

²⁰ Now when [Jesus] was asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, He answered them and said, “The kingdom of God does not come with observation; ²¹ nor will they say, ‘See here!’ or ‘See there!’ For indeed, the kingdom of God is within you.” ²² Then He said to the disciples, “The days will come when you will desire to see one of the days of the Son of Man, and you will not see it. ²³ And they will say to you, ‘Look here!’ or ‘Look there!’ Do not go after them or follow them. ²⁴ For as the lightning that flashes out of one part under heaven shines to the other part under heaven, so also the Son of Man will be in His day. ²⁵ But first He must suffer many things and be rejected by this generation. ²⁶ And as it was in the days of Noah, so it will be also in the days of the Son of Man: ²⁷ They ate, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all. ²⁸ Likewise as it was also in the days of Lot: They ate, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they built; ²⁹ but on the day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all. ³⁰ Even so will it be in the day when the Son of Man is revealed.”

Text: Luke 17:20-30 A 11-17-24 Exodus 32:1-14 1 Thessalonians 4:11-18 Ps. 98 Resp. Ps.: 5
Hymns: 341, 367, 73, 616

JESUS IS OUR HEAVENLY KING

Dear fellow believers in Christ,

Every so often someone claims to know when Jesus is coming again. There are those who claim that before Jesus comes to take us to heaven, He will set up a kingdom here on earth. Let's see what Jesus Himself has to say about such things.

We're told, “[Jesus] was asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come.” The popular belief among the Jews, including Jesus' disciples at the time, was that the Messiah would be a great earthly king, like King David. They believed that the Messiah would make the Jewish nation strong and free. The Pharisees wanted to know when Jesus thought this was going to happen.

It's a popular belief among many Christians today that before the Judgment Day comes Jesus will set up a kingdom on earth. In this kingdom, Jesus will bring earthly peace.

Jesus told the Pharisees, “The kingdom of God does not come with observation; nor will they say, ‘See here!’ or ‘See there!’” We can look on a globe and see all the [“kingdoms”] – all the countries – on earth. Jesus' kingdom isn't like that. He says that His kingdom “does not come with observation.” We can't see Jesus' kingdom. The Pharisees and the Jews in general were wrong to expect the Messiah to make Israel a strong, free nation. He would do something so much better than that.

“The kingdom of God does not come with observation; nor will they say, ‘See here!’ or ‘See there!’” Jesus' kingdom isn't something we can see. If Jesus were to set up a kingdom on earth,

we could see it. Jesus told Pontius Pilate, *“My kingdom is not of this world”* (Jn. 18:36). It would be wonderful if there were true earthly peace. Sadly, our sinful human nature keeps that from happening. Don’t set your hopes on Jesus establishing a kingdom on earth. He has done something so much better for us than that.

Jesus told the Pharisees, *“Indeed, the kingdom of God is within you.”* The original is literally, *“The kingdom of God is in the midst of you,”* *“The kingdom of God is among you.”* Jesus had just healed ten lepers. The Pharisees and the Jewish people in general shouldn’t look for some Messiah to come in the future. The Messiah had come. The disciples of John the Baptist asked Jesus if He was the promised Messiah. Jesus answered, *“Go and tell John the things which you hear and see: ‘The blind see and the lame walk; the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear; the dead are raised up and the poor have the Gospel preached to them. And blessed is he who is not offended because of Me’”* (Mt. 11:4-6). Only God can do the things Jesus did. The Pharisees and all the Jews should look at what Jesus did and believe what He said. Then they would know that Jesus is God’s Son and the Messiah, and believe in Him.

Don’t look for Jesus to establish some future earthly kingdom. Jesus gives us something so much greater than earthly peace. Listen to Jesus’ words. Look at all His amazing miracles. Believe and know that Jesus is God’s Son and your Savior.

Now Jesus spoke to His disciples. *“The days will come when you will desire to see one of the days of the Son of Man, and you will not see it.”* After Jesus’ ascension back into heaven, the disciples couldn’t see Him any more on earth. They couldn’t talk with Him face to face any more on earth. Jesus told them, *“They will say to you, ‘Look here!’ or ‘Look there!’ Do not go after them or follow them.”* Some people would make false claims about God and try to lead them away from Him. Jesus told them, literally from the original, *“Do not even begin to go after them or follow them.”* They should stick with God’s Word and keep following Jesus.

Jesus told His disciples, *“First [I] must suffer many things and be rejected by this generation.”* The Jews, including the Pharisees, and the disciples at that time, were looking for their Messiah to be a conquering hero. They were not looking for a suffering Messiah. Jesus told His disciples that He would *“be rejected by this generation”* – literally from the original, *“be rejected after examination by this generation”* *“be declared useless by this generation.”* Most of the Jews rejected Jesus because He wasn’t the kind of messiah they were looking for.

It’s very appealing to think that Jesus is going to set up an earthly kingdom in which He stops all hate and injustice and wrong, and gives us earthly peace. But Jesus came to do something infinitely better for us. Jesus died for our sins on the cross, and rose from the dead. Our sins are all forgiven. All our guilt is taken away. Jesus brings us peace with God, and peace with ourselves. In the face of all the problems in this world, Jesus gives us *“the peace of God that passes all understanding”* (Phil. 4:7). Jesus says, *“Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.”* (Jn. 14:27)

Jesus told His disciples, *“As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be also in the days of the Son of Man: They ate, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all. Likewise as it was also in the days of Lot: They ate, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they built; but on the day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all.”* In the original all of this stresses on-going activity. Without God, the lives of the people in Noah’s day and the people in Lot’s day centered only on this life on earth. So many people try to hold onto their life here on earth because this world and this life are all they have. They’re afraid that God may be real. They’re afraid of what they may have to face after they die. Like the people at the time of Noah and of Lot, they’re completely unprepared for God’s judgement.

Many people deny that there is a God. They want to live the way they want to live, and they don’t want anyone to tell them differently. If what the Bible says is true (and it is!), God made everything in the universe. A God that powerful is way more powerful than we are. We would have to live the way He tells us to. We would have to answer to Him. We would face eternal punishment for our sins in hell.

God did make everything in the universe. He is way more powerful than we are. We do have to live the way He tells us to. We are answerable to Him. We deserve to be punished for our sins in hell.

But almighty God is also merciful and forgiving and loving. *“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved”* (Jn. 3:16-17). The God who created all things loves us and sent His Son to save us. We don’t have to be afraid of God. By faith in Jesus our sins are forgiven, we’re saved, and we have eternal life in heaven. Jesus says, *“Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father’s house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also.”* (Jn. 14:1-4)

We’re told about the unbelievers at the time of Noah, *“The flood came and destroyed them all.”* We’re told about the unbelievers in Sodom at the time of Lot, *“It rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all.”* The Bible warns us, *“It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.”* (He. 10:31)

Jesus says, *“For as the lightning that flashes out of one part under heaven shines to the other part under heaven, so also the Son of Man will be in His day.”* Everyone will see Jesus when He comes on Judgment Day. The Bible doesn’t tell us when the Judgment Day will be. By faith in Jesus we’re ready whenever He comes again. Jesus tells us, *“Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life”* (Rev. 2:10c). We can’t take Jesus and our salvation for granted.

Keep reading your Bible. Keep coming to church to hear God's Word. Keep looking to Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith, to keep you in your faith in Him. (He. 12:2)

We will see Jesus in heaven. Jesus, our heavenly King, will rule over us face to face in heaven. Paul says, "*I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us*" (Ro. 8:18). In heaven there won't be any sin. In heaven we won't ever hurt anyone, and no will ever hurt us. In heaven we'll have perfect peace, perfect health, perfect happiness forever. In heaven we'll be able to serve God perfectly forever. The Bible says about heaven, "*There shall be no more curse, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His servants shall serve Him. They shall see His face, and His name shall be on their foreheads. There shall be no night there: They need no lamp nor light of the sun, for the Lord God gives them light*" (Rev. 22:3-5). "*And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.*" (Rev. 7:17)

Don't look to Jesus to give you an earthly peace that can't last. Look to Jesus to give you peace, true peace now, and peace in heaven that lasts forever. "*Even so, come, Lord Jesus*" (Rev. 22:20). Amen.