

Ready And Waiting
Luke 12:35-40

Today, as we examine these precious truths given to us here in the Book of Luke, we find that the Lord Jesus has chosen to interweave words of prophecy within His many other truths, mysterious words that tell us about things and circumstances that are yet to take place, words especially about those coming days when He will return to this earth to receive His beloved bride, you and me, to be with Him in His “Mansions of Glory” in heaven.

And strangely, as I listen to many of the sermons being preached in our day, it seems that there are very few preachers who are comfortable preaching about prophecy. They prefer instead to focus their messages on other matters of scripture.

But, as we will see in our study for today, all throughout these scriptures the Lord Jesus has interwoven many prophecies within His instructions to us, prophecies that we really ought to preach about, prophecies about His return, prophecies about His second coming when He'll bring an end to this world as we know it and will take us to be with Him in the heavens.

And again no, not all of the words of prophecy are comfortable for us to hear and to know, because there are many sufferings prophesied about in the scriptures, sufferings that will accompany our Lord's return.

And yes, some of those events can truly be very frightening, so frightening that many even devout Christians would rather not even think about them. But the real and precious truth is that better by far are all the many eternal and joy-filled blessings that our Lord's return will bring to us than any fears that we might endure.

And so, with our custom of following along and teaching verse by verse through these scriptures, today the Lord has presented some of these prophecies to us here in Luke chapter 12. And because He has done that, we'll give these precious words our full consideration.

And I want to begin by assuring all of us who have received the Lord Jesus as our Savior that we really have nothing at all to fear. His return brings with it really

wonderful and blessed and exciting joys unimaginable and we should be looking forward to His return.

But sadly also, for all those many people who have not received the blessed salvation that the Lord Jesus provides, even the thought of what those coming days have in store can be truly frightening and foreboding.

And in the scripture passages that we'll study today, the Lord Jesus speaks about both of those groups of people, those who look forward to His return, and those who do not. And He reminds us that for those of us who are faithful, we must remain ever watchful and ever ready and waiting.

Listen to these precious truths given to us in Luke chapter 12, beginning in verse 35,

³⁵ Stay dressed for action and keep your lamps burning, ³⁶ and be like men who are waiting for their master to come home from the wedding feast, so that they may open the door to him at once when he comes and knocks. ³⁷ Blessed are those servants whom the master finds awake when he comes. Truly, I say to you, he will dress himself for service and have them recline at table, and he will come and serve them. ³⁸ If he comes in the second watch, or in the third, and finds them awake, blessed are those servants! ³⁹ But know this, that if the head of the house had known at what hour the thief was coming, he would not have left his house to be broken into. ⁴⁰ You also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect." (Luke 12:35-40)

These words are similar in many ways to another teaching of the Lord Jesus given in the Book of Matthew chapter 25. There He tells us that,

¹ "The kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom. ² Five of them were foolish, and five were wise. ³ For when the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them, ⁴ but the wise took flasks of oil with their lamps. ⁵ As the bridegroom was delayed, they all became drowsy and slept. ⁶ But at midnight there was a cry, 'Here is the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.' ⁷ Then all those virgins rose and trimmed their lamps. ⁸ And the foolish said to the wise, 'Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.' ⁹ But the wise answered, saying, 'Since there will not be enough for us and for you, go rather to the dealers and buy for yourselves.' ¹⁰ And while they were going to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with

him to the marriage feast, and the door was shut. ¹¹ Afterward the other virgins came also, saying, 'Lord, lord, open to us.' ¹² But he answered, 'Truly, I say to you, I do not know you.' ¹³ Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour. (Matthew 25:1-12)

Folks, these words given here by the Lord Jesus are especially fearful to me. It would seem that all ten of these virgins thought that they were saved, but in reality only five of them were able to enter into the Kingdom of God. And I do fear that that will also be true for many, many who sit within the pews of many of our churches today. How sad! How so very sad!

Also, note that in the words of both of these teachings, the Lord Jesus has told us that we will not know the exact day or the exact hour when He will return. But though we can't and won't know the day or the hour, we really must always be faithfully watching and waiting for Him to come.

And so that we will not be caught completely unprepared, our Lord has told us in many places in these scriptures that there will be recognizable signs that will precede and will announce His coming, signs that will help those of us who have eyes to see and ears to hear to know that the "Day of the Lord" is very near.

And while yes, throughout the many generations past there have been signs that really looked like the "Day of the Lord" was near, more than ever before, it seems that right now, during these days that we are now living within, many of those signs that were prophesied about are becoming more and more frequent and obvious.

Listen to how the Lord Jesus describes some of those signs of the soon coming days when He'll return. These words are given to us in Luke chapter 17 where the Lord tells us,

26 "Just as it was in the days of Noah, so also will it be in the days of the Son of Man. 27 People were eating, drinking, marrying and being given in marriage up to the day Noah entered the ark. Then the flood came and destroyed them all.

28 "It was the same in the days of Lot. People were eating and drinking, buying and selling, planting and building. 29 But the day Lot left Sodom, fire and brimstone rained down from heaven and destroyed them all. (Luke 17:26-30)

These words describe some of those “signs of the soon coming day of the Lord” very well, and we really should consider them carefully! Can these days that we are now living within be any more like those days of Noah and those days of Sodom?

In the days of Noah, all the people of the earth were just getting about their daily lives. But one thing that was taking place behind the scenes in those days was an extreme “turning away from the Lord”. “Apostacy” was rampant. And when God shut the door to the Ark there were only eight people left on the earth who still believed in God. And all the other people would be swept away by the flood.

Can you imagine that folks. In that day, there was only eight people left on this earth that were worthy of being saved. All the other people, some estimate the number to be in the millions, were so reprobate that they were condemned not only to die in the flood but to also suffer eternal damnation. But God, in His mercy and grace, saved those eight people, Noah and his family.

And then also, as Jesus told us here, the last days will also be as they were in the days of Sodom. And in Sodom, as with the days of Noah, the people were just getting about their daily lives. But unfortunately, their daily lifestyles were especially corrupt with rampant homosexual sins filling their behaviors.

And Oh dear friends is not our day just like the days of Sodom and Gomorrah, rampant with vile and perverse homosexual sins, men and women publicly flaunting their perverse behaviors before the world, drawing as many as they can into their perversity, even innocent children. And most of the world seems to agree with them.

Recall that just before God destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, Abraham had interceded to save those people. And God had said to Abraham that if there were even ten righteous people in those big cities, He would not destroy them. But sadly, there weren't even ten righteous people in those cities and so He did destroy all of them, except Lot and his family. And sadly, even Lot's wife proved herself to not be worthy of being saved. How sad! How so very sad!

And Yes! Again! These days that we are now living in have many of those same “signs of the soon coming of the Lord” that are spoken about in the scriptures. The lifestyles of our days and our people are very, very much like those in the

days of Noah, with our rampant apostasy, many, many people turning away from God. Our churches are more empty today than they have ever been.

And also, our days are so like the days of Sodom. Just a few short years ago we would have never imagined the homosexual perversity that we are seeing take place in our culture today, vile and unashamed they flaunt their sinful behaviors before the world. And the world is cheering them on.

But thankfully, just as God told Abraham as Abraham interceded with God for Sodom and Gomorrah, if there are a few faithful people still remaining on the earth, then He will be merciful, and He will do as He did with Noah and His family and with Lot and his family. Before the final destruction begins, He will rescue the faithful ones. And that is why we who trust in the Lord Jesus must always be watching and waiting for His return, when we will be “caught away” to be with Him in the sky. What a joy-filled thought!

But again, and sadly so, most of this world has no idea that this will take place, and perhaps real soon. Our world has chosen instead to believe the theories and the philosophies of our secular leaders and has completely turned away from believing anything about the Lord, choosing instead to believe that everything will simply continue on for centuries just as it always has.

Folks, if only the people of this world would read the blessed words of these scriptures and believe the truths that are given here, they would know that our world has a built-in life span, with that life span determined solely by our Almighty God who created it.

And it truly does have a soon-coming end to its days. And the Lord Jesus is warning us that its time is nearly at hand. And when that final moment arrives, there will be no further opportunities, no negotiations, no extensions of time, and no hope left for those who have refused the blessed salvation that the Lord Jesus has provided.

Listen to some more of those warnings given by the Lord Jesus. These given in the Book of Matthew, chapter 24. Listen, beginning in verse 3,

³ As Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately. “Tell us,” they said, “when will this happen, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?”

⁴ Jesus answered: "Watch out that no one deceives you. ⁵ For many will come in my name, claiming, 'I am the Christ,' and will deceive many. ⁶ You will hear of wars and rumors of wars, but see to it that you are not alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come. ⁷ Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes in various places. ⁸ All these are the beginning of birth pains.

⁹ "Then you will be handed over to be persecuted and put to death, and you will be hated by all nations because of me. ¹⁰ At that time many will turn away from the faith and will betray and hate each other, ¹¹ and many false prophets will appear and deceive many people. ¹² Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold, ¹³ but he who stands firm to the end will be saved. ¹⁴ And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.

²¹ . . . For then there will be great distress, unequalled from the beginning of the world until now—and never to be equaled again. ²² If those days had not been cut short, no one would survive, but for the sake of the elect those days will be shortened.

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. ³¹ 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. (Matthew 24:3-31)

While most all of us who have given our hearts to Christ in salvation truly do believe that He will return and He'll gather us to Himself just as these scriptures tell us, there are several variations of understanding about "how" and about "when" that will take place, and also the exact chain of events that will take place as our Lord returns for us.

Many Christians, of which I am one, are convinced that in those soon coming end of days, the Lord Jesus will do much as He did in the days of Noah and in the days of Sodom and Gomorrah, that before those final moments of the days of this earth take place, there will be a "rescue" of the faithful few.

As with Noah and his family and Lot and his family, God will rescue the faithful believers, you and me, off of this earth. It will be as we are told about in 1

Thessalonians chapter 4, we will be “caught away”, raptured off the earth to join with the Lord Jesus in the air. Those words,

¹⁶ . . . the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷ Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord. (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17)

Folks, yes, these are mysterious words, not even imaginable by our human minds, but nevertheless they are truth. Absolute truth!

Recall that promise that Jesus made to us in John chapter 14, where He said,

² I go to prepare a place for you? ³ And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also. (John 14:2-3)

Again, while some of our most devout of Christians might differ on the timing in which this event of our being “caught up together to meet the Lord in the air” will take place, it surely will happen. We know that to be so because our loving Father does not desire for His beloved children to suffer His “wrath” that is to come upon the wickedness of the world. He tells us that in 1 Thessalonians 5. Listen!

⁹ For God has not destined us for wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, ¹⁰ who died for us so that whether we are awake or asleep we might live with him. (1 Thessalonians 5:9-10)

The wrath that these words speak about is described for us at great length within the prophecies given in the Book of Revelation. There the Lord describes what is said to be seven years of tribulation like the world has never known before, after which the Lord will usher in His Millennial Kingdom. And praise be to God for His great mercy.

And so, as these words of our scripture passage are telling us, we really must be ready and waiting with anticipation for our Master, the Lord Jesus to return so that He can save us from the wrath to come. Listen again to those words given in Luke chapter 12.

³⁵“Let your waist be girded and your lamps burning; ³⁶and you yourselves be like men who wait for their master, when he will return from the wedding, that when he comes and knocks they may open to him

immediately. ³⁷Blessed are those servants whom the master, when he comes, will find watching. Assuredly, I say to you that he will gird himself and have them sit down *to eat*, and will come and serve them. ³⁸And if he should come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find *them so*, blessed are those servants. . . . ⁴⁰Therefore, you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect." (Luke 12:35-40)

These truths are really real folks. This will take place and you and I need to be ready and waiting for the Lord Jesus to return to come and take us to be with Him in the heavens. And it surely does look like He is coming soon to do it. And the question is, "are you ready and are you eagerly waiting for Him to come"? I am! And Praise the Lord, "even so, come Lord Jesus"!

Listen to these words of the Apostle Peter and we'll close.

³ Know this first of all, that scoffers will come in the last days with scoffing, following their own sinful desires. ⁴ They will say, "Where is the promise of his coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all things are continuing as they were from the beginning of creation." ⁵ For they deliberately overlook this fact, that the heavens existed long ago, and the earth was formed out of water and through water by the word of God, ⁶ and that by means of these the world that then existed was deluged with water and perished. ⁷ But by the same word the heavens and earth that now exist are stored up for fire, being kept until the day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly.

⁸ But do not overlook this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. ⁹ The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance. ¹⁰ But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed.

¹¹ Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness, ¹² waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set on fire and dissolved, and the heavenly bodies will melt as they burn! ¹³ But according to his promise we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells. (2 Peter 3:1-13)

Let's Pray!