

Lesson 40

Foretaste of the Kingdom

Icebreaker:

If you knew a disaster was coming what three things in your house would you try to save beside family members?

Introduction:

In December of 30 AD, Jesus attended the Feast of Dedication (Hanukkah) in Jerusalem then returned to the region of the Galilee. Probably in early March of 31 AD, Jesus left His home for the last time heading for the regions of Judea¹ and Perea.² After arriving there a group of Pharisees questioned Jesus as to when the Kingdom of God was coming.

Reading The Scripture:

Luke 17:20-37

The Kingdom of God is in Your Midst

Luke 17:20-21

(Gospels forged together into one seamless story, in collaboration with New American Standard Bible, authored by Michael Gibson, Founder of Spirit & Truth, dba Key 2 Changes: "Follow Me: A Message from God", a journey with Jesus)

Now having been questioned by the Pharisees as to when the kingdom of God was coming, He answered them and said, "The kingdom of God is not coming with signs to be observed; nor will they say, 'Look, here it is!' or, 'There it is!' For behold, **the kingdom of God is in your midst.**"

The Kingdom of God is in your midst. The Kingdom of God is always present when its representative the King, Jesus Himself, is in a particular place. This statement made by Jesus can be perceived on at least three levels. Level 1 - Literally or bodily as Jesus was standing in the midst of the group of Pharisees, Level 2 - Ideally or soulishly as Jesus is standing in the midst of Israel, the people and land, Level 3 - Mysteriously or spiritually as Jesus stands in the midst of the heart of His people, where He rules and reigns.

The Coming of the Son of Man

Luke 17:22-25

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And He said to the disciples, "The days shall come when you will long 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! Look here!' Do not go away, and do not run after them. For just as the lightning, when it flashes out of one part of the sky, shines to the other part of the sky, so will **the Son of Man be in His day.** But first He must suffer many things and be rejected by this generation."

The Son of Man be in His day. The time at which Jesus the Messiah will be revealed as He returns to the earth again.

¹ At the time of Jesus, Judea was an area falling within a thirty-five mile radius of its capitol, Jerusalem.

² Perea was an area lying to the east of the Jordan River adjacent to Judea in what is now the modern-day country of Jordan.

Like the Days of Noah and Lot

Luke 17:26-33

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"And just as it happened in the days of Noah, so it shall be also in the days of the Son of Man: they were eating, they were drinking, they were marrying, they were being given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all. It was the same as happened in the days of Lot: they were eating, they were drinking, they were buying, they were selling, they were planting, they were building; but on the day that Lot went out from Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all. It will be just the same on the day that the Son of Man is revealed. On that day, let not the one who is on the housetop and whose goods are in the house go down to take them away; and likewise let not the one who is in the field turn back. Remember Lot's wife. Whoever seeks to keep his life shall lose it, and whoever loses his life shall preserve it."

"**Remember Lot's Wife**". Lot's wife was turned into a pillar of salt when she looked back towards Sodom and Gomorrah. (Genesis 19:26)

One Will Be Taken

Luke 17:34-37

(Gospels forged together into one seamless story, in collaboration with New American Standard Bible,
authored by Michael Gibson, Founder of Spirit & Truth, dba Key 2 Changes: "Follow Me: A Message from God", a journey with Jesus)

"I tell you, on that night there will be two men in one bed; one will be taken, and the other will be left. There will be two women grinding at the same place; one will be taken, and the other will be left. Two men will be in the field; one will be taken and the other will be left." And answering they said to Him, "Where, Lord?" And He said to them, "Where the **body** is, there also will the vultures be gathered. Therefore be on the alert, for you do not know which day your Lord is coming."

Body. "Dead body" or "corpse".

The Commands:

1. Do not go away.
2. Do not run after them.
3. On that day, let not the one who is on the housetop and whose goods are in the house go down to take them away.
4. Likewise let not the one who is in the field turn back.
5. Remember Lot's wife.

The Lesson:

The Pharisees who questioned Jesus concerning the coming of the Kingdom asked him a legitimate question. Jesus had constantly referred to Himself as the Son of Man and these Pharisees recognized that in essence He was claiming to be the Messiah. They arrived at their conclusion based on the Messianic prophecy in the Book of Daniel.³ *I kept looking in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven One like a **Son of Man** was coming, and He came up to the Ancient of Days and was presented before Him. And to Him was given dominion, glory and a **kingdom**, that all the peoples, nations and men of every language might serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion which will not pass away; and **His kingdom** is one which will not be destroyed.*

³ Daniel 7:13-14

*Essentially the Pharisees wanted to know when Jesus would begin reigning as the King of Israel and establishing His rule over all the nations. They were expecting a **physical** kingdom whose beginning could be **dated** with some precision. But Jesus' reply was somewhat cryptic. The kingdom of God is not coming with signs to be observed; nor will they say, "Look, here it is!" or, "There it is!" For behold, the kingdom of God is in your midst."*

In order to unravel His cryptic reply we will need to gain some understanding about the idea of the Kingdom of God. In simple terms "the Kingdom of God" means "the **rule** of God." The kingdom of God is established when God begins to rule over His people. When Jesus told the Pharisees that the Kingdom of God is in your midst, He was alluding to the fact that God rules when people accept Him as Lord and obey His laws and decrees.⁴ That's why Jesus told the Pharisees that the Kingdom of God was not coming with signs to be observed.

Then turning to His disciples, Jesus cautioned them not to give heed to people who would say that the Kingdom of God was either here or there since the Kingdom of God does not come with signs to be observed. But wishing to give His disciples more information, Jesus turned the conversation back to the Son of Man, thus linking Himself with His future reign as Messiah.

He told them that they would long to see the day when He, the Son of Man, was ruling on the earth but they would not see it in their lifetimes because He would have to suffer many things and be rejected by the current generation. However, He did tell them that He would return to the earth in the future. And He likened that day to a lighting flash: occurring suddenly, in the sky, transpiring quickly and noticeable to all who were watching for it.

As if to give force to His point, Jesus likened His return to the day that Noah entered the ark and the day that Abraham's nephew Lot left Sodom. As in those times there will be two groups of people coexisting on planet earth at the same time: those who belong to the Kingdom of God and those who do not. God will deliver those who are His and reign down wrath on those who are not.

Those who belong to God will hear His voice and obey Him. Noah heard God speak ahead of time and prepared an ark. Then he entered the ark when God told him to. Lot had not prepared beforehand but heard God's message through the angels that were sent to deliver him and obeyed them. In both cases the people who were delivered from God's wrath had submitted to the rule of God in their lives. To those who are members of the Kingdom of God Jesus warns that on the **day** of their deliverance they are not to try to take **any** worldly possession with them. Then He instructs them to remember Lot's wife.

Group Discussion:

1. What happened to Lot's wife?
2. Why did Lot's wife turn back?
3. What was wrong with looking back?

The Lesson Continued:

To those who do not belong to the Kingdom of God that day will be like any other. They will be eating, drinking, marrying, buying, selling, planting and building. They will be unsuspecting!

⁴ This concept would reach a greater dimension when the Holy Spirit came upon the disciples at the Feast of Weeks (Pentecost) three months later. This was the beginning of a spiritual kingdom in which God lives within His people and rules over them by writing His laws on their hearts. (Jeremiah 31:33-34)

Then on that **night** the wrath of God will fall upon them. From the scripture it appears that one-half of the remaining people will be destroyed.

The Point Of The Lesson:

Those who hear and obey God's voice will be spared.