

The Coming of the Kingdom **Luke 17:20-37**

The Pharisees ask in v20 when the kingdom will come, which implies the Kingdom has not yet come. In response Jesus talks of the now and the not yet of the Kingdom of God.

Now and Not Yet

The Pharisees had preconceived ideas of what the Messiah would be like, and Jesus wasn't fulfilling those ideas. Rather than the kingdom coming as they expected it, Jesus told them it was in their midst. They missed the fact that it had already arrived in Jesus. The Kingdom of God and its transforming power is here, and available now. It is also future.

Jesus goes on to explain that the kind of signs the Pharisees were looking for were not the signs of the *arrival* of the Kingdom but of its *fulfillment*, its consummation on the last day. And when that day comes, Jesus says, it will be obvious, it will be sudden and it will divide.

You won't miss it

Jesus says the disciples will long to see Jesus come in power. When you see the state of the world, or are facing struggles in life, or watch a friend falling in sin, you can long for that day too. But that longing for the day when God intervenes and changes the status quo can leave you vulnerable to believing false claims: that the Kingdom has already come in all its fullness. Jesus says, don't believe such claims. Instead, when the Kingdom comes in all its final power, it will be obvious. It will be like lightning. You won't be able to miss it. But you can miss out on it.

You can miss out on it

Jesus uses the examples of the judgments in Noah's and Lot's days. People were carrying on their life as normal, unaware and indifferent that judgment was approaching. But then He talks of not going back for your possessions when that day comes. But why would someone do that? Because that's how they've lived throughout their lives. The last day won't change what our hearts are like, it will just confirm what they are like. And if we love something else more than God the last day may mean trouble for us. His coming will be pain not gain. Wavering over whether Jesus is the most important thing in our lives can be deadly.

And in v32 Jesus urges us to 'Remember Lot's wife.' She was rescued from Sodom, but looked back. She loved her life in Sodom more than God, and despite being on the verge of rescue was overcome in the judgment. Instead, our attitude should be that of Paul who could say, "for me to live is Christ and to die is gain!" (Phil 1:21).

It will divide

Jesus says his final coming will divide people. In that day, someone else's faith won't be the issue, it will be where each of us stand as individuals.

But how can we ensure we find ourselves on the right side of the judgment? Jesus says in v25 that the Son of Man must suffer. It was because He suffered for our sins and was rejected by God that we don't need to be. It is trusting in Him, not ourselves, just as Noah and Lot had to trust God, that will rescue us from judgment.