**Last Days According to Jesus**

**Part 4**

**“No One Knows the day or the Hour”**

**Matt 24: 32-36 “Now learn a lesson from the fig tree. When its branches bud and its leaves begin to sprout, you know that summer is near. 33 In the same way, when you see all these things (signs coming to pass), you can know his return is very near, right at the door. 34 I tell you the truth, this generation will not pass from the scene until all these things take place. 35 Heaven and earth will disappear, but my words will never disappear. 36 “However, no one knows the day or hour when these things will happen, not even the angels in heaven or the Son himself. Only the Father knows.”**

**Today I want to finish our “Last Days according to Jesus” series with the message, “No One Knows the Day or Hour.”**

**Jesus has given us many signs to look for that point to the general season of His return...**

**But He tells us at the end of His Olivet discourse that “only the Father knows” the exact day and hour.**

**—So God knows and He’s not telling!**

**It’s normal and natural to want to know the time...even the disciples asked, “When will these things be?”**

**God’s answer is always the same: “It is not for you to know.”**

**So Jesus’s advice is, “Therefore, stay awake, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming.”**

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**All in all, the Lord has given us several key truths about the timing of his return.**

**Each truth teaches us something important about how we’re to live as we wait for Him.**

**First, never forget that...**

1. **No one knows the precise moment of His return**

**Since the days of Jesus, certain believers and church leaders have claimed to know the day and hour, and have led many astray...**

**Historically, I counted at least 45 major, heavily influential predictions given by church leaders of the very date Christ would return, only to miserably fail.**

**For example:**

**In the year 500 AD, three Christian theologians predicted His return that very year—It failed, leaving many disillusioned.**

**In the year 796 on April 6 a Spanish monk prophesied to a crowd of people that Jesus would return that very day—it failed.**

**Many church leaders predicted Jesus would return on January 1 of the year 1,000.**

**As the turn of the millennium approached, “it was universally believed that the end of the world was at hand...and that Jesus Christ would descend upon Jerusalem to judge mankind.**

**Panic swept through Europe’s population...thousands forsook their homes and jobs to flee to Jerusalem.**

**Some squandered their substance in riotous living, while wailing multitudes lay day and night on altars, looking for the end of the earth...”**

**It never happened! And hundreds of thousands were left disillusioned.**

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**Jumping ahead to our generation, in 1988 a man named Edgar Whisenant published a book called, “88 Reasons Why the Rapture Will Be in 1988.”**

**I was pastoring in East Texas at the time and everyone had one of these books.**

**Some quit their jobs, and others left our church in anger that I wouldn’t go along with it.**

**As the date approached, regular programming on TBN was interrupted to provide special instructions on preparing for the rapture.**

**It never happened, and like the boy who cried wolf, a skepticism about the Lord’s return grew.**

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**The most recent world-wide prediction came from a man named Harold Camping—the general manager of the Family Radio network—who predicted Christ would return both in 1994 and on May 21, 2011.**

**He also added the world would end on Oct 21 of the same year.**

**It never happened, causing the secular media to mock and ridicule the church.**

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**All of these predictions failed because Jesus said, “Only the Father knows, and He’s not telling!”**

**But one thing is certain—Jesus will return. He said so, stating, “Heaven and earth will pass away, but my word will never pass away” (24:35).**

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**A second truth Jesus gave to us about His return is:**

**II. The world will be totally unprepared for His coming**

**Jesus drew a comparison between the days of Noah and the generation of His return.**

**He said, “As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. For in the days before the flood, people were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, up to the day Noah entered the ark; and they knew nothing about what would happen until the flood came and took them all away. That is how it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. Two men will be in the field; one will be taken and the other left. Two women will be grinding with a hand mill; one will be taken and the other left” (Matthew 24:37-41).**

**So what was it like in Noah’s day?**

**Well, the best way to describe it is “business as usual.”**

**Jesus paints a picture of a generation totally unaffected by the warnings of Noah, who was not just the ark builder, but a “preacher of righteousness,” who warned them of the approaching judgment.**

**Hebrews tells us, “Noah’s belief in God was in direct contrast to the sin and disbelief of the rest of the world—which refused to obey...” (11:7)**

**Jesus says they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, buying and selling...just doing life until the day Noah entered the ark.**

**The crazy old boat-builder down the road was the brunt of all their jokes.**

**The people of Noah’s day mocked him saying, “It will never happen.”**

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**Jesus said the world would be just the same before His return.**

**The comparisons between Noah’s day and ours are striking:**

**—Noah warned of something never before witnessed by human beings—a great, world-wide flood.**

**—The church of Jesus Christ is warning the world today of something never before seen by human beings—the return of Jesus Christ to the earth.**

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**—The people of Noah’s day scoffed and mocked at his warnings of a flood.**

**—The people of our generation are doing the same thing when we say Jesus is coming back...**

**Peter saw this coming and wrote:**

**“I want to remind you that in the last days scoffers will come, mocking the truth and following their own desires. 4 They will say: “So Jesus promised to come back, did he? Then where is he? He’ll never come!” (2 Pet. 3:3-4)**

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**Another comparison...**

**—As Jesus has given us signs of His return, the people of Noah’s day were also given signs that pointed to the time the flood would come.**

**One of those signs was the oldest man that ever lived named Methuselah, who lived to be 969 years old.**

**Methuselah was the son of Enoch—who was supernaturally raptured off of the earth—and the grandfather of Noah.**

**So he was squarely in the righteous lineage of his time.**

**His name meant, “When he dies, it (the flood) shall come.”**

**Methuselah was given as a sign by God of the approaching catastrophic flood——”When he dies, it shall come.”**

**The Bible records that the very year of his death was also the year of the flood—*when he died, it came!***

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**Another comparison is...**

**—The people of Noah’s day were taken completely off guard when the flood came and “took them all away.”**

**Jesus said, “Before the great flood everyone was carrying on as usual, having a good time right up to the day Noah boarded the ark. They knew nothing—until the flood hit and swept them all away” (24:37-38).**

**—It will be the same when Christ returns, for Jesus said “So shall my coming be” (24:39).**

**Paul the Apostle wrote, “For you know quite well that the day of the Lord’s return will come unexpectedly, like a thief in the night. 3 When people are saying, ‘Everything is peaceful and secure,’ then disaster will fall on them as suddenly as a pregnant woman’s labor pains begin. And there will be no escape” (1 Thes. 5:2-3).**

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**And a final comparison is, in Noah’s day there was only ONE PLACE of safety, the ARK Noah built.**

**And there was only ONE DOOR to get in—the door God commanded Noah to build.**

**God was very clear about that one door when instructing Noah...He said:**

**“Put the door on the side...” (Gen. 6:16)**

**He put the door on the side so that all could see it.**

**He put the door on the side for easy access.**

**—It was big enough for an elephant to meander through, and patient enough for a snail to crawl to it.**

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**That door called out to Noah’s generation each and every day for over a century...“Whosoever will, let him come.”**

**But listen: The same God that gave the door also finally shut the door!**

**The Bible says that, once Noah and his family were securely in the ark, “God shut the door” (Gen. 7:16).**

**After God shut the door, the time of judgment had arrived.**

**The generation that had walked past the door, ignored the door, and mocked the door, one day pounded on the door to no avail.**

**God had shut the door!**

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**There’s likewise a door of salvation for us!**

**Jesus told the people of His day, “I am the Door. Anyone who goes in through Me will be saved...” (John 10:9).**

**As in Noah’s day, there is only one way, one door, one escape route, one option to avoiding judgment before the return of Christ...**

**And that door is held open by a blood-stained Cross!**

**Today the door is opened, but it may not be tomorrow!**

**That’s why the Bible says, “I tell you, now is the time of God's favor, today is the day of salvation” (2 Cor. 6:2).**

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**LET’S PRAY**