

Straight Talk About The Second Coming

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[0 : 00] Okay. A generation ago, an old school dad and his son were having a conversation. His son had just got his driver's license, freshly minted.

And he was having a conversation. They were having a conversation about the family car. The son wanted to see if he could start driving the family car. And so the dad offered him a deal.

Well, maybe you offered your 16-year-old son a similar kind of a deal. I don't know. But he said it this way. He said, son, if you will study your Bible lesson every week.

This was for Sunday school. Study your Bible lesson every week. If you can raise your grades from a C average to a B average. If you can make sure that you do all the chores that you're assigned to do throughout the week.

And if you get a haircut, we'll talk. So the son went about doing all of this. And he put himself into his Bible lessons.

[1 : 03] And he was reading and studying. And he actually went to work on getting his grades up. And he was successful in doing that. And he was faithful in getting the chores done around the house.

But he hadn't gotten his haircut yet. And his dad noticed. And he said, son, I've noticed that you've been studying your Bible lesson.

That's awesome. And I've also noticed that your grade average has gone up from C to B. And it's rising. And you're putting the effort in there. It's great. And you're keeping up with all the chores.

But you didn't get your hair cut yet. What's going on with that? And so the son said, well, dad, I've been, you know, as you know, I've been reading my Bible. And as I read in the Bible, I can see there that Moses, Moses had long hair.

And actually, I saw Samson in the Bible. He had long hair. Matter of fact, he was prized for having long hair. That was his strengths. And don't you know, dad, that John the Baptist was known for his long hair and a few other things.

[2 : 11] And actually, Bible scholars tell us that even perhaps Jesus wore his hair in a long style. And his dad took note of that.

And you might have thought, well, maybe his son got him on this. And he said, yes, son, you know, you're correct. But Moses and John the Baptist and Samson and Jesus, they probably all did have long hair.

But you'll also notice if you read your Bible that everywhere they went, they walked. So the young man received an education that day that he was not expecting.

And the Pharisees, if you are familiar with the Gospels, as we make our way through the Gospels, were used to, at this point, receiving education, an education that they weren't expecting.

And that's going to happen at the beginning of our text today. We're in John chapter 17. And they're going to ask Jesus a question. And at first, it's like, okay, that's a legitimate question.

[3 : 28] But Jesus teaches them something that they weren't quite ready for. They were asking, hey, Jesus, when will the kingdom arrive? When is that going to happen?

That's an interesting question. Lots of folks have questions concerning that. And the way that Jesus answers that question, he does so in a way that they don't expect.

And then from there, he turns his attention to teach his disciples. This is not just the 12 now. The Gospels are keen on letting us know.

If he's talking to just the 12, it mentions to the apostles. If it uses the word disciples, it's the larger following. Not necessarily all the onlookers and curiosity seekers, but the ones who have made the commitment that where Jesus goes, I'm going, because he is the Messiah.

Yeah, they're convinced of that, at least somewhat at this point. But here's our text. And here's the question that comes from the Pharisees. 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, which is an interesting way of saying it.

[4 : 39] And he goes on and says, nor will they say, look, here it is or there. For behold, now get a load of this statement. The kingdom of God is in the midst of you.

And this is, in some respects, a confusing phrase, especially since some of the translations say the kingdom of God is within you instead of in the midst of you or in your midst is probably the best way of saying that.

And so because there are some translations, and it's usually the older school translations that say it that way, the kingdom of God is within you, people have kind of said, well, what that means is that it's an inner spiritual truth and it's inside you in the same way that the Holy Spirit has taken up residence, and that's what that means.

And that's not what that means. Jesus is literally saying he's standing right in front of you. He's standing right in the middle of you.

They're probably the group is standing around him. And Jesus is saying, look, the kingdom of God is not what you think. And matter of fact, the kingdom of God is standing right here in your midst right now.

[5 : 54] They still didn't get that. And do we even get that? Because we think the kingdom of God, we think of what that is. We think of when is that going to happen, those kinds of questions.

But on your notes now, when it comes to understanding the kingdom of God, let's start with this today. The kingdom of God is more of a who than a what. That's a big thing because even when we think of heaven or the kingdom of heaven, the kingdom of heaven is absolutely more about a who than a what.

What makes heaven heaven is not the streets of gold and the gates of pearl and all those things that we think about. But what makes heaven heaven is the fact that he is there, that God is there, that Jesus is on the throne there.

That's what makes heaven heaven. And so it's more of a who than a what. And therefore, we, when we're talking about the kingdom of God, should focus more on the king than the kingdom.

It's more about the king than the kingdom, okay? Make sure that we're in right relationship with the king than we have all of our P's and Q's about the kingdom, okay?

[7 : 06] Secondly, that we should care more, focus more about the giver, more on the giver than the gift. A lot of times, you know, we have our prayer lists and we want answers to prayer, and we're more concerned about the things that he's going to provide for us, the way that he's going to take care of us physically.

When we should be, our focus should be on the one who gives the gifts. That that's where, if that's where our attention is, God's going to take care of the rest.

This is classic Jesus teaching in the Sermon on the Mount, Matthew chapter 6, that if we seek first his kingdom, his righteousness, actually a relationship with him, he's going to take care of all of this stuff.

When he talks about seeking his kingdom, it means seeking him. That's what that's about. And again, I would say it this way, that we should focus more on the healer than the healing.

That even when we're in need of physical healing, that it's not even so much about that as it is the healer.

[8 : 08] Because what do we do if we receive the healing and miss out on the healer? We saw that last week with the ten lepers that were healed of their leprosy.

And only the one came back, only the one that was saved. The other nine, they received physical healing, but they weren't saved. And so what a tragedy for them to receive such a wonderful gift as, I'm not a leper anymore, but yet still at the end of their life when they died, they missed it, they missed heaven.

What a tragedy that would be. And so here's the reality. Everyone wants a when. This is fascinating when it comes to understanding the kingdom of God and the second coming of Jesus, those kinds of issues.

Everyone wants a when. You tease these issues, and that's what people are interested in. They want to wear. But Jesus taught us to focus on the who, on himself, and the now.

Tell me what your focus is. Is it always on what's to come? Or what about your relationship with Christ today? Where are you at in your relationship with Jesus right now?

[9 : 26] Because that's where the lion's share of our attention should be. Am I in right relationship with Christ right now? That's what matters.

That's what we need to focus on. And so Jesus, again, now moves to his disciples. This is the larger group. And so he's not addressing the question of the Pharisees anymore, but he's continuing the thought, if you will.

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, there's a clue in this passage as to what he's talking about that, as a Bible student, you need to be aware of. Anytime you see a reference to the days or the day of the Lord or that day, that is a reference to the day of his second coming.

Okay? Keep that in mind. It's a familiar phrase in the Old Testament, particularly Old Testament prophecy. We'll talk about the day of the Lord, the great and coming day of the Lord.

[10 : 32] Or sometimes it's just to refer to as that day, that day. And that is a reference to the actual second coming of Jesus, not the rapture.

And we're going to explain the difference between those two here shortly. But understand that. So here's a clue. So what Jesus is referring to here now is the second coming of Jesus.

You will desire, the day is coming when you will desire to see that day arrive. Okay? But you will not see it. And they will say to you, look there, look here.

Don't go out and follow them. Even in our day today, we're living in the church age. We're not even living in the age that Jesus is referring to, and I'll explain that as well.

But even today, you have so-called Bible scholars and people that are prophecy scholars that are saying, hey, look around at the signs of the times, and we're not there yet.

[11 : 34] I'll explain that as well. Some of you are like, wait a minute. Are you sure? Let's keep going here, and we'll get to that. But the point here that I want to tell you is, like Jesus, I would say, do not follow that.

Do not follow after that kind of thinking. For us in the New Testament age or the church age, the next event on the prophetic calendar is the rapture itself.

There's nothing else that has to happen on the prophetic calendar before the rapture occurs. And we will be surprised by it. Let's go on.

For as the lightning, Jesus goes on, verse 24, for as the lightning flashes and lights up the sky from one side of the sky to the other. We've had some opportunities here in recent days to see flashes of lightning like this, and you guys know what that's like.

You look up in the sky, and it's like, boom, and you can see it move across the sky. And it's fascinating to watch, and you can't miss it. If you're out and that occurs, it's amazing to see, and it's startling to see.

[12 : 48] So will the Son of Man be in his day. Again, it's to the second coming of Jesus. It's going to be an event that is visible like lightning is in the night sky.

Out in the open, people will see it. But first, before that day arrives, he must suffer many things and be rejected by this generation.

The generation he's talking about is the current generation. The disciples that are there, the Pharisees, all the people that are there in Israel greater, and the people who will reject him and cause him to go to the cross and suffer and die.

And, of course, it's the reason why Jesus came. It wasn't a travesty of misjustice, even though it was. It was Jesus willingly going to the cross to pay the penalty for our sin. That's why he came. That's why he went to the cross. He rose again from the dead. We celebrate that every Sunday that we gather. But Jesus would go through that suffering. It makes sense.

[13 : 51] He would go through that before he comes again, before he sets up his kingdom. Now, before we move on and talk about some of the details of prophecy, because, again, this is important because God puts it in here for us to read and to learn and to study.

Even with that in mind, there is a huge difference between having a fascination with the end times or having great Bible familiarity.

There's a big difference between understanding end times, understanding knowledge of the scriptures, and following the Lord in humble obedience.

Because there are both kinds of people, people who have a fascination with end times, people who have an understanding or somewhat, at least an earthly, worldly understanding or familiarity with Bible passages of scripture, and yet do not live in humble obedience.

This is why we talk about it. Make sure that even as you're studying these things, that your priority is in your relationship with Christ today. That's what matters. Because depth of knowledge does not equal depth of relationship.

[15:12] We have to keep that in mind. I can study my wife. I can know everything about her. But that doesn't mean that I have a good relationship with her. The same thing can be true in your relationship with the Lord.

You can study the scriptures. You can know all the ins and outs of all the prophecies and have it all nailed down. But if you don't have a relationship with the Lord that's working, that's intimate, that's personal, what good does that knowledge do you?

Nothing. Nothing. Nothing. Nothing. Nothing. So, with that being said, let's go on and talk about this from the perspective of James, the half-brother, if you will, the brother of Jesus.

So this is the younger brother of Jesus, grew up with him, and didn't believe in Jesus during his earthly ministry. But then when he saw the resurrected Christ, he's like, okay, you're not my brother, you're my savior.

This is what he said. But be doers of the word and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. Okay? There is a group of people that fit this category, people who hear the word of God, maybe even fascinated by it, but they're not doing it.

[16:28] What good does it do them? James would say or ask that question. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks intently at his natural face in a mirror.

Now I'm going to pick on me today. How many of you do this in the morning when you get up? How many of you look in the mirror before you go out for the day?

Right? If your hand's not going up, you're just lying. Okay? Because you're looking in the mirror before you're going out for the day. Right? It's what you're doing.

You're either shaving your face or you're fixing your hair or you're putting your makeup on or you're doing something. You're getting the sleep out of your eyes. Something's going on. Right? I imagine some days for some guys in particular, you take a hat shower and you're gone.

You don't even look at yourself. But most of the time you're going to look at your face in the mirror. For if he looks at himself and goes away and at once forgets what he was like, what is that about?

[17:36] But the one who looks into the perfect law and he compares the word of God to this mirror, for we see ourselves as we are. It's as if I get up in the morning and this is going to sound weird and it's the way my mind works.

I have like a middle school boy mind. Okay? Get up in the morning and you look at your face in the mirror and you see a big zit on your face.

Has that ever happened to you? Maybe it's been a few years since your teenage years or whatever. I'm getting older. I still occasionally get a zit on my face. What is that about? I thought I was going to outgrow that.

And some of you are thinking, you know, you're going to wash your face? Anyway. But if I get a zit on my face, I'm going to do something about it, right? I'm not just going to let, I'm just going to go out in my day and it's going to be there.

Hey, how you doing? I'm going to do something about it. Most of the time I'm going to pop that thing. I told you it's gross, but that's what you do, right?

[18:38] And Jesus compares the silliness of that with someone who takes a look at the word of God and says, oh, this is really good.

I get a glimpse of who I am and then closes it up and goes about his day and doesn't do anything about it. How silly is that? That's what he's saying.

But the one who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty and perseveres, who endures, who being no hearer who forgets, but a doer who acts, he will be blessed in his doing.

So don't just focus on the knowledge and the understanding and that kind of thing. Someone asked me about my book, about the end times.

And so what motivated you to write that book? And I want to admit this as part of my motivation for writing that book was this.

[19 : 41] I had to get it out of my system because I didn't want all of my attention to be focused on that. I don't want to be known as an end times scholar or someone who's all the time focused on all of my teaching is on end times stuff.

I didn't want that. So I wrote it. I got it out of my system. And now, yes, we'll talk about it in the scriptures. It's our subject for today. It's where we're at in Luke.

And it's appropriate to teach it. There will be a time where I go through the book of Revelation. We've done that in the past. We'll go through sections of the gospel that teach about the second coming of Christ and all that's contained therein.

But yes, there's more to living the Christian life than just being fascinated with end time stuff. So yes, be fascinated.

I am, obviously. But make sure that your priority is your day-to-day relationship with the Lord. How are you doing with the Lord today? That matters a whole lot more than whether you get all the end times ducks in a row correct.

[20 : 51] Okay? Does that make sense? Is that fair for me to say that? Okay, now, take a look. We've got, you can't talk about end time stuff without a chart, right? So we've got a chart.

You can see I'm silly. So we've got our chart. And you can see the, you know, the pre-tribulation rapture. That's where we're at. The tribulation itself is coming in the advance.

The second coming of Christ, you can see we have them depicted on the chart as two separate events. The rapture is a going up. The second coming is a coming down. And where we are at today, where you and I sit today is right here in the church age.

We don't know how long that period lasts. Now, the Bible tells us the tribulation is seven years. Millennial kingdom is a thousand years. But the church age that we're living in today, we don't know when that's going to end.

We know when it started, but we don't know when it's going to end. We just don't have that answer. And if somebody says, oh, I know when it's going to end. I know when the rapture is going to happen. Walk away as fast as you can because Jesus told us, you're not going to know.

[21 : 55] So don't go there. Okay? So that's where we're at today. Now, we're going to come back to this and fill more of this in as we go along. And you'll have on your notes now, on the backside of that, a list of what makes these two events, the rapture of the church and the second coming of Jesus, two distinct events.

Because the problem is, there's a lot of folks out there today who want to say that, no, they're basically one and the same, that there really is no such thing as the rapture, that when you see rapture language, it's tied into the second coming of Jesus and it's all one event.

Or you might see some people who talk about a post-trib rapture of the church. And so if they're not tied together, the one right after the other, that kind of thing.

And so I want to show you from the scriptures how these two events are very much so distinct and time difference between the two events. And so let's take a look at that.

We're going to start by, before we start filling in this list, we're going to look at some of the passages of scripture that are listed underneath this chart. You have them listed there. We're not going to look at all of this, but we're going to look at some of these verses here.

[23 : 06] Starting with 1 Thessalonians 4, verse 16. Someone might say, for instance, oh, there's no such thing as a rapture. The rapture is not found in the Bible anywhere. No, that's not true.

I'll show you. For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, and the voice of the archangel, and the sound of the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will cry first. Now understand, this is not an event that's meant for the whole world.

It's meant for the church. So only the church will hear these distinct sounds, the call of command, the trumpet of God, and only the church.

The rapture is only for the church, the people who are truly saved at the time that this happens, the church, the true church. So they're the only ones who will hear it.

Now it might sound like people in the world might hear like rumbles of thunder, but they won't hear the distinct command. It's similar to like when some of the miracles of Jesus, when there was a voice of God talking, or on the road to Damascus with Paul, people saw a light, but they didn't see Jesus.

[24 : 12] Similar kind of thing in that sense. I don't know if the unsaved world at that time will hear any sound at all, but if they will, it will be indistinguishable for them. It'll just be like thunder or

lightning.

But for the believer, it will be distinct. We will know it. And the dead in Christ will rise first. This is classic rapture understanding that those who are dead and buried during the church age will be resurrected at that point and go to meet the Lord in the air.

Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds. Now this word caught up, the Greek word for this is not a word that any of us know.

It doesn't translate into anything in English. But the Latin translation of this word is the word rapture. So when you talk about, well, the Bible doesn't say anything about the rapture, it certainly does, because if you read the New Testament in Latin, there's your word.

It actually uses the word rapture in the verb form. We will be caught up or raptured together with them in the clouds. So the Lord doesn't come to the earth during this event.

[25 : 23] He meets us in the clouds in this event to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will always be with the Lord. Now what's interesting as, as Paul is teaching this in first Thessalonians in chapter four, this is how chapter four ends.

And then he says, you know, encourage one another with these words, verse 14. And then in chapter five, it's unfortunate you have chapter divisions sometimes, because the thought, you miss that the thought carries through.

But Paul transitions from talking about the rapture to talking about the second coming. So don't confuse them, because the language is different. So chapter five, verse two.

So is this just a couple of verses later from what we just read? And he said to these, this group of believers who are confused about how all this works. And he had taught them before when he's there, but they're confused again, because someone came in and confused them with false teaching.

And so he sends this letter to correct their thinking. And he says, for you yourselves are fully aware that on the day of the Lord, what did I tell you earlier about this phrase, the day of the Lord? That's a reference to what? The second coming, not the rapture.

[26 : 34] So you know that he switched from talking about the rapture to talking about the day of the Lord. That will come like a thief in the night. Okay. That kind of imagery is also found in the gospels, talking about the, because you don't know, but you can prepare for a thief, but you don't know when he's going to arrive.

So while people are saying there is peace and security, a familiar theme that happens throughout the tribulation, tribulation, peace and security that happens throughout the tribulation, then sudden destruction will come upon them as labor pains, will come upon them.

I didn't highlight the word them. I should have. Sudden destruction will come upon them. He switches from a we, us. Chapter four, talking about the rapture, we who are alive and remain, we will be caught up to meet the Lord in the air.

Chapter five, he's talking about the second coming. They, this will come upon them. Do you see the change? Notice the change in language.

It's important to do that. So sudden destruction will come upon them as labor pains. Now, let me ask you ladies that have delivered babies. And we've had a few of those lately around here.

[27 : 51] And I've never done this. Surprise, surprise. If I tell you I've never had a baby, are you surprised by that? Is that, I know it's kind of a confusing thing today.

Apparently some people's minds really rich. You've never had a baby. You look like it. No, I'm not. It's a different subject, difference. But ladies, those of you who've had children, you have, before you go into labor, there's signs that labor is coming, right?

You get little twinges. You get all, I can, I can, I can sympathize. Maybe. I don't know. I can, I can, I can, I can't relate, but you know, and, and, and, and, and, you know, then you go into labor and labor is so quick.

It's like the twinkling of an eye, right? It happens so quickly. It's like just a, a beat and it's over, right? Am I, am I describing that correctly? Of course not.

Some of you want to beat me up now. No, it takes a while. And, and this imagery of, of a, of a woman in labor is used to describe not the rapture, because the rapture is a sudden event with no clue that it's about to happen.

[29 : 11] Whereas the second coming is an event that you can kind of time it out and you can kind of see the signs and know that it's coming. And you might not know the day or the hour.

You've heard that kind of phrase before, but you can kind of know when it's coming. Just like in, in your pregnancy, you can kind of figure out when it's coming, when the baby is going to arrive, but you don't know the day or the hour.

That's why you're taking bets, right? On when the baby's going to arrive, because nobody knows. And so somebody thinks, well, I know it's going to happen on the 23rd at four o'clock in the morning. And then they lose their money because we don't know, but you can kind of guess, you know, it's coming. That's the atmosphere of the second coming, but not the rapture.

Okay. And it will come upon them like labor pains come upon a pregnant woman and they, not us, they will not escape.

[30 : 11] Imagery again of the rapture from first Corinthians 15. That's this very familiar passage of scripture, often read at funerals and appropriately.

So, but behold, I tell you a mystery. Now, this is interesting that he uses this word here, mystery. When Paul uses the word mystery, what's he referring to the, in the new Testament, particularly in Paul's writings, the mystery has to do with this church, the church.

Why the church? Because the church in the old Testament didn't exist. There was no clue. No old Testament prophet could look forward and say, well, the church is coming.

They didn't. They didn't know that. They didn't see a distinction between first coming and second coming of Jesus. They saw it as all one event, but what they didn't see is that there was this gap between them.

From their perspective, they only saw it as one event. But when you put it on the timeline, oh, wait a minute, we've got this whole thing in between here called the church, Jew and Gentile together in the body of Christ.

[31 : 16] you don't find it anywhere. Not even a hint. I challenge you. Scour through your old Testament. There is not even a hint of this thing called the church there.

That's why Paul calls it a mystery. Something that was hidden in the past. That's now been revealed after the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus. So when Paul's talking about a mystery, he's generally referring to something doing with the church.

So I'm going to tell you a mystery. We, the church, shall not all sleep, which shall be changed. In a moment, the twinkling of an eye, it's different language than the second coming. In the moment, in the twinkling of an eye, the last trumpet, for the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed.

And it goes on from there. Revelation 4.1. Now some people will say, I don't know if it's really talking about the rapture or not. Come on. We always want to read things in context.

Who was the book of Revelation written to? This is good Bible study 101. Know your context. And when I'm teaching the Bible, I will often say a phrase, context is king.

[32 : 27] Because if you get the context of the passage, you're going to end up who knows where. Who was the book of Revelation written for? It was written for the seven churches in Asia Minor.

And he spends all of chapters two and three writing specific instructions and warnings to these seven churches. And then at the end of those instructions to those churches, he says, after this, I looked and behold, a door standing open in heaven.

Huh. And the first voice, which I had heard speaking to me like a trumpet, hello, said, come up here and I will show you what must take place after this. This is a picture of, a metaphor of, the church being taken up out of the way so that in Revelation chapter 4, following here and moving forward, the church is out of the picture.

Even though the seven churches are who Revelation is written to, the church disappears after this moment. You don't see the church referenced anymore after this moment in the book of Revelation. Why? Because the church is gone. Huh. Now, let's talk about second coming. Language in this, dealing with the second coming.

[33 : 47] You're going to find language dealing with the second coming all over the Old Testament, Old Testament prophecy. So like this in Zechariah 12, verse 10, I will pour out on the house of David.

This is a reference now to how God is not done with Israel yet. How do we know? Because this hasn't happened yet. It's yet to come. I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, a spirit of grace and please for mercy.

So that when they look on me, on him whom they have pierced. Come on. I don't understand how people can read this language and not get it.

But you have to have spiritual eyes to see it. It's obviously a reference to Christ. So that when they look on me, on him whom they have pierced, they shall mourn for him.

Why? Because we missed it. All these Jews at the end of the tribulation are going to be like, oh, I could have had a V8. They're going to be like, I missed it. I missed it.

[34 : 51] We missed our Messiah. And there he is. They shall mourn for him as one who mourns for an only child and weep bitterly over him as one who weeps over a firstborn.

Why would you weep? Because that was our Messiah and we missed him. That's why you would weep bitterly. That's why they will weep bitterly the end of the tribulation when they recognize, oh boy, we blew it.

We missed it. Many of them will come to faith during the tribulation and many of them will lose their heads quite literally as a result of that wrath and that judgment during that time.

Revelation 19.11. This is again describing the second coming. I saw heaven opened. Behold, a white horse, the one sitting on it called faithful and true and in righteousness he judges and makes war.

It's quite interesting that in Muslim theology, they're also looking for the second coming, the coming of their Messiah figure.

[35 : 55] They don't refer to him as Messiah figure, but they use the same kind of imagery. And when they describe this this coming of their Messiah type figure, it's a perfect description of the Antichrist.

And it's like, what? That's alarm. They don't, they're not talking about this on the news. Go figure. But this one true Messiah at the second coming, he's coming and in righteousness he judges and makes war.

And guess who's coming with him? The armies of heaven. That's you and me. Arrayed in fine linen, white and pure. That's imagery of the church.

That's imagery of us after the judgment seat of Christ. And we're now adorned in this, these robes of white and pure and we're riding also on white horses.

I haven't done much riding in my lifetime, but I figure I'm going to be okay riding on a horse over here. And the cool thing is, it doesn't say anything about us as holding weapons.

[37 : 10] Because I think our main job here at this point is cheerleader. Because we're just cheering Jesus on at this point. I mean that's, praise the Lord. And we will be cheering even though what we will be watching will be complete judgment and wrath and fury and death and destruction.

And we will recognize it as justice that we've been waiting for. Anybody been waiting for any justice lately?

Anybody missing elements of justice in our culture today? The true satisfaction of that is not going to come until this moment.

But when it comes, we will cheer like you won't believe. So we're back to our chart now. Now let's fill in some blanks here.

So when it comes to the rapture, it will be an invisible event. Not invisible to us as believers. If we're alive when the rapture happens, we will see it. We will hear it. It will be very noticeable for us.

[38 : 16] But those who are not saved will not know. But with the second coming of Jesus, what makes it different is people won't be able to look away. They can't look away.

When it happens, when Jesus steps through those clouds and he descends to the earth, people will not be able to take their eyes off of him. They're saved or lost in that moment.

We'll have no choice. It will be, for the rapture, done in secret, if you will. Only the church is affected by it.

But with the second coming, it's out in the open. It's declarative. It's everybody. Everybody's included in that moment.

The rapture will be misinterpreted. Can you imagine what the world will be like when the church is gone in an instant? And when I say the church, I'm talking about the people, people who are saved.

[39 : 24] Let me also clarify this. There will be churches remaining and people to fill those church buildings that who remain, who have been teaching or believing or not practicing the true gospel.

Can you imagine the kind of explanations people will have? And it will be incredible and it will include things like I can just imagine all those people, those were all the bigots and Nazis and all the

terrible people.

They're gone now. And now we can have the kind of world that we've always wanted because all those people are gone. That's the kind of explanations that will happen.

But at the second coming of Jesus, no misinterpretation of that. It's going to be unmistakable. You don't have a choice to understand what's going on there. You will know and everyone will be participants in that event.

Even us. Even though we're just kind of watching from the backside cheering him on. But yeah. And the rapture, he just descends to the clouds. He doesn't come back to the earth.

[40 : 37] So it is not, the rapture is not the second coming in any way because the second coming is him coming back to the earth. Okay. Okay. The rapture, he's coming for his followers.

That's key. just his followers. But at the second coming, he is coming with his followers. Okay.

Prepositions matter. The rapture, there's no time to react. It happens. It happens quicker than I can do that.

Okay. That's pretty quick, right? It's quicker than that. Is there any time to prepare? Can you do anything? Is there going to be any notice like 10 minute warning?

Rapture ahead. Nothing. It's just in a poof, in a moment, in a twinkling of an eye, gone. Not so with the second coming.

[41 : 41] Yes. There will absolutely be time to prepare. So we'll see in just a moment. When you look at the passages that Jesus teaches in Matthew 24 and the passage that we're looking at today in Luke 17, they will have time to prepare before the second coming.

They will know that it's happening. They will know that they are on the verge of it. They won't know the day or the hour that they'll be able to prepare if they're ready.

If they're ready. So when you back at our little chart here, you look at this and we're getting ready to look at Luke 17 again. And where does Luke 17 fit on the timeline here?

Same thing with Matthew 24 and 25. It fits here on the timeline. It doesn't fit the church age. It doesn't speak to us in the church age. But this is, as Bible students, this is how we think.

Well, if it's in the Bible, then it's speaking to me. What? Where do we get that mindset? Do you follow the Old Testament instructions in the law?

[42 : 55] No, because they weren't speaking to you. They were speaking to a group of people who existed in Israel back over 2,000 years ago. And when you read these instructions here, they weren't meant for us.

Now, the people who are alive during the tribulation, yes, they will want this instruction and they will have it if they will look for it. And it's good for us to know that this is what's going to happen, but please don't be confused into thinking this is meant for us in the church age.

It's not. Jesus is speaking to kingdom issues. And it's not what we're facing. It's not what we're seeing in our day today. We're in the church age.

It's distinct. It's different. It's separate. So let's take a look at our passage in Luke chapter 17. Just as it was in the days of Noah.

So he's continuing to teach his disciples this. Just as it was in the days of Noah. So again, context is king. Let's ask the question, what was it like in the days of Noah?

[44 : 04] Don't you have to know the answer to that question before you can really understand what he's about to say? Just as it was like in the days of Noah. What was it like in the days of Noah?

Full of sin and debauchery and all kinds of treachery and terrible stuff. No, that's not what he's talking about. That was what was happening here, but that's not what Jesus is highlighting here. Okay? Don't misunderstand me. They were full of sin and debauchery and treachery and all kinds of terrible stuff. There's a reason why they were judged, but that's not what Jesus is highlighting here.

Just as it was in the days of Noah, so it will be in the days of the Son of Man. So again, days of the Son of Man, that's a reference to what? The second coming. Keep that in mind.

So all of this as we're going along. What were they doing? They were eating and drinking and marrying, being given in marriage. They were talking about the busyness of life. Now that's a problem that we face today, right?

[45 : 04] We have tons of people in our day today who would say, yes, I believe in Christ. Yes, I want to follow the Lord, but I'm so busy. How many times do people say that today?

I got so much stuff going on, I can't come to church. I don't have time to invest in my kids or my marriage, building it up in a Christ-honoring way.

I don't have time for that. I got so much going on. I'm so busy. That's what Jesus is highlighting about the days of Noah. They were busy.

They were taking their kids to school. I don't know how they did that back then. They were taking their kids to school. They were going to work. They were punching the time clock. They had all kinds of stuff, chores to do. The water's coming in the basement. They got all kinds of stuff. Everything's going on.

You know, I got time for that. That's what Jesus is highlighting. They were eating and drinking, marrying, being given in marriage, doing all the stuff that you do. Until the day when Noah entered the ark and the flood came and destroyed them all.

[46 : 06] Yay. They just didn't care. They allowed the busyness to distract them from what really mattered. Anybody relate to that?

I do. Because I'm so busy too. Be careful. Be careful. Be careful with that. Likewise. Now here's where Luke gives us a little bit more chunk of information than what Matthew does.

We don't get Matthew. Matthew doesn't tell us this part about Lot. So pay attention here. Likewise, just as it was in the days of Lot. What was it like in the days of Lot?

Well, remember, Lot was in Sodom and Gomorrah. Fun times in Sodom and Gomorrah. And you might say, well, Sodom and Gomorrah, what was it like then? Well, it was full of sin and debauchery and immorality and all.

Yeah. Again, that's not what Jesus highlights here. Was Sodom and Gomorrah judged with fire and brimstone because of their sin and wickedness?

[47 : 10] Yes. That's not what Jesus highlights here. Just as it was in the days of Lot. They were eating and drinking, buying and selling, planting and building. They were busy.

They were distracted. They were doing all of this stuff. But on the day when Lot went out from Sodom, fire and sulfur rained from heaven and destroyed them all.

But that's just a metaphor. That really didn't happen.

Ain't nobody going to jump up and tell the preacher that he's crazy? Anybody? Anybody?

Somebody jump up and tell me I'm crazy, please. Okay, thank you.

Because this really happened. Oh, come on, the world would say. Come on. You know what's interesting? I smile, but I shouldn't.

[48 : 16] I mean, it's horrific what happened to the people. But they had it coming. They deserved it. This wrath that they received from God was so well deserved. God was absolutely righteous in his judgment of Sodom and Gomorrah.

Absolutely. Don't think, oh, all these innocent people. There weren't any. Remember, God is sovereign and he is righteous in all of his judgments. Well, do we really know?

Yeah, we really know. Now, I don't need what I'm about to show you to believe that it really happened. but it's kind of cool when you see it because now, archaeologists who go over there with a lens of the Old Testament scriptures and they believe the Old Testament scriptures and they dig up this area outside.

Remember, it bordered the Dead Sea. Fire and brimstone hailed down. The way it's written here, fire and sulfur rained down. Brimstone, sulfur, same thing.

Rained down from heaven. And it all burned up except for the part that fell in the Dead Sea. That sulfur, that brimstone, the fire was put out by the sea and it just dropped to the bottom.

[49 : 36] Well, since that time, the Dead Sea has receded. And so now, they can go in and they can find what was there. They found it. So take a look at this.

In the region that was known then as Sodom and Gomorrah, they have these, they call them sulfur balls. You don't find these anywhere else in the world.

They only exist right here. Again, do you need any more of a clue that this really happened? And so they find these sulfur balls and they excavate them and they collect them and then you can hold them like if you put them on the end of a stick and take a match and light them on fire, they burn. They're still flammable. This is like 5,000 years later. They're still flammable. They still burn and melt and watch this.

So I'm up here on the site called locally Numera Gomorrah. And this is the site that the archaeologists associated with Gomorrah.

[50 : 47] So here you can see that ashy layer that's just underneath the surface. This is full of burned pottery. It's full of the fragments of human bones. The question is, is what evidence is there of this burning sulfur that rained down?

Well, it seems that the culprit are these sulfur balls that are also found in this area. Anybody? Hello? Do you think we should take seriously what we read? Even in the book of Genesis? Absolutely.

Now, do I need that? Do you need that to know that what happened there is true? No, I don't. Is it fun? Yeah, it's kind of fun. But, understand, this is what Jesus is referring to now.

on the day that Lot went out from Sodom, fire and sulfur rained down from heaven and destroyed them all, so will it be on the day when the Son of Man is revealed.

[51 : 50] Again, second coming events that he's describing here. On that day, let the one who was on the housetop with his goods in the house not come down to take them away.

What is he describing? At least a little bit of time to prepare. You're not going to get that at the rapture. Okay? Likewise, let not the one who was in the field, let him not turn back.

Again, it's describing a time to react, a time to respond. How much, they don't know. But they know it's coming and they're going to respond in this way.

Even the unsaved will respond. The evidence to them will be clear. Oh, Jesus had to throw that little gem in there. Because we're what happened with Lot's wife.

Right? Lot's wife was just like the people in the tribulation who are going to be like, okay, the event of all events of all eternity is coming to have. Jesus is coming back.

[52 : 56] I'm going to go get my stuff. Really? Do I believe that Lot's wife turned into a pillar of salt?

Yeah, I do. And that's a warning for them during this age. Don't be like Lot's wife.

whoever seeks to preserve his life will lose it. Again, context. Don't, don't, don't take a verse like this and pull it right out of its context and separate it and use it to mean something different, which happens all the time.

In its context, it means at the end of the tribulation, just before Jesus arrives, keep in mind that if you're trying to preserve your life, don't.

You're going to lose it. You're going to die. And whoever loses his life, whoever just walks out freely and says, Lord, I look forward to your second coming. Whether I die in these next few moments or I live to see the end of all things and survive whatever happens during your wrath, I'm here for it.

[54 : 14] Lord, I'm yours. that person's life will be saved. They may suffer a physical death, but they'll have eternal life. Okay? Not something that you and I will face because we're living in the church age.

Oh. So I tell you in that night there will be two in one bed and one will be taken in the other left.

Again, people who want to pull this verse out of context or these verses out of context, what are these verses describing?

What are these verses describing? People will say the rapture. Uh-uh. Don't do that. This is not the rapture. This is not describing the rapture.

Remember, we're talking about in the days of Noah, as it was in the days of Noah. So two will be in the bed, one will be taken, one will be left behind.

You got a whole movie series, book series, right? Based on this little phrase left behind. There will be two women grinding together, one will be taken, and the other will be left. Oh, it's describing the rapture.

[55 : 27] No, it's not. How do you know that, Rich? Stick with me. Because some of you are like, that's all you've heard. You can open commentary, commentary, people will look at this passage and say, well, this is a rapture.

If you look on AI, it's the rapture. AI gets a lot wrong. Hopefully you figured that out. It's a rapture. One will be taken, the other one will be left.

Verse 36, not found in the newer text, but the older verse will have. Two men will be in the field, one will be taken, the other left behind. Why was this either added or taken away to match up with what happens in Matthew, which we'll see in just a moment.

I'm going to show you the parallel passage in Matthew 24. But concerning that day and hour, no one knows. Again, not talking about the rapture, because in the rapture, we don't even know what year or decade or century.

We don't know. But day and hour, we can't get that specific with the rapture. But when it comes to the second coming, we can get down to day and hour. We don't know what day and hour, but we can kind of nail it down when it comes to weeks and months.

[56 : 36] Because we know at the halfway point of the tribulation, the Antichrist goes up into the temple steps in Jerusalem. Ah, I'm God, worship me. You know you've got three and a half years. You can figure it out.

You may not know the day and the hour, but you're going to get pretty close. You're going to know. For as were the days of Noah, even here in Matthew, Jesus, again, same thing, as in the days of Noah, so will be the coming of the Son of Man.

He's talking about the second coming. For as in those days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, again, emphasis on distraction, on busyness, until the day when Noah entered the ark, and they were unaware until the flood came and what?

What happened to the people that were killed? What happened to them? The flood came and what? They were swept away. They were raptured.

It's the same kind of language. Caught up, swept up. They were swept away.

[57 : 39] But where were they swept away to? To their drowning, to their death. And the ones who were left behind, were left behind to do what? Go into the ark and survive into the next age.

Oh. And then two men will be in the field, one will be taken, one will be left, two women grinding at the millstone, one will be taken, one will be left. Back in Luke chapter 17 again, just so that you're sure that what Rich is saying is not crazy talk.

Jesus answers one final question about this subject for them. Where are they going, Lord? These people that are swept away, these people that, well, two in the bed and one's taken away and one's left, two people on the rooftop, one taken, one left away.

Where are they going, Lord? Jesus tells us, where the corpse is, there the vultures will gather. That ain't the rapture.

Because when you and I are raptured, this ain't the conclusion. It's not the rapture. It's not talking about the rapture. Don't talk about this being the rapture.

[58 : 54] It's not the rapture. Just because you hear people say these things, just because the language looks like the rapture, it's not. Keep it in context.

It's the second coming of Jesus. It's the end of the tribulation. Those who are swept away will be taken to their doom, to their judgment.

Those who are alive at the end go into the millennial kingdom, to rule and reign with Christ for a thousand years. That's how this works.

This is what Jesus was describing to them. So when you're back here on the chart and you're looking at this back down at the bottom here, the two events, Christ descends to the clouds for his followers.

Christ returns to the earth with his followers. Two distinct events. When you're reading in scripture, know which is which. when you're trying to understand these events, they often get confused.

[60 : 01] Matthew 24 and 25, oftentimes you'll see commentators and preachers talking about these events like they're almost intermixable, interchangeable.

They're not. The rapture is not in view at all in Luke 17 or in Matthew 24 and 25. 25. It's just not there.

It's not the question that Jesus is answering. Both of these are in response to questions that are asked of Jesus about the kingdom. When the kingdom is about to be set up, what's it going to be like?

And he tells us what it's going to be like. Now, what will happen? The good news is you and I won't be here.

Amen. We won't face this. Praise the Lord for that. We're going to be with the Lord during that seven years. We're going to be facing the judgment seat of Christ and then the marriage supper of the lamb.

[61 : 03] One grand party in heaven. And then when that feast is over, we're getting on a horse and coming with him back. That's a future to look forward to.

Wow. But during this time, the unbelieving world will not be ready. They won't be. Christians, people who get saved during the tribulation will be, but the unsaved won't.

They'll raise home to hide or try to gather what they can and run for the hills. That's what will happen. That's what Jesus is describing, Luke chapter 17. Okay? Makes sense. Because they'll have some time to prepare. And that's what they do. What matters most to people is going to be exposed in that time. The Christians at that time, come Lord Jesus, come on, bring it on. If I die, I die because in just a few moments, I'm going to have a resurrected body again. I'm going to be with you. It's all going to be wonderful. The person who is in Christ at the end of the tribulation, they're not worried about their physical bodies.

[62 : 09] They're ready. They're ready to go. But those who are lost, and it will be evident in the way that they live. When the signs become evident that Jesus is on the verge of returning, they're running to the hills, they're running to get their stuff, they're running to hide, and they're cursing God all at the same time.

Read Revelation. It's startling to see their mindset. They will show that they care more about their stuff than the Savior.

That's what will be evident, right? I've got to go save my stuff. People will abruptly be separated from each other.

We saw that in the text. Two in bed, one taken, one left behind. But understand, this event is in no way picturing the rapture of believers. That's not what it's describing. And there are, by the way, plenty of good commentaries who get this.

You just got to know which commentary that you're reading, which preacher that you're paying attention to when it comes to understanding this. This is not me standing on a ledge by myself.

[63 : 22] Okay? Number four, unbelievers will be swept away to a place of death, decay, and utter devastation. That's what's being described here. And this is your reminder that the judgment is grim, it's painful, it's shattering.

That's what's happening. I'm going to give you, it's late. I don't have a clock. My clock died. You're like wondering, when is this going to be over? One verse.

I want to leave you with some good news. I want to leave you with a sense of hope, not a sense of gloom and doom. Look at this verse given in Revelation chapter 3. So again, this is written to the church.

So we're the church age. So we can say, okay, this is written for us. Pay attention. Because you have kept my word about patient endurance, I will keep you from that hour of trial that is to come on the whole world.

What's he talking about? That great tribulation that's coming on the whole world. world. Not a little tribulation over here. There's a war over here and it's bad. Not a little tribulation over here where there's a flood and it's terrible and hurricane.

[64 : 33] No, this is talking about tribulation on the whole world. Great tribulation on the whole world. Talking about the tribulation. But we're going to be saved from that. We're going to be saved from that hour of trial.

We're going to be kept safe from that hour. You're not going to have to go through it. Now there will be people who will say, oh, come on, rich. These are the people who protest the idea of the rapture being before the tribulation.

You're too soft. Christians are going to go through that. Christians, we're told all over the place that Christians have to face persecution. Christians have to face trial. Christians have to face suffering. And I would say, amen, absolutely. But you're describing suffering and pain and trial that comes as a result of the original sin, Adam and Eve. You're talking about the evil one who is coming and trying to destroy you.

That's where you're coming from. The tribulation that's coming, the great tribulation, is trial and wrath and judgment from God. He's not bringing that on you and me.

[65 : 37] He did that on Christ at the cross. Yes, in this life, the church age, you will face hardship and trial and persecution. But from the ultimate pain and suffering and trial that's to come, that comes from God, you will be preserved and kept from that.

Rejoice. Your Lord loves you and is going to take care of you regardless. Let's pray. Lord, thank you so much for your word. Lord, thank you for all of this that you've given us.

Lord, I pray that our understanding would increase, that our knowledge would be filled up, and all the more so, Lord, that we would live for you and honor you with our lives today.

Help us to be reminded that that's what matters. Am I living for you today? Do I trust you today? Do I love you with the way that I live my life today?

help me to live in obedience and trust the days of my life. Whether it's I face my earthly physical demise and they place my body in the ground and then I meet you in the air that day, that resurrection day, or I'm alive and remain and the rapture happens.

[67 : 05] Lord, we know what our outcome is going to be. And we know even now when we face death in this day, our body may go in the grave, but we as a person, our soul, our spirit, sees you face to face and is with you in heaven immediately to be absent from the body, to be present with the Lord.

Thank you for these precious truths. Thank you for loving us to give us these words so that we can know that we don't have to be in doubt, we don't have to wonder. We thank you, Lord, and we love you.

Help us to look for your coming. And Lord, we know we're going to be surprised when it happens, but may we be found faithful when it does.

Lord, again, we love you, we praise you in Jesus' name. Amen. Thank you for coming. Have a great week.