

Luke 21:25-36 Jesus Is Surely Coming Again! Advent 1 Nov. 29-30, 2015

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God's grace and peace are yours as you wait for the coming of your Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen. As the Advent season begins, we are warned and comforted by the news of Jesus' return in Luke 21:25-36. These are Your words heavenly Father to keep our faith strong in certain hope. Your Word is truth! Amen.

Dear Christians, awaiting Jesus' return,

We have begun the season of Advent which is the time of preparation for the coming of Jesus, first as the Savior, and second as the Lord. Just as people are making preparations to celebrate the birth of Christ during this season, so Christians are also preparing for Jesus to come again to give us the gift of full salvation in heaven! Now, we wait for this, trusting in the promises in God's Word. At His coming, we shall see how God has been faithful to keep every promise He made about His Son.

Jesus is surely coming again!

First, we'll compare Jesus' 1st and His 2nd coming – regarding the world, Jesus, and His people. At Jesus' first coming the angels told a handful of people the good news in fields near Bethlehem, but in the town itself and anywhere else in the world nothing seemed changed by Christ's birth. The only sign in the sky at His first coming was one star which led a few wisemen to find Jesus and worship Him with their gifts. The people in the world went about their business: gathering treasures only for themselves.

As Jesus' second coming approaches, it will be more obvious. Jesus said, "*There will be signs in the sun, moon and stars. On the earth, nations will be in anguish and perplexity at the roaring and tossing of the sea. Men will faint from terror, apprehensive of what is coming on the world, for the heavenly bodies will be shaken.... It will come upon all those who live on the face of the whole earth.*" (vs.25-26, 35) The universe, from which unbelievers see such stability, will suddenly begin to fall apart and eventually disappear completely. Unbelievers, who cling to nothing but the physical elements, will lose everything in the end. Some will die because the end will be so frightening. How dramatic the change will be in the world and in the universe at Christ's second coming compared to the quiet of His first coming!

Christ also will be seen differently. At Christ's first coming few people noticed Him. He grew up in humility obeying His mother and step-father. When He began His ministry, some people thought that He was a prophet because of His miracles, but few knew the truth that He was God and man in one person.

When He tried to tell the crowds who He was, most people rejected Him and turned against Him. Due to His meekness and humility, many people despised and hated Him. They were glad when He was arrested and suffered death on the cross and was buried like any dead person. They wanted Him out of sight and mind so they could continue with their lives - feeling safe though unbelief separated them from God.

But, at Christ's second coming people won't be able to avoid Him. Jesus said, "*At that time they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.*" (v.27) As Jesus appears a trumpet blast will sound across the whole world. Everyone will see Him, even those who *pierced Him*. (Revelation 1:7) His divine nature, shining brighter than the sun, will no longer be hidden, but all will see. The power, so often hidden at His first coming, will fully be used as He raises all the dead with a shout and calls them together to stand before Him in judgment. No one will be able to hide from Him. For unbelievers, it will be a time of terror and shame that will never end. Such will be Christ's rule at His second coming in glory!

How were believers affected after Jesus' first coming? His followers also have had to live in humility. They have been persecuted as if they are harmful to the world because of their witness to the truth. They have been mocked, martyred for their faith, and rejected as weak fools. Jesus warned His followers that they would suffer tribulation *"because of His name."* (John 15:21) That trouble continues to this day as Islamic militants kill innocent Christians. Dictators and ungodly countries continue to arrest and harm Christians when they openly speak of their faith in Christ as their Savior. It happened to Christ in His humility and it will happen to believers until the end of the world.

But, at His second coming, while unbelievers are crying in bitterness as they see all their worldly treasures that they have lived for burned in fire, it will be so different for believers. Jesus said, *"When these things begin to take place, stand up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near."* (v.28) Christians will be able to stand before Christ as the judge because through faith they have received the full forgiveness of sins that He won by His death on the cross. Believers will be holy on that day since they will be covered by His sinless life. So, believers can lift up their heads in anticipation of what is ahead for them. In heaven, there will be no more mocking, suffering, threat of death, and nothing to fear. All the evil will be banished and only Christ will remain as their caring Savior to shepherd them forever.

Page 3 **Second, we pray that God would help us be ready for His coming.** Jesus said, *"Look at the fig tree and all the trees. When they sprout leaves, you can see for yourselves and know that summer is near. Even so, when you see these things happening, you know that the kingdom of God is near."* (v.29-31) God has given us His Word so that we know the truth about Christ's second coming. We can be certain of a future glory with Christ as long as we continue to trust in Him as our Savior. We need to keep our faith focused on Him alone and to be certain that Jesus will keep His promises. He said, *"Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away."* (v.34)

Many of us have heard God's Word for a long time. His Word may not seem that important to us that we need to keep hearing it. But, remember: the stakes are so great, eternal life with Jesus or eternal death in hell. We cannot keep our faith alive by ourselves for a second. The Holy Spirit works through the Word to warn us faith-threatening danger. Jesus warned, *"Be careful, or your hearts will be weighed down with dissipation (a wasting of our lives), drunkenness and the anxieties of life, and that day will close on you unexpectedly like a trap.... Be always on the watch, and pray that you may be able to escape all that is about to happen, and that you may be able to stand before the Son of Man."* (v.34, 36) Example of a frog does not escape cooking in warm water. Our culture seeks to gradually overcome our faith and Christian morals by slowly replacing them with sinful living together instead of marriage, with selfishness instead of godly desires, and any other sinful desire instead of God's will. But these sinful ways will end in disaster when people's motives and actions will be judged. Christians need to be warned not to yield to temptations.

Even more, we need God's promises. Peter wrote, *"Since everything will be destroyed in this way.... You ought to live holy and godly lives as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming. That day will bring about the destruction of the heavens by fire, and the elements will melt in the heat. But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness. So then, dear friends, since you are looking forward to this, make every effort to be found spotless, blameless and at peace with Him."* (2 Peter 3:11-14) Many things in life are not certain. But, we can be certain of being blameless as we trust in Christ. As we turn from our sins and trust His free forgiveness we look forward to Jesus' second coming to take us home to glory. He is surely coming again! Amen.