

**James 22 – Wisdom about the Second Coming**  
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We are now in the final chapter of James in our series called Wisdom for Everyday Life. Last week we taught on oppression from James 5:1-6. We saw how said James said that ungodly rich people will face God's judgment because of their oppression of other people.

We saw that God wants every oppressed person to know that He hears their voice and will be the One who ultimately holds the oppressor accountable and gives reparations to the oppressed.

That brings us to our text today where James tells Christians (especially those enduring hardship) to patiently endure until the coming of the Lord. My sermon is called Wisdom about the Second Coming. Our text is James 5:7-8 which says:

*Therefore, be patient, brothers, until the Lord's coming. See how the farmer waits for the land to yield its valuable crop and how patient he is for the early and latter rains. You too, be patient and stand firm, because the Lord's coming is near.*

The therefore is there for the purpose of letting us know that **we must be patient with God as we wait for the second coming of Jesus Christ**. Remember – he's talking to those who've been oppressed and who are crying out to God for help. Crying out like the Psalmist who said in Psalm 119:84 says:

*How long must Your servant wait? When will you punish my persecutors?*

James is addressing people who are waiting for their oppressors to be judged and for the resulting relief they will experience. God wants them to know that there will be some relief in this lifetime, but we will always be dealing with unjust people who oppress others. James says that some of that won't be dealt with until Judgment Day.

Waiting for that is hard to do because we want justice now. We will get a measure of it now, but some we must wait on. This doesn't seem fair. What is God waiting on? 2 Peter 3:7-9 tells us:

*...the present heavens and earth are reserved for fire, being kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men. But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day. The Lord is not slow in keeping His promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.*

Peter shows us that just as God destroyed the earth by a flood in the days of Noah, He will destroy it in the future by fire.

Peter also tells us that to God – a day is like a thousand years. So, to God – the 2,000 years since Jesus died are like 2 days! It seems like a long time to us, but not to Him! And Peter tells us what God is waiting for – **He's waiting for as many people as possible to come to repentance and salvation through Jesus.**

Now – we don't want to wait for our oppressors to get the judgment that is due them – but God is waiting for them to come to a place of repentance and faith. We want our oppressors to perish, but God does not want any to perish! That shows us what's in our hearts compared to what's in God's heart.

By the way – If the Lord had come back ten years ago there are some of you who had not been born again yet! Be grateful God waited on you!

James says that the Lord is waiting for the latter rain, that is the final harvest of souls. This is a foreshadowing of the return of Jesus Christ. The Lord is giving the final opportunity to people to get right with God. So we must be patient because some of our loved ones need to get saved!

**Jesus told His disciples He would be leaving – but that He was coming back for them. This is what is called the Second Coming of Jesus Christ.** He said it would happen and we need to be ready for it. Jesus told His disciples in John 14:2-3

*I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with Me that you also may be where I am.*

In Matthew 24:39-42 Jesus said:

*That is how it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. Two men will be in the field; one will be taken and the other left. Two women will be grinding with a hand mill; one will be taken and the other left. Therefore keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come... So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect Him.*

Why is it important that we be established in the truth of the second coming of Jesus Christ? Because it gives us a sense of urgency about the things of God, the kingdom of God and eternity. It causes us to live ready to meet Jesus.

**All of us will face Him one day – and it may be sooner than you think. We must live our lives as if every day could be the day we face God. Are you ready for that?**

Many Christians live their lives with no thought about meeting the Lord face to face. They are not ready. But, the Bible teaches that Jesus will come to earth again. It's very specific about how this will happen, but not about when this will happen. We must all live as if every day could be that day.

In every generation since Jesus died and resurrected, some Christians have thought they were the last generation. Jesus said this in Matthew 24:36 about His return:

*No one knows when that day or time will be, not even the angels in heaven. Only the Father knows.*

We know one day this world as we know it will come to an end. There is an appointed time – but we don't know when. God does not tell us exactly when. In fact, if someone tells you they know exactly when Jesus is coming back – run in the other direction. Jesus taught in Matthew 24:30-31 what His Second Coming will look like.

*At that time the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and all the nations of the earth will mourn. They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky, with power and great glory. And He will send His angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather His elect from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other.*

We see several things here about the second coming of Jesus:

- 1- It will be a physical return
- 2- It will be visible to everyone – it will not be secret
- 3- Jesus will return with power and authority
- 4- Jesus will return suddenly and expectantly

Are you ready for His return? No one knows the exact date when Jesus will return, but the Bible gives us some signs of what the end times will look like.

By the way – **more signs of Christ's return exist today than at any time in history!** One of the most essential passages of Scripture about the end times is Matthew 24 and 25. It is like the clothesline from which all other prophecy should be hung! This passage starts with this in Matthew 24:1-2

*Jesus left the temple and was walking away when His disciples came up to Him to call His attention to its buildings. "Do you see all these things?" He asked. "I tell you the truth, not one stone here will be left on another; every one will be thrown down."*

Jesus prophesied that the temple would be destroyed and the destruction would be so complete that not one stone would be left standing. And our Lord's words were 100% accurate! In AD 70 the Roman army, under the command of Titus, destroyed Jerusalem and the stones of the temple were thrown down.

A group of us recently went there and saw this with our own eyes! In Jerusalem, we saw the main street that was next to the temple mount of Jerusalem in the time of Christ. We saw that road was torn up and there were piles of huge stones, the very stones that Jesus said would be thrown down from the Temple Mount!

I'm telling you this to let you know that **biblical prophecy is always 100% accurate. If the first part of this chapter came true – the rest of it will come true!**

In Matthew 24 Jesus goes on to tell us what the end times will include: The Rapture – the Great Tribulation - The Second Coming of Jesus. All of this will happen – just like the first part of the chapter happened! After predicting the destruction of the temple - Matthew 24:3-14 says

*As Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately. "Tell us," they said, "when will this happen, and what will be the sign of Your coming and of the end of the age?"*

*Jesus answered: "Watch out that no one deceives you. For many will come in My name, claiming, 'I am the Christ,' and will deceive many. You will hear of wars and rumors of wars, but see to it that you are not alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come.*

*Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines, pestilences and earthquakes in various places. All these are the beginning of birth pains. Then you will be handed over to be persecuted and put to death, and you will be hated by all nations because of Me. At that time many will turn away from the faith and will betray and hate each other, and many false prophets will appear and deceive many people.*

*Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold, but he who stands firm to the end will be saved. And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.*

Jesus gave us signs of when the beginning of the end would be. I don't know if you pay attention to the news, but all of these things have increased dramatically. Let's look at these signs individually.

### **Sign #1 - Deception will cause many to turn away from the faith**

Deception is the main sign of the last days. Six times in Matthew 24 Jesus warns us about deception. Everywhere you look today you see deception and people falling away from the faith. On a regular basis I see stories of ministers and Christian leaders and artists leaving the faith. It's always surprising, but it shouldn't be. Jesus said this will only increase! This is a sign of the times!

### **Sign #2 – There will be Wars and Rumors of Wars**

There have been about 15,000 recorded wars in recorded history. You would think that as human civilization grew, the number of wars would decrease. But the 20<sup>th</sup> century was the bloodiest century in history. More people died in wars in the past 100 years than in all the centuries before! In 2022 in our world there were 8 major wars with over 1,000 deaths per year and 47 smaller conflicts! This increase in warfare is a sign of the times!

**One of the signs of the end times is ethnic conflict.** Jesus said:

*For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom.*

It seems kind of redundant for Jesus to say nations will rise against nations and kingdoms against kingdoms until you realize that the word translated nation is the Greek word ethnos. The word ethnos is not talking about countries, but it literally means a race of people, a tribe, an ethnic group. The word kingdom is talking about countries. In fact, Dan Boerger's Interpreted New Testament says:

*Ethnic groups will fight against each other, and entire countries will war against each other.*

Jesus declared that one of the prominent signs of the end of time is ethnic conflict. And one of the major issues we face today is racial conflict. This is a sad sign of the times.

### **Sign #3 – There will be Earthquakes and Disasters**

The number of earthquakes the earth experiences per year has grown over the years. Not only that – but the magnitude and intensity of earthquakes is growing. The US Geological Service says that 20,000 earthquakes are now happening every year. That's 55 earthquakes a day! This constant rumbling of the earth is a sign of the times!

In addition – natural disasters on earth have doubled in the last 30 years! Hundreds of thousands of people have been killed and displaced by earthquakes, tsunamis, floods, volcanoes and fires!

### **Sign #4 – There will be Famine and Pestilence**

There are approximately 8 billion people on our planet – and 828 million of them are experiencing some sort of malnutrition right now. That's over 10% of the world's population.

In addition to famine, pestilence is growing. Pestilence is defined as disease that spreads fast and kills many people. Again – you would think with the growth in medical knowledge we would have solved the problem of infectious diseases. But pestilence is growing. We just experienced a worldwide pestilence called COVID! This is just another sign of the times!

### **Sign #5 – There will be an Increase of Wickedness**

Jesus said in Matthew 24:37

*As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man.*

What characteristics marked the “days of Noah? Genesis 6:5 tells us that in the days of Noah:

*The Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.*

The headlines every day tell us about murders, rapes, kidnapping, assault, child abuse, robbery. These are commonplace to us now! Listen to 2 Timothy 3:1-5

*There will be terrible times in the last days. People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God – having a form of godliness but denying its power. Have nothing to do with them.*

Wow – if that doesn’t describe our society today, I don’t know what does! The Bible says that **in addition to all the wars and disasters and famines, the end times will be characterized by people without character!**

They will have no reverence, respect or restraint!

They will have no character, conscience or conviction!

They will have no gratefulness, goodness or godliness!

Jesus also said Christians will be persecuted. There is persecution of Christians happening right now all over the world. Don’t be surprised when it comes to America!

Evil people have always plagued society, but for most of the last 2,000 years Christian morality has acted as a measure of restraint. But as Christian standards of morality and decency are being swept aside, wickedness unashamedly and boastfully flaunts itself. Our courts, colleges and communication media are showing increasing bias against Christians and any moral code.

I know that sounds like a lot of bad news, but I want to end on a more positive note, because not all the signs of the times are bad!

### **Sign #6 - The Gospel will be preached to the whole world**

The most exciting sign of the times is that the gospel of Jesus Christ is being preached in every nation on the planet! In Matthew 24:14 Jesus said:

*And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.*

There is world-wide spiritual awakening going on right now. More people are coming to Christ today than at any time in history.

And Jesus said He's not coming back until every people group has heard the gospel. These are exciting times to be a part of God's Kingdom. The signs of the times are everywhere! **As we see these signs all around us, we should not fear or be discouraged.** Jesus told us what to do in Luke 21:28

*When these things begin to take place, stand up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.*

So, when you see the signs of the times – this is not a time to be down – it's a time to look up!

Jesus said in Matthew 24:12 *Because of the increase of lawlessness, the love of most will grow cold, but he who stands firm to the end will be saved.*

We see lawlessness in our streets - but it's a sign of the times. But we have the promise that those who endure to the end will be saved! So when you hear of wars and rumors of wars – keep your inner peace – it's just another sign that Jesus is coming soon!

When you hear of earthquakes shaking the world – don't let it shake your world – it's just another sign that Jesus is coming soon! When you hear of kingdom rising against kingdom – don't shrink back in fear – move forward in faith because your redemption is drawing near!

When you see these signs in the heavens – lift up your head and look at Jesus! Jesus is still on the throne ruling and reigning! Stand up and look up! Because Jesus is getting ready to stand up and come down for us!

He is coming for a church that has neither spot nor wrinkle!  
 He is coming for a church that has been washed in the blood of the lamb.  
 He is coming for a church that has their lamps filled with the Holy Ghost.  
 He is coming for a church that is looking for His return.  
 Titus 2:13 says we should be:

*Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ.*

The fact that Jesus is about to return is not a scary thing to those who are living for Him, but it is something that brings us great hope! It brings hope because we know that when Jesus takes us home there will be:

No more sickness or pain	No more sadness or sorrow
No more tears or trials	No recession or oppression.
No more sin or temptation	No road rage or old age.
No bad news or sad news.	

There will be absolutely nothing to complain about! You will miss nothing about life on earth because it will be infinitely better there! And the best part about heaven is that FOREVER we will be with our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.