

Noah's Era and End Times

Douglas W. Cho, D.R.S.

Luke 17:26-30 [NKJV]

And as it was in the days of Noah, so it will be also in the days of the Son of Man: 27 They ate, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all. 28 Likewise as it was also in the days of Lot: They ate, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they built; 29 but on the day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all. 30 Even so will it be in the day when the Son of Man is revealed.

Jesus' saying above is about the 'Lord's Day,' which refers to the end times. Lord's day is understood as a period of time when the prophecies in the Book of Revelation and relevant OT prophecies on the last days will happen and is not a single event of the Lord's return. Jesus Christ preached love and grace during His first period in the world and so have His disciples. However, the Bible tells us that the last seven years of the world as we know will be a period when God's wrath will be unfurled on the unbelieving and sinful world. That means the grace period will no longer be with the world. As the seven year 'Tribulation Period' ends, Lord Jesus will return to the world, punish all unbelievers and enemies of the Lord of the time, establish His global reign out of Jerusalem of Israel to begin the millennial kingdom. I have written about the end times in prior messages but the Lord wants me to reawaken you folks about the impending end times so that all of us will enter the ark of salvation when this time comes. Why did Lord Jesus say the end times will be like the days of Noah and of Lot? That is the topic of our study today, and I hope it will give help your preparation for the end times.

1. Noah's Era and the Gospel of Grace

According to Ancient Book of Jasher, the great flood occurred in the year 1656 after the creation [about 4,125 years ago from today] and the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah in the year 2048 after the creation [about 3,733 years ago from today]. Lord Jesus, as God the Son, took part in God's decision to destroy the world with a global flood. Seeing the moral depravity of Sodom and Gomorrah, the Lord came to Abraham together with two angels and informed him of His plan to destroy these wicked cities with fire and brimstone. As God the Son who made the decision to utterly destroy the sinful world and the two sinful cities, Lord Jesus gave the Pharisees and those who were listening a stern warning about the final divine punishment that would come in the end times by referring to the historic two events of punishments that God had unleashed because of the massive global and regional unbelief and moral depravity.

During Noah's era God was very much grieved and angered at how the children of the fallen angels took daughters of men and produced giants and they became very wicked and morally corrupt. So, God came to a decision to destroy all breathing creatures on the earth together with the humans except Noah and his family.

[Genesis 6: 4-8] There were giants on the earth in those days, and also afterward, when the sons of God came in to the daughters of men and they bore children to them. Those were the mighty men who were of old, men of renown. 5 Then the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. 6 And the Lord was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart. 7 So the Lord said, "I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth, both man and beast, creeping thing and birds of the air, for I am sorry that I have made them." 8 But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord.

However, God declared a 'Grace Period' of 120 years before bringing on the global flood so that, if people repent and turn to God during this period, He would renounce the plan of destroying them with a flood. According to Jasher, God called Methuselah and his grandson, Noah, who were both righteous before God, and gave them the calling of preaching the gospel of grace during this grace period to the sinful people of the era. Genesis 6:3 records very simply, "The days of man shall be 120 years," whereas Book of Jasher provides us details on the ministry of Methuselah and Noah, who spoke the gospel without ceasing for 120 years.

[Genesis 6:3] And the Lord said, "My Spirit shall not strive with man forever, for he is indeed flesh; yet his days shall be one hundred and twenty years.

*[Jasher 1536AM: Translation by Ken Johnson] 6 And after the lapse of many years, in the four hundred and eightieth year of the life of Noah, when all those men, who followed the Lord had died away from among the sons of men, and only Methuselah was then left, God said unto Noah and Methuselah, saying, 7 Speak ye, and proclaim to the sons of men, saying, Thus saith the Lord, return from your evil ways and forsake your works, and the Lord will repent of the evil that he declared to do to you, so that it will not come to pass. 8 For thus, saith the Lord, **Behold I give you a period of one hundred and twenty years**; if you will return to me and forsake your evil ways, then will I also turn away from the evil which I told you, and it shall not exist, saith the Lord. 9 And Noah and Methuselah spoke all the words of the Lord to the sons of men, day after day, constantly speaking to them. 10 But the sons of men would not hearken to them, nor incline their ears to their words, and they were stiff-necked.*

In the year 595 of Noah's life God told Noah to build an ark (ship) for a refuge from the coming global flood. Noah and his family completed this project in five years through dedicated efforts. There was no rain on earth before the flood so that the sinful people of the world only scoffed at God's message of destroying the world with a great flood. And they regarded Noah and his family as fools as they were devoted to building the ark as the vessel of preserving their life.

Because of the constant preaching activities of Methuselah and Noah, the people of the soon-to-perish world knew about the so-called 'grace period' of 120 years. Noah believed that God would execute His flood plan if people do not repent. Noah, however, did not know when the flood would come exactly, although he knew that the flood would not happen before he completes the ark construction. Lord Jesus said no one knows when His return will be and only God knows. Noah was devoted to preaching the message of grace while continuing to build the massive ark with the help of his family during the five years before the flood. And the time came finally when the ark was completed in accordance with the design God had given Noah.

Lamech, Noah's father, died five years before the flood, in the year Noah began the ark construction work. Unfortunately, Lamech did not live to take part in the ark construction project of his son. Methuselah, Noah's grandfather, however, must have provided constant encouragements to the ark building crew, and he passed away only a short time before the ark completion. Also, the ark project could not have been possible without the dedicated devotion of Noah's family. God is pleased when all members of a righteous man of God are united in supporting him to do God's work. However, it is not always the case of men of God.

As they were nearing the final stages of the ark construction, Noah became more and more aware that the flood, of which God had spoken to him some 120 years ago, was now imminent, but he did not know just exactly when it would come. People of the world likely mocked Noah in derision, "*Now that you are done building this huge ship, tell us when the flood would come so we may also make preparation.*" Noah would not counter their cynicism but kept on making preparations for the family's livelihood aboard the ship for an indefinite period of the flood to come. Noah was sad and heart-broken that the 120 years of preaching God's message of grace had only been ignored by the sinful world, which was marching toward a global destruction. So will be the end times of our day. Although the gospel of grace is still being preached in most countries, it is either ignored or despised by the wicked peoples of this world. And the world is marching toward the days of God's wrath.

Once all of the necessary work was done, God told Noah's family to enter the ark. Then, God caused all living animals, each a part of male and female, to come to the ark and Noah and his sons led them into their prepared habitats. This amazing orderly procession of animals must certainly have drawn the people's attention, but none of them chose to join Noah's family on the ark. The whole event was only a big entertainment to them. When this process was completed, God closed the ship's door and shut Noah and his family in the ark from the outside. The grace period was now over and no one could enter in, even if someone wanted to join Noah belatedly.

*[Genesis 7:13-16] On the very same day Noah and Noah's sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth, and Noah's wife and the three wives of his sons with them, entered the ark— 14 they and every beast after its kind, all cattle after their kind, every creeping thing that creeps on the earth after its kind, and every bird after its kind, every bird of every sort. 15 And they went into the ark to Noah, two by two, of all flesh in which is the breath of life. 16 So those that entered, male and female of all flesh, went in as God had commanded him; and **the Lord shut him in.***

I do not intend to present the details of the global flood that followed Noah's entry into the ark. Rather, by reviewing what happened prior to the flood, perhaps we could understand how the events and conditions *before the flood* are relevant to our days. The reason for this exercise is because Lord Jesus told His disciples and the Pharisees that the end times will be like Noah's era. Just as the grace period was over after God shut Noah in the ark and no one could enter it any longer, it will be like so in the end times. God's grace has term limits.

2. Grace Period and Rapture

All people in the world of Noah's era knew about God's grace period of 120 years because Methuselah and Noah had been preaching this message of grace to them without ceasing, year after year for 120 years. However, they did not believe it and the grace period was coming to a close. Today, no one knows exactly when God's grace period will end. Certain church leaders have proclaimed that Jesus Christ would come on certain specific days and drew attention of many people. But their prophecies turned out to be false. God's grace period is continuing for some time and the gospel of grace continues to be preached until the rapture event, when God's grace will cease, although there will be a mass conversion, during the final seven years, among the Jews and some non-Jews who repent having seen the rapture of their families and friends. However, they will have to undergo a period of extreme tribulations which the world has not seen before.

In the following saying Lord Jesus told His disciples that He would *"come back to bring them back to where He is."* Since this event did not happen during the life times of His disciples, the subject of this 'bringing back' must be the New Testament church, which came into being after Jesus' ascension to heaven. It means the present-day true Christians are those the Lord will return to take back to heaven.

[John 14:2-3] My Father's house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.

Rain started coming down seven days after Noah and his family entered the ark. The Lord's closing of the ark entrance door is like the rapture in the coming end times. And the great flood corresponds to the great tribulation of God's wrath. Both the great flood and the great tribulation are due to God's wrath toward the sinful world. The sequence of events, rapture followed by great tribulation, will be so because Lord Jesus told so to His disciples. And it is right for us to believe His saying about how things will be in end times. Just as God separated righteous Noah and his family from the wicked world that He was about to destroy, God will remove His faithful children, the New Testament church on earth, from this earth, on which He would unleash unspeakable disasters as prophesied in the Book of Revelation. That is why I believe in the **'pre-tribulation rapture'** position and I encourage you the same.

About the rapture the apostles Paul, Peter and John have written. And Lord Jesus spoke about it in parables. The apostle Paul prophesied that true Christians will be transformed into bodies of resurrection at the time of the rapture. That is, we will put on the incorruptible bodies, meet Lord Jesus in the clouds, travel to the Kingdom of Heaven together with Him, and enter into the wedding ceremony as the bride of Jesus Christ.

[1 Corinthians 15: 51-53] Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed— 52 in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. 53 For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality.

Paul explained how the rapture will happen to the Thessalonica church. Lord Jesus will not come down to the earth but will call the faithful dead and the living saints *from the clouds* through the shouting voice of an

archangel and the trumpet sound. This rapture event is NOT the Lord's coming to the earth but will happen in the clouds.

[1 Thessalonians 4:15-18] According to the Lord's word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. 16 For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. 17 After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so, we will be with the Lord forever. 18 Therefore encourage one another with these words.

Rapture is a living hope of all true Christians. This present world we live in is full of wicked, evil forces who cause all kinds of problems including acts of violence, inciting of wars and conflicts globally, causing moral depravity and political corruption, fomenting social unrest and crimes, causing church divisions and debaucheries, engaging in human trafficking including child sexual exploitation and human sacrifices to Satan. Their ultimate purpose is to destroy the humanity and to offer the broken world to Satan, who is their master and lord. True Christians are endeavoring to live godly life daily according to the teachings and moral standards of God as found in the Bible and led by Holy Spirit. Yet, peace and joy are often robbed when they see or face the sins and their effects in the world around them. Oh, how wonderful it would be to be removed from this wicked world and be wholly transformed into incorruptible resurrection bodies and to be with Lord Jesus, our Bridegroom, in heaven forever! Rapture will be such a blessed event. And it is only natural for all Christians to make preparations and be ready for this glorious event in anticipation.

Many teachers mistakenly believe and teach people that the rapture and the Lord's second coming will be one and the same event. Just as the flood came seven days after Noah's entry into the ark, a period of time, such as seven years at least, will be required for God to execute His wrath plan and to bring about the final conversion of the Jewish people to Christ before the Lord comes back to the earth and establish His millennial kingdom rule. A number of signs have been prophesied to occur prior to the second coming, and many theologians have written about them for the purpose of warning the world. However, it is not quite accurate to take them as the signs before the rapture because they are two different events interspersed with a number of years. In the next study, we will look into the imminence of the rapture and how the rapture will occur so that we could be prepared for this glorious event.

Amen.