



“The Coming of the Kingdom”
Luke 17:20-37
November 3, 2019

This morning we are going to be in Luke Chapter 17. Please join me there, where in Verses 20 through 37, Jesus addressed the coming of His Kingdom. This is a vital topic that is prevalent through all the pages of the Bible.

Many people like to debate about what it is going to be like, when and how, Jesus is going to come back, and how all the details are going to play out when He does. It is a fervent discussion to say the least. Christians have the ability to even argue and debate about the coming of the Kingdom. As we get into this portion of Scripture, I want to see if I can tune our hearts to hopefully hit close to home on this topic.

This Monday evening I had the opportunity to spend some time with a radiant sister in Christ, a woman filled with the Spirit of the Living God. As I shared in that conversation with her, I saw kindness in her eyes as she was attentive and focused in on me and the things that I wanted to share with her, and with the things that she had to share with me as well.

There was such grace in her speech, as I think she was being a little bit too generous in her encouragement toward me as far as ministry here at Bethel Grace goes. There was purpose and resolve in her heart as she expressed the desire within her to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ everywhere, to anyone and everyone that might come her way. It was such a special conversation that I had with her. Here was this woman, I could see the life of God in her so clearly. Even as I sat by her bed holding her hand at the Alamitos West Care Facility, it was evident that her body is experiencing so much difficulty and decline.

Some of you might have figured out by now that I am talking about our sister, Judy Petersen. She is a sister filled with the Spirit of the Living God. Her body is weak. It is frail. That can be seen, yet the presence of God is so evident in her. Meanwhile, her body is suffering as she can't keep food and drink down, so she remains weak and it seems that she is getting weaker. They even have a pad on her bed that has some kind of sensor on it so that if she tries to get up and walk on her own, which she can't do, an alarm will alert staff.

She has to stay in that bed, but that bed felt to me like a version of the Holy of holies, where the presence of God was there upon His child. Here is the thing about our sister Judy: she has experienced the Kingdom of God. The Kingdom of God is present with her.

Judy is different. She is distinct. She is a Christian. She is born again. She has received the gift of the Holy Spirit. She has the desire to spread the Kingdom wherever she goes. This desire remains lively within her as a servant of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Yet looking at her, you can see that in the frailty of her physical condition, there is so much more to the power of the Kingdom that has yet to be displayed in her life on that day when Jesus Christ comes back and resurrects her body into something that is powerful, into something that is glorious, into something that is not subject to decline when she is resurrected with Jesus at the coming of His Kingdom.

There is a phrase that theologians like to use in reference to the coming of Jesus Christ. This is a phrase that I have used in the past. It is phrase that I will use in the future. It is a phrase that we need to understand as we think about how Jesus' Kingdom comes. It is called *The Already, but Not Yet*.

The Kingdom of God in Christ the Messiah, it is already but it is not yet. Christ came into the world, He was incarnate, He was God as man. He came into this world to die for our sins, to cleanse us, to cloth us in His righteousness, to cleanse us within, to give us His Spirit so that the Kingdom is alive in the world today.

Yet, at the same time, there is so much more of the Kingdom that is yet to be culminated as Jesus, in the end, totally eradicates all the effect of sin, and He resurrects not only His people, but He resurrects the earth, and we reign with Him forever and ever and ever in power and in glory. The Kingdom of Heaven is already, and it is not yet.

Every Christian is going to experience tension to various degrees of hardship in their life. It is a fact that in Christ the Kingdom is present within them, yet there is still so much more to be experienced because we still suffer pain in this world. We suffer the pain of bodily decline. So many of us experience the groaning that occurs as these bodies wear out.

In addition to that, we feel that tension because we still have the struggle with sin where we experience temptation. We have a pull toward things that we hate within. We don't want to do them, yet we still feel tempted to do those things. Sometimes we even stumble into those things.

We still feel the tension between the already and the not yet in that the Kingdom of God is present within His people, yet here on this earth, the people of God still experience trouble. They get harassed. In many cases, they even get persecuted by people in the world who oppose the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

This morning I was encouraged to hear that our DOXA students set a time during their 9AM hour to pray for the church around the globe, especially including the people of God that are being persecuted for their faith in Christ. They prayed for six Christians in Sri Lanka who were going to church one Sunday and were attacked by a mob of ten people. They were hospitalized and suffered for their faith.

Here you have brothers and sisters filled with a desire to worship Jesus Christ, even in a dark place, yet they get pounded as a result of it. The Kingdom is already, but the full manifestation of it is not yet, for when it is completely consummated, those kind of things won't happen anymore. It is the nature of the Kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Looking through the pages of the New Testament, what we find is that the topic of the Kingdom of God, especially in the Gospels, it was the number one topic of teaching and preaching of our Lord Jesus Christ. He came into the world as a preacher of the Kingdom, did He not?

When Jesus began His preaching ministry, what was His first sermon—repent for the Kingdom of God is at hand. He was calling the people of Israel and anybody who heard to understand sin and their need for God’s grace and to turn to the Lord in humble repentant faith.

Going through the teaching ministry of Jesus, what you find is that He spoke of the Kingdom incessantly. By-in-large, His parables were just about always about the Kingdom of God and its nature, that we might understand it. Jesus was always talking about the Kingdom, and people noticed this.

As we move into Luke Chapter 17, we have some of the religious leadership of Israel saying, *Okay, Jesus, when is it going to come? When are we going to see this Kingdom? You say that the Kingdom is at hand. When are we going to see the Kingdom come in power?*

In their minds, the Kingdom of God was going to come with a mighty messianic conquest of the Gentile nations, namely the empire of Rome that had its boot on the neck of the nation of Israel. They were missing the fact that prior to coming with this kind of power, and, in fact, this kind of judgment upon the sin of the world, the Messianic Kingdom would first come in its spiritual renewal of those who would enter into it.

So they were missing Isaiah Chapter 53 and the Suffering Servant. They were missing Psalm 22. They came and they asked Jesus, *Okay, when is this Kingdom that you keep talking about going to show itself? And Jesus said, Just look around you!*

In this text before us, the Pharisees came with this question, and He answered with already. Then He took His disciples and said, *Boys, understand something. But not yet. It is going to come in power.*

So let’s read through what is before us this morning from the heart of the Messiah to us out of Luke Chapter 17 and Verses 20 through 37:

²⁰Being asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, he answered them, “The kingdom of God is not coming in ways that can be observed, ²¹nor will they say, ‘Look, here it is!’ or ‘There!’ for behold, the kingdom of God is in the midst of you.”

²²And he said to the disciples, “The days are coming when you will desire to see one of the days of the Son of Man, and you will not see it. ²³And they will tell you, ‘Look there!’ or ‘Look, here!’ Do not go out or follow them. ²⁴For as the lightning flashes and lights up the sky from one side to the other, so will the Son of Man be in his day. ²⁵But first he must suffer many things and be rejected by this generation. ²⁶Just as it was in the days of Noah, so will it be in the days of the Son of Man. ²⁷They were eating and drinking and marrying and being given in marriage, until the day when Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all. ²⁸Likewise, just

as it was in the days of Lot—they were eating and drinking, buying and selling, planting and building,²⁹ but on the day when Lot went out from Sodom, fire and sulfur rained from heaven and destroyed them all—³⁰ so will it be on the day when the Son of Man is revealed. ³¹On that day, let the one who is on the housetop, with his goods in the house, not come down to take them away, and likewise let the one who is in the field not turn back. ³²Remember Lot's wife. ³³Whoever seeks to preserve his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life will keep it. ³⁴I tell you, in that night there will be two in one bed. One will be taken and the other left. ³⁵There will be two women grinding together. One will be taken and the other left.” ³⁷And they said to him, “Where, Lord?” He said to them, “Where the corpse is, there the vultures will gather.”

We have this word of instruction from Jesus the Messiah about the coming of His Kingdom and I pray that our hearts will experience the awe and the reverence and the amazement that I think Jesus intended for us to experience reading these sacred words from God to us.

This whole passage starts with that question that so many inquiring minds have desired to know—when, when, when, when is the Kingdom going to come? When is it going to come? When are we going to see this awesome display?

Jesus answered the Pharisees, *What are you talking about when? Open your eyes. It is here, right here in the midst of Israel right now. Just look around.* King Jesus said it was already here.

If they would just look around, they would have seen His miracles. They would have heard His preaching. They would have seen demonic strongholds being broken. They would have heard false teaching being rebuked and corrected. They would have seen so many signs of His Kingdom all the way around them. But I wonder if they had eyes to see the way that lives were being transformed in their midst?

Just like last week, we read about those ten men with leprosy that got healed. How awesome was it that they were healed of leprosy, but only one came back with his whole inner being renewed, pouring forth praise and thanks to God? He was lit up with gratitude and worship.

What a transformation, and the punchline reads: Oh, yes, and it was a Samaritan. The people of Israel would have said, *What kind of joke is that? Are you going to tell me that some vile hip-hop artist named Kanye can actually start worshiping Jesus and have some transformation?* It would have read something like that in their ears. They don't praise Jesus, but when the power of the Kingdom comes, they do.

What about the wonderful love and reconciliation seen in such an unlikely way even among the twelve disciples of Jesus? Have you ever thought about what they were comprised of? You have rugged commercial fishermen being transformed into preacher-theologians, spreading the Word of God's grace.

Then Jesus made it interesting by calling the local Galilean tax collector; the blood sucker, Matthew who would have been like a leach draining them of as much of their money as he could. And Jesus told him he was going to come and be a part of their company too. What?! Him!?

To make it even more interesting than that, Jesus called in a man named Simon the Zealot, who absolutely would have hated and wanted to ring the wretched neck of anybody working for Rome in that way. But Jesus said that He was going to bring him too.

Then they were a band of brothers who loved one another, who still scuffled and had debates about who was the greatest. But they would have love and unity, and it is so beautiful. It is like: Let's get a gathering of blue collar, hammer swinging men and mingle in with them a wall street shark and then throw in a member of Antifa, and let's see them all come to Jesus and be born again, dwelling together in unity and in common purpose.

That is how it is supposed to be. Can we just ask the Lord and seek to serve Him in such a way that we see more of that kind of diversity joining together with eyes focused on Jesus, because then the Kingdom of God is seen in such wonderful ways. That is how Jesus began, but then He pulled His disciples aside and told them that the Kingdom was there.

But the majority of what He taught about was Him saying, *But it is not yet, and it is going to come, and, yes, there is sin in this world, and, yes, there are abusive people who won't repent, and, yes, they are going to get judgment if they don't receive. The power of the Kingdom is coming in an awesome way. Let Me tell you about it.* So we have this teaching for the disciples.

Scan your eyes over the text that we just read and see the use of the title *Son of Man*. It is used not once, not twice, not three times, but four times. That Son of Man was Jesus' favorite reference to Himself.

We read this and we know that Jesus is the Son of Man and He is the Son of God. The Son of Man refers to the fact that He is human. The Son of God refers to the fact that He is divine, the God-man.

While there might be some of that, what I think is even more powerful is that Jesus kept using this Old Testament name for Himself, and it points us to the fact that He is a supernatural being, whose going to reign forever and ever.

Most famously this title, the Son of Man, it comes to us from Daniel 7:13-14, where we have the prophecy of the anointed One, the Lord's Messianic King.

¹³And I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him. ¹⁴And to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed.

It is an Everlasting Kingdom. This is the Son of Man, and Jesus came telling the Pharisees and the Sadducees and the disciples and all of Israel and everybody else who would listen, including the people of Southern California all those years away here gathered in Bellflower, *Yes, I am that Man. It is Me. I'm the Son of Man, and I have a Kingdom that is already here. When it comes in the fullness its display, it is going to be spectacular.*

So the Pharisees kept asking when. Somewhere in Mark Chapter 13, Jesus said, *Look, stop asking when. Nobody knows. Not the Son, not the angels, only the Father knows exactly when.* Still we get these wingnuts who always set dates. Harold Camping, Family Radio, could not stop giving dates.

Every time I hear somebody set a date, I get a red marker and go my calendar. I don't highlight the date in gold, but I mark a big X in red, indicating it probably will not be that day just because somebody says they know when it is going to be. Then again, God could do it on that day too. He can do it whenever He wants. God the Father knows.

So Jesus did not answer the Pharisees' question as to when and give a date, but He said, *But here is what it is going to be like when. My Kingdom is coming. I am returning. It's going to be awesome, and if you want to know what the times will be like, I will summarize it for you.*

You could probably bring so many more attributes and adjectives and things to characterize what it is going to be like in the day when the Son of Man returns in glory physically and literally, but let's talk about three ways that He is going to be revealed when He comes back.

How will the Kingdom come? First, the Kingdom of God in Christ will come unmistakably. It will come for so many unexpectedly and it will come inescapably. First:

1. It will come unmistakably (17:22-25)

When King Jesus comes back, the world is going to know He is back. How many of you have experienced a thunder storm? How many of you have experienced a *real* thunderstorm? So you know the shock that can happen in the midst of this kind display of natural power in the world.

We have had some pretty good thunderstorms recently here in Southern California. I remember last winter we went outside to look at the storms. But I remember as a young man in my early 20s, I was with some friends surfing in the Central American surfing paradise of Costa Rica.

We were in that region at the tail end of a tropical hurricane that past through, where some of its aftermath was still being experienced. We were in the shabby little beach front hotel, nestled in the rain forest on a beach called Playa Domatical.

We went through a tropical thunderstorm that was furious. I was in a room, separated from the rest of my friends, who were in the main living room. All of a sudden, an extremely loud boom hit. If that bolt of lightening did not hit the ceiling, I don't know how much closer it could have gotten.

It felt like the whole building was shaking. I was shaking. Everything lit up, then I had the challenge of walking into the other room, looking like I was keeping my cool! All of our eyes were wide open, just about popping out of their sockets. The thunder was stunning. It was forceful. Have you ever had something like that where it was just such and insane display of power and light that it took your breath away?

What is it going to be like when I come back, Jesus said in Verses 22 through 25, *Look, there is coming a period where the people of God are going to be longing for My return. Things will get tough.. Be careful, there are going to be some people saying, 'Look there it is.' Others will be saying, 'Here it is.'*

And Jesus' point was that if you have to wonder whether it is Me or not, then it is not Me because when I come back, you are going to know it is Me. It is going to be unmistakable. Is that not what Jesus is teaching us here as we see what is in this text? Verse 22:

²²And he said to the disciples, "The days are coming when you will desire to see one of the days of the Son of Man, and you will not see it. ²³And they will tell you, 'Look there!' or 'Look, here!' Do not go out or follow them. ²⁴For as the lightning flashes and lights up the sky from one side to the other, so will the Son of Man be in his day. ²⁵But first he must suffer many things and be rejected by this generation.

Here in Verse 24, we have the Lord Jesus Christ describing the most stunning, breathtaking, hair-raising, soul-shaking event that will ever take place in the history of the planet earth—it is the moment of His personal, visible, glorious bodily return to this earth. The God-man will be fully illuminated.

He was kind of illuminated upon the Mount of Transfiguration, where He was full of glory. He is coming back, and the glory that is inherent in His being, because God is Light, is going to light up the entire sphere of the planet earth. It is going to be awesome, high voltage, and supernatural, with illumination that is going to be shocking in its affect. That is how it is going to be when King Jesus comes back.

But notice how Jesus said that first something is going to precede that. That mighty display is going to come. The One, who was the Lamb, is going to be like the lion, but first there was a road of suffering that He had to walk. So, the cross came before the coronation; the crown of thorns before the crown of gold. Jesus said, First He must suffer many things and be rejected by this generation.

The glory will come, but first it was required that the Messiah purify the souls of His people by shedding His blood for them, that they might enter into His Kingdom cleansed, saved by grace through faith as those qualified by the King to enter into the Kingdom of holiness and grace in its full manifestation.

Jesus came to save us. There is a day of fearsome judgment that is coming upon this earth, but there is safety in the grace of Jesus Christ. He came to shield us from the wrath of God by taking the wrath Himself when He was on the cross.

Trust in Jesus. Be plunged into the saving grace of Jesus through faith, confessing, *I am sinner. I am unholy, and I need a Savior. I have recognized Who that is. It is Jesus, and I worship Him.* Come to faith in Christ and walk with Him.

If you are here and you are coming to faith in Jesus Christ, you tell me about it because we are here to encourage you. You tell the person who brought you. There is something that is joyful that awaits you. The Christian faith is not a private faith, it is a public faith.

Do you want to know the wonderful way the Jesus has established for us to declare that we are Christians? We get baptized. We go into water, where we say we are dead to sin. We are alive in Christ by the immersion in what and in the raising up. That's what you have ahead of you.

The Kingdom will come unmistakably. What will the condition of the earth be like? Will the people of the earth be taking this seriously? Jesus has laid it out as recorded in Scripture and that Scripture has gone all throughout the face of the earth. But will people be taking this seriously?

The Kingdom,

2. It will come unexpectedly (17:26-30)

I am going to let you look at that on your own, because I want to spend some time on Point Three, and we have communion ahead of us. But Jesus will come unexpectedly. If you look at what it says in Verses 26 through 30, you will see that Jesus used two of the most ridiculed and scoffed stories of the Old Testament.

He spoke of them as absolute historical fact. He invoked the days of Noah's Ark and the story of Sodom and Gomorra. Instead of focusing in on the great morally perverse city that defined both of those ages, Jesus talked about how we can expect the end-times to be similar in its perversity.

So, we must see the perversity growing around us and pray that people will be renewed by grace because we are living in a society that is astonishingly perverse, and it is getting deeper and deeper and deeper.

What Jesus focused on is that there is going to be continued life as usual. People will be living with no fear of God in their eyes. Then the judgment that they never thought would come, will come. It is going to come unexpectedly, so the Lord has given us the mission on earth now to make it so that it is not so unexpected for people.

Let's spread the knowledge of His cross and His empty grave and His coming return, so that at least people will know what is coming. Then they will have to make their choices accordingly. The Kingdom is going to come unmistakably. It's going to come unexpectedly. And finally we see that:

3. It will come inescapably (17:31-37)

No one is going to be able to escape the judgment that is to come. As we read in Verses 31 through 37, we see that warning is mingled into imagery with this passage of Scripture to help us to understand and see how this going to go down.

The Kingdom will come inescapably. Let's start by looking at Verses 31 through 33:

³¹On that day, let the one who is on the housetop, with his goods in the house, not come down to take them away, and likewise let the one who is in the field not turn back. ³²Remember Lot's wife. ³³Whoever seeks to preserve his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life will keep it

Jesus gave us a woman to be remembered. Remember Lot's wife, Jesus said. She, with her husband, was a citizen of the city of Sodom. She was graciously given deliverance from the impending destruction of that city.

Reading the story in Genesis 18 and 19, what we find is that even though she was being taken out of the city, the city was not taken out of her. For even as massive slabs of burning road tar were being heaved upon these wicked cities and judgement was falling, she turned, and she looked back.

Understand, it is not just that she looked back with her eyes to see the astonishing sight behind her, it is that she looked back because of the longing to go back in her to the world and the life that she had in those two cities.

Her feet were running away from Sodom, while her heart was returning back and longing for the possessions, for the lifestyle, for all the comforts, and for all the worldly wealth. Her heart was in the city, so as she was being taken out of the city, she too came under judgement.

The testimony of Scripture is that she became a pillar of salt. She could not escape the judgment to come, because she was a person who was not redeemed, a person who had not responded in faith to the declarations of God. Jesus said to remember her. Think about her. Ponder her.

So what we would understand is that even at the end of time, there will be some who appear to be Christians who know the language, who know the routine, yet internally the most dominant desire within them is to hold onto their possessions, to hold on to this world, to hold on to this society. And Jesus said, *Give to your life to the Lord and don't hold on to those things. If you try to preserve your life, you will lose it, but if you lose your life, you will gain it.*

Just tell the Lord that you believe. And pray that the Spirit will fill your life in such a way that should Jesus Christ come back today, you won't lunge the wrong way. Everybody is going to lunge one way or the other. Some are going to be lunging for the world, but others are going to be lunging toward Jesus and telling Him to take them home.

What is in your heart? Is it Maranatha, Greek for *come soon, Lord*. The Lord before me, the world behind me. You take me home whenever it is time. Everybody is going to be affected by this great gravitational pull that is going to happen. No one will escape the separation that will occur when Jesus brings His children into the safety of His presence. And the children of this world are left to the judgment due their sin.

Jesus laid out this series of pictures in Verses 34 through 36. Let's look at what it says there:

³⁴I tell you, in that night there will be two in one bed. One will be taken and the other left. ³⁵There will be two women grinding together. One will be taken and the other left.

How about Verse 36? Wait, Verse 36. Somebody read Verse 36, that is right before Verse 37. Are you looking at your Bibles? Wait a minute, what's happening there? It goes from Verse 35 to Verse 37, if you are in the ESV. What's up with that?

Find the footnote at the bottom and behold it says: two men will be in the field. One taken and the other left. What's happening here? Brothers and sisters, this is a reminder for us that the inspiration of Scripture was absolutely perfect and inerrant, and the transmission of Scripture was highly, highly, highly trustworthy. That's what this means.

Understand two aspects of how the Bible has come to us. One is the teaching of inspiration, how God moved upon the hearts and souls and minds of men so that when they took their pen and their roll of papyrus, they were carried by the Spirit to perfectly write down the exact words that God intended. The original copies of Scriptures are inerrant. They are perfect and pure in every way.

The transmission of Scripture, the copying of it through the ages, is highly, highly, highly trustworthy, so that when you look at all the different ancient and early manuscripts of the Scriptures that have been dug up by archaeologists, you find that it is so, so accurate and highly, highly, highly so, so that there are only a few variations especially between the early copies that have been discovered early in time.

But understand, that is the copying. That is the transmission. That is not the writing. You can line them all up and see that there has been so much faithfulness in the copying of Scripture through the ages. However, there are places where one old manuscript and copy varies from another.

So, they put those discrepancies in the footnotes of your Bible, so that you can know. What you find is that no doctrine of the Christian faith is altered or affected by any of those discrepancies between the early manuscripts.

That is the whole science of New and Old Testament textual criticism. It is an awesome study and will build your confidence in the reliability of Scripture. I would commend to you the *The New Testament Documents, Are They Reliable?* by F.F. Bruce. There are also other good books that will help you navigate this issue.

Back to what Jesus is driving home for us. He gave us a series of pictures depicting how at His return, some people will be suddenly taken, vanishing from the surface of the earth, taken up to Him. Others will be left behind. Those taken are going to be taken to be with the Lord. Those who are left are going to be left to the destruction that comes with the Messiah's judgment.

Some of us here will begin scratching heads saying: this is the kind of imagery that a lot of theologians use to describe the seven-year pre-tribulation rapture of the church at the secret coming of Jesus for His church. It is seven years prior to the glorious main event that is going to come seven years later.

This is the kind of imagery that is used in a lot of books. We have heard of the *Left Behind* series in books and then in movies. There are also the *Thief in the Night* books from way back when. I remember that when I was a boy. It was all serious stuff.

There is the language of people vanishing and being caught up, with others being left behind. They use the imagery of this text in support of that. However, this is the problem: this text is not talking about the so-called rapture of the church that is seven years prior to the main event, The Second Coming.

Remember what we are talking about here. This is Jesus talking about that unmistakable event that is going to occur when He comes back and nobody is going to be able to ignore it and say, *They have vanished. Where did they go?* They are with Him!

I am a man raised up in pre-tribulation rapture theology. There was a time when I would have fervently defended it. Sometimes I still do. At other times I think it is not as clear-cut as many theologians might assert.

This is one of the areas of open-handed discussion of eschatology, where we don't grab these different doctrines like baseball and beat each other up. We try to understand it all. I think you can make a good case for the pre-tribulation rapture from other portions of Scripture, but you can't use this text, because this passage is not talking about the pre-tribulation rapture.

This passage is talking about an event that is going to come with the force of supernatural lightening at the end of the age, when Jesus Christ, the Son of Man, is revealed. Some will be taken up to be part of His welcoming entourage. Some will be left behind to receive their judgment. This is something that we see taking place here. We need to take it in. The point of it is to be ready. Make your decision now, because you will not have a time to make a decision then.

Then this passage concludes in an enigmatic way. The disciples asked another question—where, where is this going to happen? Why did they ask that? That's strange. Did they think it was going to be in a geographic location, limited to one particular place on the map? What's going on here?

Just when we would hope that Jesus was going to clarify what they meant by that question, He responded in Verse 37:

³⁷ ...**“Where the corpse is, there the vultures will gather.”**

That is a graphic portrayal of the devastation that will occur. It is brutally graphic, and it is even hard for me to read. But judgment is going to come, and it is going to be fearsome and it is going to be amazing.

Guess what? When it happens, the people of God, the church of God, they are going to see it and they are going to say, *Our Lord always does what is right. He is awesome. He is awesome!* We will marvel at what He does. and there will be no doubt that those who receive judgment will only get exactly what they deserve as properly measured by the Messiah.

One last Scripture that I want to close with. Going back to when—Jesus did not tell us when, but He tells us why. The Word of God tells us why the Lord is being what some might say as slow in His return. II Peter 3:8-10

⁸But do not overlook this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. ⁹The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance. ¹⁰But the day of the Lord will come like a thief and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed.

The Lord is being patient with sinners of this earth that He intends to call home and bring into His Kingdom.

Here is a question for those of you who are in Christ: How many of you are thankful that Jesus Christ did not come back the day before you were saved and brought into the Kingdom? There are people to be brought into the Kingdom. He is at work.

The Lord is at work bringing people to faith, and He intends to use us to help people to understand the Gospel and to build them up in the faith, so let's say, *Lord Jesus, keep our hands to the plow, and help us to understand that it is serious that all the things of this world are fleeting.* It is going to be gone in a flash, but all that is done in Jesus Name endures forever.

Let's close in a word of prayer.