

Last Days - Part Seven

The Rapture

Of the True Church

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I Thessalonians 4:13-18

But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him. 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.

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: 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. Wherefore comfort one another with these words.

This refers to the Day of Christ, which is at hand. I personally don't believe that this day is too far down the road. We are taught in the Word to expect it at any moment — even today.

Now, following the Day of Christ will be another day. This day is called the Day of the Lord.

The Day of the Lord

I Thessalonians 5:2

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

It behooves us to be ready for the Day of Christ, when the church will be raptured!

II Peter 3:10

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.

What a horrible day this will be! We certainly don't want to be left behind to face such a day.

Matthew 24:29

Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken.

When all of this takes place, the scientists will surely have a hard time trying to figure out what went wrong! If they'd just look in the Bible, they'd surely find the answer: God has risen up to punish the world for its wickedness.

Revelation 6:12-14

And I beheld when He had opened the sixth seal, and, lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood; and the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind. And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places.

I wouldn't want to be here when something like this is going on! The only assurance we have of not seeing such a great and terrible time of destruction is to be ready when Jesus comes.

Isaiah 13:6

Howl ye; for the day of the Lord is at hand; it shall come as a destruction from the Almighty.

God is saying, *OK, world, go ahead and holler. Go ahead and howl. You've had time, but you rejected Jesus. You've taken up with the Antichrist. You went your own way — now go ahead and howl!*

Isaiah 13:7, 8

Therefore shall all hands be faint, and every man's heart shall melt: and they shall be afraid: pangs and sorrows shall take hold of them; they shall be in pain as a woman that travaileth: they shall be amazed one at another; their faces shall be as flames.

I look at this, and it makes me shudder to think of such a terrible day coming. What day is it? It is the great and terrible Day of the Lord.

This day is at hand, and when it begins to come, this is the way it will be.

Isaiah 13:9

Behold, the day of the LORD cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate: and He shall destroy the sinners thereof out of it.

This time is coming at the end of the age and is clearly identified to us as a time of God's wrath. It is a time when God is going to move with fierce anger and wrath. Listen, this terrible day is coming because men have rejected the love of Jesus. The Bible tells us the way to escape this:

John 3:16

For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him should *not perish* [italics mine], but have everlasting life.

What about those who don't believe in the only begotten Son of God, those who reject Jesus Christ? According to John 3:16, they will perish!

II Thessalonians 2:9, 10

Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.

We're at the end of the age, and we're heading more and more in that direction. A falling away is predicted of much of the church (II Thessalonians 2:3); multitudes of former believers will follow the Antichrist. The wrath of God will then be poured out, destroying the world because people loved a lie and rejected the Son of God, choosing instead to worship Antichrist.

Don't tell me that God isn't a God of fierce anger and wrath. I'm showing you from the pages of the Bible. If you believe the Bible is the Word of God, then you must believe this. The God of John 3:16 is the same God who will pour out His wrath and fierce anger to straighten things out.

This will come to pass because of the world's total and utter rejection of the Son of God.

Revelation 6:12, 13

And I beheld when He had opened the sixth seal, and, lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood; and the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind.

Now, whatever John saw fall had the appearance of stars falling to the earth. I realize those stars out there are big suns shining. And I also realize there are lots of other things out there in the universe. Whatever it is, there is going to be a rain of some kind of debris falling to the earth, just as the prophet of God saw.

The sun will be darkened. It will be pitch black. You won't even be able to see your hand in front of your eyes.

Isaiah 13:11

And I will punish the world for their evil, and the wicked for their iniquity; and I will cause the arrogancy of the proud to cease, and will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible.

Yes, God is going to punish the world. He is going to destroy sin and the sinner right out of this world with fire judgment. And then He is going to set a new order upon the earth.

Following this, the Lord is going to establish His kingdom down here. He is going to rule and reign for 1,000 years, right here on this present planet earth, and we who love Him are going to rule and reign with Him.

Where are you going to be when the great and terrible day of the Lord comes? Up in glory, safe before the Father's throne? Up there where the mansion He has prepared will be open to you? Or down here to face His wrath when it falls?

It's up to you.

II Corinthians 5:11a

Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men

I would like to persuade you to live for Jesus. Take these strong warnings to heart. If you do as the Lord said to do — watching and praying, living a holy life before Him — you'll be counted worthy to escape all these things which shall come upon the earth.

Fire Judgment!

Isaiah 24:1

Behold, the Lord maketh the earth empty, and maketh it waste, and turneth it upside down, and scattereth abroad the inhabitants thereof.

God is speaking here of making the earth empty. This goes along with what He previously said:

Isaiah 13:12

I will make a man more precious than fine gold; even a man than the golden wedge of Ophir.

Here He speaks about punishing the world until only a few men are left. He speaks of punishing it by turning it upside down and scattering the inhabitants abroad.

Isaiah 24:4-6

The earth mourneth and fadeth away, the world languisheth and fadeth away, the haughty people of the earth do languish. The earth also is defiled under the inhabitants thereof; because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant. Therefore hath the curse devoured the earth, and they that dwell therein are desolate: therefore the inhabitants of the earth are burned, and few men left.

That's pretty shaky! Yet it is God's Word. His Word holds this world reserved unto fire judgment. He said the earth would be burned and few men would be left.

Now, this brings us way back to the days of Noah: *As it was in the days of Noah, so shall it also be in the days of the coming of the Son of man* (Luke 17:26). In Noah's day, it was just eight souls. We don't know how many it will be in the day of Jesus, other than the fact that the Word says few men will be left.

Isaiah 24:10

The city of confusion is broken down: every house is shut up, that no man may come in.

The city of confusion: Mystery Babylon, the city with a woman sitting on seven mountains, the city of Rome. The city of confusion is broken down.

When the wrath of God falls, an earthquake is going to come and split that city into three parts. It is going to shake that city until every building will fall to the ground. That city will be destroyed by the wrath of God, and it will never be rebuilt!

Isaiah 24:16, 17

From the uttermost part of the earth have we heard songs, even glory to the righteous. But I said, My leanness, my leanness, woe unto me! the treacherous dealers have dealt treacherously; yea, the treacherous dealers have dealt very treacherously. Fear, and the pit, and the snare, are upon thee, O inhabitant of the earth.

Remember the words of Jesus: *Pray that you will be counted worthy to escape all these things that will come upon the earth* (Luke 21:36). He told us it will come as a snare.

Isaiah 24:18

And it shall come to pass, that he who fleeth from the noise of the fear shall fall into the pit; and he that cometh up out of the midst of the pit shall be taken in the snare: for the windows from on high are open, and the foundations of the earth do shake.

No escape!

This is the fierceness of God's wrath: fear and the snare and the pit. It is a day of fire judgment, a day when men will try to escape from one facet only to fall into another. There will be no escape when it comes.

Isaiah 24:19

The earth is utterly broken down, the earth is clean dissolved, the earth is moved exceedingly.

Would you like to be on the earth in the day of the fierceness of the wrath of Almighty God?

Isaiah 24:20

The earth shall reel to and fro like a drunkard, and shall be removed like a cottage; and the transgression thereof shall be heavy upon it; and it shall fall, and not rise again.

The earth is moved exceedingly. The earth shall reel to and fro like a drunkard. What did Isaiah know about the earth traveling around the sun in an orbit? What did he know about the earth's movement and how it travels in space? Only God could have said these things way back then.

Prophetically, the Spirit of God was telling us what will happen in the day of the fierceness of God's wrath. He knew the earth travels in an orbit. After all, that's the way He made it! And He knew He can cause it to reel to and fro in space like a drunkard.

The End

We have to realize God's reasoning in all of this. The world is coming to an end. This old world system is going to end. God isn't going to tolerate the sinful mess on this planet for ever.

Today, God is giving men a chance to get saved. He has graciously poured out His Spirit in these last days. He has been pouring out His Spirit upon all flesh, saving all who will call on Jesus Christ, to cleanse them from sin and become their Lord and Saviour.

Salvation

Romans 3:23

For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God

The entire world is in sin and wickedness, in need of a Saviour to set them free. God provided that Saviour when He sent His only begotten Son into this world.

I Timothy 1:15

This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.

The work of Jesus Christ is to save sinners, and He wants you to be saved! He died for you on Calvary's Cross. His blood was shed to wash away your sins. He gave Himself in sacrificial death — dying in your place — so you could be saved, forgiven of your sins, born of the Spirit, and able to receive everlasting life.

Your acceptance of Jesus, believing on Him and confessing Him as your Lord and Saviour, is the essence of the Gospel. Christ died for you, and you must believe on Him. You must accept Him into your heart if you want everlasting life.

Where do you stand today? Have you been born again? Have you been saved? If not, do something about it today, before it is too late!

Luke 13:23, 24

Then said one unto Him, Lord, are there few that be saved? And He said unto them, Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus taught us that we should enter in at the strait (narrow) gate. He is that gate. If we want salvation, we are going to find it through believing on Him.

There are many, many names around of those who claim to offer salvation. But the Scripture is emphatic to teach that Jesus is the only way. Strait is the gate and narrow is the way that leads to eternal life

John 14:6

Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me.

Jesus warned the people to strive to enter in. He said there would be few who would find that strait gate.

The day is coming when many will seek to enter in but won't be able to. Wouldn't it be an awful thing to keep putting off the day of salvation only to find out, when you finally decided to do something about it, that it is too late!

How could this be?

Luke 13:25

When once the master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us; and He shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence ye are

When the Lord comes in the rapture to take His church out of this world, many are going to do this very thing. They are going to wait until it is too late to ask for salvation.

Is that the pathway you're going to take? Are you going to put off the day of salvation until it is too late? Are you going to decide to get right with God when there is no more time? Don't put it off any longer, or you may find that you put off the day of salvation just one day too long!

Luke 13:26, 27

Then shall ye begin to say, We have eaten and drunk in Thy presence, and Thou hast taught in our streets. But He shall say, I tell you, I know you not whence ye are; depart from Me, all ye workers of iniquity.

There's a separation of the saved and the unsaved. Many, at the last moment, will want to go — but it will be too late. Those who were ready will have gone, and the door will be fast shut!

Luke 13:28

There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out.

Many are going to pull their hair out. They are going to scream! They are going to holler and cry out! Yes, they will be terrified, because they waited too long. They didn't take Jesus' warnings seriously.

While you still have time, consider what Jesus has to say to you. Don't just think about it; take the step today. Receive Him as your personal Lord and Saviour while you still have time.

Romans 10:8-10

But what saith it? The Word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

What powerful verses!

We are told to do two things:

- believe with our heart
- confess with our mouth

What are we to believe? *Believe in thine heart that God has raised (Jesus) from the dead.* This isn't talking about mental consent. This is speaking about believing in your heart.

When you believe something in your heart, it will move you. It will cause you to respond, grasping hold and not letting go. And when you believe on the Lord Jesus from your heart, you will follow Him the rest of your life. You will set your heart on Him.

Many claim they believe in Jesus. The Bible says that even the devils believe and tremble. They may believe and tremble, but they are not saved. And you may have a belief in Jesus, but you must believe with your heart and accept Him as your Lord and Saviour.

Then the Bible goes on to say that you must confess Him with your mouth as your personal Saviour.

Romans 10:13

For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

If you want to be saved today, call on Jesus: *Lord Jesus, come into my heart and save my soul. I turn my life over to You, and I believe that You will save me and forgive me of my sins.*

John 3:14,15

And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life.

The message of Jesus is a message of everlasting life. He spoke much about this subject.

We want to look further in the Word at what He stressed concerning this, that we may know it is the will and plan of God for all who will believe.

John 3:16

For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

The whole purpose of Jesus coming into this world is found in this verse. God's message to a lost, dying world is that they can have everlasting life through His Son.

John 3:17

For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through Him might be saved.

Jesus didn't come to condemn us! He came to save us.

John 3:36

He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.

The same message of eternal life through Jesus Christ is clearly given here, emphasizing the necessity of believing on the Son.

John 4:14

But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.

We have to do something here. Jesus offers the water, but we must drink of it. Having it available is one thing; drinking it is quite another. The Lord offers salvation, but you must reach out to believe on His Son, receiving Him into your heart. The woman at the well heard about the water of life and she reached out to receive it.

John 5:24

Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.

Again, we are told to merely believe and we will pass from death unto life, from the old dead state of walking after the flesh unto a life free from condemnation, a life of walking after the Spirit — see Romans 8:1.

John 5:39, 40

Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of Me. And ye will not come to Me, that ye might have life.

How terrible to think that some refuse to come to Jesus and receive everlasting life! Don't let that be your case. Come to Him while there is time.

John 6:32,33

Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but My Father giveth you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is He which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world.

Here Jesus again offers everlasting life to whosoever will reach out to receive it.

John 7:37, 38

In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink. He that believeth on Me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.

Are you thirsting for life? Is there a craving in your soul? Is there something in you that cries out, *Oh, God, I want to live for ever! I don't want to perish?*

Well, He is offering you rivers of living water if you will simply reach out, in faith believing, and receive.

John 10:10,11

The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly. I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth His life for the sheep.

Revelation 22:20

He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.

Amen! Even so, come, Lord Jesus!