

Advent II - Ready for His Return

Luke 12:35-40

In the 1880s, if you wanted a good life with a good job, you moved to Johnstown, PA. The Pennsylvania Main Line Canal came through town, so that brought jobs. So did the Pennsylvania Railroad. And the Cambria Iron Works. Families were moving in from Wales. From Germany. Not to mention there are beautiful mountains, covered with forest, all around town. And right through the town runs the Conemaugh River.

In fact, the area is so beautiful, the country's richest people—Andrew Carnegie and Andrew Mellon—would come out from Pittsburgh to hunt and fish at a private club up above town, where an old earth dam had been modified to make a fishing lake for them. On May 30, 1889, a huge rainstorm came through and dropped six to 10 inches of rain. Despite that weather, the next day the town lined up along Main Street for the Memorial Day parade. The Methodist pastor, H. L. Chapman, said, "The morning was delightful, the city was in its best mood, with flags, banners and flowers everywhere ... The streets were more crowded than we had ever seen before." And then the old dam miles above town collapsed, releasing almost four billion gallons of water. When that wall of water and debris hit Johnstown 57 minutes later, it was 60 feet high and traveling at 40 miles an hour. People tried to escape by running toward high ground. But over 2,000 of the 30,000 people in town died. Some bodies were found as far away as Cincinnati, and some were not discovered until 20 years later.

--The Johnstown Flood remains one of the greatest tragedies in American history, behind only the **Galveston Hurricane** and the **9/11** terrorist attacks.

--In of these cases, life was fine. **Until it wasn't.** In a moment, in a way that was unexpected and most people were not prepared for, something cataclysmic occurred, and people were swept away.

The rule of thumb of history is that everything continues along as normal until it doesn't.

--The Bible speaks of a similar global event that is coming in the future, the **Return or our Lord Jesus Christ** or His Second Advent.

--It uses similar language: **1 Thessalonians 5:3**

--The Bible teaches clearly and frequently that Jesus Christ, the Messiah, is coming back to earth at an unexpected moment.

--That He will bring human history as we know it to a climactic end, by taking the righteous to be with Him and destroying those who refused to have Him as Savior.

What is Advent? It is leveraging the facts of Jesus' first coming to make us ready for His second.

--The predictions of the Bible were very clear about Jesus' first advent: born in Bethlehem, to a virgin, of the tribe of Judah, a descendant of David, rejected, crucified, raised again, ascending to Heaven, etc. **Jesus fulfilled these prophecies literally and many others like them**

The predictions of His second coming and the details surrounding it are far more prolific in the Bible—for every single prophecy of His first coming there are eight of His second coming.

--Many feel that this is some sort of optional doctrine that we can dispense with = a **very poor handling of Scripture.**

--To say that it is an important event in the future is an understatement

--To say that it is a cardinal doctrine of the Bible is not an overstatement.

--All other doctrines and events in the Bible lead to this one.

We know that all of the details of this event that Scripture predicts will be fulfilled with precision because the same was true for the predictions of Jesus' first Advent.

--We also know that God puts a very dire warning for those who might think that they can tamper with this doctrine.

--At the end of the book on Jesus' second coming, Revelation, God says this: **Revelation 22:18-19**

--Not to be taken flippantly, brushed off as something with no modern application;

--You sure don't want to twist this or obscure its meaning or abandon its truth.

But there is a lot who do, believe it or not, many who teach that it just simply isn't going to happen or that it already happened in the past (which also means that it isn't going to happen).

--This kind of thing was going on also in the early days of the Church:

II Thessalonians 2:1-3; II Timothy 2:17-18.

--The Bible is God's book, He inspired it, He breathed it, He carried the prophets along as they wrote by His Spirit—He makes the points that He wants to make because they are the ones that matter.

--What is it that makes people think that they can write their own ending to God's book? –Don't mess with this teaching, let it say what it says.

--It's interesting; When it comes to how things end, we have as many opinions as there are preachers—do you want to know why?

--I don't know all the reasons, but I suspect its partly because we do not take the Bible's teachings on this as literal.

If it doesn't mean what it clearly says, then **there is no way to know what it means!**

--**V.40** – We cannot be indifferent about the future, we have to be ready.

--Everything is not going to keep going along like it is; there will be a supernatural invasion from outside of our space/time domain.

--The Bible describes the outcome of that invasion in the most horrific terms.

"A certain event at an uncertain time."

1. The Son of Man is coming; it is an absolute certainty.

--This title that Jesus gives Himself is a very humble title; it is the title that every human holds as well, but it also, for Jesus, the title of His Second Coming.

--**It is the way that Jesus refers to Himself the most. Over 100 times in the New Testament and 30 times in Matthew alone.**

--By far the most prolific title of Jesus in *His first Advent*, but it is, specifically, the title the Old Testament gives Jesus for *His second Advent!*

Daniel sees a vision of the world ending regime of the Antichrist and how terrible those times will be, but in the midst of that vision he sees this: **Daniel 7:13-14**

Notice several things:

1. Jesus validates what's coming by what God has already said.

--Jesus' entire life and ministry which He fulfilled was predicted in the Old Testament; a document completed over 400 years before His birth.

--God calls the future accurately through His prophets!

2. Jesus takes the prophecy of Daniel literally.

--Daniel is standing on earth which is where the Son of Man is coming to.

--The dominion He's receiving is an earthly dominion, the same one that the antichrist possessed

--Every nation, all languages, all peoples, all properties on earth will be His.

--We are not smarter than Jesus, right? So, if He interprets prophecy literally, then we should as well.

3. Jesus repeats this theme on multiple occasions: **Matthew 16:27; Luke 9:26; Luke 21:26-27**

--As opposed to the thinking of some, this is not an optional doctrine; He is telling us how it all ends.

2. A certain event at an uncertain time.

--**V. 40** – Did you wake up thinking that today could be the day? That's all the more reason why it could be!

--This and many verses like it is where we get the doctrine of immanence—it could happen at any time.

I got hit in the head with a pole that fell down from the rack above me—I didn't see it coming, didn't expect it, didn't know what was happening when it did.—that's immanence.

Immanence is not like a hurricane coming toward the coast—we can see it, we can time it, we can measure it, we have prior warning.

None of those things will be true of Jesus' return for us.

When will this be? The Bible actually gives us a clear date. Any day!

--**Titus 2:12-13** Paul was expecting it in his lifetime; **James 5:7**; **1 Peter 4:7**;

So was James and Peter