



Luke 21:25-36
“The Second Coming of Christ”
By Mike Clark

Luke 21:25-36

25 “And there will be signs in sun and moon and stars, and on the earth distress of nations in perplexity because of the roaring of the sea and the waves, 26 people fainting with fear and with foreboding of what is coming on the world. For the powers of the heavens will be shaken. 27 And then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. 28 Now when these things begin to take place, straighten up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.” 29 And he told them a parable: “Look at the fig tree, and all the trees. 30 As soon as they come out in leaf, you see for yourselves and know that the summer is already near. 31 So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that the kingdom of God is near. 32 Truly, I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all has taken place. 33 Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away. 34 “But watch yourselves lest your hearts be weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and cares of this life, and that day come upon you suddenly like a trap. 35 For it will come upon all who dwell on the face of the whole earth. 36 But stay awake at all times, praying that you may have strength to escape all these things that are going to take place, and to stand before the Son of Man.”

INTRODUCTION – We live in a day and age where the belief that Jesus Christ will return is held by very few. Many even doubt that Jesus Christ even existed, let alone will return.

The apostle Peter wrote about similar unbelief from the world.

2 Peter 3:3-4 - ³ Knowing this first of all, that scoffers will come in the last days with scoffing, following their own sinful desires. ⁴ They will say, “Where is the promise of his coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all things are continuing as they were from the beginning of creation.”

While the world mocks and laughs at the return of Christ, I want to show you from God’s Word why it is impossible that Christ not return. Christ must return and here is why.

First, God has promised in His Word that Christ will return again. Of the 300 plus prophecies about the Messiah, many were only partially fulfilled at his first advent.

For example, Jesus read from Isaiah 61 in his hometown, but stopped in the middle of verse two. The latter part of verse 2 says to proclaim the day of vengeance of our God. The reason he stopped and didn’t say that part was because that was for his second advent.



Luke 21:25-36
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Psalm 2 also talks about the Messiah and verse 7 is quoted in the New Testament several times. That verse says, "You are my Son, today I have begotten you." Yet many parts of that Psalm await a future fulfillment.

Verses 8-9 have yet to be fulfilled literally which says "I will give You the nations for your inheritance, and the ends of the earth for Your possession. You shall break them with a rod of iron, You shall dash them to pieces like a potter's vessel."

Isaiah 9:6-7 also seems to have both the first and second comings of Christ in view. "For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given," clearly refers to His first coming. But the rest describes Him as a king in glory on David's throne –

"And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government and peace there will be no end, upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, to order it and establish it with judgment and justice from that time forward, even forever."

Jesus himself taught that he would return when he said, "When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory." Matthew 25:31.

In John 14:2-3, Jesus said "I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself."

The Apostles had the second coming in mind often in their letters. For example, the Apostle Paul wrote in Philippians 3:20 – "Our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ."

He also encouraged the Colossians by saying "When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory."

The Apostle Peter wrote "When the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away."

The Apostle John wrote "Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when he is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is."

Again, and again, the apostles through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, testify that Christ is coming a second time.



Luke 21:25-36
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God's plan for the church also demands the second coming of Christ. God is gathering his elect into one body, the church and the church's role is to be like a pure bride for God's own Son, ready to be presented to Him at His second coming.

Another reason Christ must return is to judge the world and punish sin.

2 Thessalonians 1:7-9 says "When the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels ⁸ in flaming fire, inflicting vengeance on those who do not know God and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. ⁹ They will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might."

And he will not only punish those who do not obey the gospel, but he will vanquish Satan and his demons.

Revelation 20:10 says "The devil who had deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur where the beast and the false prophet were, and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.

And finally, the hope of the saints demands the return of Christ. Only His glorious, triumphant return can fulfill the hope of the saints. We are waiting for Him and He knows that is the longing of our hearts.

Peter wrote "that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ."

Peter saw the promise of Christ's return as a great comfort for the people of God in their times of trial.

For all these reasons Christ must return, and we are taught to look for his coming and long for it and to wait patiently and expectantly for it. This is the blessed of hope of every true child of God.

So, whatever the world says, we know that Christ will return, and so let's look further at what His return will look like.

Now last week, Pastor Jody preached on Jesus foretelling the destruction of the temple and Jerusalem. He said that Jesus gives us 3 warnings to consider to help us get through these times as we wait for the Lord's return.



Luke 21:25-36
"The Second Coming of Christ"
By Mike Clark

He said we are not to be fooled by false Messiahs. We are not to fear with the result of failing to witness. And we are not to rely on man's strength to protect us.

And so, with that in mind let's look at our text for this morning.

Point 1 – A Christian can have confidence even when the world is literally falling apart.

Luke 21:25-28

²⁵ "And there will be signs in sun and moon and stars, and on the earth distress of nations in perplexity because of the roaring of the sea and the waves, ²⁶ people fainting with fear and with foreboding of what is coming on the world. For the powers of the heavens will be shaken. ²⁷ And then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. ²⁸ Now when these things begin to take place, straighten up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near."

Here we are told there will be signs in sun, moon, and stars. Matthew and Mark provide us with a further description of what will happen to the sun and moon and stars.

The sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light and the stars will fall from the sky.

Have you ever seen an eclipse? Solar and lunar? Have you ever seen a meteor shower? I think these things are just a taste of what the actual events will be like.

Isaiah prophesied about these events as well. Listen to what he said.

Isaiah 13:6-12 - ⁶ Wail, for the day of the LORD is near; as destruction from the Almighty it will come! ⁷ Therefore all hands will be feeble, and every human heart will melt. ⁸ They will be dismayed: pangs and agony will seize them; they will be in anguish like a woman in labor. They will look aghast at one another; their faces will be aflame. ⁹ Behold, the day of the LORD comes, cruel, with wrath and fierce anger, to make the land a desolation and to destroy its sinners from it. ¹⁰ For the stars of the heavens and their constellations will not give their light; the sun will be dark at its rising, and the moon will not shed its light. ¹¹ I will punish the world for its evil, and the wicked for their iniquity; I will put an end to the pomp of the arrogant, and lay low the pompous pride of the ruthless. ¹² I will make people more rare than fine gold, and mankind than the gold of Ophir.



Luke 21:25-36
"The Second Coming of Christ"
By Mike Clark

Although that prophecy applied immediately to the destruction of Babylon, the events described here are far too universal and catastrophic to have related entirely to Babylon.

The devastation of Babylon was just a small fraction of what will happen to the entire universe.

Isaiah continues to depict events that are universal in scope.

***Isaiah 13:13-16** ¹³ Therefore I will make the heavens tremble, and the earth will be shaken out of its place, at the wrath of the LORD of hosts in the day of his fierce anger.¹⁴ And like a hunted gazelle, or like sheep with none to gather them, each will turn to his own people, and each will flee to his own land. ¹⁵ Whoever is found will be thrust through, and whoever is caught will fall by the sword. ¹⁶ Their infants will be dashed in pieces before their eyes; their houses will be plundered and their wives ravished.*

Those catastrophes depict all nations being affected. Isaiah later gives further details of universal destruction.

***Isaiah 34:1-4** - Draw near, O nations, to hear, and give attention, O peoples! Let the earth hear, and all that fills it; the world, and all that comes from it. ² For the LORD is enraged against all the nations, and furious against all their host; he has devoted them to destruction, has given them over for slaughter. ³ Their slain shall be cast out, and the stench of their corpses shall rise; the mountains shall flow with their blood. ⁴ All the host of heaven shall rot away, and the skies roll up like a scroll. All their host shall fall, as leaves fall from the vine, like leaves falling from the fig tree.*

And Isaiah wasn't the only prophet who wrote about this.

***Ezekiel 32:7-8** - ⁷ When I blot you out, I will cover the heavens and make their stars dark; I will cover the sun with a cloud, and the moon shall not give its light. ⁸ All the bright lights of heaven will I make dark over you, and put darkness on your land, declares the Lord GOD.*

***Joel 2:30-32** - ³⁰ "And I will show wonders in the heavens and on the earth, blood and fire and columns of smoke. ³¹ The sun shall be turned to darkness, and the moon to blood, before the great and awesome day of the LORD comes. ³² And it shall come to pass that everyone who calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved. For in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there shall be those who escape, as the LORD has said, and among the survivors shall be those whom the LORD calls.*

When we read these OT precursors, the images in these verses are signs and warnings that the beginning of the Day of the Lord is here.



Luke 21:25-36
"The Second Coming of Christ"
By Mike Clark

The apostle John also wrote in his vision:

Revelation 6:12-14 - ¹² When he opened the sixth seal, I looked, and behold, there was a great earthquake, and the sun became black as sackcloth, the full moon became like blood, ¹³ and the stars of the sky fell to the earth as the fig tree sheds its winter fruit when shaken by a gale. ¹⁴ The sky vanished like a scroll that is being rolled up, and every mountain and island was removed from its place.

So not only will the heavenly bodies be affected, but the earth itself and nations of people will be affected.

The text says that the sea and the waves will roar causing distress of nations and perplexity.

People will faint with fear and foreboding because of what is happening. We see a lot of fear in our day and in our country. The fainting and fear described here though is on a whole different level.

The Greek word for faint indicates that people may die from this. It has the meaning of expiring or to stop breathing. Deuteronomy 28 gives us a bit of this sense.

Deuteronomy 28:65-67 - ⁶⁵ And among these nations you shall find no respite, and there shall be no resting place for the sole of your foot, but the LORD will give you there a trembling heart and failing eyes and a languishing soul. ⁶⁶ Your life shall hang in doubt before you. Night and day you shall be in dread and have no assurance of your life. ⁶⁷ In the morning you shall say, 'If only it were evening!' and at evening you shall say, 'If only it were morning!' because of the dread that your heart shall feel, and the sights that your eyes shall see.

People will faint with fear because the powers of the heavens will be shaken.

Haggai 2:6-7 - ⁶ For thus says the LORD of hosts: Yet once more, in a little while, I will shake the heavens and the earth and the sea and the dry land. ⁷ And I will shake all nations, so that the treasures of all nations shall come in, and I will fill this house with glory, says the LORD of hosts.

The Lord Jesus who upholds all things by the word of his power will shake the heavens and the earth.



Luke 21:25-36
"The Second Coming of Christ"
By Mike Clark

Think about this - When the law of God was given at Sinai - what happened? – The earth shook. And when Christ died on the cross – the earth shook.

All the forces of energy, here called the powers of the heavens which hold everything in space constant, will be in dysfunction.

The heavens and the earth are held together by the power of God and when that power is diminished, the resulting chaos will be inconceivable.

2 Peter 3:10-12 - ¹⁰ But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed. ¹¹ Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness, ¹² waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set on fire and dissolved, and the heavenly bodies will melt as they burn!

Jesus then gives the supreme sign of his coming. Jesus himself will be the supreme and final sign of His coming.

In the midst of this world's darkness, Jesus will manifest himself in His infinite and undiminished glory. Just as the destructive catastrophes will be unparalleled, so will this manifestation of power and glory of Christ.

Get this picture in your mind. The sight of Christ in all His glory will be so unbearably fearful that sinful mankind will cry out for the mountains and the rocks to fall on them.

Instead of repenting and believing in Him, they will curse and blaspheme His name.

600 years before Christ, Daniel had a vision of the Messiah coming on the clouds of heaven -

Daniel 7:13-14 - ¹³ "I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him. ¹⁴ And to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed.

In his vision on the island of Patmos, the Apostle John wrote -



Luke 21:25-36
"The Second Coming of Christ"
By Mike Clark

Revelation 1:7 - ⁷ Behold, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him, and all tribes of the earth will wail on account of him. Even so. Amen.

Jesus will return in the same way he ascended to heaven in the clouds.

Acts 1:9-11 - ⁹ And when he had said these things, as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. ¹⁰ And while they were gazing into heaven as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes, ¹¹ and said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven."

I also want to point out that Jesus coming on a cloud has many references to God.

The psalmist wrote of God's using clouds as His chariot and Isaiah pictures the Lord riding on a swift cloud. The Lord manifested himself to the Israelites in a pillar of cloud by day.

The Lord spoke out of a bright cloud at the transfiguration of Jesus. And Jesus will later say to the religious leaders that they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven.

Now these may be natural clouds, but I think more than likely these are supernatural clouds of glory because of how often clouds are associated with the Lord.

And Christ's return will be accompanied by incredible demonstrations of His power.

He will show His power over nature, over Satan and his demons, and He will show His power to protect His people, Amen?

Now in verse 28, Jesus tell His church how to respond when these things start to happen.

Jesus says that true believer's response to these things should be one of confidence, not fear, standing with raised heads and assured that the Day of the Lord is for them a day of redemption.

Isaiah 60:1-2 - Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you. For behold, darkness shall cover the earth, and thick darkness the peoples; but the LORD will arise upon you, and his glory will be seen upon you.

Point 2 – Trust God's promises in His eternal Word.



Luke 21:25-36
“The Second Coming of Christ”
By Mike Clark

Luke 21:29-33

²⁹ And he told them a parable: “Look at the fig tree, and all the trees. ³⁰ As soon as they come out in leaf, you see for yourselves and know that the summer is already near. ³¹ So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that the kingdom of God is near. ³² Truly, I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all has taken place. ³³ Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

Jesus moves from prophecy to pastoral exhortation concerning faithful life in light of the events he has anticipated.

So, Jesus tells a parable here that illustrates what he has just said. Jesus told parables for the purpose of both concealing truth and revealing truth.

When he didn’t explain a parable to the multitudes or religious leaders the truth was concealed. When he did explain the parable to the disciples, the truth was revealed and he made it clear and understandable to them.

When Jesus tells this parable about the fig tree to the disciples, he is giving them further insight into his second coming.

Jesus uses a fig tree in this parable. Fig trees were used as illustrations many times in the Old Testament. Jotham used it in his story in Judges 9. Jeremiah saw two baskets of figs in his vision after Nebuchadnezzar took captives from Judah to Babylon.

Hosea used it as a figure in his prophecy about Israel. Joel used a splintered fig tree to illustrate the devastation of Judah by a plague of locusts.

So, if the disciples knew their OT, they would have been familiar with the fig tree as an illustration.

Jesus is reminding them that just as you know the summer is near when the fig tree’s come out in leaf so also when they see the signs he has just described coming to pass, they know that the kingdom of God is near, or as Matthew says that He (meaning Jesus) is near, right at the door.

Meaning the time of His second coming is near.



Luke 21:25-36
"The Second Coming of Christ"
By Mike Clark

We are to observe carefully the signs of the times, the public events of the times in which we live. But listen, we are not to be absorbed in politics, but we are to mark political events. We are to study diligently the signs of our times.

Are there any signs in our day? Are there things going on in the world today that demand our attention? Yes. All these things should make us remember what Jesus said about the fig tree. We should remember that Jesus said, Behold, I am coming quickly!

Listen - The mocking, the rejecting, or the persecution from the world should not shake our faith. If God has said it, and He has, He will certainly bring it to pass.

Now we have in verse 32 a passage that has many different interpretations relating specifically to "this generation." Who does this generation refer to?

Well here are some proposals. Some say it refers to the disciples and the people who were living at the very time. Some say it refers to the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD which was 40 years from that time.

Some say it refers to the Jewish people, others say it refers to the entire the human race.

Others say this generation refers the bad people, a category of people who are resistant to the purpose of God. Luke 7:31, 9:41, 11:29-32, 50-51; 16:8, 17:25. It's the wicked and adulterous generation that Jesus talked about.

It meant that the wicked and adulterous generation of bad people will continue until the second coming.

The argument is that this generation refers not to a set number of decades or to people living at a particular time but to people who stubbornly turn their backs on the divine purpose. Jesus' followers can expect hostility and calamity until the very end.

The last possibility is that this generation is talking about the generation that sees these things happen when it starts to take place. The generation that sees these things happen will not die until it has happened.

Now you have many godly and insightful pastors and commentators past and present who were all over the board on this one and so honestly I'm not sure which one is correct, but personally I lean towards the last two that I mentioned.



Luke 21:25-36
"The Second Coming of Christ"
By Mike Clark

So, Jesus then says that heaven and earth will pass away, but His words will not.

Heaven and earth will one day pass away. All the environmentalists can't do a thing to save the planet. It's a disposable planet. That doesn't mean that we aren't good stewards, but we don't worry about trying to save the planet.

Hebrews 1:10-12 - "You, Lord, laid the foundation of the earth in the beginning, and the heavens are the work of your hands; ¹¹ they will perish, but you remain; they will all wear out like a garment, ¹² like a robe you will roll them up, like a garment they will be changed. But you are the same, and your years will have no end."

Revelation 20:11 - ¹¹ Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. From his presence earth and sky fled away, and no place was found for them.

Though heaven and earth will one day pass away, Jesus said His words will never pass away.

1 Peter 1:24-25 - All flesh is like grass and all its glory like the flower of grass. The grass withers, and the flower falls, ²⁵ but the word of the Lord remains forever.

How long? – Forever!

Point 3 – Watchfulness and prayer are essential for the Christian

Luke 21:34-36

³⁴ "But watch yourselves lest your hearts be weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and cares of this life, and that day come upon you suddenly like a trap. ³⁵ For it will come upon all who dwell on the face of the whole earth. ³⁶ But stay awake at all times, praying that you may have strength to escape all these things that are going to take place, and to stand before the Son of Man."

Jesus is concerned with more than the proper discernment of the times. He is interested in perception that leads to appropriate action. His disciples needed to maintain constant readiness.

Jesus addresses the apostles and tells them to take heed, to watch yourselves. This teaches us the importance of humility. Think about Noah – who escaped the pollutions of the world before the flood, yet afterwards was overtaken by drunkenness.



Luke 21:25-36
"The Second Coming of Christ"
By Mike Clark

Abraham was the father of the faithful and yet through unbelief lied and said Sarah was his sister. Lot didn't take part in the horrible wickedness of Sodom, yet afterwards fell into the sin of incest.

Moses was the meekest man on the earth and yet lost self-control and was angry with the Israelites and did not treat the Lord as holy in the midst of the people.

David was a man after God's own heart and yet committed adultery and murder.

These examples are for our instruction and show us the wisdom of our Lord's warning in this passage. They teach us to be clothed with humility according to 1 Peter 5 and let him that thinks he stands take heed lest he fall, so says Paul.

1 Thessalonians 5:2-8 -² For you yourselves are fully aware that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. ³ While people are saying, "There is peace and security," then sudden destruction will come upon them as labor pains come upon a pregnant woman, and they will not escape. ⁴ But you are not in darkness, brothers, for that day to surprise you like a thief. ⁵ For you are all children of light, children of the day. We are not of the night or of the darkness. ⁶ So then let us not sleep, as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober. ⁷ For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk, are drunk at night. ⁸ But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation.

The Lord's return will be like a snare and a trap for those who do not believe. Just like a trap catches an animal in an instant and just as the lightning flashes suddenly in the sky, so instantly and suddenly will be the return of the Lord Jesus.

Whenever it takes place it will be a sudden and unexpected event.

How many of us can honestly say that for the most part we are living our lives in a consistent state of expectation of our Lord's return?

Think about this – in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, the whole course of the world will be stopped. The King of Kings will appear, the dead will be raised, truth will be known, (for most too late), the world with all its lusts will pass away.

All this will begin at once, without notice, without warning.

The gospel does not call us to neglect our responsibilities that the Lord has given to each of us. We are not to live the life of a hermit just waiting for the Lord to return.



Luke 21:25-36
"The Second Coming of Christ"
By Mike Clark

It calls us to live like people who expect their Lord to return while we fulfill our responsibilities.

Eschatological testing is to be met with constant alertness and prayer which will allow people to stand as those found faithful before the Son of Man who comes in power to bring judgment and redemption.

We are to watch. We are to live as if we are on guard in an enemy's territory. We need to remember that evil is all around us. And it's not just around us but it is in us as well.

Matthew 26:41 - ⁴¹ Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."

We have to daily contend with our hearts that are deceitful above all things and desperately wicked.

We need to put on the whole armor of God and beware of spiritual drowsiness.

And we are to pray always.

Ephesians 6:18 - ¹⁸ Praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end, keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints.

This should be a consistent part of our lives. We need to be speaking to God daily.

We are to pray for grace to lay aside every weight and sin and to cast away everything that may interfere with being ready to meet the Lord.

Listen - Those who refuse to repent and believe will not escape and will not be able to escape all these judgments nor will they be able to stand before the Son of Man.

Psalms 1:5 - Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous.

Beloved, the signs that Jesus has just mentioned paint a horrific picture. The second coming of Christ will terrify the heart of unbelieving man like never before.

Think about this – if the giving of the law at Sinai was so terrible that even Moses said "I exceedingly fear and quake," the return of Christ when he comes to earth in power and great glory will be much more terrible.



Luke 21:25-36
"The Second Coming of Christ"
By Mike Clark

So, if you have never repented of your sin, meaning you turn from it and put it to death, and if you have never placed faith in Christ alone, then I plead with you to cry out to the Lord and ask him to forgive you.

If you want to escape all these judgments that will one day come upon this world, then flee to Christ, flee to the Rock, flee to the only refuge there is.

But for those who are trusting in Jesus, we will (by God's grace) be able to stand before the Son of Man.

Ephesians 6:13 - ¹³ Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm.

Jude 24 - ²⁴ Now to him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you blameless before the presence of his glory with great joy.

However terrible the signs of Christ's second coming may be to those who do not believe, they don't need to be feared by the true believer.

It should fill the believer's heart with joy! It should remind the believer that his complete deliverance from sin, the world, and the devil is close at hand, and that we will soon say goodbye to sickness, sorrow, temptation, and death.

The day when an unbeliever loses everything will be the day when the believer will enter his eternal reward.

The hour when the unconverted's hope perishes will be the hour when the believer's hope will be changed to full sight and full possession of our inheritance.

We as believers should look forward to Christ's second coming often. That thought will sustain you under all the trials and persecutions of this life.

J.C. Ryle said, "Expect little from this world and expect much of the next."

And so, may we with the Lord's help, act on what we have just read and heard. If we believe that Christ is coming again, let us get ready to meet Him. If we know these things, happy are we if we do them, Amen?