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Unrepentant Unbelievers Before the Coming of Christ

By Steven J. Hogan

~ A Saturday Morning Post #363 ~

Christ's coming is the primary theme in Matt. 24 which, in my opinion, is the most important, must-read end-times' chapter in the Bible. We are slowly working our way through this very instructive and important passage. We have already talked about Christians, Jews, and the rapture of the church at Christ's coming – and today we are seeing what God says about the unrepentant unbeliever.

Matthew 24:37-38a – *"The coming of the Son of Man will be just like the days of Noah. For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage…"* Lk. 17:28, a related passage, states, *"It was the same as happened in the days of Lot: they were eating, they were drinking, they were buying, they were selling, they were planting, they were building."* In the last years before Christ's coming, the unsaved are going along like usual, are living their normal everyday lives – eating, drinking, marrying, giving in marriage, buying,

selling, planting, and building. They aren't expecting God to intervene and put a stop to what they are doing, and then pour out His wrath on them.

Matthew 24:37-38a talks about sinners in the end-times, and many more verses describe what they are like. In Lk. 6:23-26, Jesus says they are seeking fortune, food, fun, and fame. In Lk. 12:19, He tells us, *"Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years to come; take your ease, eat, drink, and be merry."* Rev. 13:3-4 talks about the sinner's relationship with the devil. *"The whole earth* (not the elect) *was amazed and followed after the beast* (Antichrist)*; they worshiped the dragon* (Satan)… *and they worshiped the beast, saying, 'Who is like the beast, and who is able to wage war with him?'"* These non-Christians are definitely not worshiping God – they are worshiping the devil (Rev. 13:13-14); and they are not obeying God – they are doing what the devil wants them to do.

Revelation 13:16-17 speaks of another beast, the false prophet (Rev. 19:20), the Antichrist's right-hand man. He causes the unsaved to take the mark of the beast, *"a mark on their right hand or on their forehead."* Only when a person worships the devil and takes the mark is he *"able to buy or to sell."* But know that the Holy Spirit will not allow any of God's elect to take the mark. 1 Cor. 3:16

Revelation 18 is a sobering chapter about satisfied sinners in the end-times, about idolaters, those who truly love the world. Rev. 18 is the kind of passage that should put the fear of God in you. In it, we find out that *"Babylon the great"*, a dwelling place of demons and evil spirits, describes the kingdom of Satan in the last years of this age. *"Her sins have piled up as high as heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities"* (vss. 4-5). *"She glorified herself and lived sensuously."* vs. 7

We learn that the music, wealth, food, cars, furniture, clothes, merchants, and manufacturers of the world will be no more, that *"all*

things that were luxurious and splendid have passed away from you" (vss. 11-14). We discover that *"in one day her plagues will come, pestilence and mourning and famine, and she will be burned up with fire; for the Lord God who judges her is strong"* (vs. 8). This world is worldly now, but in her final few years, she will be extremely worldly. But God says, *"Woe, Woe."* Rev. 18:16

2 Tim. 3:2-4 identifies some of the sins of unbelievers, specifically that they are *"lovers of themselves, lovers of money… lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God." S*adly, the ungodly don't understand the consequences of their sin, what happens if they don't repent. As in the days of Lot and Noah, they don't realize that there are disastrous, cataclysmic events from which they won't escape, and that they will then be cast into hell, an eternally painful and punishing fire (Matt. 25:41, 46). *"It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God"* (Heb. 10:31). *"Our God is a consuming fire."* Heb. 12:29

Matthew 24:14 – *"This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world for a witness to all the nations, and then the end shall come."* You wonder if these last days' sinners had heard the gospel. We know some people are being born again, but most people in the world are rejecting God (Matt. 7:13). They don't understand that Jesus Christ died to pay the penalty for peoples' sins and was raised from the dead, and that if they repent of their sins and believe in Him, they would be forgiven, receive eternal life, and be children of God. (Rom. 5:8, Mk. 1:15, Jn. 1:12-13). Instead, they turn from God, ignoring the evidence of the creation (Rom. 1:18-22) and the fact of the flood. *"Professing to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man…"* (Rom. 1:23). *"They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen."* Rom. 1:25

Ephesians 4:18 says that the lost are "*darkened in their understanding, excluded from the life of God… because of the hardness*

of their heart”. When the unrighteous don’t believe God and his word, they are *“darkened”* in their thinking. Because of unbelief, they don’t understand the gospel and that sin has consequences, that they will be punished at the end of this age, and forever and ever. Luke 3:9, 17; Rev. 20:15

Matthew 24:12 – *“Because lawlessness is increased, most peoples’ love will grow cold”*. The unrepentant are extremely lawless, rebellious, and wicked in the end-times. Jn. 3:18 tells us, *“This is the judgment, that the Light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness, for their deeds were evil.”* The corruption, sensuality, immorality, and depravity on this earth in the last years is similar to what occurred in the days of Lot and Noah. Mk. 7:20-23, Rom. 1:24-32, Gal. 5:19-21, and 2 Tim. 3:1-4 list specific sins that were true back in their day, are true today, and will be even more accepted, prevalent, blatant, and *“legal”* when the Antichrist is ruling in the last days of this age.

2 Peter 3:3-6 helps us understand what many unbelievers will be thinking and saying. *“Know this first of all, that in the last days mockers will come with their mocking, following after their own lusts, and saying, ‘Where is the promise of His coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all continues just as it was from the beginning of creating.’ For when they maintain this, it escapes their notice that by the word of God the heavens existed long ago and the earth was formed out of water and by water, through which the world at that time was destroyed being flooded with water.”*

John 15:20 – *“If they persecute Me, they will also persecute you”*is what Jesus told us. The sinners are mocking, ridiculing, laughing at, and persecuting Christians. Peter told us, *“Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you, but to the degree that you share in the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing, so that at the revelation of His glory, you may rejoice with exultation.”* 1 Pet. 4:12-14

What happens when God has had enough, when wickedness in the world is filled up to the brim? **Matthew 24:38-41** – *"They were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and they did not understand until the flood came and took them all away; so will the coming of the Son of Man be. Then there will be two men in the field, one will be taken and one will be left. Two women will be grinding at the mill, one will be taken and one will be left."* In the days of Noah, sinners were doing normal, everyday activities right up to when the rain from above and the waters from below began covering the earth. What immediately followed was that Noah and his family were saved from the flood, from God's wrath, but a world of sinners was judged, was punished by the flood, by God's holy wrath. Gen. 6:9-13

Luke 17:29-30 gives us Lot's example – *"On the day that Lot went out from Sodom, it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all. It will be just the same on the day that the Son of Man is revealed."* The unsaved in the time of Lot did not understand what was coming. They were so godless, so hardened, so deep in their sin, and they had no idea what would be happening.

The stories of Lot and Sodom, and of Noah and the world, illustrate what happens to believers and unbelievers at Christ's coming. The unbelievers, oblivious to God, are going along living their sinful lives. Then once again, this world is filled up with sin, and this age comes to an end. Suddenly, Christ returns to rapture the church, and God begins to punish the sinners. Luke tells us that God's mercy on saints and His justice on sinners are back-to-back events, and occur on the same day. In fact, Rev. 8:1 tells us that only 30 minutes separate the two, the rapture of the church and the beginning of God's wrath upon the unrepentant.

Matthew 24:40-41 give examples of what this looks like. There are two stories of two people working together, and in each case, one is saved and one is lost. Without warning, the world goes dark but is then

lit up by Christ's coming, and immediately the saved are gone, glorified, and with their Savior. But the lost are in shock, terrified, and scared to death. *"There will be signs in sun, moon, and stars... men fainting from fear and the expectation of the things which are coming upon the world"* (Lk. 21:26). *"The kings... and the rich... and every slave and free man hid themselves in the caves... and they said to the mountains and to the rocks, 'Fall on us and hide us from the presence of Him who sits on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb'"* (Rev. 6:15-16). The ungodly realize that God, the Judge, sees them, and that they cannot escape, and that He will soon pour out His wrath on them.

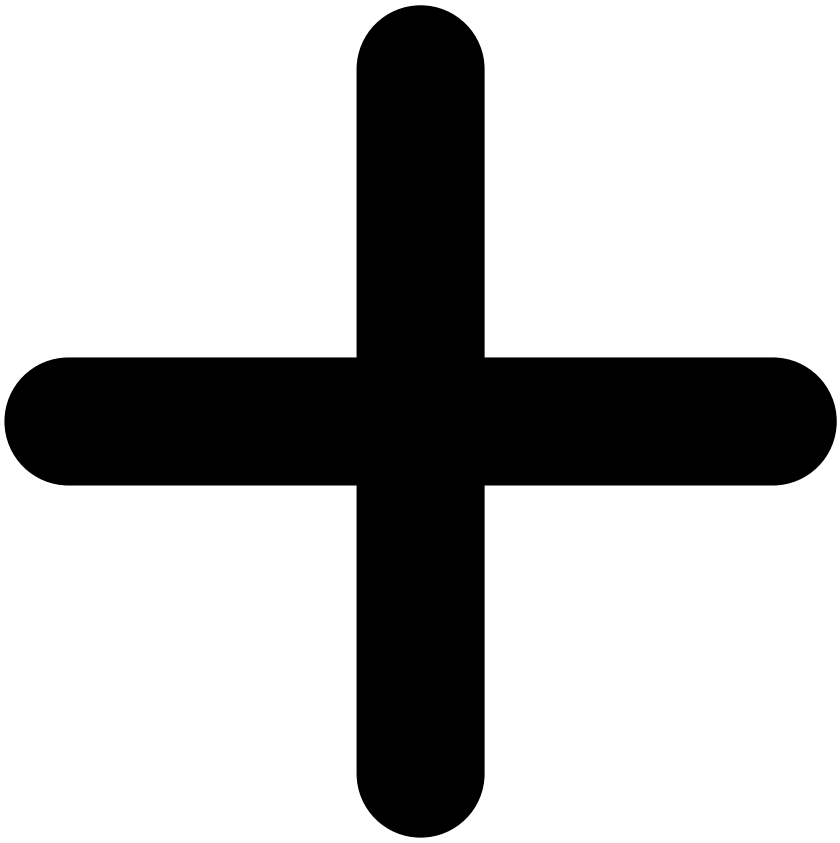
At Christ's coming, there is a sudden separation of those who are saved and those who are lost, of believers and unbelievers. For the saints, it's the best day of their lives, and for the sinners, it's their worst day. For the children of God, they are with Christ and the believers, and will be blessed forever. For the children of the devil, they are with the wicked, and will be punished forever.

As a Christian, you need to know what Matt. 24 is telling you will take place in the last years of this age. If God has you here, know that it will be a very tough time, a time of great evil, hate, persecution, and martyrdom, a time when the Antichrist rules the earth. But know that it's a very short time compared to being forever with Jesus in heaven in a glorified body and with believers (2 Cor. 4:17-18). Yes, you may experience Satan's wrath on earth for a little while, and you may, like Lot, be *"oppressed by the sensual conduct of unprincipled men"* (2 Pet. 2:7), but it's nothing compared to experiencing God's everlasting wrath in hell.

If you are on earth at that time, remember that the Spirit is in you, and that God will give you an abundance of peace, strength, and hope. So keep believing, keep loving, and keep persevering to the end. *"Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you"* (Matt. 5:44). *"Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations... lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age"* (Matt. 28:19-20).*"Encourage one*

another and all the more as you see the day drawing near” (Heb. 10:25). *“In a very little while, He who is coming will come, and will not delay”* (Heb. 10:37). And remember the last verse of the book of Revelation, of God’s word – *“The grace of the Lord Jesus be with you all. Amen.”* Rev. 22:21

P.S. Knowing about the unbeliever in the end-times is a motivation for sharing the gospel with them, and for personal holiness. Here are three important posts about the unbeliever – *“What About the Unrighteous Unbeliever in the End Times?”*, *“Sinners and Saints in the End Times”*, *“They are Scared to Death.”*



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