

The Second Coming of Jesus Christ (Part 5)

Tim Conway | *Series: Eschatology: A Study of the End Times*

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Luke chapter 17 verse 20. We are in the midst of an ongoing study concerning eschatology -- the study of end times. The end of what? End times; the end in relationship to what? Eternity is going to go on forever. Eternity has no end. Why do we talk about the end when there really is no end? Well there is an end of something. Even though we are all going to exist forever; there are those things that are eternal; there are those things that are everlasting. There are also those things that come to an end. When we speak about end times, we are speaking about something that has closure. The Bible speaks about the end. The end of the ages. The end of the age. Scripture speaks about the last days and even the last day - singular. There is an end of time. There is an end of this world. Peter tells us very plainly. 2 Peter 3:7, "The heavens and the earth that now exist are stored up for fire." That's what we are talking about. We are talking about this world; these heavens and this earth, as we know them now, they are destined for fire. This is all going to come to an end. This is going to be destroyed. The world we see now, has an end. That's what we are talking about. End times - we're talking about as we move towards that closure of this age, this world. That's what we have in mind.

Today and Lord willing in the weeks ahead, we're going to examine, just like we find right here in Luke chapter 17, we're going to examine various places in Scripture. In the beginning, not Daniel, not Revelation, not Ezekiel. We are going to look, again what I've wanted us to do all along, look at some of the plain teaching. I want to stick to the Gospels for a number of weeks. I want us to see what Jesus said over and over and over again, before we launch off into the craziness of Revelation. I want you to see what comes from Scripture. Brethren, what we need to strive to do is this: Look at Scripture and exegete it. We need to have the Word speak to us. You know what the problem is? You have too many people that fly off to Daniel and to Revelation. They have been indoctrinated by a system, led to believe certain things, and now they can't read any of their Bible without reading those things into it. That is not a proper way to approach the Scriptures with you already having assumptions about what it means before you ever get there.

The proper way to approach Scripture is to go to Scripture, let it speak to you, and say, "Does my system fit with that?" And if it doesn't, what do you do with the system? You throw the Bible out the backdoor and say, "I'm holding to that system nevertheless"? Brethren, that is the easy way to end up going down a path you don't want to go down. That is a dangerous path. Let's let Scripture speak to us. And today, it's going to be out of Luke 17. Now, just for starters here, I want to hit you with this, time and again in the weeks ahead, because I just want you to get a basic framework in your head about what we are talking about.

Premillennial dispensationalism holds to an eschatology, a view of end times, we're talking about 'Left Behind,' most of the fundamentalist churches in this country, John Hagee touts this stuff, John MacArthur. We're talking about guys, believers, fellowship right up here on the north side of our own city. This is the eschatology they hold to. Let me tell you the timeline; just a basic timeline. Here we are now. Next major event in God's timeline is

what? The rapture. That's what they are looking for next. Followed by seven years of tribulation, at which time the notorious Antichrist is going to take power. At the end of that seven years of tribulation, Jesus Christ is going to come. The battle of Armageddon; the defeat of the Antichrist; Satan bound. Now a thousand, literal thousand years is ushered in, at the end of which time is a rebellion: Gog and Magog. Devil is defeated, thrown in the lake of fire, the wicked are judged. Now we enter in to the eternal realm.

That is a basic timeline. Look, anytime you try to summarize a system, somebody is going to say, "Yeah, but I know so and so who believe such and such." Yeah I know. This is the basic timeline associated with dispensational premillennialism. I know there is a historic premillennialism but this dispensationalism is what I really want to go after. Over against what? What I believe the Scriptures teach is: We are in this age. The eternal age is coming. The only thing that separates us is the coming of Christ. All the dead are raised; all are judged; and the eternal kingdom is ushered in. That's what I believe Scripture says.

What I want you to all do is as we examine Christ's teaching on these matters, today and in the weeks ahead, I want you to be honest. Honest, not with what your system has taught you, but I want you to be honest with what you read. I am not saying it's all easy. There are some things I don't know if I am ever going to figure out in this lifetime. I am striving to. Those places that are really difficult are not the places we want to start. We want to start in the places that are not that difficult.

So, my question is this: Does Luke 17 verse 20 and following indicate a timeline like the dispensationalists hold to? Or like the one I just described. This age, the age to come. Separated by Christ's coming. The resurrection of the dead. A general judgment. And the ushering in of the new heaven and the new earth. New heavens - plural, and new earth.

Well let's read. Luke 17 verse 20, "Being asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, Jesus answered them, "The kingdom of God is not coming in ways that can be observed, nor will they say, 'Look, here it is!' or 'There!' for behold, the kingdom of God is in the midst of you." KJV, NKJV says within. Now, there's no difference in the Greek behind different translations here. It can be translated either way. The kingdom of God is in the midst of you or is within you. Both readings are correct.

"He said to the disciples, 'The days are coming when you will desire to see one of the days of the Son of Man, and you will not see it. They will say to you, 'Look, there!' or 'Look, here!' Do not go out or follow them. For as the lightning flashes and lights up the sky from one side to the other, so will the Son of Man be in His day. But first He must suffer many things and be rejected by this generation. Just as it was in the days of Noah, so will it be in the days of the Son of Man. They were eating and drinking and marrying and being given in marriage, until the day when Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all. Likewise, just as it was in the days of Lot— they were eating and drinking, buying and selling, planting and building, but on the day when Lot went out from Sodom, fire and sulfur rained from heaven and destroyed them all— so will it be on the day when the Son of Man is revealed. On that day, let the one who is on the housetop, with his goods in the house, not come down to take them away. Likewise let the one who is in the field not turn back. Remember Lot's wife. Whoever seeks to preserve his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life will keep it. I tell you, in that night there will be two in one bed. One will be taken, the other left. There will be two women grinding together; one will be taken, the other left.' Verse 36 found in some manuscripts, not in others, reads this way, "Two men will be in the field; one will be taken,

the other will be left.” That is definitely found in Matthew’s Gospel. There’s no debate about it being found there. “They said to him, ‘Where, Lord?’ He said to them, ‘Where the corpse is, there the vultures will gather.’”

Now I just want you to notice verse 30: “So will it be on the day when the Son of Man is revealed.” That word ‘revealed.’ Sometimes we speak about the Apocalypse. That word ‘revealed.’ That’s it. Apokalupto. That’s where we get the Apocalypse from. The Son of Man is revealed. There’s no question about the meaning of that word. It has to do with making something visible; uncovering. It carries the idea to lay open what has been veiled or covered up. There’s something that is hidden right now; it is going to be revealed. Christ, the Son of Man is going to be revealed. That is what is being spoken about here. Brethren, we live between two comings of Christ. He came the first time incarnate; robed Himself with humanity. He came into this world to live under the Law. He came into this world to give His life a ransom for many. And He has been taken up. And He is seated at the right hand of the Father. But He is coming again. He is going to be revealed. The faith of the New Testament Church is dominated by this expectation. He came once, He has been taken up - passed through the heavens, ascended, seated at the right hand of majesty where He reigns now. And He will reign until all of His enemies are made a footstool for His feet. And He will come. He will come. That is our expectation.

But now here is the thing. Before we dive into the Second Coming, I want you to see something. Notice verse 20, “Being asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come.” Now notice this: you have Pharisees. The Pharisees were by and large not friends of our Lord Jesus Christ. By and large, they did not believe He was the Messiah. But they have a question. Why would they ask Jesus about the coming of the kingdom when they don’t even believe He’s the Messiah? Why take your theological questions to somebody you believe is an imposter? Well, precisely for that reason. Because you do believe He’s an imposter. By your question, you’re trying to expose Him. That’s what they were constantly doing with their questions.

But notice: “When is the kingdom of God coming?” He answered them, “The kingdom of God is not coming in ways that can be observed, nor will they say, ‘Look, here it is!’ or ‘There!’”-- concerning the kingdom. Nobody is going to be able to say, “Look, there it is, being established right over there.” That’s what He says. Nobody is going to say that. Why? Because it is not going to be established that way. “For behold, the kingdom of God is in the midst of you (or is within you).” Jesus came and said, “Repent.” He claimed that the kingdom of God had come. From the days of John the baptist until now, you know what? The kingdom of heaven is taken by violence. You press into it. Unless you become as little children, you don’t enter. Unless you are born again, you don’t enter. Unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees.

Brethren, let me tell you: The kingdom is not in food and drink. The kingdom is spiritual. The kingdom has to do with righteousness. You see, when we speak about the kingdom, we are speaking about the realm where a king rules. He rules in men’s hearts. When you submit to Christ, that is where somebody is entering the kingdom. That is what the kingdom is all about. Brethren, most of these Pharisees did not believe that Jesus was the Messiah, but you know what? He claimed to be. He said He is. You know what they had an idea about the kingdom? “It’s going to be here, it’s going to be observable, it’s going to be recognizable.” They put Messiah together with a physical, earthly kingdom. And so they said, “You are claiming to be the Messiah, where is your kingdom?” They didn’t believe He was. And this was only confirming to them He wasn’t. Because they expected when Messiah came, He’s going to set up a kingdom. His own disciples believed that. But you know what? We are right to connect Messiah

and kingdom, only not in the way they imagined. They thought the coming Messiah meant a physical kingdom on this earth.

In effect, they are saying, “You say you are the Messiah, where is your kingdom?” And you know what? We can tell, by the way our Lord answers their question, that the Pharisees did in fact expect an earthly kingdom. I mean, see how He corrects their thinking: “The kingdom of God is not coming in ways that can be observed.” You see, obviously these guys are saying, “Where is it?” Well, for Jesus to answer this way and say, “Not in ways that are observed. You’re never gonna say ‘Look here it is’ or ‘There.’” Well, you answer this way only if when this is precisely what the Pharisees expected, but when what they expected is a wrong expectation. He is correcting them, “Guys, it’s not like you think. It’s not observable.”

Let me ask you a question, if we are just going to be honest with Scripture. Just honest. Does it sound to you like Jesus is saying, “The kingdom of God is coming in a way that is observable, only after the rapture and after the 7-year tribulation”? Let us be honest. Our Lord interacted with Pilate, you remember that? Pilate, “Are you the King of Israel?” “You say that I am.” Jesus said, “My kingdom is not of this world.” Oh brethren, the kingdom is going to be most observable, but not in this world. His kingdom is not of this world. Nobody here is going to be able to say “It’s over there, It’s over there, it’s observable.”

I said to a dispensational friend of mine. I said, “Brother, Jesus Christ said His kingdom is not of this world.” He said, “Not yet.” You know what the dispensational guys want to tell you? “We are the ones who literally interpret Scripture.” My dispensational friends, would you please literally interpret this: Not observable. Not of this world. I just want us to be honest with Scripture. The kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking but of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. Can I tell you this: Our Lord Jesus Christ NEVER, NEVER gave even a single indication that His kingdom would ever be physically set up in this world. Ever. You cannot find it. You have to read it into His words if you are going to come to that conclusion. He never said so. Jesus Christ reigns in men’s hearts.

Brethren, just very quickly before I leave this subject, turn over a page or two in your Bibles to Luke 19. I want you to see something. This was an ongoing issue about His kingdom. Now notice this: Verse 11 of Luke 19, “As they heard these things, He proceeded to tell a parable, because He was near to Jerusalem, and because - notice this - they supposed that the kingdom of God was to appear immediately.” That’s what everybody, that’s what the Pharisees expected. They expected the Messiah to come in, set up an earthly kingdom, sit Himself back on David’s throne, and take care of all their enemies. That is what they expected. “Is it here now Lord, are you going to set it up now?” You see they supposed that the kingdom of God was to appear immediately.

Does our Lord say that it is going to appear immediately or anywhere in this world? Notice how He answers. “He said therefore,” Notice in verse 11, He proceeded to tell a parable. Now let’s look at the parable, verse 12: “He said therefore, ‘A nobleman went into a far country.’” Let me just tell you right off, you can look at this more in depth later, the nobleman is Christ. The far country is Him going to heaven. This is a parable. There is a nobleman that represents Christ. He goes into a far country, which means He goes away. He ascended up to His Father. Notice this: It is while He is far away that He receives the kingdom. Brethren make no mistake about that. The kingdom is being received by Christ now. His enemies are being put down now. Every time a sinner falls in repentance before Christ, there is an enemy subdued. And every time one of the wicked dies, there is an enemy subdued. His enemies

are being put down now. He went. When He is far away, He is getting for Himself a kingdom. Make sure you see that. That's all the more I want to do with that right now. If you doubt what I am saying that that has to do with Christ, or that has to do with Him ascending and going away for now, you can look further at that later. I don't want to spend a lot of time.

But notice this: "A nobleman went into a far country to receive for Himself a kingdom and then return." You see, when He comes and returns, it is not to set up a kingdom here. He has already got the kingdom. It is at that point He ushers in eternity. It is at that point the new Jerusalem comes down. The place of His reign is a new heavens and a new earth. But notice that. Because I am going to make a case later on that this thousand-year kingdom of Revelation is now. You see, He is getting the kingdom for Himself now. The kingdom has come now. Repent! For the kingdom of God is at hand (Now). It is not a physical kingdom in this world, nor will it ever be a kingdom that is going to be established in this world. This world is going to be destroyed, and then that kingdom is going to be brought here that He has earned and established.

Anyway, back to Luke 17. The kingdom of God is not coming in ways that can be observed. I think you all have to admit that just based on those texts, to come up with a thousand-year kingdom in this world before the end of this world, is not found there. You have to put it there. You have to come up with it from somewhere else and bring it here. It's not here. What Jesus says is, it's not observable. Okay, let's keep going. Verse 22, "And He said to the disciples, 'The days are coming when you will desire to see one of the days of the Son of Man, and you will not see it.'" What Jesus is anticipating is that His disciples are going to yearn for His presence. Don't any of you ever find yourself longing for that? He recognized that such days were coming. Such days of sin, rampant wickedness, hardship, affliction, persecution. What do they want? They want His help, they want His presence.

Days are going to come when you want to see one of the days of the Son of Man. That means you want Him there. You want Him with you. He has gone. You want one of the days when He was here with you; or to jump forward to one of the days when He is going to be back with you. You want a deliverer. You want the help. In such times of difficulty, you know what's going to happen? You're going to have deceivers jump up and cater to people who are looking for help or for deliverance. In such times, Jesus predicts that men are going to rise pretending to be the messiah. And so, Jesus takes this occasion to caution His disciples against being led astray.

Notice what He says in verse 23, "They will say to you, 'Look, there!' or 'Look, here!'" He says, "Do not go out and follow them." Why not, what if it is Christ? He says it won't be. It won't be Me. Verse 24, "For as the lightning flashes and lights up the sky from one side to the other, so will the Son of Man be in His day." Now I just want you to stop at those last two words. What does "His day" mean? What is the day of the Son of Man? And again, I would take you back to verse 30. We know what our Lord has in mind: "So will it be on the day". That is His day. The day when the Son of Man is apokalupto (revealed). That which is veiled is no longer veiled. His day is the day when the Son of Man comes again. He is revealed. What does this imply? It implies that He is not revealed right now, and that goes hand in hand with what He is expecting. You guys are going to get in difficult times; there is going to be persecution. You guys are going to find yourselves in prison. You guys are going to find this world is not a nice place. Wars and rumors of wars, and affliction. Those who put you to death are going to think that they are doing God a favor. That is what you have to look forward to. It is going to be difficult. Remember He said this to them? He said, "I am telling you these things so that you don't fall away."

That's why He is telling them these things because He is saying, "Look, there is going to come some days, He told them concerning fasting, they don't fast now, the bridegroom is with them. The day is coming, the bridegroom is going to be taken away, they are going to fast. Those are hard days. There is sorrow, there is longing, there is difficulty. You are going to long for those days. Brethren, if we are living the Christian life right, we ought to be longing for Christ's coming; longing to see Him; longing to escape. This is what His day [implies]. He is not revealed now, He is out of sight now but He is coming again.

Remember the two angels? When Jesus Christ ascended, His disciples were standing there, they're watching Him go, He disappears into the clouds, two angels appear right there. They say in Acts chapter 1 verse 9, "As they were looking on, He was lifted up, and a cloud took Him out of their sight. And while they were gazing into heaven as He went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes, and said, 'Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw Him go into heaven.'" You know why it is foolish; it is absolute foolishness to believe when anybody tells you that Jesus Christ has already come? Why is it so foolish? Because when He does come, there is not going to be any doubt in anybody's mind that it is happening. That is why it's foolish.

Listen, if there is any kind of event that takes place in this world that you actually have to sit there and contemplate "hmmn, I wonder if He has come," you can be certain He hasn't. That is what He is saying here. He says when He comes, it's not going to be a matter that anybody has to sit down and do calculations or try to figure out. Nobody is going to have to say, "He's over there!" It is going to be such an event that is going to take place, it is going to be so radical, it is going to be so bright. If you have to analyze whether He's come or not, He hasn't. Lightning, brethren, fills the whole sky. It's like lightning flashing from one end to the other. Everyone knows it, everyone sees it. And so it's going to be when the Son of Man is revealed. I want you to see this. There is nothing secret about this. It is like lightning that flashes, not secret.

You see, there is this very prevalent idea today that Jesus Christ is coming twice. Or, that His one coming can be broken up into two: the secret coming where He raptures the church; and 7 years later, this open coming where He defeats the Antichrist. Brethren, I'll just tell you this, and you have to be honest. From this, there's nothing about a secret coming. This coming right here is open, it's apparent. Nothing about a two-part coming. There is one coming, very visible; precisely what John tells us. Listen to this: Revelation chapter 1 verse 7, "Behold, He is coming with the clouds." This is just what the angels told the disciples, there in Acts chapter 1. "Behold, He is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him." You see how public it is? This thing is public, it is spectacular, and it is terrifying. Every eye will see Him. There will be no doubt. You don't have to wonder, "Oh I wonder if it's happening." Every eye will see Him. It's like the lightning. It's greater than the lightning. You can imagine lightning flashing.

You know what? It's the kind of thing that is instantaneous. You think about a bolt of lightning striking at midnight; black sky. A bolt of lightning could strike way over here on this horizon, and you would see it flash at night, probably in the day too. You can see the flash. Lightning is brilliant. Just bang! It's instantaneous. And the thing about it, well there are other things that happen instantaneously, maybe an earthquake happens instantaneously; a volcano erupts. But He is speaking about something every single one of us in this room are familiar with. We have all experienced lightning at night. Lightning, at all, we've experienced it. It registers with us. If we

are all in here at night and a bolt of lightning strikes out there, you know what happened. Every eye is going to see it. You will know when it is happening.

Notice this, just listen to me. John says, "Every eye will see Him, even those who pierced Him, and all tribes of the earth will wail on account of Him. Even so. Amen." You know, as a young believer, I wondered at that verse. You get saved and you think, "I want to see the Lord. I have an expectation of seeing the Lord." And then you read right here, "All the tribes of the earth will wail on account of Him." Do you know what most men [think]? Oh I am sure. You talk to people on the streets, you come with us when we evangelize, you get a real clear picture about what people think. Almost every single person we speak with expects to be received by Jesus Christ. But the picture that our Bible portrays is a world full of wailing. I want you to imagine this. I want you to think about this. At the moment Jesus is revealed, think about what happens. That instantaneous moment. Every eye sees Him. Do you recognize what happens? How many ever billions of people are alive at that moment in time, something is happening to every one of them at the same instant. You know what is happening? You know what is happening. You know exactly.

We are talking people just like us. They have thoughts, they have hearts. A moment before, they were just living their lives. They had hopes, they had ambitions, they were going somewhere. Driving down the road; walking across the kitchen. Responsibilities, lives, hopes. Can you see it? Multitudes upon multitudes at the very same instant: Bang! They are hit with "I am not ready. It is all over. This is not good." I mean, it is happening to a world full of people spontaneously at the same moment. "I am undone." Brethren, why would John describe a whole world of wailing? Because, by and large, that is representative. It is only this little flock, just little flock, (the ones who, right now, are counted as fools and idiots and fanatics, who loved Christ more than life itself,) who will be the exception. This silly, little, stupid bunch of nobody's always reading their Bibles and talking about getting saved, who are going to marvel at His coming. Their shame will be turned to joy and gladness.

He says this, Luke 17:25, "But first He must suffer many things and be rejected by this generation." You see, Jesus needs to say this. Why? Because just like we saw, the Pharisees, "You're going to set up your kingdom now?" His disciples over in Luke 19, "Lord, is it at this time?" Remember even there when He is getting taken up in Acts chapter 1, "Okay Lord, is it this time? We thought it was when we were headed to Jerusalem but it didn't happen then. Is it now?" You see, it is the same question over and over. Jesus is trying to put the pieces of the puzzle together for these guys. You notice: "First I must suffer." They could not yet conceive of the cross. They fully expected Jesus to just come set up His earthly kingdom. But Jesus as He is speaking about His coming in glory, He is careful to mention first His humiliation, His suffering, His sorrow, which must precede His exaltation. Why? So that they don't fall away. For the sake of their faith. Wasn't it that way? Two on the road to Emmaus, "We thought it was going to be him. All disappointment now." What He is doing is He is telling them; He is seeking to teach them so that His disciples wouldn't be weakened by false expectations and misunderstandings. "Guys, I've got to suffer first."

Now notice this. Two examples. Our Lord is going to give us two Old Testament judgments. Real historical judgments that He is going to liken His Second Coming to. You have to remember this. Whatever glory there may be; how much we ever may marvel, (and there may be a time for worship among us believers,) you have to recognize it is a time of judgment. And when He wants to go back into the Old Testament and pull up two stories that resemble His coming, both are stories of judgment. This should shake us because of what stories they are. They

are the two most devastating Old Testament examples of judgment found in our Bibles.

Let's read Luke 17:26, "Just as it was..." Brethren, I hope you catch those words. He's not saying, "Well when I come, it's going to just basically be a celebration. Yes, there will be a little bit of judgment going on, and a few wicked people cast away." No. He says, "Just the way it was in the days of Noah and the days of Lot. Just as it was, so will it be in the days of the Son of Man. They were eating and drinking and marrying and being given in marriage, until the day when Noah entered the ark, and the flood came - and notice this - and destroyed them all. Likewise, just as it was in the days of Lot— they were eating and drinking, buying and selling, planting and building, but on the day when Lot went out from Sodom, fire and sulfur rained from heaven and destroyed them all." Same words: destroyed them all. Verse 30, "So will it be on the day when the Son of Man is revealed." It is going to be a day for wailing. When those judgment rains began to fall, you can imagine as those waters rose, the people wailed. I don't know if anybody was even given a chance to wail in Sodom and Gomorrah. Not in this world. They are wailing now. They were wailing moments afterwards in the place they were.

Two things. Two things I would have us notice about these two stories. True stories. Historical accounts that Jesus likens His own revealing to. One is: I mentioned that God destroys them all. Do you feel the weight of this? I mean, think about it. Of all the stories that He could have brought, He brings one, the first one, eight souls were spared. All the rest died. The second story, four souls escaped Sodom and Gomorrah. All the rest were burned alive. He says in verse 30, "So will it be on the day when the Son of Man is revealed." Just as it was in Noah's day and in Lot's day, so will it be. Our Lord said, "Few there be that find it." Did He not? Our Lord also said, "When the Son of Man comes, will He find faith in the earth?" Oh it is going to be a terrible day. Terrible day. That was the first thing, God destroys them all.

Notice the second thing about these two stories: The unexpectedness. That ought to jump out at you. Just look! Look what He wants us to see. It's not like you even go back into the Old Testament and find that these things were ever spoken about. These are things Jesus knows were true that He wants you to know were true. These are not things you go back to the Old Testament in the book of Genesis and read about. These are things that Jesus knew were taking place that are so much a parallel to when He comes. Just normal life. Just doing what you always do: eating, drinking, marrying, buying, selling, planting, building, life as usual. It happens when you don't think it will happen. Notice both in the example of Noah and the example of Lot, they are just going along. And then what He says. He says they are just going along; eating, drinking, marrying, given in marriage, until the day. There's always a day. There's the day Noah went into the ark. Or how about with Lot? What's happening? Eating, drinking, buying, selling, planting, building, but on the day when Lot went out of Sodom. In verse 30, "So will it be on the day..."

Just going along. Most men get caught unaware. Just engaged in other things. They are not expecting this. I mean, look, think about how life is. We just had a wedding yesterday. You folks have plans. Buying and selling. You know, put it right where you live. "Yeah, I've got to go to the store." Or, "this is theology, that's kind of where I live." This Book has to do with where we live. You're going to go to the store. Some of you ladies probably would have thought today, "I've got to go to Walmart. I've got to go to HEB. I've got to go to Costco. I've got to go to Sam's." Buying and selling. That's what they are doing, just buying and selling. Marrying and given in marriage; we had a marriage yesterday. David was talking about marriage. Marriage sanctifying or not being married can be sanctify-

ing. Some of you are married, you're thinking about your marriage. Some of you are not married, you want to be married. This is life. This is just the normal things.

Planting. Well we don't do much planting, we go get our food somewhere. Building. It's just the stuff of life. People thinking of making trip to the store. Business ventures; plans for a new house. Just life as usual, and it's going to be exactly like this on the day when the Son of Man is revealed. Suddenly like a flash of lightning, bang! there it is! And the King in all His glory, Scripture says, He is coming with His angels in flaming fire, and He is going to carry out vengeance on His enemies. And when you figure that by and large, the vast majority of this world is going to be at enmity against Him, even people, Jesus said many religious people are going to say to Me in that day, "Lord Lord, we were there. We were in the church and we were doing many mighty works and prophesying and casting out demons. We were the religious folks. We were the ones saying Lord Lord. We were there. We were singing the songs." "I never knew you." And they are going to know. They are going to know the moment that they see Him. They are not ready. He is going to bring vengeance against those who obeyed not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

I'll tell you what, men's hearts are going to fail. That's where the wail comes from. Imagine it. Imagine whatever it is, 10 billion, 15 billion people, or whatever it is, alive on the earth at that time. The vast majority, their hearts will fail in the same moment. It's all over. It's all over. My friend, men may count you a fool for following Christ now. Not in that day, they will not. In our day, men's lips are quick, they are quick to call us whatever they want to call us - "radicals, fanatics." They want to mock, they want to say their things, they want to ridicule, they want to slander. In that day, no tongue will wag against God's people. The richest, the most powerful people in this world will trade everything to be one of the followers of the Lamb. Everything! But it's too late. The door is shut. Their time of opportunity is gone. Oh, what fools! They were offered a Savior, not like the demons who had no chance. They were offered a Savior, and they said, "Nope." Oh brethren, we go to people's doors, you know it, "This Book, it was just written by men. It's a mirage. It's a myth. The Bible is just a bunch of stories." It will not be that. It will be all too real.

You remember John Bunyan, Pilgrim's Progress? Christian at one point in that story goes to the house of the Interpreter. You may recall, the Interpreter takes him to a man who had a dream about judgment day. And as that man described judgment day, he said, "I dreamt." And he said he dreamt that he heard this great sound of a trumpet, and there he saw a Man sitting upon a cloud attended with the thousands of heaven in flaming fire. He said also the heavens were in flaming fire. He said, "I sought to hide but I could not, for the Man that sat upon the cloud still kept His eye upon me. My sins also came into my mind and my conscience did accuse me on every side." You know what is happening to a world full of people? They are not just innocent people. They are guilty sinners, who when opportunity was laid before them to surrender to His mercy, raised their fist and said, "I don't want You." Remember those citizens who would not have Him to rule over them? He said, "Slay them. Slay them all." Oh they will want mercy then.

You have to recognize the Lamb of God, once His wrath is let loose against you and there is no hope, and that door is shut, that Lamb will become altogether a terror to you. Notice this: Luke 17:31, "On that day," Let's stop right there. What day are we talking about? Go back to verse 30, "So will it be on the day when the Son of Man is revealed." Make no mistake about what day we are talking about here in verse 31. "On that day, let the one who is

on the housetop, with his goods in the house, not come down to take them away, and likewise let the one who is in the field not turn back.” It may do us well to remember that when Christ is revealed, it will be just as it was in the days of Lot. Just as it was. You know, some people want to come along and say, “Well, people on their housetop not coming down to take their stuff away, is this really speaking about the Second Coming here? Because it’s not like men will even have a chance or an opportunity to do that on that day, will they?” Just make sure you see verse 30. “So will it be on the day when the Son of Man is revealed.”

“On that day, let the one who is on the housetop, with his goods in the house...” Let me tell you what Jesus is doing here. He is bringing the Second Coming home to how you live now. You’ll see this, but it’s evidenced by what is happening in the hearts of men when He comes. He immediately says, “Remember Lot’s wife.” Now you have to remember, He is comparing His coming to what it was like in the day of Lot. He came in the day that Lot went out. Who did Lot go out with? With his wife and his two daughters. But his wife did not make it to the place of safety. Why not? She looked back. She was turned to a pillar of salt. Remember Lot’s wife. You say, “What does this have to do with the Second Coming, what does it have to do with it?” Brethren, there is going to be wailing, there is going to be tremendous fear, but at that very moment when He comes, something is going to happen in the hearts of men concerning their treasures; concerning what they are attached to.

Brethren, the loss, the loss. Do you recognize what that day is? It’s a loss; and the men and the women that are wailing are going to lose their lives. What is a life? A life is all you do. You see, they are going to exist forever. How come they are not rejoicing, “Oh, I am going to exist forever”? Because the life they had is going to be taken away from them. Oh! If you’re living your life where to depart and be with Christ is far better, it’s no loss. But when your heart is set on all the things here, the goods in the house, think, think. Moments before He comes, what’s it going to be like? I mean, if He came an hour from now, in the moments that led up to it, do you ever just drive down the road and look at all the people around you, and think about what they are thinking about? That’s what people are going to be thinking about, right in the moments before Christ comes.

“I bought a new 50-inch LED Television. My favorite show is going to come on, I am going to be able to watch it in High Definition on Thursday night.” Or they are driving along and they are thinking about, “I need to go to the gym, I am starting to get some flab here.” Or they are thinking about, “I really like that new song,” and it’s going through their heads and they are running the music through. Or they are thinking about what they are going to do next Friday. Or they are thinking about, “Is there enough food in the refrigerator?” Or, “My son graduates next year from high school, I really want him to become a doctor.”

You know, when Christ comes, it’s all over. It’s done. “But wait, Lord, I am in my 20s. I expected to live through my 20s and 30s and 40s, and I expected to get a wife and get a home, and live my job, this is too soon!” It’s just gone. Everything is gone. You see, we like to say, “Well, that’s my son; that’s my daughter. I hope to see them grow up and have grand kids.” They are not your children. They belong to Him and He can take them away when He wants. And the wicked, to them that have not, even what they seem to have is going to be stripped. Everything. What He is dealing with here is our hearts.

Brethren, if you’re walking through life and you’re attached, and you’re dug in, and you love the things here, and the cares of this world consume you, that’s bad. There is this hesitation. Can you imagine the moment He comes? Undoubtedly, this thing is going to sequentially play out. There is going to be a moment when He first ap-

pears. How it's all been structured and how it all falls out, I don't know. But obviously, it's happening in a sequence of time. Things are happening. And the first impulse in some people's hearts, "Protect, protect this. Go hide. Keep this life. This can't be happening! This just messes up everything that I had my heart set on. Everything! My goods!" Can you imagine? The man on his housetop, and bang! there he is. And the things that are going through your mind is, "Oh no! What's happening? I got family Erlins downstairs. I got pictures, pictures when my grandchildren were babies."

Listen, if you don't think people will think like that, all you have to do is watch a person that is in the midst of losing their house to a fire. And suddenly where is their mind going? People lose their lives going back into fires to get stuff. You don't think it will be the same way? It's the same people with the same kind of hearts! And you know what? When your heart is set on, "Oh Lord, Lord come. I want you more than anything else." I'll tell you brethren, to see some, hopefully even many in this room, to have Him come; and there is not a moment's hesitation, there is not a looking back like Lot's wife, "Oh no." You see, you look back and it's like, "Oooh, there is something back there that I don't want to let go of."

Brethren, I can see many in this place. You're running across the field, you're not looking back. You're reaching out, "Lord." Scripture says we are going to be caught up, that's the rapture. It says it's coming and it's not secret. We are going to be caught up, probably instantaneously. But if it wasn't instantaneous, I can see some of us just running, we are running to Him, we are leaving it all behind. This is our hearts desire. This is what we've been hoping for. But oh brethren, you can see in verse 33, where your heart is, now, is going to be every bit evident of where your heart is going to be the moment He comes. "Whoever seeks to preserve his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life will keep it." Our Lord can just so naturally move from His coming, right into the condition of our own hearts. Will we at the heart level be ready for His coming?

Brethren, this is not any dry, dusty doctrine for the bookshelf. The Second Coming of Christ is real. It has to do with us. Some few will be ready and the masses will not be. Are you ready? Well, are you seeking to preserve your life and your stuff now? Are you daily dying now? You know what that means? I daily am surrendering to what He wants for me, not what I want for me. My life is submitted to Him. I am His. To live is Christ. And if to die is gain, the coming of Christ is the same gain. And that's how the Christian sees it. It is gain. Do you think of His coming and long for His coming? Folks, remember Lot's wife. If your heart is like hers, it will not go well with you in that day. You see what Jesus is doing? He gave us the story of Lot, and He said My coming is going to be just like that. And by the way, lest you forget one of the aspects of that story, you better remember Lot's wife because that figures into how Lot and what happened to him is going to be like My coming.

Notice this very quickly, those taken. Luke 17:34, "I tell you, in that night there will be two in one bed. One will be taken, the other left. There will be two women grinding together. One will be taken and the other left." Verse 36, "Two men will be in the field. One will be taken, the other will be left." You be honest. This portion of Scripture says nothing about a secret rapture. Nothing. You can see what this is talking about if you're honest with the text. Nothing about a secret rapture. This has all been about the day in which the Son of Man is revealed. Can I tell you something? The same terminology is used over in Matthew 24. Do you know how Jesus goes forth from those words in Matthew 24? He goes forth telling us a parable about the wise and the foolish virgins. Five enter in and the door is shut; and five are left out. You want to know what being taken and being left is all about? That's

what He says. That's what He tells us. We are going to look more at that in the weeks ahead.

You know what else He tells? He goes right on to tell another parable about servants. Two different kinds. You got the servants that were faithful, He says enter into the joy of the Lord. The one who is not faithful, He says throw them into outer darkness. You go right into the next. The Shepherd as He divides His sheep from the goats. The sheep, everlasting life. The goats, everlasting punishment. You want to know what it means to be taken? Remember what He is talking about? Noah is taken; put in the ark, the place of safety. Lot is taken from Sodom and Gomorrah to a place of safety. The wise virgins are taken behind the door into the banquet, a place of safety. Those good servants, away to the place of joy and safety. The sheep, taken to safety and eternal life.

This is no secret rapture folks. This is the day the Son of Man appears. And if you get left behind, there is no more chance. There is no 7-year tribulation to figure it out. It's over, and you are undone. Luke 17:37, "They said to him, 'Where, Lord?'" You ask where all this is going to take place? He says "I'll tell you where it's going to take place. The things I am describing, I'll tell you where they are all going to take place. They are going to take place everywhere there is a corpse." That's where it's going to happen. What are these birds, these vultures? They tear the dead to shreds. You know where it's going to happen? It's going to happen wherever you have the dead who know nothing about the life of God in the soul of man. You can look at these vultures as the vultures of God's judgment. I think that very clearly squares with that interpretation. "Where, you ask, are these going to happen?" Just ask yourself where the corpse of the dead humanity, devoid of the life of God. It's the whole world. It's the whole lost world. They are not taken. They are left. They are left to be eaten by God's vultures of judgment.

Brethren, spectacular will be the vengeance, and it says the children of God are going to marvel. They are going to marvel at all of this unfolding. But it is going to be terrible. An awful day when God smites His enemies. Fearful. Glorious. Certain. It's coming. We are 7 days closer than a week ago when we met and talked about these things. We are closer to that last day. It is coming, brethren, it is coming.

Father, I pray that these folks would be most ready for that day, living in anticipation, without being carried away by the cares of this world, that they would not be found to be Lot's wife. You would have us to carry out and work out our salvation with fear and trembling. Lord, I pray that you would work a real fear and trembling in the hearts of Your people. You are a fearful, fearful God; but glorious and good; saving. Oh we thank You that You have not just consigned us to wrath, but You have sent us a Savior, a way of deliverance. Thank You, thank You, thank You. In Christ's name we pray, Amen.