



HERE
IT
IS?



**FROM
JOHN'S
HEART
TO
YOURS**

The devastation, confusion, division and hatred caused by the COVID virus, cannot leave any Bible believing Christian with any doubt that Satan is behind all of this, in one way or another.

“Is this the end of the end times?” is a question many are asking.

Jesus, in replying to the question of the Pharisees concerning the coming of the Kingdom in Luke chapter 17, said:

21 You won't be able to say, 'Here it is!' or 'It's over there!' For the Kingdom of God is already among you.” Luke 17:21 (NLT)

We are all still asking the same questions. When will it come and what will be the signs of the coming of the Kingdom?

With all the chaos of COVID over the last eighteen months and the earthquakes, wars and rumors of wars, what do we make of these events and are they indeed the signs of the end of time?

More importantly, what are we to do about it?

The Kingdom does not come with signs to be observed, Jesus notes in this passage in Luke 17. The notion that its coming will be marked by some cosmic display, is challenged. He is changing the Pharisees' expectation that they may point here or there and declare that they have found it, because the Kingdom is “in their midst” or “within their reach.”

The Kingdom hope is present in His presence and given its proximity, He suggests we should not be wasting time or effort in trying to determine where it might be located.

There are still many mysteries around the Kingdom and no theologian seems to have uncovered them all, but if we accept that it is a Kingdom “already but not yet” then its initial

manifestation has come with Jesus' ministry. Because it's already here in Him, the Pharisees need not look for its coming in the sky, He says. It is already here in him!

However, Jesus then says that His return in power is a different matter. It is a day that they will long for but will not see. The powerful display of that Day is still coming, and its timing is known only to the Father.

Many are saying, "Here it is," or "There it is," but Jesus warns them not to follow such claims. When the Son of Man comes, it will be visible and obvious, like lightning flashing across the sky, He says.

Much recent thinking has focused us away from the warnings of Jesus, who tells us in Luke 17, that the day of the Son of Man will be a day of judgment. It's not something we like to hear.

But what should we be doing in preparation for that great and fearful day, because He compares the nature of the messianic judgment to the flood in the days of Noah (Gen. 7) and to the days of Lot at Sodom and Gomorrah. (Gen. 19)

Those are frightening judgment scenes!

Just as they did then, people will pay little attention to God. They will eat, drink, marry, and be given in marriage, just as they did up to the day Noah got into the ark and the Flood came. That was the end; life stopped. Similarly in the days of Lot, there was eating, drinking, buying, selling, planting, and building. But when Lot left Sodom, judgment came, and nothing of the formerly vibrant city was left.

Both comparisons picture the absolute finality of God's judgment. The days of the Son of Man will be like those ancient days of judgment. The idea that there is a second chance on the judgment day is a myth as far as the Bible is concerned.

It will be swift and there will be no time to look back as Lot's wife did.

For the first time in history many signs are indeed pointing towards the end.

Events in the Middle East, earthquakes, famine and COVID are all signs. Because of modern technology, "The Good News" can be preached for the first time in the Whole World. There is huge spiritual activity going on all over the earth and persecution increases.

These things all point to an urgency, a need for readiness!

We don't like to consider the consequences for those who turn their backs on Jesus, but all the signs point, not only to a time of persecution, but also to a time of great harvest as we look to the future.

The mission has not changed for us. The Good News remains good. Our hope should be at an all-time high. It's time for harvest!

The relevance of the gospel has never been greater. People are desperate for answers. They need truth and they need direction and only Jesus can provide that. "The Way the Truth and the Life" remains our only hope and the message we have for the world is desperately needed at this time.

He himself has promised us an eternal hope but it's based on persistence and resilience. He answers His own first question in Luke chapter 18:7, on the basis of the widow's persistence:

"And will not God give justice to his elect, who cry to him day and night? Will he delay long over them? ⁸ I tell you, he will give justice to them speedily."

But He then asks a question which remains to be answered:

"Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?"

We've been through challenging times recently, but we should not give up. Our persistence in prayer, like the widow's, should never waiver. Despite the circumstances, when Jesus returns, may He find our faith on earth.

Come Lord Jesus!

John



JOHN & JAYNE SCHOLTZ



Tony and Marilyn are currently visiting their Cluster Churches in the UK.

It is their first visit since the outbreak of COVID-19 and are delighted to be strengthening their relationship in the UK.

They send much love to COTN Family.



TONY AND MARILYN FITZGERALD



For any comments, suggestions and news, please do not hesitate to contact the COTN Virtual Resource Centre at communication@cotn.org

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