

## Eschatology – A Study Of The Last Days

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In our first part of this study of the last days, we found that even though the persecution we suffer as Christians can be great at times, it was foretold to us by Jesus. He told us that we could expect suffering and persecution because he suffered and faced persecution. That those who persecute us are the same ones who persecuted him and they are the ones that hate us, hate Jesus, hate the Father that sent Jesus. But out of all this, we have comfort. The Holy Ghost is here to comfort us in these last days, and we have the comfort of knowing that all these persecutions are temporary. Once Jesus returns as he promised, we will no longer face suffering like this, but will have joy being with our Lord, Jesus Christ!

Jesus spent time speaking to his disciples about the kingdom of God. He spoke about those things that would happen before the kingdom would be established. Jesus, living as a man, was a Jew. He was there to save his own first, but also we Gentiles. But because he was a Jew, coming for the Jews, it was necessary that he establish the signs that would show when it was that his kingdom would be established. Before he could be placed in power as King, the sin problem had to be taken care of first. Before we, Jew and Gentile, could be in the presence of God, our sin problem had to be taken care of. It was necessary that Jesus pay the acceptable price of sin. Romans 6:23 tells us,

23 For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Because we have all sinned, indeed were born in sin, we have earned death. Thankfully, we have a God of forbearance and long-suffering. A merciful God who knows it is impossible for us to earn salvation. So, He gave us his only begotten son, that whosoever believes on him would have everlasting life. We who believe are the recipients of that free gift of eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

As we were saying though, Jesus being a Jew would establish signs to confirm those things that he spoke to his disciples concerning the kingdom of God. As Paul reminds us in 1 Corinthians 1:22,

22 For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom:

So, we must remember that these signs we will look at actually apply to the Jew. We can say it applies to the Jews in the sense of those Jews that have not already believed on Jesus as their Messiah and those unbelieving Jews that are present after Jesus returns for His church.

For some reason, man has always been temporarily fascinated with signs and wonders. I say temporarily because the effects seem to wear off quickly. When God brought his people out of Egypt, he performed many signs and wonders. They saw these signs and wonders and yet moments later murmured, complained and began creating gods out of their own imagination. People have not changed for the better these days. You will not see authentic signs and wonders much today, but there are those out there that are all too happy to put on a performance knowing people will flock to them. If they stop performing these signs and wonders, the people will leave them just as quickly. People are only fascinated by the signs and wonders only because of the fact a sign or wonder is being performed. They are missing the real point. Signs and wonders accompany a promise or covenant established by God and that for the benefit of His people, the Jews. It is not for a spectacular show. You want to see a spectacular show, go outside on a dark and moonless night away from city lights and you will be amazed at all of what God has created! Let's look at some interesting statements in Scripture concerning the end times.

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There is a statement in Scripture in which there is agreement between two of the chief Apostles. Paul and Peter both speak of this particular truth! What is it? It is the idea that the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night. Paul, in 1 Thessalonians 5:2 says,

2 For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night.

Peter says in 2 Peter 3:10 the following,

10 But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.

Keep both of these portions of Scripture in mind as we will return to them shortly. There are some great truths that come out of these sections. The thing that was interesting about these two statements is the agreement concerning the suddenness and unknown time that our Lord will return! They both speak of this as being equivalent to a thief in the night. Let's take a moment to look at some things from Scripture that speak of this idea. Words from Scripture directly out of the mouth of Jesus! (Luke 12:37-40)

First, we read in Luke 17:26 - 30 the following,

26 And as it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man.

27 They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all.

28 Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded;

29 But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all.

30 Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed.

This is great stuff! These are words you just won't hear in one of those liberalized, mamby-pamby churches that need to get out of their plush little sinless, bloodless, corrupted bibles and open up a King James Bible where maybe they might just discover they're not the little perfect, sweet, great in their own eyes, bags of bones that they are. They are no different from the world and no different from those described in these few verses. The people in these verses are people who had neither a clue nor cared about what was going to happen. They were living life as if it would just go on forever. They did all these things: they ate, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded, and then they were destroyed. Doesn't that sound like what is going on these days? People are just going about their lives as if Jesus is not going to return! We can expect this from the world, but the sad part is, there are people who are claiming to be Christians that fall in this same group. The Lord knows who are His though.

Remember, we read just a few minutes ago how the Son of man would return as a thief in the night. There is a difference between the world and those who are truly the Lord's. The world lives like those

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in Noah's day and Lot's day. We as truly saved, Bible believing Christians are doing what we are supposed to be doing. Looking for the return of Jesus!

Jesus said in Luke 12:37 - 40 says,

37 Blessed are those servants, whom the lord when he cometh shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them.

38 And if he shall come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find them so, blessed are those servants.

39 And this know, that if the goodman of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched, and not have suffered his house to be broken through.

40 Be ye therefore ready also: for the Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not.

Suffice it to say that we do not know the hour that the Son of man cometh. Jesus told us in Matthew 24:36,

36 But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only.

Look at what is recorded in Mark 13:32,

32 But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father.

We do not know that day and hour, the angels do not know, even the Son does not know. God the Father is the only who knows that day and hour when Jesus shall return. We are blessed who watch for his coming!

We read from 2 Peter 3:10 concerning the day of the Lord coming as a thief in the night. He confirms much of what we have talked about concerning the way of the world just a few verses previous to this. 2 Peter 3:3 - 4 says,

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.

Peter says these people are willingly ignorant of the Word of God. They will be without excuse in that day. They know what will happen in that last day, but choose to not believe it.

Christians, that is, those who have believed on the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus as payment in full for their sins will not suffer through this time spoken of. They are watchful of that time and will not be partakers in that time. Just as God saved Lot from the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, and saved Noah from the flood that destroyed the world, He will save us from the destruction to come during the day of the Lord.

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Paul, in 1 Thessalonians 5:1 - 2 spoke about the day of the Lord coming as a thief in the night. He also said in verses 3 through 5 the following,

3 For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape.

4 But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief.

5 Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness.

He tells us that those who are living in darkness shall not escape the destruction to come. But, he also says that we as children of light, children of the day, will not be overtaken as by a thief in the night. We will escape that destruction which comes with the day of the Lord! We see this further because of what Paul says just previous to this section at the end of chapter 4. 1 Thessalonians 4:15 - 18 says,

15 For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep.

16 For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:

17 Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

18 Wherefore comfort one another with these words.

We will be raptured out of here before the day of the Lord! We who are alive and those that have already died in Christ will join up with the Lord in the air. All this, as Paul says, by the word of the Lord!

It is truly comforting to know that those who believe that Jesus died and rose again will be spared from the sudden destruction that will come on that day of the Lord. We serve a loving, merciful God who always does what He says He will do. Just as He saved Noah and Lot for examples, He will save us who have believed on the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ. By believing on this, we are saved from this sudden destruction, we are saved from our own sins, we are promised eternal life with the Lord! Have you believed on Jesus' death, burial and resurrection as your only source of salvation? I urge you to do so. Do not be overcome by the sudden destruction that will come as a thief in the night. Do not allow yourself to be eternally damned to the Lake of Fire that was not originally created for you, but for those angels who left their first estate. Do not think that your own good works will be acceptable as payment for your sins. There is only one acceptable payment and that was completed by Jesus at Calvary on the Cross. A prayer will not save you, but believing on Jesus and his acceptable payment for your sins will save you. The key word being believe. Will you please believe and be saved? The choice is all yours.