

First Sunday of Advent

November 30, 2025

St. Matthew 24:36-44:

Echoes from the Days of Noah

- I. What Was Would Be
- II. Unaware
- III. Preparing
- IV. Be Ready

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St. Matthew 24:36-44

Dear friends in Christ,

When I think over the years your pastors have been with you, I would say that we have witnessed an incredible roller coaster ride of the church in America. I remembered a conversation from 42 years ago with a couple who thought that the whole staff and I should leave the church because I was not in agreement with their theology. I called it "**Meology**". They left, along with others, after being confronted with Scripture. You know, it's pride over repentance.

We cannot ignore Jesus' words concerning *the last days*: "And many will fall away and betray one another and hate one another (Mt 24:10)." Over 65 years ago, A. W. Tozer, referred to as a Christian pastor, wrote:

We have lost the art of worship... We carry on our religious activities after the methods of the modern advertisers. Our homes have been turned into theaters, our literature is shallow, our hymns border on sacrilege and scarcely anyone seems to care. Christianity is little more than objective truth, sweetened with song and made palatable through religious entertainment. Christ calls men to carry a cross, but we call them to have fun in his name.

This day is the First Sunday of Advent, the First Sunday of a new Church Year, which will take us to the celebration of the First Coming of Christ, Christmas. The theme for the Sundays of Advent is "Things to Think About". The text for this morning is one of two choices appointed for the Gospel lesson this morning. The one I've chosen calls and connects us to...

ECHOES FROM THE DAYS OF NOAH

I. What Was Would Be

We know that our Advent journey will take us to this Scripture: "And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn (Lk.2:4-7)" - the First Coming of Christ.

Our text for this morning addresses the Second Coming of Christ: "But concerning that day an hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only. For as were the days of Noah, so will be the coming of the Son of Man (vv.36,37)." *As were the days of Noah, so will be the coming of the Son of Man.* The days before the flood no-one knew and no one cared, except Noah and his family. At his birth, Jesus was laid in a feeding trough for livestock. No one knew and no one cared, except Mary and Joseph and the small remnant waiting for him. The days before the 2nd coming and the judgment day, no one knows and no one cares except the small remnant waiting for Him. *Echoes From the Days of Noah.*

And if you ask, "How can Jesus not know the day of his return?", the only answer that can be given is the one you've heard before: "The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but the things that are revealed belong to us and to our children...(Dt.29:29)." *The secret things.*

II. Unaware

For as were the days of Noah, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day when Noah entered the ark, and they were unaware until the flood came and swept them away so will be the coming of the Son of Man (vv.37-39).

The echoes of Noah are quite clear, aren't they? *Eating, drinking, marrying and giving in marriage*. Business as usual. These things are necessary for life and for preserving life. However, things necessary for life can undo life if not managed in Godly, lawful ways. Well...today marriage isn't necessary. Parenting is turned over to others. Eating and drinking are so much the emphasis of "the good life". Matthew Henry wrote:

"They were unreasonable in it; they were...intent upon the world and the flesh, when the destruction was at the door, (of) which they had such fair warning. They were eating and drinking, when they should have been repenting and praying; when God, by the life ministry of Noah, called to *weeping and mourning*, then (followed by) joy and gladness (Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible, Vol.5, p,293).

Doesn't this sound an alarm? If the goal of life is the cry of, "I want what I want out of life here no matter the cost!", then, as the Scriptures say, "If the dead are not raised, 'Let us eat and drink for tomorrow we die.'" (I Cor., 15:32b)? What is it that can cause our faith to fade or go away – other than flesh, and Satan?

And get this, "they were unaware until the flood came and swept them away, so will be the coming of the son of man." Unaware? By choice! The Ark was constructed in the open. Scriptures call Noah, "a herald (a preacher) of righteousness (I Pt.2:5)." The sound preaching of God's Word of righteousness through faith in Christ is still on this earth today, though the voice of the *modern church* brings distortion, and hatred of Christ grows.

III. Preparing

Then two men will be in the field; one will be taken and one left. Two women will be grinding at the mill; one will be taken and one left (vv.40,41).

Please listen, this is not about a rapture in the sense that God's people will be taken up to heaven and the unbelievers will be left behind for 1000 years to think about it! Remember, "For as were the days of Noah so will be the coming of the son of man." And please hear this from the 7th chapter of Genesis:

And Noah and his sons and his wife and the sons' wives with him went into the ark to escape the waters of the flood. Of clean animals, and of animals that are not clean... (all) went into the ark with Noah as God had commanded Noah and after seven days the waters of the flood came upon the earth (selected portions of verses 7-10).

The seven days were God's appointed time for Noah to get the animals onboard and situated on the ark. No time was given for the people left behind to have a second chance. We could say that Noah and his family were raptured, that is, taken up into the ark. And then the flood came. Is that straight with us? "As were the days of Noah so will be the coming of the son of man." And please hear this from the Apostle Paul, words for God's people:

For you yourselves are fully aware that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. While people are saying, "There is peace and security," then sudden destruction will come upon them... But you are not in darkness, brothers, for that day to surprise you like a thief... so let us not sleep, as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober (selected portions of I Thess.5:2-6)

Again, we're not preparing for a "rapture" in the sense that Christ will rule on the earth for 1000 years of peace and give those left behind a second chance. We're preparing for something vastly different! We're preparing for the return of God the Son who will come to judge the living and the dead. As Noah and his family were taken up into the Ark so the Lord will return and take His people to be with

Him. And those left behind? Hear this word of the Lord: "...all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory (Mt.24:30b)" - Judgment Day!

IV. Be Ready

Therefore, stay awake, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming. But know this, if the master of the house had known in what part of the night the thief was coming, he would have stayed awake and would not have let his house be broken into. Therefore you also must be ready, for the son of man is coming at an hour you do not expect (vv.42-44).

Think about it. The Ark was being built in the face of humanity in anticipation of a worldwide flood, but only a few were ready. Prophets prophesied the coming birth of our Lord Jesus Christ who would bring forgiveness of sin and eternal life to the world, but only Mary and Joseph were ready.

Do we think about it? Maybe it will be a Sunday morning when we're sitting in the pews hearing the word of God and singing hymns, or when we're together with family and friends in celebration. Maybe it will take place at work or play, or during a stay in the hospital, or at a birth, or a funeral, or a wedding, or while arguing with someone, or gossiping, or... and then it happens:

Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Then will appear in heaven the sign of the son of man, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the son of man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he will send out his angels with a loud trumpet call and they will gather his elect from the four winds from one end of heaven to the other (Mt.24:29-31).

The tribes will mourn because they will know and understand that the end and judgment day have arrived. For those in Christ we're told, "And he will send out his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other (Mt.24:31)."

Think about it. *Echoes from the days of Noah* will come to an end. What was, ends! God said, "For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth, and the former things will not be remembered or come into mind (Is.65:17)." Preparation for the celebration of the birth of Christ, His First Coming, foreshadows His Second Coming. Do we hear the echoes? Are we ready? Are we helping others prepare? What are we thinking about?

Amen.

Pastor Bill Abbott