

Last Man Saved

Asked about the end times, Jesus said, “as the days of Noah *were*, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be.”

Jesus pointed us back to those days to encourage us to study their characteristics, because these would also characterize the days preceding His return.

A little review from our previous study is in order.

Mat 24:36 "But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only.”

We said that Jesus was referring *not* to the resurrection and rapture of the church, but to His Second Coming.

The church is not in Matthew twenty-four and twenty-five, at least not directly. Jesus was talking about God’s future dealings with the nation of Israel - the physical descendants of Abraham through his son, Isaac.

It is important in studying prophecy that we understand that God is not through dealing with Israel as a nation. The church is not Israel; Israel is not the church.

If you confuse the two, you won’t have a clue how to interpret Bible prophecy.

According to theologian Charles Ryrie,

Promises made to Israel are still going to be kept in the future. We can be sure that all God has said is true and will take place, because of His character and consistency. The Church does not replace Israel and should not expect a symbolic fulfillment of the promises of the Old Covenant. As one reads Scripture, it is necessary to keep Israel and the Church separate.

In Romans 11:1 we read,

Rom 11:1 I say then, has God cast away His people? Certainly not! For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, *of the tribe of Benjamin.*

God has not “cast away” the Israelites. He is still dealing with them as an identifiable people group, separate from His dealings with Gentiles.

The apostle Paul goes on to explain that Israel, as a nation, is under God’s discipline. In the mean time, the Gospel is going out to all men everywhere, Jew and Gentile. He says of this, “through [Israel’s] fall, to provoke them to jealousy, salvation *has come* to the Gentiles. Now if their fall *is* riches for the world, and their failure riches for the Gentiles, how much more their fullness!”

Currently the word that characterizes Israel is “fall.” One day the word that characterizes Israel will be “fullness.”

Their “fullness” means their salvation. It comes at the end of the Great Tribulation.

The Great Tribulation is called, in the Old Testament, “the time of Jacob’s trouble.” It will be the time predicted by Daniel - the seventieth week of seven years by which God saves His people.

It is specifically geared to end the “fall” and bring in the “fullness” of Israel.

We know that at the end of the Great Tribulation, all the surviving Jews will look upon Jesus and see Him pierced for them. They will receive Him as their Savior. That is their “fullness.”

Then, in Romans eleven, Paul says,

Rom 11:25 For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in.

Rom 11:26 And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: "THE DELIVERER WILL COME OUT OF ZION, AND HE WILL TURN AWAY UNGODLINESS FROM JACOB;

Rom 11:27 FOR THIS IS MY COVENANT WITH THEM, WHEN I TAKE AWAY THEIR SINS.”

These verses are very clear. The nation of Israel is being disciplined, but God will save them in the end.

Currently He is saving “whosoever will believe.” These saved whosoever he refers to as “the fullness of the Gentiles.”

Now if in this chapter the “fullness” of Israel meant their salvation, then the “fullness” of the Gentiles means their salvation.

Israel will remain under discipline until a specific group of believers is saved. We identify that group as the church. It will be “full” when the last believer of the church age is saved, and the Lord raptures us home.

The church is not on the earth during the Great Tribulation. We are safe in Heaven, having been resurrected and raptured.

BTW This “fullness of the Gentiles” is another reason I believe the rapture is presented as an imminent event. The rapture will happen when the last believer of the church age receives Jesus Christ. It isn’t tied to any calendar event, or any feast of Israel. It could happen at any moment - just as soon as we are “full.”

Perhaps this is why Peter, in his letter, said we could “hasten” the coming of the Lord. One of the meanings of the word is to *accelerate*. You should think you can *accelerate* the coming of the Lord.

If the Lord was coming on a particular calendar day, it would be impossible to speak of accelerating His return to rapture us.

You can accelerate His coming by telling more people about Him because among them is the last one before we are snatched away.

G. Campbell Morgan, a great expositor of Bible prophecy and the Word of God, wrote,

I never lay my head on the pillow without thinking that perhaps before I awake, the final morning may have dawned. I never begin my work without thinking that He may interrupt it to begin His own. Every night before we go to sleep, we ought to say, ‘He may come tonight.’ Every day when we get out our tools and go to work, “This may be the last day’s work I’ll do.”

We said that the phrase, “no one knows the day and hour,” was a familiar Jewish idiom. The Feast of Trumpets began each year when two witnesses saw the first sliver of the new moon. Until they told the priest they had sighted it, he could not announce the Feast.

Anticipating the announcement, he would tell folks, “no one knows the day and hour,” until the moon was seen.

That being the case, it seems Jesus was saying He would return at the end of the Great Tribulation on the Feast of Trumpets.

Jesus fulfilled the four spring feasts in His first coming, so it is understood He will fulfill the three fall feasts in His Second Coming.

Matthew 24:37 But as the days of Noah *were*, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be.

Matthew 24:38 For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark,

We’re going to get back to Genesis chapter six where we see the kind of marriages Jesus was referring to. The Sons of God, whom we will show are fallen angels, somehow married and mated with human women, producing giants, called Nephilim.

First we want to finish looking at Jesus’ reference to the Days of Noah.

Matthew 24:39 and did not know until the flood came and took them all away, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be.

A key to understanding the next few verses is to ask, *Who was taken away at the time of the flood?* The answer is, *Nonbelievers were taken away to judgment.*

Noah and his family were kept safe through the flood to be left on the earth and repopulate it.

Read the next verses with that in mind.

Matthew 24:40 Then two *men* will be in the field: one will be taken and the other left.

Matthew 24:41 Two *women* will be grinding at the mill: one will be taken and the other left.

It might sound like the rapture but it isn't. It's the Second Coming.

- The men and women who are taken are taken away to judgment – just like the people during Noah's flood.
- The men and women who are left are left to repopulate the earth – just like Noah and his family.

BTW This is a strong reason why the rapture cannot be post-tribulational. If all living believers at the end of the Great Tribulation are raptured; and all nonbelievers are judged and sent to Hades; then there is no one left on the earth, in a human body, to repopulate it for the Kingdom Age.

Matthew 24:42 Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming.

The Bible is very precise in describing the timing of the Tribulation. Daniel called it the seventieth week on God's prophetic calendar of four hundred and ninety years. It means a 'week' of years, or seven years.

The two halves of the Tribulation are described as a time and times and half a time in Revelation 12:14. The two halves of it are described as one-thousand two hundred and sixty days in Revelation 11:3 and 12:6.

It has a distinct beginning, middle, and end:

1. It will begin when the antichrist signs a peace treaty with Israel guaranteeing their safety and allowing them to rebuild their Temple in Jerusalem.
2. At its mid-point the antichrist enters the Holy of Holies in the Temple and desecrates it by demanding he be worshipped.
3. The Tribulation ends with the Second Coming of Jesus Christ during a great battle on the earth in the Valley of Megiddo.

Daniel and John (in the Revelation) both speak of an expanded period of one thousand two hundred ninety days, or thirty additional days after.

Daniel also uses the figure one thousand three hundred thirty five days.

It seems that those additional days are when Jesus judges the nations, separating the sheep from the goats, in anticipation of the one thousand year kingdom on earth.

The sun will be darkened; the moon turned to blood. It will be impossible to tell time.

The believers alive after nearly seven years of Tribulation will know the signs and the general timing but not the exact moment itself. It speaks of having a great sense of anticipation that builds and builds.

But those who survive will know it is near, and will keep looking up for Jesus in His Second Coming.