Luke 17 (Part 2) • Lepers and the Day of the Lord

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Right now, we're in Luke chapter 17. We're picking it up in verse 11. So why don't you follow along as I read through the rest of the chapter? It goes like this:

"On the way to Jerusalem he was passing along between Samaria and Galilee.
12 And as he entered a village, he was met by ten lepers, who stood at a distance
13 and lifted up their voices, saying, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us." *14 When he saw them he said to them, "Go and show yourselves to the priests." And as they went they were cleansed* *15 Then one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, praising God with a loud voice;* *16 and he fell on his face at Jesus' feet, giving him thanks. Now he was a Samaritan.* *17 Then Jesus answered, "Were not ten cleansed? Where are the nine?* *18 Was no one found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?"* *19 And he said to him, "Rise and go your way; your faith has made you well."*

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

22 And he said to the disciples, "The days are coming (when you will see, excuse me) *when you will desire to see one of the days of the Son of Man, and you will not see it.* *23 And they will say to you, 'Look, there!' or 'Look, here!' Do not go out or follow them.* *24 For 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.* *25 But first he must suffer many things and be rejected by this generation.* *26 Just as it was in the days of Noah, so will it be in the days of the Son of Man.* *27 They 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.* *28 Likewise, 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.* *31 On 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.* *32 Remember Lot's wife.* *33 Whoever seeks to preserve his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life will*

keep it. [34] *I tell you, in that night there will be two in one bed. One will be taken and the other left.* [35] *There will be two women grinding together. One will be taken and the other left."* [37] *And* (he said to them, excuse me) *they said to him, "Where, Lord?" He said to them, "Where the corpse is, there the vultures will gather."* (ESV)

Stop there. Let's pray.

Lord, as we approach Your Word, as we study through these Scriptures, we pray for Your Holy Spirit to lead us into all truth. Father, we believe that Your Spirit is the means by which we are able to apprehend what is being written here.

So we ask You to open our eyes and ears, spiritually speaking, to really be able to take it in. And we pray, Lord, that You'd help us also to apply the Word, for therein is wisdom. Guide us and direct us in our study. We ask it in Jesus' precious name, amen.

This section of the chapter begins with Luke telling us that Jesus is traveling from the north in Galilee on his way down to Jerusalem. He's heading there for the last time, and when you're going that direction, you either have to go through Samaria or you have to go around it. And there were Jews who felt that to even walk through the soil that belonged to Samaria was something that would defile them, because, you remember, the Samaritans were considered half-breeds by the Jews because they were part Jew but also part Gentile. And so most people wouldn't walk through Samaria.

Jesus didn't. He wasn't most people, and he really didn't care what other people thought. And so when He came to the border of Samaria, he would just walk right through, and sometimes even enter the villages. We're told in this section that He entered a village. We're not sure if it's in Samaria or not, but either way, it says that He is met there by a group of 10 lepers. And, of course, that means that they had leprosy.

Leprosy was a very horrible and very communicable disease at that time. It's called Hansen's disease today, and it's very controllable, but it still exists in third-world countries. Places like India still even have leper colonies where people go to live so as to try to put a handle on the spread of that disease.

But if you were unlucky enough to contract leprosy, you would have to move out of your home, you'd have to leave your family and your loved ones and go live in a leper colony. And if you did venture out among the healthy people, you had to keep a very obvious distance between you and other people. And if someone started to walk toward you, that was healthy, you had to let them know that you were a leper by calling out and saying, I'm unclean. And that person

would say, oh, and then they'd walk, make a distance, and that was your responsibility if you had leprosy.

So what a horrible way to live, right? I mean, separated from your family, knowing that you're going to probably—well, most certainly—die from this disease eventually, through complications or whatever. You will be maimed. You will be disfigured, and life is going to be pretty rotten for the rest of whatever your time on this earth will be. Wonderful, right?

So here's these 10 lepers who, you'll notice in verse 12, it says they stood at a distance, which was their responsibility to do. And they called out to Jesus, saying, *"[13]...Master, have mercy on us."*

Now, it's interesting that they use the word mercy. And I think you probably know what that word means, right? That means not getting what you do deserve. And that suggests that these men believed that their leprosy was, in fact, punishment from God. And that's not hard to understand because that was a very common belief at that time.

We know that the disciples would often bring that sort of a thing up. You'll remember that they saw a man who had been born blind, and they said to Jesus, so, Lord, who is it that sinned? Was it this man or was it his parents that he was born blind? (John 9:1-3)It was just assumed. That was the case.

So these guys are probably operating under that sort of an idea: We've got leprosy; we've obviously done something to anger God, and he's punishing us. And so they're calling out, and they're saying, *"...have mercy on us."* What a horrible thing.

Do you know what's particularly horrible also? This is still going on. People—and here's what's really sad. There are many Christians that I meet who are under the idea that the difficulties they are experiencing in life are punishment from God. And when I say punishment, I'm talking about the wrath of God. I'm talking about God punishing them unto condemnation.

I had a note just this last week from a woman who doesn't attend our fellowship but who was hearing our stuff online, and she wrote. She had an interesting statement. She said to me, I believe that Jesus died on the cross for my sins, but I believe that the difficulties that I'm going through right now are a punishment from God. And I'm just ripped in my heart every time I hear that, because there's a contradiction in that statement.

You see, Jesus was punished for our sins, and when He was finished being punished for our sins, He cried out and said, *"...It is finished,"* and that means basically paid in full. (John 19:30) And so that punishment unto condemnation

is done for a believer. It's over. It's done. Jesus was punished for you. And so that means that whatever difficulty you're going through in life right now or have gone through in the past is not a punishment from God unto condemnation.

The Bible doesn't even really like to use that word for believers. It better uses the word discipline. It is discipline, and, as discipline, the Bible tells us it is an act of love. The Scripture tells us very clearly that God disciplines those whom He loves (Hebrews 12:6). And so now, when you and I go through difficult times—and we all do, every one of us—we lose loved ones. We go through challenges. We have health issues. We have interpersonal, relational issues. We have money issues, and on, and on, and on it goes. And when those things happen, the last thing out of the mouth of a believer should be, God is punishing me, because you're basically almost saying that what He did to Jesus wasn't enough. It was enough. He suffered enough.

And now whatever is going on in your life, for whatever reason it's going on—and I'm not even telling you why it's happening, good grief. Sometimes it's just because we live in a fallen world. We live in a world where junk happens. But even if the Lord is allowing something specific in your life for the purpose of discipline, we know what the purpose is.

Ultimately, it's that Christ might be formed in you, that you might be—you and I might be—formed more into the image of Christ Jesus through those difficulties, to the point where God's Word tells you and I that we're to consider any hardship as just discipline. It doesn't matter where it's coming from. Just consider it discipline. Just assume that it's discipline. Don't assume it's wrath.

Because Jesus came to save us from wrath, right? That's what Paul said to the Thessalonians: Jesus Christ who saves us from the coming wrath (1 Thessalonians 1:10). So, *"... there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus."* (Romans 8:1) Right? It doesn't—don't talk that way anymore.

If you're a believer, change your language, change your understanding. God is not condemning you. He's not punishing you under condemnation. He may be disciplining you, but if He's doing that, it's an act of love on his part so that you and I might be formed more into the image of Jesus Christ. Those are such important things to remember.

Now, notice the Lord's response to these men. It says, *"[14] When he saw them, he said to them, 'Go and show yourselves to the priests.'"* And this is really interesting because it doesn't even say, be healed. No wave of the hand, no mud. It's a weird one, but you know what I'm saying. He didn't do anything. He's just —can you imagine saying, Lord, I need to be healed, and He goes—He just says, walk away.

But it's a different—a walk away because what he's doing is He's telling them to be obedient to what we're told in Leviticus chapter 14, which is when you—when a leper is healed, they are to go to the priest to be examined, and there the priest will look to see if in fact their skin disease has cleared up and is gone. And if so, then they're required to offer a certain amount of sacrifices. And then the person is then cleared to come back into the temple and to be part of the worship community of Israel. (Leviticus 14:1-7).

And all that's good and fine. What's really fascinating about these instructions is I'm very sure that up to this point, they were rarely, if ever, used. In other words, God gave instructions back in Leviticus. He said, all right, here's the deal. If somebody has ever healed of leprosy, I was like, how often is that going to happen. Have them go to the priest, and the priest will examine them. And then if they're truly healed... da-da-da. Well, here's the interesting thing. This hasn't been happening. All of a sudden, Jesus comes on the scene, and now it's happening.

And there's all these people. Suddenly, there's this spike in people coming to the high priest and saying, yeah, he's been healed. And the priest is examining these individuals, right? And, yeah, okay. All right, you're good to go. It makes you wonder, doesn't it? That whole command back in Leviticus chapter 14 is all about the priest who's going to know for sure when Messiah is on the scene. Because those healings—that's exactly what the prophecy said Messiah was going to come and do. And who should... I mean, the high priest needs to know when Messiah is on the scene, right? It's almost like God said in Leviticus, all right, now here's the deal.

You're going to see a real spike in people coming to visit you when Messiah gets here. It's probably not going to even happen in your lifetime up until that point. But, boy, I tell you, when He gets on the scene, suddenly you're going to have a line outside your door of people wanting to be examined because they've been healed by Messiah.

Yeah, you would think if you're the high priest, you're probably going to start paying attention to stuff like that and thinking something's changed around here. Maybe the Messiah is here. Isn't it interesting that despite all the testimony that came to the priest, the high priest, he continued to reject that evidence as a sign of prophetic fulfillment. And instead denied that Jesus was, in fact, the Messiah.

So it says here, if you look at the end of verse 14, Jesus tells them to go to the high priest. And it says, *"...As they went* (in other words, as they walked away) *they were cleansed."* Isn't that interesting? Can you imagine being one of those lepers?

Your body's probably already started to experience the horrors of that disease. Their fingers would fall off, their toes would fall off. They couldn't feel them. That's what leprosy does; it kills those nerve endings. And they would get a cut or an infection, and they couldn't feel it, and they'd get infected, and they would lose—you start losing parts of your body. And now you're walking along, and suddenly you look down and you notice that your skin is remade, reborn. And what an amazing thing that is.

How would you react? Well, we learn about how one man responded. In verse 15, we're told that one of them saw that he was healed, and he decided to turn back. It's like, hey, there's already going to be a line over at the high priest anyway. So he turns back, he goes back to Jesus, and with a loud voice, he begins to praise.

And it says in verse 16, *"...he fell on his face at Jesus's feet,"* right? And Jesus said, oh, stand up. I'm just a man. Didn't do that, did he? No, that's not in there. That happened to the apostles. People fell at their feet sometimes, and you know what they said? They said, get up, I'm just a man. Jesus didn't say that because He wasn't just a man. He is God in human flesh, and He received the worship that He was given from that man.

And He basically responds here in verse 17 by saying, wait a minute, I thought there were ten guys healed. Where's the other 9? Where'd they go?; *"*[18] (Was no one in His intro) *Was no one found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?"* And so Jesus is basically highlighting the lack of gratitude, I suppose, and it's a pretty ugly thing.

We might laugh at it in YouTube videos. You can get onto YouTube and see these kids excitedly ripping open wrapping paper on a present only to burst into tears once they get it all off, saying something like, I wanted the red one! And you want to slap the kid just right through the computer, but because it's like good grief. And although it might be slightly funny with a child, it's—in an adult particularly—it's a pretty ugly thing when we've received something from the Lord, and we don't say thank you.

I think about sometimes in my own prayer life, how many times I'll list things that I'm praying about, and then we receive an answer, and I don't go back to Him even to say thank you. And I'm like, wait a minute, Paul, what are you doing here? Even when you pray a simple prayer, and then it turns out just exactly as you prayed and you wanted. I want to be more thankful, you know what I mean? I want to have a thankful heart.

He says to this man—and this is really interesting—in verse 19, He says, *"Rise and go your way; your faith has made you well."* And I read that verse, and I

thought, that's interesting in light of the fact that He had healed all 10 of them. So, in a very real sense, all 10 of them had been made well. But yet, He said specifically to this man, *"...your faith has made you well."* And I found out something interesting.

That term or that phrase, rather, *"made you well"* is one Greek word. It's a verb, and it can actually be translated to have a larger meaning than just a physical sort of a deal.

In fact, it can actually be translated has saved you; your faith has saved you. So there's something significant going on here with this man that goes beyond just physical healing and the cleansing of this leprosy. And that's pretty important to think about because I think it's possible for us to be touched by Jesus in some particular way and not be touched by Him in the way that we need the most. You know what I mean by that?

I mean, just because you've met Jesus and you are touched by Him in some sort of a healing way, whether it was physical, emotional, spiritual, or whatever, that doesn't necessarily mean that you've received everything you need to receive from Him.

Here's the point. It's wonderful. It's wonderful that these 10 men were healed of their leprosy, but if they were healed just to get, like, another 10 years or 15 or 20 years or even 30 years, and then they die in their sin, and they're just as lost as ever, then what have they gained? A few extra years to scrape around and try to make a living and deal with the issues of life as painful as they are. I mean, what—do you understand what we're talking about here?

I mean, God—He's concerned about our temporal needs, but His concerns go far deeper. He doesn't just want to put a band-aid on a big wound in our lives. That's not going to make a difference.

Let me show you something very interesting that the apostle Paul said to the church in Corinth in chapter 15. He said this:

1 Corinthians 15:19 (ESV)

If in Christ we have hope in this life only, we are of all people most to be pitied.

If in Christ we have hope in this life only, we are of all people most to be pitied.

Isn't that a fascinating verse? In other words, if Christ is your answer for this life only, then you are to be pitied more than all people. And when people come and they want prayer for whatever—prayer for my marriage, prayer for my body, prayer for my finances, prayer for family issues, prayer for my children—I

know that what they're wanting prayer for is the biggest thing on their radar right now.

But can I just tell you, that's not the biggest thing on God's radar, and it frankly shouldn't be the biggest thing on yours. The biggest thing on our radar ought to be eternity at all times, but see, that's rarely the case. And God knows that, and He's not condemning anyone for becoming fairly myopic about looking at our temporal existence. However, He does want us to lift our eyes from that sort of a situation to look beyond that.

I mean, look, if, again, if somebody comes to Jesus and they receive physical healing, and they're like, whoa, I've been healed! But they never bow the knee to Him, they never give their heart to Him, they never embrace what He did for them on the cross, so they got healed to be lost. I mean, what a sad story is that?

It goes on here, moving on. It says that the Pharisees came and plied Jesus with a question. It says in verse 20, *"Being asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come."*

Now, before we get into the answer here, we've mentioned many times that the Jews had very certain, specific expectations about the coming of the Messiah and, of course, who they knew would usher in the kingdom of God. So they're wanting to know about times. When would the kingdom of God come?

This is the same question, basically, that the disciples asked Jesus after His resurrection and just before the Holy Spirit fell at Pentecost. They said, when? When are all these things going to happen related to Israel and so forth? Remember what Jesus told them?

He said, it's not for you to know the times and seasons that God has established, and so forth (Acts 1:6-7). But this was a big deal to the Jews. When is this going to happen? Where is it going to happen? And you'll see some of that also being asked.

It's all about when the Messiah comes to usher in the kingdom. And Jesus wants them to know the kingdom. The kingdom is here. The kingdom is here. I have ushered in the kingdom. See, they were right about that. Messiah did come to usher in the kingdom, just not in a way that they expected.

Do you remember what Jesus said earlier in this study back in chapter 11? Let me put it on the screen for you. He said,

Luke 11:20 (ESV)

...if it is by the finger of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.

…if it is by the finger of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you."

In other words, I'm here, and I am showing you, and you are witnessing daily this evidence of the kingdom of God right in your midst. And so what He's doing is He's wanting them to understand that the kingdom of God is more than just what they've envisioned it to be.

And so he says to them in verse 20, as we finished that verse, he says, *"...The kingdom of God is not coming in ways that can necessarily be observed…"* right?

And what He's trying to enlarge in their understanding is the spiritual nature of the Kingdom of God. He goes on in verse 21. He says, *"nor will they say, 'Look, here it is!' or 'There!' for behold, the kingdom of God is in the midst of you."* And the kingdom of God was in the midst of them because Jesus was in the midst of them.

And then, when Jesus went to go be with the Father, the Spirit came, deposited in the church, and the kingdom of God is now operational in the church. And the kingdom of God is still in the midst of people because of you and I—or you and me. I always get that wrong.

You would be shocked how many emails I get from people around the world who correct me on my grammar. Yeah. Anyway, and all my mistakes are on recordings that just keep going for 10 to 20 years, so I can't go back and change them.

The kingdom of God is working in the hearts of people, and that's why it is very difficult to observe sometimes because you can't necessarily always see the changes on the outside of somebody. But you can see them on the inside. If you really look at somebody's life after they have come into contact with the King of kings and the Lord of lords, you're going to see a change in their life. I'm not the same man I used to be, thank heaven. And I know that God is doing a work of changing your life too, and that's the kingdom of God at work.

But if we're just walking along in a crowd of people and they don't know us from Jack Spratt, they're going to say, it's just a guy or this, but there are things going on. See, the kingdom of God can't be observed in the way that you normally would experience something like the kingdom rising in some other sort of a situation. And people, like the Jews, still can get focused or fixated on the kingdom being this.

Or I don't know how many of you guys were around or were walking with the Lord back in the nineties. But some of you might remember the Toronto

blessing. Everybody thought the kingdom of God was up in Canada. It's up in Toronto, you guys! We need to go there because that's where the kingdom is really operating. And people were flocking up to Toronto, and then it moved. It went down to Florida. I think it was Florida.

And so everybody's now down there hanging out. I got to get in on the kingdom. And Jesus says, it's not—that's not the kingdom. It's not about go there or go there, here it is. Here it is. Go catch it. The kingdom of God is within the heart. That's where He enthrones himself, right?

So we tend to miss the real activity of the kingdom because we're looking for a place, or we're looking for a dynamic. We're even looking for a movement. You know, Calvary Chapel is part of a movement, the movement of the Jesus people that took place in the late 60s and early 70s. Out of that grew Calvary Chapel, and it became this. But that's not the kingdom of God. That's not the kingdom of God. The kingdom of God is what God was doing in people's hearts and has been ever since the beginning. So we got to be careful not to miss what's really going on.

And then verse 22 is very important. I want you to take note of the first few words of the verse because it says, *"And he said to the disciples..."* Now, stop there. Let me tell you why I wanted you to take note of that. He's been having a conversation with the Pharisees. They're the ones who asked Him the question, what about the timing? What about this? And what about that? He's talking to them about that.

But then He turns to talk to his disciples. Why is that important? Well, it's important because there are times when you talk to unbelievers, and there are times that you talk to believers, and those conversations are usually very different in nature. But it takes discernment to know how to differentiate the conversation that goes on with an unbeliever and the conversation that goes on with a believer.

And I got to tell you, a lot of times I'll hear Christians talking on TV or in some article or on social media or something on the internet. And I think to myself, you need to just be quiet. Because what they'll start talking about things that people in the world don't have any concept of because they're deeply spiritual in nature. And we find that sometimes this does more harm than good.

It's important to understand a couple of things. Let me share these with you in the form of some cross-reference passages, first from 1 Corinthians chapter 2, up on the screen. This is important:

1 Corinthian 2:14 (ESV)

The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned.

The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned.

The man who does not have the Spirit of God living in his heart does not—in fact, cannot accept the things that come from the Spirit of God. You see, they're basically foolishness to him, right? And the reason he can't understand them is because they take spiritual discernment, and the only way that you and I can get spiritual discernment is through the Holy Spirit living in us and opening our hearts and minds. That's how that happens, okay? We forget that.

And so as Christians, we start talking, yapping about things that we probably shouldn't talk about, because people can't understand them, and we invite mocking and worse. Let me remind you of what Jesus said, recorded in Matthew chapter 7. He said,

Matthew 7:6 (ESV)

Do not give dogs what is holy, and do not throw your pearls before pigs, lest they trample them underfoot and turn to attack you.

Do not give dogs what is holy (because a dog can't appreciate something that's holy. And he says,)*, and do not throw your pearls before pigs* (because pigs don't understand value, right? But look at this,)*, lest they trample them underfoot and turn to attack you."* Which is even worse.

But let me tell you something: there's a lot of things that are very precious to us as believers that have been trampled underfoot because Christians weren't using the proper discernment at the time about what to talk to the world about versus what we talk to one another about in Christ. And it has always been a problem, frankly so be careful.

One of the things that Paul said when he went to Corinth was, I made up my mind while I was with you to know nothing except Christ and Him crucified (1 Corinthians 2:2).

And if you're talking to an unbeliever, you can sit and talk all day long about the gift of tongues, but that's not going to get him saved, and it's only going to confuse him. You know what I mean? And I hear it going on all the time. We're

talking about things that are just like, why? Talk about Jesus. Talk about what He did on the cross, and then make sure that those people have bowed the knee to what He did on the cross and accepted Christ as their savior.

And then once they get saved, then you can bring up all those other topics, and you're going to have this connectedness to them on a spiritual level because the Spirit will be there, opening their heart and awakening their understanding to things which they otherwise were like going, huh, and even mocking about. So those are really important things to keep in mind.

So what does Jesus say when he turns to his followers? Here's what he says. We're still in verse 22. He says*, "...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."*

Now, *"...the days of the Son of Man*" is a reference to the day of the Lord. In other words, Jesus is saying that the days are coming when you're going to really, really want me to come back, but you're not going to see me come back right away. He's preparing them that they're going to long for Him to return.

And then he goes on to warn them about false messages that people will give. Look at verse 23: *"And they will say to you, 'Look, there!' or 'Look here!'..."* And He's telling them some people are going to claim to be the Messiah or to know where the Messiah has landed.

Has that ever happened that you're aware of? Oh my. There have been all kinds of wackos who've shown up and said, I am the Messiah. Or people will tell you, oh yeah, he returned in 1945 or something, and he's in the desert, and if you join our church, you'll know all about it. And it's just wacko.

And Jesus says, no, that's actually not the way I'm going to return. Look at verse 24—or actually, the end of verse 23 says, *"...Do not go out or follow them."* And then verse 24: *"For 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."*

I don't know if you've ever been in that, a lightning storm growing up in the Midwest. I saw lots of them where you literally saw lightning begin on one horizon and go to the other. And it is a magnificent, terrifying sort of sight, but it's obvious. Particularly when it happens at night, you know what happened because it lights up everything. I mean, it's like God just turned on the light in the middle of the night, and everybody knows that we just saw lightning go from one side to the other.

Well, Jesus said that's the way His appearing is going to be. In other words, it's going to be obvious. So if somebody says to you, oh, I know Jesus came, He's

back, He's over…No, no, no! Everybody's going to know. Everybody's going to equally know when He returns.

But then He says this in verse 25: *"But first he must suffer many things and be rejected by this generation."* This was an important thing to tell the Jews, because even though the Old Testament prophets said that the Messiah would suffer, you see, the Jews didn't know how to deal with that. There are two images of Messiah in the Old Testament. You're aware of that, right? There's the image of the suffering Messiah, and there's the image of the conquering Messiah.

You guys remember what Messiah means? It literally is Anointed One. So the Jews are trying to put these pictures together and reconcile them, a suffering Messiah and a conquering Messiah. And they decided that the name Messiah went better with the conquering picture. I mean, Anointed One, how could the Anointed One also be the suffering one? And they couldn't figure it out. So what they did is they just ignored that or they explained it away—which, by the way, still happens today.

You read Isaiah chapter 53 to a Jew who is a practicing Jew, and that chapter is all about the suffering of Jesus Christ. And you know what they'll tell you? They'll say, that is a prophecy of Israel. And that's their explanation. You see, because this whole suffering Messiah thing doesn't fit their understanding of what Messiah is and what He comes to do.

And so Jesus is reminding them, but first, Messiah must suffer and be rejected, right? And then He gives an illustration—in fact, two illustrations from the past—to highlight the sudden nature of His coming.

Verse 26: *"Just as it was in the days of Noah* (So He first makes reference to the global flood)*, so will it be in the days of the Son of Man. They were eating and drinking and marrying and being given in marriage right up until the day when Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all."*

In other words, Jesus is saying that life went on as usual. Everything was just going on just like it always did, right?

And then the flood came. There was only one person, and one family, I guess, that was preparing for what was coming. And Noah is this picture of the body of Christ, because we are preparing because we know. We know what's coming. And so we shouldn't be just doing life as usual. Often Christians do, but we shouldn't be. We should—I mean, we got to do the things that life requires, but that shouldn't be the focus of our lives. Got to go to work, make money, pay my mortgage, buy a car, get married, have kids.

If that's all life is to you, then you're just like the people in Noah's day, and His coming is likely to surprise you. But if you're ready, if you're looking with your heart toward the fulfillment of the promise that Jesus Christ is coming back, then you're going to be like Noah, who's preparing. Sometimes it would be nice if He gave us a job, like, why don't you build a boat, something like that. But instead, we're supposed to be just serving the Lord, doing what He told us to do, right?

And then he uses another example here in verse 28. *"Likewise, just as it was in the days of Lot* (who was the nephew of Abraham)... *"* He says, "...(the people) *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."* Again, people were going on with normal life, just doing what came next. But destruction came so suddenly that only Lot and his family escaped.

And so the emphasis here is on readiness, having our hearts prepared, being ready for the coming of the Lord. Are you ready for Him to come? Right? Jesus says in verse 31, *"On that day, let the one who is on the housetop, with his goods in the house…*"

Don't go down and get anything, don't go back for your stuff. People tell you that. If there's a house fire, don't try to—don't run into the house and try to save something. Well, Jesus is saying it for different reasons. He then goes on to say, likewise let the one who is in the field, out working in the field don't turn back and go home and get the things that you need.

And then He says, this in verse 32*, "Remember Lot's wife."* And so this whole exchange is all to say, essentially, don't be so connected to this world that you want to go back and save something from it. There's nothing to be saved, right? The new thing is coming. Jesus is coming back. Don't worry about the things of this world, and don't look back longingly like Lot's wife.

The reason she was killed on that day was because, in her heart, she longed to go back to Sodom and Gomorrah, to those places of great wickedness and evil. Even though God was judging those towns for their wickedness, she longed to go back.

And so Jesus is speaking to you and I about not being so tethered to this world that it holds us back. And that's why some of us don't think much about His coming very often—because we are so tethered. We are so connected to this world. We are, in a sense, like Lot's wife.

So He says in verse 34, *"I tell you, in that night there will be two in one bed. One will be taken, and the other left."* Can you imagine what that's going to be

like? You've got a husband and a wife, and one of them knows Jesus as their Savior and the other one doesn't. And the trumpet is going to sound when Jesus returns for His church, and one of those people is going to be taken, and the other one's going to be left all alone.

He says, *"[35] There will be two women grinding together* (talking about grinding their, basically, meal prep) *and one will be taken, and the other left."* It's a pretty crazy sort of picture, isn't it?

So all that causes the disciples to ask Jesus a question. And again, this is the focus on the locality: *"[37] And they said to him, "Where, Lord?"* And it's really the same question that the Pharisees asked earlier: When is the kingdom of God going to…? And they're saying, where is this going to...? They want to know the central locale, but they're thinking small.

And so Jesus responds by basically just giving a figure of speech. And He basically says, hey, when you look up in the sky and you see vultures circling, you know that there's a carcass out there somewhere, and that's where the vultures are going to gather. And it's really just a way of saying, wherever there's wickedness in the world, that's where judgment is going to happen.

They're asking where, but they're thinking on a very small scale. But later on, they would see that this is so much bigger than just Israel and even the neighboring countries. They weren't really thinking on a global sort of scale, but they would come to think that way.

In fact, later on—and I don't know how many years later—but Peter actually writes about the day of the Lord, and he even goes beyond a global scale. Let me show you this from 2 Peter chapter 3. He says,

2 Peter 3:10-13 (ESV)

But 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. Since all these things are this to be dissolved, what sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God…

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holiness and godliness waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God…" Isn't that interesting?

Now, what's Peter doing? He's talking about the day of the Lord. He skipped all the way past the millennial kingdom to when the new heaven and the new earth will be created. Let me give you just a quick timeline. Any day now—and the world is set, the stage is set—for the Lord to return for his church. And I believe that's going to happen first. I believe that the trumpet is going to sound, and, as Paul says to the Thessalonians, we will be caught up to meet the Lord in the air (1 Thessalonians 4:17).

And I believe that is going to usher in the great tribulation period, and that will go on for seven years, and it will be a terrible time of wrath poured out upon the face of the earth. It is referred to in the Old Testament as the day of Jacob's trouble, meaning that Israel is going to go through a very difficult time also during the tribulation period. In fact, toward the end of the tribulation, all the nations of the earth will amass to wipe Israel off the globe. And that is when Jesus will return at the end of the tribulation to the earth.

You see, Jesus doesn't return to the earth until He comes to save Israel. He comes first for the church, but not to earth. The Bible says we will meet him in the air, right? So we meet the Lord in the air first. That is not technically His second coming; that's the rapture.

And then, at the end of the tribulation, Jesus returns to the earth, fights for Israel. Israel turns to faith in Him as a collective nation, and He establishes his throne on Mount Zion and begins to usher in that period of time that we refer to as the millennial kingdom—a period of 1,000 years where there will be unprecedented peace and prosperity on the earth.

But at the end of that 1,000 years, the Bible tells us in Revelation that Satan will be released one final time to deceive the hearts of men. There will be one final attempt to overthrow God, which will be put down very quickly. And at the end of that battle, the current earth and the current heavens will be destroyed to make way for a new heaven and a new earth, which will be merged together.

And the Bible says at the end of Revelation, God will live with man completely at that time. (Revelation 20:7-10 and Revelation 21:1-4) That's what Peter was referencing in his day of the Lord.

When you see that in the scripture about the day of the Lord, don't think that it's talking about a 24-hour period. In fact, the day of the Lord really begins at the rapture of the church and goes really through the Millennial Kingdom. So that's a long day. I mean, you thought you had a long day at work. This is a really long day, but it's all referred to as the day of the Lord.

It’s something that we are looking forward to as the church because it begins with us as the bride being caught up to be with our groom and that seven-year period of the wedding banquet, during which time the earth will be having a real hard time. Let’s stand together.

We’re going to have some people up front here to pray for you for whatever needs might be going on in your life. I would encourage you to take advantage of that, but I would encourage you more than anything to make sure you’re not like some of those lepers who just got touched by the Lord today or were given something from Him and then dashed away. That would be very sad indeed.

If you have not bowed the knee to Jesus Christ, you need to do it today. And it just basically means, Lord, I accept what you did for me on the cross. I confess my sin and I ask you to forgive me, and I ask you to make me new, and just let Him do the rest. That’s not, by the way, when you start trying to be a Christian; hopefully you’ll never start trying to be a Christian, and you’ll just let God do that work in you that only He can do anyway. That’s the day when you start yielding to God to let Him do that work.

And I pray that if that day hasn’t been yours yet, it would be today because we don’t know—the trumpet could sound anytime, you guys. The stage is set. Everything prophetically that really needs to be put in place is there, at least for the church to be caught away. So don’t delay.

Heavenly Father, thank you so much for Your Word and for the reminders we get from it. We put our lives at your feet. We pray, Lord God, for Your Spirit to guide us, to direct us, to fill us with understanding. We pray that You would just continue to teach us the things we need to learn so that we might walk in understanding.

And Father, I pray for anybody here who needs to just surrender their life to Jesus, that they would do it today, even if they’re not even sure what that means, just to yield themselves to Jesus, to confess their sin.

Lord, I’m a sinner, but I know that you died to save me from my sin, to pay my price. I accept that today. I accept what you did for me on the cross. Fill me with Your Spirit, Lord. Let them pray those prayers just in their heart today.