

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

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

Chapter 17- Luke 17:20-37

283- The Kingdom of God- Part 3

June 28, 2015

Luke 17:20-37

20 Now having been questioned by the Pharisees as to when the kingdom of God was coming, He answered them and said, "**The kingdom of God is not coming with signs to be observed;**

21 nor will they say, 'Look, here *it is!*' or, 'There *it is!*' For behold, the kingdom of God is in your midst."

22 And He said to the disciples, "**The days will come when you will long to see one of the days of the Son of Man, and you will not see it.**

23 "They will say to you, 'Look there! Look here!' Do not go away, and do not run after *them*.

24 "For just like the lightning, when it flashes out of one part of the sky, shines to the other part of the sky, so will the Son of Man be in His day.

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

26 "And just as it happened in the days of Noah, so it will be also in the days of the Son of Man:

27 they were eating, they were drinking, they were marrying, they were being given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all.

28 "It was the same as happened in the days of Lot: they were eating, they were drinking, they were buying, they were selling, they were planting, they were building;

29 but on the day that Lot went out from Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all.

30 "It will be just the same on the day that the Son of Man is revealed.

- 31 "On that day, the one who is on the housetop and whose goods are in the house must not go down to take them out; and likewise the one who is in the field must not turn back.
- 32 "Remember Lot's wife.
- 33 "Whoever seeks to keep his life will lose it, and whoever loses *his life* will preserve it.
- 34 "I tell you, on that night there will be two in one bed; one will be taken and the other will be left.
- 35 "There will be two women grinding at the same place; one will be taken and the other will be left.
- 36 ["Two men will be in the field; one will be taken and the other will be left."]
- 37 And answering they said to Him, "Where, Lord?" And He said to them, "Where the body *is*, there also the vultures will be gathered."

To the Glory of God

Now the English term, "ology" comes to us from the Latin, and it means:

-ology= the science of; or the study of

And so you add whatever branch of knowledge that you are dealing to the suffix of "ology" and you have *the study or the science of* that particular discipline. For example, if you seek to study the human "psyche" you add "ology" to the word "psyche" and you have "Psychology". If you desire to study the various "societies" on the earth- you add that word to "ology" and you have "Sociology".

And the Holy Bible is no different. So within the framework of the study of the Bible- there are twelve of these "ologies":

1. **Theology**- The "science or study of" God
2. **Bibliology**- The "science or study of" the Bible
3. **Paterology**- The "science or study of" God the Father
4. **Christology**- The "science or study of" God the Son
5. **Pneumatology**- The "science or study of" God the Holy Spirit
6. **Anthropology**- The "science or study of" Mankind
7. **Epistemology**- The "science or study of" how we come to "know" God

8. **Hamartiology**- The “science or study of” Sin
9. **Soteriology**- The “science or study of” Salvation
10. **Ecclesiology**- The “science or study of” the Church
11. **Angelology**- The “science or study of” Angels
12. **Eschatology**- The “science or study of” Last Things

And what Jesus is talking about here in the eighteen verses that Brother Andy just read to you has to do with the study of “Last Things” or Eschatology.

Now as I told you last week- Eschatology looks ahead and tries to interpret what God has promised in Scripture. So Eschatology looks ahead at what will happen at some point after it was originally spoken and tries to make sense of it. And it’s a pretty risky science and the track record of people who engage in interpreting these future events is pretty bad. Most everybody- saved or not saved- who have tried their best to interpret the future based on what God has spoken infallibly in the Bible have got it wrong. And many of them have gotten it so wrong that their real bad Eschatology has spawned all sorts of crazy cults and false teachings that border on being blasphemous.

There have been the most ridiculous predictions about future events by people for nearly 2,000 years concerning things like the Second Coming of Jesus and the unveiling of the Anti-Christ. And people have been predicting dates when Jesus would return and who the anti-christ is for as long as the Church has been in existence.

People have done great elaborate amounts of research and come up with very specific dates when the Lord will return and every single one of them have been wrong. And people have said that everyone from John Kennedy to Henry Kissinger to Anwar Sadat to Barack Obama is the anti-christ. And they’re all wrong, too.

And there seems to be one great issue that is *causing* almost all of these predictions and *causing* people- who would normally not do this- to go out on a limb and predict things like this with great frequency- and that is a regrettable departure from the concept of Sola Scriptura- and developing Eschatological Doctrines by looking at world events rather than developing them from Scripture and from Scripture alone. They see something in the news and they say, “*Oh man, that is the anti-christ or the mark of the beast or what the Bible says will happen.*”

And I understand why people do this- it is so very fascinating to look at world events and then try to analyze them and interpret them according to Scripture. But the problem with doing that is that we really don't see current events very clearly. First of all- we are only getting some or portions of information- we rarely get the entire story until many years later when "current events" become "history" and are written about in great detail. And secondly, we almost *always* interpret current events through the lens of our own political and religious and personal biases and prejudices. And I would also suggest to you that most people don't know their Bible very well in our day either. So we are not very good at predicting the future with or without our Bibles.

However- even though all that is true- every true Christian who has any understanding of the Scripture at all and any mature love for Christ and the Glory of Christ at all- longs for His Return. The Second Coming of Jesus Christ to this earth is the culmination of the Life and Work of our Lord Jesus. It is His exaltation. It is where He sets aside His long humiliation and is exalted before the whole world. And as those who love Christ- we long for that day to come. We desire for Jesus to return in all His Majesty and in all His Glory to end all pain and all suffering and all disease and all injustice and all poverty and for Him to rule and reign over this entire earth.

And I always want to be faithful to remind you that the reason that all of these bad things will end when Jesus Comes back is because they are all products of sin. And when Jesus return to this earth- He is going to remove all of the products of sin forever! But what many people either don't understand or don't want to hear- is that the way that Jesus is going to remove all of the products of sin from the earth forever is by destroying all *unrepentant* sinners.

In other words- evil in the world is not a tangible commodity like a mountain or a river or a table. Evil is the *summation* or the *product* of *all* of the thoughts and *all* of the words and *all* of the deeds of lost and unsaved people. In other words- Evil lurks *inside* people- in their fallen nature and in their black hearts, and in their arrogance toward God and His Truth, and in their rebellion against His Order, and in their hatred of Him and His Holiness. And all murder and all lying and all stealing and all blasphemy and all acts of wickedness and greed and malice come from *inside* people.

And because people will not bow before God and repent- evil continues, and even though God ordained Human Government to destroy the acts of evil doers- they can't eliminate the intents of the heart- which is where evil originates. So unless people desire to repent and serve the living God as outlined in Scripture- they really *don't* want an end to evil in the world- because they are a part of it.

But God can and will eliminate all evil in the world. And so when Jesus comes back- all those who *refused* to repent and who *refused* to obey and who *refused* to follow and who *refused* to submit will be destroyed by the King of all other kings and the Lord of all other lords when He returns.

And so as we saw last week- the Coming of Jesus to this earth will be a Day that is both "Great" and "Terrible". That Day will hold unspeakable "Terror" for those who are not saved and yet it will be a Day of great "Comfort" and "Joy" to those who have been graced by God to repent and trust in Jesus.

Now as I try to remind all of us- Christianity isn't new. Christianity is a little over two thousand years old. And so there is not a single subject that is in the Bible that hasn't been discussed and analyzed and studied and researched in great depth- all throughout the two thousand year history of the Church- and Eschatology is among those subjects. And so very godly people, who desire to be wholly Biblical- have been studying Eschatology at great length for many, many years.

And yet, these godly and saved people have come to different conclusions about just how we are to understand what Jesus and others were talking about when they spoke about "Last Things". And the differences seem to center *primarily* on the subject of the Millennial Reign of Jesus Christ- millennial referring to the 1,000 year Reign of Jesus upon this earth or what many call "The Kingdom".

So there are three main historical views of how to understand that Kingdom of God or the Millennial Reign will be manifested- all throughout the two thousand year history of the Church. And they are:

- ✓ **A-Millennial-** (*Against* the Millennial) The Millennial is purely spiritual and is carried out in Heaven
- ✓ **Post- Millennial** (*After* the Millennial) Jesus returns only once- after the 1,000 year (long time) period of the "Church Age"

- ✓ **Pre- Millennial-** (*Before* the Millennial) Jesus comes back to begin the 1,000 year Reign and then comes back again in fullness.

And it seems that A-Millennialism is the oldest of the three- being taught and preached for almost the entire 2,000 year history of the Church. Post-Millennialism has been taught for about 500 years- or about as long as the Protestant Reformation, while Pre-Millennialism has only been taught about 150 years or so- even though it is true that *portions* of both Post- and Pre-Millennialism have been taught for the entire 2,000 year history of the Church.

And all three of these views have merit and all three of these views have problems. And besides differing about how to understand the Millennial- they also differ in what words and verses are to be taken *literally* and which verses and words are to be taken *figuratively* or *spiritually*. And what makes this complicated is that all three views contain adherents that I personally admire and follow, and that have helped me immensely in my own walk with God.

For example- it was Augustine- who made A-Millennialism to become the dominant view of the early Church. It was the excellent work of Spurgeon and Jonathan Edwards and the Puritans that gave Post-Millennialism favored status and ever since the mid- to late 1800's- as people have seen the horrors of two world wars and Man's injustice toward Man that Pre-Millennialism has now become the dominant Eschatology of the modern Church. Almost all of the well-known Pastors and Teachers alive today all teach Pre-Millennialism, and every person in this room who was saved during the last half of the 20th Century or the first half of the 21st Century has been taught Pre-Millennialism almost exclusively. Most of you have never even heard of the other two.

Both A-Millennialism and Pre-Millennialism teach that things on the earth will continue to get worse and worse just before Jesus returns to rescue His Church, while Post-Millennialism teaches that ultimately the Gospel will prevail and that more people on earth will be saved than lost at the coming of the Lord, and even among the people who are not saved- the Gospel will have such powerful effect- that it will *reduce* the amount of sin and wickedness in the earth. So it is no secret that it was those who held to a Post-Millennial view of Last Things who left the comfort and safety of their homes to brave the wide expanse of the

oceans to explore new worlds to conquer for Christ and for the sake of the Gospel.

Two other issues that must be dealt with are:

- The nation of Israel and the Church
- Whether some New Testament Prophecies have already been fulfilled

Now there is one other issue that I want to bring up that I really shouldn't have to- but I know that I do. Eschatology is a *secondary* issue. Believing one way or the other about Last Things is not an *essential* issue of Salvation, and, therefore- people who are absolutely saved by Grace through Faith in the finished Work of Jesus Christ may disagree with some or all points of the various views. And we are commanded by the Gospel *not* to divide over secondary or third tier issues. In other words- it is wrong for people to separate from one another over Eschatological issues.

Look, I have absolutely no problem drawing a line in the sand and fighting and even dying on the Hills of the full Deity of Jesus Christ or the Trinity or the Inspiration of Scripture or Justification by Grace through Faith alone- absent any and all human works. Those are primary and essential issues of the Christian Faith, and there can be absolutely no compromise concerning those issues. You either believe those things or you're not saved. And we are right and correct to separate over those issues all day long. And I am willing not only to be persecuted but I am perfectly willing to lose everything I have and even die to protect and defend those essential issues of Biblical Christianity.

But whether the Millennial Reign of Jesus is a *literal* 1,000 years or simply a *Jewish figure of speech* to understand a long extended period of time- that is *not* an issue that we should divide over. And one of the reasons why I hesitate to even discuss the issue of Last Things and why after being saved for 44 years I have never officially taught it is because I see people all the time divide over the silliest of issues, and I want to say here and now- that that kind of separation is sinful and wrong. And I wouldn't even teach it now except that we are going verse by verse through the Gospel of Luke and our Lord Jesus is talking about it. And so I *have* to deal with it.

And the deal that I make with you is *not* that I will always be right, but whatever I teach from behind this pulpit will be my best effort at getting this right, and so even if it is wrong- it will be honest.

Okay now that we have that introduction out of the way- I want to say that as a Church, we are like the 1st Century believers in Thessalonica of whom it is written,

1Thessalonians 1:9b&10

**9 ... how you turned to God from idols to serve a living and true God,
10 and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, *that is* Jesus, who rescues us from the wrath to come.**

So we wait for the Coming of the Lord Jesus from Heaven with great anticipation. In **Titus 2:12b-14** Paul told the young Pastor on the island of Crete that *all* believers are to:

**12 ... to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age,
13 looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus,
14 who gave Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed, and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds.**

So we aren't just waiting for Jesus to come back- we are earnestly looking, we are anticipating, we are eager for Him to return, and we are busy in the Work of the Lord in the meantime. But there is even more. Look what Paul told the young Pastor in the Church at Ephesus in **2Timothy 4:5-8:**

**5 But you, be sober in all things, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.
6 For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come.
7 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith;
8 in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing.**

So it's not enough to love the baby Jesus in the Manger once a year at Christmas. It isn't enough to love the Jesus Who performed miracles and raised the dead and fed the hungry and healed the sick. It isn't enough to love the Jesus Who loved the sinners and embraced the children. It isn't enough to love the Jesus Who hung on a Cross and died for the sins of the whole world and it isn't enough to love the Jesus Who rose from the dead in the same body that he died in on the third day and Who ascended up into Heaven in the sight of over 500 people.

So we don't just wait. And we don't just look. We are those who *love* His Appearing. We say with the Apostle John in **The Revelation 22:20**,

Even so, come Lord Jesus

So we don't just wait. And we don't just look. And we don't just love. We plead for His return. And we're going to learn on Sunday Evenings that we are supposed to fast for His return. And we pray for His return. You see, any time we pray, "*Thy Kingdom come*," we are asking God to send Jesus back to this earth in that final Eschatological Event. We are asking God to sovereignly interrupt everybody's plans and to insert Himself with Power and Force to bring the Kingdom to the earth. That's what we're praying, and if that is not asking God to violate people's will, I don't know what is. So we live as believers in the great hope of a great expectation. We live in anticipation of that glorious Event with all of its features. And that is why I can offer you three views concerning the Second Coming that are not debatable by anybody:

- A. Jesus is Coming back to this Earth
- B. His Coming is at an undisclosed Time in the future
- C. Be Ready!

And that is why we are grieved at the way the world treats the Lord Jesus Christ. We're continually grieved at the way the Lord is treated in the world. And so we want Him to be vindicated. We want Him to be exalted. We want Him to take what is rightfully His. We want Him to break the seals of the little scroll as it tells us in the Book of the Revelation- which is the title deed to this earth- and we want

Him to take it back because He is rightfully King of kings and Lord of lords. We want Him to break the back of the usurper satan and all his demon hosts. We want Him to take over all the kingdoms of this world and make them the Kingdom of our Lord and the Kingdom of His Christ.

Now the first time Jesus came, He came to establish His *spiritual* Kingdom which He continues to build right now- one soul at a time. And so the way the Kingdom of God advances in *this* respect is one soul at a time- one person at a time being called by the Gospel to repent and trust in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. That is the way the spiritual Kingdom moves forward. And praise God- it is moving forward spiritually in the world right now! It cannot be stopped, and it cannot be defeated, and it will win the soul of every single person who is chosen by God for Salvation from before the foundation of the world.

So, right now- daily- people are being added to the Church who are being saved. And so in *that* sense- the Lord is building His Kingdom- one soul at a time. And so as we pray "*Thy Kingdom come*" we also embrace this *spiritual* advance of God's Kingdom.

Now sadly, even in the spiritual realm of the Kingdom of God- there are people who get it all confused. As I have told you many times- because we are fallen, because we are flesh, because we are really, really naïve and gullible at heart (which is why the Lord Christ calls us sheep), and so we are easily led astray, we are easily deceived, and we are much more willing to believe a lie than the Truth.

And there is not a single issue of Theology proper that people have not gotten wrong, and not a single issue of Biblical Truth that people have not messed up. And the issue of The Kingdom of God is no exception. So there are people out there right now who think they can advance the Kingdom of God on earth *politically* by getting control of human governmental institutions and by attempting to *moralizing* a culture. And I love these people and I know many of them, and I think they are saved and that they love Jesus, and that they mean well. And I was a part of that thinking for a period of time- and I came to realize that I was wrong about that and so I left. And they're wrong about it, too.

And then there are people who think they advance the Kingdom of God by coming together and trying to unify all supposed Christians by removing any doctrinal distinctions and accepting any belief in God or

Christ that the dog drags in through the door. And many of these people think that Doctrine is the problem, and so they reject all doctrine- which is in itself a doctrine- and they think that they can achieve unity and arrive in the Kingdom through singing songs about how we all are going to tear down the walls of division that separate us and by holding hands and closing their eyes and swaying back and forth and imagining unity in their minds. Kind of like a spiritual Woodstock. And I love these people, too, and I was a part of that for several years as well. I worked and labored and fought to unify the Churches here on the Gulf Coast and did many things to alleviate racial barriers and such. And so I don't hold second place to any Pastor on this entire Coast concerning racial unification. I was on the forefront of those efforts. But the net result of all of that is that unless we are unified around Divine Truth- not songs or emotion- we really are not unified in any meaningful way at all. And so I left that effort as well.

You simply cannot advance the Kingdom of God that way, dear friends. And all you really accomplish through all of that is to corrupt the Church with alliances that are *not* from God but which are actually from satan. Because Light and darkness have no fellowship.

So there is only one way that the Kingdom of God advances spiritually- and that is through true and genuine, sure-nuff Salvation- one soul at a time. And that Salvation is accomplished by and through the ongoing and faithful preaching and teaching of God's Word- which is why I am all about doing that.

And so as the American culture becomes more and more pagan, and as the hostility against the Gospel rises, and as the penalty for being faithful to Jesus becomes more and more costly- that is when we need to preach and teach all the more, and that is when we need to be more vocal and more visible and more open and more unafraid and less timid and less restricted than ever before.

It is my conviction that as it gets darker and darker out there- we should have *more* Bible Studies- not less, *more* Prayer Meetings- not less, *more* times of godly Fellowship- not less, *more* times of encouraging one another and holding one another accountable- not less. We should have *more* times of partaking of the Lord's Supper- not less, and *more* times of being busy and active in service to God and to other people outside the walls of this Church- not less.

Now many people are panicking over the recent ruling by the Supreme Court and while I share their concern- I will say that it is certainly no surprise. I have been preaching that this would happen since the mid-1970's, and so the only thing that is mysterious to me is why it took so long. But let me say that the *external* persecution of the Church of Jesus that will no doubt come on the heels of this ruling is actually a tool in the Hand of God to purify His Church. Because *anytime* it gets costly to obey Jesus- all the deadwood leaves, all the lukewarm and worldly and nominal church members leave, and the only thing remaining inside the Church are the true believers.

And I will also say that *external* persecution helps us to become more doctrinally precise, it helps us to formulate our answers better and to be more Biblical, and it forces us to know what we are talking about. So *external* persecution always brings forth more praying, and more Bible Study, and more Fellowship, and more repentance. And that is the classic definition of revival! So how could we be opposed to that?

Now I want to begin to look at what Jesus said here by looking again at **Luke 17:20-24**:

20 Now having been questioned by the Pharisees as to when the kingdom of God was coming, He answered them and said, "The kingdom of God is not coming with signs to be observed;

21 nor will they say, 'Look, here it is!' or, 'There it is!' For behold, the kingdom of God is in your midst."

22 And He said to the disciples, "The days will come when you will long to see one of the days of the Son of Man, and you will not see it.

23 "They will say to you, 'Look there! Look here!' Do not go away, and do not run after *them*.

24 "For just like the lightning, when it flashes out of one part of the sky, shines to the other part of the sky, so will the Son of Man be in His day.

Now there are a few things that we need to get settled in our minds as we begin to unravel this part of **Luke 17**. First of all is the context.

What we need to remember is that Jesus didn't speak these words in a secret meeting with just His Apostles. Jesus spoke these words to

three groups of people who were all swarming all around Him as He spoke:

1. The Apostles- who believed
2. The Disciples- some of whom were believing while others were not
3. The Pharisees- who did not believe

So these Words were all spoken *publicly*- for all three groups to hear. And because that is true- what you have here is *not* a description of the sequence of events leading up to the manifestation of the Visible and Worldwide Kingdom. So these words are *not* chronological. This Passage here is *not* like those in Paul's Epistles where he goes into great detail about the Coming of the Lord, and this is not even like **Matthew 24** or **Luke 21** where there is a much more *chronological* presentation of the Events that leads up to the Coming of the King.

This Passage is merely a description of the nature of the Divine Judgment that *precedes* or *comes before* Jesus' Return to this earth. So we have in this text a description of Divine Judgment. So this is the "terrible" part of the great and terrible Day of the Lord.

Now, another thing I want us to get in our heads is that we are not the first or the only group who have wanted to understand how all this is going to work out. The Apostles themselves were the first group who asked the Lord how this was going to all come together. And they did it first in **Matthew 24** when they asked:

Matthew 24:3b

... Tell us, when will these things happen, and what *will be* the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?"

Now upon careful exegesis- paying close attention to the tense of the verbs- we see that the Apostles were actually asking two different questions here. The first question is:

... Tell us, when will these things happen?

... where the "**things**" that they are asking about are the "things" that Jesus was talking about *prior* to Matthew 24. And the *second* question is:

... and what *will be* the sign of Your coming?

And then there is a *second part* of the *second question*

... and what *will be* the sign of... the end of the age?

So there seems to be *three* different questions that the Apostles were asking Jesus to tell them about.

1. When will "these things" happen
2. What will be the "sign" of His Coming
3. What will be the "sign" of the end of this age

And we are going to explore all about this as we continue on- but it is telling that the very first response that Jesus gave to these three questions had nothing to do with any of what they were asking. Jesus said in **Matthew 24:4b**

... See to it that no one misleads you.

And this shows us that spiritual deception was far and away the dominate issue on the Mind of Jesus Christ- even when it came to the issue of His Return. Now the second time they asked Jesus about Him coming back- was in **The Acts 1**- please go there with me.

1 The first account I composed, Theophilus, about all that Jesus began to do and teach,

2 until the day when He was taken up *to heaven*, after He had by the Holy Spirit given orders to the apostles whom He had chosen.

3 To these He also presented Himself alive after His suffering, by many convincing proofs, appearing to them over *a period of* forty days and speaking of the things concerning the kingdom of God.

So here is Dr. Luke, writing once again to this Roman dignitary- a man named Theophilus. And in verses 1&2- the good doctor is referencing his Gospel Record- the one that we have been "journeying" through since 2008.

And then in verse 3- Luke sets forth the reason why he wrote this inspired Book- that we call today “**The Book of the Acts of the Apostles**”. Now read verses 4&5:

4 Gathering them together, He commanded them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait for what the Father had promised, "Which," *He said*, "you heard of from Me;

5 for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now."

So this is the time that Jesus told His Apostles and others to go to the Upper Room and wait until they were endued with Power from on High. And according to what I have calculated- they went into that Upper Room and they stayed there for at least ten straight days- with no reference to eating or drinking anything- and they were fervently praying in one mind and one accord, and the Holy Spirit came upon each of them in a powerful and glorious way. Now look at verse 6:

So when they had come together, they were asking Him, saying, "Lord, is it at this time You are restoring the kingdom to Israel?"

Now this moment is *after* the Resurrection and it is *after* Jesus had already spent 40 days alone with these men- teaching them things pertaining to the Kingdom of God. And yet we see here that the most important thing on their minds right now is the restoring of the kingdom to Israel! Now this is amazing. They still had the very same eschatology about how things were going to end up that they had gotten from the Pharisees before these men were ever saved. It's almost as if they haven't heard a single thing that Jesus has taught them.

These men were asking Jesus about when Israel's physical and natural restoration would occur here- *not* about the advancement of Christ's spiritual Kingdom through the Salvation of lost souls. And to show you that this is true- look how Jesus answers them in verses 7&8

7 He said to them, "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."

Now at the front part of verse 7- Jesus begins to answer their question by saying,

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

... which is just a polite way of saying:

It's none of your business!

So Jesus is saying that it's not helpful for them to know this. So God does not choose to reveal that to you. So *what* is none of their business? *What* is not helpful for them to know? *What is it* that God does not choose to reveal to them?

The time He will be restoring the kingdom to Israel

God doesn't want anybody to know this. Jesus said so. And yet today this is the single biggest aspect of the Second Coming that everybody wants to know about and what all the great writers say that God has shown them. But Jesus said that it's none of our business. And I think we need to remember that.

Now the King James says "times and seasons", and the NASB says "epochs". Now the word "epoch" means: a period of time in history marked by notable events or particular characteristics. The beginning of a distinctive period in history. A division of time that is a subdivision of another period and is itself subdivided into "ages".

Now that is what the word means. So Jesus says here that it is none of our business to know a period of time in history marked by notable events or particular characteristics. Jesus said that it is not helpful for us to know about the beginning of a distinctive period in history. And the Lord of the Church said that God does not choose to reveal to us anything about a division of time that is a subdivision of another period and is itself subdivided into "ages".

Jesus said that all of these events have been:

... fixed by His (the Father's) own authority

So that means that all of the future events surrounding the restoring of the Kingdom to Israel have all been fixed by the Father's Own Sovereign Authority. And this information is *not* for distribution to the bond-slaves.

And I'm absolutely convinced that this answer utterly stunned the Apostles and silenced them. There is no doubt in my mind that they felt the sting of this rebuke. And if that is all that Jesus said that day- it would have put a huge damper on the whole event. But it isn't all that He said. He went on to give them great hope when He said,

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.

So there is a Power that is for us- but *that* Power is for Ministry- to take the glorious Gospel to the four corners of the earth and *not* the Authority that the Father alone has over the restoring of the Kingdom to Israel.

So as we wait with great anticipation for the Return of Jesus to this earth- we are not to just sit and wait. This "waiting" involves being busy. This waiting involves action. This waiting involves us actively involved in ongoing Ministry throughout the whole earth. In fact- the proof of truly waiting with anticipation for the Lord's Return is in us actively being busy in ongoing Ministry. Let me say this another way- the way you prove that you truly believe and are saved, and that you are waiting with great anticipation of the Lord's Return is by being busy in ongoing Ministry.

Now look at verse 9:

And after He had said these things, He was lifted up while they were looking on, and a cloud received Him out of their sight.

And they didn't know what to do. They had never seen anything like this before. Jesus began to physically ascend into Heaven in the

very same Body that He was raised in. And they were stunned and so they just stared- now look at verses 10&11:

10 And as they were gazing intently into the sky while He was going, behold, two men in white clothing stood beside them.

11 They also said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into the sky? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in just the same way as you have watched Him go into heaven."

Now at first this sounds like a silly question. Where else would you be looking if your Savior had just risen up literally into the air? What were they supposed to do- eat popcorn? But the question is not implying that they were out of line by looking up- it was a question directed at their sense of loss, that the longing in their hearts, the sadness that they were feeling was evident to God, and, therefore, made evident to the angels.

Remember- they had not yet been filled with the Holy Spirit to the extent that they were going to be in about ten more days. And they still really didn't understand why Jesus had to leave in the first place. I'm mean He just got here. The Jews had been waiting centuries for Messiah to come and now He leaves after only three decades of life? What's that all about? I mean the Apostles had only been with Him for about 3-1/2 years. How in the world are we going to vanquish the Roman Army when our King just leaves us? How is the Kingdom going to be established now?

So they were astonished but they were also very sad to see Him go. And God knew that. And so the angels were sent by God to comfort them. And they say, *"Why are you looking longingly as if you are losing Him? This Jesus Who has been taken up from you into heaven will come in just the same way as you have watched Him go into heaven."* That's what they meant by saying that.

And how is He going to come back? Literally. Physically. Bodily- right out of the clouds right down to this earth. That's exactly what it says and that's exactly what it means. So the Christian Church confesses and believes and teaches the literal, physical, and bodily return of the Lord Jesus Christ. The very same Christ Jesus Who went up is going to come down in the very same way He went up.

And so what I want to leave you with this morning is this: This Prophecy along with all the other Promises and Prophecies and Warnings about the Second Coming are as unmistakable as any other teaching in the Bible. The Prophecies of the Return of Jesus Christ to establish His glorious Kingdom are not vague and they are not obscure. They're not hard to understand and they're not complicated. They're not mysterious and they're not hidden. They are straightforward, clear, factual, and historical- just like everything else recorded in the Scripture. And no matter what all the liberal theologians might say- Scripture is very specific, it is very precise, and it is very unambiguous about the Second Coming as about all past redemptive history recorded in the Old Testament and in the New Testament as well.

The only people who are confused about the Bible are those who don't believe in its accuracy and in its veracity. Those who don't believe the Creation account in Genesis have a hard time believing in Salvation by Grace through Faith and Eternal Damnation of the Wicked and the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. Those who doubt that there was a real historical biological Man named Adam who was made out of the dust of the earth have a hard time believing that God hates sin and that heaven is only for saved people. Those who don't believe that Eve was made out of Adam's rib also don't believe that God rained down fire and brimstone on Sodom and Gomorrah because of sexual perversion, and they also don't believe that demons live inside of some people who perpetrate evil on others.

Those who don't believe that God flooded the earth and killed every living soul except the eight souls on the ark also don't believe that God took on flesh and became Man, and that Jesus was fully God and fully man in the same Body at the same time without conflict or contradiction. And they also don't believe that God is One in His Essence and is eternally manifested in three distinct Persons of God the father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.

So what else is new. Those who don't believe one part of the Bible struggle over other parts. Duh. So the answer is to quit disbelieving the Bible, quit rebelling against God stop quenching the Spirit, and simply believe what it says. Because the precision of the Bible is staggering and it goes from there into a detailed explanation of Creation by the Revelation of God Himself- Who is the Creator. The Bible is precise.

And when you get into the history of the Patriarchs in the Book of Genesis- the Bible is precise. The history of the Flood is precise. The history from Abraham is precise. Everything God said and did is precise. There's precision in the Law and the history Books of the Bible. There's precision in the Psalms and the Books of Literature that we call Biblical Poetry. And there is precision in the Prophets. And there's precision in the details of the Gospel Records and in The Book of the Acts and in the Epistles. And there will be the same kind of precision in every eschatological passage, as well as in the Book of the Revelation to be interpreted by the same normal principles of interpretation you interpret any language, leaving room for what is obviously figurative.

And you certainly can't dismiss prophetic language that has to do with the end of the age and the return of Jesus Christ as being obscure and hidden when it is so specifically described. Nothing that I read you in this text of Luke is at all obscure. Everything I read you there is clear and straightforward, and you will see as we work our way through it how precise and applicable it is. The Bible means exactly what it says, no matter what the particular subject on which it is speaking is. And that is why we can trust it and we can base our lives on it and we can go to Heaven on it!

Amen. Let's pray

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The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen. Be watchful and quicken your pace. Soli Deo Gloria. For the Glory of God alone.