

OpenTheo

10 Lepers, Day of the Lord (Part 2)



The Life and Teachings of Christ - Steve Gregg

In this talk, Steve Gregg discusses the topic of the Day of the Lord and the concept of the Kingdom of God. He clarifies that the Kingdom of God is within us and not a physical entity. He notes that the Day of the Lord is an important theme throughout the scriptures and compares it to the time of Noah and Lot. Additionally, he highlights how the passage is frequently used as proof-text for the pre-tribulation rapture. Overall, this talk offers a thought-provoking perspective on the Day of the Lord and the Kingdom of God.

Transcript

We don't use it quite in the second sense in our modern English, but if I say that something is within you, you'll take me to mean inside of you personally, inside of you as an individual. But within you, and the word you being plural as it is here, would suggest within your ranks or within your presence, in the presence of this group here, you people. It's within this group here, or it's in your midst.

It has representatives among you, is what I understand him to be saying. Now, a lot of people, Christians as well as New Agers, have taken within you to mean something like in your heart, the Kingdom of God is in your heart. It's inside of you.

Many, many Christian teachers through the years have understood it this way, and New Age people and others have understood it this way too, that the Kingdom of God is in your heart. However, while there may be some sense in which there could be truth in it, it hardly would be a fitting interpretation of Jesus' remarks in this case, because he was not talking to his disciples when he made this remark, but he was talking to the Pharisees who were his enemies. And to suggest that the Kingdom of God was within their hearts would be, they'd be the people least likely for him to say something like that about the Kingdom of God.

It was not in their hearts. They were of their father, the devil. And therefore, it seems highly unlikely that the Kingdom of God is within you, spoken as it was in this context, means inside of you individually in your heart.

I understand Jesus' words to mean, the Kingdom of God is represented by some who are among you right here. I understand the Kingdom of God not to be a mystical phenomenon inside the soul or the heart of a believer, although their heart must be engaged to be a participant in the Kingdom of God. A person has to be born of the Spirit to see the Kingdom of God and to be in it.

But the Kingdom is itself more of an external reality, more of an objective society. It is basically made up of the subjects of King Jesus. Whoever is a subject of his is part of his Kingdom, just like the subjects of the Queen are her Kingdom.

So all Christians, basically, if Jesus is their Lord, they are the Kingdom of God. They are representatives of the Kingdom of God. You and I and all of us corporately together are his Kingdom, his domain, that over which he rules.

And therefore, when Jesus said, the Kingdom of God is among you or in your midst, which is how I understand it, he means that although you have been looking for the Kingdom of a certain sort, and you have been hoping to identify it by certain observable criteria, the Kingdom of God has already come. There are citizens, there are representatives of it right here in the crowd as I speak. And you haven't noticed because you are not looking in the right places for them.

Invisibly, the Kingdom of God has come. And some participants already are in it. You aren't among them, but he says, some are, and they are in your midst.

That's what I understand his meaning to be here. And then he turns to his disciples. So he said the previous things to the Pharisees because they asked him.

And then he turned to his disciples, and the rest of what we read in this chapter was addressed to them. And he said, the days will come when you desire to see one of the days of the Son of Man, and you will not see it. Now the expression, one of the days of the Son of Man is not easy.

It's not a simple thing to understand. If he had said that you will long to see the day of the Son of Man, and by the way, that expression does occur at the end of verse 24. It says, so shall also the Son of Man be in his day.

And also, verse 30, so will it be in the day when the Son of Man is revealed. It would be clear that the day of the Son of Man is the day of his return, his second coming, the day that he's revealed. The Son of Man in his day.

But one of the days of the Son of Man is a little more difficult of interpretation, plural. Now, a couple of ways this could be understood. One would be to say that when Jesus is present, it's day.

When he's absent, it's night. He's the light of the world while he's here. And when he

arrived on the planet the first time, the prophets, like Zechariah and so forth, announced that the day has sprung, or the daybreak had come.

When Jesus looked forward to his death, he said the night is coming, when no man can work. During the time of Jesus' absence, Paul wrote, the night is far spent, the day is close at hand. And the second coming of Jesus Christ is like another day.

Figuratively speaking, to say that Christ's presence on earth is like daytime. His absence is like nighttime. And seen that way, one of the days of the Son of Man would be a way of saying one of the two days of the Son of Man.

The first day was his presence here the first time. The second day, when he comes back, everything else is nighttime. One of the daylight periods when the sun is visible.

He was visible for three and a half years, actually more like 33 and a half, but publicly visible for 33 and a half years. That was a day, daylight period. Then he went away.

When he comes back, he'll be visible again. That'll be another daylight period. There's two days.

His first coming and his second coming. And his presence as a result of those coming. So that's one way of saying it.

In other words, the day is coming when I won't be here anymore. And you'll wish you could see one of the days of the Son of Man. I personally don't think that's the right interpretation, even though I belabored it.

I just want to mention that's one possible interpretation. I think the days of the Son of Man probably is used in the same grammatical sense as in verse 26. It says the days of Noah.

Or in verse 28, the days of Lot. In verse 26 it says it was in the days of Noah, as it was in the days of Noah. Or in verse 28, like it was in the days of Lot.

Probably the days of Noah, days of Lot, and days of the Son of Man has similar grammatical function. The days of Noah were the days when Noah was on the earth. The days of Lot were the days when Lot was on the earth.

They're not here anymore, but they were once. And during their lifetime, their lifetime was called the days of them. So to say you'll long to see one of the days of the Son of Man, it's sort of like you'll long for the good old days when I was with you.

A time will come. When you will long for one of the days that you used to know of my presence, and I won't be here. However, he says there will be a day of the Son of Man when he will be revealed.

Now, that day, as I say in verse 30, is said in the day when the Son of Man is revealed. That's when he comes back, I believe. And the other place it speaks about his day is in verse 24.

For as the lightning that flashes out of one part under heaven shines to the other part under heaven, so also the Son of Man will be in his day. In the day of the Son of Man, his day. Okay, now, that lightning image has, in my life, almost always conveyed the notion of a sudden appearing of Christ like a lightning bolt from the sky.

You know, in the twinkling of an eye. You know, it says in 1 Corinthians 15, this change will come. But I personally don't think that Jesus is actually talking about a lightning bolt as an image of his coming in this particular place.

It may seem strange to say that, but I'd like to challenge the translation of the word lightning. Over in Matthew 24, 27, which is the parallel to this statement. Matthew 24, 27.

We have what appears to be the same statement of Jesus, but worded only slightly differently. Matthew 24, 27 says, For as the lightning comes from the east and flashes out to the west, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. Now, the lightning, he said, comes from the east and flashes to the west.

In Luke's version that we were reading, he says it this way. For as the lightning that flashes out of one part under heaven, shines to the other part under heaven. Notice, the motion of this lightning is not vertical, it's horizontal.

He's comparing something that is not a vertical motion, like a lightning bolt that comes out of heaven and strikes maybe a tree or something on the earth. We usually think of lightning as a vertical phenomenon. But he's describing a horizontal phenomenon.

A lightning that flashes from one part under heaven to another part under heaven. And specifically, Matthew, from the east. He said it comes from the east and it flashes to the west.

Now, this raises serious questions as to whether we should understand this as lightning. The Greek word, which is here translated lightning, is astrape. If you want to write that down, it's A-S-T-R-A-P-E.

It looks like a strap with an E on the end. Astrape. Astrape.

Sounds like agape. That just has, instead of a G, it has an S-T-R in that place. Astrape, I have, out of curiosity, looked this up in lexicons some years ago to discover what I did discover.

Kind of interesting to me. And that is that astrape does not necessarily have to mean

lightning in the sense that we usually think of that word. But rather, *astrape* means bright, shiny.

Now, whether I can immediately locate the verse that I want to about this or not, let me see if I can. There is a place where this same word is translated very differently than lightning. I wonder if I can find it quickly here.

In Luke, what? Is it Luke 13 or Luke 11? Luke 10, you think so? I would have thought it was... Ah, no, a different one. That's another reference to lightning. In that case, it does appear to be vertical.

I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. The word *astrape* can mean lightning. But there is another place where Jesus is talking about... And it's in Luke.

You don't put a candle under a bushel, but you put it up on a lampstand. No, no, no. Okay, here we go.

I got it. There it is. It's 36, yeah.

1136, thanks. Luke 1136. This is what I wanted to show you.

Luke 1136 says, If your whole body is full of light, having no part dark, the whole body will be full of light, as when the bright shining of a lamp gives you light. Now, the word bright shining, this is Luke 1136. The word bright shining in this verse is *astrape* in the Greek New Testament.

But, now, it's the same word that's translated lightning, when it says, I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. Now, obviously, we have a single Greek word that can mean two different things. It can refer to a lightning bolt, or it can refer to a bright shining.

It's obvious that in Luke 1136, lightning bolt wouldn't be the right term. It can't be translated as when a lightning bolt of a lamp gives you light. So, bright shining is obviously the right interpretation there of this word.

Now, the question is, when Jesus talks about his coming being like lightning or like *astrape*, is it better to translate it lightning or bright shining? We have seen that those are both adequate possible translations of the same Greek word. But, in my opinion, especially in Matthew's version of the statement, Matthew 24, 27, where he says, for as the *astrape* comes from the east and flashes to the west, it would make more sense to translate *astrape* as bright shining, in this case, than lightning. For one thing, because lightning doesn't particularly move in that direction.

But, there is a bright shining that comes from the east and flashes all the way to the west. And that bright shining is a sunrise. The sunrise comes from the east and it shines across the sky to the west.

Eventually, of course, the sun moves to the west. This is a horizontal movement that Jesus is talking about. It starts in one place under heaven and it moves to another place under heaven.

It doesn't move from heaven to earth. That's not what he's talking about here. Now, I'm not trying to say that Jesus is speaking of a horizontal rather than vertical movement at his coming.

I'm not denying that Jesus will come out of heaven vertically down to earth. I affirm that he will. But the image he's using to liken his coming, I think, is not that of a lightning bolt, but that of a sunrise.

It's not so much that he's saying, when I come it's going to be sudden and just going to boom, just like a lightning bolt from heaven, but it's going to be like a sunrise. Like the bright shining that comes from the east, before the sun rises, the horizon begins to brighten a bit. The sky that was black initially becomes a somewhat dark blue, then lighter blue, and eventually there's orange and yellow beginning to be seen, and you can actually see some beams coming over the horizon before the sun is in full view, and eventually, boom, the sun is visible.

Peter talks about, I think, the second coming of Christ, when in 2 Peter 1.19, he says about the scriptures, he says that these are a light that shines in a dark place, and we should take heed unto them until the day dawns and the morning star arises in your hearts. Now, I don't know what to make about that in your hearts part. It seems to speak of something that God's working in his church, that is one of those things associated with this sunrise, but notice in 2 Peter 1.19, his actual statement is that we should pay heed to the scriptures until such a time as this sunrise comes, suggesting that after that, we won't have to take heed to the scriptures.

They won't be needed as a light that shines in a dark place anymore, because it won't be dark anymore. The sun will have arisen. Now, I suppose this could be interpreted in a lot of ways, but I feel safest in interpreting it as the second coming of Christ.

I think we should pay heed to the scriptures until Jesus returns. It's dark until then, and we need that lamp unto our feet and lighten our path. When Jesus returns, and not until then, in my opinion, we'll be free to no longer need the scriptures to shine.

We'll have him instead. So, I think Peter is talking about the second coming of Christ, but he speaks of it as a dawning, of the morning star arising. Jesus, I think, considered his second coming to be like that too.

It's like the bright shining that comes from the east and flashes even to the west. And that would be perhaps saying it's like the dawning of a new day when he comes. Now, he's talking in Luke 17 about days, one of the days of the Son of Man.

In his days on earth, the disciples knew him and saw him, and there's going to come a time, he says, when they're going to miss that, because they're not going to know him and see him in quite that way. He'll be absent, it'll be dark, and they'll long for one of those days again. But there will be another day of the Son of Man.

In his day, it'll be like the sunrise, like a new dawning, a new day spring from on high. That's the day when he is revealed. Now, to what degree we're to understand the parallels to a sunrise to apply, I don't know.

Maybe he's just saying that just like a sunrise, his coming will be the dawning of a new day. It may mean nothing more than that. Or there may be something about the gradual brightening of the sky that is supposed to be the connection between that and his coming.

In Proverbs 4.18, Solomon says, The path of the righteous is like the light of dawn, which shines brighter and brighter until the full day. Proverbs 4.18 The path of the righteous person is like the light of dawn, which shines brighter and brighter until full day, which suggests that our own walk, the path that we as righteous people take, is like a sunrise. The day star rises in our hearts.

And it gets brighter and brighter until he comes, until the full day, when the sun is visible over the horizon. Until then, however, things are supposed to be brightened a bit. And I suspect that there may be something of this in Jesus' remark.

I can't say for sure. But he might be saying that my coming, like the sunrise, is going to be something that is precipitated by a certain brightening, in general, of the path of the righteous. Like until full day, it's going to get brighter and brighter.

Now, that doesn't mean in any sense that the world is going to become a better and better place. Because the church shines brightest and is most glorious in the midst of persecution. Anyone who remembers what Peter said in 1 Peter, throughout, he indicates that the glory and the radiance of the life of Christ in us is perfected and made brighter by the persecutions that we go through, and so forth.

And to say that the glory of the Lord is going to arise upon you, to say that your path is going to get brighter and brighter until the full day, is not to say that the path of the wicked is going to get brighter and brighter until full day. Darkness shall cover the earth and gross darkness the people. But the glory of the Lord will arise upon you and his glory will be seen upon you.

I'm talking, of course, on the day of the 16th. When we were in that passage in Isaiah 60, I mentioned that I think it has a principal application to the first coming of Christ. But since that was just one of the days of the Son of Man, and there's another day coming, there's no reason to doubt that what is said there could apply to his second coming as

well.

That no matter what condition the earth is in, how dark things are, how bad things are, even if it's during overt persecution of the church, the glory of the Lord or the image of Christ, I think is going to be made more perfect, going to be made more glorious, more visible upon us. Paul said that we all with unveiled faces beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord are changed from glory to glory in that same image, even as by the Spirit of the Lord, 2 Corinthians 3.18. So, I don't know how much of this to read into Jesus' statement. In my opinion, all this can be read into it, but I'm not sure that he intends it to be.

He does, in my opinion, liken his coming not with a bolt of lightning, but with the rising of the sun in the morning. And whether he's only saying by that, my coming will be the beginning of a new day, just like the sunrise is the beginning of a new day, and no further parallels are intended. Or whether there is more to it, that there is more parallel to it than that.

That just as the sunrise that begins a new day is precipitated by a general brightening, the glory of the sun becomes more visible even before the sun himself is visible. That even before Jesus comes back, his glory may be seen to a greater degree than now upon his people. I don't want to be too mystical or esoteric or anything like that, but I think there may be something of that in there when you compare some of the other statements of Scripture.

The dawning of a day is a very common image for the coming of Christ. Now, we see then, he's saying that they're going to miss having him around. They're going to wish they had, again, one of those days with the Son of Man.

But he says there's going to be another day. Another day of the Son of Man to look forward to. And he says in verse 23, And they will say to you, Look here or look there.

Do not go after them or follow them. Now, notice this. Look here and look there are the same things that we see in verse 21.

Look here and look there. However, in verse 21, he was telling the Pharisees concerning the actual true coming of the kingdom of God, it's not the kind of thing where you'll be able to say, Look here or look there. It comes without observation.

It has already, in fact, invisibly intruded into your world and you haven't noticed it. And so also he says to his disciples, Since the kingdom of God is not going to come with observation, since the kingdom of God is not going to be one of those things where they can say, Look here or look there, if, in fact, people do come and say, Look here or look there, don't look. It's not what they think it is.

Many people think that there will be an antichrist who will impersonate Christ and who

will be mistaken for Christ in the last days. And they feel that Jesus is warning against that. The true Christ has come, but he didn't make quite the splash that the Jews thought he would.

But he's saying, Don't expect him to. But if someone does come and make that kind of observable splash, somebody comes along and claims to be the Messiah and so forth, and they can say, Look, here's his kingdom over here. Don't mistake that for the real thing.

Don't go after them. Don't follow them. The kingdom that he's come, that he's brought is a spiritual thing and it's not going to be observable in terms of some earthly kingdom or political movement.

And then he gives the words in verse 24, For as the lightning or the bright shining which flashes out of one part under heaven and shines to the other part under heaven, so also the Son of Man will be in his day. But first he must suffer many things and be rejected by this generation. That's self-explanatory.

We don't need to comment. However, the next verses maybe do need comment. And as it was in the days of Noah, so it will be also in the days of the Son of Man.

They ate, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage until the day that Noah entered into the ark and the flood came and destroyed them all. Likewise as it was also in the days of Lot. They ate, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they built.

But on the day that Lot went out of Sodom, it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all. Even so will it be in the day when the Son of Man is revealed. Now, there's a lot of emphasis on days in this entire passage.

It talks about the Son of Man in his day in verse 24. And then it talks about in the days of Noah, verse 27, there was the day that Noah entered the ark and the flood came that day. With reference to the days of Lot, verse 29, there was the day that Lot went out of Sodom and on that same day, Sodom was destroyed.

So also there will be a day when the Son of Man is revealed. This is emphasizing that there is a particular day that God will reveal his Son. However, he also compares the days of Noah with the days of the Son of Man.

And I'm not sure how, I must confess, I'm not sure quite how he means that. Because the days of Noah were times when Noah was on the earth. If the days of the Son of Man are the time when Jesus is on the earth, then it's hard to know exactly how that is to be understood.

In this case, I think the days of the Son of Man must be taken in somewhat of a more

loose sense. Of the days approaching the day. You know, the days that are of the general time period of the day of his coming.

I don't know that I can justify that except by maybe the imposition of my assumptions. But I'm not sure if anyone has a better explanation than that. In any case, yes.

Yeah, the day of his second coming. Well, at least in verse 26, where it says, As it was in the days of Noah, so it will also be in the days of the Son of Man. The days of the Son of Man in that particular sense is likened to the days of Noah.

And the days of Noah were before the flood. So presumably the days of the Son of Man they're referred to are before the day of his coming, which is like the flood. There's a sense in which his day may be dawning even before his appearance.

Yeah, he warned that the flood was coming. Maybe that's how we're to understand it. Like the days of Noah's witness, so the days of Christ's witness through the church.

Maybe that's how we're to understand it. I honestly, as I said a moment ago, I don't know exactly how that term is intended by Jesus here. If that's the only thing I have trouble with in the passage, though, I'm ahead of most people.

The passage is generally full of difficulties. What is the comparison of the days of Noah and the days of Lot to this time of Jesus' coming? Well, on the one hand, several things have been done with this, usually by dispensationalists, but I don't know that it's been restricted to them. One thing is to suggest that the days of Noah and the days of Lot were very wicked days, very corrupt days.

Therefore, Jesus is saying that the world, just prior to Jesus' coming back, is going to be very, very corrupt, just like it was in the days of Noah, and as it was in the days of Lot. And therefore, any comparisons we can find between, say, Sodom in Lot's day or the corrupt antediluvian world in Noah's day, if we can find parallels between those and our own corruption of our own government and so forth, and our own society, people often are encouraged by those parallels, say, well, we must be living in the days Jesus spoke about. The problem with that is that we've got tunnel vision, and we don't have a very broad grasp of what's going on in the whole world.

We're mostly aware only of what's going on in our neighborhood or our country. We have relatively little grasp of what's going on worldwide, and we have even less grasp, probably, of what's happened historically. The more complete a person's knowledge is of what's going on globally and what's going on historically, the less likely they are to think that our days are uniquely evil or our time is uniquely evil.

What inclines many American Christians, and I don't know, maybe Canadian Christians think this way too, but North American Christians put it that way, to think this way is the fact that North America has been a continent which for many generations was fairly

dominated by a Christian worldview and sort of a moral biblical consensus, and that is changing. It's obvious that there's much less of that consensus in our society today, and that alarms Christians, and not surprisingly, and probably understandably, it alarms us. However, we shouldn't make more of it than its significance warrants.

The fact of the matter is things are not anywhere near as bad yet in North America as they were, for instance, in the days when the Assyrians were swallowing the world up and impaling people on stakes and putting hooks through their noses and dragging them off, cutting their skin off and everything, dragging them off every nation they conquered. I mean, things have been a lot worse in a lot of different times. I'd say there have probably been, if Jesus was trying to connect the wickedness of Noah's day with the wickedness of the end times, first of all, that wouldn't be very helpful.

For one thing, we don't know exactly how wicked it was in Noah's day, nor do we know exactly how uniquely evil our own day is because we don't have any first-hand knowledge of just how bad things were three generations ago or three centuries ago or thirteen centuries ago. I mean, we can read history, but it's selective. We don't know everything that was going on.

It would be absolutely impossible for any generation to be able to with certainty say, I think we're living in about the worst times ever because we just don't have the data. And if Jesus was trying to communicate that, now you'll know it's the last days because corruption is going to be rampant and there's going to be wickedness and homosexuality and all that stuff, he'd be communicating nothing of value to us because we don't know whether the degree to which those things are true in our age are unusual, how much that was true a century or two or three or ten centuries ago. Jesus' words would be useless if that's what he's trying to communicate.

Therefore, I don't think that is his meaning. In fact, his meaning is much different, it occurs to me. In verse 27, when he's describing the conditions of the days of Noah, he says, they ate, they drank, they married wives.

What horrible things for people to do, to eat and drink and get married. Now, because some people are committed to the notion that Jesus is trying to warn us that the last days will be very corrupt days, they have to take ate and drank and married wives to mean something more than the words actually mean. I've heard people say, they ate and drank, they were gluttonous party animals, they're drunkards and they're overindulging themselves with gluttony and alcoholic drinks and so forth.

And married wives, look at that, they're going through one wife after another through divorce and remarriage and serial polygamy and so forth. None of that is implied by eating and drinking and marrying wives. Eating and drinking and marrying wives are very legitimate things to do.

Marriage is honorable and the bed is undefiled and whether you eat or drink, you're supposed to be able to do it to the glory of God. And so there's nothing about those things that impresses us with the wickedness. And by the way, if Jesus did intend to impress us with the wickedness of the people of Noah's day, he could have done so by saying, they beat each other up, they robbed, they raped, they murdered.

Because even Genesis tells us that the days of Noah were filled with violence. So we must assume that Jesus could have, if he wanted to make that particular connection, he could have listed a number of violent crimes that people were involved in to show that the moral conditions in the last days would be like the moral conditions in the days of Noah. But that's not the connection he chooses to make.

He compares it with things they did that were not criminal. Eating, drinking, getting married, the very things Christians themselves do without any tinge of conscience. And we shouldn't have any problem with it.

They're legitimate things to do. That Jesus is not talking about sinful activities in the days of Noah is further illustrated by his parallel comparison with the days of Lot. Now listen, what could Jesus have said about the days of Lot if he wanted to underscore how bad things were? Certainly homosexuality.

One of the glaring sins of Sodom in the days of Lot was its homosexuality. And besides that, the prophets like Ezekiel said that Sodom, you know, they were negligent of the poor and needy, they were proud, they were boastful. All these things are said about Sodom in the days of Lot in the Old Testament.

But none of those things are mentioned by Jesus, even though Jesus gives a list of things that were going on in the days of Lot. What are they? Well, they, again, they ate and they drank. There's no mention of marriage here, but they bought and they sold.

Boy, that's an atrocious kind of behavior, buying things and selling things. And they planted and they built. How could there be a people imaginable so corrupt who plant crops, they build buildings, they buy things, they sell things, they eat food, they drink? Is it not obvious that Jesus is not making any attempt whatsoever to underscore the moral conditions of the days of Noah or the days of Lot? He could have done so with graphic criminal and sinful behavior, but he doesn't mention any sinful behavior.

That's not his point. What is his point is that they did the ordinary things that people do every day in their lives. They were conducting business as usual, oblivious to the fact that their lives were about to end any moment.

The things they did were not bad things, but they seemed particularly inappropriate if they had known that they were going to die that day. Not because they should be ashamed to stand before God and say, Oh, I have to admit it, I did plant, I did build, I did

buy some things and sold some things. That's not what makes it inappropriate.

The fact of the matter is they are doing things that show that they think that everyday life is going to continue as usual. You build a building, you plant crops, because you expect to be here for a while. The point he's making is they were totally unaware of what was about to happen to them.

And he says, that's what it's going to be like when I come. The wicked are going to be like that. They're going to be doing ordinary things.

They may or may not be as wicked as previous generations. That's not his point. He's not making any point whatsoever about that.

He's saying, the thing that's parallel is that these people were caught suddenly and unawares. By a judgment that they had no clue what was about to fall. And that's how his second coming is going to be.

Now, in verse 31 he says, in that day, he who is on the housetop. Oh, I need to make one other comment about the days of the lot and the days of now. Because this is something that dispensationalists do that I just want to let you know about.

There is such a desperation on the part of dispensationalists to prove a pre-tribulation rapture. In the absence of any scripture that teaches it. That they have to fabricate ridiculous arguments in its favor from alleged typology and so forth.

And this passage is one of the key proof texts for a pre-trib rapture. Do you see it there? Where is it then? Well, it's here. Here's where it says it.

In verse 27, in the day that Noah entered the ark. That's a type of the rapture. And the flood came and destroyed them all.

The flood is a type of the tribulation. The tribulation didn't come until the rapture. You see, the rapture has to happen first.

Like Noah was taken to a place of safety in the ark. Then God brought the tribulation waters of the flood. Likewise with Lot.

Look at Lot. The day, verse 29, the day that Lot went out of Sodom. That's like the church going out of the world in the rapture.

It rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all. Which is like the tribulation coming down. I was taught this from my youth.

It struck me as a legitimate interpretation. Because I never dreamed to question it. Until I began to question the whole doctrine of pre-trib rapture.

And I began to re-look at some of these proof texts that I based it on. And said, wait a minute, where did I get that out of there? The first question I would like to ask those who base any doctrine on that particular kind of interpretation of this passage. Is on what basis are we justified in equating the flood or the fire and brimstone that came on Sodom with the tribulation period? If there even is said to be a tribulation period in the Bible.

On what basis is that particular period of time compared with the flood or with the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah? I will say this much. There is no passage in the Bible that encourages us to equate the flood of Noah or the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah with a seven year period. There is no place that makes that identification anywhere in the Bible.

But there is in fact a passage, actually in 2 Peter chapter 3. That compares the flood with the second coming of Christ. Let me show you this in 2 Peter chapter 3 real quickly. 2 Peter 3. We are running low on time here, real bad.

2 Peter 3, it says, verse 5, speaking of those scoffers. For this they willfully forget that by the word of God the heavens were of old. That is, he created the heavens of old by the word.

And the earth also standing out of water and in the water. By which, that is the water, by the water, the world that then existed perished being flooded with water. He is talking about the flood of Noah.

The waters that God created when he created the heavens, the earth and the waters. At some point later he flooded the world with them in the days of Noah. Now he says, but the heavens and earth which now exist, that is since the flood, are kept in store by the same word.

That is, his word created the heavens and the earth in the first place. And then eventually he kind of destroyed the way things were with the flood. Now, the heavens and earth that have existed since then, the same word of God preserves them until the time that they are reserved for.

They are reserved for fire until the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men. Now what is that fire? We will look at verse 10 in the same chapter. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise and the elements will melt with a fervent heat.

Both the earth and the works that are in it shall be burned up. Verse 12, looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God because of which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with a fervent heat. Nevertheless, we according to his promise look for new heavens and new earth.

Now, there was an old heaven and new earth that God created, but he wiped it out with

a flood. It says in verse 5 and 6. Now there is a heaven and earth that has been in existence since then. He is going to wipe that one out with fire.

The flood of Noah is likened, at least in principle, to the second coming of Christ, the day of the Lord, the day of God, when the earth will be burned up. It is not likened to a seven-year tribulation period, but it is likened to the second coming of Christ. Therefore, the flood is a type of the end of the world, in fact, but not of a seven-year period, but of the second coming of Christ.

What about the days of Lot? Well, I can't say that I know of any place in the Bible that the destruction of Sodom is necessarily compared directly with any other event. However, the description of the second coming of Christ, as Paul gives it in 2 Thessalonians 1.8, sounds similar to the destruction of Sodom. In 2 Thessalonians 1.8, Paul is describing the second coming of Christ, and he says it will be in flaming fire, taking vengeance on those who do not know God.

Just like he destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah with flaming fire, so his second coming will be in flaming fire. What I am saying is there are things in the New Testament to encourage us to see that what God did to Sodom and what he did in the days of Noah, judgments from heaven, are comparable to what he is going to do in the second coming of Christ. But there is no passage that encourages us to compare those same historic events with some future seven-year tribulation.

There is no justification for this at all. Therefore, what is easier to understand Jesus' words to mean is that the righteous, in fact, will be safe, and God will assure that they are safe before he comes and brings judgment on the world. Whether it means he will rapture them first or keep them safe on the earth is a question to be debated from other texts at another time.

But the point is, there is nothing to encourage us from this comparison of the days of Noah and the days of Lot to say, well, those judgments in those days were like the seven-year tribulation, and the escape of Lot and the entry of Noah's family into the ark, that is like the rapture of the church. That is sleazy exegesis as far as I am concerned. Verse 31, In that day, he who is on the housetop and his goods are in the house, let him not come down and take them away, and likewise, the one who is in the field, let him not turn back.

Remember Lot's wife. It is hard to know exactly at the second coming of Christ how anyone could turn back. I mean, it is going to happen quite, in all likelihood, quite suddenly, and turn back to where from where? I have a feeling that what Jesus is saying here is just don't look back.

Don't wish to retrieve anything from this life when Jesus comes and brings an end to this world and ushers in new heaven and new earth. Don't go back. Don't let your heart

linger on the things that you have left behind in your house, the things that you had in this life.

Divorce your affections from those things. Remember what happened to Lot's wife. When God did destroy Sodom and Gomorrah, Lot did escape, in fact, but Lot's wife didn't.

Why? Sodom was still in her heart. She looked longingly back at the things she was leaving behind, her house and those things behind it. Jesus said, don't you make that same mistake.

When Jesus comes, you should be glad to give up everything that you are leaving behind. Don't ever longingly wish that you could have it again or look back. Whoever seeks to save his life will lose it, verse 33 says, and whoever loses his life will preserve it.

Now, the clock doesn't say so, but the tape machine says I have about four minutes left, so let me take these last verses. I tell you, in that night, which is probably the night of that day in verse 31, in that day, and the day that we've been talking about all along, the day of the Lord. In that night there will be two men in one bed.

One will be taken and the other will be left. Two women will be grinding together. The one will be taken and the other left.

Two men will be in the field. The one will be taken and the other left. And they answered and said to him, where, Lord? So he said to them, wherever the body is or corpse, there the eagles will be gathered together.

Now, of course, this passage has often been thought to be about the rapture of the church. I personally don't believe it is. First thing I'd point out is notice that he is talking about something which results in an instant separation between parties that are previously closely associated.

In fact, they work side by side in the field or at the mill, or they even sleep next to each other. Some people thought that's proof that homosexuality would be big time in the days when Jesus comes back. Because two men would be sleeping in one bed.

I think that the assumption that this is a reference to homosexuality is a reflection of our own cultural embarrassment about men touching each other or being close to each other. I mean, most men I know, including myself, would feel awkward sleeping with another man in the same bed. I don't know why.

There's nothing immoral about it. But I mean, it's maybe because of the stigma of homosexuality or something. But in our culture, that just isn't done very much.

Nothing wrong with it being done. It just isn't done much in our culture. Of course, there are exceptions.

I know of some. But that's no big deal. The thing is, it is not such a stigma in other cultures.

I mean, we're not talking about homosexuality here. We're just talking about people in close proximity. When Larry Norman based his song about the Preacher of Rapture on this verse, he changed it.

A man and wife asleep in bed. She hears a noise and turns her head. He's gone.

I wish we'd all been ready. That song, by the way, I think misinterprets this, although it's a very nice song in other respects. But one thing I'd point out, that there is an instant separation between two parties who are close, and therefore there's some kind of a distinction made by God, apparently, between one party and the other.

The question is, which one is taken and which is left, and what does it mean to be taken? The idea that this is being taken into heaven, and therefore the party is the Christian that's taken, and the one left behind is the non-Christian who stays behind to go through seven-year tribulation, is an assumption that has to import a great deal of novel ideas into the passage that aren't there. There's no mention of tribulation in this passage, or for that matter, in any passage on the second coming of Christ. And there's no suggestion here whether it's the good or the bad that are taken, except for the fact that it's been compared with the days of Noah.

Now, in verse 27, it says that Noah went in the ark, and then the flood came and destroyed them all. In the parallel to this in Matthew, which we don't have time to look at, the same statement in Luke says, the flood came and took them all away. Here in Luke 17, it says, the flood came and destroyed them all.

It's talking about the sinners. They were destroyed. The wording in Matthew is, the flood came and took them all away.

And in Matthew, it immediately goes to, and one should be taken, and the other left, and one should be taken. This passage here. Immediately after saying in Matthew 24, the flood came and took them all away, it says, so shall it be in the day of the Son of Man, two will be sleeping together, one will be taken, and the other left.

The suggestion is, the ones taken are not taken in a rapture. They're not taken away to heaven. They're just taken in the sense of judged.

They're killed. And when the disciples, wondering about this, say, where Lord, where are they taken? He says, look for the vultures. That's where the corpses will be.

The one taken is dead. The one taken is the one that God destroys in flaming fire when he comes. And God will do that to the wicked, not to the righteous when he comes.

So even though I do believe this is about the second coming of Christ, I don't believe it's talking about the rapture of the church here. I believe it's a passage about judgment upon the wicked. And that God's judgment will be so discerning that he can even judge one person in the presence of a righteous person without touching the righteous.

Psalm 91 talks about the same too. A thousand shall fall at your side, ten thousand at your right hand, but it shall not come nigh you. And so that's how I understand this particular passage.

Very different than some people do. Alright, well we're out of time for this.