

# How Did Jesus Explain the End of the Age?

*Note: This is the first of a two-part article.*

Just days before our Lord's death, burial and resurrection, He withdrew from the crowds in Jerusalem, walked with His disciples across the small Kedron Valley and climbed up part of the mild slope of the Mount of Olives, which overlooked Jerusalem from the east.

His disciples used this private time with Him to ask Jesus important questions about the destruction of the temple, His Second Coming and the final judgment at the "end of the age" (Matt. 24:3). He told them that no one knows the day or the hour of His future coming. "Only the Father knows," He said (Matt. 24:36b; MSG).

## **We Can Know the Signs of His Coming**

However, in the immediately preceding parable of the fig tree, Jesus taught that men *can* know signs of the end of this age and the general period of His coming (see Matt. 24:32-35). When the fig tree is tender and the branches put out leaves, one can understand that summer is near. It doesn't indicate the day or hour that summer will begin, only the general time period. Thus, the prophetic "fig tree" is a sign of anticipation and approximation.

The generation of discerning believers living in the days preceding the Lord's coming will know they are in the last days because of these indicators (Matt. 24:33). What the last-day disciples will not know exactly is the day and hour of our Lord's soon return (Rev. 22:12-13). The unsaved world will be in the dark about these important, future prophetic events.

## **Noah's Flood Teaches Us About the End of the Age**

Our Lord Jesus went on to compare the Biblical account of Noah's flood (Gen. 6-8) to teach critical truths leading up to His return: "For as in the days before the flood, they [the unsaved] were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day Noah entered the ark" (Matt. 24:38, MEV).

He did not say the pre-flood generation was gluttonous or intoxicated nor that there was anything inherently inappropriate or unwholesome in marriage. Actually, sexual expressions within the bonds of marriage are sanctified (Heb. 13:4). His issue was that the unrighteous ones were oblivious to the reality of their personal sins and would be unprepared for the impending judgment by a holy God.

The original events (recorded in Gen. 6-8) showed how the people of that age were morally twisted or "wicked," and the culture was filled with "violence" or lawlessness and God determined to destroy that generation (the 10th from Adam and Eve) and start over (Gen. 6:1-7).

In the context of that evil society (Gen. 6:11-13), "Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord" (Gen. 8:8). God saw him as "a just man and blameless among his contemporaries." Almost like a tombstone epitaph, the rest of the verse says simply, "Noah walked with God." This is the same term used of his great-grandfather, Enoch, of whom Scripture says, "Enoch walked with God, and he was no more because God took him" (Gen. 5:24).

It seems that Noah's walk with God consisted of faithful obedience to "all the Lord commanded him" (Gen. 6:22; 7:5). The degeneration of the human race was rapidly happening all around him, but Noah was viewed as righteous and blameless in God's sight, if not also in the sight of the unrighteous and guilty ones around him.

The apostle Peter calls Noah a "preacher of righteousness" (2

Pet. 2:5b), although no Scripture specifically shows him as “preaching” or proclaiming anything. Apparently, Noah’s nearly 100 years of righteous living before an ungodly world, while he was very visibly obeying God in building a really big boat/ship, was the testimony and witness God desired of him. Undoubtedly, he repeatedly explained to those who came to watch or mock that the ark was intended for saving lives—not just the various animal kinds but precious human beings who would turn to God in repentance, humility and obedience.

### **Deviant Thinking and Practiced Perversion**

God, who knows the very intentions of our hearts, saw that mankind was wicked and corrupt and human thoughts were “continually only evil” (Gen. 6:5). As in our day, society in Noah’s day had lost its moral conscience and discernment of values, decency and relationship to God. Deviant thinking and practiced perversion weaken and ultimately destroy a civilization.

According to Genesis 6:14-17, the ark was to be 450 feet long (equal to 1.5 football fields in length), 75 feet wide (the same length-to-width ratio is consistent to ship dimensions today), and 45 feet high, with a capacity exceeding that of 500 railroad stock cars. Its bargelike shape made it difficult to capsize. Food and animals were loaded onto the ark in the numbers and kind which God ordered.

Then, God affirmed Noah by saying, “You and your entire household go into the ark, for you alone I have seen to be righteous before Me among this generation” (Gen. 7:1). Noah, his wife, his three sons Shem, Ham and Japheth and their three wives all boarded the ark (Gen. 6:18-22). Please remember that. We’ll mention it again next time in Part 2 of our study: “Learning about the End of This Age from Noah’s Worldwide Flood.” {eoa}

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