

Promise of His Coming

by G.B. Duncan

The sermon explores the promise of Christ's second coming, emphasizing the sudden and unexpected nature of his return, and the importance of being prepared to meet him.

Duration: 28:52

Scripture: Matthew 16:3, Matthew 24:27, Matthew 24:38, Matthew 24:42, Matthew 24:44, Matthew 24:50, 1 Corinthians 15:52

Topics: "Second Coming"

Description

The sermon transcript discusses the promise of Jesus' second coming, emphasizing the suddenness and unexpectedness of his arrival. The speaker addresses three questions about the second coming: when will he come, how will he come, and why will he come. The answers are derived from biblical references, such as the parable of the wheat and the tares, and the idea that Jesus will come to gather his faithful servants and bring judgment upon the rejecters of Christ. The sermon concludes with the anticipation of Jesus' reign and the joy of seeing him vindicated and enthroned.

Transcript

We pray thee that now as we turn once again to thy holy word which is indeed a lamp unto our feet and a light unto our path the holy spirit himself may take our minds and think through them thy thoughts my lips and speak through them thy truth our hearts and incline them in obedience to thy word and will this we ask for christ our savior's sake.

You'll find our text in the second epistle of peter chapter three and a little phrase in verse four of that chapter 2 peter chapter 3 and verse 4 the question where is the promise of his coming and i would like if i may just to take the one little phrase out of it to give us a title rather than a question simply the promise of his coming as i have indicated this is the advent season and in the calendar of the christian church we think of christ as the one who is a coming one a coming to this earth that is what the word advent means the one who came to this earth of ours the son of god to be the savior of the world and the church has always maintained and believed that there are two comings the one has been fulfilled the other has been foretold the first coming was in humility the second

coming will be in majesty and in glory and in our church of scotland book of the common order the collect or prayer for the third sunday in advent brings us back in our thinking to that second coming this is how the prayer appointed for that day reads oh lord jesus christ who at thy first coming did send thy messenger to

prepare thy way before thee grant that the ministers and stewards of thy mysteries may likewise so prepare and make ready thy way by turning the hearts of the disobedient to the wisdom of the just that at thy second coming to judge the world we may be found an acceptable people in thy sight who livest and reignest with the father and the holy spirit ever one god world without end at thy second coming to judge the world and we have been singing hymns out of a whole section

of our church hymnary which is titled his coming in power of course there are those who deny the truth of either or indeed of both these comings and certainly many who accept the first coming will deny the truth of the second coming but as professor lemon pointed out in his book christ and the world of thought this rejection of the truth of the second coming can be explained because of man's dislike of the whole idea of judgment which is bound up so clearly and closely with it now it's impossible in the span of a short address to deal adequately in any way with this tremendous theme this glorious hope but i want if i may to ask three questions which it seems to me are legitimate to ask and to try and answer them in outline and in purely sketch form as far as possible from the words of our

lord three questions about what is called in our text the promise of his coming and i would suggest if you can at least remember the three questions and then try and work out the answer of scripture to them then some purpose will have been achieved in our study this morning and the first question is when will he come that is a legitimate question to ask and to all those who do believe that christ is coming again no question is more important than this one we want desperately to know when he will come in reply to that question there would seem to me to be two statements we can make with the full authority of scripture behind us and the first statement concerns the information that has been denied to us and that is quite clear god has not and god will not give any answer to that question

when will he come again and again it is stated in scripture that no one does know no one ever will know when christ will come again we look at the passage we read together from matthew 24 36 i couldn't help noticing as i was reading it how this fact is stressed again and again but of that day and hour knoweth no man know not the angels of heaven but my father only again after saying that the coming of christ will be like the coming of the flood in noah's day christ points out they knew not until the flood came verse 42 watch therefore for ye know not what hour your lord has come verse 44 therefore be also ready for in such an hour as ye think not the son of man cometh verse 50 the lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him it was augustine who said the last day

is hidden that every day may be regarded the last day is hidden that every day may be regarded one thing is absolutely clear and that is that no one can tell because nobody knows the time of his appearance you recall how in act one in the final recorded interview which reveals the anxiety in the minds of the disciples concerning the future we read in verse 6 when they therefore were come together they asked of jesus saying lord will thou at this time restore again the kingdom to israel he said unto them it is not for you to know the times or the seasons which the father hath put in his own power all we do know is that the coming of the savior is to take place after a long time of waiting matthew 24 48 the servant says my lord delayeth his coming in the parable of the ten virgins we read

how the bridegroom tarry in the parable of the talents which follow we read after a long time the lord of those servants cometh it is this very delay that's referred to by peter when he reports the unbelief that unbelief seizes upon this delay and tries out where is the promise of his coming for all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation and i've never been able to understand why devout christians who hold scripture in the highest esteem and treat scripture as the final authority how some of

them as some of them do go so far as to predict when christ will come in such a time as ye think not so the information has been denied to us nobody knows the second statement concerns the indications that should be discerned by us in matthew 16 verse 3 christ rebukes

the hostile the maliciously and hostile minds of the pharisees for wanting a special sign to authenticate his ministry on earth the reply of our lord suggests that there were already signs enough and that there would be still more and then he utters this rebuke oh ye hypocrites ye can discern the face of the sky but can ye not discern the signs of the time and so it is that when later on in the beginning of that 24th chapter of saint matthew's gospel when the disciples came with questions and some people think there may be three questions in that third verse you read there as he sat upon the mount of olives the disciples came unto him privately saying tell us when shall these things be that is the destruction of the temple and what shall be the sign of thy coming and of the end of the age

there may be three questions there are at least two our lord does refer them to signs of his coming and he gives a long discourse in which some of the signs must surely be taken as referring to his second coming as others would also refer to the destruction of jerusalem dr graham struggy in his book the lord's return and it's passing it's worth noting that he was awarded his d.d. by edinburgh university because of his massive contribution to the religious life of edinburgh in a remarkable ministry in charlotte chapel and i don't think edinburgh university gives d.d.s lightly to baptist ministers they may to presbyterians but not likely to baptist ministers they gave it to him and a great biblical scholar and like dr struggy has stated that there are at least five signs spoken of here and

elsewhere in scripture signs that would mark the nearness not the time but the nearness of the return of christ and here they are we've only time to mention them widespread apostasy in luke 18 verse 8 when the son of man cometh shall he find faith on earth and in matthew 24 the love of many shall wax cold this is a point taken up by paul in the second epistle to the thessalonians chapter 2 verse 3 that day shall not come except there come a falling away first widespread apostasy within the church a falling away from the truth a falling away from christ and then secondly widespread hostility towards the people of god matthew 24 verses 9 and 10 ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake again in that same 24th chapter the rebirth of the jewish nation in verse 32 when our lord

speaks of that nation under the emblem and symbol of the fig tree which shows signs of new life indicating the nearness of the return a line of prophecy found almost everywhere in the words of the old testament prophets that there would come a day when israel would be restored universal strife both between nations and within nations war and lawlessness and anarchy verse 7 nations shall rise against nation and kingdom against kingdom and the fifth sign worldwide evangelism in verse 14 this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations and then shall the end come the indications that should be discerned by us the information that has been denied the answer to the question when will he come is simply this nobody knows but our lord has indicated that

there are certain things that we must anticipate before that coming and prior to it and i remember being very much impressed by the fact when the bishop of edinburgh who was in churchmanship a high churchman and he didn't stand where i stood in many things when i was rector of saint thomas's church there and god gave us some very wonderful times of blessing in the seven years that we were there and the bishop came to take a service i think it must have been a confirmation service and when we were talking in the vestry he turned to me and said i think the stage is getting set for the second coming of our lord and we believe as we say in the creeds the great creeds of the christian church that he shall come

when will he come the exact information has been denied to us but various explicit

indications should be discerned by us the second question which is another legitimate question is how will he come the first when will he come the second how will he come here again there are two statements that we can make on the authority of what our lord himself has said that have the support of scripture the first thing is that he will come suddenly and in a moment in the passage we read in that 24th chapter of matthew prior to the passage we actually read in verse 27 christ says as the lightning cometh out of the east and shineth unto the west so shall also the coming of the son of man be this thought is taken up by simpho who in one corinthian 1552 writes of what is going to happen and he describes it as happening in a moment in the twinkling of an eye at the last trump suddenly and

unexpectedly the lord will come verse 44 in such an hour as ye think not the son of man cometh verse 50 in a day when he looketh not for him and when our lord likens the situation at his second coming to the situation in the time of noah we find him describing in that 38 verse the picture of life going on normally and wickedly and then suddenly judgment for as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking and marrying and giving in marriage until the day life will go on normally i've never forgotten how many years ago i heard brother edward the most christ-like man i think i've ever met point out how when our lord came first to this earth only a comparative handful were expecting him and least of all in their expectancy was the orthodox establishment of the church

just a few deeply taught by the spirit simeon anna mary and joseph maybe elizabeth and zachariah the parents of john but apart from them the world lived on the church worshipped on its machinery grinding on utterly unconscious utterly indifferent to the tremendous happiness that christ had come and i remember brother edward saying it would not be a matter of surprise if history repeats itself for when he comes again will he find faith on earth unexpectedly suddenly in a moment the god almighty will say to human history curtains and down the curtain goes he will come suddenly in a moment he will come visibly as a person unmistakably you see there are those who try to water down to explain away the truth of the second coming by pointing out that christ is always coming to this earth but he

is always breaking into human history at the personal level at a national level or even a universal level and that is true but professor james denny who again is no fool and who knew his new testament and bible in all probability better than any of us here he has said all these admissions do not enable us to call in question what stands so plainly in the pages of the new testament what fills so exclusively the minds of the first christian the idea of a personal return of christ at the end of the age and professor denny ends if we are to retain any relation to the new testament at all we must assert the personal return of christ as judge visibly as a person suddenly in a moment visibly as a person he will come listen to what he himself says about this the son of man shall come in the glory

of his father with the angels again then shall appear the sign of the son of man in heaven and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn and they shall see the son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory and again hereafter you shall see the son of man sitting on the right hand of power and coming in the clouds of heaven a final word of confirmation from that scene of christ's ascension when we read that the two men the angels may be said this same jesus which is taken up from you into heaven shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go he went visibly as a person he will come in like manner visibly as a person how will he come suddenly in a moment it'll be curtains visibly as a person when will he come i want the answer to that how will he come i want

the answer to that why will he come we've only the very briefest of time simply to indicate the reasons for his return and i want to select two that are expressed very wonderfully in the last verse of the great advent hymn in our hymn book with which we will close our service this morning and the last verse of this great hymn by francis ridley have a girl goes like this oh the joy to see thee reigning thee my own beloved lord every tongue thy name confessing worship honor glory blessing brought to thee with glad thee my master and my friend vindicated and infirmed unto earth's remotest end glorified adored and owned two tremendous words why will he come so that he may be vindicated and so that he may be infirmed these are two aspects alone that i want to select there are many other

reasons why but let's think of the vindication of christ when he came in humility and in grace men spat on him men scourged him men mocked him men crucified him for the purpose of redemption and reconciliation through his death on the cross all this was endured the revelation of the mercy of god was essential but it was only partial it was adequate for faith and salvation but it was not complete the revelation of the mercy of god must be followed by the revelation of the majesty of god which is equally essential in the interest of truth and the truth of the matter is simply this that god is not someone that man can kick around man's been doing that ever since the fall he has just been kicking god around and the picture of man as a picture of god as he really is is essential and the

revelation of the nature of god is to be filled out and completed with frightening effects in revelation 1 verse 7 we read behold he cometh with clouds and every eye shall see him and they also which pierced him and all the kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him we read of men running to hide themselves in the rocks and the caves and god is seen by man as he really is jb phillips wrote that book your god is too small and even in jesus christ the picture is too small there we see the revelation of god's grace and truth as far as man's sin is concerned but we need the revelation in majesty to complete the picture when the glory and the splendor and the majesty of god as he is breaks in upon man's mind that's going to be a frightening day for a lot of folks the one they've kicked

around the one whose will they have disregarded the one whose grace they have spurned they will see him as he is the vindication of christ is part of the purpose and the other the coronation of christ when he takes the throne the purpose is to judge and then to reign the judgment will be twofold a judgment for those who are not christians and the issue will be what have you done with christ and this will hold for them the condemnation of their sin for those who are christian the issue will be what have you done for christ and this will have to do with the evaluation of our service parable of the tares when the time for the harvest is come at the end of the age our lord said the son of man shall send forth his angels and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend and them

which do iniquity the rejecters of christ will be rejected by him don't let's be under any illusion we're not all traveling the same road and we won't all spend eternity in the same place for those in the service of christ for the servants will come the reckoning time for the lord of those servants cometh and reckoneth with them and the issue will be what have we done for christ then come at the end when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to god even the father that god may be all in all a promise what a wonderful promise what a wonderful promise he shall come so as we move into christmas and our minds are filled with the thoughts of the first advent and he came in humility let our minds rise beyond that see beyond it why it may not even come got a letter from my old rector dazzle

mold his wife great man of god man who loved the book sent their love and greetings to us i don't know how old he is he must be getting on now and then at the end came a cryptic sentence that we wondered

about in his slightly shaky handwriting still recognizable very much as his he wrote this sentence as a p.s
this will be the last christmas card we sent wonder whether daryl dazzle mold was hoping and praying that
it'd be the last christmas on earth before christ comes well we know the answer to that nobody knows but
it could be the last could be might not even come such an hour as he thinks not the lord will come are you
ready for his coming would you welcome him would you be thrilled would you the most fantastic thing that
would ever happen to know that he's there in one moment oh god

our loving father how we bless thee that all that thou hath purpose for man is adequate for man's need not
simply for the regeneration of the self the reconciliation of the sinner but a bigger plan still to take in the
whole of human history we praise thee for this and as we see things going from bad to worse help us to lift
up our eyes and know that the coming of the lord draweth nigh above all help us to be ready for that
coming so that should he come today we'd have nothing to worry about nothing to alter nothing to change
nothing to fuss about except just to be glad that his coming help us to live that way for thy mercy's sake
amen

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