

Luke 21:25-36

*The Second Coming of Jesus Christ*

It was March 23, 2003 and the 101st Airborne division were based in Kuwait. Capt. Mark Wisher was asleep in his tent when suddenly, with out warning , a hand grenade exploded.

When all was said and done 2 Air Force officers were dead and 14 were injured. One of the injured was Capt. Wisher. Ironically Army Sgt. Hasan K. Akbar was arrested and charged.

More than a dozen pieces of shrapnel from the grenade tore into Wisher's right side, injuring his arm and leg. One piece that Wisher described as a "golden BB" entered his abdomen and inflicted the most severe damage, collapsing his right lung, lacerating his liver and ripping a hole in his diaphragm.

The 29-year-old Capt. Wisher is recovering from severe internal injuries and thankful to be back with his wife, Tara, at their home in Clarksville, TN.

Yet Wisher, an F-16 fighter pilot trained to guide air strikes from the ground for advancing troops, is anxious to get back into the action.

"It's good to be home," Wisher said this past Monday. He spent nearly two weeks recovering at a U.S. military hospital in Germany.

"But the hardest part about this whole thing is being away from the guys" in his military unit, he said. "I was with 22 other Air Force guys, and they have pushed north into Iraq. I don't know where they are for sure, but I'm guessing they are close to Baghdad. But because of what happened, I was left behind.

Doctors have told him recovery and rehabilitation will take three to six months. Wisher said he wants to be back on duty much sooner.

Interesting, isn't it, that a man who sustained those kind of injuries wants to return and take his place with the men he trained with.

What he was saying was, "This is who I am. This is what I'm about. Things won't be right until I'm where I belong."

As I was growing up, I had a little bit of religious training. Not that I listened much, but I did go through catechism classes and was confirmed in a church.

When I finally trusted Christ as Savior and started study the Bible I was amazed to find that all though the OT and NT was the promise of the second coming of Jesus Christ.

Somehow that truth had never gotten through to me. But the fact is there are more verses promising the second coming than there are that predicted His first coming.

If were going to do any justice to the Bible at all then we have to acknowledge that it teaches that Jesus Christ is coming back again bodily to this earth.

Why? Because “the earth is the Lord’s and all it’s fullness. Because He is King of Kings and Lord of Lords. Because things won’t be right until He’s where He belongs.” This is who He is. This is what He’s about.

**Turn with me to one of the classic passages on the second coming, Luke 21 Pg 1019**

In Luke 21 we’re heading down to the very last days of Jesus ministry. In Chapter 22 He’ll eat His last meal.

In Luke 21 and Matthew 24 we have what we call the “Olivet Discourse.” This is a teaching session for the disciples in which Jesus outlines future events.

Last week, we studied down to verse 24 where Jesus talked about what it would be like in the days leading up to His bodily return. In verse 25 He teaches on His actual coming.

I believe that in our day and age the second coming of Christ hasn’t been that popular a topic because were so obsessed with this life.

A couple of generations ago people expected a short, hard life and looked forward to eternity. Today, we expect a long, painless life and we’re not so anxious for the life to come. Life throws some of us some hard curves and we get angry at God and are ready to quit.

The Bible is straightforward and honest about what we should expect in this age. Jesus said that nation would rise against nation, kingdom against kingdom, there would be earthquakes, famines, pestilences, and commotions.

He said in our personal lives we should expect tribulation, sorrow, and tears.

Something is radically wrong on the planet. This is not the way it's supposed to be and down inside we know that.

What's wrong is, God's will is not being done on earth as it is in heaven.

The Bible says, *For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness.*

The people of this world aren't worshiping their Creator. But one day all that will change. The King will return and take up His rule. The Lord will come back and we will bow before Him and give Him the glory He deserves.

If we're really the people of God we ought to long for that day. We ought to be so anxious for the second coming of Jesus Christ that every day our prayers include, *"Even so come quickly, Lord Jesus."*

The King is coming back. He's about justice. He's about equity. And He's about true peace on earth.

"This is who He is. This is what He's about. Things won't be right until He's where He belongs."

Notice: *I. Jesus Christ Is Coming Back With Power and Great Glory*

In Acts chapter 1 we're given the account of Jesus' ascension back into heaven 40 days after His resurrection. He's received up into heaven on a cloud and the disciples standing there doing what you and I would do, staring up into the sky with their mouths hanging open.

Two angels appear and this is what they say: *"Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven."*

Jesus left bodily in the clouds. He'll return bodily in the clouds.

Approximately seven years before He returns bodily the rapture will happen. Living believers will be taken away and the dead in Christ raised. During the next years

there will be what the Bible calls tribulation, *such as has not been since the beginning of the creation which God created until this time, nor ever shall be.*

At the conclusion of that time of tribulation Jesus Christ will return bodily to earth to establish His kingdom, and faithful believers will rule and reign with Him 1000 years.

That's the coming that's described here. **read vs 25-26**

God created the cosmos; the stars, the planets, and the earth. He also sustains them.

Isn't it interesting that even though people have rejected God, they often presume that the things He controls and "holds together" are going to remain constant. They predict time and location on the basis of the stars. People even try to use astrology to regulate their lives by the heavens.

God is going to shake the powers of heaven. He's going to shake this planet.

People won't ignore these signs. They'll be terrified by them. But most won't turn to God because of them.

**Turn to the Book of Revelation chapter 6 Pg 1178 Read 6:12-17**

Men's hearts will fail them for fear. People will literally be scared to death from *the expectation of those things which are coming on the earth.*

There's a whole lot of other verses that show all the blessing that's going to come when Jesus returns. In Luke, it's obvious that Jesus wants us to get the other side of the picture.

Jesus' disciples had just been admiring the magnificent temple in Jerusalem. They were expecting their Master to take Messianic control. They were probable admiring the temple because they were figuring it would be their new office space, since they were Jesus' right hand men.

What Jesus was emphasizing was God's judgment on Israel. He was emphasizing that God would first destroy the very place that had been dedicated to a worship of Jehovah because that worship had been perverted.

Then God was going to bring destruction on this beautiful world He had created because of the rebellion of humanity.

A lot of people would laugh at such a concept. In Peter's day they said, *"Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation."*

That was just 35 years after Christ and scoffers were already mocking. but the biblical promise is He will return. He has to return.

### **Back to Luke 21 Read vs 27**

Matthew 24 reads: 29 *"Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. 30 "Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.*

The first time Jesus came the only people who saw Him were the people living in a little strip of land in Palestine. He never traveled more that a few miles from the place He was born.

The next time will be so totally different: Rev 1:7 *Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him, even they who pierced Him. And all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him.*

The second coming of Christ will be glorious and powerful. The first time He came a relatively few people knew it was Him. At the second coming no one will have any doubts.

### **Read vs 28**

The signs which the unbelieving world distort or deny or try to avoid are the same signs which should warn believers. The signs which bring terror and fear to the unbeliever, will bring courage and hope to the believer.

The reason is that these signs precede the return of the Lord Jesus, and His return in great power and glory. When He comes, He'll deal with His enemies and ours. He will remove the wicked, and He will reward the righteous. His coming should bring terror to His enemies, and joy to His friends.

The book of Revelation tells us that during the Great Tribulation there will be many

people who become believers in Christ. Revelation 7 explains:

*After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, saying, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!"*

*Then one of the elders answered, saying to me, "Who are these arrayed in white robes, and where did they come from?" And I said to him, "Sir, you know." So he said to me, "These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. (Revelation 7:9-14)*

The same signs that serve as a dire warning to others will mark redemption for the people of God.

*I. Jesus Christ Is Coming Back With Power and Great Glory*

*II. When The Time Comes It Will Be Obvious*

### **Read 29-32**

We have to be so careful in interpreting prophecy.

In the Bible, the fig tree is often an image of Israel. Because of that back in the 1970's some Christians were pointing to this as a fulfillment of prophecy. They said the fig tree budding was Israel being recognized as a nation, May 15, 1948. Then they defined a generation as 40 or 50 years and said Christ would return sometime in the late 80's to early 90's.

That's a great example of what not to do with the Bible. Notice Jesus says "Look at the fig tree, and all the trees. When they are already budding, you see and know for yourselves that summer is now near."

What He means is, "when the trees bud it's obvious what season it is. When the stars start falling and the moon turns to blood you know what's happening."

This generation (that sees those things) will be the generation that that sees the return of the Lord.

### **Read 33**

Two things stand out about this promise of Christ. First, notice how Jesus speaks here with an authority that goes for beyond any other prophet. Jesus speaks here as God, not just as a man, and not even just as a prophet.

Other Biblical prophets could say, "Thus saith the Lord." Jesus says His words, words which won't pass away, are eternal words. Jesus was speaking as God. His words were His own words of divine revelation. That's authority you have to reckon with. You can't be neutral.

He is either God who has all authority or He's crazy. But there's nothing in between. I'll go with God any time.

Second, Jesus said His words were eternal, never failing.

We have an expression, "talk is cheap." What we mean by that is, we want to see actions, not just hear words. Well Jesus says, "My words are absolutely trustworthy. What I say, I will do."

We tend to trust in things because we can see them, and because they appear to have promise of lasting. Jesus says His words outlast heaven and earth.

If we value something on the basis of how long it'll last, nothing has greater value than the Word of God. Why is it that so often we value those things which are destined to perish above those words of God which will never perish?

*I. Jesus Christ Is Coming Back With Power and Great Glory*

*II. When The Time Comes It Will Be Obvious*

*III. Jesus Coming Will Be Joy For Those Who Are Watching, And A Snare To Those Who Aren't*

## **Read vs 34-35**

Jesus' first gives the command "Take heed" and then says, "Watch." Both of those commands apply to God's people in every age but they will have special meaning for those in the tribulation period.

"Watch" doesn't mean to stand around looking for signs. It means "Be awake! Be alert! Don't get caught unprepared!" This may apply specifically to the future but it sure has a message for us today.

It's so easy for us to get weighted down with the cares of this life and the distractions of this world.

During tough times in life it's easy to give up on God. It's easy to just throw in the towel and say, "I quit. Living for God is too tough. I'm just going to go with the flow. Nobody around me seems to care about God and they're getting by. Why should I care?"

### **Read vs 36**

Warren Wiersbe writes, "Luke 21:36 refers primarily to believers standing before the Lord at the judgment when He returns to earth to establish His kingdom."

"Matthew 25 talks about the sheep and the goats. The sheep will enter the kingdom while the goats will be cast out. While many of God's people will die during the Tribulation persecutions, many others will escape and see Jesus Christ when He returns in glory."

"If believers during that difficult age will be tempted to yield to the world and the flesh, Christians in this present age of comfort and affluence face even greater dangers."

It's ironic, isn't it, that sometimes it's easier to live for God under the pressure of persecution than it is under the pressure of affluence and freedom?

I'm guessing that's because affluence and freedom tend to make us careless. When we're not worried about someone breaking down our door and arresting us, or concerned about how we'll feed our family we tend to forget about God's provision. We're not in constant prayer so God becomes less and less a part of our everyday thoughts and priorities.

The Bible says (Pr 11:4) *Riches do not profit in the day of wrath, But righteousness delivers from death.*

Jesus said *how hard it is for those who trust in riches to enter the kingdom of God!*

*And, the cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches, and the desires for other things entering in choke the word (of God in a person's life), and it becomes unfruitful.*

We need this warning just as much as anyone living in the tribulation times, maybe more!



**I'd like us to look at one last passage of Scripture this morning, I Thessalonians 5 pg 1137**

Just before this, at the end of chapter 4 the Apostle Paul writes about the rapture. He has to fill these Christians in on the rapture because it's not something that was talked about in the OT.

But there was something they did understand because it's all through the OT.  
**Read vs 1-7**

The term "The Day of the Lord" is not a 24 hour day, but it's a period of time that includes the tribulation and Christ's return.

The OT prophets describe the Day of the Lord in very somber terms.

For instance the Prophet Joel wrote: *Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision! For the day of the LORD is near in the valley of decision. The sun and moon will grow dark, And the stars will diminish their brightness. The LORD also will roar from Zion, And utter His voice from Jerusalem; The heavens and earth will shake...*

The Prophet Isaiah said: *Wail, for the day of the LORD is at hand! It will come as destruction from the Almighty. Behold, the day of the LORD comes, Cruel, with both wrath and fierce anger, To lay the land desolate; And He will destroy its sinners from it. For it is the day of the LORD'S vengeance, The year of recompense for the cause of Zion.*

The point in I Thessalonians is while this all will come as a surprise to unbelievers, this isn't a surprise to believers.

Believers in Christ know that Jesus is coming back in judgment but the rest of the world scoffs.

In Matthew 24 Jesus gave the example of Noah. He said, *"But as the days of Noah were, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. "For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, "and did not know until the flood came and took them all away, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be.*

People scoffed and laughed at Noah. They had never seen a flood before in their lives and here was a guy building a massive boat.

They went on doing all the normal, natural things of life. They thought everything was OK till the flood came and took them all away.

### **Read 8-9**

Faith, hope, and love are like armor that protects God's people. Faith and love are like the breastplate that covers the heart. Hope is the helmet that protects the mind.

The hope of salvation isn't a matter of hoping God will save us. It's the hope that salvation gives us.

The day of the Lord and the judgment of God are because of the sin of this world. Jesus Christ came the first time to pay for that sin. He came the first time to take the punishment for our sins.

Easter is about the cross and the empty tomb. The Bible says: *that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures...*

Our "hope of salvation" is Jesus Christ and His finished work at the cross.

The Bible says: *These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life*

Because of Jesus Christ and His death, burial, and resurrection we know what the future holds for us.

We have a living hope. Our comfort is the knowledge that before the day of the Lord with its judgment, Jesus is coming in the rapture to remove us.

Believers don't have to fear future judgment. *For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ...*

Believers don't have to fear the future. We'll experience trials and problems, because they're part of this present age, but we'll never experience the judgment of God because Jesus Christ bore that judgment for us on the cross 2000 years ago.

We should be encouraged to know that God has an ultimate plan and purpose He's working in our world.

Ultimately it's not about any particular government or nation, not even the United States.

All the events in our world are all moving toward that day when Christ returns and establishes His kingdom of earth.

Maybe you've never trusted Jesus Christ as your personal Savior. We all have an appointment. I don't know when yours is going to come but it's on it's way. It may be here sooner than you expect.

The Bible says; *it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment...* No reincarnation. No second chance. This is it.

You need to make an appointment with Jesus Christ to meet Him personally.

If you've never come to God and said, "I have sinned. I need to trust the Son of God," then listen to these words from the Bible: *He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.*

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Capt. Mark Wisher is anxious to get back to his troops. He said, "This is who I am. This is what I'm about. Things won't be right until I'm where I belong."

All of creation is anxiously waiting for the return of Jesus Christ. He's the King of all the earth. His very nature is to shepherd His people. Things wont be right until He's where He belongs.