

The Coming of the Kingdom of God

by Wayne Dailey,
Founding Pastor, Bethel Revival Center

Luke 17:20a

And when He was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come, He answered them and said . . .

Now, pay attention to the rest of this verse to get the full message Jesus is saying:

Luke 17:20b, 21 . . .

The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you.

There is much preaching found in the New Testament concerning the coming of the kingdom of God concerning the kingdom of God being near at hand. Here, Jesus speaks of the kingdom of God in a real spiritual aspect: the kingdom of God is within you.

Born Into the Kingdom

John 3:3

Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

This speaks of having a relationship. When one is born again, one is born into God's family, into the kingdom of God.

In Luke, the Pharisees were demanding that Jesus tell them when the kingdom of God would come. They expected the kingdom to come observably, in a way one can see. But because as a people they had rejected the King, how could they expect the kingdom to come to them?

Now at the end of the age, the kingdom will come with observation. Jesus will come back to set up a kingdom upon the earth and rule in it for 1,000 years. It will be observable because the king will be there.

However, here in Luke Jesus is speaking of having the kingdom of God within when one is born again. So the kingdom of God is not just a pending reality; it is also a present reality in the lives of God's people.

The kingdom of God really covers everything, everywhere: for it all belongs to Him, His domain for eternity. But here and now we can be assured in our hearts that we have the kingdom of God within us. Those who believe in Jesus have a present blessing given them. Here and now they experience the things of the kingdom of God because they have been born again. They have a relationship, and that relationship will fully bloom one day when the Lord returns.

He's going to clean up this earth with a fire judgment. A lot of things are going to burn during this time of fire judgment: the fire will cleanse the filthiness of this world. This world is going to be renewed and the established kingdom of God on earth is going to grow into the greatest kingdom that ever was.

And this great kingdom of God is like the zenith of all the ages. In God's kingdom there will be peace, joy, and happiness. Weapons will be put down and no one will learn war anymore. One of the great blessings of the kingdom is that God will have put Satan right where he belongs, chained down in the pit for 1,000 years.

In this present time we can't help but see the reality of Satan and his evil works all around us. But in the kingdom we read of the wild beasts being as tame as a kitten: the lion will lie down with the lamb and eat grass in the field. We think of the animals today: so many are vicious, wild beasts.

Why are they wild? Why do they go about killing each other? Did God make them that way? That wasn't the purpose of God's creation. They're that way because of the fall. The fall of man affected all manner of life upon this earth, including the animal kingdom.

But when we look toward the kingdom of God upon this earth it won't be that way. Jesus is going to be upon His throne reigning over all. The earth will be so blessed to have the Lord back here again.

Now, before the kingdom age comes (from the end of the church age on down to the end of the tribulation period) there will be a time of great troubles. That trouble will only grow worse, until it utterly climaxes in the world's greatest war: the battle of Armageddon. Yes, the time of the end will certainly be plagued with many troubles. But through it all will arise the building of the kingdom of God upon this earth, where Jesus will reign for 1,000 years.

Now, we can't determine that the kingdom is here or the kingdom is there upon this earth. Jesus tells us that the kingdom of God is within the believer, through a relationship with God and his presence in us.

We Shall See the King

Luke 17:22

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.

Jesus was referring to the days that would come after He has risen and gone back to heaven. The disciples had had a close relationship with the Lord, walking with Him from day to day.

Jesus warns his disciples that, after this time of sweet fellowship with him, they would suddenly find they were no longer in that realm. "Oh, if we only could have one of those days again! If we could only see Him heal the multitudes once more!"

We all can look back at days we wish we could have once again. But that's not the way life works.

Here Jesus warns the disciples that they would long to go back to those days, but could not. He's clearing the path to warn them of the false prophets and teachers who would come to deceive, trying to convince them that Jesus is here or there. He let them know right up front that they should ignore such news, for it just wouldn't happen.

Luke 17:23

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

Don't you believe this. We'll see the king when He comes for us. It's not the way we think it will be, but the way Jesus says it will be.

Luke 17:24

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.

This is how He's going to come: like a flash of lightening. He's going to come quickly.

Now, is He going to come once, or is He going to come twice? Is He going to first come for the church and then for those who are left behind? Let's look at what the Word would tell us about this:

The Day of the Lord is at Hand

I Thessalonians 4:16,17

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: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

This is the rapture of the Church. This is spoken of here in very clear terms, with Jesus descending from heaven to meet us in the clouds to take us home. As the lightening shines from one part of heaven to the other, so shall the Son of man be in His day. That word *day* is important. This isn't referring to just any day. It is speaking about the day of Christ in the singular form.

There's an event coming: the Day of Christ. Each of us had better be ready for that day. We are warned time after time in the Word that His coming is going to be like a thief in the night, and we'd better be ready.

Matthew 25:13

Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh.

Here we are, living in this world day after day not knowing the day or the hour of His coming. Thus, we're warned to be ready every moment. Yes, the Lord is coming, but He didn't say when. Will it be this year? He didn't say when. Will it be next year? He didn't say when. What did He say?

Luke 12:40

Be ye therefore ready also: for the Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not.

We're in this position. We don't know the day or the hour, but we do know this: He is coming, and we must be ready when He does come. The warning is to be ready. He's coming for those who are watching and awaiting His coming, those who are ready. He's coming for His own, for those who love Him and walk with Him from day to day. We must maintain our spiritual relationship with Him.

I don't see anything about a backslider being found ready at His coming. Are those who have turned back from the Lord to go out into the world and live apart from Him — are they ready? What if the Lord comes while they're in that state? The Lord warned us, telling us to be ready.

That's really much bigger than you think. You don't know the day, you don't know the hour; but you do know He is coming and you must be ready at that moment.

There's the last trumpet sounding out for the church as Jesus descends from heaven with a shout and the voice of the archangel. Talk about activity! The dead in Christ will rise from their graves throughout the world. Like a flash they'll be caught up to meet Him, receiving a new spiritual body; and then those of His who are alive and remain upon this earth will be caught up together with them: all those who were found ready, waiting, and watching for his coming.

This is the thing we're waiting for, but we have to be ready. Many don't consider how important it is to be ready. Those who are ready for His coming will miss these terrible things that are going to come upon the earth.

If you knew the day and hour of His coming, you'd be sure you were ready.

We Know Not the Day Nor the Hour

Luke 12:39,40

And this know, that if the goodman of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched, and not have suffered his house to be broken through. Be ye therefore ready also: for the Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not.

The thief comes at a time when nobody is looking for him to come. The owner of the house comes home to find his home has been broken into while he was gone. If they had known the thief was coming they would have been watching and waiting for him.

The Lord speaks of coming as a thief in the night. He didn't mean that He was a thief, but that He comes unannounced. He's coming suddenly, quickly.

Do you understand, then, how important it is to be ready? Are you fulfilling God's Word?

Watch Ye Therefore

Luke 21:36

Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man.

We have to be in this realm of praying always. When was the last time you prayed that you'd be ready?

The Lord warns of people's hearts be overcharged with surfeiting. What does that word *surfeiting* mean? It means party making; eating and drinking, and having a merry old time with no thought of being ready.

These types of things will catch many unawares in that day. They're not thinking about it, not concerned about it, not praying about it. Tomorrow will be yesterday soon: "Let's eat and drink and have a good time today, and let tomorrow take care of itself." That's the way many are living.

Pray that you would be counted worthy. Some aren't going to be counted worthy to escape all these things. The world will not be counted worthy to escape.

We want to bear in mind that there are those people who should know better, those people who should be ready, yet take no thought for eternity. It's a shame the way many want to live, ignoring the things of God. This present generation, as a whole, takes no thought for eternity. We can look at the church world and wonder how many will be taken unaware. So many are caught up in so many activities, so many things to entertain, so many things to entice, that you wonder how many will be ready for the Lord when He comes.

So much is flying into the face of God's Word, knowing what He says to do and yet taking no thought to live in obedience. They toss His Word aside and refuse to keep His Word. When will they stop and get ready? More than likely, most won't. What will it take? A lot will be shaken by the things that will take place in this world when the Lord comes and takes His church away. That will leave a big hole, when all who were ready, who were found watching and praying, will be taken.

Jesus forewarns that strait is the gate, and narrow the way that leads to eternal life, and few there be that find it. He also warned on the other hand that broad is the way that leads to destruction, and many go that way.

Take His warnings to heart and realize that we must be ready at all times. He warns again and again.

We can reach out to souls and warn them to be ready, teach them from the Word what Jesus says about being found ready. We can ask, "Are you ready?" That's a great question: "What if you're not ready when the Lord comes?"

Now, there's another question we should ask: "When the Lord comes, what next?" The saints will be caught up into heaven during that time.

The Great Tribulation is what's next! I believe there's a dividing line between the dispensation of the church age and the Great Tribulation.

The End of the Church Age

Isaiah 61:1,2a

The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon Me; because the LORD hath anointed Me to preach good tidings unto the meek; He hath sent Me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, and the day of vengeance of our God

This is the time period when we can go back to the beginning of the church age and trace it up to this present time. This time will come to an end. Prior to this was the great dispensation of the law and that came to an end when the church came

Hebrews 8:13

In that He saith, A new covenant, He hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away.

People went from law to grace. And when the church age ends that period of grace will also end upon this world. From this mark onward will be the seven years of great tribulation. The most ideal place for God to be looking to take us home would be right there, when the church age ends and the time of great tribulation begins.

The church age will come to an end. It will be fulfilled. So the Lord is coming for His own, taking us out of the world and from the things that will come upon this world.

Matthew 24:36

But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but My Father only.

Nowhere will the Bible tell you the exact time of Jesus' coming. And even if you agree that the most likely place for this to take place would be at the end of the church age, this still doesn't pinpoint the exact moment for us. One thing we can know is that we'd best be ready at all times.

Be Ready

Matthew 24:42

Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come.

What if you're not ready? You'd better be ready, but what if you're not? He's going to come, and He's going to go as quick as a bolt of lightning flashing through the sky. If you're not ready at that moment, where will you stand? What comes after the church age? The great tribulation when God's judgment will be poured out without measure.

Revelation 3:15-17

I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of My mouth. Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked

Those that are left behind are left behind because they weren't ready when Jesus came for His own. Stop and think about that.

Revelation 3:20

Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me.

Jesus came, and couldn't get in to His own church at Laodecia. He warned them to repent. They were neither hot nor cold, but lukewarm. And, thus, He would spew them out of His mouth unless they repented. They thought they were rich and in need of nothing, but didn't know that actually they were poor and wretched and naked and blind.

Naked and blind: the covering Jesus is speaking of is spiritual, the covering for sin — the Blood of Christ. We have this relationship with Jesus: His Blood is our covering.

Now, this church was poor, miserable, wretched, naked and blind.

Gold Tried in the Fire

Revelation 3:18

I counsel thee to buy of Me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see.

This is the counsel of God to the Laodicean church: buy of Me gold tried in the fire. What do you think He is speaking of?

The Laodicean church is a type of the apostate church at the end of the age. At the coming of the Lord they're not ready. The Lord describes a spiritual condition that people can get themselves into, typical of the falling away in the last days.

The essence of this message is that the kingdom of God is within. This is the first thing that's necessary to be ready for the coming of the Lord. We can't enter the kingdom of God except we are born again.

In this relationship we enter God's kingdom in the relationship we have with Him. But then we have to consider in our hearts that we have to be ready for the coming of Jesus at all times.

We don't know when He's coming, but we do know this: He is coming, and we must be ready in that moment. That's a serious warning.

The Lord is not trying to be uncertain about His coming. It's perfectly timed by God: but nobody else knows the day or the hour, not even the angels of God. He's kept this a secret down through the ages, and He's going to keep it a secret until that very moment when Jesus breaks through the clouds.

If you are caught up unto Jesus in the rapture, what a seal you will have on your life. That event will prove you passed the greatest test you ever had. Yes, being ready when the Master comes will take you up into His very presence. And those who are not ready will be left behind. They weren't ready, and they're not going to be caught up with Him in the air.

The test is there. And we want to be in that realm where we're not left down here wondering why all the believers have gone, and we're still down here. What a terrible thing. We don't want that to happen to us. We want to be watching and praying, waiting for His coming. We want to be found ready to meet Him — one way or the other.

We'll either meet Him when He lifts us up to meet Him in the clouds, to take us home, or when we take our last breath and leave this old body.

Either way, we want to be ready.

An Hour We Know Not

Luke 17:26,27

And as it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man. 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.

See what happened to those who were left behind in Noah's day. They made no attempt to get ready. They were warned of God. Noah and his family got on the ark, but the rest perished in the flood. The flood came, just as God had warned, and they all perished. They knew not until it took them all away.

They weren't watching. They didn't pay any heed to Noah building that ark.

These warnings speak to us of the day we're living in, and the need to be ready.

What were they doing in Noah's day? They were eating and drinking — marrying and giving in marriage. This speaks of how the sons of God intermingled with the daughters of men (the ungodly seed of Cain) and married them. This brought calamity upon the earth, as well as the fact that violence covered the earth; the thoughts and intents of their hearts were evil continually.

Are You Ready?

II Peter 3:6,7

Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished: but the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.

We're warned to be ready that the Lord will take us up when He comes. Why do we have to be ready at all times? He's coming in an hour we know not. He'll come quickly. He'll come suddenly.

It's not going to take God months and months to raise the dead. Don't even think it will take Him minutes. Raising all the dead in Christ will be an easy thing for God to do — in the twinkling of an eye.

We want to freshen up our minds. We who have been born again are glad we've been born into the kingdom of God. We're in the Body of Christ, born into the family of God. We have a relationship with Him. We're His possession. He calls us His very own. The spirit of life in Christ Jesus is in us, and we're given life everlasting.

But we're also warned that we must be ready the unlikely hour of his coming.

Are you ready? Take the challenge. You have to answer that for yourselves.

When are you going to get dressed? We've got to be dressed all the time, always having on our spiritual covering: the Blood of Christ. It's the Blood of Christ that cleanses from all sin and unrighteousness. We're no longer naked before God when we have the Blood of Christ applied to our hearts.

How did the church of Laodicea get into such a condition that the Lord said they were blind and naked? They were living in one of those prosperous times where the money was flowing.

And, today, there's a lot of money flying around. It may have slowed down a bit, yet there's still a lot of it. More people are millionaires than ever before, some becoming millionaires overnight. But all that money won't get them into heaven. No matter how much they have, it won't count. All that it accomplishes is for them to get caught up in their covetous ways, wanting more and more.

Church, let's be humble. Let's be sweet in our soul. Let's be content loving the Lord and being faithful to Him. Let's serve Him with all of our heart, putting our whole attention on Him.

Why don't we get into the Lord much deeper than we have? Should we be walking on the shore, when we could be out there walking on the water with Jesus?

Let's give the Lord our full attention, giving Him the best of our lives. Let Him use the prime time in your life. Some like to waste their lives on the things that are meaningless in light of eternity, giving God only a few moments here and there.

A lot of folks have to be on their death bed before they begin to really think about where they're heading.

Stop right now and ask yourself, "Am I ready?"

We all would like to think we're ready, but the Word of God challenges us to examine ourselves. The Word clearly reveals the path He wants us to walk on, that straight and narrow way; watching and praying as we await His coming.