

Gospel Truth

Biblical Instruction and Encouragement for the Mission Field Worldwide.

WHEN THE RAIN CAME

There came a time in the history of the world when God poured out His judgment and destroyed mankind because of their gross wickedness. As the population grew, "GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart. And the LORD said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth" (Genesis 6:5-7).

The influence of sin was great and was exacerbated by the fact that "the sons of God" began to marry the "daughters of men" (Genesis 6:1-2). The sons of God were those that came from the lineage of Seth and had a background of respecting and acknowledging the God of Heaven. They began to marry the daughters of men who came from the lineage of Cain, idolatrous and ungodly people. It remains true in this present evil world when people marry outside of the faith, they are marrying outside of the will of God; the consequence is the spiritual downfall of those who at one time had communion with God.

In the midst of evil, "Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord" (Genesis 6:8) because he was obedient to the will of God. God provided an avenue of escape for Noah and his family

from the destruction that was to come. He gave instruction to Noah to build an ark, for God was going to bring death to all the living by a flood of water upon the earth.

Noah was a preacher of righteousness and most likely declared to all that would listen of the impending doom and judgment of God. In the face of probable opposition and scorn, Noah labored with faith, year after year, building the ark. There came a day, after the ark was filled with the animals that would be spared, when God instructed Noah, "Come thou and all thy house into the ark" (Genesis 7:1). "For yet seven days, and I will cause it to rain upon the earth" (4). God shut them in the ark, and in the six hundredth year of Noah's life, the fountains of the deep broke up and the windows of heaven were opened. It began to rain as never before seen upon the earth. God did what He said He would do, and all people except for those on the ark perished in the flood because of their rejection of the almighty God.

Consider how it must have been to those who had seen this man building an ark. They heard the warning of judgment to come, they were told to turn their hearts to God, and yet they ignored



"They heard the warning... they were told to turn their hearts to God, and yet they ignored the message. However, one day a raindrop fell from the sky."

(continued on page 2)

WHAT THE BIBLE TEACHES ABOUT...

Word of God

2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:20-21; Matt. 24:35

Relationship of Love

Matt. 22:37-40; John 14:21-23; 1 John 4:7-11

Repentance

Acts 3:19; Acts 17:30; 2 Cor. 7:10

New Birth

John 3:3-7; 2 Cor. 5:17; Rom. 6:1-4;
Eph. 2:1, 5-6

Freedom From Sin

1 John 5:18; Matt. 1:21; John 8:11

Infilling of the Holy Spirit

Acts 19:2; Acts 15:8-9; Acts 1:8

Holiness

Luke 1:73-75; Heb. 12:14; 1 Peter 1:15-16;
Titus 2:11-12; Rom. 6:22

Kingdom of God

Luke 17:20-21; Romans 14:17; John 18:36

The Church

Acts 2:47; Eph. 4:4-6; 1 Cor. 12:12-13; Col 1:18

Unity

John 17:20-23; Gal 3:28; Rev. 18:2-4

Ordinances

Matt. 28:19-20; Matt. 26:26-30;
1 Cor. 11:23-27; John 13:14-17

Divine Healing

Luke 4:18; Isaiah 53:4-5; James 5:13-16

Sanctity of Marriage

Matt. 19:5-6; Luke 16:18; Rom. 7:2-3;
1 Cor. 7:10-11

Outward Appearance

1 Tim. 2:9-10; 1 Cor. 11:14-15; Deut. 22:5

End of Time

2 Peter 3:7-12; John 5:28-29; 2 Cor. 5:10;
Matt 25:31-46

Pacifism

Luke 6:27-29; Luke 18:20

Worship

John 4:23-24; Eph. 5:19; 2 Cor. 3:17

Great Commission

Mark 16:15

(continued from page 1)

the message. However, one day a raindrop fell from the sky. Before long there was a deluge of water, and the idolater, the agnostic, and the atheist believed in the message of Noah—but it was too late.

Crowds of people may have swarmed around the ark when the rain came. “Let us in. Open the door. Save us!” The opportunity for salvation from death was past, for the door was shut. Time had run out.



“The idolater,
the agnostic, and the
atheist believed in the
message of Noah—
but it was too late.”

Just as it was in the days of Noah, so it will be when Jesus returns to this earth to usher us to the judgment seat of God. “As the days of Noe [Noah] were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe [Noah] entered into the ark, And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be” (Matthew 24:37-39).

2 Peter 3:6-7, 10 teaches that as the world was overflowed with water and people perished in the flood, that this present world will be destroyed with fire and will be burned up when the Lord returns. There will be no second

chances, there will be no time to pray to be saved. This is the time to prepare to meet God. This is the time to get on the ark of salvation. We are living in the last days, and time is running out. Jesus Christ is at the door and this world is about to be consumed by the final judgment of God. People are living as if there were no end to come. The world scoffs at the saint of God. People belittle the doctrine of holiness and sanctification. People are seeking their own ways and following after their lusts. Sin and evil are rampant in this world. It is about over. God will send His Son in judgment just as sure as He sent the flood.

We are living in the last days before the fire of God is poured out in devastating finality on this earth. When Jesus returns, it will be too late to repent. Now is the time. What will it take for you to believe? Will it be too late for you? Time is running out. ■

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—Editor, Michael Smith

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Editorial



Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen. — Revelation 1:7

One day, not far off, the Lord Jesus will come breaking through the clouds with His angels. In a moment, in a twinkling of an eye, at this last trump, time will be no more. There will be a crashing of ages when time ceases and all people of all generations, living and dead, come together. There will be a universal resurrection, and all people will stand before the great white throne of judgment. The book of life will be opened, and we will all be judged. The righteous will inherit eternal life in Heaven to be forever with the Lord, and the unrighteous will be cast into a lake of fire for eternity.

The burden of this issue is evangelistic in nature. There is a truth that the Spirit of God wants saint and sinner to get hold of: Time is running out.

The Spirit of God has moved upon me many times over the last few months, and I pray that the Holy Spirit would move you in your spirit as you read this issue. This is not just another paper, another doctrine, another message. It is a divine cry of the Lord to remind us that time on this earth is short. The coming of the Lord is very close. Jesus is coming back, and it will be soon.

The sin and immorality of this world is ever before the Lord. As with Sodom and Gomorrah, the judgment of God is about to fall. Flee for your life and be saved. If you have a profession but have not been loving and serving God with all of your heart, now is the time to make a change. Humble your heart to God and cry out for mercy, for soon, mercy will be no more. Backslider, today is the day to come back home. You will go farther and farther away from God unless you plead the blood of Jesus. Let us not hide behind our family name, church history, reputation, or standing in the congregation. Let us with openness and honesty before God examine our lives and be sure we are clear in all things before the God of Heaven.

We do not know when the Lord will return and this cry has been made for 2000 years; but we are nearer than ever, and the cry of the Spirit that “Time Is Running Out” is clear and distinct. Heed the warning. Presume not that tomorrow will come. There are sins that need to be repented of, impurities that need to be cleansed, relationships that need to be mended, and hearts that need to be humbled. While I personally do not intend to be an alarmist, I mean by the power of God to sound the warning.

Let us set our house in order, for time is almost out. Let us live every day as if it were our last, for one day soon it will be.

Michael W. Smith

October 2022

**I MUST DIE, BUT WHEN?
I MUST MEET GOD, BUT HOW?
I WILL LIVE IN ETERNITY, BUT WHERE?**



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Bible Study Guide

Subject: The End Is Near

Scripture Reading: *Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh.* — Matthew 24:44

Summary: According to the scripture and the pattern of God’s timing and judgment, time on this earth is running out. The second coming of Christ is near at hand. Prepare to meet thy God.

I. Illustrative Parable

Ten Virgins (Matthew 25:1-13)

II. Pattern and Timing of God’s Judgment

- A. Adam & Eve—Flood: ~1656 years
- B. Flood—Mosaic Law: <900
- C. Mosaic Law—Christ’s Death: <1500
- D. Christ’s Death—Present Day: <2000

III. Judgment of God

- A. Luke 17:26-29 As in the days of Noah.
- B. Romans 14:10-12 All will stand at the judgment.

IV. Time Will End Unexpectedly

- A. Revelation 16:15 Jesus will come as a thief.
- B. 1 Thessalonians 5:1-3 Peace and safety; then sudden destruction.

V. An Appointed Time

- A. Matthew 24:36 Only the Father knows.
- B. Acts 17:30-31 He has appointed a day He will judge the world.

C. Hebrews 9:27 Death and judgment is an appointment.

D. Luke 12:16-21 “This night thy soul shall be required of thee.”

VI. The End Is at Hand

- A. Romans 13:11 “For now is our salvation nearer than when we believed.”
- B. 1 Peter 4:7 The end of all things is at hand.
- C. Revelation 22:20 “Surely I come quickly. Amen.”

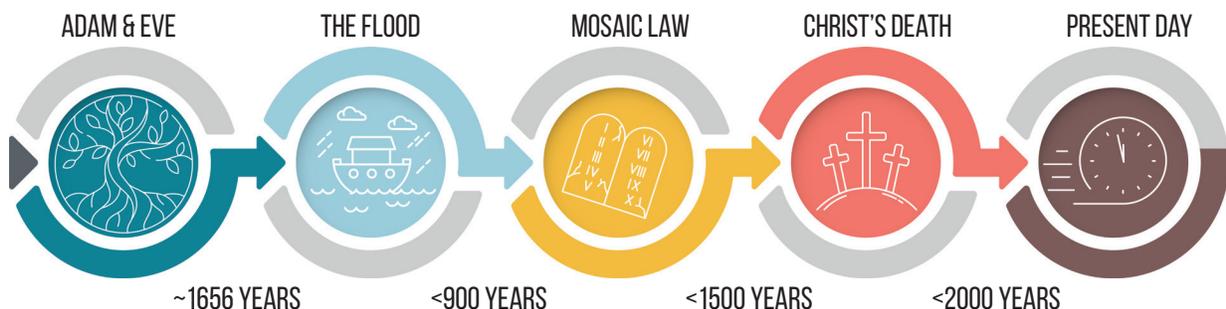
VII. Final Things

- A. 2 Peter 3:3-9 Scoffers and God’s longsuffering.
- B. 2 Peter 3:10-12 What manner of person should you be?

Conclusion

Set thine house in order: for thou shalt die, and not live. — Isaiah 38:1

Pattern and Timing of God’s Judgments Through History



TIME IS RUNNING OUT



The sun rises and the sun sets. The hands on the clock of time continue to turn. People are living life as if there will always be a tomorrow, another day, another opportunity. However, we stand on the brink of eternity, and time as we know it is about to run out.

Christ Will Return

Jesus is coming soon and when He returns, this earth will be destroyed. We will all stand in judgment before God and then live for eternity in Heaven or Hell. There will be no measurement of time, for time will exist no longer. Are you prepared?

The Ten Virgins

Jesus told a parable of ten virgins in Matthew 25:1-13 in order to warn us of His impending return. Five of the virgins were wise and five were foolish. They all had some profession of godliness as they waited for the bridegroom to return. Five of these virgins, people who had separated themselves to some extent from the unrighteousness of the world, grew careless. They let the oil in their lamp run out. They grew lukewarm and lost their zealous love for God. The daily grace and power of the Holy Spirit no longer had freedom. One time the fire had burned, but through time and neglect the fire went out. This is reflective of many professing Christians today.

“While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept” (5). The bridegroom is tarrying His coming. This denotes that Christ is delaying His return to this earth and in a sense is “past time.” While He delayed, the virgins all

slumbered and slept, for it was close to midnight. It was a time of darkness outside of the glow of the five burning lamps. It was a sleepy, drowsy time. The point of the parable is not that all Christians will be asleep, for there may be some who are waiting and anticipating the coming of the Lord; but there is a warning to wake up and be alert and prepared for the coming back of Jesus Christ.

“At midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him” (6). It is close to midnight. The world is shrouded in the darkness of sin and deception as God is being shoved out of people’s lives. Most people are following their own selfish ways rather than wholeheartedly embracing the purity and godliness of Christ. Be ready in the darkness to hear the sound of the trumpet that Christ has returned. The world is spiritually spiraling downward quickly, and the clock is about to strike twelve, when time will be no more.

When the bridegroom returned, the foolish virgins asked the others for some of their oil, but alas, they had none to spare. As in the parable, we are each accountable for our own spiritual experience before God. We must daily seek God and live ready for the return of the Lord. The parable teaches that the foolish virgins went to buy oil, but upon their return, “the door was shut” (10). It was too late just as it will be when Jesus comes back. There will be no opportunity to realign priorities, no more time to pray and ask forgiveness, no more time to correct wrongs, no more time to make a change. We will all face the Lord as we truly are at that moment. The five foolish virgins cried out for the Lord to open the door, just as they probably did in the days of Noah when the rain came. The Lord said, “Verily

(continued on page 6)

(continued from page 5)

I say unto you, I know you not. Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh" (12-13).

Pattern of Judgment

There is no assurance of another year, and there is no guarantee of tomorrow. When one considers the pattern and timing of God's judgments, it is evident that time is running out. After Adam and Eve sinned, it was 1656 years when God poured out His judgment and destroyed the earth with a flood. Less than nine hundred years after the flood, God made a covenant with His people when He gave the Mosaic law. The Law was in effect for less than 1500 years before the dispensation of Grace came through Jesus Christ. It has now been almost 2000 years since Christ died on the cross to redeem mankind from sin.

How Much Longer?

As a whole, our world has rejected Christ, and sin is abounding. How much longer will God wait before He says, "It is enough"? "And as it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man" (Luke 17:26). People will be eating, drinking, marrying, working, and just living life. Then, the judgment of God will be poured out. When the Lord returns, "every knee shall bow to me [Christ] and every tongue shall confess to God." (Romans 14:11). Very soon, there will be no unbelievers, for we shall see Christ in all His glory and authority. Everyone will stand before the judgment seat of God and will give account of himself to God.

A Sudden End

Time will end unexpectedly, for Christ will come abruptly. "Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments" (Revelation 16:15). Are you keeping your garments clean and pure, or are you contaminated with sinful, carnal spots? "But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them" (1 Thessalonians 5:1-3). We will be given no more warning of when Christ returns than what you are reading now. It will be sudden and unexpected.

No man knoweth the day that time will end except God Himself. Jesus does not even know, but "my Father only" (Matthew 24:36). Ministers and religious organizations have prophesied of the exact time when the Lord would return. This

was an exercise in futility after the flesh, for the scripture teaches clearly that God is the only one that knows. However, God has given us His Word that informs us that we are in the last days and that the end is nigh.

A Day Appointed

God "hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness" (Acts 17:31). He has a set time and by all indications, that day is quickly approaching. No one will escape this appointment. Jesus told a parable in Luke 12:16-21 of a rich man who had big plans for his future. He planned to tear down his barns and build bigger and to take his ease and enjoy life. God spoke to him: "Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee" (20). The man went out into eternity unprepared to meet God. Even if the Lord does not return for us all this night, it might be your time. Are you living ready for your soul to be required of you? You will not be able to change that appointment.

Surely, I Come Quickly

Time is running out. "The end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer" (1 Peter 4:7). Christ testified to John almost 2000 years ago that, "Surely I come quickly" (Revelation 22:20). Where is He now? Surely, He is waiting at the door.

"There shall come in the last days scoffers... saying, 'Where is the promise of His coming?'" (2 Peter 3:3-4). It has been long, but Peter warned them that just as the world was destroyed by water it would be destroyed by fire. God is longsuffering and is "not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (9).

Be Ready When He Comes

"Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness?" (2 Peter 3:11). Time is almost out, for Christ will return any day. Are you ready? If not, this moment is the time to repent and ask Jesus into your heart. Now is the time to prepare your life for the beginning of eternity. If you are not ready to yield now, you will in all probability not be ready tomorrow. ■



"We will be given no more warning of when Christ returns than what you are reading now. It will be sudden and unexpected."

A SOLEMN CHARGE

(Bible Lessons, Vol 17 No. 4, 1985)

Leslie C. Busbee



From Peter and Paul, and James we have the prophecies concerning Jesus coming again. The days are hastening on their way toward that great and final day when these things

will be fulfilled....Let us be assured that He will keep His promise and come again just like it has been foretold. It may be nearer than we might think. "When they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them." The pulse of the world today is the striving for peace and safety. It matters not how secure man makes himself in this present evil world, and how prosperous they become in the material things of life; it will all be dashed from them in a moment. The world will be destroyed at Christ's coming. There will be no intervening rapture and tribulation to give people another chance to be prepared to meet Him. When Jesus comes, the dead will be resurrected, both saint and sinner, both evil and good, both just and unjust. It will all take place at the same time. He will come to take vengeance on them that know not God, and to be glorified in His saints. There will be no interlude of a thousand years between the resurrection of the righteous and the wicked. If we are going to be ready and accepted of Him, we will have to be in that condition when He comes. All grudging, malice, strife, and bitterness must be out of our hearts. It will mean so much for us to be accounted worthy to stand before the Son of Man in that day.

To be ready to meet the Lord is the highest resolve and desire of the child of God. It should be on our minds every day. Today might be the day. How our hearts and minds should be away from this present evil world and fixed on those treasures which are above where Christ is now seated on the right hand of God "expecting" until that day comes when He can come again. "Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many, and unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation" (Hebrews 9:28). Paul said that a crown of life will be given to all of those "who love His appearing."Oh, if we will live faithfully to Him and keep Him uppermost in our hearts and minds, we will welcome the glorious sight of Christ coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory! We are exhorted to be persons in all holy conversation and godliness, and be found in him in peace, without spot, and blameless. These are solemn charges and challenges to us. Jesus told us in Luke 21:36: "Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man." Won't it be worthwhile to suffer as a Christian and be rewarded over there! Just think of the saints who have gone on before us being raised back to life and vitality and awareness again! This coming year could very well be the last of this old planet Earth. If the Lord's coming is twenty years away, then we could count it very close, could we not? If it is ten years away, that would be closer still. Or if it is five years off, see how close it is! For these are but little wisps of time, so soon to pass by. May the Lord direct our hearts into His love and patient waiting for Christ. ■



"Today might be the day. How our hearts and minds should be away from this present evil world and fixed on those treasures which are above."



DID YOU KNOW?

“The second coming of Christ is a prevailing theme of the New Testament. It is referenced eight times more often than the Lord’s initial coming. It is alluded to more than 300 times in the New Testament.”

(“Facts About the Second Coming of Christ.” Christian Courier. 9/20/2022).



A Word
in Season

PATIENTLY WAIT FOR THE COMING OF THE LORD

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Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.
— James 5:8

Though sin abounds in society and the tears of life flow, as children of God, we have a wonderful and bright hope of a better day. The coming of the Lord is not a fearful thing to those who are saved. We look forward to the day that the Lord Jesus will break through the clouds and usher us to our eternal home in Heaven. There will be no more tears, no heartache, no pain, no sickness, no burdens for lost loved ones; we will be in the presence of the One who loved us and gave His life for our redemption. The song, *Bright Anticipation*, says: “I am waiting, I am longing for the summons to come, When from sorrow and trouble I’m free; When with Jesus I am reigning in that heavenly home, Where forever its beauties I’ll see.”



HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD

What a wonderful day that will be in Heaven; however, we are not there yet. When the burdens are heavy and the night seems to have no end, hold on in faith, for “the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.” Some people settle in the gloom of circumstances and lose their hope of Heaven. Others concede to the philosophies and pressures of the fallen world and lose their zeal and purpose for God. Still others allow their love to wane under the influence and darkness of life.

Brother and sister, wait patiently and rest in the knowledge that deliverance from this vale of sorrow is coming soon. Let us not be swayed by the world, but let us establish and fix our hearts in the love of Christ. Let us keep our eyes on Jesus—patiently waiting, digging deeper in the love of God, laboring for souls, and maintaining a watchfulness and carefulness in daily living. Let us not throw our hands up in despair and discouragement, but let us patiently wait—for the coming of the Lord Jesus is close at hand. ■