

# The Day of the King

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[ 0 : 00 ] Morning. Our first reading is from Daniel chapter 7, starting at verse 9, which is on page 900. So verse 9. And 10,000 times 10,000 stood before him. The court sat in judgment and the books were opened.

I looked then because of the sound of the great words that the horn was speaking. And as I looked, the beast was killed and its body destroyed and given over to be burned with fire.

As for the rest of the beasts, their dominion was taken away, but their lives were prolonged for a season and a time. 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. And 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. Today's second reading is taken from the book of Luke, chapter 17, verses 20 to 37, which, as Ben just said, can be found on page 1056 of the Church Bibles.

[ 1 : 42 ] That's Luke, chapter 17, starting at verse 20, on page 1056. Being asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, he, Jesus, answered them, The kingdom of God is not coming with signs to be observed, nor will they say, look, here it is, or there.

For behold, the kingdom of God is in the midst of you. And 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.

And they will say to you, look there, or look here. Do not go out or follow them. 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.

But first he must suffer many things and be rejected by this generation. Just as it was in the days of Noah, so will it be in the days of the Son of Man.

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. Likewise, just as it was in the days of Lot, they were eating and drinking, buying and selling, planting and building.

[ 3 : 08 ] But on the day when Lot went out from Sodom, fire and sulphur rained from heaven and destroyed them all. So will it be on the day when the Son of Man is revealed.

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.

Remember Lot's wife. Whoever seeks to preserve his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life will keep it. I tell you, in that night there will be two in one bed.

One will be taken and the other left. There will be two women grinding together. One will be taken and the other left. And they said to him, Where, Lord?

He said to them, Where the corpse is, there the vultures will gather. Well, good morning. Please do keep that passage open. As Ben said, my name is Andy, Acting Lead Pastor or Caretaker Manager, as the youth group like to say.

[ 4 : 16 ] Let's pray together as we start. Heavenly Father, we thank you for your word. We thank you that you speak to us. You have not left us in the dark. Please help us to listen to you now.

Amen. I wonder what you are longing for at the moment. Perhaps a warm house, five minutes peace, maybe to get through the month.

Maybe it's some security in an uncertain area of life. Perhaps a particular someone to become a Christian. In our passage this morning, did you spot it?

That Jesus gives us something to long for, something to desire. Verse 22. If you look down, the days are coming when you will desire to see one of the days of the Son of Man.

Jesus expects his followers to desire to see Jesus on his throne, ruling in God's earthly kingdom.

[ 5 : 26 ] Now, the coming of God's kingdom is a big issue of this section of Luke's Gospel that we've been thinking about, started last week, and it'll continue all the way up till Easter. And it was raised there in verse 20 from the Pharisees, being asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come.

Jesus answered them. And so if you remember our exam question from last week, has the kingdom of God come? A, yes, B, no, C, other.

Last week we saw part one of the answer, didn't we? Yes. God's kingdom has come because God's king has come. Salvation is available through faith in the king.

And that was shown in the case of that Samaritan leper who was healed and came to Jesus, fell on his face, at Jesus' feet, and was saved. Well, this week is part B of the answer.

No. God's kingdom hasn't come fully yet. Daniel 7, that was read earlier, speaks about the judgment of earthly kings and kingdoms and the Son of Man coming to rule God's everlasting kingdom on earth.

[ 6 : 39 ] And that is still to come. But it will come. Did you spot that Jesus calls himself the Son of Man throughout these verses to make the point that he is the person who's going to do all this?

But not in the timing that was expected. You see, Jesus turns this week from, well, last week speaking to the Pharisees, this week to speak into his disciples, his followers, explaining more about the coming kingdom.

And what Jesus says to his disciples then is exactly what he says to us now. Jesus wants us to desire the days of the Son of Man.

He wants us to long for and fix our eyes on his coming. But also to be on guard for the dangers that come now as we await God's kingdom to fully come in the future.

Well, if you have a handout on the back of the service sheet to follow online, on the screen as well. First thing then, the Son of Man is coming. God's kingdom is coming.

[ 7 : 47 ] The Son of Man is coming. First point, it will be unmistakable. Don't be deceived. Verse 22. And he said to his 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.

Now, given what they saw Jesus do on earth, it's no surprise that the disciples are longing for more of that in the future, to enjoy one of those kingdom days.

But Jesus gives a strong hint here that his return won't be in the disciples' lifetime. And goes on to warn them and not to allow their desire lead them into error.

So he says, verse 23, they will say to you, look there or look here. Don't go out. Do not go out or follow them. Jesus worried they might be misled by claims that the Son of Man has already returned.

God's kingdom is already here fully and finally. And so just as bad as thinking last week that the kingdom of God hasn't come at all is thinking that it's already fully here and there's nothing else to look forward to.

[ 9 : 06 ] Lots of claims over the past 2,000 years of people saying Jesus has already shown up. The Mormons quite famously. It was also a problem in New Testament times.

If you cast your mind back to 2 Timothy and growth group last term, Paul writes to Timothy to tell them that some were claiming the resurrection had already happened. That there was nothing else to look forward to.

The final day has come and it actually destroys people's faith. People say, Jesus says, don't be deceived. And related to this is the claim, well, to know exactly when Jesus will return.

Many of us may remember Harold Camping. He was a guy who first predicted that Jesus' return would occur on or about the September 6th, 1994, my ninth birthday.

But that failed to occur. His revised date was September 29th and then October 2nd. In 2005, he then predicted it to be May 21st, 2011.

[ 10 : 14 ] And when that failed, he retired from public life. Jesus is saying, some will be around who are only too glad to feed fantasy, to stir up hype.

But don't let the desire for the days of the Son of Man, that heavenly kingdom that is coming, lead you into all sorts of weird, wild speculations or even be open to them.

Now, Jesus provides the corrective for this in verse 24. When the Son of Man comes, you will know it. It will be unmistakable.

So verse 24. For as lightning flashes and lights up the sky from one side to the other, so will the Son of Man be in his day. Perhaps in London with our light pollution, our blackout blinds and earplugs, it's possible to miss a lightning storm.

It still manages to get through, doesn't it? But, not if you're sailing in the middle of the ocean. If you're camping in the middle of nowhere on Duke and Venerbah or something.

[11:28] Or if you're on a plane in a lightning storm. You don't miss it then. And so Jesus is saying the coming of God's kingdom, the return of the Son of Man, will be like those times when lightning flashes and lights up the whole horizon from end to end.

Public, visible, unmistakable. No one is going to stand there and ask, do you know, I wonder if this is the second coming. It will be unmistakable.

And so as a consequence, we don't need to worry. We don't need to be anxious or desperate to try and work out if it's already happened or when it's going to happen. Because when it comes, Jesus said, it will be unmissable, unmistakable.

But no sooner does Jesus speak of his no doubts about it glorious return that he inserts this customary caution that he often does. Verse 25, But first he, the Son of Man, must suffer many things and be rejected by this generation.

This is the divine plan. It must be this way and this is the proper order for Jesus, suffering and then glory.

[12:44] But that's also the path that Jesus will go on to lay out for his disciples in verse 33 when we get there. suffering than glory. Well, if the first danger is thinking about the coming of God's kingdom is deception, the second is distraction which is Jesus' next point.

It will be unexpected. Don't be distracted. The coming of the Son of Man will be unexpected. Don't be distracted. You see, Jesus is clear as we've been seeing throughout our service and our time this morning, there will come a time when judgment will fall on this earth and this world will end.

The final whistle will be blown. The final curtain will come down. It will be put your pens down and stop writing time. And just like my wife's birthday, it will be an unexpected day that will take people by surprise.

Have a look at verse 26. Just as it was in the days of Noah, so will it be in the days of the Son of Man. 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.

Likewise, just as it was in the days of Lot, they were eating and drinking, buying and selling, planting and building. But on the day when Lot went out from Sodom, fire and sulfur rained from heaven and destroyed them all.

[14:17] So will it be on the day when the Son of Man is revealed. Jesus points to two examples from the Old Testament of days of judgment when God's judgment fell.

He points to the day of Noah from Genesis 6 to 9 and then he points to the days of Lot, Abraham's nephew from Genesis 19. And those two days have something in common with each other and the day when the Son of Man will come.

And that being that on that day everybody was just carrying on as normal. You see, as Noah and the family entered the ark in their back garden, well over the fence, Rita and Roy were gardening. On the other side, Pat and Janelle are getting ready for their son's wedding. and over the back fence, Sean is having a barbecue with his mates with a few cans.

And when the flood came, it was an unexpected interruption of normal life. And as Lot was fleeing from Sodom, as he was leaving, Lot were commuting in from the Sodom suburbs.

[15:37] The underground was packed with people trying not to make eye contact with each other, off to do business, buying and selling. And then the fire came. It was an interrupted, unexpected interruption of normal life.

Well, let's not misunderstand what Jesus is saying. It wasn't totally unexpected because they hadn't been warned. Lot warned people of the judgment to come and tried to get people to come with him. In the story of Noah, there's a whopping great big ark in the middle of a landlocked country that spoke of a flood that is to come. And there's nothing wicked in these activities in themselves.

He's saying it's not wrong to buy, it's not wrong to eat and sell. But the point Jesus is making is that those things were the sum total of their lives.

And the reason they were utterly unprepared is because they were just totally absorbed in their own interests living for this world. And because of that, the flood in Noah's time and the fire and sulfur in

Lot caught them by surprise and destroyed them all.

[16:49] that's how it will be when the Son of Man is revealed. And I think the biggest danger for us here in Dulwich is not so much deception but this distraction and attachment as we'll come on to.

It's easy to assume that those who don't follow Jesus are always preoccupied with their own stuff. but it's also a danger for followers of Jesus too, isn't it? We are liable to be so taken up with getting through school, passing exams, going to work, taking the kids to clubs, running the clubs, scrolling through Instagram, mowing the lawn, getting your hair cut, paying the orthodontist, opening ISIS, getting vaccinations, that it is like we're living in Sodom.

And it is this frenzy pace of life that most of us feel of one thing after another that means we can lose sight of what's coming.

And Jesus says, disciples, don't let that happen with you. And so it's wonderful when we meet to pray together. It's wonderful when we meet together this morning, when we meet in our growth groups to think about heaven in this term.

It's wonderful to encourage one another to keep fixing our eyes on that ultimate future. There's a couple who used to live in Dulwich.

[18:23] They had a sign in their kitchen that just said, maybe today, question mark. So whenever they made a cup of tea, they were reminded the day is coming when the Son of Man will be revealed.

Similarly, one friend goes through his diary and writes in Jesus' return, question mark, on random days in the year ahead.

Not to guess, but so that when he looks at his future plans, that he wouldn't get distracted by those plans, that the things in this life, but fixing his eyes on the final whistle.

And so, yes, it's kids need to go to school, we need to work, we need to eat and drink. I told, as I said this week, if you don't go to school, I get a fine.

So those things are good. But amidst the busyness of life, school, work, ferrying the kids around, parties, investments, holidays, DIY, making plans, we're not to lose sight of what's coming.

[19:29] We're not to let those things be the sum total of our lives. But instead, remember the coming of the Son of Man. It will be an unexpected interruption.

Don't be distracted. We're linked to the idea of distraction in this world is the idea of attachment to this world. And so, thirdly and finally, the coming of the Son of Man, it will be revealing.

Don't be attached, it will be revealing. Don't be attached. Jesus gives two pictures of the urgency that should grip a disciple when the Son of Man is revealed.

So verse 31, on that day, let the one who is on the housetop with his goods in the house not come down and take them away.

And likewise, let the one who is in the field not turn back. When the Son of Man is revealed, it will also reveal our hearts.

[20:32] There will be people on the tops of the houses, on the balcony, maybe enjoying a nice glass of wine. And they see the unmistakable return of Jesus, but rather than run towards him as they ought, they run to the house to try and gather the things their life has been about.

Same for those in the field. When he comes, they'll be turning back, not turning to Jesus. Jesus is pressing us here on our affections, our hearts, where they are.

You see, if the coming of God's kingdom really matters to us, well, it should lead us to sit loose to everything else. And so Jesus says in verse 32, as a warning, remember Lot's wife.

She was someone whose heart was vividly revealed when judgment fell on the town of Sodom with Lot and their two daughters. She lived in Sodom, a town riddled with all sorts of sin.

And God graciously revealed to Lot that judgment was going to fall and basically dragged him out of the town along with his family and led them towards safety. But let me read what happened next on Genesis 19.

[21:46] The sun had risen on the earth when Lot came to Zah. Then the Lord rained on Sodom and Gomorrah sulfur and fire from the Lord out of heaven.

And he overthrew those cities and all the valley and all the inhabitants of the cities and what grew on the ground. But Lot's wife behind him looked back and she became a pillar of salt.

Lot's wife was being led away from judgment and towards salvation. But she was so in love with Sodom that even though she was being led away from judgment she couldn't help but stop and look back over her shoulder.

And in that moment it became very clear where her desires were. She looked back she was caught up in the judgment and perished. I don't know when you were last interrupted by a fire alarm at work or in a shop or somewhere like that.

I don't know if you were a fire marshal actually if you get to wear one of those high vis jackets with a little bit of power. Crucially you're told to just leave straight away.

[ 23 : 02 ] Don't get your stuff. Don't go back in to get anything until it's safe to do so. And those warnings are real aren't they?

A few years ago Wendy Rybold 44 years old tragically died in a house fire in America. She initially got out but went back in to get her mobile phone and didn't make it out again.

That was Lot's wife. A heart that was so caught up in Sodom that she looked back and was caught in the judgment. the day when the Son of Man comes back it will be revealing.

It will show where our hearts really are and where they lie and where people have invested in their lives or where they invested their life full stop.

And so Jesus says remember Lot's wife remember Lot's wife and get your life rightly ordered now as a consequence. Verse 33 Jesus says whoever seeks to preserve his life will lose it but whoever loses his life will keep it.

[ 24 : 14 ] The problem for so many people is they think that this life is all there is. Maybe that's your view here this morning. The comedian Ricky Gervais said the last time he hosted the Golden Globes he says we're all going to die soon and there's no sequel.

Well that mindset means every moment matters doesn't it? because every moment is like a grain of sand trickling through the hourglass of our lives and that is essentially the YOLO attitude.

YOLO standing for you only live once. And so Jesus says if that's you if you want to preserve your life like that well then ultimately on that final day you will lose your life.

Shut out from God's kingdom forever. forever. But for the Christian there's a different world view that this life is not all there is. This life effectively is our spare life if I can put it like that.

And we look forward to the days of the Son of Man being in Jesus' perfect physical kingdom with nothing that spoils. And most excitingly of all being in Jesus' presence forever.

[ 25 : 27 ] That is what the disciples are longing for. that is what we should long for. And because the Christian is certain of that future well that in fact impacts the present.

It means standing shoulder to shoulder now with Jesus that even if it looks like suffering like him Jesus suffered and rejected in his generation it will be the same for us.

And again let me say it's just it's not that we withdraw to some kind of monastic existence living in caves we're only allowed to eat bread and water and you're not allowed to go on holiday but far from it we get to enjoy these things in life now arguably all the more because we know they're all from God and we can praise him for them.

But when we remember the ultimate future we are able to hold those things in a loose hand. It's okay it's okay if we don't get it. we don't need to preserve them we can be willing to give them up whether that's money ambitions careers and indeed or use them for the advance of the gospel that is what those are for children how we should bring up our children and modelling it to them in the decisions that we make.

And so it's such an encouragement to see people here do that be it with money time energy making those costly decisions in order to serve Jesus in a particular way.

[ 26 : 59 ] Among us over the years there are people who've had to restructure their week dropped a day at work to be trained in gospel ministry and lots of us are in our jobs everyday lives seeking to share the gospel share Jesus with our friends and colleagues and Jesus says that is the right way to live the world would say we're losing our lives it's pointless you're wasting your time YOLO but be encouraged Jesus says we will end up keeping our lives but Jesus is also crystal clear on the warning seeking to preserve our lives now living attached to this world will ultimately lead to us losing our lives in eternity and putting ourselves under the judgment of God and when God's kingdom fully comes it will be a day of division on even the most intimate levels verse 34

I tell you in that night there will be two in one bed one will be taken and the other left there will be two women grinding together one will be taken and the other left now a whole series of novels and films called left behind has been based on these verses with some kind of wacky ideas really that there will become a time where God's people are suddenly going to get sucked into the air and disappear like there's people on a plane and the pilot turns to look at the co-pilot and they're gone

that kind of thing but that's I don't want to get bogged down with that I think that's a misreading of this verse and verses like this and Revelation but the point here really is that two people are going to be working together and on the day of judgment they'll have two different destinations there'll be two people sharing a bed husband and wife when the son of man comes and they'll end up in different places some of us are currently painfully aware of that that close proximity to believers be it a spouse or a parent or a child it doesn't affect someone's salvation what matters as Jesus says last week in chapter 17 verse 19 is whether we have personal faith in the king the son of man is coming has the kingdom of God come well yes the kingdom of God has come because the king has come salvation is available and we are to respond rightly like that healed leper coming to Jesus in faith falling on our faces before him this week has the king of God come well not fully yet no that we are to long for that future to desire it and to not be deceived his coming will be unmistakable and in that frantic pace of life

Jesus says don't be distracted keep looking to that future day remember Lot's wife and don't be too attached to this world but be encouraged Jesus says when we come to faith in Jesus and fix our eyes on him and enduring the suffering and the sacrifices that come with it will be like losing our lives now in the world's eyes but we all keep our lives in eternity when the son of man is revealed let me lead us in prayer heavenly father please help us to see the encouragements and the warnings here please help us to see the encouragements that when we lose our life now when we make sacrifices now because of your coming kingdom we will end up keeping it keeping our lives and please help us to see the warnings now of remembering

Lot's wife being too attached to this world that we don't look forward to Jesus and we'll be caught out when he comes please help us as we make decisions now in light of that future coming and to fix our eyes on that day amen amen take care of at on that July now of that year there's a gathering that ■■ man love