

REDEMPTION COMPLETED

- A. Introduction: Last week we looked at a statement Jesus made shortly before He went to the Cross. He had already told His apostles that He was soon going to leave them—but would return. In fact, His first message to His followers once He returned to Heaven was: I'll be back. Acts 1:9-11
1. In the context of His return, Jesus told His men that His second coming will be preceded by tribulation on the earth unlike anything this world has ever seen. Matt 24:21
 - a. In describing what is going to happen prior to His return Jesus said: What men see coming to the earth will cause the fear of doom to grip their hearts (Luke 21:26, TPT).
 - b. Yet Jesus told His followers that when these horrific things begin to come to pass, we can be elated in joyous expectation because our redemption (or deliverance) draws near. Luke 21:28
 1. The second coming of Jesus is approaching, and the Bible makes it clear that perilous times will precede His return. Things are going to get much worse in this world before they get better.
 2. The only way we can be elated in joyous expectation, in the face of events that cause peoples' hearts to fail them for fear, is if we know what is happening and why, if we are certain that we'll make it through, and if we know that the end result is good.
 - c. We're taking some time to look at why Jesus is coming back and what His return will mean for humanity. Accurate knowledge in this area will help us be elated, joyful, and full of hope and peace in the face of the increasing catastrophe coming to this world.
 2. The term second coming of Jesus is not found in Scripture, although it is appropriate because His return will be His second time on earth. Second coming is a broad term that includes a number of events which occur over a period of time.
 - a. People have a tendency to focus on individual events such as the rapture, the tribulation, and the Antichrist and miss the overall purpose of the second coming.
 - b. Because they don't consider these individual events and topics in terms of the big picture, or God's plan for humanity, they draw wrong conclusions that produce fear instead of hope.
 - c. Jesus is coming back to this world to complete God's plan for a family with whom He will live forever. God created human beings to become His sons and daughters through faith in Him, and He made this world to be a home for Himself and His family. Eph 1:4-5; Isa 45:18; etc.
 1. Both the family and the family home have been damaged by sin, beginning with Adam's sin. Because of sin, men and women are now disqualified for the family, and this planet is infused with a curse of corruption and death. Gen 3:17-19; Rom 5:12; Rom 5:19; etc.
 2. Jesus came to earth the first time to pay for sin by His sacrificial death on the Cross. Through faith in Jesus and His sacrifice, men and women can be restored to their created purpose as sons and daughters of God. Jesus will come again to cleanse the earth of sin, corruption, and death and restore it to a fit forever home for Himself and His family. John 1:12-13; Rev 21-22
 3. The return of Jesus is a vital part of the gospel (the good news of salvation). Jesus' return will bring to completion God's plan for a family on this earth, renewed and restored to pre-sin conditions.
 - a. This world in its present condition is not the way it's supposed to be, not as God intended or created it to be—filled with wickedness, pain, suffering, loss, and death. And, it isn't going to stay this way: For this world in its present form is passing away (I Cor 7:31, NIV).
 - b. Jesus said we can be elated in joyous expectation because redemption draws near. Redemption is God's plan to deliver His creation from sin and its effects through Jesus' first and second coming.
- B. Not only is there a curse of corruption in the earth, there is a counterfeit kingdom dominating this world. We aren't going to do an in depth study of this topic, but some key points will help us as we move forward.
1. Before Almighty God created the physical world, He created an invisible world populated with angelic

beings. At some point before time as we know it began, one of these beings (Lucifer) led a rebellion against God's authority. Col 1:16; Isa 14:12-16; Ezek 28:12-19

- a. Lucifer (who became known as Satan) and the angels who joined him established a counterfeit kingdom. At some point after the creation of the physical, material world, Satan enticed Adam and Eve to join him in rebellion, and his usurper kingdom spread to this planet.
 - b. Satan is called the god of this world (II Cor 4:4). You may recall that when he tempted Jesus in the wilderness, Satan offered Him the power and authority of the kingdoms of this world "for it has been turned over to me (by Adam), and I give it to whom I will" (Luke 4:6, Amp). Jesus actually referred to Satan as the prince of this world (John 12:31; John 14:30; John 16:11).
 1. John the apostle wrote: We know that...the world around us is under the power of the evil one (I John 5:19, NLT); Stop loving this evil world and all that it offers you...for the world offers only lust for physical pleasure, the lust for everything we see, and pride in our possessions. These are not from the Father. They are from this evil world. And this world is fading away, along with everything it craves (I John 2:15-17, NLT).
 2. The Greek word translated world (*kosmos*) is used several ways in Scripture. In these verses it refers to the present condition of human affairs in alienation from and opposition to God.
2. Jesus didn't come to make this world a better place, nor did He commission us to fix up the world. It can't be fixed because the root problem is spiritual. Not only is there a curse of corruption and death in this world, there is a usurper kingdom in active opposition to Almighty God. It must be removed.
 - a. Through the Cross Jesus broke Satan's power: God disarmed the evil rulers and authorities. He shamed them publicly by his victory over them on the cross of Christ (Col 2:15, NLT).
 1. When a man or woman believes on Jesus as Savior and Lord, he or she is transferred out from under the authority of the devil and his kingdom of darkness. Satan has no power (authority) over those who are redeemed (delivered from the guilt and power of sin through faith in Jesus).
 - A. Col 1:13—For he has rescued us from the one who rules in the kingdom of darkness, and he has brought us into the kingdom of his dear Son (NLT). Through faith in Christ we are delivered from the authority and power of the devil.
 - B. Gal 1:4—The Lord Jesus Christ...according to the will of our God and Father gave himself for our sins and thereby rescued us from this present evil world-order (J.B. Phillips).
 2. This doesn't mean no more troubles for us in this life. We still live in and must contend with the realities of life in a fallen world. Through the Cross Jesus opened the way to reestablish His kingdom (His reign) in the hearts of men. We now face life as sons and daughters of God.
 3. When a person believes on Jesus, He indwells them by His Spirit, and they are born of God and restored to their created purpose as God's sons and daughters. Luke 17:20-21
 - b. Satan was defeated at the Cross, but he has not yet been subjugated (forced to submit to control and governance). He still has power (authority) over those who are in his kingdom. All who are guilty of sin are in his kingdom and under his power.
 1. While on earth, Jesus explained that during the period between His first and second coming, both wheat and tares (weeds) will grow up side by side in this world. By wheat, Jesus meant children of God; by tares He meant children of the wicked one. Matt 13:36-43
 2. This usurper kingdom, its leader and its populace, will be removed at the end of the world or this age (v39), when Jesus returns. The Greek word translated world (*aión*) refers to a period of time marked not by length of time, but by spiritual or moral characteristics.
 - A. At the Cross Jesus activated the plan to reclaim the family through new birth. He's coming back to remove the usurper and his kingdom and reclaim the family home.
 - B. In the Book of Revelation the apostle John was shown the completion of the plan. Note what John saw: Then the seventh angel blew his trumpet and there were loud voices

shouting in heaven: The whole world has now become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ, and he will reign forever and ever (Rev 11:15, NLT).

3. Here's the point for our present discussion. Satan is going to attempt to hold on to his kingdom and prevent the rightful King, the Lord Jesus Christ, from returning to reclaim what is His. Prior to the Lord's return Satan will offer the world a false Messiah, an anti or in place of christ. a.

This man will preside over a worldwide system of government, economy, and religion. The activities of this man and the responses of the world to him will produce the chaos and tribulation of the final years leading up to Jesus' return (lessons for another day).

b. Matt 24:1-3—When Jesus' apostles asked Him what signs will indicate that His return is near, the first sign Jesus mentioned was religious deception, specifically, false christs and false prophets who will deceive many. Matt 24:4; 11; 23-24

1. The apostle Paul wrote these words about this final world ruler: This evil man will come to do the work of Satan with counterfeit power and signs and miracles. He will use every kind of wicked deception to fool those who are on their way to destruction because they refuse to believe the truth that would save them (II Thess 2:9-10, NLT).

2. To be deceived means to believe a lie. The antidote for deception is Truth. If ever there was a time to know for yourself what the Bible says (especially the New Testament), it's now.

A. If you love the truth you have nothing to fear in the months and years ahead. Truth is a Person, the Lord Jesus Christ, who has revealed Himself in and through the pages of Scripture. John 14:6; John 17:17

B. In the context of the perilous times coming on the earth prior to the Lord's return, Paul told his son in the faith, Timothy, to continue in the Scriptures because "they (give) you the wisdom to receive the salvation that comes by trusting in Christ Jesus" (II Tim 3:15, NLT).

C. One of the main points we're going to emphasize as we work through this series over the next few months is that to fully appreciate what Jesus' second coming will mean for the world we must consider what it meant to the first Christians, the eyewitnesses who interacted with the Lord and wrote the New Testament documents.

1. They understood that Jesus is coming back to complete the plan of redemption. They already knew from the Old Testament prophets that the Lord is going to restore the earth to pre-sin conditions.

a. Until Jesus came, they didn't have all the specific details, but they knew that God's people will be raised from the grave to live forever with the Lord on this earth. Isa 26:19; Dan 12:1-2; etc.

b. Jesus didn't die just to save the immaterial part of man (our spirit and soul). He died to save every part of our being (including our body) as well as the family home (this earth) from the effects of sin, corruption, and death. Consider these statements from two eyewitnesses, Paul and Peter.

1. Paul wrote: But we are citizens of heaven, where the Lord Jesus Christ lives. And we are eagerly waiting for him to return as our savior. He will take these weak mortal bodies of ours and change them into glorious bodies like his own, using the same mighty power that he will use to conquer everything, everywhere (Phil 3:20-22, NLT).

2. Peter, in one of his first sermons said: (Jesus) will remain in heaven until the time for the final restoration of all things, as God promised long ago through His prophets (Acts 3:21, NLT).

2. The return of Jesus to complete the plan of redemption will affect everyone who throughout human history has put faith in the revelation of Jesus given in their generation.

a. Countless people are now in the invisible Heaven waiting to return to this world to be reunited with their bodies raised from the dead so they can live on earth again, this time forever. Job 19:25-26

b. Referring to the salvation that began to unfold with Jesus' first coming, Peter wrote: This salvation was something the prophets wanted to know more about. They prophesied about this gracious salvation prepared for you, even though they had many questions as to what it all could mean. The

wondered what the Spirit of Christ within them was talking about when he told them in advance about Christ's suffering and his great glory afterward. They wondered when and to whom all this would happen (I Pet 1:10-12, NLT).

1. The Old Testament prophets were not clearly shown that there would be two comings of the Lord separated by two thousand years. Some of the prophecies they were given contain the first and the second coming of Jesus in the same passage. Isa 9:6-7
2. But the prophets knew that a good end is ahead. In the face of national destruction coming on Israel for their persistent idol worship, Isaiah the prophet looked far into the future and wrote: Look! I am creating new heavens and a new earth—so wonderful that no one will even think about the old ones anymore. Be glad; rejoice forever in my creation (Isa 65:17-18, NLT).
3. The Hebrew word new has the idea of to be new, fresh; to rebuild, repair—this world restored.
3. One of the attitudes we see in the New Testament writings is that knowing that a plan is unfolding with a good end helps us deal with present struggles and pain. Heb 12:2
 - a. We've referred to the Epistle to the Hebrew Christians a number of times in recent months. They were experiencing increasing pressure and persecution for their faith in Jesus. Paul wrote to encourage them to stay faithful no matter what, because salvation (redemption) will be completed.
 1. Paul reminded these believers that they took their initial persecutions joyfully, knowing "you had better things waiting for you in eternity" (Heb 10:34, NLT).
 2. Paul urged them to exercise patient endurance and trust God because "You will receive all that he has promised. For in just a very little while, the Coming One will come and will not delay" (Heb 10:36-37, NLT).
 - b. Heb 9:26-28—Paul reminded them that Jesus came once at the end of this age to put away (abolish) sin by the sacrifice of Himself and that He "will appear a second time, not carrying any burden of sin, not to deal with sin, but to bring to full salvation those who are (eagerly, constantly, and patiently) waiting for and expecting Him (v28, Amp). Full salvation includes bodies and this earth transformed and restored. Paul also wrote:
 1. Rom 8:18-20—I am convinced that any suffering we endure is less than nothing compared to the magnitude of glory that is about to be unveiled within us (the full realization of what the Cross made possible). The entire universe is standing on tiptoe, yearning to see the unveiling of God's glorious sons and daughters. For against its will the universe has had to endure the empty futility resulting from the consequences of human sin (TPT).
 2. Rom 8:21-23—But now, with eager expectation, all creation longs for freedom from its slavery to decay and to experience with us the wonderful freedom coming to God's children. To this day we are aware of the universal agony and groaning of creation, as if it were in the contractions of labor for childbirth. And it's not just creation. We who have already experienced the firstfruits of the Spirit (new birth) also inwardly groan as we passionately long to experience our full status as God's sons and daughters—including our physical bodies being transformed (the redemption of our bodies). For this is the hope of our salvation (21-23, TPT)
4. The first Christians knew that perilous times will precede the Lord's return when a final wicked world ruler causes great harm and chaos. But they also knew the end result—Jesus' return to restore this world and establish the kingdom of God on earth. That gave them hope and joy.

D. Conclusion: It's hard to watch what is happening in this world and not feel fear and or the pressure to do something. But what ails the world can't be fixed by natural human power. It will take the return of Jesus to make things right. He will complete the plan of redemption when He returns. That's what the second coming is all about. We must keep our priorities right and remember what's most important—that people come to saving knowledge of Jesus so they can join God's family and be part of the plan. More next week!