



Potomac Hills Community Church, PCA

GRACE ORIENTED • CHRIST CENTERED

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What Jesus said about the End Times

“Revealed Grace” - a series from Luke Luke 17:20-37

OPENING THOUGHTS: “*An Instructive Moment about Lot’s Wife.*”¹

Once upon a time ... there was a city named Sodom. Sodom was notorious for its sin. It sat in the southern part of the Jordan Valley, fermenting in its excesses, drunk with debauchery, and reeling with decadence.

It was like some **magnified** combination of San Francisco and Amsterdam.

But because of its location, its resources, and a rapidly growing population, the opportunities to make money there were staggering.

It was there that a man named Lot made his home and raised his family. The people of Sodom could afford to eat meat every day and they paid well for the privilege. With a shrewd mind for money, Lot parlayed his livestock business into an empire, and before long, he was a leader in the city, sitting at the city gates to preside over its affairs and judge its disputes.

While Lot was busy with business and politics, his wife was preoccupied with planning the weddings of their two daughters. She has already bought the material for the wedding dresses and has commissioned festive robes for the guests. Now she’s working on the menu for the wedding banquet.

With Lot being such a prominent man, the guest list is getting longer, as is the list of things she has to get done. But she has waited her whole life for this and relishes the opportunity. As a young girl, she had always dreamed of having daughters. And as a young mother, she had always dreamed of hosting their weddings. And her dreams were about to come true.

She considered it one of the high points of her life.

But then one night two mysterious visitors come and shatter her dreams, warning her family of the city’s impending destruction.

¹ Adapted from Moments with the Savior by Ken Gire, pages 260-263.

“**What?** You’ve **got** to be kidding? **Leave** town? **Leave** my home? **Leave** my way of life? **What** about the weddings? **What** about all my plans?”

But it appears she keeps all those anxious thoughts to herself. And in the early morning twilight she and her family slip out of the city. She looks at the home she is leaving behind, the home where she raised her daughters and lived her life, the home where her memories are stored like so many dishes in the cupboard.

The two angelic messengers lead the way, followed by Lot, then by his wife and two daughters. Their husbands-to-be stay behind, thinking it all so much religious nonsense. And as she passes through the neighborhoods, she wonders if it isn’t nonsense too.

After their breathless uphill trek to the small town of Zoar, the morning breaks. The sunshine begins to fall across the Jordan Valley, revealing ominous black clouds rolling towards the city.

And then the Bible says ...

Genesis 19:23-26, *“The sun was rising as Lot reached the village. [24] Then the Lord rained down fire and burning sulfur from the heavens on Sodom and Gomorrah. [25] He utterly destroyed them, along with the other cities and villages of the plain, eliminating all life — people, plants, and animals alike. [26] But Lot’s wife **looked back** as she was following along behind him, and she became a pillar of salt.”*

Those nineteen words of verse 26 paint the only picture we have of Lot’s wife. Six words in the New Testament put the caption underneath the picture.

Luke 17:32, *“Remember what happened to Lot’s wife!”*

Entombed in a pillar of salt, her life stands as a monument, warning us of Jesus’ words, **Luke 17:33**, *“Whoever clings to this life will lose it, and whoever loses this life will save it.”*

In that one backward glance, longing for the life she left behind, Lot’s wife passed from the realm of the living to the realm of the parable.

And though she is dead, the message of her life lives on.

The context of that sobering ‘moral-of-the-story’ is that Jesus’ is answering a question from the Pharisees, *“When will the Kingdom of God come?”*

And Jesus tells them that the Kingdom of God will come when suddenly the Son of Man appears and it is the Day of Judgment.

But before we look into that too closely, we need to back up and ask the question, ...

BACKGROUND: What is “The Kingdom of God”?²

2 . The Background and much of the exposition of the text is adapted from Preaching The Word: Luke, Volume Two by R. Kent Hughes, pages 175-182. The definition and explanation of “the Kingdom of God” is partially adapted from the book, Gospel and Kingdom by Graeme Goldsworthy, pages 47-48, 87-98.

The New Testament has a great deal to say about the Kingdom of God. In fact, the Gospel of Luke alone has twenty-seven occurrences of the phrase *the kingdom of God*. This makes sense because the New Testament is about the kingdom's King — Jesus Christ.

Now you have to listen carefully, because you're going to get some theology now. Actually, you get theology from me a lot; usually I just don't tell you. But to understand what Jesus is saying about the end times, we have to step back for a moment and look at the big picture of the Bible.

As I said, the New Testament is about the kingdom's King — Jesus Christ.

But at the same time, the kingdom of God did not begin at Christmas, with the first advent of the Messiah. Rather, it is a reality that extends back to the beginning of Biblical revelation and courses through the entire Old Testament. In fact, it is the kingdom of God that gives the Old Testament its continuity.

We first see the kingdom in the Garden of Eden, where Adam and Eve lived in willing obedience to God's rule. The fundamental definition of the kingdom of God is: ***God's people, in God's place, under God's rule.***

That phrase perfectly describes the kingdom in the beginning, the final eschatological kingdom of God at the end, and all the manifestations in between.

As we know, in Eden the kingdom was destroyed by the sin of man, and the rest of the Bible is about the restoration of a people who are willing subjects of the perfect rule of God.

After Eden, we next see the kingdom memorably promised to Abraham in the Abrahamic Covenant (Genesis 12, 15, 17), in which God promised that Abraham's descendants (**God's people**) would possess the Promised Land (**God's place**) and live under His authority (**God's rule**).

The historical process by which Israel came to enter the Promised Land (as temporary and flawed as their living under God's rule at that time was) was the sovereign, redemptive act of God as He rescued his people from captivity in Egypt — the blood of the Passover lamb.

The monarchy that later flowered under David and Solomon (as disappointing as that also was) imperfectly manifested the essential elements of God's kingdom as well.

The failure of Solomon's kingdom and the subsequent Babylonian Exile made it clear that the prophecies of the pre-exile prophets (Isaiah, Jeremiah, Joel, Amos, Hosea, Micah, Nahum, Zephaniah, and Habakkuk) were about a future **great day** when the **perfect, everlasting kingdom of God will come**.

The exile prophets (Daniel and Ezekiel) and the post-exile prophets (Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi) prophesied about this eternal kingdom with uniform passion. In fact, the Old Testament ends on a note of promise and **expectation** of

the coming of the kingdom.

This was followed by over 400 years of prophetic silence between the Old and New Testaments. During that time a number of solutions were dreamed of. Perhaps the best known was that of the Pharisees, who sought a literal return of the Davidic Monarchy and the liberation of Israel from foreign oppression.

After the passing of those four dark centuries, the night skies over Palestine gave way to a great company of angels glorifying God for the incarnation of Jesus — The Messiah!

And thirty years later Jesus began to say, **Mark 1:15**, “*At last the time has come!*” He announced. “***The Kingdom of God is near! Turn from your sins and believe this Good News!***”

The Good News, the Gospel is the bringing near of the kingdom.

Jesus did not mean that the ultimate fulfillment had taken place, but that the kingdom was near in Him. The book of Matthew repeatedly describes Jesus’ ministry as “*preaching the good news of the kingdom*” (Matthew 4:23; Matthew 9:35; cf. Matthew 24:14).

We can say that the kingdom came in Jesus Christ and will come in its fullness at Jesus’ return.

The Who, What, and Why of the Kingdom

In Jesus Christ we find the kingdom of God. All that we know or need to know about God’s kingdom is found in Christ.

- **God’s People**

In the Garden of Eden, Adam and Eve were the people of God. Significantly, Jesus, the Son of God, chose to come to earth as the last or second Adam (cf. Romans 5:18-21; 1 Corinthians 15:20-22, 45-49). Jesus identified himself with Adam’s race at his baptism (Luke 3:21, 22). In the wilderness He overcame temptation (Adam had failed the same test), ultimately triumphing on the cross (Matthew 4:1-11; Mark 1:12, 13; Luke 4:1-13).

Thus the Apostle Paul could write, **Romans 5:19**, “*Because one person [Adam] disobeyed God, many people became sinners. But because one other person [Jesus] obeyed God, many people will be made right in God’s sight.*”

The people of God come to Him through Jesus!

Jesus also was and is the ultimate, perfect seed of Abraham, as Paul wrote in **Galatians 3:16**, “*God gave the promise to Abraham and his child. And notice that it doesn’t say the promise was to his children, as if it meant many descendants. But the promise was to his child—and that, of course, means Christ.*”

The promises of Abraham only have their fulfillment in and through Christ.

In addition to being the ultimate seed of Abraham, Jesus is the ultimate son of King David. As the King, Jesus embodies the people as their representative.

All these realities — Jesus as the last Adam, the one true seed of Abraham, the true Israel, the promised son of King David — establish one glorious point: Jesus Christ is the head of a new race, the people of God!

All who are “in Christ” are a new creation (2 Corinthians 5:17).

They are the people of God.

They are the people of the kingdom.

- **God’s Place**

In a significant sense, Jesus also was and is the place of the kingdom of God. The Old Testament images of places — the Garden, the Promised Land, the city of God, Mount Zion, the temple — all reach fulfillment in Christ, because in the New Testament the place of the kingdom is Christ Himself (cf. John 1:14; John 2:21; Acts 13:34). Jesus replaced the temple, and thus those indwelt by Christ become the place of God’s rule (cf. Galatians 2:20; Ephesians 3:17).

- **God’s Rule**

Lastly, Jesus was and is Himself the rule of God. In the Incarnation He lived under the rule of God so perfectly that He could say, “*I always do what pleases Him*” (John 8:29). At the same time He was (and is) King, and He repeatedly exhibited kingdom powers (cf. Luke 8:1, 2; Luke 9:1, 2; Luke 11:20). And all who are in Christ live and serve under God’s rule in their hearts.

So we see that the kingdom of God was at hand in Christ, for He was God’s person, in God’s place, under God’s rule — and all those who are ‘in Christ’ are God’s people, in God’s place, under God’s rule.

True Christianity, kingdom Christianity, is radically Christ-centered.

With the advent of Christ, the kingdom had drawn near.

And with that background on the Kingdom of God, let’s dive into today’s passage ...

Luke 17:20-37, “*One day the Pharisees asked Jesus, "When will the Kingdom of God come?"*”

Jesus replied, "The Kingdom of God isn't ushered in with visible signs. [21] You won't be able to say, 'Here it is!' or 'It's over there!' For the Kingdom of God is among you."

[22] Later He talked again about this with His disciples. "The time is coming when you will long to share in the days of the Son of Man, but you won't be able to," He said. [23] "Reports will reach you that the Son of Man has returned and that He is in this place or that. Don't believe such reports or go out to look for Him. [24] For when the Son of Man returns, you will know it beyond all doubt. It will be as evident as the lightning that flashes across the sky. [25] But first the Son of Man must suffer terribly and be rejected by this generation.

[26] "When the Son of Man returns, the world will be like the people were in

Noah's day. [27] *In those days before the flood, the people enjoyed banquets and parties and weddings right up to the time Noah entered his boat and the flood came to destroy them all.*

[28] *"And the world will be as it was in the days of Lot. People went about their daily business—eating and drinking, buying and selling, farming and building—*
 [29] *until the morning Lot left Sodom. Then fire and burning sulfur rained down from heaven and destroyed them all. [30] Yes, it will be 'business as usual' right up to the hour when the Son of Man returns. [31] On that day a person outside the house must not go into the house to pack. A person in the field must not return to town. [32] Remember what happened to Lot's wife! [33] Whoever clings to this life will lose it, and whoever loses this life will save it. [34] That night two people will be asleep in one bed; one will be taken away, and the other will be left. [35] Two women will be grinding flour together at the mill; one will be taken, the other left."*
 [36] [verse 36 is omitted in most reliable manuscripts as a later addition]

[37] *"Lord, where will this happen?" the disciples asked.*

Jesus replied, "Just as the gathering of vultures shows there is a carcass nearby, so these signs indicate that the end is near."

Jesus answers the Pharisees' question briefly, letting them know that they don't really understand their own question. And then He follows it up with His disciples with a long explanation.

Let's start with ...

v. 20-21: **THE ALREADY**³

Jesus answers the Pharisees, who were looking for the reestablishment of the old Davidic kingdom. Having been asked when the kingdom of God would come, Jesus replied, "The Kingdom of God isn't ushered in with visible signs. You won't be able to say, 'Here it is!' or 'It's over there!' **For the Kingdom of God is among you.**"

Here is a place where the NIV gets it wrong. The NIV says, "The kingdom of God is **within you.**" Jesus would never have told the unbelieving Pharisees that the kingdom was "within" them. The correct reading is: "the Kingdom of God is **among you**" (as the *New Living Translation* has it).

The kingdom was standing in their midst in the person and work of Christ!

The irony here was **huge**, because they were arrogantly and unknowingly asking the kingdom's King, the King of kings, when His kingdom would come.

They thought that their careful, cultured expertise in observing every phenomenon would assure them of seeing the kingdom before anyone else did.

Significantly, Jesus had earlier encouraged His followers to interpret the

³ The explanation of the verse 21 translations is adapted from *The Gospel of Luke* by Earle Ellis, page 211 and *The NIV Application Commentary: Luke* by Darrell Bock, pages 451-452.

times, **Luke 12:54-56**, “*Then Jesus turned to the crowd and said, "When you see clouds beginning to form in the west, you say, 'Here comes a shower.' And you are right. [55] When the south wind blows, you say, 'Today will be a scorcher.' And it is. [56] You hypocrites! You know how to interpret the appearance of the earth and the sky, but you can't interpret these present times.*”

Jesus encouraged His people to read both the Scriptures and the times.

But the Pharisees had the whole picture wrong. They thought the kingdom might have a local beginning in a political movement, so that they could say, “Here it is,” or “There it is”.

They were blind — though the King Himself was giving His kingdom message with kingdom power, they completely failed to recognize Him.

Their problem was not due to any lack of signs.

Jesus had done numerous miracles.

But recognizing Jesus as Messiah, seeing the kingdom, was a matter of inner revelation and divine insight. In **Luke 10:21** we read, “*Then Jesus was filled with the joy of the Holy Spirit and said, "O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, thank you for hiding the truth from those who think themselves so wise and clever, and for revealing it to the childlike. Yes, Father, it pleased you to do it this way.*”

Entering the kingdom of God was essentially an inner process of faith and repentance in response to the invisible winds of the Holy Spirit. The Pharisees needed to concentrate less on the external form of the kingdom and more on its spiritual dimensions. They had missed the deeper levels of the Old Testament’s teaching as to the people, place, and rule of God’s kingdom.

This is a call (actually a warning) to us to be sure that we submit to the lordship of Christ in every part of our lives. We must prayerfully ask God to build the radical kingdom ethics of the Sermon on the Mount into our lives. Above all, we must be radically Christ-centered, for then we become the people of God, our hearts the place of God, and our lives examples of the rule of God.

Having given the Pharisees more than enough to think about regarding the already of the kingdom, Jesus went on to offer advice, possibly privately, to His disciples about ...

v. 22-37: THE NOT YET ⁴

He makes five major points about the Not Yet. First, He says, ...

- **v. 22-24: Seeking**

“Later He talked again about this with His disciples. "The time is coming when you will long to share in the days of the Son of Man, but you won't be able to," He said. "Reports will reach you that the Son of Man has returned and that

⁴ The part of this section on persecution has been adapted from the sermon, “*Being Ready for Christ’s Return*,” by Frank Barker, Briarwood Presbyterian Church, Birmingham, Alabama.

He is in this place or that. Don't believe such reports or go out to look for Him. For when the Son of Man returns, you will know it beyond all doubt. It will be as evident as the lightning that flashes across the sky."

Certainly the disciples would see the evidence of the Resurrection, they would all watch Christ gloriously ascend to the right hand of the Father in a radiant cloud in Acts 1, but none would see any of the days surrounding His final advent. We are **still** waiting for His glorious return today.

But heavy waters and hard times await them all, and in the middle of those trials, they would **long** to see His return. And in their longing, they were not to be seduced by "prophecy experts" crying that they had seen the Messiah.

His great appearing will be cosmic — like thousands of mile-long lightning bolts simultaneously ringing the earth. All will see this — in the Middle East, across Russia and into Siberia, in Asia, in China, in Australia, in Europe, in Africa, in the Americas, on all the world's islands, at the North and South Poles.

No one will miss it!

He says, "*you will know it **beyond all doubt.***"

But for many of us this isn't much of a burning issue. We're doing pretty well. We live in one of the richest places on the face of the earth. The only thing that stops **us** from worshipping God is our own sin and laziness.

But if you and I were in the Central Asia, like Pakistan, where Christians are getting gunned down during their worship services ... or in the Far East, like China, where Christians are getting thrown into virtual slave labor camps, then the coming of Christ might all of a sudden be something we **very, very** much longed for to relieve us of the persecution of this life.

And Jesus graciously warned them (and us) that before any final appearing, there would be suffering and rejection.

- **v. 25: Suffering**

Before His glorious reign, there would be humiliation and suffering. Verse 25, "*But first the Son of Man must suffer terribly and be rejected by this generation.*"

That Jesus was to suffer was prophesied repeatedly in the Old Testament. **Isaiah 53:3** says, "*He was despised and rejected—a man of sorrows, acquainted with bitterest grief. We turned our backs on Him and looked the other way when He went by. He was despised, and we did not care.*"

And **Psalms 22:6-8** says, "*But I am a worm and not a man. I am scorned and despised by all! [7] Everyone who sees me mocks me. They sneer and shake their heads, saying, [8] "Is this the one who relies on the Lord? Then let the Lord save him! If the Lord loves him so much, let the Lord rescue him!"*"

And then in verses 16-18 it says, "*My enemies surround me like a pack of*

dogs; an evil gang closes in on me. They have pierced my hands and feet. [17] I can count every bone in my body. My enemies stare at me and gloat. [18] They divide my clothes among themselves and throw dice for my garments.”

The suffering and rejection of Christ was a necessary price for our salvation.

Later, in **Luke 24:25-26**, Jesus would tell them, *“You are such foolish people! You find it so hard to believe all that the prophets wrote in the Scriptures. Wasn't it clearly predicted by the prophets that **the Messiah would have to suffer all these things before entering his time of glory?**”*

And Jesus saying this here, as He did again after His resurrection, prepared the disciples to wait for the not yet, also describe in Psalm 22.

Psalm 22:27-31, *“The whole earth will acknowledge the Lord and return to Him. People from every nation will bow down before Him. [28] For the Lord is king! He rules all the nations. [29] Let the rich of the earth feast and worship. Let all mortals—those born to die—bow down in His presence. [30] Future generations will also serve Him. Our children will hear about the wonders of the Lord. [31] His righteous acts will be told to those yet unborn. They will hear about everything He has done.”*

But we're still in the **already**, the **not yet** is still to come.

And we know this because of prevailing ...

- **v. 26-30: Secularism**

“When the Son of Man returns, the world will be like the people were in Noah's day. In those days before the flood, the people enjoyed banquets and parties and weddings right up to the time Noah entered his boat and the flood came to destroy them all. And the world will be as it was in the days of Lot. People went about their daily business—eating and drinking, buying and selling, farming and building—until the morning Lot left Sodom. Then fire and burning sulfur rained down from heaven and destroyed them all. Yes, it will be 'business as usual' right up to the hour when the Son of Man returns.”

This rejection of Christ will go on and on around the world until the end, as the two Old Testament illustrations from the days of Noah and Lot graphically depict.

Both Noah and Lot were righteous men according to the New Testament, despite their faults. **2 Peter 2:5** talks of Noah, *“And God did not spare the ancient world—except for Noah and his family of seven. Noah warned the world of God's righteous judgment. Then God destroyed the whole world of ungodly people with a vast flood.”*

And **2 Peter 2:7** talks of Lot, *“But at the same time, God rescued Lot out of Sodom because he was a good man who was sick of all the immorality and wickedness around him.”*

Both escaped destruction — Noah because of his obedience (Hebrews 11:7), and Lot because angels induced him to leave Sodom (Genesis 19:16, 17).

And both men lived in utterly depraved cultures.

But on this occasion Jesus made no mention of the righteousness of Noah and Lot or the sinfulness of their cultures.

You would think Christ would mention activities that were grossly immoral and that such evil is what would doom these people. But that's not what He says.

According to Jesus, people's problem was their regular everyday activities — “eating, drinking, marrying ... buying and selling, farming and building”.

It was not their sin, as great as it was, that damned them to destruction — it was their **indifference**. They were so preoccupied with normal life that they rarely had a thought above the mundane.

That is the way it will be at the end — “*it will be 'business as usual' right up to the hour when the Son of Man returns,*” and that is the way it is today!

Jesus' words describe many people's priorities today — “eating, drinking, marrying, buying and selling, farming and building.” Just as they did then, people are engaged in the regular affairs of life with little attention given to God.

Better homes and cars, gardening, menus and feasts, friends, marriage, children are all **good things**. But many give such high consideration to these things that they even wonder whether they have a soul! They give no thought to their sin. They are shallow, complacent, comfortable — and without Christ.

And it gets worse!

- **v. 31-33: Possessed by this life**⁵

“On that day a person outside the house must not go into the house to pack. A person in the field must not return to town. Remember what happened to Lot's wife! Whoever clings to this life will lose it, and whoever loses this life will save it.”

Some people are so taken up with material things, that Christ thinks it necessary to warn them that on the very day in which He will be revealed to execute the wrath of God on sinful human activity, they will be tempted to go back into the house or city to get their favorite possessions because they cannot imagine life without them. For the sake of **things** they will lose life itself.

Lot's wife could not imagine existence without her possessions, plans, and dreams. Longing for the life she was leaving behind, she lingered and so perished in the brimstone.

“But Lot's wife looked back ... and she became a pillar of salt.”

Jesus then issued a critical truth, “*Whoever clings to this life will lose it, and*

⁵ A small part of this section is adapted from According to Luke by David Gooding, pages 291-292.

whoever loses this life will save it."

Jesus talked about this same thing earlier, back in **Luke 9:24-25**, *"If you try to keep your life for yourself, you will lose it. But if you give up your life for Me, you will find true life. [25] And how do you benefit if you gain the whole world but lose or forfeit your own soul in the process?"*

On that occasion, Jesus was putting forth the need to let go of the world's possessions, so we can put our full trust in Him. The constant hedging of one's life with things — home, investments, retirement — **trying to keep one's life** — is a sure way to lose it. And then He describes what losing your life will look like when He returns ...

- **v. 34-37: Separation**

"That night two people will be asleep in one bed; one will be taken away, and the other will be left. Two women will be grinding flour together at the mill; one will be taken, the other left." "Lord, where will this happen?" the disciples asked. Jesus replied, "Just as the gathering of vultures shows there is a carcass nearby, so these signs indicate that the end is near.""

Jesus then explained that His coming and the ensuing judgment will be subtly discriminate and eternal. In all outward respects two people may appear the same as they share the same bed or work at the same mill. But one will be taken away to deliverance, while the other is left to destruction.

Now, I need to comment on this verse, because it is often used in poorly written religious fiction to describe an event called the rapture rather than the event Jesus is speaking of, which is the day of His return and the Day of Judgment [**same day**], of which the rapture is just a part.

Jesus comes back, no mistaking it. Everyone will be aware of it. Those who belong to Him, those who are 'in Christ' will be taken to be with Christ **right then**, and those who do not belong to Christ will be left here to face **immediate judgment**. It will all happen at once. No one will be left behind to get a second chance. Jesus isn't going to then leave and come back some other time.

The Left Behind series of books are based on faulty system of Biblical interpretation called "*Dispensationalism*" that holds to a discontinuity of the Bible (separating Old Testament interpretation from New Testament interpretation); distinct time periods [dispensations] where God offers different means of salvation for different people (not all are saved by the work of Christ); a belief that Jesus can be your Savior without being your Lord, and an obsessive focus on His return that decreases the need for the work of Christ to be applied to our lives and our culture today.

The debate is actually much bigger than that, but suffice it to say, that I think [Dave Silvernail's opinion, as an unapologetically Presbyterian and Reformed

Minister of the Word of God], that the theology beneath the Left Behind books is wholly inadequate. So if you can read them as entertaining fiction, fine. But please don't try to get your beliefs and doctrine out of them, because, simply put, it's really bad.

Now, let me also say, that there are a great many dispensationalists who are godly, loving people, who believe the Bible and love Jesus and we could learn much from their example of devotion.

But, when Jesus comes back, there will be no mistakes, for God's omniscience will determine the separation, and He will call those who are His own to Himself. And everyone else will face Judgment.

Outward appearance will count for nothing.

God knows every heart!

Judgment will fall on humanity.

Where there are spiritually dead, there will be judgment.

CLOSING REFLECTIONS: *Inside or Outside?*

And you have to ask yourself ... Which side of this separation am I on?

Am I facing Christ ... or facing Judgment?

Am I in the Kingdom looking out? Or am I out of the Kingdom looking in?

Because being in the Kingdom is about belonging to the King, and either you do or you don't.

And His answer to the Pharisees question hasn't changed.

The truth is, though Jesus has been gone for over 2,000 years, "the kingdom of God is among [us]"!

If we have trusted Him and are in Christ, **we are living as His people**,

As **Psalm 100:3** says, "*Acknowledge that the Lord is God! He made us, and we are His. **We are His people, the sheep of His pasture.***"

In **John 10:14** Jesus says, "*I am the good shepherd; **I know my own sheep, and they know me...***"

If we have trusted Him and are in Christ, **we are living in His place**,

As **Galatians 2:20** says, "*I myself no longer live, but **Christ lives in me**. So I live my life in this earthly body by trusting in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.*"

And **Ephesians 3:17**, "*And I pray that **Christ will be more and more at home in your hearts as you trust in Him**. May your roots go down deep into the soil of God's marvelous love.*"

If we have trusted Him and are in Christ, **we are living under His rule**.

Matthew 28:18-20, "*Jesus came and told His disciples, **"I have been given complete authority in heaven and on earth.** [19] Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the*

Holy Spirit. [20] Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

We are children of the kingdom.

Jesus, through his life, death, and resurrection, has won for us the riches of His glory. We have perfect acceptance with God in Christ. We are completely loved in Christ. We are totally forgiven in Christ. And even more, there is nothing that we will possess in glory that we do not now have in Christ.

Thus the Christian lives in the tension of the **ALREADY** of living 'by faith' and the **NOT YET** of knowing the full reality of the kingdom 'by sight.'

But we have a great assurance about the **not yet** because of the **already** in Christ. If we are His people, in His place, under His rule, we will look beyond the regular living of life **to** Him, and we will hold loosely the things of this world.

Because Jesus Christ is everything.

He is the maker and goal of all creation (Colossians 1:15-17).

He is the source and goal of redemption (Colossians 1:18-20).

He is the heir of all things (Romans 8:17).

He is the focus of God's Word (Luke 24:25-27, 44-46).

He is our person, our place, our rule.

He is the King.

He gives us the kingdom.

Why? Because ...

Being in the Kingdom is all of grace from beginning to end ... and it's all of grace because it's all of Christ, who is the King.

Luke tells the story of how Jesus revealed that grace, died to provide it, rose again to bestow it, and **will return to establish its presence over all of creation.**

And those who long for that day said, "Amen."