

In the preceding passage Jesus' parable warned us that we should live as if He would return at any moment. He explained that the more we know our Master's will, the more we are accountable to do it. He encouraged us to be dressed and keep our lamps burning. In other words, always be ready to serve Him and expect His return. Today's passage continues with Jesus' warning that His present mission is not to establish the peace that is prophesied to come one day (Isaiah 9:7<sup>i</sup>). That will come after His return. Presently His fire in the earth is bringing division.

Jews understood from the many laws given through Moses that God always intended for His people to be different from the world around them (2 Corinthians 6:17<sup>ii</sup>). It was illustrated in the many rules about not mixing certain things. It was not something new that Jesus was teaching, but rather an explanation of why the future would be different from what they expected. Previously Jesus had promised great reward for faithfulness, but here Jesus warned of the cost of that faithfulness.

<sup>49</sup> *"I came to cast fire on the earth, and would that it were already kindled!"* Luke 12:49 The fire of the Holy Spirit in the church would not only bring sanctification in our lives, which is the presence of Jesus in each believer, but it would also bring a fire of evangelism sweeping through the world and producing purification in societies (John 14:16,17<sup>iii</sup>; Luke 3:16<sup>iv</sup>; Matthew 3:11<sup>v</sup>). Fire purifies and cleanses, but it can also bring damage. Those who reject the fire of the Gospel face the fire of judgment (Luke 3:17<sup>vi</sup>).

Why did Jesus long to cast this fire into the earth? First, it is what every believer needs to help them grow in Christ. It is the transforming power of God to change us into His instruments and free us from bondage to sin (John 8:34<sup>vii</sup>). Then we can go out as fiery instruments of righteousness influencing the world for Christ.

That results in division (John 7:43<sup>viii</sup>). Jesus' message brought division, and it still does today. There will be those who hear and believe, and those who reject and resist it. While we teach love for one another, those who oppose the message, from Jesus' time until now, often resort to hateful violence. This is evidence of the power of the fire in the message and its conviction of sin (John 16:8<sup>ix</sup>).

Before Pentecost the world was a very brutal place. The fire of the Spirit and spread of the Gospel through the church would teach the value of every human life. It would transform the drudgery of everyday life into one of meaning and purpose. Slaves would sing songs of heaven and eventually even be freed because of this fire. Laborers would do their work to the glory of God. Missionaries would convert savage tribal groups like the Vikings and North American Plains Indians, teaching them to value life. India would give up many of its destructive practices like the caste system, multiple wives, and women being burned alive with their dead husbands. The fire of the Gospel has slowed the decay of societies and banished many horrible practices.

Certainly, the institutions that used the name of the church have committed excesses and atrocities, but the Gospel fire slowed the headlong plunge toward the return to the days of Noah (Matthew 24:37<sup>x</sup>). Just think, it only took about 1500-years for mankind to get into the state where destruction of the flood was the only hope. It has been at least four thousand years since. The great event that happened halfway through that time period that reversed much of the destructive path mankind was on was the coming of Jesus. But just as Jesus predicted, mankind is increasingly divided over His message

and lives for selfish pleasures (Matthew 24:10-12<sup>xi</sup>). The more they do so, the darker and more destructive the world becomes.

*<sup>50</sup> I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how great is my distress until it is accomplished!* Luke 12:50 Before the fire could be cast into the earth, Jesus had to endure the baptism. He was speaking of the wrath of God He would endure, taking our sins upon Himself on the cross and receiving God's just punishment upon those sins (Mark 10:38<sup>xii</sup>). The thought of it lay heavy on His heart and mind. Yet, He knew it had to be accomplished so the fire of the Holy Spirit could be cast on the earth. We cannot fathom the horror He knew He would face. Looking at the atrocities of mankind over the millennia, what kind of wrath would be sufficient justice for it all? Add to that the trillions of individual injustices and acts of defiance against God. No human can comprehend the enormity of it. The cross had to come first to make us sanctified vessels for the Holy Spirit.

Fredrick Beuchner wrote of the Buddha, "Buddha sits enthroned beneath the Bo-tree in the lotus position. His lips are faintly parted in the smile of one who has passed beyond every power in earth or heaven to touch him. 'He who loves fifty has fifty woes, he who loves ten has ten woes, he who loves none has no woes,' he has said. His eyes are closed."<sup>xiii</sup>

Beuchner went on to write of the contrast with Jesus. While Buddha shut out all love and suffering with his closed eyes, Jesus' love for us all took on Himself our sin, sin which caused all the suffering in the world. In one sense, Buddha had discovered the truth that love for the things of the world ends in pain. He just didn't know that there is One who is worthy of our love and to love Him can bring immeasurable joy along with suffering that builds character (Romans 5:1-3<sup>xiv</sup>). Jesus loves us even when it brings Him pain. **He counted the souls of mankind worth the suffering He would endure.** There is heavenly reward that Buddha was unaware of. The so-called bliss of Nirvana is literally nothing compared to eternity in the glorious presence of Jesus and His great love.

This distress was what Jesus struggled with upon coming to Jerusalem for the last time and in the Garden of Gethsemane (John 12:27,28a<sup>xv</sup>; Luke 22:42-44<sup>xvi</sup>). He knew the physical torture that was coming, but much more, the pain of bearing the sins of the world. Yet, He also could see what was on the other side: the Holy Spirit empowering His followers and the way His life in us would affect the world (Hebrews 12:2<sup>xvii</sup>). He could see the bride made holy, ready for the marriage feast of the Lamb (Revelation 19:7<sup>xviii</sup>).

Jesus was tempted in every way we are and yet was without sin (Hebrews 4:15<sup>xix</sup>). His distress far outweighed any distress we will experience. We all experience times of distress, but we can know Jesus understands what we are going through and His direction and power will see us through. We need a vision for what is on the other side too. Jesus' warning should help us to know what to expect so that we don't have wrong expectations.

*<sup>51</sup> Do you think that I have come to give peace on earth? No, I tell you, but rather division. <sup>52</sup> For from now on in one house there will be five divided, three against two and two against three. <sup>53</sup> They will be divided, father against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother, mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law.*" Luke 12:51-53 Jesus used a passage from Micah 7:6<sup>xx</sup> to warn the disciples of what they would have to endure because of their love for Him. Some of our distress will come because of our faith and the

rejection of it by family members. Truth divides. While Jesus is the Prince of Peace and came to bring peace to people of good will, there can be no peace with ungodliness (Isaiah 9:6<sup>xxi</sup>; Luke 1:78,79<sup>xxii</sup>; 2:14<sup>xxiii</sup>; 2 Corinthians 6:14<sup>xxiv</sup>). When we refuse to applaud sin as good thing, we face the rejection of those who have not yet seen the light. That hurts the most when it is from a family member. Our stance on Biblical standards and declaration that the forgiveness of Jesus is the only way to escape judgement for our sins will bring division. Just mention the name of Jesus and you will get a reaction.

Everyone wants to be accepted. Family members will want us to agree with their views. When we take a stand for truth, the false sense of peace departs from the household. I say "false sense of peace" because when sin is tolerated and applauded, there is no real peace even among family members. When there is no faith in God, material things become a god. Then family members will fight over those gods. One family member's faith in Christ only intensifies the divisions that are already there. When faith enters the picture the rivalries and competition explode.

When several family members come to faith, the boundary lines are set and the unredeemed side will fuel one another with their disgust, while the born-again side prays for the salvation of those family members. Conviction makes the unbelievers even more angry. Either there is separation or conversion. Matthew adds the rest of the quote from Micah, *"A man's foes will be those of his own household"* - from Matthew 10:36<sup>xxv</sup>.

Though Christianity is the outcome of Judaism, the battle is especially intense in Jewish households. It is no wonder that Satan inspired Hitler to use the nominal Christians as a tool to promote his hatred. That would further bring a rift between the two. Thankfully, today that rift is being mended. Many Jews are beginning to realize that biblical Christians are their friends. Messianic believers are beginning to hold rank in the army and even be accepted in government. This is an amazing turning point that Jesus pointed to when He said the veil would be lifted when the times of the Gentiles come to an end (2 Corinthians 2:16<sup>xxvi</sup>; Luke 21:24<sup>xxvii</sup>). We are now transitioning into that day.

Converts from Judaism and Islam will tell you how faith in Jesus divides. We see this division around the world. The mantra of our culture is that all religions lead to God. There is a National Geographic special that promotes that idea, graciously including Christianity as one way, but ignoring Jesus' claim to be the only way to the Father.

Unlike our current culture, Jesus did not claim people are basically good, quite the opposite. Jesus did not espouse doing whatever you like as long as it doesn't hurt people, or that the desires you were born with must be how God made you. The Bible teaches we are born with a sinful nature that can only be overcome by surrender to Jesus. He demands submission to His Lordship in our lives (Matthew 16:24,25<sup>xxviii</sup>). He wants complete surrender. But once we realize He is love and truth, that He gave everything for us, it makes total sense that we owe Him our all.

The demand to be Lord over our lives is what causes the division. The Caesars demanded to be lord. We each want to be our own lord. We are encouraged by our culture to do our thing any way we like. Jesus says that is the path of most people, the broad road that leads to destruction (Matthew 7:13<sup>xxix</sup>). And though we have millions of examples of this being true, our fallen nature balks at surrendering to His love. Therefore, He brings division. But to those who surrender, He brings real peace. He gives us His peace (John 14:27<sup>xxx</sup>). We have a peace no Buddhist or any other faith can experience. It is knowing you are forgiven and destined for eternity in the presence of your Creator who

loves you more than you can comprehend. It's knowing the days of your life are planned in advance and that all things work together for good (Psalm 139:16<sup>xxxii</sup>; Romans 8:28<sup>xxxiii</sup>). It's not pie in the sky, but rather it is a present reality (Ephesians 2:17,18<sup>xxxiii</sup>). But to those who reject these truths, it is a declaration of war. They want to silence us. Isn't it amazing that communism and totalitarians see Christianity as their biggest threat!

*<sup>54</sup> He also said to the crowds, "When you see a cloud rising in the west, you say at once, 'A shower is coming.' And so it happens. <sup>55</sup> And when you see the south wind blowing, you say, 'There will be scorching heat,' and it happens. Luke 12:54,55* Matthew tells us this was in response to the Pharisees and Sadducees request for a sign from heaven (Matthew 16:1<sup>xxxiv</sup>). This may have been a similar message addressed to the crowds as Jesus approached Jerusalem. If the message to the Pharisees was that they should see Jesus is the Messiah, the message to the crowds approaching Jerusalem was that they did not see the signs that indicated He was the suffering servant before He would become the conquering King.

Rain came off the Mediterranean in the west and heat came from the deserts in the south. The signs indicated what weather was coming. John the Baptist had declared he was the one preparing the way for the Messiah. The Messiah was predicted to heal blind eyes, deaf ears, and make the lame walk (Isaiah 42:6,7<sup>xxxv</sup>; 35:5,6<sup>xxxvi</sup>). They witnessed the fulfillment of those signs. He was from the house of David, born in Bethlehem, and His ministry was in Galilee (Isaiah 9:1,2<sup>xxxvii</sup>). How is it they could not see all these signs? How is it that people today do not look back and see all the prophecies He fulfilled and His victory over death and still demand more proof?

It reminds me of what Jesus said to John's disciples in Luke 7:22,23 *<sup>22</sup> And he answered them, "Go and tell John what you have seen and heard: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, the poor have good news preached to them. <sup>23</sup> And blessed is the one who is not offended by me."* That was Jesus' response to John's uncertainty about whether Jesus was the Messiah, and it is a good one for anyone who doubts.

*<sup>56</sup> You hypocrites! You know how to interpret the appearance of earth and sky, but why do you not know how to interpret the present time?* Luke 12:56 The people claimed to be students of the Law and the prophets but ignored the signs in them that proved Jesus is the Messiah. Surely the people could see the Pharisees trying to trip Jesus up (Luke 11:53,54<sup>xxxviii</sup>). The Scriptures could have warned them of what would follow. What was the past cycle when prophets appeared? In most cases the prophet's words would be rejected. The prophets were murdered. Then God would bring the judgments the prophet predicted. That is what happened in Israel. We, too, should discern the signs of the end-time being fulfilled in our days (2 Thessalonians 2:3<sup>xxxix</sup>; 1 Thessalonians 5:2-4<sup>xl</sup>).

*<sup>57</sup> "And why do you not judge for yourselves what is right? <sup>58</sup> As you go with your accuser before the magistrate, make an effort to settle with him on the way, lest he drag you to the judge, and the judge hand you over to the officer, and the officer put you in prison. <sup>59</sup> I tell you, you will never get out until you have paid the very last penny."* Luke 12:57-59 Having forewarned the disciples and the crowd of what was coming, Jesus gave practical advice but with obvious spiritual implications. When you take the side of the kingdom of God you put yourself in a minority. That makes you a target. You go to court at a disadvantage for you are already suspect. So why not meet with your accuser on the way and settle with him or her. They usually want some physical thing because that is

what they live for. It may not be fair but give it to them and settle the issue. Don't expect justice from this world. We have a pretty good legal system, but it often fails. It is becoming increasingly evident that judges ignore the law and decide from their personal worldview. If they are biased against Christians, you'll end up paying more than you ever expected.

There are spiritual overtones to that message. In the next week's passage, the people acknowledged that they understood those spiritual implications. The Holy Spirit convicts us of sin time and time again. We are indebted to God for everything. He doesn't demand that we pay anything for all His goodness, but He does judge rebellion against His right ways. He does expect our worship. Jesus is the judge (John 5:22<sup>xli</sup>). If we harden our hearts and refuse to accept the truth of the Holy Spirit's conviction, we will end up standing before Jesus on the Day of Judgment. By then our hearts will be so hardened we will never repent or worship Him. There is no way we will every pay off that debt we owe.

How do we settle along the way? We listen to conviction. We repent, which means to change directions. And we accept the payment of our debt that is offered from Jesus' sacrifice (1 John 1:9<sup>xlii</sup>). That means we should be more obligated than ever to serve Him, and yet it is freely given. Once accepted, the power of it will change our lives. That is the Gospel, the sanctifying fire. It doesn't mean we stop sinning. In fact, it makes us even more aware of how sinful we are, but also how reliant we are upon the grace of God and the righteousness that comes from Jesus (2 Corinthians 5:21<sup>xliii</sup>; Ephesians 1:7,8<sup>xliv</sup>).

Today we've covered four short teachings. The first was the fire Jesus came to cast. Is it burning brightly in you? The second was the warning of division in families because of His claims. The third was we should be discerning of the signs of the times. And the last one taught us not expect justice from this world, so we should settle out of court. Taking it in a spiritual sense, be sure you are right with God for we do not know the day we will die. These four teachings remind us this world is not our home. Jesus' disciples do not live for comfort, but for the glory of God who gave Himself for us that we might truly live. We are just passing through, strangers in the earth as the patriarchs were (Hebrews 11:16<sup>xlv</sup>). Are you ready to stand in His presence?

## Questions

- 1 What kind of fire did Jesus want to cast into the world?
- 2 What is the result of that fire?
- 3 What is the baptism Jesus was referring to?
- 4 Why was it so distressing?
- 5 What is the major difference between Jesus and Buddha?
- 6 Why was He willing to endure it?
- 7 Why do households divide over Jesus?
- 8 Contrast the world's teaching with Jesus' teaching?
- 9 Why can't people see all the signs that prove Jesus is Messiah and Lord?
- 10 Why should we settle out of court when possible?

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<sup>i</sup> **Isaiah 9:7 (ESV)**

<sup>7</sup> Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.

<sup>ii</sup> **2 Corinthians 6:17 (ESV)**

<sup>17</sup> Therefore go out from their midst, and be separate from them, says the Lord, and touch no unclean thing; then I will welcome you,

<sup>iii</sup> **John 14:16-17 (ESV)**

<sup>16</sup> And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever,  
<sup>17</sup> even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you.

<sup>iv</sup> **Luke 3:16 (ESV)**

<sup>16</sup> John answered them all, saying, "I baptize you with water, but he who is mightier than I is coming, the strap of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.

<sup>v</sup> **Matthew 3:11 (ESV)**

<sup>11</sup> "I baptize you with water for repentance, but he who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.

<sup>vi</sup> **Luke 3:17 (ESV)**

<sup>17</sup> His winnowing fork is in his hand, to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his barn, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire."

<sup>vii</sup> **John 8:34 (ESV)**

<sup>34</sup> Jesus answered them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who practices sin is a slave to sin.

<sup>viii</sup> **John 7:43 (ESV)**

<sup>43</sup> So there was a division among the people over him.

<sup>ix</sup> **John 16:8 (ESV)**

<sup>8</sup> And when he comes, he will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment:

<sup>x</sup> **Matthew 24:37 (ESV)**

<sup>37</sup> For as were the days of Noah, so will be the coming of the Son of Man.

<sup>xi</sup> **Matthew 24:10-12 (ESV)**

<sup>10</sup> And then many will fall away and betray one another and hate one another. <sup>11</sup> And many false prophets will arise and lead many astray. <sup>12</sup> And because lawlessness will be increased, the love of many will grow cold.

<sup>xii</sup> **Mark 10:38 (ESV)**

<sup>38</sup> Jesus said to them, "You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, or to be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized?"

<sup>xiii</sup> - *Now and Then* San Francisco: Harper, 1983, pp. 54-55 as quoted in *Preaching the Word - Preaching the Word - Luke, Volume II: That You May Know the Truth.*

<sup>xiv</sup> **Romans 5:1-3 (ESV)**

<sup>1</sup> Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>2</sup> Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God. <sup>3</sup> Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance,

<sup>xv</sup> **John 12:27-28a (ESV)**

<sup>27</sup> "Now is my soul troubled. And what shall I say? 'Father, save me from this hour'? But for this purpose I have come to this hour. <sup>28a</sup> Father, glorify your name."

<sup>xvi</sup> **Luke 22:42-44 (ESV)**

<sup>42</sup> saying, "Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me. Nevertheless, not my will, but yours, be done." <sup>43</sup> And there appeared to him an angel from heaven, strengthening him. <sup>44</sup> And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly; and his sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground.

<sup>xvii</sup> **Hebrews 12:2 (ESV)**

<sup>2</sup> looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.

<sup>xviii</sup> **Revelation 19:7 (ESV)**

<sup>7</sup> Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his Bride has made herself ready;

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<sup>xix</sup> **Hebrews 4:15 (ESV)**

<sup>15</sup> For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin.

<sup>xx</sup> **Micah 7:6 (ESV)**

<sup>6</sup> for the son treats the father with contempt, the daughter rises up against her mother, the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; a man's enemies are the men of his own house.

<sup>xxi</sup> **Isaiah 9:6 (ESV)**

<sup>6</sup> For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

<sup>xxii</sup> **Luke 1:78-79 (ESV)**

<sup>78</sup> because of the tender mercy of our God, whereby the sunrise shall visit us from on high <sup>79</sup> to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace."

<sup>xxiii</sup> **Luke 2:14 (ESV)**

<sup>14</sup> "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!"

<sup>xxiv</sup> **2 Corinthians 6:14 (ESV)**

<sup>14</sup> Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. For what partnership has righteousness with lawlessness? Or what fellowship has light with darkness?

<sup>xxv</sup> **Matthew 10:36 (ESV)**

<sup>36</sup> And a person's enemies will be those of his own household.

<sup>xxvi</sup> **2 Corinthians 3:16 (ESV)**

<sup>16</sup> But when one turns to the Lord, the veil is removed.

<sup>xxvii</sup> **Luke 21:24 (ESV)**

<sup>24</sup> They will fall by the edge of the sword and be led captive among all nations, and Jerusalem will be trampled underfoot by the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.

<sup>xxviii</sup> **Matthew 16:24-25 (ESV)**

<sup>24</sup> Then Jesus told his disciples, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. <sup>25</sup> For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.

<sup>xxix</sup> **Matthew 7:13 (ESV)**

<sup>13</sup> "Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many.

<sup>xxx</sup> **John 14:27 (ESV)**

<sup>27</sup> Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.

<sup>xxxi</sup> **Psalms 139:16 (ESV)**

<sup>16</sup> Your eyes saw my unformed substance; in your book were written, every one of them, the days that were formed for me, when as yet there was none of them.

<sup>xxxii</sup> **Romans 8:28 (ESV)**

<sup>28</sup> And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.

<sup>xxxiii</sup> **Ephesians 2:17-18 (ESV)**

<sup>17</sup> And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near.

<sup>18</sup> For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father.

<sup>xxxiv</sup> **Matthew 16:1 (ESV)**

<sup>1</sup> And the Pharisees and Sadducees came, and to test him they asked him to show them a sign from heaven.

<sup>xxxv</sup> **Isaiah 42:6-7 (ESV)**

<sup>6</sup> "I am the LORD; I have called you in righteousness; I will take you by the hand and keep you; I will give you as a covenant for the people, a light for the nations, <sup>7</sup> to open the eyes that are blind, to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon, from the prison those who sit in darkness.

<sup>xxxvi</sup> **Isaiah 35:5-6 (ESV)**

<sup>5</sup> Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped;

<sup>6</sup> then shall the lame man leap like a deer, and the tongue of the mute sing for joy. For waters break forth in the wilderness, and streams in the desert;

<sup>xxxvii</sup> **Isaiah 9:1-2 (ESV)**

<sup>1</sup> But there will be no gloom for her who was in anguish. In the former time he brought into contempt the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the latter time he has made glorious the way of the

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sea, the land beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the nations. <sup>2</sup> The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shone.

<sup>xxxviii</sup> **Luke 11:53-54 (ESV)**

<sup>53</sup> As he went away from there, the scribes and the Pharisees began to press him hard and to provoke him to speak about many things,

<sup>54</sup> lying in wait for him, to catch him in something he might say.

<sup>xxxix</sup> **2 Thessalonians 2:3 (ESV)**

<sup>3</sup> Let no one deceive you in any way. For that day will not come, unless the rebellion comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction,

<sup>xl</sup> **1 Thessalonians 5:2-4 (ESV)**

<sup>2</sup> For you yourselves are fully aware that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. <sup>3</sup> While people are saying, "There is peace and security," then sudden destruction will come upon them as labor pains come upon a pregnant woman, and they will not escape. <sup>4</sup> But you are not in darkness, brothers, for that day to surprise you like a thief.

<sup>xli</sup> **John 5:22 (ESV)**

<sup>22</sup> The Father judges no one, but has given all judgment to the Son,

<sup>xlii</sup> **1 John 1:9 (ESV)**

<sup>9</sup> If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

<sup>xliii</sup> **2 Corinthians 5:21 (ESV)**

<sup>21</sup> For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

<sup>xliv</sup> **Ephesians 1:7-8 (ESV)**

<sup>7</sup> In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, <sup>8</sup> which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight

<sup>xlv</sup> **Hebrews 11:16 (ESV)**

<sup>16</sup> But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared for them a city.