experienced a substantial increase in spiritual understanding and comprehension. The perception of the scope of salvation,

and the depth of spiritual experience, has been realized. Subjects like the grace of God, spirituality, and the good fight of faith have been clarified. What

is all of this marvelous increase? It is the coming of the Kingdom of God, and it is marvelous to behold! How thankful we are for such provision.

THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS WITHIN YOU

"²¹ Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you."

NEITHER SHALL THEY SAY

"Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! . . ."

Other versions read, *"See here! See there!"* ^{NKJV} *"Look, here it is!"* or, *"There it is."* ^{NASB} The kingdom of God is not something that can be seen with the human eye, or touched with human hands. It is of another order, and cannot be detected with natural senses. It is as impossible to detect the kingdom of God with senses adapted for a seen earth and created things within it as it is to see God, whom *"no man hath seen at any time"* (1 John 4:12).

BEHOLD!

" . . . for, behold . . ."

Other versions read, *"For indeed,"* ^{NKJV} *"because,"* ^{NIV} *"for in fact,"* ^{NRSV} and *"for lo."* ^{ASV}

This is something like saying *"Verily, Verily."* It precedes the affirmation of unquestionable reality.

THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS WITHIN YOU

" . . . the kingdom of God is within you."

Other versions read, *"is in your midst,"* ^{NASB} *"with you,"* with the footnote, *"among,"* ^{NIV} *"is among you,"* ^{NRSV} *"in the midst of you,"* ^{RSV} *"already among you,"* ^{CEB} *"in the middle of you,"* ^{MGI}

As used here, the lexical meaning of *"within"* is as follows: *ōwithin, inside; within you i.e. in the midst of you,* ^{STRONGS} *ōin the midst of you,* ^{THAYER} *ōamong (you), in*

(*your*) *midst,* ^{FRIBERG} *ōa position within an area determined by other objects and distributed among such objects - 'among, with, 'among you stands one you do not know' (John 1.25),* ^{LOUW-NIDA} *ōamong you, in your midst,* ^{GINGRICH} *and* *ōamong you, in your midst.* ^{DANK}

First, it should be apparent that the Kingdom of God is not within individuals – particularly the enemies of Jesus, to whom He was speaking. Those who are in Christ Jesus have entered the Kingdom of God (John 3:5), but the kingdom of God has not entered them – and that is not what Jesus meant in this saying. Nor, indeed, does any Apostolic doctrine suggest that the Kingdom of God is actually within us – either individually or collectively.

Men from early centuries, namely Godet and Olshausen, following Chrysostom, said that Jesus meant *"in your hearts."* Other commentators say the following.

⇒ John Calvin says, *"That restoration of the Church,"* he tells us, *"which God has promised, must be looked for within; for, by quickening His elect into a heavenly newness of life, he establishes his kingdom within them."*

⇒ Albert Barnes says that it may mean this: *"The reign of God is in the heart."*

⇒ John Gill says, *"in the elect of God among the Jews, in their hearts."*

⇒ Matthew Poole says, *"The latter words of this verse seem fairly to admit of a double interpretation, as you here may signify the disciples of Christ, who had received Christ as*

their Lord, over whom he exercised a spiritual dominion and jurisdiction, or as it may respect the whole Jewish nation, amongst whom the kingdom of God was now exercised."

⇒ The Pulpit Commentary reads, *"The kingdom of God could not be said to be in the hearts of those Pharisees to whom the Master was especially directing his words of reply here. It should be rather understood in the midst of your ranks; so Meyer and Farrar and others interpret it."*

⇒ John Wesley said, *"For behold the kingdom of God is within or among you - Look not for it in distant times or remote places: it is now in the midst of you: it is come: it is present in the soul of every true believer: it is a spiritual kingdom, an internal principle. Wherever it exists, it exists in the heart."*

AN EXPLANATION

I have taken the time to share what others have said, but NOT to assist us in defining what Jesus meant. I have already shown that from the etymological and apostolic doctrine point of views there is no reason to make the text read that the Kingdom of God is within the individual, or a group of individuals. The time I have taken is rather to confirm that during difficult spiritual times, when the heart of preaching was not always what Christ intended, there was a certain blindness in key areas. Most of those I have mentioned had grace, faith, and justification right. However, there was not much preaching or writing about *"The Kingdom of God."*

CLARITY

Let it be clear, that there is no

clear doctrine in Scripture that states the Kingdom of God is set up within men. Daniel saw that it would be "set up" (Dan 2:44) – but not within men. It would be set up on the earth like the other kingdoms that it would destroy – which kingdoms were not in the hearts of men.

Again, Jesus spoke of entering the Kingdom, not of the Kingdom entering into men.

⇒ He said, "For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matt 5:20).

⇒ He said, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven" (Matt 7:21).

⇒ And again Jesus said, "Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matt 18:3).

⇒ Again, He spoke of it being "easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God" (Matt 19:24; Mk 10:24-25; Lk 18:25).

⇒ Again He said, "And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out: it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire" (Mark 9:47).

⇒ Paul taught, "that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God" (Acts 14:22).

WHAT DID JESUS MEAN?

Several of the versions state it correctly: "in your midst,"^{NASB} "among you,"^{NSRV} "in the midst of you,"^{RSV} and "is already among you."^{CEB}

Jesus meant that the Kingdom of God was right in their presence – under their noses, so to speak, and yet they did not know it. Jesus spoke similarly of the Kingdom of God when He referred to the significance of Him casting our demons and unclean spirits. "But if I with the finger of God cast out devils, no doubt the kingdom of God is come upon you" (Luke 11:20). Other versions read, "the kingdom of God is come to you,"^{NIV} "has arrived among you."^{NLT}

The Pharisees had "demanded" when the Kingdom of God would come, and Jesus announced to them that they were standing right in the middle of it, beholding its workings and its dominance. They had not detected it, because it did not come with

observation.

When Jesus sent out the seventy, He told them, "And into whatsoever city ye enter, and they receive you, eat such things as are set before you: And heal the sick that are therein, and say unto them, The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you" (Luke 10:8-9). If the city did not receive them, they were to say, "Even the very dust of your city, which cleaveth on us, we do wipe off against you: notwithstanding be ye sure of this, that the kingdom of God is come nigh unto you" (Luke 10:11).

A SOBERING IMPLICATION

When Divine workings are taking place, it is because "the Kingdom of God" is in our midst. When the eyes of our understanding are opened, "the Kingdom of God" is among us. Where there is genuine "righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit" (Rom 14:17), "the kingdom of God" is among us. Where what is being proclaimed is not in word only, "but in power" (1 Cor 4:20), "the kingdom of God" is among us! Those in Christ have been "translated . . . into the kingdom of His Dear Son" (Col 1:13). The Kingdom has not been put into them. That should be abundantly apparent. It is the truth, and eventually faith will take hold of it. I judge from the various versions that this subject has been glossed. But emphatically, it is not glossed in Scripture.

THE DAYS WILL COME

"²² And He said unto the disciples, The days will come, when ye shall desire to see one of the days of the Son of Man, and ye shall not see it."

HE SAID UNTO THE DISCIPLES

"And He said unto the disciples. . ."

Jesus does not address this word to the Pharisees, or to the general public that followed Him. He rather addresses it to His disciples – those

who were the closest to Him. They had spent all of their time in His presence. There had been no successful efforts to persecute them. If they were in danger, as in a storm, He had rescued them.

THE DAYS WILL COME

" . . . The days will come, when ye shall desire to see one of the days of the Son of Man, and ye shall not see it."

Other versions read, "you will long to see,"^{NIV} "have a great desire to

see,"^{BBE} "yearn to see."^{MIT}

For three consecutive and uninterrupted years, they had been in the presence of the Lord, experiencing His teaching, expositions, miracles, rebukes, correction, etc. But the time was fast approaching when His immediate Presence would be "taken away from them" (Matt 9:15; Mk 2:20; Lk 5:35).

After He died and was buried, and

before Jesus ascended into heaven, the disciples were in a condition where they desired that He was with them. Two disciples on the road to Emmaus, when the risen Christ appeared to them "in another form" (Mk 16:12), said *"But we trusted that it had been He which should have redeemed Israel: and beside all this, to day is the third day since these things were done"* (Luke 24:21). O, how they longed for just a day with Him! The other disciples were in Jerusalem, on the evening of the very day Jesus rose from the dead, and *"the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews"* (John 20:19). O, how they longed for just one day of the Lord being with them.

On the eve of His betrayal Jesus told them, *"Verily, verily, I say unto you, That ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice: and ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy. A woman when she is in travail hath sorrow, because her hour is come: but as soon as she is delivered of the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world. And ye now therefore have sorrow: but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you"* (John 16:20-22).

At that time, Jesus was available to His disciples on a regular basis. They could ask Him the meaning of a parable (Matt 13:36), inquire about the end of the world (Matt 24:3), and inquire about the prophet Elijah (Matt 17:10). But the time would come when they would not have immediate access to

Him. At the time of our text, they did not know much, if anything, about an Intercessor in heaven (Heb 7:25), or access to the throne of grace (Heb 4:15-16). They did not yet have an understanding of living by faith (Heb 10:38). That is why, as Jesus would tell them later, they would *"weep and lament"* (John 16:20).

Jesus said of His disciples, *"But the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then shall they fast in those days"* (Luke 5:35).

What person who is following Jesus has not longed for a more immediate contact with Him? This matter of living by faith is not a simplistic thing that leaves the hungry soul thoroughly satisfied at all times. There remains a profound longing as expressed by Paul: *"For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better"* (Phil 1:23).

However, the economy of faith demands that you be deprived of the physical presence of the Lord's Christ – even though He dwelt for a time on earth, and His disciples had regular access to Him. The *"good fight of faith"* must be fought (1 Tim 6:12). There is a seeking that requires more tenacity and stamina than was required when Jesus dwelt among men.

This word of Jesus postulates the disciples being in an environment of persecution, opposition, imprisonment, and threats of death. None of these had been experienced

while they were walking with the Savior as He went about doing good. The only danger they ever faced was with the elements – wind and wave – and the Lord immediately resolved that dilemma.

Years later, when Paul was in a storm, he had to endure it for two weeks, face the breaking up of the ship, make his way to the shore when they crashed on a certain island, shake off a serpent that bit him, and have comforts and accommodations ministered to him by others (Acts 27:18-28:6).

During these times, the saints of God find out the valuable ministry of the Holy Spirit. He is the *"Comforter"* who took the place of the bodily presence of the Lord Jesus, as He said: *"And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever; Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him: but ye know Him; for He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you. Yet a little while, and the world seeth Me no more; but ye see Me: because I live, ye shall live also. At that day ye shall know that I am in My Father, and ye in Me, and I in you"* (John 14:20).

As for experiencing one of the days of the Son of Man, when He comes again, *"we shall see Him as He is"* (1 John 3:2). Until then, we must live by faith, being comforted and led by the Holy Spirit, with Christ dwelling in our hearts by faith (Eph 3:17)

THEY SHALL SAY UNTO YOU

"²³ And they shall say to you, See here; or, see there: go not after them, nor follow them."

MATTHEW'S GOSPEL

"Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not. For there shall arise false Christs,

and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect. Behold, I have told you before." (Matt 24:23-25)

MARK'S GOSPEL

"And then if any man shall say to

you, Lo, here is Christ; or, lo, he is there; believe him not: For false Christs and false prophets shall rise, and shall show signs and wonders, to seduce, if it were possible, even the elect. But take ye heed: behold, I have foretold you all things" (Mark 13:21-23).

With the physical absence of Jesus, all manner of false teachers will, arise, telling the people where Jesus and the advantages He gives can be found. Like Theudas, and Judas of Galilee (Acts 5:36-37), they will lead men to their own destruction. None of these arose when Christ was among men, for there was no way they could compete with His Presence. No competitive leader arose to seduce the people while Jesus of Nazareth was among them. Following His ascension into heaven, and enthronement at the right hand of God, false Christ's and false prophets are successful only to the degree that the church is weak and immature.

THEY SHALL SAY

"And they shall say to you, See here; or, see there . . ."

Other versions read, *"Look there! Look here!"* NASB *"There He is, Here He is,"* NIV *"See, it is there! or, It is here!"* BBE *"'Look! Right here!' or, 'See! Over there!'"* CJB *"'Look, there is the Son of Man,' or 'Here he is,'"* NLT and *"Look! [He is] there! or, Look! [He is] here!"* AMPLIFIED

Jesus' immediate reference is to the kingdom of God, concerning which He has been asked *"when the kingdom of God should come."* Ultimately that does have to do with the Son of Man being revealed, for when He is fully seen, then the Kingdom of God is also fully seen, or revealed.

GO NOT AFTER THEM

" . . . go not after them, nor follow them."

The followers of Jesus are not to pay attention to those who seek to identify the kingdom of God or the presence of Jesus with a geographical location, or a particular group of people. God may very well dwell in a particular congregation, as stated in Paul's first letter to the Corinthians: *"But if all prophesy, and there come in one that believeth not, or one unlearned, he is convinced of all, he is judged of all: And thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest; and so falling down on his face he will worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth"* (1 Cor 14:24-25).

That presence, however, is not an exclusive one. No body of people can say God dwells only with them, or claim they are "the true New Testament church." Even though some attempt to do so, no denomination, sect, or division, can trace their beginning back to Pentecost. There are vast periods of time when it was exceedingly difficult to find a body of true believers. One of those periods is described as a time when one referred to as "a horn" that *"made war with the saints, and prevailed against them"* (Dan 7:21). It was revealed to John in these words, *"And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations"* (Rev 13:7).

This is why we cannot afford to allow men to define the borders of the Kingdom of God, or tell us where it is. The Kingdom of God is not found by searching or analysis, but by the participation that is realized by entering that Kingdom by means of the new birth.

SO SHALL THE COMING OF THE SON OF MAN BE

" 24 For as the lightning, that lighteneth out of the one part under heaven, shineth unto the other part under heaven; so shall also the Son of Man be in his day."

Jesus now leaps forward to the time when the Son shall be fully disclosed – at which time the Kingdom of God will also be fully perceived. He does this because this reality is what makes salvation most relevant. The salvation of God is not only a remedy for the past. It is also a preparation for the future, when Jesus will appear to finalize all that is intended to be done in *"this present evil world."* At that time, there will no longer be a deliverance for sinners.

AS LIGHTNING

"For as the lightning, that

lighteneth out of the one part under heaven, shineth unto the other part under heaven . . ."

The entrance of the Son of God into this world was preceded by an announcement of when it would occur (Lk 1:26-38). When the Holy Child was born, an announcement was made to certain shepherds concerning what had happened: *"For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord"* (Luke 2:11). Certain wise men from the east were alerted to this birth, and came to see the Holy Child, taking two years to get there (Matt 2:1-12,16). About forty days later (Lev 12:2-4), Jesus was dedicated, and certain in Jerusalem heard the glad tidings (Lk 2:25-38).

However, this is not how the

coming of the Lord and the appearance of God's *"everlasting kingdom,"* will take place. The closest thing to the rapidity with which Christ's appearance will take place is like the flash of lightning from one end of heaven to another. One cannot perceive the advancement of that light.

SO SHALL ALSO

" . . . so shall also the Son of Man be in his day."

When Jesus returns, there will be no time to announce His second coming, like there was with His first coming. If those who asked Jesus when the Kingdom of God should appear are not prepared for it, that very coming will mandate their eternal destruction.

Of course, the complicating factor is that since Jesus has returned to heaven, the norm is that there can be no preparation after death. We do have an example of souls that died in the flood, to whom Jesus preached while His body was in the grave (1 Pet

3:18-20). Of course, their situation was a bit different. The Law had not yet been given, and people beyond the reach of Noah had never, so far as we know, been exposed to a proclamation of the true God and His will. Because of

pervading iniquity, Enoch had prophesied of the flood directly, and the coming of the Lord indirectly (Jude 1:14-15). He was not, however, a global proclaimer, and is not so presented in Scripture.

BUT FIRST HE MUST SUFFER AND BE REJECTED

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

BUT FIRST

"But first . . ."

This is a Divinely appointed view of segments of time. This is not a prophecy of something Jesus sees coming. It is an announcement of something God has determined. As such, what Jesus now says cannot possibly be averted or delayed. I want to emphasize that this is not prescience, or prevision –i.e., an exercise of Omniscience concerning the future. This is something God purposed, and will initiate, causing it to happen. If this was not the case, Jesus would not have submitted to it.

This will be very apparent in what Jesus says. Jesus was in no way a victim of circumstance. The ONLY things that happened to Him, were those which were appointed by God Almighty. For some, this is difficult to receive, for the men who carried this out were charged with the guilt of Christ's death. Jesus, however, will establish that this is, in fact, the case.

HE MUST SUFFER MANY THINGS

"...must He suffer many things..."

Other versions read, "endure much suffering," ^{NRSV} "will have to undergo much," ^{BBE} "must endure horrible suffering," ^{CJB} and "experience extreme excruciation [intensely painful]." ^{MIT}

Beginning around this time, Jesus

frequently reminded His disciples of this treatment (Matt 16:21; Matt 17:21; Mk 8:31; 9:12; Lk 9:22; 17:25; 22:15).

On the day of Pentecost, Peter referred to these events of suffering: "Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain" (Acts 2:23). In the Temple court he proclaimed, "But those things, which God before had showed by the mouth of all his prophets, that Christ should suffer, he hath so fulfilled" (Acts 3:18). And again, "For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done." (Acts 4:27-28).

A Delineation of His Sufferings

What were the sufferings Jesus endured?

- ⇒ Being in an agony, He prayed in the Garden (Lk 22:44).
- ⇒ In the high priest's quarters they mocked Jesus and struck Him (Lk 22:63).
- ⇒ In the high priests quarters "when they had blindfolded Him, they struck Him on the face, and asked Him, saying, Prophecy, who is it that smote thee?" (Luke 22:63-64).
- ⇒ "And many other things blasphemously spake they against Him" (Luke 22:65).
- ⇒ One of the high priest's officers struck Jesus with the palm of his hand (John 18:22)
- ⇒ "Now Annas had sent Him bound

unto Caiaphas the high priest." (John 18:24).

- ⇒ "The chief priests and the scribes came together, and led him into their council, saying, Art thou the Christ? tell us. And He said unto them, If I tell you, ye will not believe" (Luke 22:67).
- ⇒ "And the whole multitude of them arose, and led Him unto Pilate. And they began to accuse Him, saying, We found this Fellow perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Caesar, saying that He Himself is Christ a King" (Luke 23:1-2).
- ⇒ When Pilate told the people he found no fault in Jesus, "they were the more fierce, saying, He stirreth up the people, teaching throughout all Jewry, beginning from Galilee to this place" (Luke 23:5).
- ⇒ Scourged by Pilate (Matt 27:26).
- ⇒ Made a crown of thorns and put it in His head (Matt 27:28).
- ⇒ The soldiers "smote Him with their hands" (John 19:3).
- ⇒ Mocked Him (Matt 27:29).
- ⇒ Spit on Him (Matt 27:29).
- ⇒ Struck Him on the head with a reed [staff, NIV] (Matt 27:29).
- ⇒ "And the chief priests and scribes stood and vehemently accused Him" before Herod (Luke 23:10).
- ⇒ "And Herod with his men of war set Him at nought, and mocked Him, and arrayed him in a gorgeous robe, and sent Him again to Pilate" (Luke 23:11).
- ⇒ Herod then returned Jesus to Pilate.
- ⇒ Upon the insistence of the people, Pilate released Barrabas, a thief and a murderer, and kept Jesus, sending Him to be crucified (Lk 23:24-25).
- ⇒ Jesus carried His own cross (John 29:17).

- ⇒ Pilate had Jesus crucified (Mk 15:24).
- ⇒ Others passed by the cross and railed on Him (Mk 15:29).

AND BE REJECTED OF THIS GENERATION

" . . . and be rejected of this generation."

Other versions read, *"put on one side by this generation,"*^{BBE} *"reproved of this generation,"*^{GENEVA} *"will not be accepted by the people of today,"*^{NIRV} *"refused of this nation,"*^{PNT} and *"be disapproved and repudiated and rejected by this age and generation."*^{AMPLIFIED}

The words "THIS GENERATION" are significant. As used here they mean *"men of the same stock; the whole multitude of men living at the same time."* Jesus was not speaking of the entire nation of Jews, but of those living at that time, and among whom He had been ministering.

- ⇒ *"But whereunto shall I liken THIS GENERATION? It is like unto children sitting in the markets, and calling unto their fellows, And saying, We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced; we have mourned unto you, and ye have not lamented."* (Matt 11:16-17).
- ⇒ *"The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with THIS GENERATION, and shall condemn it: because they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas is*

here. The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with THIS GENERATION, and shall condemn it: for she came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and, behold, a greater than Solomon is here." (Matt 12:41-42)

- ⇒ *"That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar. Verily I say unto you, All these things shall come upon THIS GENERATION."* (Matt 23:35-36)
- ⇒ *"Now learn a parable of the fig tree; When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh: So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors. Verily I say unto you, THIS GENERATION shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled"* (Matt 24:32-34).
- ⇒ *"And He sighed deeply in his spirit, and saith, Why doth THIS GENERATION seek after a sign? verily I say unto you, There shall no sign be given unto THIS GENERATION"* (Mark 8:12).

Solomon spoke of generations in this manner – of people of a particular kind being grouped together, even though it was over a lengthy period of time: *"There is A GENERATION that*

curseth their father, and doth not bless their mother. There is A GENERATION that are pure in their own eyes, and yet is not washed from their filthiness. There is A GENERATION, O how lofty are their eyes! and their eyelids are lifted up. There is A GENERATION, whose teeth are as swords, and their jaw teeth as knives, to devour the poor from off the earth, and the needy from among men." (Prov 30:14).

When Israel refused to go into Canaan after they had spied out the land, there was an entire generation of men that were excluded from entry into it – over 600,000 men ranging from twenty years and upward who were fit for war (Num 1:3; 26:2). God referred to that whole conglomerate of men as *"this evil generation"* (Deut 1:35).

Jesus declares that He will be rejected by that generation – the one to whom He was ministering. Later Peter will affirm Jesus was *"delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain"* (Acts 2:23).

Later the aggregate church, when persecuted, prayed, referring to Christ's death in this manner: *"For of a truth against Thy Holy Child Jesus, whom Thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done"* (Acts 4:27-28).

AS IT WAS IN THE DAYS OF NOAH

"²⁶ And as it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of Man. ²⁷ They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all."

Now Jesus summons the attention of His listeners to His second coming, doing it, so far as we know,

when there was not a person alive who had a clear idea about that coming. Neither Moses nor the Prophets spoke clearly of Christ's second coming. The book of Job provides a very vague reference to this climactic event: *"For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God"* (Job 19:26). In Matthew

thru John, Jesus speaks of His second coming in 89 verses. The Epistles contain sixty specific references to that event. The entire ministry of Christ Jesus centers around three epochal events:

- ⇒ His present appearance in heaven for us: *"For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the*

true; but into heaven itself, now to APPEAR in the presence of God for us: Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others; For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world" (Heb 9:24-26a).

⇒ His initial appearance in the world: *" . . . but now once in the end of the world hath He APPEARED to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself." (Heb 9:26b).*

⇒ His second appearance: *"And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall He APPEAR the second time without sin unto salvation" (Heb 9:28).*

AS IT WAS IN THE DAYS OF NOAH

"And as it was in the days of Noe . . . They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all . . ."

In Moses' record of the flood, he does not provide any details as to what the people were doing when the rain began to fall. He only provides some summary information.

⇒ *"And God saw that the wickedness*

of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually" (Gen 6:5).

⇒ *"The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence. And God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth. And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth." (Gen 6:13).*

Now, ever, Jesus provides more details. We find that the world was caught totally unaware. There apparently were not a lot of signs and indicators concerning what was coming.

⇒ They were eating and drinking until the day Noah entered the ark (Matt 24:38; Lk 17:27).

⇒ They were marrying and giving in marriage until the day Noah entered the ark (Matt 24:38; Lk 17:27).

AS IT WAS IN THE DAYS OF LOT

In this destruction four cities were obliterated from the face of the earth. without anyone or anything remaining (Gen 19). We are told of some of the sins of Sodom. Initially, they were correctable transgressions: *"Behold, this was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom, pride, fulness of bread, and*

abundance of idleness was in her and in her daughters, neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy. And they were haughty, and committed abomination before me: therefore I took them away as I saw good" (Ezek 16:49-50).

Finally their sin degenerated into that of Sodomy, which is at the bottom of the moral ladder. They actually demonstrated their sin when two angels, appearing as men, visited Lot (Gen 19:4-11).

Now, however, Jesus shows how their sin and dulled their senses, so they did not see the severe judgment that was coming.

⇒ They ate and drank (Lk 17:28),
⇒ They married wives (Lk 17:28)
⇒ They bought and sold (Lk 17:28).
⇒ They planted (Lk 17:28).
⇒ They builded (Lk 17:28).

SO SHALL IT BE IN THE DAYS OF THE SON OF MAN

" . . . so shall it be also in the days of the Son of Man . . . "

When *"For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first" (1 Thess 4:16).*

When Jesus returns, the world is going to be living as though it was just another day to feed their lusts, and do what they desired.

AS IT WAS IN THE DAYS OF LOT

"²⁸ Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded;²⁹ But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all."

AS IT WAS IN THE DAYS OF LOT

"²⁸ Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank,

they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded;²⁹ But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all."

Jesus is confirming that sin and transgression has an anaesthetizing effect upon the soul. It so lulls the soul into sleep that is totally incapable of detecting warning signals of the

approaching wrath of God and impending doom. This was confirmed in the flood, and in the destruction of Sodom, Gomorrah, Adma, and Zeboim. Right up until Jesus returns with a shout, graves are all emptied, and the heavens and the earth pass away, sinners will think it is just another day. Like Sodom, they will be eating, drinking, buying, selling, planting, and building. Sin shall have lulled them into

a deep sleep that shall be abruptly interrupted by the blast of a heavenly trumpet, the shout of the Lord Himself, and the "voice of the archangel" (1 Thess 4:16). "The earth shall, cast out er dead" (Isa 26:19), and "the earth

and the heaven" shall be fleeing from the face of the glorified Christ. There will be no place for the sinners to hide, as the time of God's wrath "is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou

shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great; and shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth." (Rev 11:1)

WHEN THE SON OF MAN IS REVEALED

"³⁰ Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed."

When Jesus is revealed, He will be seen for what He is right now. He is not coming to set up His kingdom and commence a reign on earth. God's Kingdom has already been set up, and is being governed by Jesus with a strict focus upon the brethren He is bringing to glory (Heb 2:10). He presently is exalted, and is appropriately described as "the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords" (1 Tim 6:15).

There are several texts that speak of Jesus being "REVEALED" in all of His glory.

⇒ *"For the Son of man SHALL COME in the glory of his Father with His angels; and then He shall reward every man according to his works." (Matt 16:27)*

⇒ *"And then shall APPEAR the sign of the Son of Man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory." (Matt 24:30)*

⇒ *"And He shall send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect*

from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other." (Matt 24:31)

⇒ *"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." (Matt 25:31)*

⇒ *"But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, And the stars of heaven shall fall, and the powers that are in heaven shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of man coming in the clouds with great power and glory." (Mk 13:24-2)*

⇒ *"For whosoever shall be ashamed of Me and of My words, of him shall the Son of Man be ashamed, when He SHALL COME in His own glory, and in His Father's, and of the holy angels." (Luke 9:26)*

⇒ *"And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; 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. And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and*

great glory. And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh." (Luke 21:28)

⇒ *"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 COME to be glorified in His saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day." (2 Thess 1:8-10)*

⇒ *"That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the APPEARING of Jesus Christ." (1 Pet 1:7)*

⇒ *"But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when is glory shall be REVEALED, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy." (1 Pet 4:13)*

⇒ *"And when the Chief Shepherd shall APPEAR, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away." (1 Pet 5:4)*

IN THAT DAY

"³¹ In that day, he which shall be upon the housetop, and his stuff in the house, let him not come down to take it away: and he that is in the field, let

him likewise not return back."

Here the Lord describes the posture that must be taken when Jesus

comes, paralleling it to the eminent destruction of Jerusalem. Peter, Andrew, James, and John had asked Him three questions. Jesus had just

told them of the destruction of the Temple, which would take place at the destruction of Jerusalem: *"See ye not all these things? verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down"* (Matt 24:2). They then asked Him *"privately,"* saying, *"Tell us, when shall these things be? [destruction of the Temple], and what shall be the sign of Thy coming, and of the end of the world?"* (Matt 24:3; Mk 13:4).

Jesus does not answer the questions one at a time. Instead, He blends the answers together, for they all have these traits:

1. They are the end of one thing, and the beginning of another.
2. They have to do with a final

dissolution.

3. In order to survive, one must be watchful and ready.

This verse is particularly speaking of the destruction of Jerusalem. Luke records some detail in the instructions: *"And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh. Then let them which are in Judaea flee to the mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out; and let not them that are in the countries enter there into. For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled."* (Luke 21:21-22).

Jesus then ties that with His second coming: *"And then shall they*

see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh" (Luke 21:28).

Whether you are speaking of the destruction of Jerusalem, the end of the world, or the coming of Christ, there is no time for making an adjustment. His disciples were to apply that fact to the coming destruction of Jerusalem, the determined end of the world, and the scheduled coming of the Lord. They had to be ready for all three of those events. The reason for this is that all three came from God, and were His judgments and determinations. Their lives could not be lived by a mere routine. They had to be alert and vigilant.

REMEMBER LOT'S WIFE

"³² Remember Lot's wife."

When Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboim were destroyed by a fiery holocaust, Lot and his family were told, *"Escape for thy life; look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain; escape to the mountain, lest thou be consumed"* (Gen 19:17).

Lot's wife apparently found it too difficult to leave, and therefore disobeyed the word delivered by a holy angel. It is

written, *"Then the LORD rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the LORD out of heaven; And he overthrew those cities, and all the plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and that which grew upon the ground. But his wife looked back from behind him, and she became a pillar of salt."* (Gen 19:24-26).

Whether it is the Jews fleeing from the destruction of Jerusalem, or passing through the demise of the

world at the coming of the Lord, it is useless and senseless to look back. Why? Because there really is nothing more to look back to!

Now, the saints must learn to live while forgetting the things that are behind (Phil 3:13). If you can do that, you will be able to pass through the end of the world, and the coming of the Lord, to obtain the inheritance that is reserved in heaven for you. There is grace for this to be done.

WHOEVER SHALL SEEK TO SAVE OR LOSE HIS LIFE

"³³ Whosoever shall seek to save his life shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his life shall preserve it."

Here is a principle of Kingdom life. It is something that cannot be violated with impunity. The individual who desires Jesus must deny himself.

WHOSOEVER SHALL SEEK TO SAVE HIS LIFE

"Whosoever shall seek to save his life shall lose it . . ."

Other versions read, *"Whoever seeks to keep his life shall lose,"* ^{NASB} *"Those who try to make their life secure will lose it,"* ^{NRSV} and *"If you cling to your life, you will lose it."* ^{NLT}

Those who seek the means by which they can maintain their old life – life in this world – have set themselves up for a fall. Why would any person make this choice, knowing that the world and the lust thereof is going to pass away, while there is a realm that is forever blest, and filled with glorious

advantage.

What of the person that has a small taste of the world to come, but defers to accept what this world has to offer? He will lose what little he had! What a senseless loss that is!

WHOSOEVER SHALL LOSE HIS LIFE

" . . . and whosoever shall lose his life shall preserve it."

Other versions read, *"whoever*

loses his life shall preserve it." NASB "*but those who lose their life will keep it,"* NRSV "*and if you let your life go, you will save it."* NLT

It is generally true in the Kingdom of God that the lower is sacrificed in preference for the higher; the temporal for the eternal; the seen for the unseen.

"Grinding in the East was performed, as it is now, chiefly by hand. The mill-stones were about two feet in diameter, and half a foot in thickness. The lower one was fixed, and the upper one was turned by a handle, or crank. This was done by two persons, who sat opposite to each other. One took hold of the mill-handle, and turned it half way round; the other then seized it, and completed the revolution. This was done by women; by servants of the lowest order; and was a very laborious employment." BARNES NOTES

That is because the higher is better. The eternal is satisfying. The unseen surpasses anything that can be seen. If men do not make the proper choice, God will make their choice for them. Those who do not want Him shall not have Him. But for those who desire Him above all else, and are willing to lose their lives to have Him, the end of this world will mark a glorious beginning that will never end.

I TELL YOU

"³⁴ I tell you, in that night there shall be two men in one bed; the one shall be taken, and the other shall be left. Two women shall be grinding together; the one shall be taken, and the other left. ³⁶ Two men shall be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left."

There will be a separation of the two classes just mentioned those who chose to save their lives, and those who chose to lose them. To put it another way, those who chose to have eternal life, and those who chose not to have it.

In this world, it is something challenging to identify these two groups. But it will not be difficult to perceive them when our Lord, comes again – even if they are together.

TWO MEN IN ONE BED

"I tell you, in that night there shall be two men in one bed; the one shall be taken . . ."

The point here is not a particular sin that was being committed, like sodomy. Rather, it is that the difference between these two persons was nearly indistinguishable to men. But not to God. One, and only one, is taken, and the other is left.

TWO WOMEN GRINDING TOGETHER

" . . . Two women shall be grinding together; the one shall be taken, and the other left . . ."

Whereas some were sleeping, and yet the distinction was discerned, and a separation made, here we have two women at work, doing the same thing – grinding. But these two women were not alike. One was taken, and the other left.

TWO MEN SHALL BE IN THE FIELD

" . . . Two men shall be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left."

Here again we find two men, but these are in the field. They are about a normal task, apparently working together. But they are not the same, for one is taken, and the other is left.

WHO IS TAKEN?

Jesus spoke elsewhere of the taking of some. It is not at all uncommon for men to think the righteous are the ones who are taken – raptured out of the world to avoid the great tribulation. Is this really what Jesus meant?

Let us briefly examine three separations. Those taken away in the flood. Those taken away in the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, And the separation of the wheat and the tares.

⇒ THE FLOOD. Who were the ones taken away, and who were the ones left? The wicked were taken away, and the righteous were left. *"For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking,*

marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be." (Matt 24:39). Noah and his family were left.

⇒ SODOM AND GOMORRAH. *"Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all."* (Luke 17:29). Lot and his daughters were left.

⇒ THE WHEAT AND THE TARES. The *"wheat"* are defined as *"the children of the Kingdom,"* and the tares as *"the children of the wicked one"* (Matt 13:38). When the harvest came, the reapers were told *"Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn."* (Mat 13:30). In explaining the parable Jesus said, *"The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth"* (Matt 13:41-42).

The ones who are taken away are the wicked, not the righteous. The wicked have been the intruders, not the righteous. They will be gathered out

first, as Jesus plainly taught – just as they were in the flood, and in the fiery

destruction of Sodom AND Gomorrah. Before God gathers “together all things”

(Eph 1:10, He is going to thoroughly purge the house of all contaminants.

WHERE, LORD?

“³⁷ AND they answered AND said unto Him, Where, Lord? AND He said unto them, Wheresoever the body is, thither will the eagles be gathered together.”

WHERE LORD?

“And they answered and said unto Him, Where, Lord? . . .”

The word translated *ōwhereō* means, *ōas of place; what locality,ō*^{STRONGs} *ōwhere? in what place?ō*^{THAYER} AND *ōin a certain place.ō*^{FRIEBERG}

The New Living Translation is worded correctly: *“Where will this happen, Lord?”*^{NLT}

That is, where will all of this occur – not where will the removed ones be gathered. The answer of Jesus makes clear that this is the meaning.

WHEREVER THE BODY IS

“ . . . AND He said unto them, Wheresoever the body is, thither will the eagles be gathered together.” Other versions read, *“Where the body is, there also will the vultures be gathered.”*^{NASB} *“Where, Lord?” they asked. He replied, “Where there is a dead body, there the vultures will gather,”*^{NIV} *“Where, Lord?” they asked. He replied, “Where there is a dead body, there the vultures will gather.”*^{NRSV}

In other words, the judgment of God will fall where the greatest iniquity is found – and, in this case, that would be Jerusalem. It had been given the greatest amount of truth and blessings, and yet had treated it with contempt.

This is the manner in which the

Lord judges. Greater sins receive greater judgment. All sin does not have the same weight.

Therefore, Jesus told Pilate that those who delivered him to the ruler were guilty of the *“greater sin.”* *“Then saith Pilate unto him, Speakest thou not unto me? knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee, And have power to release thee?”* Jesus answered, *Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above: therefore he that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin”* (John 19:10-11).

Such sins will receive greater judgment. It behooves us to perfect holiness in the fear of the Lord, working out our own salvation.

Our next Hungry Saints Meeting will be held on Friday, 4/14/17. In our next lesson, we will continue our series in the Gospel of Luke. The fifty-fifth lesson will cover verses 1 thru 17 of the eighteenth chapter: “PERSISTENT PRAYER, SELF RIGHTEOUSNESS, And INFANTS.” Jesus addresses the matter of prayer – persistent prayer. He did this by delivering a parable intending to teach men that they always should persevere in prayer, and not faint, or give up. He then spoke to the matter of self righteousness, which stops a person from being justified. Then He gives the disciples a sterling lesson on little children, and how they are to be received. We will begin our meeting at 6:30, which will be followed by a time of refreshments and fellowship.