

The Kingdom of the Heavens

by Stephen Kaung

Stephen Kaung's sermon explores the nature and significance of the Kingdom of the Heavens, emphasizing repentance and self-denial as keys to entering this divine realm.

Duration: 1:22:52

Scripture: Matthew 3:1-2, Matthew 4:17, Matthew 11:12, Matthew 24:14

Topics: "Second Coming", "Kingdom Preparedness"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the concept of the sudden return of Jesus Christ, comparing it to a thief coming unexpectedly. He uses the analogy of two men working in a field, two women grinding at a mill, and two people sleeping in bed, where one is taken and one is left behind. The preacher emphasizes that believers should be prepared for this event, as it could happen at any moment. He also references passages from the Gospel of Matthew, where John the Baptist and Jesus both preached about repentance and the nearness of the kingdom of heaven.

Transcript

Will you please turn to the Gospel according to Matthew. Matthew chapter 3 verses 1 and 2. Matthew chapter 3 verses 1 and 2. Now in those days comes John the Baptist preaching in the wilderness of Judea and saying repent for the kingdom of the heavens has drawn nigh. Chapter 4 verse 17.

Chapter 4 verse 17. From that time began Jesus to preach and to say repent for the kingdom of the heavens has drawn nigh. Chapter 11 verse 12.

11, 12. But from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of the heavens is taken by violence and the violent seized on it. Chapter 24 of Matthew verse 12.

No, verse 14. Verse 14. And these glad tidings of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole habitable earth for a witness to all the nations and then shall come the end.

Let's have a word of prayer. Dear Lord, it is our heart's desire that we may see the vision of the glory of the Lord. To answer our prayer, open our inner eyes that we may see thee in all thy beauty.

All that thou hast provided for us, all thou hast called us to enter in. And Lord give us grace that by faith and obedience we may do so. We want to give thee all the glory in the name of our Lord Jesus.

Yesterday morning we considered together on this matter of the kingdom of God. We mentioned that kingdom in the strictest sense means kingship. The kingship of God.

God being the eternal one. His kingdom is everlasting. There is no end to his kingdom.

His dominion is over all generations. No matter what happens. Even after the rebelling of the archangel.

And also the rebelling of man. God's kingdom goes on. And yet in another sense, the kingdom of God is over those who really submit themselves to the rule of God.

And over them is the reality of the kingdom of God. Thank God by his grace we have been delivered out of the power of darkness. And have been translated, transferred into the kingdom of the son of God's love.

So today we are in the kingdom of God. But the thing is, we may be in the kingdom of God positionally. But in our daily lives, are we really living as sons and daughters of that kingdom? I think this is something that we need to consider very seriously before the Lord.

Now this morning we would like to consider together on this matter of the kingdom of the heavens. Are the kingdom of God and the kingdom of the heavens the same? Are they different? In what way the kingdom of God is the kingdom of the heavens? And the kingdom of the heavens is the kingdom of God. And in what way they are different? I think this is something we need to understand.

Now if the kingdom of God is where God rules, then the kingdom of the heavens is where the heavens rule. In a very general sense, God is the God of the heavens and of the earth. So we find that the heavens always rule.

You remember in Daniel chapter 4 verse 26? God through Daniel showed Nebuchadnezzar that the heavens do rule. So in any age, at any time, the heavens do rule. Because God is the God of the heavens.

But we find in the word of God that the term the kingdom of the heavens is a very special term. It is used only in the gospel according to Matthew. Some said it is used 32 times, others said 33 times.

But anyway we find this is a very special term used in the gospel of Matthew. The only other place that approaches it in the New Testament is 2 Timothy chapter 4 verse 18. The apostle Paul said, God will deliver me from the works of evil and bring me into his heavenly kingdom.

But aside from 2 Timothy in the New Testament, or Daniel 4 in the Old Testament, the kingdom of the heavens is a very special term used only in the gospel of Matthew. Now what does it mean? Simply put, the kingdom of the heavens is a part in the kingdom of God. It is a certain period within the kingdom of God which is from eternity to eternity.

And within that time frame, there is a specific period called the kingdom of the heavens. It begins with the first coming of our Lord Jesus to this. And it ends with the second coming of our Lord Jesus.

Coming to this earth and set up his kingdom upon this earth for a thousand years. And during this specific time zone is the term, the kingdom of the heavens. So brothers and sisters, in one sense, the kingdom of the heavens and the kingdom of God are one.

So sometimes you'll find, even in the gospel of Matthew, the kingdom of God is used four times. And in the other gospels, it's the kingdom of God. And you will find sometimes they refer to one and the same thing.

But at other times, you'll find the kingdom of God is greater than the kingdom of the heavens. Because the kingdom of the heavens is only one period in the kingdom of God. Now why is the kingdom of the heavens important to us believers? Because this is especially related to us believers, to the church.

So brothers and sisters, it is very very important for us to have a clear understanding of what the kingdom of the heavens is. We would like to look into this matter. From two different directions.

One is from the viewpoint of time. And the other is from the viewpoint of contents. Now first of all, we will look at the kingdom of the heavens from the time viewpoint.

John the Baptist was raised up by God to be the forerunner of our Lord Jesus. And when he was of age, he came out and began to preach. He preached in the wilderness.

And yet people flocked to hear him. And his message is one. Repent, for the kingdom of the heavens has drawn nigh.

Now brothers and sisters, we know that for 400 years, God was silent to his own people. Even though the remnant returned to Jerusalem and rebuilt the temple. And the temple service was going on all these years without interruption.

And yet, God was silent. He didn't speak to his own people for 400 long years. We were thinking it would be a very difficult time for the chosen people of God.

But unfortunately, they did not think so. Because they had the temple. They had the priesthood.

They had the sacrifices. They had the word of God. They were able to pray.

And they considered themselves as a religious, godly people. So even though God was silent for 400 years, the people live on as if nothing happened. But I believe it will be very difficult for God.

God loved his people. He wanted to speak, to converse, to fellowship, to reveal his heart to his people. And yet, the people's spiritual condition shut him up.

I believe it is the same thing for us today. It is more difficult for God not to speak to his people than for his people not to hear his voice. But after 400 silent years, suddenly God began to speak again.

Not because the condition of God's people had changed. It was God himself. He couldn't restrain himself anymore.

He spoke. And when he began to speak, he electrified the whole nation. And what is the message? The message is very simple.

Repent. For the kingdom of the heavens has drawn nigh. Why repent? You know the Pharisees and the scribes, when they heard this message, they couldn't accept it.

Because they didn't feel they needed to repent. If the message is reformed, that's fine. There's always room for improvement.

But to repent, that is too drastic. Repent is a very strong word. Repent means the past is all wrong.

You have to turn around completely and go a different, opposite direction. That's so strong for the Pharisees and the scribes. They didn't feel they need to repent.

But the reason for repentance is different. You know we repent because we have sinned. We repent because we have done something wrong.

We repent because we know we are not right. Therefore we need to repent. To change our mind.

These are the regular, ordinary reasons for repentance. But here the message is new. Repent.

Why? Because the kingdom of the heavens has drawn nigh. Brothers and sisters, do you see the difference? Repent not because of something negative. Not because of sin, of failures, of shortcomings.

Repent for something that is most positive. And that is the kingdom of the heavens is drawing near. As the chosen people of God, living in Jerusalem, having the temple, having daily worship, fasting twice a week, gave the one tenth, that is good enough to live in the commonwealth of Israel.

As a people of God. Different from the people of the world. But brothers and sisters, the message was It may be enough for you to be a chosen people in the commonwealth of Israel.

But it is not enough for you to enter into the kingdom of the heavens. Therefore you need to repent. Completely turn around.

Acknowledging that you are a total failure. And you come to accept the mercy of God. That is the message John the Baptist brought into the chosen people at that time.

Six months later, our Lord Jesus himself also began to preach. And when he heard that John the Baptist was put into prison, he began his ministry in Galilee. And the message he preached was the same message.

Repent for the kingdom of the heavens has drawn nigh. Now brothers and sisters, why is it that John the Baptist said, the kingdom of the heavens has drawn nigh. There is a kingdom very different from all the kingdoms of the world.

It is a heavenly kingdom. And this heavenly kingdom is coming. It is drawing near to you.

Therefore you have to prepare when it arrives. Otherwise you will be cast out. John the Baptist preached it in this way.

Why? Because he knew the king of the heavens has already arrived on the earth. He is going to set up his kingdom very soon. Therefore be prepared to meet the king.

The children of Israel, they were looking for the Messiah, the king. But the king, the Messiah has silently, quietly, hiddenly come already. And he is almost ready to begin his work.

So John the Baptist, to prepare the way of the Lord, called everyone to repent. But isn't it strange that when our Lord Jesus began to preach, he should say, repent for the kingdom of the heavens is here. Because he is here.

Where the king is, there will be his kingdom. But our Lord preached the same message. Repent, for the kingdom of the heavens has drawn nigh.

Why? It is because the king is here. But where are his people? He has no one to rule over. Therefore you find in the beginning of the ministry of our Lord Jesus, his message is still, the kingdom of the heavens has drawn nigh.

But strangely, when you turn to Matthew chapter 11, you know John the Baptist was put in prison. He began his ministry maybe in A.D. 27. He was put in prison in A.D. 28.

He was martyred in A.D. 29. But while he was in prison, and probably close to the time of his martyrdom, he sent his disciples to our Lord Jesus. And asked, are you the one whom we are waiting for? Or shall we wait for another one? Now brothers and sisters, that seems to be very strange.

John the Baptist bore such a powerful, wonderful testimony to our Lord Jesus. Behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world. I know he is the Son of God.

I am only the friend. He is the friend. Such a marvelous testimony to the Lord Jesus.

But now, he asked, are we waiting for another one? Or are you the one? He was in prison, probably fully expecting the Lord to deliver him. But the Lord didn't do anything. He was almost offended by the Lord.

Why is it that the Lord did all these things to other people, and not doing it? And the answer of the Lord is also strange. The Lord said, go and tell him what I am doing. Yes, I am opening the eyes of the blind.

I am making the lamb walk, the leper clean, raise the dead. But I am not doing anything to you. Bless it, if you are not offended by me.

Thank God, John took that message. He was faithful to the very end. But you know, after these messengers from John left, then the Lord began to praise John.

He said, do you know who he is? He is greater than the prophets. There is no one born of woman greater than he. But the little one in the kingdom of the heavens is greater than John.

Now from the time of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of the heavens is to be taken by violence. And the violence sees on it. Brothers and sisters, you notice there is a change of time.

When the Lord first preached, he said, the kingdom of the heavens has drawn near. But now, he said, the kingdom of the heavens is to be taken by violence. It is already here.

And if you want to take it, you can take it now. If you want to enter it, you can do so. There is a change of time.

Within a very short period, our Lord has already begun to set up his kingdom, the kingdom of the heavens in man on earth. Why? Because you remember, at that time, he already had called disciples. There were some people who responded to him and followed him.

They left everything behind and followed the Lord Jesus. And these few became the kingdom of our Lord, the kingdom of the heavens. In view of the kingdom of the heavens drawing near, what is the proper response to it? Repent.

But when the kingdom is now, has already begun, then what is the proper attitude towards it? Very simple. Violence. The kingdom of the heavens is to be taken by violence.

It is such a kingdom, so different from the kingdom of the world. It is a heavenly kingdom. And the only way you can take it is through violence.

Now we must remember the word violence is a very strong word. But the violence here is a heavenly word, not an earthly word. The violence here is not doing violence to other people.

It is to do violence to yourself. The problem of this world is we love ourselves too much. Self is the sign of this world.

But in the kingdom of the heavens, this self has no place. We have to do violence to ourselves in order to gain the kingdom. And that's the reason why our Lord Jesus, He said, if anyone comes to me, let him deny himself.

That is to say to himself, I do not know you. I don't know you. I have nothing to do with you.

I'm not going to cater to you, to gratify you. I deny you. We must deny ourselves.

Take up our cross daily and follow Him. Otherwise we are not worthy to be His disciples. We are not worthy of the kingdom of the heavens.

Brothers and sisters, the message is very clear. From John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of the heavens is to be taken by violence. And the violent, those who do violence to themselves, they seize on it.

It's theirs. And dear brothers and sisters, from that time onward until now, this is the way to the kingdom of the heavens. But thank God, one day, this kingdom of the heavens will be publicly manifested on this earth.

So you'll find in Matthew chapter 24, verse 12, our Lord Jesus said, the glad tidings of the kingdom of the heavens must be preached throughout the habitable earth as a witness to all the nations. And then the end will come. In other words, when this message has gone out as a testimony to the world, that God has a people upon this earth.

They are different. They belong to the kingdom of the heavens. They exhibit, they live their lives, a heavenly life.

And one day, this kingdom of the heavens will publicly be manifested on this earth. The kingdom of this world will become the kingdom of our God and of His Christ. And this will happen at the second coming of our Lord Jesus.

And thank God, we know it is very soon. So dear brothers and sisters, from time wise, the kingdom of the heavens can be seen in three different times. The kingdom of the heavens is near.

The kingdom of the heavens is now. And the kingdom of the heavens is come. Finally, it will come to us.

The message of the kingdom of the heavens is near is the word repentance. The kingdom of the heavens is now. The word is balance.

And the kingdom of the heavens is to come. The word is watch. Watch for the kingdom of the heavens is coming very soon.

Now this is one way to look at the kingdom of the heavens. Then there is another viewpoint we would like to consider. And that is from the viewpoint of its contents.

We know that the gospel of Matthew is the gospel of the kingdom. Thank God, even though it is not the first gospel written. And yet in God's sovereignty it is put as the first of the gospels.

Because the gospel is so full. There is the gospel of the kingdom. As we find in Matthew.

There is the gospel of servanthood. We find in Mark. There is the gospel of grace.

We find in Luke. There is the gospel of life. We find in John.

Now all these are the different aspects of the gospel. There is only one gospel. The gospel of Jesus Christ.

But it is so full. It has many aspects. And the first one God wants us to understand is the gospel of the kingdom.

So that is why we find Matthew as you open the New Testament it is Matthew. Now in the book of Matthew we find there are three peaks. And these three peaks on the kingdom of the heavens will show us what the kingdom of the heavens is like.

The first peak is found in Matthew chapter 5 to 7. The so called Sermon on the Mount. That gives us the spiritual reality of the kingdom of the heavens. In other words in the Sermon on the Mount our Lord Jesus show us what the kingdom of the heavens is like.

What is the kingdom of the heavens? Who are the people in that kingdom? Then you find in Matthew chapter 13 another peak. Here you find our Lord Jesus use parables telling the mysteries of the kingdom of the heavens. Now the kingdom of the heavens today is a spiritual reality.

It is real. It is here. But it cannot be seen by the world.

It is hidden. Not because it is hidden it is not present. It is here.

But the world does not know exactly what it is. Cannot explain it. So to the world it is a mystery.

A mystery is something hidden waiting to be revealed. But thank God for those who today are in the reality of the kingdom of the heavens. They understand.

They know. But to the world they do not know. All they see is a confused picture.

That you find in Matthew chapter 13. And then in Matthew chapter 24 and 25 another peak. It is Olivet prophecy.

Our Lord Jesus prophesied concerning the kingdom of the heavens to come upon this earth on the Mount of Olives. And that will show us how the kingdom of the heavens will come eventually upon this earth fill this earth to the glory of God. So brothers and sisters we will very briefly consider together these things.

First, Matthew chapter 5 to 7. Now I believe brothers and sisters we are all familiar with the so-called Sermon on the Mount. The Bible says our Lord Jesus He went to a mountain. And His disciples followed Him.

But there were also great crowds following Him. So our Lord Jesus He sat down and He began to speak. But the Bible tells us very clearly He was not speaking to the crowds.

He was speaking to His own disciples. He wanted to tell His own disciples what the kingdom of the heavens really is. What manner of life when you live in that kingdom.

The crowds only overheard it. But they are not the objective of our Lord's word. Some people think on the mount our Lord Jesus proclaimed a new law.

Moses gave the children of Israel the law. The Ten Commandments. And now our Lord Jesus on that mountain He proclaimed a new law.

Higher. Nobler. Greater.

Than the law that came through Moses. But if it is a law then we must keep it. We must do it.

Now if the children of Israel could not do the Ten Commandments do you think we can keep the Sermon on the Mount? If you haven't tried you may think you can. But if you try the more you try the further you are away. It is impossible.

So some people they think that the Sermon on the Mount is a new system of ethics. Moral ethics. Now if it is who are able to live that kind of life nobody can.

So we know that the Sermon on the Mount is not a new law. Nor a new ethical standard. Because they are way beyond man.

It is grace. It is what grace can do for us. Only by grace are we able to live that kind.

And in order to live that kind of life you need a new life. This old life wouldn't do. That's the reason why our Lord is showing us this new life that He has given us.

This new life in us. What kind of a life that is. What is the character of that life.

So at the beginning of the Sermon on the Mount we have the Beatitudes. Blessed. Happy.

If you really want to be happy to be blessed blessed are the poor in spirit. For theirs is the kingdom of the heavens. What kind of people are living in the kingdom of the heavens? The poor in spirit.

Who is the poor in spirit? Our Lord Himself. He was so rich. He was so full.

He was God. Still He is God. Ego with God.

And there is not something to be grasped at. It is right but He emptied Himself. He cannot empty Himself of His own deity.

Because that is what He is. He always is. But He emptied Himself of all the glory honor majesty surrounding.

And He took upon Himself the form of a born slave. No right no position not even owning His own life. As He was in the fashion of a man He was obedient to the Father even unto death and that the death of the cross.

This is poor in spirit. Not because He is poor but because He emptied His riches obedient unto death. Brothers and sisters humanly speaking this is impossible.

We may try to be humble but the more humble you are the prouder you are. I remember when we were young Christians we are told that Christians should be humble. So we try to bow low when we walk to be humble.

But the more you bow yourself the prouder within you. So you see how humble I am. Poor in spirit.

Real. Not because of poverty but because of riches. Brothers and sisters that's Christ.

But it is Christ in you and in me. And the same thing is true with all the Beatitudes. Nothing of ourselves.

It is all Christ. And Christ in us. And because He is in us living out His life therefore this righteousness is more excellent than the righteousness of the Scribes and the Pharisees.

It comes from within not put on from without. Then we be the salt and the light of the world. Then you'll find it is much higher than the law of Moses because it not only governs our outward actions it governs our inward thought.

Be ye perfect as your Heavenly Father is perfect. So brothers and sisters you'll find in Matthew 5 the Word is one life. It is a new life.

It is the life of Christ. The life of Christ in us. And because it is the life of Christ in us therefore we can live the kind of life that Christ lived.

And we are in His Kingdom. So it is no matter of doing. It is a matter of being.

Being what we are. And then in Matthew chapter 6 to put it very simply it is a life of faith. A life of faith.

Do not be anxious about what you shall eat, what you shall drink, what you shall be clothed with. Seek it first. The Kingdom of God and His Righteousness.

And all these things shall be added unto you. Our Lord Jesus says O ye of little faith look at the birds, look at the lilies why don't you believe your Heavenly Father? Those who live in the Kingdom of the Heavens live a life of faith. Trust Him.

Have confidence in the Heavenly Father. And then Matthew 7 is a life of obedience. Not only believing but obeying.

Choose the narrow way. Not just say Lord, Lord but do His will. It is a life of obedience.

So brothers and sisters when you come to the reality of the Kingdom of the Heavens it is just a matter of life faith and obedience. Then you find in Matthew chapter 13 yet Matthew chapter 13 is the mysteries of the Kingdom of the Heavens. They are called mysteries because to the world it was something unknown, puzzled.

The world look at it and do not know what it is. Confused. But to us our Lord Jesus said you know.

You shall understand. Our Lord uses parables. So those who do not understand will never understand.

But those who know know the depths of these mysteries. And in these parables you find there is continues history behind it. The first parable is the parable of the sower.

The sower is none other but our Lord Jesus Himself. When He was on this earth He sowed the seed. The seed is the seed of the word of the kingdom.

The word of the kingdom. That's what our Lord Jesus sowed. And the fields are the hearts of man.

When the word of the kingdom is spread and reached the hearts of man you find some hearts are like the byways. Trodden by the world. Hardened.

The seed will not even get into the heart. And after they hear the birds came and swallowed them. And the bird here represents the evil power.

Evil forces. So you find that when the gospel of the kingdom is preached some have heard but never entered into their heart. As if they have never heard.

And some are like stony ground. There is a thin layer of soil. So it's when the seed fall into it it quickly began to sprout.

But there is no root. And when the sun came out some people who hear the word of the kingdom they receive it joyfully. But there are sins.

The world and other things as huge stones there. No root. So with a little persecution they fell away.

Fall away. And some hearts are like thorny grounds. The seed fall into the heart and began to grow.

But it being squeezed by the thorns and cannot bear fruit. The word is there but no fruit. Only the good ground.

The ground that has been tilled, softened. They receive the word of God gladly and patiently bear fruit. 30 foot, 60 foot, 100 foot unto God.

That's the first parable. Then this is continued by the second one. The second one is the seed you notice is no longer the word of the kingdom.

The seed sown are the sons of the kingdom of the heavens. In other words the word of the kingdom has born fruit. These people have received the word, patiently allow the word to work within them and begin to grow.

They become the sons of the kingdom of the heavens. And our Lord Jesus sowed them on the field. But the field is no longer the heart.

The field is the word. Brothers and sisters, do you know you are sown by the Lord, say in California. And he sowed, he spread you in California for a purpose.

But at the same time, the enemy came in quietly. And he sowed his seed in the same ground. The world, dino, pear, they look alike.

And they all grow together in the world. But, when it began to sprout and bear fruit, the difference is evident. So the servants came to the Lord and said, is it not that you sow only the good seed? Where

comes all these bad ones? The Lord knows.

The servants are ignorant. But the Lord knows. He said, the enemy does it.

So they said, do you want us to pull them out? Oh no. If you pull the pear out, you will pull the wheat out too, because their roots are being entangled. Wait.

Until the harvest time. And then they will be separated. The evil ones will be bound up and burned.

And the good ones will be taken in too. Now brothers and sisters, wherever the gospel is preached, wherever Christianity spread, you find this picture. In the world, in the so-called Christian world, where the influence of Christianity is, Christendom, Christian schools, hospitals, orphanages, churches, you find a mixture.

They are sons of the kingdom. But unfortunately, entangled with the sons of the evil ones. They grow together.

There is no way to separate them. This is Christianity today. This is Christendom.

Have to wait until the end. And God will send His angels to separate them. Then it's followed by two parables.

The parable of the mustard seed and the parable of the leaven in three measures of meal. Now brothers and sisters, even though today there are many different interpretations, but I hope you will consider and see according to the sequence of the development. I believe the Lord is showing us since in the second parable you have both the tare and the wheat growing together.

Now, the Lord is showing us the two sides. On the one hand, you find in Christianity it begins as a mustard seed. Our brother already mentioned a mustard seed is the smallest of the seed.

But there is life in it. Living. But the mustard is a plant, not a tree.

Each after its kind. The church is a little flock, hidden in this world. But then you find the mustard seed has grown abnormally into a big tree, out of its species.

And the birds came and dwell in it. Now, if you still remember the first parable, what the birds are, is the evil one. Christianity has developed instead of being a humble hidden little flock.

It has become a huge institution. Some people said Christianity has succeeded. But God said it is corrupted.

The birds came. Even full of evils. That's the outward appearance.

How about the inside? It's like a leaven. Leaven in the scripture always speaks of something evil. Whether it is doctrine, or whether it is behavior.

Always evil. Three meals of fine flour are to be the meal offering to God. There should be no leaven in it.

And yet, leaven is put in it, and it's corrupt. That's Christianity. That shows the one side of it.

But thank God, He also shows us the other side of it. So, this is followed by two other parables. The parable of the treasure, and the parable of the pearl.

Treasure, pearl. That speaks of the reality of the kingdom of the heavens. The merchant, the pearl seeker is Christ.

He came into this world seeking for treasure. Looking for pearl, treasure. Pearl are precious to him.

And for that sake, he's willing to sell everything to buy the world in order to get the treasure. So you see, that is the picture here. And then finally, the dreadnought.

That's the end of the world. At the end of the world, everything will be sorted out. And what is of God will enter into the kingdom to come.

And what is not of God will be thrown out. So, brothers and sisters, there you find the awkward appearance of the kingdom of the heavens. So far as the world understands.

But still, it's a mystery to them. But the Lord said, you know it. Now, brothers and sisters, are we confused? Do we know it? Are we still saying, well, look at Christianity.

It is going to conquer the whole world. Or do you see everywhere? But thank God, He's looking for the real thing. And He will have it.

Now that's Matthew 13. And then Matthew 24 and 25. Now, this is prophecy.

Now, to say very briefly, the disciples asked three questions. When shall these things be? What will be the sign of your coming? And the end of this age? Maybe to the disciples, these three things are one. Because if Jerusalem should be destroyed, no stone upon another stone, certainly that's the time, that's the sign that the Lord has come.

That's the end of the age. End of the world. So maybe in the heart of the disciples, they are the same thing.

But our Lord knows the difference. So in answering them, you'll find there are three things in that prophecy. One, when shall these things be? When shall Jerusalem be destroyed? When shall no stone upon another stone upon the temple? And our Lord's answer begins with Matthew chapter 24 verse 4. From verse 4 to verse 13.

That is actually His answer, direct answer to this question. When shall these things be? But because it is prophecy, so He goes on from verse 14 until verse 31. He goes on to the future.

The destruction of Jerusalem and the temple is a near fulfillment in A.D. 70. But the full fulfillment is towards the end of this age. When you will find the abomination of desolation standing in the place of, that shows the end.

You remember Daniel's prophecy. And then the Lord said how He will come as a lightning. And He will gather His people, chosen people, together from every corner of this earth.

Israel shall be restored. Now that's when shall these things come. And the sign of His coming is from Matthew chapter 24 verse 32 to chapter 25 verse 29 30.

That tells us the sign of His coming. As the days of Noah, so shall be the coming of the Son of Man. As the days of Lot, so shall be the coming of the Son of Man.

Suddenly He will come as a thief. Two men are working the field. Two women are grinding the mill.

Two persons are sleeping in bed. Suddenly without any notice one is taken one is left. Brothers and sisters we are on the verge of this thing.

Suddenly any moment now throughout the whole world because the world is round some are sleeping some are in the early morning grinding some are in the daytime working in the field but suddenly all over the world certain believers disappear. The Lord comes and still they will be taken right up to the throne as the welcoming party to the return. Brothers and sisters maybe by His grace we are among if we watch if we wait if we pray if we be ready then when He shall come and then the end of this age.

Matthew 25 verse 30 31 to the end Our Lord shall come upon this earth set up His throne of glory and He will judge the nations and the sheep nations will be removed into the kingdom of the heavens upon the earth and the goat nations will be thrown into the lake of fire. That's the end and the end is coming. So brothers and sisters or you can look at it another way the first part from chapter 24 verse 4 through verse 31 to the Jews 31 32 to chapter 25 verse 30 to the church and 31 to the end to the Gentiles.

So you'll find it's all inclusive telling us one day this kingdom that has been hidden throughout the ages and even in the age of grace it is still hidden but known to some and one day the kingdom of this world will become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ. Hallelujah. Dear Lord we do want to thank Thee that by Thy grace we have repented and only by Thy grace Lord that we are able to be violent to ourselves to seize upon the kingdom today and we do look forward to the day when Thou shall return and we shall reign with Thee for a thousand years to the glory of God.

In Thy precious name we pray.

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