

# The End Will Come Unexpectedly

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Over the decades in God's Church, ministers and brethren have come up with prophetic timelines about how prophecy is going to work out and when the end will come. I've talked to many people over the years who've felt, in their own minds, that they knew precisely when Christ was going to return—knew the year, knew the month, knew the day. In the fifties and sixties—if you were in the Church back then—many thought it would be 1972, then later 1975.

I can remember sitting in Detroit, listening to a sermon where the minister went through the prophetic timelines; he then gave an exact date when Christ was going to return, and he let it all hang out there. That didn't come to pass. Then more recently some thought it was going to be 2008. I heard a man say around 2007 or early 2008, and I quote, "You don't need to plan for the Feast, because we'll have fled by then." Of course, that didn't happen.

Even today, some people claim to know when Christ is returning—the day He's going to return. What does God's word say about that? That's the important thing, not what human beings think or feel or conjure up.

Let's go to Matthew 24—you're going to want to place a marker here, because we'll be coming back to it from time to time. We're going to break into the context here, because we don't have to cover the whole thing, but we'll start in verse 27. Christ is speaking. He's telling us when He's going to return. I'm reading out of the King James, as I usually do.

**Matthew 24:27** *For as the lightning [the Greek meaning is "bright shining", not a bolt of lightning] cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. (KJV)*

As the sun moves from the east to the west, you can't miss it. It's there, it's shining. Jumping to verse 36.

36) *But of that day and hour knoweth no man, [or no one] no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only.*

Isn't this amazing? Christ is saying, *I don't even know*—angels don't know, I don't know—yet people continue to say they do know, when Christ says nobody knows. In verse 37, Christ gives us a clue. He says:

37) *But as the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be [there's a clue].*

38) *For as in the days [of Noah] that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark [until the very day],*

39) *And [the surrounding people] knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. (KJV)*

So what Christ is saying is, as in the days of Noah, I'm going to come when everything is going along normally: people are marrying, giving in marriage, doing the normal things. Then, when you least expect it, I will come. So the question then comes to my mind: Christ said this, relates it to the days of Noah—is there something God wants us to learn about this event from the days of Noah? Maybe if we study the days of Noah, we can learn some more. So let's go back and do that. Let's go back to Genesis, chapter 6, and we'll start in verse 5. Genesis 6:5, and we're going to see that conditions then are not all that different than the conditions today. God was not happy, as God is not happy today.

**Genesis 6:5** *And 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. (KJV)*

You look up the word continually in the Hebrew and it means from one sunset to the next—twenty-four hours a day. Of course, with the Internet and social media, that evil can be spread around the earth almost instantaneously. That is something that never existed before, which makes it even worse.

6) *And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart.*

7) *And the LORD said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them.*

8) *But Noah found grace [the Hebrew means favor] in the eyes of the LORD.*

9) *These are the generations of Noah: Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah [here's a key that we might put in the back of our mind] walked with God. (KJV)*

The Hebrew for *walked* means “to be conversant with”. I have no doubt—I know for a fact—that Noah and God talked. We talk to God and God talks to us through His word, through prayer. So the Hebrew can mean conversant with or it can mean follow. Noah followed God; he conversed with God.

10) *And Noah begat three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth.*

11) *The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence.*

That Hebrew word for *violence* can also mean cruelty or injustice; violence, cruelty, injustice—kind of sounds like today.

12) *And God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth. (KJV)*

We are destroying the earth, we are destroying people's character, we're destroying people's lives, we're killing unborn babies—millions and millions a year—it is just unbelievable. We are kind of like the days of Noah, and even more so, because of the technology and the ability of man to do more and more evil through that technology. Verse 13:

13) *And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth.*

And now, because Noah found favor, God says:

14) *Make thee an ark of gopher wood; rooms shalt thou make in the ark, and shalt pitch it within and without with pitch [to waterproof it].*

15) *And this is the fashion which thou shalt make it of: The length of the ark shall be three hundred cubits, the breadth of it fifty cubits, and the height of it thirty cubits. (KJV)*

We see here that God gave Noah very detailed plans on how to build the ark. If Noah and God were communicating and talking, I have no doubt that God had very detailed designs for that ark, and Noah fulfilled God's design. It's an important subject from the following standpoint—we'll ask a question here: How big was the ark? That has a bearing on the story. It depends on what cubit was used. There's a long and short Hebrew cubit, there's a Babylonian cubit, and then there's a long and short Egyptian cubit. So it depends on which one you pick, but they vary between about seventeen and a half inches and twenty and a half inches, depending on which one. If we just take the middle of the road—say at nineteen inches, for the length of the cubit—the ark would be approximately 450 feet long and about eighty feet wide. So in modern terms, the ark was about one and a half times the length of a football field and about half as wide—a big boat, a very big boat. The point I want to make is, it took a long time to build that boat by hand, because Noah and his sons had no power tools, no electricity. They built that boat by hand—450 feet long. So let's jump now to verse 17.

17) *And, behold, I, even I, do bring a flood of waters upon the earth, to destroy all flesh, wherein is the breath of life, from under heaven; and every thing that is in the earth shall die.*

18) *But with thee will I establish my covenant; [God says to Noah, I'm going to make an agreement with you] and thou shalt come into the ark, thou, and thy sons, and thy wife, and thy sons' wives with thee.*

19) *And of every living thing of all flesh, two of every sort shalt thou bring into the ark, to keep them alive with thee; they shall be male and female. (KJV)*

20) *Of fowls after their kind, and of cattle after their kind, of every creeping thing of the earth after his kind, two of every sort shall come unto thee, to keep them alive.*

21) *And take thou unto thee of all food that is eaten, [meaning the animals are going to need food, his family is going to need food] and thou shalt gather it to thee; and it shall be for food for thee, and for them.*

22) *Thus did Noah; according to all that God commanded him, so did he.*

He was very obedient, down to the last detail. Going on in chapter 7,

**Genesis 7:1** *And the LORD said unto Noah, Come thou and all thy house into the ark; for thee have I seen righteous before me in this generation. (KJV)*

God knew Noah's heart and Noah trusted God, he loved God, he wanted to follow God, he was obedient to God. Beginning of verse 4, it says—I'm reading out of the King James—

4) *For yet seven days, [the King James and New King James margins say "after seven more days"; if you look at an interlinear, the word "more" is in the translation, so verse 4 should be "for yet seven more days"] and I will cause it to rain upon the earth forty days and forty nights; and every living substance that I have made will I destroy from off the face of the earth.*

5) *And Noah did according unto all that the LORD commanded him. (KJV)*

So the point here, in the seven more days, is it appears that Noah had only seven days' notice. When God said, I want you gather all the animals, the food and all that, I'll give you a week. And of course with God's help, God can direct the animals just to walk into the ark, that's not difficult for God. Noah gathers all the food, gets the animals in the ark within a week, and it's easily done with God's help. Then in verse 15,

15) *And they went in unto Noah into the ark, two and two of all flesh, wherein is the breath of life.*

16) *And they that went in, went in male and female of all flesh, as God had commanded him: and the LORD shut him in. (KJV)*

So seven days to get the ark loaded—food, animals—then God closed the door. Then seven more days the ark rested on dry land, as we read in the beginning of verse 4. Now my guess is, if you were of the locals there, seeing all these animals parading into the ark, seeing Noah and his family loading food into the ark, then all of a sudden they're in the ark and the door is closed, and they just sit there for seven days. And of course the locals, I'm sure, are coming by and jeering and taunting, because the boat is here, everything's ready, it's fully loaded with food, animals and everything, and it's just sitting there on dry land. Of course the locals are scoffing.

After seven days, guess what happens? It begins to rain, and rain like the world has never seen before—rain from the sky, water coming up from the ground—and then

everything changed overnight. From blue skies and dry land, until the earth is in turmoil. The point I think God wants us to understand—there are several points, obviously—is that God gave Noah a very short time. He said seven days, it's now time to load the ark you've been building—we're going to talk about that in just a minute—get everything into the ark; you've got seven days. God helped him. Then they sat for seven more, and then the rains came. With that in mind, let's go back now to Matthew, chapter 24, and we'll pick it up in verse 39.

**Matthew 24:39** *And [they] knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. [Just like that.]*

40) *Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left.*

41) *Two women shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken, and the other left. (KJV)*

It is interesting that Christ uses the word *taken*. It doesn't say one chose to go and the other didn't, or one made a decision to go and the other didn't. Christ says one was taken and one was left behind. This clearly tells us that we don't choose; God and Christ will choose, just like God and Christ chose Noah. So the analogy for today—as far as Christ returning—we could say: there are two people in one church group and one is taken; there are two people in another church group and one is taken. I think that would be a very appropriate analogy, because it doesn't make any difference where we warm a seat. That doesn't qualify us to be with Christ, to be spared from all of this turmoil—it's not where we warm a seat. Let's go on to verse 42. Notice this:

42) *Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come. [You don't know, He said, so you'd better be ready.]*

43) *But know this, [our ears should perk up, the antenna should go up, because Christ is saying, I want you to know this:] that if the goodman of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up.*

44) *Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh. (KJV)*

And He's saying the point is, you can't see it. You're not going to be aware of it. It will seem as if life is just going on like normal, and the time when you think it's not going to happen, that's exactly when it is going to happen. He says there in verse 44, that's why you must be ready, because you don't know when it's going to happen.

45) *Who then is a faithful and wise servant [now notice that, because that's going to come into play later when Christ talks in the next chapter], whom his lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season?*

46) *Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing.*

47) *Verily I say unto you, That he shall make him ruler over all his goods.*

48) *But and if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming;*

49) *And shall begin to smite his fellow servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken ... (KJV)*

What He's basically saying is if that servant goes back into the world, goes back into the common society and does things that he did before in his previous, unconverted life, He says, if he begins to do that, that's not good. I remember years ago when we were talking with a fellow about end-time events and when Christ would return, and he said—I can remember just like it was yesterday, because it shocked me—he said, I don't want the Kingdom to come now, I'm having too much fun. He had a nice life, he was a wealthy man. He had toys—he had an airplane—and he was going to and fro, and we'd say, he had it all. He said, I don't want God's Kingdom to come now, because I'm just living it up and I'm having a grand old time. Well:

*50) The lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of,*

You see, Christ keeps saying it over and over—how many times does He need to say it?—I'm going to come when you least expect it. I'm going to come in an hour when you don't think it's going to happen and you're not looking for it to come.

*51) And shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. (KJV)*

Because—sorry—we fouled this one up. So we see here that God left a precedent with Noah when he gave him only a week's notice. That's a lesson for us, that's a precedent God has established with Noah for us to learn today, because Christ said He is going to return when no one expects it, just as in the days of Noah. When He does return, there are going to be brethren filled with regret, because they did not prepare. This is something all of us really need to understand. That leads to the title of the sermon: The End Will Come Unexpectedly. The bible is very clear about that. The first point I want to make is:

### **1. We must be preparing for that day now and we must never quit preparing for that day.**

We must prepare for that day now—today, right now—and in the future never quit our preparation for that day. We don't know how long Noah worked on the ark, and we'll go back to Noah to help us with this. The Bible hints at it. Let's go to Genesis 5:32. The bible isn't absolutely specific, but we can get a general idea of how long Noah worked on the ark. As we know, human beings lived a lot longer before the flood than they did after the flood.

**Genesis 5:32** *And Noah was five hundred years old: and Noah begat Shem, Ham, and Japheth. (KJV)*

Now the New Living Translation says by the time Noah was 500 years old, he begat Shem, Ham, and Japheth. This is Genesis 5, and then in Genesis 6, we read earlier, that God instructed Noah to build the ark. Now look at chapter 7 and verse 6.

**Genesis 7:6** *And Noah was six hundred years old when the flood of waters was upon the earth. (KJV)*

So from that we can extrapolate that he most likely had close to 100 years—it could have been eighty or seventy, we're not exactly sure—but close to 100 years to build this ark. He had 100 years from the time God said, look, I'm going to destroy this earth, and I want you to make this ark, here are the dimensions, here's how I want it built, to the time that Noah actually got into the ark and the door was closed—it was approximately 100 years. To build a boat that size by hand with your family, you could see where it would take a long time to do.

So here's the question—think about Noah and his family building a boat out in the middle of dry land for decades and people walking by and watching them. They are hauling lumber and they're sawing and they're doing this and they're doing that; pounding pegs into the wood. How many times would the people walk by and there's not a cloud in the sky, and they are saying, old man, you're building a boat? They look up and they start jeering: I don't see any clouds, I don't see any rain. By the way, we've had a drought now for the last five years, what do you think you're doing, old man?

The jeers would come, the taunts would come—or they would walk by, and say, what are you doing? And Noah would say I'm building a boat. A boat? Here? No water nearby? Noah would say, yeah, I'm building a boat. Why are you doing that? Well, God told me to. Well, you're sure about this? Noah says, yeah, I'm sure about it, because by the time this boat gets built, we're going to need it, and you're going to need it. And in reply, they jeer, taunt, and go their own way.

As long as it took Noah to build the boat—decades—what motivated Noah? Was it what he saw up in the sky—no clouds, no rain, droughts—or was he motivated by something he could not see? He was not motivated by what he could see. What he could see was drought, blue skies, not much rain. He was motivated by what he could not see and what God told him.

The important point is, for all these decades, he never quit. He kept going. I've been in the Church for over fifty years, and I'm only halfway there to what Noah was building—it's a drudge—but how would you like to be out in open space building a boat for fifty years, having to endure the ridicule and all of that that Noah undoubtedly had to endure? I'm sure the spectacle of this spread far and wide. People would go out of their way to take their camels by, or their donkeys, or walk by on the trade route (or something like that), to see this spectacle going on out in the middle of the dry land.

The most important thing is, he never stopped, and remember, he had only a week's notice. When God told him to get in the ark (I'm sure God didn't tell him beforehand), he's working on the ark, it's getting close to being ready, and God says, okay a week from today, we're going to get all the animals in. I want you to get all the food in, and I'm going to shut the door. So, if Noah had not gotten to that point, there would be

something wanting, but Noah was there; God was ready and Noah was ready. He never quit. When God told him to get in the ark, it had better have been ready, because there was no more time.

Today, what is the common belief? Let's go to 2 Peter 3:3. This is what we see today, and it's exactly what Noah encountered in his day: the attitude of the people—just amazing.

**2 Peter 3:3** *Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts,*

*4) And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation. (KJV)*

I studied this in graduate school—not this scripture, of course, but the principle—it's called the doctrine of uniformitarianism. That's a long word. It means what happened yesterday will happen tomorrow. What you see in the past will happen in the future. Nothing is going to change; conditions will remain the same—that's the doctrine of uniformitarianism. So the people in Noah's day said, floods never happen. You're talking about a flood? You're building a boat? It's never happened before. It's not going to happen tomorrow, it's not going to happen in the future.

Today it's the same thing, only referring to Christ's return. People say this—or the Bible says this—Christ is going to come like the light from the sun; it hasn't happened in thousands of years. It's not going to happen tomorrow, it's not going to happen next week, it's not going to happen in the next thousand years; that's the doctrine of uniformitarianism. The fact is, at some point, reality will come. Christ will come. That leads us to the second point.

## **2. What is our part to play between today and when Christ returns?**

Noah had a part—he had to build a boat. What is our part? God gave Noah specific instructions on how He wanted that boat built. He didn't say, Noah, you can build any old raft, any old boat—its up to you—I'll take care of the rest. God didn't do that. He said here's how I want you to build it. I'm sure the instructions were extremely detailed. He told him what to do and how to do it. Noah, you see, had a part to play in his own salvation, by constructing this boat. God gave him the instructions, and then patiently waited for approximately 100 years to see what Noah would do. Would Noah quit? Would he get discouraged by all the people coming by and jeering at him, or would he just methodically, day by day, keep plodding along, doing what God wanted him to do?

Similarly, God gives us a part to play in our salvation, just the way He did with Noah. Let's go to Matthew 19 and we'll read verses 16 and 17. It's very simple what our part to play is—it's hard to do sometimes—fighting Satan, fighting human nature, fighting the world.



**Matthew 19:16** *And, behold, one came and said unto him [to Christ], Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life? [Isn't that the question, the bottom line?]*

17) *And he [Christ] said unto him, Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God: [my Father] but if thou wilt enter into [eternal] life, keep the commandments. (KJV)*

And then He goes on to enumerate them. Let's go to John 17:3. Christ is speaking again about eternal life, what our job is, what we need to be doing—constructing our spiritual ark, as Noah built his physical ark. John 17:3; Christ is speaking, talking again about eternal life.

**John 17:3** *And this is life eternal, [and what is that?] that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent. (KJV)*

So we have to keep the commandments, and we have to come to know God and Jesus Christ. Let's go to Ephesians 4:22. Paul is speaking here. This is the everyday battle, and I'm sure Noah had everyday battles: cutting down trees, hauling lumber, maybe missing a dimension here or there and having to re-cut something.

**Ephesians 4:22** *That ye put off concerning the former conversation [the King James version says *conversation*, but it means *conduct*, so put off the former conduct of] the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts;*

23) *And be renewed [that means renovated, remodeled, renewed] in the spirit of your mind [have a new mind];*

24) *And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. (KJV)*

The new man is like God. Back to verse 13.

13) *Till we all come in [and in the margin of the King James, it says *into*] the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect [the margin in the King James says *mature*] man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ: (KJV)*

So we keep the commandments. We come to know God and Christ, and then through the power of the Holy Spirit, we transform ourselves through that power to be like God and to be like Christ, and to follow in the footsteps of Christ when He walked this earth. Let's go to Philippians 2:5—the next book over—toward the end of the Bible. Paul is talking here again. This just adds to this:

**Philippians 2:5** *Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:*

Have the same mind. That's the mind that we seek, that's what we have to work on, is to have the mind of Christ.

12) *Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. (KJV)*

It's up to us individually. It is not where we warm a seat. We cannot ride somebody else's coattails into God's Kingdom. It is between us and God, and how we change to be like Him and Jesus Christ.

13) *For it is God which worketh in you both to will [meaning to have the desire] and to do of his good pleasure. [Keep the commandments. Then he goes on to say:]*

14) *Do all things without murmurings and disputings:*

15) *That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke [notice what he says, harkening back to Noah and to his day], in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world; (KJV)*

Today we are indeed in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation like never seen before. Finally, under this point, let's go to 1 Corinthians 12 and we'll begin in verse 31. The concepts are simple. The execution can be difficult if we don't exercise God's Holy Spirit. 1 Corinthians 12:31—you know where we're going with this. Paul says:

**1 Corinthians 12:31** *But covet [I'm reading out of the King James; the margin in the King James says *but desire*] earnestly the best gifts: and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way.*

13:1) *Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, (KJV)*

People in the past thought they had the gift of prophecy, and that they understood the dates and the times, and they set those dates and times, only to fail.

1 continued) *and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing. (KJV)*

If we're not exercising love, first to God, then to our fellow man, all the rest that we do does not count. I've known people that could quote chapter and verse. They almost had the entire Bible memorized—all kinds of knowledge—yet if you behave in a contemptible way, it doesn't count for anything. God gives us a part to play in our own salvation, and he gives us a specific way, just as he gave Noah. He gives us the example of Noah, who built a physical ark.

God is saying to us, I want you to build a spiritual ark—you. You are the spiritual ark I want you to build, and you do it through My Holy Spirit. You do it through yielding to Me,

and you do it through keeping My commandments, and you do it through having love for all people—all My children.

The point is (closing out the second point) that we don't know when Christ is returning. Christ doesn't know when Christ is returning, therefore we don't. We don't know how much time we personally have left. Often, we say, well yes, conditions are this and that, we've got some more time. We don't know how much time we have left to build our spiritual ark. The fact is, any of us could die tonight in our sleep, or we could be in a car wreck tomorrow, and our time is done, regardless of when Christ returns. So we need to keep that in mind.

That leads to the last point.

### **3. Because of all this, we should have a sense of urgency to prepare ourselves for this day.**

It's easy just to go with the flow—uniformitarianism—to think that because it didn't happen yesterday, or didn't happen the week before, it's probably not going to happen next week, so I've got some time. If we base our spiritual sense of urgency—in other words, how hard we work today and tomorrow on building our spiritual ark—if we base that on what we see in the world, we are very likely to ease up: I've got more time; I've got days, I've got months, I've got years—whatever it might be. But remember 2 Peter 3:3, the doctrine of uniformitarianism, what we see today will be tomorrow, until we don't. What we see today will be tomorrow until it doesn't come tomorrow—something different comes, and everything changes overnight. Remember what Christ said in Matthew 24:37; we read it earlier:

**Matthew 24:37** *But as the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. (KJV)*

He reminded them that before the flood came, life was normal. They were eating; they were drinking; they were marrying; they were giving in marriage; they were having parties; they were working; they were educating themselves; they were building homes; they were doing all of that stuff until the day Noah went into the ark. Then seven days later, everything changed overnight. Overnight it changed. They didn't know until the flood came and drowned them.

What Christ is saying—hey, I'm going to come in a similar manner, so you'd better be ready, you'd better be aware—because up until the time that bell rings and God tells Christ, okay, now is the time (God throws a switch, so to speak), and Christ does God's bidding—until that time—everything is going to be like normal. Until the flood came and drowned them, so shall the coming of the Son of Man be. Then two are going to be in one location; one is taken. Two are going to be in another location and one is taken. The message is—Christ is saying—you'd better prepare, because you don't know when I am coming; the angels don't know, I don't know, only My Father knows. And He says

to the physical eye (casual observer), in the last days, things are going to be just normal life, until the world starts to unravel. That could happen overnight.

Think about this—we'll just use one example—if a terrorist group wanted to bring the United States or modern society to its knees, one way to do it would be to destroy the electrical system. They would bring the electrical grid down. You think what your life would be like, if, right this second, electricity quit. You would have no communication. Kids today, particularly, doing this [the speaker mimics tapping on a cellphone] and all of a sudden it stopped—they wouldn't be able to communicate with anybody. No phones, no television, no Internet—nothing. And then, no lights at night, no heat in the winter, or if it's in the summer, no air conditioning. Then you want to go to work—well, you can't work—there's no electricity. You want to buy some gas to put in your car to get to work, or to get the grocery store—you can't pump gas, because that needs electricity. You have no water in your house, because you need electricity to pump the water to get it to your house.

So, within twenty-four to forty-eight hours, you would have anarchy in this country, because each individual home is an island unto itself. Then people start to think, okay, this freezer I have—all the food is going to melt here pretty quick—I'd better go get myself some food. So they start raiding the grocery stores, breaking into people's homes, and it would be absolute anarchy. The police couldn't come, because they have no gas to get there. Police couldn't communicate, because they couldn't talk to each other and wouldn't know where the problems were. This is an example—just one tiny example—of how fast God could bring things to pass and bring society to its knees, overnight, in a matter of hours. We say, well, things are okay, tomorrow will be like today, and everything is going to be all right. You see, before this time occurs, we are to walk by something different than what we see.

We won't turn there—you know the scripture—2 Corinthians 5:7 says, *we walk by faith, not by sight*. We can't prepare if we look at the conditions around us. We have to walk by faith—what Christ says, what we've just been reading. Noah's motivation was based on faith. His sense of urgency wasn't based on the clear blue skies that he saw, or the droughts that were going on. He was not looking to blue skies, he was looking to God, who told him what was going to happen, and he believed God.

Let's go back now to Matthew 25 and we'll begin in verse 1. We all know that chapter breaks are inserted by men, so Matthew 25 is continuing the context of Matthew 24. Christ hasn't changed the subject. We're told,

**Matthew 25:1** *Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. (KJV)*

He says ten virgins. He's saying there are ten that are not corrupted. They are clean and they are pure; they're virgins. Obviously, He's talking about ten converted brethren, ten converted people.

- 2) [but notice] *And five of them were wise, and five were foolish.*
- 3) *They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them:*
- 4) *But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps.* (KJV)

The Expositor's Bible Commentary has an interesting point here. This is in volume 8, page 513. It says, quote:

*The lamps here are either small, oil-fed lamps, or more plausibly, torches, whose rags would need periodic dousing with oil to keep them burning. In either case, the prudent would bring along a flask with an additional oil supply, to keep the torches burning.*

So we're told here the five wise planned for a long journey, because they took the oil. The five foolish didn't plan at all; they didn't even think about it. The five wise looked forward and said this might be a long journey, we'd better take some oil. The foolish didn't even think about it.

**Matthew 25:5** *While the bridegroom tarried [The NIV says *The Bridegroom was a long time in coming*] they all slumbered and slept.* (KJV)

The fact is, Christ is not going to come as fast as we want Him to. I remember a minister whom I highly admired, the late Roland Tucker. He gave a sermon in 1973, and the title of the sermon was—it's one of those sermons you always remember—he said, "We will want Christ to come, long before He does". He made an entire sermon out of that one sentence, and it's true. We'll want Christ to come long before He does.

The fact is, God has respect for those who grieve over the conditions of this world, and the evil that's in this world. God has respect for them who grieve over the sins of mankind. Let's look at just a couple of examples. Let's go to Ezekiel 9:4. This is talking about the time before, referring to Jerusalem, of course. Notice who God notices and takes note of.

**Ezekiel 9:4** *And the LORD said unto him, [a man—a being—who is going to make a mark] Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a mark [and if you read the context, it's a mark of protection] upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof.* (KJV)

And we've talked about it in the past, of the evil that went on in the temple and the temple grounds, of the conduct of the priests, and the conduct of the scribes, and worshipping idols on the temple ground; worshipping Tammuz, facing the east with their backs to the temple, and all of that. This is what was going on, and God said of those who note that and who sigh and cry and grieve about it, put a mark on them and they will be protected. Then let's go to Psalm 94 and let's begin in verse 3. We'll just read two verses. David had evil going on around him. David had to repent of evil he had

done. David had a lot of opposition. Notice what he said. I'll read this out of the New Living Translation.

**Psalm 94:3** *How long, O LORD? How long will the wicked be allowed to gloat? 4) How long will they speak with arrogance? How long will these evil people boast? (NLT)*

And they boasted about doing away with David. They boasted about their own power, and how they were going to take over the government and so on. If you transfer it today, hear their arrogance, and these evildoers boast, you don't have to look any farther than the Oval Office. Sad, but true. Now let's go to Revelation 6:9. We're talking about a time yet future, but it's a reflection what went on before this time.

**Revelation 6:9** *And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar [this was a vision, of course] the souls [the lives] of them that were slain for the word of God [he was looking at the lives, going back now, that were killed because they were loyal and faithful to God—they were martyrs], and for the testimony which they held:*

*10) And they cried with a loud voice [in vision, these people who had died because of their martyrdom], saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? (KJV)*

And so we see in these scriptures, people are crying out to God, saying, how long do we have to keep going through this? How long do we have to watch this evil? My point is, Christ will not come as fast as we want Him to come. And we have to prepare for that day. He will take longer than we wish. During this time, where Christ delays His coming, look what we have to deal with. Let's go to 2 Timothy 3:13. This is a prophecy and it is true today, on steroids, as they say. It tells us,

**2 Timothy 3:13** *But evil men and seducers [that want to take us away from what we believe] shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived. (KJV)*

They're deceived by Satan. They go out and deceive other people. Satan's agenda is to deceive us, so that we turn from God, we turn from the truth; we go back into the world. As was mentioned at the Feast—let's go back to Daniel 7:25, just one verse—this is what we have to deal with. It's talking about a time yet future, but there is a head of a false religion, and that head is going to do certain things that we must deal with.

**Daniel 7:25** *And he [the head of this false religion] shall speak great words against the most High [that's God Almighty] and shall wear out the saints of the most High, (KJV)*

Now think about that; being worn out means fatigue. As Vince Lombardi, coach of the Green Bay Packers (who won all those championships), once said, fatigue makes cowards of us all. When we're tired, is it easy to sleep? Of course. And if the world wears us out, and wears us out, and wears us out, over the years, over the decades,

that's Satan's plan—to wear out the saints of the Most High. Why? So we go to sleep, and we don't prepare for this day and this time.

The fact is, if we're honest with ourselves—and I admit I've done this—we've all been asleep at times. If we look back at our time in the Church, there were days, weeks, months, sometimes years, where we were asleep.

Let's go back, with that in mind, to Matthew 25, and we will pick it up in verse 6. We have to have a sense of urgency, because we don't know when Christ is returning and we don't know when our last day on earth might be.

**Matthew 25:6** [Christ says] *And at midnight* [that's the darkest part of the night, the middle of the night, halfway between sunrise and sunset] *there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh;* [the cry is, things are happening, things are now different; they weren't the same as yesterday, they weren't the same as ten years ago] *go ye out to meet him.* (KJV)

Could it be false Christs, false prophets, showing signs and wonders? Could it be society falling apart, starting to collapse? Things are now different.

7) *Then all those virgins arose* [they all woke up], *and trimmed their lamps.* [The foolish had some oil left.]

8) *And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out* [or could be going out].

9) *But the wise answered, saying, Not so; lest there be not enough for us and you: but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves.* (KJV)

Now remember back in Matthew 24:45 when we read it in the beginning?—it says a faithful and wise servant. Well, verse 9 here says the wise answered (talking about the wise). In verse 10, there's a correlation here; Christ is talking about the same subject.

10) *And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready* [emphasis on *they that were ready*] *went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut.* (KJV)

So this tells us there comes a time when there's no time left. There will come a time when there is no time left. It's too late to go back and build the spiritual ark that we should have been building years before.

11) *Afterward came also the other virgins* [church members, brethren], *saying, Lord, Lord, open to us* [they think they know God; they are calling out Christ's name].

12) *But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not.* (KJV)

We see that there are virgins—brethren—who are locked out. Locked out. And that's kind of a scary thought, because they hadn't prepared themselves for that day. It's very

interesting; five were inside, five were outside—fifty percent—two in the field, one is taken; two grinding at the mill, one is taken. Christ uses the same percentage—it's very interesting—that not everybody is going to be there. Is it fifty percent—I mean, is this literal? Fifty percent is a big number—that's half. So Christ is trying to tell us and emphasize, look, when Peter says the righteous shall scarcely be saved, this directly applies. The message is:

*13) Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh. (KJV)*

He says it again. He says it over and over and over. The door was shut, because God and Christ said you haven't exercised enough of My Spirit, so that I recognize you. You don't look like Christ, you don't look like the Father. You look like a carnal human being. I'm not going to let you into My Kingdom, because you had time—you could have built your spiritual ark—but you refused to do so. You got involved in the world and put it off—hey, we've got plenty of time—and that's the attitude of the current state of God's Church, prophesied. Revelation 3:17—we know where we're going here. What is the attitude of the greater Church at the end time? It is prophesied, we know what it is. This is a condemnation of our day and the era in which we live.

**Revelation 3:17** *Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods [which we are today], and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: (KJV)*

Meaning I am in need of nothing. I've got all the physical stuff I want. I've got all my toys, I've got my NFL, my cars, my clothes, my trips, and all of this stuff. But Christ is saying you don't have a clue that you are naked and miserable, poor and blind, spiritually. That's what Christ is saying. The Laodicean says, I don't need to prepare, because I've got all I need. I've got it. All I have to do is wait it out—I don't have to change, take me as I am—I'll just skate into the Kingdom of God, because I sit in this seat or I belong to this group, and I am just treading water until Christ returns.

The lessons of the five virgins—the five wise virgins, I should say—they didn't base how hard they worked spiritually on what they saw physically. They didn't base how hard they studied and prayed and worked on themselves, and repented and cried out to God, based on the physical circumstances around them, but rather they based it on God's promises and on Christ saying, I am going to come when you least expect it. I am going to be there when you least expect it, so you'd better be ready and you'd better be prepared. They based their work, building their spiritual ark, on God's promises.

When you take it all in, we have to have a sense of urgency now to prepare ourselves for that day. For any of us, today could be our last day. We just don't know, and the older we get, the more true that is. So we need to make ourselves spiritually ready.

Let's summarize now. We've seen that Christ warns us that He will return—He says it over and over again—at a time when we least expect it. The conditions in which He



returns will be very much like the conditions of the days of Noah. With that in mind, let's go to Zephaniah 1 and we'll begin in verse 7. This is a prophecy about this very time, just toward the end of the Old Testament—Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi.

**Zephaniah 1:7** *Hold thy peace at the presence of the LORD God: [know who we're talking about—the LORD God is God Almighty] for the day of the LORD is at hand: for the LORD hath prepared a sacrifice, he hath bid his guests [He has invited guests]. (KJV)*

8) *And it shall come to pass in the day of the LORD's sacrifice, that I will punish the princes, and the king's children, and all such as are clothed with strange apparel. (KJV)*

Revelation tells us that the saints will have white linen, and wear white linen, which is the righteousness of the saints, and we're told here that these people wear strange clothing; God doesn't recognize them.

9) *In the same day also will I punish all those that leap on the threshold, which fill their masters' houses with violence and deceit. (KJV)*

Going to verse 13.

13) *Therefore their goods shall become a booty, and their houses a desolation: they shall also build houses, but not inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, but not drink the wine thereof [there won't be time; all that has come to an end].*

14) *The great day of the LORD is near, it is near, and hasteth greatly, even the voice of the day of the LORD: the mighty man shall cry there bitterly [when they realize the time has come].*

15) *That day is a day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress, a day of waste and desolation, a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness,*

16) *A day of the trumpet and alarm against the fenced cities, and against the high towers.*

17) *And I will bring distress upon men, that they shall walk like blind men, [why?] because they have sinned against the LORD: and their blood shall be poured out as dust, and their flesh as the dung.*

18) *Neither their silver nor their gold shall be able to deliver them in the day of the LORD's wrath [I've got need of nothing—I've got it all; well, that's not what the Bible says]; but the whole land shall be devoured by the fire of his jealousy: for he shall make even a speedy riddance of all them that dwell in the land. (KJV)*

That is going to happen, yet it doesn't look like it's going to happen. If we just walk outside and look around today—no, it doesn't look that way—but if we have walked by faith and not by sight, God tells us, we have a part to play in our salvation—we've seen that the foolish will not be prepared. They just will not, and there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. But the wise will be prepared, because they have worked on it prior

to the event happening. That is why, right now, we should have a sense of urgency of doing our part; obeying God, getting close to God, knowing God—who God is, who Jesus Christ is—and working on ourselves; overcoming our human nature, overcoming the world, overcoming the provocations of Satan, because Christ is going to come when we least expect it. Therefore we cannot waste a single minute. We just can't waste a single minute, if we put that sense of urgency to work.

Let's close with a final scripture that gives a beautiful result. Let's go to Matthew 24:30. This is the reward, this is what happens if we exercise God's Spirit in a sense of urgency.

**Matthew 24:30** *And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.*

31) *And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other. (KJV)*

What a day! We have the opportunity to be gathered together. So let's have an urgency—a sense of urgency—to prepare for that day, to be there on that day, which is a day that will come when we least expect it.