

Christ's Preview of His Kingdom pt. 2

By Charles Feinberg

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This is part two of the message on Christ's Preview of His Kingdom by Dr. Charles Lee Feinberg, Dean and professor of Old Testament at Talbot Theological Seminary. Thus far in this message on Christ's Preview of His Kingdom we have seen certain features of Christ for gleam of his kingdom first of all atop the mount where we have Moses, Elijah, the disciples and most important of all the Lord Jesus Christ who received from heaven a voice from the cloud saying this is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased. Those are the principle participants atop the mount. But there's more here, in this remarkable preview, pre-showing if you will of Christ's kingdom. It's in the mount. Who were in the mount? We've already inhabited it more than once. Peter, James, and John as it were the inner circle. Those somehow who had a more intimate place in the life and ministry of our Lord Jesus, probably they were more involved in the things near and dear to his heart, probably had greater insight than some of the others though at times we may wonder about that. But they seem to have had a particular close place to our Lord Jesus on earth, not that he didn't love the others, but there was a special place in his thinking and his consideration and his love for these three. Peter, James, and John.

They were with the lord in the mount. Actually, in the gospel account we see that they were witnesses three times of significant events. It's in Mark's gospel, the fifth chapter, in the

37th verse where we read that the Lord took Peter, James, and John when he was called upon to go and see Jairus' daughter who had just died. And at the time when he went to raise her from the dead, he took along with him Peter, James, and John and they were eyewitnesses of this important, vastly significant activity of the Messiah of Israel, namely the raising of the dead. And then these three are here at the transfiguration. Peter, James, and John Matthew 17 verse 1. Never any question as to whether they were present at the transfiguration. Mark 14:33 tells us again that at one of the greatest times in the life of our Lord Jesus Christ, namely just before he went to Calvary's cross. Here we find Peter, James, and John in the garden with him at the time of the agony, Mark 14:33. It is significant that each one of these followers of our Lord Jesus, each one of these apostles knew genuine and great suffering for the Lord.

It was James who was the first apostle to be martyred we read in the book of Acts. Peter is said to, this is tradition, he's said to have been crucified in Rome head downward the read on for that the tradition tells us is that he did not feel worthy enough to be crucified in the same erect position as our Lord Jesus and asked that he be crucified head downward. James was martyred, Peter crucified, the apostle John was persecuted for the faith, exiled to Patmos and there is a tradition that he was later on after his escape he was later apprehended and for the preaching of the gospel was put to death violently, some say boiled in oil. All these men of God, these three very close to the Lord were learning lessons that would certainly stand in good stead in a coming day when the Lord said I have a cup that I must drink, meaning the cup of suffering can you drink it? And when the disciples answered seemingly glibly we can. Well when these three men indicated it at the time they certainly spoke better than they knew. The Lord had, in his marvelous, inscrutable plan that we cannot explain he had in the future for them death, violent death, death at the hands of those who hated the Gospel. Now these apostles here represent, they

are in unresurrected bodies you remember. They do represent Israel in the flesh, in the future kingdom.

You see these men had not at this time yet known or entered in to the wonderful privileges after Calvary for instance indicated in the book of Acts when the spirit of God came upon them and baptized them, all believing ones into the body of Christ. They rather, at this point, are representative with looking at all the different elements and factors, features that are representative of that which shall obtain in the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ and here the apostles represent Israelites in their natural bodies in the future kingdom. That we have in the great prophecy of Ezekiel, the valley of dry bones, Ezekiel 37 verse 21 through 27. And say unto them, thus saith the Lord God, God tells Ezekiel to prophecy to Israel. Behold I will take the children of Israel from among the nations whether they are gone and will gather them on every side and bring them into their own land. Notice there's no resurrection spoken of here. And I will make them one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel and one king, so one Messiah, shall be king to them all and they shall be no more two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms anymore at all. Neither shall they defile themselves anymore with their idols nor with their detestable things nor with any of their transgressions. But I will save them out of all the dwelling places wherein they have sinned and will cleanse them.

So shall they be my people and I will be their God. And my servant David shall be king over them and they all shall have one Shepard. This is the greater David, David's greater son the Lord Jesus. They shall also walk in my ordinances and observe my statutes and do them. They shall dwell in the land that I have given unto Jacob my servant wherein your fathers dwelt. And they shall dwell therein, they and their children and their children's children forever. And David my servant shall be their prince forever. Moreover I will make a covenant of peace with them, it

shall be an everlasting covenant with them and I will place them and multiply them and will set my sanctuary in the midst of them forever more. The placing of them is setting them in their own land. My tabernacle also shall be with them and I will be their God and they shall be my people. Sooner than any one of these apostles realized they were given a preview of the coming kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Messiah's coming again for Israel is not far off.

It was Dr. Guinness of England who had spoken on the imminent return of the Lord Jesus. He used this illustration to show how he knew the coming was near and it's a very pointed one. He said he had heard the rendition of the Messiah by Handel with great delight just the previous evening. He went on to indicate that if a man had asked him after the performance had preceded a couple of hours how long he thought it would continue. He said he would have answered about five minutes. But the man who was asking the question might have continued how can that be? It's in full swing; it's been going on for two hours. Frankly I can see no reason why the performance shouldn't continue for two hours longer. How do you know it'll be over in five minutes? Then said Dr. Guinness I should have answered him because I have the score. Don't you remember that beautiful solo? He'd have said yes. And that choral number? Yes. And then I should have said to him and I know it'll soon be over because I have the score and they are singing the last chorus. It's a wonderful thing friends to have the score. The Bible, the guidebook.

So you may follow events that lead to the glorious advent of our Lord Jesus. We are near his coming. How near no one knows for certain I know we're living in a day when there are so many telling us it's gonna be so many years off this that and the other. No one knows for certain. We do know service to the truth or to the word of God or to prophetic scriptures if we begin setting dates no one knows. He can come in a matter of moments even, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye. When near is coming, I repeat how near nobody knows for sure. For certain.

But it cannot be long. We've seen then the elements of the wonderful coming kingdom atop the mountain. We have seen elements in the mountain; Peter James and John were in the mountain. Let's take a look finally at that which was below the mountain. The crowd at the foot of the mountain. There was such a crowd. We read of them in Matthew 17:14, And when they were come to the multitude there came a man kneeling to him and saying Lord have mercy on my son for he is epileptic and suffers grievously for oft times he falleth into the fire and oft times into the water and I've brought him to thy disciples and they could not cure him. And Jesus answered and said oh faithless and perverse generation how long shall I be with you? How long shall I bear with you? Bring him hither to me and Jesus rebuked him and the demon went out of him and the boy was cured from that hour.

The crowd at the foot of the mountain represents whom? Oh they must represent someone in this preview, in this foreshadowing. They represent the nations, the gentiles in the kingdom and after its establishment. In Isaiah 11 we have a word concerning results of Messiah's work as it goes out to the gentiles. Isaiah 10 we read that's chapter 11:10-12 and it shall come to pass that day that the root of Jesse that stands for an end sign for the peoples. Unto him shall the nations seek and his resting place shall be glorious. And it shall come to pass that day the Lord will set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people that shall remain from Assyria. Here where the gentiles come in. They will release Israel and from Egypt and Pathros and Kush and from Elah and from Shinar and from Hamath and from the islands of the sea. And he will set up and in Sighn, a banner, a standard, a flag for the nations and will assemble the outcasts of Israel and gather together, dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth. When Christ comes again, he will find those ready to receive him among the nations just as he will among Israel and yet he will find others who are not ready. When he came from

the mountain notice what he found, a lost world. They knew nothing of him. They were still dead in trespasses and sin, going on glibly, blindly, heavy-heartedly, in sin laden fashion, he found a lost world.

What was even sadder if possible was that they were powerless disciples. This dear man whose boy was demon possessed said Lord have mercy on my son. I brought him to thy disciples and they could not cure him and our Lord had to rebuke them. Oh faithless, oh faithless and perverse generation. How long shall I be with you? How long shall I bear with you? Bring him hither to me. A lost world, yes and a powerless disciples and notice, verse 18 Jesus rebuked him. The one who inhabited this boy and the demon went out of him and the boy was cured from that hour. There's gonna be a demon in a human being, very clear here. And when the Lord Jesus comes back there's gonna be a demon in a man. The anti-Christ will be a devilish counterfeit of the living Christ. We read of it in 2 Thessalonians 2. He sits in the temple of God, making out that he is God. That can only happen, my dear friends, if Satan had such complete control of a man. This man will be Satan possessed and demon possessed because the king, the leader of all demons is Satan himself. So you have quite a clear picture of what was going on, transpiring at the bottom of the mountain. And you see our Lord did not keep the apostles to himself. He did not keep them in the mount without a terminal point. They were to go down and to conduct ministry on the earth. And so when there was a word concerning the need of this father and this son and the disciples could do nothing for him, what happened? Did the Lord say Will Allah do anything either? No. Jesus rebuked him, rebuked that demon. And the demon went out of him, and the Lord Jesus Christ cast the demon out and in the kingdom, not only will demons be cast out but the Lord of the demons, the king of the demons will be dealt with.

Yes. There will be a vicious trio. Satan, the political ruler, the Roman beast, and the religious leader, the false prophet. Politically, ecclesiastically, and the power behind them as in revelation chapter 13 will be Satan. What's the Lord Jesus gonna do, he's gonna consign all three of them to the bottomless pit. We read of it in Revelation 19. Verse 19-21. And I saw the beasts and the kings of the earth and their armies gathered together to make war against him that sat upon the horse, that's the Lord Jesus. And against his army what a dodder, what absolute blasphemous defiance. A man to come against the living Christ and against his army. And the beast was taken that no question as to whether the forces will be joined, as to whether there will be a confrontation. And there's certainly no question as to the outcome of the conflict. The beast was taken captured and with him the false prophet that wrought the signs in his sight, Revelation 13. Able to make the image speak. Wherewith he had deceived them that had received the mark of the beast and them that worship his image. They too were cast alive into the lake of fire that burneth with brimstone. And the rest were killed with a sword of him that sat upon the horse, even the sword which came forth out of his mouth and all the birds were filled with their flesh.

God is gonna consign the beast and the false prophet and in the 20th chapter of the revelation he confines Satan to the bottomless pit. And how long will they stay? Will they be annihilated? Not a bit of it, no. We read in Revelation 20 verse 10 the Devil who had deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where also the beast and the false prophet are. Notice they've been there for a thousand years and their still in existence. And they shall be tormented, not tortured but tormented day and night forever and ever. Friends, there are gonna be many ready thank God. But sad to say some will not be ready and so you see Peter, James and John represented those who were ready Moses and Elijah represented those who were ready. The Lord Jesus Christ is the one who made the provision for all to be ready. But you go down into

the world among those who know not Christ, they are not ready. They're not even thinking about being ready. They think they can make themselves fit for any kind of life hereafter. That's not true. No more than man by himself can take care of the things of his household that pour man whose son was afflicted with a demon, could help him. And sadly enough, in a world that is so powerless that they're not depending on the power of God, why the Lord meant for these disciples, these apostles to have the power to take care of just such a situation as obtained in that hour and yet they were powerless, why? Because they were not taking hold of the power of God to the extent that the Lord Jesus Christ meant them to and that's true of you and me, let's be fair.

We are not exhibiting the mighty power of God as we should in the world, and unbelieving world round about us, not because Christ has lost any of his power, not because God is unwilling to release it to us but because we are limited by our own unbelief, our own faithlessness just as Israel in the wilderness. They limited the holy one of Israel and how many times we read where in the Lord's earthly ministry on earth there were so many who were unbelieving that the scripture says he could do there no mighty work because not of his powerlessness but because of their unbelief. There are gonna be many ready and for that we thank God, but we are saddened to think some will not be ready but you and I, faithful in testimony can make sure that some will be ready who would not be ready if it were not for our testimony, for our witness, for our sharing of Christ with them. The account is told that while the Prince of Wales was once on a visit to the midlands, he went into a certain worker's home and next day that man was talking to his friends and he was not enamored, he was not elated over the face that he was visited by the then Prince of Wales, no. He was saddened because he said I never expected him, I wasn't looking for him at all, nor did my wife, and the sad fact of it is the house was untidy, nothing was arranged. Everything was topsy turvy. I myself hadn't washed.

We shall never forgive ourselves. If we had known he was coming we should have been ready for him.

Now you and I know that Christ is coming again. He's coming in power to the earth. And we have more testimony than Israel had. They had the testimony of the Old Testament, but we have the testimony also of the new testament, of not only the manifested Christ but of the crucified Christ, the buried risen and ascended Christ, the Christ who when we was here promised that as he had gone he would come again to recieveth unto himself that where he is there we would be also. But every one of us must make certain we shall be ready to meet him. Paul tells us in is Epistle in the new testament that time is short and is getting shorter all the while but it's long enough a time, hear it, there is long enough of an opportunity given so that we can receive Christ by faith, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ we're told and thou shalt be saved.

Paul himself says behold now is accepted time, behold now is the day of salvation. So in this remarkable portion in Matthew 17:1-9 Mark 9:2-13, Luke 9:28-36 in this tremendous incident in the life of our Lord, one of the highlights of that incomparable one, Christ himself gave a preview of his kingdom and those who say he never expected, he never expected to be considered deity, he never expected to die, he never expected to bring an earthly kingdom into existence, thy are all wrong, the testimony of the new testament is against that because in this preview of his kingdom, he certainly showed that he was preparing the way by his death for a kingdom to come on earth. That's why the disciples were taught to pray thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

So it's in this preview that we have such wonderful distinctive features of that kingdom by those atop the mount speaking of the one who's going to be the central glorious one in the

kingdom, the king himself, king of king and lord of lords, David's son, Messiah the Lord sitting on David's throne. And Moses and Elijah will be there to attest. They will be in the kingdom, yes. And then, that's atop the mountain in the mount will be those who represent Israel in the flesh, Peter, James, and John just as they represented Israel in that day and then below the mount what a needy world, the crowd, the nations represented but then among the nations so many lost, a lost world and not only so but a powerless church and a demon in a man. Thank God for the kingdom picture that we have. Be sure friend that you have a place there. You can't just depend on it by a hope so or a wish so. If you're going travelling and want a place when you land in a certain country even in our country, in certain state if you want to be sure of a place in a hotel or a motel you must make a reservation ahead of time. Have you made your reservation? If you have, see that others have their reservation in also. You cannot, you dare not leave it to chance.