

## THE REALLY GOOD LIFE

*(Life of Christ Series)*

Gospel of Luke

### The Twilight Zone

"You're traveling into another dimension..." Rod Serling, the macabre, chain-smoking narrator began. "That realm somewhere between night and day..." he continued in a haunting tone, as he introduced the 1950's weekly thriller, "The Twilight Zone". In the new era of television it was a creepy sort of show that left viewers feeling unsettled and disturbed about the abnormal detour their imagination was being forced to travel. In the days before color television it was a program best shown in black and white with shadowy hues of gray in between.

What's really eerie is that today the world has entered the twilight zone of human history. We are at a time when the faint light of this long day of grace called the Church Age is blending with the coming darkness of the Tribulation Period. Dusk is a lovely time of day; and it's a hazardous time when the setting sun casts oblique shadows that tend to fool one's vision and perception. During this brief time of twilight it is a safety rule of the road to treat twilight as night time and turn on your headlights. In this prophetic twilight time, wise Christians must turn on the headlights of Scripture and their faith in Jesus Christ to see and be seen as we head toward the dark days preceding the return of our Savior (*Titus 2:11-14*). The enemy of our souls loves this twilight time since his specialty is mixing light and dark into varying shades of gray to cloud the truth of God (*2 Cor. 11:13-15*). Sadly, many professing Christians' social and spiritual lives flirt with tricky twilight shadows of spiritual lethargy and compromised lifestyles (*1 Tim. 4:1, 2 Tim. 4:3-4, etc.*). Their impaired vision and perception recklessly endangers them, their companions, and the on-coming traffic of souls headed in the wrong direction in these end times (*Titus 1:15-16, 2 Cor. 6:14-7:1*).

In these last days, as the Holy Spirit withdraws His restraining influence upon evil in the world (*2 Thessalonians 2:6-7*), true Son-light is fading and darkness is beginning to prevail (*2 Timothy 3:13*). Its becoming obvious who truly belongs to the Lord (*John 3:19-21, Ephesians 5:8-14, 2 Timothy 2:19*). True followers of the Lord Jesus just don't mingle in the twilight shadows somewhere between what's right and what's wrong (*1 Thessalonians 5:5-8*). On the contrary, they know that "***If we say that we have fellowship with Him and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth***" (*1 John 2:6*). Fleeing the shadows, real disciples of Jesus "...walk in the light as He is in the light..." so they can have "***fellowship with one another and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses from all sin***" (*1 John 1:6-7*).

The goal of Christ's Bible Fellowship in these final days before our evacuation to meet the Lord in the air (*1 Cor. 15:50-52 & 1 Thess. 4:16-18*) is to have 100% of our church family reject and refrain from twilight zone Christianity and be totally committed to Son-shine Christianity as we await the Savior (*2 Cor. 11:2, 1 John 2:28-3:3*). For those who are serious about walking in the light as He is in the light instead of sneaking around in the half-light, dim-light, strobe-light, party-light, twilight of this world, CBF is glad to be your place of enlightenment in these last days (*1 Peter 2:9-12*). If you say you're a Christian but still love the dark (*2 Peter 2: 20-22, 1 John 2:15-19*), remember twilight is not Son-light; twilight belongs to the night that never ends. While the Son's rays of grace are still able to reach your heart, repent from your dark ways and let Jesus shine His grace into your soul today (*Romans 13:11-14*). Make this day the highlight of your life: "... heed as a light (the gospel) as a light that shines in a dark place, and let the morning star (Jesus) arise in your heart..." (*2 Peter 1:19*). You must leave the twilight zone and enter the new dimension of His eternal light where "... the path is like the shining sun that shines brighter unto the perfect day..." (*Proverbs 4:18*).

-PtL

## THE PROPHECY WATCH

*(How to Tell Time in the Last Days)*

Luke 17:20-37

A day in Israel begins at sunset and concludes at sunset the following afternoon. This is in keeping with God's way of marking time in the beginning – "So the evening and the morning were the first day." (*Genesis 1:5*). Therefore each day began at dusk (6 PM) and ended the same time the next afternoon. Four 3-hour 'night watches' marked the first 12 hours of a Jewish day from 6 PM to sunrise (6 AM). The gospel of Mark records the names given to each of these time periods (*Mark 13:32-36*): 6 PM to 9 PM ('evening'); 9 PM to 12 midnight ('midnight'); 12 AM to 3 AM ('rooster crowing') and 3 AM to 6 AM ('morning'). The daylight hours were simply called 'the 1<sup>st</sup> hour', '2<sup>nd</sup> hour', '3<sup>rd</sup> hour' and so on until sunset (the '12<sup>th</sup> hour'). The 4 periods of darkness were called '1<sup>st</sup> watch' (6-9 pm), '2<sup>nd</sup> watch' (9-midnight), '3<sup>rd</sup> watch' (midnight-3 am) and '4<sup>th</sup> watch' (3-6 am). Jesus said: "***Watch therefore, for you do not know when the Master of the house is coming – in the evening, at midnight, at the crowing of the rooster, or in the morning – lest coming suddenly, he find you asleep. And what I say to you, I say to all: WATCH!***" (*Mark 13:35-36*). With the first coming of Christ began a new day for the world. In biblical time-keeping, this New Testament day began in the darkness of Jesus' rejection and death on the cross, continues through the night time of His absence as 'the Church Age' until the dawn of a new age at His 2<sup>nd</sup> coming to establish the kingdom of God on earth. So, what time is it? Which watch of the night is it? The night is 'far spent – the day is at hand' – **BE READY, HE'S COMING!** (*Romans 13:11-14*).

Which 'watch' is it? If Christ's 1<sup>st</sup> advent came and went as the 1<sup>st</sup> watch, and the apostolic period of the Church Age came and went as the 2<sup>nd</sup> watch, and the 4<sup>th</sup> watch is the approaching Tribulation period just before 'the Bright and Morning Star' Jesus returns (*Revelation 22:16*), then we are in the last hours or moments of the 3<sup>rd</sup> watch (the 'Church Age.' He is coming! "*Surely I am coming quickly.*" "*Amen. Even so, come Lord Jesus!*" (*Rev. 22:20*))

### The 1<sup>st</sup> Watch

#### *(The First Coming of Jesus Christ)*

"Now when He (Jesus) was asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, He answered them and said, "*The kingdom of God does not come with observation; nor will they say, 'See here!' or 'See there!' Do not go after them. For indeed, the kingdom of God is within (or among) you.*" **17:20-21**

The kingdom of God can be understood as *personal* (Christ's Spirit within the heart of each individual believer); *corporate* (Christ as Head over *the Church* (globally) and *the church* (locally)); and *prophetically* (the coming literal millennial 1000 year kingdom of God on earth). The aspect of the kingdom of God Christians must focus on is the *personal* aspect of Christ as King of your life (spirit, soul and body) right now, every day.

- Do you think most Christians understand their relationship to Christ as Him ruling and reigning over them, within them every day? (Explain and discuss)
- Practically, how does being under the King reigning on the throne of your heart affect your daily life?

### The 2<sup>nd</sup> Watch

#### *(The Apostolic Era / Early Church Age)*

"Then He said to the disciples, "*The days will come when you will desire to see one of the days of the Son of Man, and you will not see it. And they will say to you, 'Look here!' or 'Look there!' Do not go after them or follow them. For as the lightning that flashes out of one part under heaven shines to the other part under heaven, so also the Son of Man will be in His day. But first He must suffer many things and be rejected by this generation.*" **17:22-25**

What is there about false religions, false prophets, and teachers that appeals to so many people (*2 Corinthians 11:12-13*)?

- Have you ever been enticed to *look* into some religious group or religious celebrity for special spiritual enlightenment?
- How can you tell if it is one of the last days 'decoys' Jesus warned about? (*1 John 4:1, 2 John 7-11*)

### The 3<sup>rd</sup> Watch

#### *(The Church Age & The Latter Days)*

"And as it was in the days of Noah, so it will be also in the days of the Son of Man. They ate, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all. Likewise as it was also in the days of Lot: They ate, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they built, but on the day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all. Even so will it be in the day when the Son of Man is revealed. In that day, he who is on the housetop, and his goods are in the house, let him not come down to take them away. And likewise the one who is in the field, let him not turn back. Remember Lot's wife. Whoever seeks to save his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life will preserve it." **17:26-33**

Discuss the social similarities between 'the last days before the great flood' in Noah's time and our world today (*Genesis 6:5-8*).

- What was Noah and his family doing to prepare for the end times? (*2 Peter 2:4-5*) What about us today?

Discuss the moral similarities between Sodom and Gomorrah just before their destruction and morality in the world today. (*Genesis 18:20, 19:4-5; 2 Peter 2:6*).

- What was Lot and his family doing as judgment day approached? (*2 Peter 2:7-8*) What kind of believer does Lot picture?

Discuss *2 Peter 2:9-10* and holy living in these unholy days before Christ comes.

### The 4<sup>th</sup> Watch

#### *(The Tribulation & Second Coming of Jesus Christ)*

"I tell you, in that night there will be two in one bed: the one will be taken and the other will be left. Two will be grinding together: the one will be taken and the other left. Two will be in the field: the one will be taken and the other left. And they answered and said to Him, "Where, Lord?" So He said to them, "Wherever the body is, there the eagles will be gathered together." **17:34-37**

These verses teach that when Christ returns to start the kingdom on earth, some will be 'taken' off to hell and some will 'be left' to inhabit the kingdom.

- How does His return someday affect the way you live now? (*Titus 2:11-14*)