

Luke 17:26-37

²⁶Just as it was in the days of Noah, so also will it be in the days of the Son of Man: ²⁷People were eating and drinking, marrying and being given in marriage, up to the day Noah entered the ark. Then the flood came and destroyed them all.

²⁸It was the same in the days of Lot: People were eating and drinking, buying and selling, planting and building. ²⁹But on the day Lot left Sodom, fire and sulfur rained down from heaven and destroyed them all.

³⁰It will be just like that on the day the Son of Man is revealed. ³¹On that day, let no one on the housetop come down to retrieve his possessions. Likewise, let no one in the field return for anything he has left behind. ³²Remember Lot's wife! ³³Whoever tries to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life will preserve it.

³⁴I tell you, on that night two people will be in one bed: One will be taken and the other left.

³⁵Two women will be grinding grain together: One will be taken and the other left."

³⁷"Where, Lord?" they asked.

Jesus answered, "Wherever there is a carcass, there the vultures will gather."

Berean Study Bible (adjusted layout)

1

Last days. Last day. Luke 17:26-37

Signs of the last days. 17:26-29

God has been present as Saviour. 26, 28 "in the days of Noah... Lot"

God has been ignored as Lord. 27, 29 "and destroyed them all"

Sequence of the last day. 17:30-37

Let go of this world. 30-33 "not retrieve... not return"

Left behind in this world. 34-37 "the other left"

2

Last days. Last day. Luke 17:26-37

The days before the second coming. 17:26-29

There will be good days. 27 "marrying and being given"

There will be bad days. 26, 28 "as it was in the days of Noah... Lot"

There will be ordinary days. 27, 28 "eating and drinking"

The day of the second coming. 17:30-37

No one will turn back. 30-33 “not retrieve... not return”
Unsaved will be taken below. 34-37 “there vultures will gather”
Believers will be left behind. 34-36 “the other left”

3

What will you take with you? Luke 17:26-37

It can be taken from you. 17:26-29

Personal interests to blind you. 27a “eating and drinking”
Relationships can distract you. 27a “marrying and given in marriage”
The only warning is preaching righteousness. 27b “Noah entered...” 2 Peter 2:5

You can’t take it with you. 17:31-32

Personal interests to blind you. 28a “eating and drinking”
Commercial practices can distract you. 28b “buying... planting and building”
The only warning is righteous stress. 29 “Lot departed...” 2 Peter 2:8

You can be taken from Him. 17:33-37

You can be taken from the people you care about. 34 “in one bed. One taken”
You can be taken from the things you care about. 35 “two grinding. One taken”
You will be taken to eternal death and misery. 37 “carcass... vultures”

4

What the last day looks like. Luke 17:26-37

The last day will come and no one will expect it. 17:26-29

The last day will be an ordinary day. 27a, 28a “eating and drinking”
The last day will be a happy day. 27a “marrying and given in marriage”
The last day will be a busy day. 28b “buying... planting and building”

The last day will come and nothing can be done about it. 17:30-33

The timetable is set in Heaven. 30 “Son of Man is revealed”
All we hold will pass away. 32 “Remember Lot’s wife!”
The time to choose is now. 33 “loses his life will preserve it” Mark 8:35

The last day will come and everyone will be divided. 17:34-37

Everyone will stand alone. 34-36 “one taken” Matt.13:30, 40-42 “weeds first”
The unsaved will be taken. 37 “carcass... vultures”
The believers will be left. 34-36 “the other left”

Luke 17:26-37

Run to the Light. The Old Testament is shadows. 17:26-29

Jesus is not talking about conditions in the past. 26a, 28a "the days of Noah... Lot"

Jesus is talking about conditions in the future. 26b, 28b "the days of the Son of Man"

A time of bad news. 26a, 28a "the days of Noah... the days of Lot"

A time of good news. 27 "marrying and being given in marriage"

A time of no news. 27a, 28a "eating and drinking"

A time of ordinary. 28b "buying and selling, planting and building"

Run to the Light. There is nowhere else to run. 17:30-37

Possessions cannot help you. 31a "not... his possessions"

Power cannot help you. 31b "not... he has left behind"

Preservation cannot help you. 33 "whoever tries... will lose it"

Salvation. 33b "loses his life will preserve it"

Separation. 34-35 "One will be taken and the other left"

Sulphur and brimstone. 37 "carcass... vultures"

Jesus is coming again, and it could be today! Luke 17:26-37

We are in the days of Noah. 26-27 "in the days of Noah"

Personal signs. 27 "eating and drinking"

Public signs. 27 "marrying and being given in marriage"

Physical sign. 27 "Noah entered the ark"

We are in the days of Lot. 28-29 "in the days of Lot"

Personal signs. 28 "eating and drinking"

Public signs. 28 "buying and selling, planting and building"

Physical sign. 29 "But on the day Lot left Sodom"

We are in the days of Messiah. 30-33 "the day the Son of Man is revealed"

Lessons must be learned. 30 "it will be just like that"

Possessions won't last. 31 "not retrieve his possessions"

Prepare today. 33 "whoever loses his life will preserve it"

We are in the days of judgement. 34-37 "One will be taken, the other left"

Expect the unexpected. 34-35 "two people"

Expect separation. 35 "One will be taken, the other left"

Expect punishment. 37 "carcass... vultures"

The last day could be today. Luke 17:26-37

The last day will be an ordinary day. 17:26-29

A day of relaxation. 27a, 28a "eating and drinking... eating and drinking"

A day of celebration. 27a "marrying and being given in marriage"

A day of construction. 28b "buying and selling, planting and building"

The last day will be a day of judgement. 17:27-32

Judgement will come like a flood. 27b "flood came and destroyed them all"

Judgement will come like a fire. 29b "fire and sulfur rained down... and destroyed"

Judgement will come like a thief. 31-32 "not retrieve possessions"

The last day will be a day of division. 17:33-37

I need to separate myself today. 32-33 "whoever loses his life will preserve it"

The angels will separate us. 34-35 "one taken" Matt.13:30 "First collect the weeds"

Separation will be eternal. 37 "carcass... vultures" Matt.25:46 "eternal... eternal"

The big reveal. Luke 17:26-37, esp v30

Jesus will be revealed on a day like Noah's flood. 17:26-27

People did personal things. 27a "People were eating and drinking"

People went to celebrations. 27a "marrying and being given in marriage"

People, and their world, were destroyed. 27b "the flood came and destroyed them"

Jesus will be revealed on a day like Lot's Sodom. 17:28-29

People did personal things. 28a "People were eating and drinking"

People went to work. 28b "buying and selling, planting and building"

People, and their world, were destroyed. 29 "fire rained down and destroyed them"

Jesus will be revealed on a day like no other. 17:30-37

Possession will no longer matter. 31

Places will no longer matter. 32

People make a life and death decision. 32-33

People, and their world, will be destroyed. 34-37

Other possible titles

Greatest show on earth

The end is near
Countdown
When judgement falls
It will start out just like any ordinary day
This day may be your last day
The next big thing
Look what's coming
Almost saved is completely lost
Don't look back. What's ahead is better.
Jesus is coming again, but not like you expect!
What happens on the day we see Jesus
What it will be like when Jesus is revealed

Commentary

There is no v36

³⁶Two men shall be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left. (KJV only)

Step parallelism construction

- A1 It was just like this in the days of Noah. 26a
 - A2 Everyday activities: personal, public. 28a
 - A3 Flood destroyed them all. 28b
 - B1 It was just like this in the days of Lot. 28a
 - B2 Everyday activities: personal, public. 28b
 - A3 Fire destroyed them all. 29
 - C1 It will be just like this in the days of the Son. 30
 - C2 Everyday possessions no longer matter. 31
 - C3 Disobedience destroyed Lot's wife. 32
 - D1 It must be just like this for eternal life. 33
 - D2 Everyday activities: personal, public. 34-35
 - D3 Carcass and vultures signal destruction. 37
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When one is taken, to where will she/he be taken?

³⁴I tell you, on that night two people will be in one bed: One will be taken and the other left.

³⁵Two women will be grinding grain together: One will be taken and the other left.”

³⁷“Where, Lord?” they asked.

Jesus answered, “Wherever there is a carcass, there the vultures will gather.”

The following is from: *Timeline, Second Coming*, at www.sermoninspiration.net

Naturally, and sensibly, they [the disciples] wanted to know where the one taken, was being taken to. But Jesus did not give a simple answer. He did not say, ‘Taken to Heaven’. Nor did He say, ‘Taken to Hell.’ Instead, He gave a parable-like answer that requires some thought on the part of the listener. So, let’s listen, carefully, to Jesus.

Jesus answered, “Wherever there is a carcass, there the vultures will gather.” (Luke 17:37)

Now that you have heard Jesus’ answer, carefully consider what He has just said. Look at those words so that you truly understand where those who are taken, are taken to. Does He describe the place where they are taken as a place of life, or a place of death? Does Jesus describe where they are taken as a happy place; a place of peace; a place of joy; or are they taken to a place death and destruction? Read His words again, if you are unsure.

Jesus’ teaching about one taken, and one left behind, is obviously clear. The one who is taken, is taken away to death and destruction; a place of weeping and gnashing of teeth; a place of pain and sorrow. When one is taken and one is left behind, it is obviously the unsaved who are taken, and the believers who are left behind.

This orderly sequence is consistent with everything else Jesus has taught about His return. For example, in the parable of the wheat and the weeds (Matthew 13:24-30) and His detailed explanation (Matthew 13:36-43), Jesus first stated the meaning of the symbols:

³⁸The field is the world, and the good seed represents the sons of the Kingdom. The weeds are the sons of the evil one, ³⁹and the enemy who sows them is the devil. The harvest is the end of the age, and the harvesters are angels.

He then explained the orderly sequence:

³⁰Let both grow together until the harvest. At that time, I will tell the harvesters: **First collect the weeds** and tie them in bundles to be burned; then gather the wheat into my barn... ⁴⁰As the weeds are collected and burned in the fire, so will it be at the end of the age. ⁴¹The Son of Man will send out His angels, and they will weed out of His Kingdom every cause of sin and all who practice lawlessness. ⁴²And they will throw them into the fiery furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. ⁴³**Then** the righteous will shine like the sun in the Kingdom of their Father.

Problems with understanding the Second Coming arise only when otherwise well-intentioned Bible teachers fail to make Jesus their foundation, and they begin with somewhere else in Scripture, such as:

¹⁵By the word of the Lord, we declare to you that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who have fallen asleep. ¹⁶For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a loud command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will be the first to rise. ¹⁷After that, we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will always be with the Lord. (1 Thessalonians 4:15-17)

This Scripture describes two groups of people. Please re-read those verses, and identify those two groups. You found this: a) Dead Christians “the dead in Christ” (v16), and b) Living Christians “we who are alive and **remain**” (v17). Since there are only dead Christians, and living Christians, which group is conspicuous by their absence? The non-Christians are not mentioned, because Jesus has taught us that they are the “weeds... who are removed first” (Matthew 13:30). The “dead in Christ will be the first to rise” (1 Thessalonians 4:16) out of the only two groups that are left after the unsaved are removed.

Problems in theology only arise when we fail to begin with Jesus; when we fail to make Jesus the foundation for every aspect of our Faith. But when we begin with Jesus, the world’s greatest teacher, we learn the sequence of the Second Coming is:

First, remove the weeds, when one is taken to where the vultures gather.

Next, the dead in Christ rise as the first of those who remain.

Finally, we who are alive and remain get to witness all this and then meet the Lord in the air.

“Wherever there is a carcass, there the vultures will gather.” (Luke 17:37)

There are some commentators who want the carcass of v37 to be taken to Heaven, and so, contrary to the clear meaning of this verse, they retranslate “vultures” to be “eagles”. The noun in the Greek New Testament is ἀετός [Strong’s 105] which means any large bird of prey, and depending on the context can be legitimately translated as either vulture or eagle. The action of these birds of prey is to ἐπισυνάγω [Strong’s 1996]. This is a compound word, consisting of the preposition, ἐπί [Strong’s 1909] meaning “on”, plus the verb συνάγω [Strong’s 4863] meaning “assemble, come together, gather”. Therefore, this action is “to come together on” the body. This action, which is typical of a flock of vultures, is in contrast to an eagle, which is a solitary hunter of live prey.

Once again, read Jesus’ answer. “Wherever there is a carcass, there the [birds of prey] will gather.” The context in this verse clearly calls for the translation to be “vultures”. The image is of multiple vultures gathered on the carcass of their victim.

The next question to ask is: ‘On what are the vultures gathered?’ The answer is on a σῶμα [Strong’s 4983] which means, a body. The body is that part of a person that can be killed, and with the soul, ψυχή [Strong’s 5590] be cast into Hell (Matthew 10:28). The body on which the vultures are gathered, is nothing more than a body. Hence, a dead body, or as it is correctly translated, a carcass.

Now, discard the sanitised – and false – image of the Rapture, and replace it with the true image of the unsaved being Removed. Then, put this image, as Jesus paints it, back into its actual Biblical context of verses 34-37. One will be taken, and one will be left behind. When the disciples asked where the one who is taken, will be taken to, Jesus' answer is a description of their destiny being nothing but death, pain, and destruction.

Other signs that we are in the last days / end times

¹ Now the Spirit expressly states that **in later times** some will abandon the faith to follow deceitful spirits and the teachings of demons, ² influenced by the hypocrisy of liars, whose consciences are seared with a hot iron. 1 Timothy 4:1-2

But **in these last days** He has spoken to us by His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, and through whom He made the universe. Hebrews 1:2

³ Most importantly, you must understand that **in the last days** scoffers will come, scoffing and following their own evil desires. ⁴ "Where is the promise of His coming?" they will ask. "Ever since our fathers fell asleep, everything continues as it has from the beginning of creation." 2 Peter 3:3-4

when they said to you, "**In the last times** there will be scoffers who will follow after their own ungodly desires." Jude 1:18

Other prophetic signs, such as "wars and rumours of war, earthquakes, and famines" are not signs of the Second Coming but of the destruction of Jerusalem. See Sermon Inspiration notes for Matthew 24, Mark 13, or Luke 21.

Summary of the probable sequence of the Second Coming

Return

"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, so that you also may be where I am." (John 14:2-3) Note that Jesus clearly states the purpose of His return is not to set up an earthly Kingdom. He said He is coming back to collect us and take us to be with Him. [Note Renewal, below, there will no longer be an earth!]

"The Lord Himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God" (1 Thessalonians 4:16)

Removal

"Let both [weeds and wheat] grow together until the harvest. At that time, I will tell the harvesters: First collect the weeds and tie them in bundles to be burned; then gather the wheat and bring it into my barn." (Matthew 13:30) "...The Son of Man will send out his

angels, and they will weed out of his kingdom everything that causes sin and all who do evil. They will throw them into the fiery furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth." (Matthew 13:41-42) Jesus divides humanity into 2 groups – the saved and the lost. He says the first group to go will be the lost; the weeds.

Resurrection

"The Lord Himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first." (1 Thessalonians 4:16) When the weeds; the lost are removed, Paul divides the remaining people into 2 groups: the dead Christians, and the living Christians. Of these 2 groups it is the dead believers who are raised first, leaving us living Christians to witness it all.

Rapture

"After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so, we will be with the Lord forever." (1 Thessalonians 4:17)

Renewal

"The day of the Lord will come like a thief [in the night], when 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." (2 Peter 3:10)

"Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away... And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people..." (Revelation 21:1-3)

Reward

"Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven..." (Matthew 5:12)

"Each one's work will become manifest, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done. If the work that anyone has built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward." (1 Corinthians 3:13-14) [cf 2 Pet.3:10 above]

Rejoice

"Therefore encourage each other with these words." (1 Thessalonians 4:18)

Music and songs

Songs about the Kingdom or the King

All hail King Jesus, 237 / SiS 219

Amazing love [You are my King], Ot 8

Hear the call of the Kingdom, (Getty)

King of Kings and Lord of Lords, SiS 409

King of Love my Shepherd is, 86
Let Your Kingdom come, Ot 12
Live for the Kingdom, Ot 15
Servant King, 674
Shepherd King, 726
This Kingdom, Ot 47

Songs about the Second Coming

All hail King Jesus, 237 / SiS 219
All Heaven declares the glory (Fettke)
At the name of Jesus every knee will bow, H 191
Gloria (David Meece)
Glory and power t to the One Who loves us... See Him coming, Ot 5
I keep looking up (Brian Free)
Jesus is coming (Somebody's coming, Gaither)
Jesus is coming again, CWH 91
Jesus is coming soon, CWH 71
Jesus is coming soon, (Winsett)
King of Kings and Lord of lords, SiS 409
Lo, He comes with clouds descending, H 200
Looking for the city, Ot 106
Mansion over the hilltop, CWH 107
Marvellous message we bring... Jesus is coming again, CWH 91
See Him coming, Ot 5
Sing we the King who is coming to reign, H 204
The King is coming (Newsboys), Ot 40
There's a land that is fairer... In the sweet by and by, H 698
There's a light upon the mountains, H 199
There's gonna be a better day (Gaither)
Troublesome times are here... Jesus is coming soon.
Watch ye therefore... I shall wear a crown
When the saints go marching in
When the trumpet of the Lord... When the roll is called up yonder, H 708

Songs about God's justice / judgement

Our God is an awesome God

Thought starters for personal reflection or group discussion

1. What did Jesus say are the signs of His imminent return (v27-28); and why are they so general?

2. Is it fair that ordinary people going about their business should suddenly be swept away (v27b, 29b)?
 3. Why do you think God would want His people see all the godless people removed and judged (v34-35)?
 4. Why are we not permitted to take anything with us (v31) into Heaven?
 5. What are we to remember about Lot's wife (v32)?
 6. Verse 33 seems self-contradictory. What does it really mean?
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