

Foothills Christian Assembly Sermon July 19, 2020
Luke 17: 20 – 37 “About the Kingdom of God – Part 3”

Now it happened as He went to Jerusalem that He passed through the midst of Samaria and Galilee. 12 Then as He entered a certain village, there met Him ten men who were lepers, who stood afar off. 13 And they lifted up their voices and said, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!" 14 So when He saw them, He said to them, "Go, show yourselves to the priests." And so it was that as they went, they were cleansed. 15 And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, returned, and with a loud voice glorified God, 16 and fell down on his face at His feet, giving Him thanks. And he was a Samaritan. 17 So Jesus answered and said, "Were there not ten cleansed? But where are the nine? 18 Were there not any found who returned to give glory to God except this foreigner?" 19 And He said to him, "Arise, go your way. Your faith has made you well." 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."

I. Introduction

a. Commenting on last week's text (Part 2) about flashing lightning, Matthew Henry wrote:

- i. "The *judgments* that are to destroy the Jewish nation, to lay them waste, and to deliver the Christians from them, shall *fly like lightning* through the land, shall lay all waste from one end of it to another; and those that are marked for this destruction can no more avoid it, nor oppose it, than they can a *flash of lightning*." (2.) "The gospel that is to set up Christ's kingdom in the world shall *fly like lightning* through the nations. The kingdom of the Messiah is not to be a *local* thing, but is to be dispersed far and wide over the face of the whole earth; it shall *shine* from Jerusalem to all parts about, and that *in a moment*. The kingdoms of the earth shall be leavened by the gospel ere they are aware of it." The trophies of Christ's victories shall be erected on the ruins of the devil's

kingdom, even in those countries that could never be subdued to the Roman yoke. The design of the setting up of Christ's kingdom was not to make one *nation great*, but to make *all nations good...*"

1. Redemptive judgment. God advanced His Kingdom via the destruction of His enemies at that time (apostate Judaism and eventually, beastly Rome)
- b. Two weeks ago (Part 1), we saw Jesus responding to the confused question of the Pharisees about "when the Kingdom of God would come". (v20,21) Jesus taught them some important things about the kingdom of God:
 - i. Their search for the arrival of the Kingdom of God was a search for signs and wonders, but instead that search should have been for the Messiah Himself.
 - ii. Where Jesus is, there is the Kingdom of God.
 - iii. The Kingdom of God was in their midst because Jesus was standing right there before their eyes, speaking to their very ears.
 - iv. The Kingdom of God was already present in Seed form at that moment when Jesus spoke those words. Jesus is the Seed that fell into the earth and died, rising up to fill the earth.
 - v. The Kingdom of God is not limited to the internal heart/soul, but is also expressed externally wherever Jesus Christ is. We are the Body of Christ.
- c. In the text about the Kingdom of God that follows (v22-37), *Jesus turns to His disciples*. The emphasis in this section is upon the coming kingdom judgment, and Jesus is *teaching His disciples* how to avoid the coming judgment.
 - i. Last week (Part 2): The timing of the coming judgment
 1. "He teaches them how to avoid being tricked by premature false claims, especially as they are longing for the beginning of the days of the Son of Man. (v22,23) The key to avoiding deception is knowing that the onset of this timeframe (the Son of Man in His day) will be obvious, like lightning in the sky. (v24) The onset of this timeframe of judgment will not occur until after "this generation" (those people to whom Jesus is ministering) rejects Jesus and causes Him to suffer many things. (v25) The "this generation" time clue brings in a natural sense that Jesus is describing things that His disciples need to know in order to avoid the judgment coming upon apostate Judaism of that time.
 - ii. This week (Part 3): Jesus then goes on to compare the time preceding His coming judgment to the past days preceding the judgment of God at the Flood (v26,27) and at Sodom and Gomorrah (v28-30), even using Lot's wife (v32) as a warning not to look back for their prior life when it's time to escape (v31-33). When the days preceding the judgment come to a close, and the judgment arrives, it will come too swiftly for those not watching, those unprepared, and they will be suddenly snatched from their beds and their work. (v34-36)

- iii. Next week (Part 4): Taking all of this in, now having a sense of the timing of the coming judgment, the disciples want to know where this will occur. Similar to His prior response about timing, Jesus uses the image of birds circling over a dead body to emphasize to His disciples that not only the timing, but also the location of His judgment will be obvious, as obvious as a rotting carcass surrounded by vultures. (v36,37)
 - iv. This week: About the Kingdom of God – (Part 3) v26-36
 - 1. Compared to the days of Noah - v26,27
 - 2. Compared to the days of Lot - v28-30
 - 3. Proper Response: Do not turn back - v31
 - 4. Proper Response: Remember Lot's Wife v32
 - 5. Proper Response: Lose your life v33
 - 6. Further descriptions of the suddenness of judgment – v34-36
 - 7. Questions to know, love and obey God
- II. Compared to the days of Noah - v26,27
 - a. “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.”
 - i. Jesus describes the everyday patterns of life continuing amongst the lost, even up until the very day that Noah entered into the ark. They were busy about the task of preserving their lives on that doomed earth, a vain task.
 - ii. Note the listed activities are good things given to us by God: eating, drinking and marriage. While we know the earth was filled with wickedness, the Lord here emphasizes NOT their overt wickedness, but their basic humanity, but a basic humanity apart from God.
 - 1. No mention of seeking the Lord, of fasting, of praying, of need. The lost were comfortable and satisfied with their physical pleasures, unaware of their sinfulness and jeopardy, blind to the coming judgment.
 - iii. Bock “Jesus compares the end-time with the cataclysmic flood of Noah (Gen. 6–8) and in the next verse details the point of comparison. Like that time, people will be conducting life with little attention to God when judgment comes”¹
 - iv. Principle: To be focused upon preserving one’s own life is a symptom of spiritual death. Self-focused blindness is a necessary outcome of absence of repentance.
 - 1. Corollary: Teaching people to prepare for coming judgment before teaching them about their own sin and need for forgiveness in Christ is illogical. They cannot perceive societal judgment if they have yet to perceive personal condemnation.

¹ Bock, D. L. (1996). [Luke: 9:51–24:53](#) (Vol. 2, p. 1431). Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic.

- b. Days of the Son of Man: the days preceding His judgment.
 - i. Bock “Luke’s reference to the “days” of the Son of Man refers to the period immediately preceding his return... This time will be a day of judgment against those not related to God. In this Lucan context, where there has been so much opposition to Jesus, the point is that failure to embrace Jesus leaves one exposed to this judgment when it comes. Rejection will eventually yield lightning, rain, and cataclysmic flood. Failure to decide for Jesus leaves one defenseless before God.”²
 - c. So, in Noah’s time, the lost carried on with life as usual right up until the very day the flood began, but Noah was ready. Jesus is warning His disciples to remain vigilant to watch for the days of the Son of Man that lead up to the Day of the Son of Man, the day judgment will fall. Jesus is teaching His disciples about the SUDDENNESS of the day of judgment that He will bring upon the apostate Jews.
 - i. Bock “Life and celebration were the order of the day. ... People were unconcerned about God and unprepared for him...And then life ended. Noah went into the boat, and the subsequent flood ...destroyed everyone left behind ... The judgment came suddenly.”³
- III. Compared to the days of Lot - v28-30
- a. “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.”
 - b. Likewise: Jesus chooses another example to highlight the suddenness of His coming judgment upon apostate Israel and the dangerous blindness of unbelief.
 - c. Note again none of the listed activities are sinful. Eating, drinking, buying, selling, planting and building. Yet, no mention is made of the life of the soul. No mention of prayers, fasting, or seeking God. It’s another secular world.
 - i. Bock “The basic picture is concentrated human activity that results in a lack of preparation for God’s concerns”⁴
 - d. “Even so” – Jesus tells His disciples that just like fire and brimstone suddenly rained down and destroyed Sodom, so it will be when He brings His judgment upon apostate Israel.
 - e. “in the day when the Son of Man is revealed”
 - i. When Jesus Christ finishes the period of warning signs, His day of judgment will come upon covenant-breaking Israel.
 - ii. Revealed = unveiled. Uncovering that which was hidden.
 - iii. Revelation 1:1 “The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show His servants--things which must shortly take place.”
 - 1. Revelation describes the same process Jesus presents here in Luke

² Bock, D. L. (1996). [Luke: 9:51–24:53](#) (Vol. 2, pp. 1431–1432). Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic.

³ Bock, D. L. (1996). [Luke: 9:51–24:53](#) (Vol. 2, p. 1432). Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic.

⁴ Bock, D. L. (1996). [Luke: 9:51–24:53](#) (Vol. 2, p. 1433). Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic.

- iv. Henry “When Christ comes to destroy the Jewish nation, by the Roman armies, the generality of that nation will be found under such a reigning security and stupidity as this. They have warning given by Christ now, and will have it repeated to them by the apostles after him, as they had by Noah and Lot; but it will be all *in vain*. They will continue secure, will go on in their neglect and opposition of Christ and his gospel, till all the Christians are withdrawn from among them and gone to the place of refuge. God will provide for them on the other side Jordan, and then a deluge of judgments shall flow in upon them, which will destroy all the unbelieving Jews. One would have thought that this discourse of our Savior’s, which was public, and not long after *published* to the world, should have awakened them; but it did not, for the hearts of that people were hardened, to their destruction.”⁵

IV. Proper Response: Do not turn back - v31

- a. “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.”
- b. “In that day” – Our Lord tells them that when He releases His judgment upon the Jewish nation, in that day, it will be so swift and sudden, that they must not turn back for their possessions in their houses.
- c. Like Noah’s family may have been tempted to hold on to life outside the ark on a doomed planet, like Lot may have been tempted to hold on to his life in a doomed city, so the disciples would be tempted to hold on to their possessions/security in their homes in Israel at that time. Yet, Jesus leaves no room for doubt. Safety will not be found anywhere in Israel. They must flee immediately.
 - i. Bock “When the day of the Son of Man comes, one will have to escape quickly.... Departure is clearly in view, since disciples are instructed not to turn back. Two separate getaways are described. Someone on the roof of a house is not to go back into the house to retrieve possessions. Rather, one is to scurry down the outside stairs and leave quickly. Imminent danger must be avoided by fleeing. The second picture is similar. Someone in a field should flee as quickly as possible in order to miss the dire consequences of that day. One should not turn back, as Lot’s wife did (17:32). If one is not already prepared for the day, there will be no time to prepare. There will be time only to flee.”⁶
- d. Luke 21:20-24 “But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation is near. 21 Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, let those who are in the midst of her depart, and let not those who are in the country enter her. 22 For these are the days of vengeance, that all

⁵ Henry, M. (1994). [*Matthew Henry’s commentary on the whole Bible: complete and unabridged in one volume*](#) (p. 1888). Peabody: Hendrickson.

⁶ Bock, D. L. (1996). [*Luke: 9:51–24:53*](#) (Vol. 2, p. 1434). Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic.

things which are written may be fulfilled. 23 But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! For there will be great distress in the land and wrath upon this people. 24 And they will fall by the edge of the sword, and be led away captive into all nations. And Jerusalem will be trampled by Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.”

- e. CBWW “When the Jewish revolt against Rome began in 66, there were thousands of Jewish Christians in Jerusalem (Acts 21:20). Eusebius (265–339), the church historian, reported that during the war, “The whole body of the church at Jerusalem, having been commanded by a divine revelation, given to men of approved piety there before the war, removed from the city, and dwelt at a certain town beyond the Jordan, called Pella.” The “divine revelation” no doubt was the Gospel of Luke, which records Jesus saying to his disciples, “When you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then you will know that the time of its destruction has arrived. Then those in Judea must flee to the hills. Let those in Jerusalem escape” (Luke 21:20–21). Most likely in the winter of 66–67, the Christians in Jerusalem took Jesus at his word and escaped the city’s destruction.”⁷

V. Proper Response: Remember Lot’s Wife v32

- a. “Remember Lot's wife.”
- b. Highlighting His command not to turn back in that day of swiftly arriving judgment, Jesus admonishes His disciples to remember Lot’s wife.
- c. Gen 19:24-26 “Then the Lord rained brimstone and fire on Sodom and Gomorrah, from the Lord out of the heavens. 25 So He overthrew those cities, all the plain, all the inhabitants of the cities, and what grew on the ground. 26 But his wife looked back behind him, and she became a pillar of salt.”
- d. Bock “Jesus invokes the memory of Lot’s wife (Gen. 19:26), who in Judaism was seen as an illustration of an unbeliever.... Her death resulted from turning to look back at Sodom and Gomorrah. She is a negative illustration of the consequences of holding on to life’s possessions. The call to remember is a call to pay heed to that lesson...Jesus has already warned about not looking back...⁸
 - i. Luke 9: “And another also said, "Lord, I will follow You, but let me first go and bid them farewell who are at my house." 62 But Jesus said to him, "No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God."
 - ii. Jesus’ prior lessons take on more specific meaning to His disciples as time passes.
- e. To look back is equated with an idolatrous heart. This is a person who continues to place their security and identity in their personal/family possessions, accomplishments, plans instead of in Christ and His Kingdom. To look back signifies seeking to preserve one’s life in this sinful, idolatrous way.

⁷ Rusten, S. with E. Michael. (2005). [*The complete book of when & where in the Bible and throughout history*](#) (p. 96). Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.

⁸ Bock, D. L. (1996). [*Luke: 9:51–24:53*](#) (Vol. 2, p. 1435). Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic.

- i. Henry “Those who have left the Sodom of a natural state, let them go forward, and not so much as look a kind look towards it again. Let them not *look back*, lest they should be tempted to *go back*; nay, lest that be construed a *going back in heart*, or an evidence that the heart was left behind. Lot’s wife was *turned into a pillar of salt*, that she might remain a lasting monument of God’s displeasure against apostates, who *begin in the spirit and end in the flesh*.”⁹
 - ii. In what ways do you look back, longing for the culture of the flesh?
- VI. Proper Response: Lose your life v33
 - a. “Whoever seeks to save his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life will preserve it.”
 - b. Christ here takes His disciples to the essence of righteous vigilance.
 - i. Seeking to save life = losing it
 - ii. Losing life = preserving it
 - c. Luke 12:15 “Take heed and beware of covetousness, for one’s life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses.”
 - i. Followed by parable of the rich fool whose life is suddenly required of him as he rests in luxury, words on seeking first the Kingdom, and then the parable of watchful waiting for the master to return from the wedding.
 - ii. Section ends with Jesus warning them to be ready, 12:40: “Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.”
 - iii. It is covetousness and misplaced/over-affection for possessions that can lull a disciple into false security, causing them to become one who seeks to save his life. Jesus has already warned against this in Luke 12.
 - d. Bock “Jesus now explains that disciples need to be prepared to suffer for their relationship to God. The one who seeks to gain life will lose it, while the one who loses life will keep it. *Ψυχή (psyche)* refers to both the physical and religious entities of a person’s life. The first half of the verse emphasizes physical preservation, the second half spiritual preservation. The two halves are laid out in contrastive parallelism so that the second clearly says that a relationship with God defines life. In the end, the one who identifies with God will suffer for it. Seeking to avoid persecution will lead to a lack of commitment ultimately to God (Arndt 1956: 376). It is a costly choice either way. God does not promise immunity from death and suffering, but he does promise abiding life with him to the one who survives this judgment by the Son of Man. As 9:25 says, it profits little to gain the world but lose one’s soul.”¹⁰

⁹ Henry, M. (1994). [*Matthew Henry’s commentary on the whole Bible: complete and unabridged in one volume*](#) (p. 1888). Peabody: Hendrickson.

¹⁰ Bock, D. L. (1996). [*Luke: 9:51–24:53*](#) (Vol. 2, pp. 1435–1436). Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic.

- i. To seek to save the physical life at the expense of the eternal life is the highest foolishness.
- ii. Jesus has also warned of this in Luke 9 already: "Then He said to them all, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me. 24 For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will save it. 25 For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and is himself destroyed or lost? 26 For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words, of him the Son of Man will be ashamed when He comes in His own glory, and in His Father's, and of the holy angels. 27 "But I tell you truly, there are some standing here who shall not taste death till they see the kingdom of God."

VII. Further descriptions of the suddenness of judgment – v34-36

- a. "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."
- b. Repetition highlights to the disciples how sudden His judgment will be. It will impact men in their beds and women in their work. It will impact those in homes, those at the millstone and those in the field. No aspect of existence will be left untouched by this judgment. No place in Judea will be safe from this sudden judgment. The disciples need to know the folly of seeking to hide somewhere in Israel. If they do, at least half of them will be taken away in the Roman destruction.
 - i. Do not wait until it is too late. Leave early in order to assure avoiding getting caught up in the Roman destruction.

VIII. Questions to know, love and obey God