

# A Declaration of Those Things Which Are Most Surely Believed Among Us

An Expositional Study of **The Gospel According to Luke**

**Chapter 12- Luke 12:35-40**

**239- Be Ready- Part 2**

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May 11, 2014

## **Luke 12:35-40**

**35 "Be dressed in readiness, and *keep* your lamps lit.**

**36 "Be like men who are waiting for their master when he returns from the wedding feast, so that they may immediately open *the door* to him when he comes and knocks.**

**37 "Blessed are those slaves whom the master will find on the alert when he comes; truly I say to you, that he will gird himself *to serve*, and have them recline *at the table*, and will come up and wait on them.**

**38 "Whether he comes in the second watch, or even in the third, and finds *them so*, blessed are those *slaves*.**

**39 "But be sure of this, that if the head of the house had known at what hour the thief was coming, he would not have allowed his house to be broken into.**

**40 "You too, be ready; for the Son of Man is coming at an hour that you do not expect."**

To the Glory of God

There has never been a time in the history of Christianity when the Church did not teach that Jesus was going to return to this earth. The Second Coming of Jesus is a fundamental Doctrine of Biblical Christianity that is now over 2,000 years old, and a Teaching that we should know and understand and preach and believe and expect with eager anticipation.

The Bible teaches that the Lord Jesus Christ will come back to this earth in great Power and Glory to do five amazing things:

1. Bring human history to an end

2. Take the redeemed to be with Him forever
3. To establish His Kingdom on the earth
4. Eliminate all rebellion
5. Eternally punish all unrepentant sinners

This is how the world as we know it will end. The world will *not* end in a nuclear holocaust as some say, nor will it end in blistering heat or freezing cold and rising tides due to climate change caused by gasoline powered lawnmowers, nor will it end in starvation due to overpopulation. Neither will Science and Technology develop to the point- as Science Fiction suggests- where Man evolves to the point where he can eliminate war and poverty and crime and develop his own inherent "goodness" and "purity" where we no longer need Forgiveness and Salvation or a Savior.

No, King Jesus will come back to destroy all sin, and He will destroy all sin by destroying all sinners who refuse to repent. All unbelievers and all non-Christians will be eternally condemned by the Lamb- Whose Eyes burn like flames of fire. And make no mistake about this- it is the Sovereign destruction of all evil men- who rebel against gladly submitting to the Lordship Demands of Jesus Christ- that will be the final elimination of all sin and all death and all evil and all wickedness and all injustice on the earth.

So until then- God allows evil and evil people in the world to exist- for two reasons:

1. God is yet going to save some of the evil people who repent
2. God is going to damn all of those who do not repent

And that is how human history finishes. And so the Bible is crystal clear about the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. His Return to this earth will be in both spectacular Glory and horrific Judgment. And the Bible talks repeatedly about *both* of these aspects of the Second Coming. Listen to the Word of the Lord from **2Thessalonians 1:5-10**:

**5** *This is a plain indication of God's righteous judgment so that you will be considered worthy of the kingdom of God, for which indeed you are suffering.*

**6** *For after all it is **only** just for God to repay with affliction those who afflict you,*

**7** and *to give* relief to you who are afflicted and to us as well when the Lord Jesus will be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire,  
**8** dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus.  
**9** These will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power,  
**10** when He comes to be glorified in His saints on that day, and to be marveled at among all who have believed...

Now while there are some very deep and mysterious elements about certain elements about God and the Bible- the Second Coming is not mysterious at all. The Holy Scriptures are as clear about the Return of Jesus to this earth as it is about the full Deity of the Lord Christ- which is just another way of saying that the Bible is as clear on the Second Coming of Christ as it was on His First Coming. So the Return of Jesus Christ to this world in the future is a cardinal Doctrine of the Christian Faith. Without it- we do not have Biblical Christianity. There is simply no way to discuss the great Truths of Christianity without including the Doctrine of the Second Coming.

Now in one sense- the Doctrine of the Second Coming is the most important Doctrine in the Christian Faith because it features the culmination of all Redemptive History. It looks at both the Judgment of the wicked and the blessing of the Righteous and most of all- the final and permanent and everlasting exaltation and Glorification of the King of all kings and the Lord of all lords- the one and only Savior- Jesus Christ. So in that sense- all other Biblical Doctrines lead up to that one.

The Return of King Jesus to this earth is the ultimate Purpose for which all other elements of Redemptive History were designed. We have to understand that even though the pagan world is uncertain and unclear about the future- Human History has a very clear and very unambiguous end- and the Purposes of God that he determined in Himself before history began- will be fulfilled when it's over. Every single detail- as predicted in sacred Scripture- will be fulfilled with absolute precision- both to the everlasting happiness of the redeemed and to the everlasting dismay of the impenitent.

Now sadly- there are many within the modern Church who are not at all Biblical and they are completely indifferent toward the future coming of Jesus Christ. These people view the Second Coming as sort of

an optional doctrine- as sort of a second-class thing. It's really not very practical for them. They are much more interested in the here and now. They're much more interested in their own well-being and their own self-esteem and their own success in this life.

These people are only interested in what might help them right now and so they are infinitely more interested in physical health than in spiritual purity, they are infinitely more concerned with material blessings than with spiritual blessings, and they so concerned about affecting the culture and winning political battles and with who sits in the White House to the point where they don't really see whether speculating about the return of Jesus in some nebulous tomorrow really has any value at all.

And this focus is nothing new- but it *is* a departure from Biblical Christianity and goes by different names like: "Man-centered Theology" or "Earthbound Christianity" or "Psychological Christianity" or "Pragmatism" or "Sanctified Materialism" or "Kingdom Dominion" or "The Social Gospel", but whatever they call themselves- they have very little use for the Second Coming of Jesus Christ to this earth.

Do people really think this existence is our best life now? Really? Do these people really believe that this life down here is the most important one- this vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes? Really? Do people really think that God has planned something for the future that is *less* interesting and *less* blessed and less glorious than our mundane lives down here? Do people really think that God- Whose infinite Mind wrote the Bible with supernatural precision to tell the story of Redemption from the beginning to the end and that it all culminates in some sort of optional ending here people can pick whatever ending they want and write our own ending to God's Book? Really?

Do these people really think that diminishing the Glory of Christ as our coming King doesn't matter to Him? As you know- I am greatly disturbed by the Darwinian Evolutionists because they attempt to steal the Glory of Christ as the Sovereign Creator. But I'm equally concerned about these church people- who attempt to diminish the Second Coming because they attempt to steal the Glory of Christ as the Sovereign Consummator. We must remember, dear friends, that Jesus is not only the Author of our Salvation- but also the Completer; He is not only the

Beginning- but He is also the End; He is not only the Alpha- He is also the Omega; He is not only the First- He is also the Last.

Do these people really think that living for some earthly benefit like a new car or a beautiful home or a better paying job comes anywhere close to the ultimate Joy of the Glories of Jesus Christ that He will deliver to His children when He comes back?

Dear friends- I am greatly disturbed that the single most quoted book about the Second Coming is a fictionalized account and not the Bible. I am very disturbed that twenty-five million people get their information about the Return of Jesus to this earth from a book series that isn't even true.

People say, *"But Brother Blair- the 'Left Behind' series is based on the Bible."* But if that is true- then they don't need the series at all- because we already have the Bible. Let me say that fiction about the Second Coming makes me about as nervous as fiction about the Virgin Birth or fiction about Justification or fiction about Sanctification. I'm really not too much in favor of fiction writing about any cardinal Doctrine of Christianity- especially when you have the Bible. But you have these people who would rather fictionalizing holy truths to make them more sensational and more interesting. And you see where that logic got you with this latest movie about Noah- right? How could you get any more sensational or any more interesting than what the Bible actually says about these things?

But in another sense- while it is true that the Second Coming is an essential Part of Christianity- you have these people who get so wrapped up in it that they're not taking anything away from it- they're actually adding to it. And that's pretty dangerous stuff too.

Some people are very happy to set dates. And it really doesn't matter to those who follow them how many times they have been wrong- they solve that problem by simply setting more dates. How many goofy people through the centuries have come along and done that? Then they get all their followers to quit their jobs and sell their homes and meet up on some mountain peak in their pajamas- ready for the rapture that never happens. They have forgotten what Jesus Himself said about His Return in **Matthew 24:36:**

**But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone.**

So please run away from anyone who writes books like the one I bought on the discount table after it didn't come to pass for twenty-five cents called, *"Why Jesus is Coming Back on 8/8/88"*.

And these are the very same people who want to offer themselves as being profoundly insightful and are interviewed by all the media as so-called "experts" because they have the ability to see in every single current event in every newspaper some type of fulfillment of some Bible Prophecy. And all this does is make a mockery of the great Truth about the Return of Jesus to this earth.

My brothers and sisters- the Second Coming of Jesus Christ is nothing to be played with- which is why Jesus Himself said in **Luke 12:40:**

**You too, be ready; for the Son of Man is coming at an hour that you do not expect."**

... and last week- I told you that this Statement by Jesus sounds very odd to me. And what really troubles me about this Passage is:

How, after 2,000 years of preaching, could the Return of Jesus be at an hour that *anyone* would not expect?

After the Church of Jesus being on the earth for 2,000 years, after all the sermons, all the Bible Studies, all the prayer meetings, all the great exploits of Christianity in the earth over the last two millennia- how could *anyone* on earth be unprepared for the coming of the Son of Man, and just what *is* this unpreparedness? Truly anyone being unprepared for the Coming of the Son of Man illustrates a darkness and a blindness and an ignorance that is far greater than simply being forgetful. This is a wickedness that is staggering.

Now this Statement by Jesus really only says two things:

- ✓ There is a powerful and frightening and glorious and absolutely certain Event that is coming- the Return of Jesus to this earth
- ✓ That Event will occur at an uncertain time

... and because this Event is certain and because this Event is all important and because this Event is coming at an uncertain time- Jesus says that we must Be ready!

So there is a certain Event coming at an uncertain time. And this opens up the door for us to take a look at this Cardinal Truth. And as I said- the Doctrine of the Return of Jesus to this earth stands alongside the Doctrine of the Deity of Christ and the Doctrine of the Virgin Birth of Christ and the Doctrine of the sinless humanity of Christ and the Doctrine of the substitutionary death of Christ and the Doctrine of the physical resurrection of Christ and the Doctrine of the bodily ascension of Christ and the Doctrine of the high priestly Work of Christ in Heaven. So it is very important.

Now sometimes we have to climb out of a particular Passage and step back in order to get the big picture about what's actually going on. And that is really the only way to understand the Bible- verse by verse, line by line, precept by precept, because then it's always in its correct context and you're getting the Truth of Scripture in the way it was intended to be understood by the men that God used to write it.

So we need to do that now. Jesus started teaching at the beginning of Chapter 12. And all of these verses are one long Teaching by Jesus that runs from **Luke 12:1** all the way down to Chapter 13:9.

And Dr. Luke tells us that Jesus is speaking to disciples- the mathetes- the students, the learners- some of whom were saved, some of whom were not saved, some of whom were on the way to being saved, while some of them were on their way to getting completely fed up with Jesus and just walking away from Him.

And as I have told you before- we use the word "Call" or "Calling" primarily to talk about people who are "called" into the Ministry or people who are "called" by God to do something very important. And that is a correct use of that term. However- the word "call" and "calling" is used primarily in the Bible to talk about sinners being saved. Today we say that people "accepted Jesus into their hearts"- which is a completely unbiblical and man-made phrase. The Bible says that God calls us to Himself, God calls us into His Kingdom, God calls us to be saved.

So the faithful preaching of the Gospel is the *means* by which God Calls people to Salvation. So preaching the Gospel is a Divine Call for lost people to repent and to come all the way into the Kingdom, It is a

Call for them to come to the end of themselves and to hate the person they have become due to their sin and rebellion against God, it is a Call for to them to fully embrace Jesus Christ as Lord and Master, and it is a Call to die to self and live solely for the Glory of God. Jesus said in **Luke 9:23&24:**

**23 ...If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me.**

**24 For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake, he is the one who will save it.**

There is no negotiation. There is no debate. There is no finagling. There is a Call to the absolute and unconditional surrender to the Lordship of Jesus Christ or you stay in your sins. There is a Call to the absolute abandonment of every phase of your life to the God Who has just bought and paid for your soul- or you die in your rebellion. There is a Call to come to the Cross of Jesus and die to all your ambitions, all your dreams, all your plans, and you live as a purchased bond-slave to Jesus Christ- or you remain a child of the devil.

And if you are going to heed that Call and come into the Kingdom, if you are going to acknowledge the Truth of the Gospel, if you're going to see yourself as a desperate wretch who is totally unable to affect your own deliverance from sin and damnation- if you're going to see Jesus as Lord and Savior- He says first of all in verse 1- you must abandon the ungodly teaching of the Pharisees. So if you're going to heed that Divine Call and come to the Truth- you've got to shake off the influence of false teaching. You've got to leave the damning influence of false religion behind you. You've got to come out of whatever false system you're already in and reject what you already believe and trust in.

And that's valid even today. Everybody today heeds the Divine Call and comes to the Truth out of some type of false, man-made system of belief and philosophy because everybody already believes in something.

Secondly, Jesus says, you have to stop fearing men and being intimidated by men who can only hurt you in this life, and you have to start fearing God Who has the Authority to not only kill you now- but He has the Authority to throw you into hell, too.



Then you have to openly and gladly confess Jesus Christ as Lord before men, and then you have to trust in the witness of the Holy Spirit- Who is the Teacher of all Divine Truth.

You then have to avoid the love of money and become rich toward God, verses 15 through 21. And then you must abandon the anxiety and the worry and the fear that comes from being preoccupied with this life and the cares of this life so that you can seek the Kingdom, verse 31.

And to put it another way- Jesus says you want to come and follow Me- you want your sins forgiven and come into the Kingdom- God must Sovereignly empower you to escape four things:

- ✓ False Religion
- ✓ Fear of Man
- ✓ Love of Money
- ✓ Preoccupation with the World

... because those are the kinds of things that prevent the sinner from coming to Salvation. And just to motivate you- Jesus says- I'm coming back and you don't know when. That is what is going on in this Passage. That is the context of this Passage.

So not only can we not afford to be indifferent toward God and the things of God, not only can we not be indifferent toward false teachers and the trap of material goods- we also cannot afford to be indifferent toward the future. You can't have spiritual lethargy toward the future. You've got to be ready for the future. You have got to beg God to give you one of the greatest gifts that He could ever give you and that is to be able to see yourself as God sees you and to determine if you are really in the Faith or only deceived. And the future that Jesus is talking about is His Return in great Glory! So we must be ready and we cannot afford to waste a single hour of a single day.

People have been trying to figure the Second Coming out ever since Jesus was on the earth. For example- in **The Acts 1:16**- the disciples asked Jesus,

**Lord, is it at this time You are restoring the kingdom to Israel?**

And Jesus responded by saying,

## **The Acts 1:7-8**

**7 ... It is not for you to know times or epochs which the Father has fixed by His own authority;**

**8 but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth."**

... which is just another way of saying that it isn't any of our business when he is coming back and for us to get ready and stay busy.

But anticipation about the Second Coming is great motivation to continue steadfast and to hate sin. Everything is not just going to go along the way it always has. There's going to be a Sovereign interruption in the way that the world operates and God is going to impose Himself on the earth yet again and stop everything. And the Bible describes this in the most horrific terms.

And so here in **Luke 12:40**- Jesus just barely cracks the door open on this great doctrine of the Second Coming which has so much Scripture written about it. And He says just two things that I want you to remember today-

- A. There is a Certain Event
- B. There is an Uncertain Time

... therefore we must be ready. We cannot allow our material blessings to lull us into spiritual slumber. We cannot allow our age to cause us to think that we can slow down or stop and rest. We cannot allow our feet to drag or our hands to hang down or our voice to be silent or our hearts to grow hard or our minds to become dull or our eyes to scale over or our ears to become deaf. Jesus is coming and our Savior, our Lord, our Master, our King says,

## **Be Ready!**

Now please look again at **Luke 12:40**. There you see the phrase, "The Son of Man is coming." That is an absolute fact. The Son of Man is coming.

Now if you were an average Jew standing there that day, and you heard Jesus say those words- what would you have thought? The literal phrase "Son of Man" that Jesus spoke is:

"oben adam"

... which is what David wrote in **Psalm 8:4** when he said,

**What is man that You take thought of him, And the son of man that You care for him?**

... and this phrase, "Son of Man", is used to illustrate the complete insignificance of Man. It's used by Ezekiel over and over again- the Prophet calls himself "son of man" to emphasize his utter humanness as compared to the greatness of God. So the Jews were aware that the phrase "Son of Man" indicated one who was in every sense human. But there was something way beyond that meaning that dominated their comprehension of the title "son of man".

And to help you with that, please turn back to **Daniel 7**. Now in connection with Messiah- the Jews understood that "Son of Man" was also a title that belonged only to the Messiah- Who was coming. So when Jesus made this Statement here in **Luke 12**- **"The Son of Man is coming"**- He was simply connecting Himself to the Scripture of **Daniel 7:13** where Daniel says:

**I kept looking in the night visions, And behold, with the clouds of heaven One like a Son of Man was coming, And He came up to the Ancient of Days And was presented before Him.**

... which is simply yet another way that Jesus was connecting Himself to being God in human flesh- the Divine Messiah- Who was promised to come to Israel and the Christ Who would save the Gentiles.

So Jesus is reiterating the Promise of **Daniel 7** that with clouds of Heaven- one day- a Son of Man is coming. So now with all this in mind- read **Daniel 7:13&14** with me:

**13 "I kept looking in the night visions, And behold, with the clouds of heaven One like a Son of Man was coming, And He came up to the Ancient of Days And was presented before Him.**

**14** “And to Him was given dominion, Glory and a kingdom, That all the peoples, nations and *men of every language* Might serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion Which will not pass away; And His kingdom is one Which will not be destroyed.

So the Jews knew that the Messiah was coming. And they also knew that the Messiah would have dominion over the whole earth. And they knew that the Messiah would establish an eternal Kingdom that would never be destroyed. This is a great Messianic prophecy that all the Jews knew. And they knew then Son of Man as a title for Messiah connected to Him coming in glory to establish the Kingdom His Father had given to Him. And Jesus is simply saying to these people that day about **Daniel 7** the very same thing that He said to those He preached His first Sermon from **Isaiah 61** to those back in Galilee:

**Luke 4:21**

**... Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.**

Jesus constantly referred to Himself as “Son of Man”. And while on the one hand you might say this phrase emphasized Jesus’ full Humanity- in reality- the phrase “Son of Man” was actually emphasizing Jesus’ Messiahship- which is His full Deity.

In fact, the phrase, “He Who is Son of Man”, is a substitute for the word “I.” Instead of saying “I this”...and “I that”, Jesus used the third person and said, “The Son of Man this”, and “the Son of Man that”. So Jesus was just drilling this in- that He was fully God and fully Man.

In fact, over in **Mark 2**- Jesus had just said to the paralytic-

**Son, your sins are forgiven**

... and the Pharisees were having a conniption fit about that because only God can forgive sin, and so Jesus says in verses 8-11:

**Mark 2:8-11**

**8... "Why are you reasoning about these things in your hearts?"**

**9 "Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven'; or to say, 'Get up, and pick up your pallet and walk'?"**

**10 "But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins" — He said to the paralytic,**

**11 "I say to you, get up, pick up your pallet and go home."**

Jesus said,

**so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins"**

... using His Old Testament title, "Son of Man", to show His full Deity rather than His full Humanity.

Over in **Mark 14:61**- the High Priest said to Jesus,

**Are You the Christ, the Son of the Blessed *One*?"**

... and Jesus responded to him by saying,

**Mark 14:62**

**"I am; and you shall see *THE SON OF MAN SITTING AT THE RIGHT HAND OF POWER, and COMING WITH THE CLOUDS OF HEAVEN.*"**

... which is just another connection to **Daniel 7:13&14**.

So the phrase "Son of Man" was a title. And it belonged to the Messiah- God's Son- the blessed One- Who had come to forgive sin and save. He is Lord over the Sabbath, and He came to establish His Kingdom. Jesus is the Messiah Who forgives sin. And He is the Messiah Who rules. And He is the Messiah who is going to return in glorious dominion over all creation and establish an everlasting Kingdom. And, so, here Jesus reminds us that we better be ready because the Son of Man is coming in an hour when you don't expect it.

And so the return of Jesus is always used as a powerful motivation for us to repent and to live for Jesus. Let me illustrate how that works. We just read a few minutes ago how that the Divine Call to Salvation is a Call to dying to self. Jesus said,

**Luke 9:23&24:**

**23 ...If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me.**

**24 For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake, he is the one who will save it.**

... and so this is a true "Gospel Invitation". It is not an invitation to accept Jesus into your hearts- it is a Call for you to die to self and repent of sin and trust in Jesus. Self-denial, self-hatred, we've gone through all of that, submission, sacrifice- giving up everything. And Jesus calls it,

**"Whoever wishes to save his life shall lose it. Whoever loses his life for My sake shall find it."**

So The Gospel Call is the end of you. It's the complete abandonment of your life. And then Jesus went on to talk about how important this is:

**And what would a man be profited if he gained the whole world and forfeited his soul? What will a man give in exchange for his soul?"**

... and then immediately after that Gospel Invitation- here's the motivation, next verse, **Matthew 16:27**,

**"For the Son of Man is going to come in the glory of His Father with His angels and will then recompense every man according to His deeds."**

... so you better respond. You better deny yourself. You better take up your Cross and follow Me. And you better do it now- because the Son of Man is going to come and He will recompense every man according to his deeds.

When He comes there will be the righteous blessed and there will be the wicked cursed. And that was always part and parcel of a true genuine Gospel Invitation until about 150 years ago. These two aspects of great Blessing and horrific Judgment were never separated. So the motivation is always- He's coming! He's coming! He's coming and there will be an accounting- so get ready! Listen to **Luke 21:34-36** the Words of Jesus.

**34 "Be on guard, so that your hearts will not be weighted down with dissipation and drunkenness and the worries of life, and that day will not come on you suddenly like a trap;  
35 for it will come upon all those who dwell on the face of all the earth.  
36 "But keep on the alert at all times, praying that you may have strength to escape all these things that are about to take place, and to stand before the Son of Man."**

Now, go back to **Luke 12** and the second thing that I want you to see, just briefly, is a certain event at an uncertain time. **"The Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect."** At an hour you do not expect.

And as I said- over in **The Acts 1**- the disciples said, **"When shall these things be?"** And Jesus' answer to them was very straightforward. **"It's not for you to know times or epochs which the Father has fixed by His own power."** In other words- Jesus was saying, *"It's none of your business. You don't need to know that. You just heed the Divine Call and die to self and get ready and stay busy and remain fruitful and let God handle the Second Coming."*

I have no idea when Jesus is coming back and neither does anybody else. And in the Self-imposed restriction of His Own Omniscience that the Lord placed upon Himself in His incarnation- Jesus didn't even have that knowledge while He was here on earth.

So I don't know when Jesus is going to come- I just know that he is going to come. And all believers throughout all the Church Age since Jesus first came have been living with the realization that our precious Lord could come back at any minute- so get ready!

It is my view that when we get fixated on all the details of "when" and "how" the Second Coming will take place- then we create two problems:

1. We are forced to place very precise interpretations on symbolic verses and passages of which there are very different historical interpretations from some of the most godly and astute Bible scholars the world has ever known
2. You will eventually descend into sectarianism in your attitude and behavior where your view will force you to divide with those of other views.

It is very easy to see Biblical Prophecies fulfilled *after* they have come to pass. That is because our vision is very limited. For example- it is not hard at all to read **Isaiah 53** or **Psalms 16** today and see Jesus all through it. But the main reason that it is easy for us to see Jesus in those Old Testament Prophecies is because Jesus has already come and as we look backward- we see the past in 20/20 hindsight- very clear.

But until Jesus came and lived and died and rose again- it was *not* easy to see Christ in those Passages, and most of the people who were genuinely saved under the Old Covenant did *not* see Jesus as clearly in those Passages as we do today. And that isn't because we are smarter than they were- it is because we have information that they did not have that helps us to see better.

And this is why John Baptist sent his two disciples to Jesus to ask Him:

### **Luke 7:20**

**... Are You the Expected One, or do we look for someone else?"**

John was languishing in prison and things were not working out the way John envisioned, and so he was beginning to doubt and have concerns as to why Jesus was not performing the way he had always been taught that the Messiah would operate when He got here. And that is why we must be careful when trying to look ahead and explain what all these symbolic references about Jesus' Second Coming in Bible Prophecy mean.

We know something about the chronological sequence that unfolds in the future. Our problem is that we just don't know when it all starts. We know there are events within that great, great event of the Second Coming that has many aspects- but we don't know when it all begins. So we are left with one great Command:

Be ready!

And that is why until the last 150 years or so- the Christian Church has always lived with the idea that Jesus' Coming is imminent. And you can always tell when people really believe that because they live their lives as though they expect Jesus to return at any minute. Their hearts are on Heaven, and their Treasure is in Heaven and not on



the earth, and they live with fearless abandon and courageous Trust in the Promises of God as they give themselves over to the Cause of Jesus Christ to spread the Gospel as far and as wide and as deep as they can every single day. Those are the people who believe that Jesus could come back at any minute. And people who do not live like that really don't believe that Christ's Return is imminent- no matter what they say.

Until the new Health, Wealth, and Prosperity Message deceived the simple minded- the Church always considered the Return of Jesus to be imminent. And that is the testimony of the writers of Scripture. If you read, for example, the Apostle Paul writing to the young Pastor on the island of Crete- he says this in **Titus 2:13**,

**looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus,**

... they were looking for it!

When James talked about the future- he talked about it as if it could happen at any time, **James 5:7-9** says,

**7 Therefore be patient, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. The farmer waits for the precious produce of the soil, being patient about it, until it gets the early and late rains.**

**8 You too be patient; strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is near.**

**9 Do not complain, brethren, against one another, so that you yourselves may not be judged; behold, the Judge is standing right at the door.**

When the Apostle Peter wrote about the Return of Jesus- he said in **1Peter 4:7-11**:

**7 The end of all things is near; therefore, be of sound judgment and sober *spirit* for the purpose of prayer.**

**8 Above all, keep fervent in your love for one another, because love covers a multitude of sins.**

**9 Be hospitable to one another without complaint.**

**10 As each one has received a *special* gift, employ it in serving one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.**

**11** Whoever speaks, *is to do so* as one who is speaking the utterances of God; whoever serves *is to do so* as one who is serving by the strength which God supplies; so that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belongs the glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

... and again- the motivation for doing all these things is because the Return of Jesus is imminent.

When John wrote about Jesus Coming Back- he said in **1John 2:15-18**:

**15** Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

**16** For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world.

**17** The world is passing away, and *also* its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever.

**18** Children, it is the last hour; and just as you heard that antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have appeared; from this we know that it is the last hour.

... again- do you hear the urgency in John here? *"Hurry; get ready! Hurry up and repent- Jesus is coming! Don't fall in love with things or money; do not love the world. Why? Because Jesus is coming! Don't fall asleep and don't get lax and don't be deceived! Why? Jesus is almost here! There is no time to waste. Get ready!"*

All the Apostles lived in light of that great event. Even the book of The Revelation begins by saying,

**The Revelation 1:1**

**The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show to His bond-servants, the things which must soon take place...**

And the writer of Hebrews said,

**Hebrews 10:22-25**

**22** let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled *clean* from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.

**23** Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful;

**24** and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds,

**25** not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging *one another*; and all the more as you see the day drawing near.

This tells us that one of the signs that we really and truly believe that Jesus could come back at any minute is that we gather together more often rather than less often, and that we have more Bible Studies not less, that we have more prayers meetings not less, that we have more times of godly fellowship- not less, and that we partake of Communion more often- not less. That is the fruit of being ready.

So what are we supposed to do now in the light of this? And that's how Jesus begins that verse, verse 40. "You, too, be ready." Be ready. How do you get ready? Dr. Luke tells us that there are seven steps:

1. Abandon false religion
2. Fear God
3. Confess Christ
4. Trust the Holy Spirit
5. Be rich toward God
6. Leave the world behind
7. Seek His spiritual Kingdom

... that's how you get ready. Jesus is coming, dear friends- and His Coming is certain and powerful, and it is for the purpose of motivating every generation because its timing is uncertain. And so the message is, you better be ready.

Amen. Let's pray