**THE SON OF MAN WILL COME WITH POWER AND GREAT GLORY**

June 2, 2019

Matthew 24:27-51

Key Verse 24:30 “At that time the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and all the nations of the earth will mourn. They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky, with power and great glory.”

One theologian said, “The Christian exists in a tension between what is already and what is not yet.” We live in God’s kingdom now, but his kingdom in full manifestation is coming. We have already experienced salvation; we have not yet experienced the fullness of salvation, that is, the redemption of our bodies. We have already received eternal life; we have not yet participated in the resurrection. So we are caught between the already and the not yet, and we live in that tension; looking back to the cross, looking forward to the second coming. Every believer, then, lives with a sense of what is already true and what is not yet come to pass. We live with that excitement, that joy of looking forward to the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is not so with those who do not know Christ. Most people live as if this world is everything. To them, Raptors winning NBA championship matters the most. However, when Jesus comes again, they will mourn. They will mourn because he brings judgment to those who do not believe in him. But we do not know when Jesus is coming back. Jesus tells us to keep watch. So we live in a tension between keeping watch and daily routine of life.

Look at verse 29. “Immediately after the distress of those days “‘the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from the sky, and the heavenly bodies will be shaken.’” The destruction of the temple was a local event in Judea. But the disintegration of the heavens and the earth will be a global event. It will be the day of final doom to the planet Earth and the universe. What will happen at this terrible time of final doom? Look at verses 30-31. “At that time the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and all the nations of the earth will mourn. They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky, with power and great glory. And he will send his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other.” When the Son of Man comes, there will be two kinds of people. One kind will mourn, and the other kind will rejoice. All peoples of all nations despised and rejected Jesus because they hated God, who is holy. They ignorantly nailed Jesus to the cross, thinking that they would never see him again. But they shall see the Son of Man with their own eyes, whether they want to or not. It will be a great punishment for them to see Jesus, whom they crucified. More than this, they have to stand before him to be judged according to what they have done to him and his people (Ro 2:6-11). On the other hand, the Son of Man will gather his people who have been faithful unto death and say, “Well done, good and faithful servants” (31). May God help us to be worthy of his praise.

When our Lord Jesus came to this world first, he came as a baby in a manger. Only a few people came to worship him: the shepherds and the Magi from the east. But when he comes again, his coming will be noticed globally. He will come like lightening, visible to all peoples of all nations. At that time, we will see Jesus coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory in order to usher us into his eternal kingdom. Sometimes we feel that our Lord Jesus will not remember what we did for his name's sake. But that is not true. He remembers them all. Our Lord Jesus never ignores his elect. And he will lift us up one by one from the world of woe in order to take us to himself and to the glorious kingdom of God.

The theme of the second coming fills the New Testament. It is the great anticipatory reality of Christian living. We look back to the cross where our souls were redeemed. We look forward to the second coming where our bodies will be redeemed and we will enter into the fullness of our salvation. We as Christians long for the day when Jesus comes because it is in that day that the curse will be lifted. It is in that day that saints will be glorified, that Christ will be worshiped, that creation will be liberated, and that sin and death will be eliminated. So with great anticipation we look forward to the second coming of Jesus Christ.

In order to assure us of his coming again, he tells us of a fig tree lesson. Look at verses 32-34. “Now learn this lesson from the fig tree: As soon as its twigs get tender and its leaves come out, you know that summer is near. Even so, when you see all these things, you know that itis near, right at the door. I tell you the truth, this generationwill certainly not pass away until all these things have happened.” We can understand that his coming is sure and certain through nature. During the winter, the trees look dead. But when spring comes, its twigs get tender and its leaves come out. Soon we know that the summer is coming. Likewise, Jesus’ second coming is getting nearer and nearer. We as God’s people must have spiritual insight to see the signs of Jesus’ glorious second coming. In verse 35, Jesus reassures us of the absolute certainly of his coming again, saying, “Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.”

Then when is Jesus coming? That is a good question. Look at verse 36. “But about that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.” Why didn’t Jesus tell us when he was coming again? Not even Jesus knows the day or the hour. Only God knows. Jesus did not tell us the exact time of his coming because if we knew the day of his coming, we would calculate. We would take it easy and try to have all kinds of fun and pleasure. And then one day or one hour before his second coming, we would repent quickly and try to be ready for his coming. What makes you think if you will not give your heart to Jesus Christ now, you are going to want to do it in the future?

Instead, Jesus taught us to keep watch because he will come suddenly like a thief. Look at verses 42-44. "Therefore keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come. But understand this: If the owner of the house had known at what time of night the thief was coming, he would have kept watch and would not have let his house be broken into. So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him.” Here “keep watch” means “be ready.” As you know, thieves do not make an appointment with us for their visits. Therefore, we must be ready 24/7. We must be ready to welcome Jesus at any time. Jesus wants every generation to live in expectancy, every generation to live in preparedness. So Christians ever since have always lived in the eagerness of the coming of Christ as if Jesus would come tomorrow.

Some people do not believe in Jesus’ second coming. They are like the people of Noah’s time. People in Noah’s time did not believe the promise that God would punish the world with a flood. Look at verses 37-39. “As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. For in the days before the flood, people were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, up to the day Noah entered the ark, and they knew nothing about what would happen until the flood came and took them all away. That is how it will be at the coming of the Son of Man.” In Genesis 6, Noah built the ark for 120 years. He must have been asked a million times, “Why are you building the ark?” Noah must have preached again and again, “Because God is going to judge the wickedness of this world, and only those who put their faith in Him are going to escape. And I’m building the boat as a way of escape. Would you like to join me?” And they laughed and mocked. For 120 years, they went on with life as usual while Noah preached judgment, building the ark. They were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage. Now, those activities are not sins. Eating and drinking are not sins and marrying and giving in marriage are not sins. What it means is that life went on as usual. They just lived as if nothing would ever change. They just went through the cycles of normal personal family and business enterprise, life as usual, just went through the routine. And that’s exactly what’ll happen before Jesus comes again. Look at verses 40-41. “Two men be in the field, one will be taken, the other left. Two women will be grinding with a hand mill; one will be taken and the other left.” It is just life as usual, and in the midst of the routine of life, one shall be taken, and the other left.

Peter predicted that in the last days many scoffers will come, scoffing and following their own evil desires, saying, “Where is this coming he promised? Ever since our ancestors died, everything goes on as it has since the beginning of creation.” (2 Peter 3:3-4) But 2 Peter 3:9 says, “The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.” Knowing Jesus’ heart, we must faithfully carry out God’s holy mission of sharing the gospel of salvation with all people of all nations, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance. It will be good for us that Jesus finds us teaching the Bible to our dear Bible students when he returns.

Look at verses 45-47. "Who then is the faithful and wise servant whom the master has put in charge of the servants in his household to give them their food at the proper time? It will be good for that servant whose master finds him doing so when he returns. I tell you the truth, he will put him in charge of all his possessions.” The time of Jesus’ second coming is getting nearer and nearer. As he promised, Jesus will return suddenly and publicly for all men and women to see. Many scholars on eschatology study the Book of Revelation in order to figure out when Jesus will come. They add numbers; they try to match the prophecies in the Book of Revelation with current events. We should not be busy in guessing the date of Jesus’ second coming. We should not be star-gazers. Before his sudden and glorious return, we have a mission to complete, which is preaching the gospel to all nations. Here nations mean not political nations such as Canada, China, USA. The word Jesus used for nations in Greek is “ethne” from which we get the English word “ethnic.” So nations refer to ethnic people group. According to Joshua project, there are 17,000 ethnic people groups in the world with about 7,100 of them considered unreached. It means that of the 7.7 billion people alive in the world today, 3.2 billion of them live in unreached people groups with little or no access to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. This is too great a mission to fulfill all by ourselves. But it is possible for us to fulfill when all of us take part in it. In the basketball games, there are players and spectators. But in the work of God, there should be no spectators. God called us to be faithful and wise servants in his work and history. Look at verses 48-51. “But suppose that servant is wicked and says to himself, 'My master is staying away a long time,' and he then begins to beat his fellow servants and to eat and drink with drunkards. The master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he is not aware of. He will cut him to pieces and assign him a place with the hypocrites, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” Being assigned a place with the hypocrites will be the most unbearable punishment. But that will be the punishment for wicked servants. Therefore, we must watch ourselves from becoming lazy or complacent.

William Barclay tells an interesting story of three apprentice demons who came before Satan. And he sent them to the earth to do their apprenticeship. And the first apprentice demon said, “I will tell people there is no God.” And Satan said, “It won’t work; they know better.” And the second apprentice demon said, “I will tell people there is no hell.” And Satan said, “It won’t work; they know better.” And the third demon said, “I will tell people there is no hurry – there is no hurry.” And Satan said, “You will gain many souls.” There is a hurry. Romans 13:11 says, “The hour has already come for you to wake up from your slumber, because our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed.” Today we are closer to the second coming than we have ever been in human history. “The night is nearly over; the day is almost here. So let us put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light.”

Does this mean that we should quit our jobs and go to mountains to pray? No. Someone wisely said, “Live each day in the hope that Jesus will return today, but plan today as though he’ll return in 100 years.” Martin Luther said, “Even if I knew that tomorrow the world would end, I would still plant my apple tree.” So we can enjoy Raptors winning NBA championship. But if we live as if it is the most important matter, then we are sinning against God. So Christians are living in a tension between the anticipation of Jesus’ coming and having to deal with life routines.

Are you ready? Are you alert? Are you right with the Lord Jesus Christ? If you do not know Jesus Christ, you may know him by simply inviting him into your life, the one who lived and died and rose again for you. Confess your sin, embrace him as your Lord and Savior. Then you will be ready for his second coming.