

THE KING IS COMING

- A. Introduction: We're going to shift gears for a few weeks and talk about the Second Coming of Jesus. Conditions in this world and in our own country are deteriorating: violence and crime; mass shootings, threats from ISIS and a nuclear Iran, economic challenges, global warming etc. Anxiety and fear abounds.
1. Additionally, much of what is being presented in Christian circles regarding Jesus' return and events immediately preceding it is feeding fear and confusion amongst believers.
 - a. I see a real need to address people's fears as well as to provide biblical balance to what is being said about the soon return of Jesus, especially on Christian TV.
 - b. My aim is not to be at odds with prominent preachers in the Body of Christ. My goal is to help those who consider Riches In Christ Ministries a food source to be able to assess what is being preached in terms of what the Bible says.
 2. If Jesus is your Lord and Savior and you hear a teaching about His return that makes you afraid then you aren't getting good teaching. Jesus made that clear two thousand years ago. Luke 21
 - a. Several days before He went to the Cross Jesus listed a number of signs that will indicate His return is very near. He said that some of these signs will produce fear and terror in men's hearts--v26--Men swooning away or expiring with fear and dread and apprehension (Amp)
 1. But Jesus' instructions to His followers are: v9--Don't be terrified (fear not). Do not become alarmed and panic stricken and terrified (Amp). v28--Look up and lift up your heads.
 2. According to Vine's Dictionary of New Testament Words "look up", in the Greek language, literally means "To lift oneself up, being elated in joyous expectation".
 - b. Note, everyone will see the same things. Yet some will be terrified to the point of dropping dead while others are elated in joyous expectation. It's not what you see, it's how you see what you see.
 1. Paul, who was personally taught the message he preached by Jesus Himself (Acts 26:16; Gal 1:11,12), said that in the days just prior to the Lord's return perilous or fierce times will come because of the behavior of men, and it will grow worse and worse (II Tim 3:1-5; 13).
 2. But Paul's exhortation to believers was to continue in the Word of God (II Tim 3:14-17). The Bible gives us the light we need to navigate through this unique period of history. It will help us know how to look at what we are seeing around us.
 3. When Jesus told us to be elated in joyous expectation in the face of the chaos coming on the world, He had just given His listeners a list of some of catastrophic events that will occur prior to His return.
 - a. Jesus made these statements as part of answers to questions asked Him by several of His disciples. They had just come out of the Temple and one of them noted the magnificence of the place. Jesus responded by stating that the Temple and its associated buildings would be destroyed. Matt 24:1-3
 1. When they reached the Mount of Olives just outside the city, Peter, James, John and Andrew (Mark 13:3) asked Jesus: When will this happen? What will be the signs of your coming and of the end of the world (this age)?
 2. Although Jesus had just made a terrifying statement that heart of their religious and social life, the seat of their national identity (the Temple) was going to be destroyed, none of them were upset. They just wanted to know when it would happen and what signs would precede it.
 - b. They were able to respond this way because they knew from the Old Testament (their Bible) how to look things. They knew these calamitous events would signal that the completion of God's plan of redemption was at hand, giving them reason to be elated. Redemption draws near. Luke 21:28
 4. In these next few lessons I want to give you a framework from the Bible of God's plan of redemption and how it will be completed. Then you can be elated about what you see and what is ahead and not be moved by fearful sights and unscriptural teachings.
- B. The Second Coming of Jesus is not a freaky, yet fascinating, subject stuck on the end of the Bible in a book called Revelation. It is the completion of the plan of God conceived in eternity past.

1. God's plan was and is to have a family with whom He can dwell for eternity. He created mankind to become His sons and daughters and the earth to be the home for His family. Eph 1:4,5; Isa 45:18
 - a. God's plan seemed thwarted when the first man chose independence from God. Adam was enticed to join Satan in rebellion against their Creator and rightful King of this world. Gen 3:1-6
 - b. As the head of the human race and first steward of the earth, Adam took the whole race and the earth into sin, corruption and death and gave his authority in the earth over to Satan. Gen 3:17-19; Rom 5:12-19; Luke 4:6; II Cor 4:4; John 12:31; etc.
 - c. But God immediately began to unveil His plan of redemption, His plan to deliver men and women and the earth itself from this pitiful condition and still have a family on a perfect earth for eternity.
 1. God made His first promise of the coming of the Redeemer, the Lord Jesus Christ right after Adam and Eve sinned. Gen 3:15
 2. God promised that the Seed (Jesus) of the woman (Mary) would bruise Satan's head or destroy his power and lordship over mankind. Heb 2:14
 - d. God has been talking about the end since the beginning. Enoch, the seventh generation from Adam, was a prophet who prophesied that the Lord will come with His saints to carry out justice and make things right in the earth. Jude 14,15
 1. By the time of this prophecy the effects of sin, corruption and death had begun to show themselves in the earth. Gen 4:8,9; 23,24; etc.
 2. Adam lived to the ninth generation. Imagine the hope Enoch's prophecy would have inspired in him to hear all would be made right, restored. He'd known a perfect world before sin.
 - e. God instructed men to begin to make a record of His plan of redemption as He gradually revealed increasing aspects of it, both the Person and the work of the Seed (the Redeemer). The Bible is the written record of that plan.
 1. As the centuries passed God marked out the people group through whom the Seed would be born into this world, the descendants of Abraham (Gen 12:3), specified the tribe (Judah) and the family line (David's) through which the Redeemer would come (Gen 49:10; Ps 89:35).
 2. Twenty-five percent of the Bible is prophetic or predictive because it describes the unfolding plan of God. Rev 19:10--It is truth concerning Jesus which inspires all prophecy. (Knox)
2. The prophets who wrote about the coming Seed in the Old Testament did not see clearly that there would be two separate comings of the Redeemer separated by two millennia. Isa 9:6
 - a. But they knew He was coming to reclaim the earth and establish His visible, eternal kingdom of righteousness and peace on this earth. Dan 2:44; 7:27; etc.
 1. Jesus came to earth the first time to pay the price for sin so it could be removed and men and women could become literal sons of God through union with Christ. Heb 9:28; Gal 4:4-6
 2. He'll come again to complete the plan of redemption by cleansing the world of all sin, corruption and death and establishing His visible kingdom on earth. Rev 11:15,18; Isa 9:7
 - b. We must never lose sight of what the Second Coming is all about: the return of the Rightful King to establish His kingdom on as God comes to live with His redeemed family. Rev 21,22
3. The men to whom Jesus spoke that day about the destruction of the Temple were Old Covenant Jews familiar with the writings of the prophets, most of whom wrote about the coming of the Lord. The prophets spoke of calamity on the earth just prior to His coming due to world conditions.
 - a. Jesus' followers knew about the "scary stuff". The tribulation, the antichrist, Armageddon, the moon turning to blood, etc. had already been revealed by God (Dan 7:11,12; 8:23-25; Joel 2:10,31; 3:15;). The Book of Revelation simply gives more details.
 - b. When Jesus told His disciples that the Temple would be destroyed they already knew there would be war in Jerusalem prior to the establishment of the kingdom (Zech 12:2,3; 14:1-3). But they were not afraid because they also knew from the prophets that God's people will make it through whatever is ahead.
4. When Jesus came to earth the first time He gave His followers additional information about the coming

kingdom. He explained that it would first take a form not clearly seen by the Old Testament prophets-- the kingdom or reign of God in human hearts through the new birth. Luke 17:20,21

- a. Jesus further told them that He would be leaving them for a time but that He would return to complete the plan of redemption by cleansing the earth and establishing God's visible kingdom.

His first message to His follower when He returned to Heaven was: I'll be back. Acts 1:11

1. There are at least twice as many prophecies concerning Jesus' Second Coming than His first. Only the doctrine of salvation is mentioned more often in the Bible than the promise of Jesus' Christ's return. That makes sense because His coming will coming the plan of salvation.

2. Of the 27 epistles and books in the New Testament only four do not refer to the return of Jesus and three of them are single chapters or personal letters: Philemon, II and III John, Galatians.

- b. Looking for or expecting Jesus is a New Testament theme. The fact that He is coming back is supposed to affect how we live our daily lives. I Cor 1:7; Phil 3:20,4:5; Heb 9:28; 10:25; James 5:7-9; I Pet 4:7; II Pet 3:10-12; I Tim 6:11-14; Phil 1:6; I Thess 3:11-13; 5:23

C. Now that we've established a framework of information about Jesus' return let's consider one topic that has swept through much of the Body Christ and caused great fear and confusion -- the Shemittah year.

1. For the past couple of years the word coming forth from many TV preachers is: Something big is coming. Something bad is going to happen to America. Many have implied (or in some cases stated) that the rapture will take place in September of 2015 and that economic collapse of America will occur.

- a. They base this on the fact that a Shemittah year began on Sept 25, 2014 and ended on Sept 13, 2015. Both these dates align with the Jewish Feast of Trumpets and 2015 also has the final four blood moons that also align with the feasts of Israel.

- b. Preachers have made the statement that the Shemittah affects the financial and economic realm, bringing a time of blessing or cursing depending on your actions. This statement is made in the context of supporting the nation of Israel. We don't have time to discuss all of this tonight (we'll get to it), but consider some thoughts. These ideas have no basis in the Bible.

2. Let's first define the Shemittah according to the Bible. When God brought Israel out of Egypt He gave them the Laws (civil, ceremonial, and moral laws) they were to follow once they settled in Canaan.

- a. One of the instructions they received was that they were to observe a Sabbath year or rest the land every seven years. This observance had four names each of which reveals an aspect of the it.

1. Rest of the entire land (Lev 25:4); Year of Rest (Lev 25:5); Year of Release (Deut 15:1,2,); the seventh year (Deut 15:9). Release is the Hebrew word *shmittah* (all debts were remitted).

2. It was not just to rest the land to increase its yield or provide a time of rest for man and beast.

It was to help them see that they had been set apart to the Lord and that they could enjoy the bounty of the land God had given them without toil, sweat and care.

- b. This was a real event observed by real people for real purposes. But many Old Testament events picture (foreshadow) the coming Redeemer. Israel's Sabbaths picture our rest in Jesus.

- c. Israel was not diligent to observe this Sabbath rest. One reason they were exiled from the land to Babylon was for failing to keep this rest for 490 years. II Chron 36:19-21

3. Certain preachers have tried to apply the Shemittah Year to America. stating that the country has and will experience judgment every seven years for neglecting the Word of God.

- a. Then they cite the troubles that have occurred in past Shemittah years: 1973 (Roe v. Wade); 1980 (Gulf War began); 1987 (super nova visible without a telescope for the first time since 1604); 1994 (US. Stock Market dropped); 2001 (Twin Towers destroyed in terrorist attack); 2008 (Stock Market Crash and economic crisis for U.S. and world); 2015 (something big is going to happen).

1. This is unimpressive. In this fallen world enough bad happens every year to make lots of lists.

2. Does this mean that nothing bad happened in other years? What about the Columbine school shootings (1999), Hurricane Katrina (2005) or Sandy (2012); etc.?

- b. This Sabbath observance was part of Israel's Law under the Old Covenant. That Law has never

applied to anyone but Israel. It's part of what set them apart as the group through whom the Redeemer would come. These observances and feasts were shadows. Now that the fulfillment has come (Jesus) the shadows are no longer necessary. Heb 10:1

4. If your only source of information about the return of Jesus and what Christians are to believe and how they are to behave was the New Testament you could never come up with this Shemittah idea.

a. One of the issues the early church faced was the place of the Law of Moses amongst believers. Many Jews accepted Jesus as the Redeemer but believed that His followers should keep the Law. Paul had to deal with constant challenges from such ideas.

1. The church in the city of Colosse was being influenced, among other things, by Jewish legalism which stressed circumcision, dietary regulations and ritual observances.

2. Paul wrote to them: Col 2:16,17--Let no one sit in judgment on you in matters of food and drink, or with regard to a feast day or a new moon or a Sabbath (Amp). These things are only the shadow of what is to come, the substance is in the Christ (Phillips).

b. These TV preachers say that everything is converging: The blood moons, the Shemittah, the Feasts of Israel (we'll elaborate more in later lessons). If this is so significant why is the New Testament (including Jesus and Paul) silent about it?

c. Some people have concluded that if the catching away of the Church (the rapture) doesn't come in the Shemittah Year it can't happen for seven more years because, they say, God works according to patterns. Show me one verse in the New Testament that says anything like that.

1. Paul, a Pharisee and Old Testament scholar who was well familiar with the Shemittah or the Sabbath Year never mentioned it.

2. Paul the one to whom Jesus gave the revelation of the rapture and he taught all his converts to live their lives looking for Jesus. I Thess 1:10--We are to wait (present tense in the Greek) continuously. It literally means to wait for like a child expecting its parents at any minute.

3. The New Testament presents what is called the doctrine of immanency -- the coming of the Lord for His Body is imminent (ready to take place). If we know we have to wait seven more years you've just destroyed the doctrine of immanency.

D. Conclusion: We have more to talk about next week. But consider this final thought. When Jesus came the first time Israel was expecting the kingdom.

1. John the Baptist, a prophet raised up to prepare the people for the Lord's first coming proclaimed: The King and His kingdom is at hand. Prepare ye the way. Matt 3:1-3

2. There's no trace of: store up food, give to this ministry to get your Shemittah blessing, try to figure out who the Antichrist, store up gold in preparation for the coming economic crisis, etc. in his messages.

3. The Rightful King of earth is about to return to establish His visible, eternal kingdom. That should be the focus of our attention. That's how we should see what we see coming on the earth. More next week!