

A TIME IS COMING: OF REVEALING AND RECKONING

THESIS: Live And Look

TEXT: Luke 17:20—18:1

OPEN: (*Story of 2nd century End of World cult which ensnared accomplished early church theologian*)

In **Luke 17** let's discover how to live for Jesus' return whenever it is and avoid false prophets in the meantime.

Historical (Pharisees): Pharisee means "separated one." By Jesus' time, the Pharisees had become hypocritical, rigid, and self-righteous. They considered their teaching more authoritative than Scripture (*Mtt 15:1-3*).

Luke 17:20-21 "*Once, having been asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, Jesus replied, 'The kingdom of God does not come with your careful observation,²¹ nor will people say, 'Here it is,' or 'There it is,' because the kingdom of God is within you.'*"

Live for Jesus and look out for false prophets. Scripture's clear that the return of Christ will come like a thief in the night (*1 Thes 5:2*) not by "careful observation." **Luke 12:40** "You also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect Him."

Kingdom (Greek: *basileia*) denotes royal power or dominion and signifies a territory as well as people over which a king has sovereignty. When it comes to the Kingdom of God and Christ—it's not about land or territory, it's people and stretches across the globe into Heaven itself.

1. The kingdom of God is present *and* future.
 - A. **Matthew 25:34** "Then the King will say to those on His right, 'Come, you who are blessed by My Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world.'"
 - B. **Luke 17:21** (Jesus to the Pharisees): "The kingdom of God is in the midst of you." (*NASB*)
 - C. **John 3:5** "Jesus answered, 'I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit.'"
2. When it comes to inheriting the kingdom, faithful believers in Christ receive all that belongs to God. He gives us access to all that He possesses as our very own. In other words, what is His is ours and what is ours is His.
 - A. **Romans 8:31-32** "What, then, shall we say in response to this? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare His own Son, but gave Him up for us all—how will He not also, along with Him, graciously give us all things?"
 - B. **1 Corinthians 3:21b-23** "All things are yours, whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas or the world or life or death or the present or the future—all are yours, and you are of Christ, and Christ is of God."
 - C. **1 Corinthians 6:19-20** "Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body."

Scripture teaches us not to predict days and times of Christ's return and to avoid false teachers who do.

Illustration: Here are some bogus Apocalyptic or End Time predictions made through the centuries:

- 66–70 *Simon bar Giora*. The Jewish Essene sect saw the Jewish uprising against the Romans in 66–70 as the End Time battle which would bring about the arrival of the Messiah. By the authority of Simon, coins were minted declaring the “redemption of Israel.” The revolt ended in the destruction of Jerusalem as Christ predicted (*Mtt 24:2; Lk 19:41-44*). The Savior Jesus already had been in their midst (*Lk 17:21*).
- 847 *Thiota*. This Christian declared in 847 that the world would end that year, though later confessed the prediction was fraudulent and was publicly flogged.
- 1346–1351 *Various Europeans*. The Black Death spreading across Europe was interpreted by many as the sign of the end of times.
- 1524 *London astrologers*. A group of astrologers in London predicted the world would end by a flood starting in London, based on calculations made the previous June. Twenty thousand Londoners left their homes and headed for higher ground in anticipation.
- 1874 *Charles Taze Russell* (founder of the Jehovah Witness movement) predicted the return of Jesus to occur in 1874. After this date, he reinterpreted the prediction to say that Jesus had returned in invisible form.

Luke 17:22 “Then (Jesus) said to His disciples, ‘The time is coming when you will long to see one of the days of the Son of Man, but you will not see it.’”

It may be that Jesus refers here to His earthly ministry days with His apostles or the future time of His return. If the latter is so, then He reveals His Second Coming was not to be witnessed by the Twelve while they were alive on earth. As we learned in last week’s message the Lord warned His apostles and us that persecution comes to the church.

Luke 17:23-25 “Men will tell you, ‘There He is!’ or ‘Here He is!’ Do not go running off after them. ²⁴For the Son of Man in His days will be like the lightning, which flashes and lights up the sky from one end to the other. ²⁵But first He must suffer many things and be rejected by this generation.’”

Live for Jesus’ return whenever it is and look out for false prophets in the meantime. How might we avoid falling for bogus End Time prophecies and those who promote them?

1. The return of Jesus will be seen by everyone “like the lightning, which flashes and lights up the sky from one end to the other” (*Luke 17:24*). It will not be done in secret, invisibly, or as an allegory (parable)—it’s going to be a real event witnessed by all.
 - A. **Revelation 1:7** “Look, He is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see Him, even those who pierced Him; and all the peoples of the earth will mourn because of Him. So shall it be! Amen.”
 1. Why will “peoples of the earth” (world/pagans) mourn at the return of Christ? It’s because they do not believe in Him and thus do not live expecting a reckoning before Him. At the time of Christ’s return it will be too late to repent. Now is the grace period—today—this day is the day of salvation (*2 Cor 6:2*).
 - a. **Luke 17:26-30** “Just as it was in the days of Noah, so also will it be in the days of the Son of Man. ²⁷People were eating, drinking, marrying and being given in marriage up to the day Noah entered the ark. Then the flood came and destroyed them all. ²⁸It was the same in the days of Lot. People were eating and drinking, buying and selling, planting and building. ²⁹But the day Lot left Sodom, fire and sulfur rained down from Heaven and destroyed them all. ³⁰It will be just like this on the day the Son of Man is revealed.”
 1. Jesus believes what the Old Testament says about Noah, the flood, and the ark. He references it for illustration purposes as an actual, historical event—the Apostle Peter and the writer of the book of Hebrews, too (*1 Ptr 3:18-22; Hebrews 11:7*).

2. The return of Jesus along with the “rapture” of the church (*1 Thes 4:16-17*) will not be immediately preceded by calamities such as planes falling out of the sky or driver-less cars careening out of control as some modern-day authors have conjectured. Scripture reveals that everyday life will be going on like it was in Noah and Lot’s time (i.e. eating, drinking, marrying, buying, selling, planting, building, wars, rumors of wars, famines, earthquakes—*Mtt 24:4-8*).
 - a. Even if wars, rumors of wars, famines, earthquakes, and unusual events were to happen just before Jesus returns—the point He makes with Noah and Lot’s days is that it catches unbelievers off guard because they’re not living to meet Christ for their time of reckoning.
- b. **1 Thes 5:1-6** “Brothers, about times and dates we do not need to write to you, ²for you know very well that the Day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. ³While people are saying, ‘Peace and safety,’ destruction will come on them suddenly, as labor pains on a pregnant woman, and they will not escape. ⁴But you, brothers, are not in darkness so that this day should surprise you like a thief. ⁵You are all sons of the light and sons of the day. We do not belong to the night or to the darkness. ⁶So then, let us not be like others, who are asleep, but let us be alert and self-controlled.”
 1. On inspiration of the Holy Spirit, the Apostle Paul writes expecting the possibility that Jesus could come back while he was still alive on earth and thus the Thessalonian church, too, meaning the return of Christ, the church “being called up to the meet the Lord in the air” (*1 Thes 4:15-17*), and the End of Time are simultaneous related events. They’re not something having to wait an additional 1,000 years to occur: (*v4* “But you, brothers, are not in darkness so that this day should surprise you like a thief”).
- c. **Luke 17:33—18:1** “Whoever tries to keep his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life will preserve it. ³⁴I tell you, on that night two people will be in one bed; one will be taken and the other left. ³⁵Two women will be grinding grain together; one will be taken and the other left. ³⁶Two men will be in the field; one will be taken and the other left.’ ³⁷‘Where, Lord?’ they asked. He replied, ‘Where there is a dead body, there the vultures will gather.’ ^{18:1}Then Jesus told His disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up.”
 1. What does Jesus mean when He says regarding those asleep in bed or grinding grain together or two in a field—“on that night one will be taken and the other left.” Does “taken” reference the rapture or something else? It’s something else according to Jesus in Matthew 25 (parable of talents):
 - a. **Matthew 8:11-12** “I say to you that many will come from the east and the west, and will take their places at the feast with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of Heaven. But the subjects of the kingdom will be thrown outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”
 - b. **Matthew 25:24-30** “Then the man who had received the one talent came. ‘Master,’ he said, ‘I knew that you are a hard man, harvesting where you have not sown and gathering where you have not scattered seed. So I was afraid and went out and hid your talent in the ground. See, here is what belongs to you.’ The one talent slave’s master replied, ‘You wicked, lazy servant! So you knew that I harvest where I have not sown and gather where I have not scattered seed? Well then, you should have put my money on deposit with the bankers, so that when I returned I would have received it back with interest. Take the talent from him and give it to the one who has the ten talents. For everyone who has will be given more, and he will have abundance. Whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken from

him. And throw the worthless servant outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

2. What then of those who are “left”? When we cross-reference with other Scripture, we will see that the Lord is referencing those who are still alive when He comes back. It’s a subject that the Apostle Paul addresses in *1 Corinthians 15* and *1 Thessalonians 4*. Those who remain and are alive when Christ returns shall not die instead they will be changed into their immortal, resurrected bodies to experience the new heaven and the new earth (*2 Peter 3:11-13*).

CLOSE: Live for the Lord expecting His return anytime and look out for false prophets because a time is coming of revealing and reckoning.