"LIFE ON EARTH WHEN JESUS RETURNS"

("The Times of the End Times")

Matthew 24:32-41

12/30/2018

INTRODUCTION:

***What will life be like in the days before and during the return of Christ?**

I. The Days Before Christ's Coming (v. 33-35)

A. The SIGNS of the days before Christ's coming (v. 32-33)

B. The SHORTNESS of the days before Christ's coming (v. 34)

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II. The Day of Christ's Coming (v. 36-41)

A. The SUDDENNESS of the day of Christ's coming (v. 36)
(A day of secret)

B. The SHOCK of the day of Christ's coming (v. 37-39)
(A day of surprise)

C. The SEVERANCE of the day of Christ's coming (v. 40-41)
(A day of separation)

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The failure of date-setters.

(SEE: VanKampen, p. 401)

***What will life be like in the days before and during the return of Christ?**

I. The Days Before Christ's Coming (v. 33-35)

A. The SIGNS of the days before Christ's coming (v. 32-33)

V. 32

"When the sap begins to flow into the branches, making them ***"tender,"*** and new ***"leaves"*** appear on the tree, ***"you know that summer is near."*** (MacArthur, p. 62).

Just as a budding fig tree indicates that summer is approaching, so when you see all of the events mentioned in vv. 4-29, you can know that Christ's return is soon approaching.

"Unfortunately, this parable, like many others, has often been made confusing and misleading by those who view it as a complicated allegory rather than a simple analogy" (MacArthur, p. 61).

Some interpreters view the reference to the ***"fig tree"*** as referring to Israel.

Note: In this context the ***"fig tree"*** is being used as an analogy to teach about the timing of Christ's return.

You don't use a symbol to explain a symbol. Rather, Jesus is speaking of a literal fig tree to explain a spiritual truth.

V. 33

"All these things" - The events of mass deception (v. 4), false Christ's (v. 5), universal wars (v. 6), famines, pestilences, earthquakes (v. 7), persecution (v. 9-13), the Abomination that makes the Jewish Holy Place desolate (v. 15), the Great Tribulation (v. 16-22), false prophets and false miracles (v. 24). . . these are all signs that Christ's coming is approaching.

"It is near" - Christ's coming (v. 30-31) and the establishment of the Kingdom of God (*"the kingdom of God is near"* - Luke 21:31).

"Even at the doors" - When those events transpire, we will know that Christ is ready to open and exit Heaven's doors to make His descent to earth.

The Rapture (Second Coming) is not "sign-less", as pretribulationalism teaches.

When the beginning of birth pangs have run their course, one can know that Christ's coming *"is near"* but still be unsure of the exact *"day and hour"*; hence, the admonition to *"watch"* (v. 42).

B. The SHORTNESS of the days before Christ's coming (v. 34)

"Verily" - Truly, assuredly, positively without a doubt

"This generation" - not the generation Jesus was speaking to (the disciples did not live to see *"all these things")*; but the generation that would be around when these events began to transpire.

In other words, the generation of people who are alive when these events (v. 4-29) begin to be fulfilled, will be the same generation which will experience the second coming. The generation that is present when Antichrist is manifested will be the generation to see the fulfillment of Christ's words.

By speaking of a particular ***"generation"*** Jesus is demonstrating that the events He referred to are not some long, drawn out, century-long Tribulation, but a brief period of time -- no more than 7 years long.

C. The SURENESS of the days before Christ's coming (v. 35)

"Heaven and earth shall pass away" after the 1,000 year Kingdom described in Revelation 20:1-10 is fulfilled. At the time of the Great White Throne Judgment (20:11), this present Heaven (space) and earth will be replaced by a new version (21:1).

Christ's words will:

--endure through the end of time (the preservation of Scripture is taught)

--be fulfilled at God's appointed time (the actual accomplishment of prophetic Scripture is taught).

Luke 16:17 - *"And it is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle of the law to fail."*

Scripture is *"clean, enduring forever"* (Psalm 19:9).

Matt. 5:18 - *"For verily I saw unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled."*

II. The Day of Christ's Coming (v. 36-41)

A. The SUDDENNESS of the day of Christ's coming (v. 36)

(A day of secret)

"That day and hour" - refers to the Second Coming and Rapture

It is futile even to attempt to predict a date prior to the budding of the ***"fig tree"*** (i.e. prior to the fulfillment of vv. 4-26).

Acts 1:6-7 - *"When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom of Israel? And He said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in His own power."*

Even the Son of God, while He humbly was on earth (Phil. 2:7), did not know the date in which He would return (*"neither the Son"* - Mark 13:32).

Note: If the date of Christ's return could be calculated by dates given in the Old Testament and New Testament and by building a Scriptural chronological time-line, then why wasn't even Jesus able to do so with His superior knowledge of the Scriptures? -- So much for the date-setters!

It is true that Jesus did not say we could not know the year. We will be able to estimate once these predicted events begin to transpire.

B. **The SHOCK of the day of Christ's coming** (v. 37-39)
(A day of surprise)

V. 37

The days prior to the Coming (*"parousia"* - visible presence) of Christ will be just as they were before the flood came in Noah's day.

"The days of Noah" - What were those days like? SEE: Genesis 6 -

1) Inter-marriage between the saved and unsaved (Gen. 6:2-3)

2) Human notoriety (6:4)

3) Wickedness (6:5)

4) Continual evil thoughts (6:5)

5) Moral corruption (6:11)

6) Violence (bloodshed) (6:11)

7) Unbelief (they did not believe Noah's message - I Pet. 3:20; II Pet. 2:6)

V. 38

"Despite the distress, persecutions,m and upheavals (vv. 4-28), life goes on: people eat, drink, and marry" (Gaebelein, p. 509).

The activities of ***"eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage"*** are not in and of themselves sinful; they are merely normal, daily human activity.

There is nothing spiritual about them; such activities do not show any expectancy of Christ's return and the judgment to follow.

They were simply living independently of God (they was a feeling of ***"peace and safety"*** as they ignored Noah's warning).

Although God's people will not be experiencing ***"peace"*** in the world (rather, Tribulation from the Antichrist world), lost humanity will say ***"peace and safety"*** prior to Christ's coming (I Thes. 5:3-4 - *"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. But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief."*).

"Until the day Noah entered into the ark" - On the very day (Gen. 7:7, 12-13, 16) Noah entered the ark, their partying and "liaise fair" life ended, because the flood began.

Note: Just as God delivered Noah and Lot on the same day He poured oust His judgment and wrath on the earth, so it will be at Christ's coming (Luke 17:26-30).

The Day of the Lord's Wrath begins at the Rapture (I Thes. 4 & 5).

*God always delivers His people before He pours out His vindictive judgment.

V. 39

"And knew not" - The world didn't know when the flood would come; and even Noah (who expected it 120 years after the Gen. 6:3 warning) didn't know exactly the day until 7 days prior (Gen. 7:4).

Noah and his family knew the flood would come in their lifetime and they were prepared for it, but the rest of the world was caught by surprise. They had heard that judgment was coming, since Noah (the preacher of righteousness) warned them (II Pet. 2:5), but they did not believe it.

So will it be in the Last Days (they will scoffingly say: *"Where is the promise of His coming?"*) (II Pet. 3:4).

The people in Noah's day no doubt laughed and mocked at his preaching of a coming flood (they had never seen rain, much less a flood -- just as people living today have never seen the sun and moon darkened and the stars fall, etc.). It was business as usual until the day Noah entered the ark.

C. **The <u>SEVERANCE</u> of the day of Christ's coming** (v. 40-41)
(A day of <u>separation</u>)

V. 40

"Then" - the day of *"the coming of the Son of Man"* (v. 39)

"Field. . . grinding at the mill" - Note: The ones taken will be ready, but still continuing the routines of life. Jesus does not expect us to be waiting on a mountain or in a church building the day He comes back.

Jesus said, *"Occupy till I come"* (Luke 9:13).

A hand mill was "normally operated by two women squatting opposite each other with the mill between them, each woman in turn pulling the stone around 180 degrees" (Gaebelein, p. 509).

When Christ comes, depending on which side of the globe you live on, it will either be daytime (for some) or nighttime (for others).

The jobs described in these verses (v. 40-41) are <u>day</u>light jobs. However, in Luke 17:34 Jesus said: *"I tell you, in that <u>night</u> there shall be two in one bed; the one shall be taken, and the other shall be left."*

The ones ***"taken"*** (in this context) most obviously refers to the same people who were *"gathered together"* in verse 31.

(Any other view is to twist and coerce a meaning on this text that is unwarranted and inconsistent with the inspired flow of thought in this context)

In verses 32-41, three key words tie this context together in describing the same event -- namely the Second Coming of Christ (v. 3, 30).

v. 33 - *"It is near"*
V. 36 - *"But of that day"*
V. 40 - *"Then shall two be in the field"*

Many pre-tribulationalists in a desperate attempt to make verses 40 & 41 not refer to the Rapture explain it thus:

"Those taken in verses 40 & 41 are not saints but sinners who are removed from the earth at the very end of the 70th week." (Matthew 13:40,41)

This view has a major problem explaining how the previous context (v. 36-37) relates to those seized away (i.e. v. 40-41).

Every pre-tribulationist knows that the end of the Tribulation will involve the most severe, terrifying judgments (bowls - Rev. 15-16) ever to fall on earth.

The world's conditions at the end of the Tribulation will not allow the relaxed, uninhibited, normal "eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage" scenario described in vv. 36-39.

The "peaceful" conditions on the earth (v. 36-39) experienced by the unsaved prior to the "coming of the Son of man" unquestionably point to the Rapture.

The word translated ***"taken"*** is *paralambano* (*para =* along side of; *lambano =* to take or receive). The word means to "take with one's self" or to "join to one's self" (Strong). This same word occurs in John 14:3 where Jesus promised to *"come again and receive you unto myself"*.

This word is different than the word *"took"* in verse 39, which describes how the flood waters carried the unsaved world to their doom and destruction.

The ones taken are taken to be with Christ; whereas the ones left are left to remain on earth for the Day of the Lord's Wrath.

John the Baptist said, *"Whose fan is in his hand, and he will throughly purge his flood, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire."*

There will be a severance (splitting/breaking) of many close acquaintances (co-workers) and relatives (Luke 17:34) when Christ returns.