

## 58. Jesus Taught About the Kingdom

In our last topic, we saw that we want to teach our physical and spiritual children the importance of being thankful for what Jesus has done in their lives. Jesus healed ten lepers and only the Samaritan returned to give thanks to Jesus. We saw that Jesus told him that he had received spiritual life as well as physical healing. In our topic today, we are going to see that Jesus answered a question of some Pharisees who asked when the kingdom of God would come.

In Luke 17:20-24, we read, “Now when He was asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, He answered them and said, ‘The kingdom of God does not come with observation; nor will they say, “See here!” or “See there!” For indeed, the kingdom of God is within you.’ Then He said to the disciples, ‘The days will come when you will desire to see one of the days of the Son of Man, and you will not see it. And they will say to you, “Look here!” or “Look there!” Do not go after *them* or follow *them*. For as the lightning that flashes out of one *part* under heaven shines to the other *part* under heaven, so also the Son of Man will be in His day.’” The Pharisees and many of the other Jews were looking for the Messiah to come and set up the kingdom of God.

However, they were thinking of a political kingdom. They wanted a Messiah who would come and conquer the Romans and set up a kingdom on this earth. Jesus told the Pharisees that they would not see such a kingdom during their time. Instead, Jesus said that the kingdom of God is within. We will see that Jesus does answer the questions of His disciples about a future kingdom; but at that time, He told the Pharisees that His plan for the present was a very different kind of kingdom. Jesus had told Nicodemus what was necessary to enter the kingdom of God when He said in John 3:5, “Jesus answered, ‘Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.’” Here, we see that Jesus said the kingdom of God is only for those who have spiritual life. That is why Romans 14:17 says, “For the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.”

Jesus later explained to His disciples some of the things that would happen in the future on the earth before Jesus sets up the earthly kingdom promised in Revelation 20:1-6. Jesus said that the days would come in the future when the ones who trust in Jesus will long for Him to return to the earth. In that day, there will be many false leaders who will tell the people to look here or there for the Son of Man. Jesus warned in Matthew 24:23-24, “‘Then if anyone says to you, “Look, here is the Christ!” or “There!” do not believe *it*. For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect.’” Jesus said not to be deceived and follow such false leaders. Jesus said that the true coming of the Son of Man will be as sudden as a flash of lightning. No one will be able to prepare when He comes because His coming is sudden.

Jesus went on to explain to His disciples that He must first be rejected. Luke 17:25-30 says, “‘But first He must suffer many things and be rejected by this generation. And as it was in the days of Noah, so it will be also in the days of the Son of Man: They ate, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all. Likewise as it was also in the days of Lot: They ate, they drank, they bought,

they sold, they planted, they built; but on the day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed *them* all. Even so will it be in the day when the Son of Man is revealed.” Jesus said that He would be rejected by that very generation. This rejection had been predicted by Isaiah. Isaiah 53:3 says, “He is despised and rejected by men, a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And we hid, as it were, *our* faces from Him; He was despised, and we did not esteem Him.” Jesus knew that His rejection was coming very soon.

Then, Jesus went on to say that at the time of the coming of the Son of Man to rule, the world would be like it was in the days of Noah. Genesis 6:5 describes the days of Noah when that verse says, “Then the Lord saw that the wickedness of man *was* great in the earth, and *that* every intent of the thoughts of his heart *was* only evil continually.” Here, we see that the hearts of the people were filled with evil. At the same time, the people in the days of Noah were making no preparation for the future. Matthew 24:37-39 says, ““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.” They were doing all the things of normal life when suddenly the flood came and destroyed them all.

The same thing happened in the time of Lot. The people of Sodom were doing all of the normal things that people do in their lives. However, that suddenly changed the day the angel took Lot out of the city of Sodom. Genesis 19:23-25 says, “The sun had risen upon the earth when Lot entered Zoar. Then the Lord rained brimstone and fire on Sodom and Gomorrah, from the Lord out of the heavens. So He overthrew those cities, all the plain, all the inhabitants of the cities, and what grew on the ground.” Jesus said that just as people were unprepared in both the time of Noah and the time of Lot, people would be unprepared on the day when the Son of Man is revealed to rule.

That is why Jesus went on to talk about the need for people to be prepared. Luke 17:31-37 says, ““In that day, he who is on the housetop, and his goods *are* in the house, let him not come down to take them away. And likewise the one who is in the field, let him not turn back. Remember Lot's wife. Whoever seeks to save his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life will preserve it. I tell you, in that night there will be two *men* in one bed: the one will be taken and the other will be left. Two *women* will be grinding together: the one will be taken and the other left. Two *men* will be in the field: the one will be taken and the other left.’ And they answered and said to Him, ‘Where, Lord?’ So He said to them, ‘Wherever the body is, there the eagles will be gathered together.’”

When the antichrist sets up his image in the temple, the Jews will not have time to prepare for persecution. Matthew 24:15-18 says, ““Therefore when you see the “*abomination of desolation*,” spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place’ (whoever reads, let him understand), ‘then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. Let him who is on the housetop not go down to take anything out of his house. And let him who is in the field not go back to get his clothes.’” We see that the Jews will have no time to get ready when the antichrist sets up his image in the temple.

That is why Jesus told the disciples to remember Lot's wife. Genesis 19:24-26 says, "Then the Lord rained brimstone and fire on Sodom and Gomorrah, from the Lord out of the heavens. So He overthrew those cities, all the plain, all the inhabitants of the cities, and what grew on the ground. But his wife looked back behind him, and she became a pillar of salt." Lot, his wife and two daughters were fleeing from the judgment that God brought on the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. Lot's wife paused just long enough to look back and as a result she did not escape the judgment but was destroyed with Sodom. The same thing will happen to any Jews who hesitate when the antichrist sets up his image in the temple.

When the antichrist sets up his image in the temple, people will be required to take the mark of the antichrist in order to be able to buy food. Revelation 13:16-18 says, "He causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, to receive a mark on their right hand or on their foreheads, and that no one may buy or sell except one who has the mark or the name of the beast, or the number of his name. Here is wisdom. Let him who has understanding calculate the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man: His number is 666." Most people will take that mark because they think that the mark will save their lives. Instead, all who take that mark will experience eternal judgment. God spoke through John in Revelation 14:9-10 and warned, "Then a third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, 'If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives *his* mark on his forehead or on his hand, he himself shall also drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out full strength into the cup of His indignation. He shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb.'" Judgment will face all who take the mark of the antichrist.

When Jesus comes to rule in the earthly kingdom, this judgment will come on all unbelievers on the earth. Those who are prepared for His coming will be left on the earth to enter into His earthly kingdom. Those who are unprepared will experience eternal judgment. The disciples asked when that time would come that the unbelievers would be taken off the earth. Jesus said that the time of that sudden judgment will happen when the eagles gather where the body is. Matthew 24:28-30 says, "For wherever the carcass is, there the eagles will be gathered together. 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. 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." Jesus will come at the very time when the antichrist is ready to completely destroy all Jews that still remain on the earth. We want to help our physical and spiritual children understand the need to warn all people of the need to be ready because each of these things will happen suddenly and there will be no time to prepare. People must be prepared in advance because they will have no time to prepare when judgment comes. May the Lord richly bless you as you help you children learn to warn others to be prepared at all times.