

Matthew 24:36-51 “Signs of Jesus’ Return-Ready or Not Here I Come, Jesus”

4.29.18

Perhaps one of the all-time favorite games for children to play is hide and seek. How many times have you played it in your life?



You count to a certain number, say to “20” and then you say what? “Ready or not, here I come.” That’s right! Well, that’s the title of the message today: “Ready or not! Here I Come!” And it’s not a child’s game we are playing. Instead, we are looking at the return of Jesus Christ when He comes back to this earth.

You see, Jesus is coming back to this earth again! As sure as He came the first time...born as a babe in Bethlehem, He’s coming again to this earth and that’s what He’s been describing to His disciples on the Mount of Olives, just across from the Temple in Jerusalem. Let’s read together...

Matthew 24:36-51

³⁶ “But concerning that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only. ³⁷ For as were the days of Noah, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. ³⁸ 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, ³⁹ and they were unaware until the flood came and swept them all away, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. ⁴⁰ Then two men will be in the field; one will be taken and one left. ⁴¹ Two women will be grinding at the mill; one will be taken and one left. ⁴² Therefore, stay awake, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming. ⁴³ But know this, that 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. ⁴⁴ Therefore you also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect. ⁴⁵ “Who then is the faithful and wise servant, whom his master has set over his household, to give them their food at the proper time? ⁴⁶ Blessed is that servant whom his master will find so doing when he comes. ⁴⁷ Truly, I say to you, he will set him over all his possessions. ⁴⁸ But if that wicked servant says to himself, ‘My master is delayed,’ ⁴⁹ and begins to beat his fellow servants and eats and drinks with drunkards, ⁵⁰ the master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he does not know ⁵¹ and will cut him in pieces and put him with the hypocrites. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

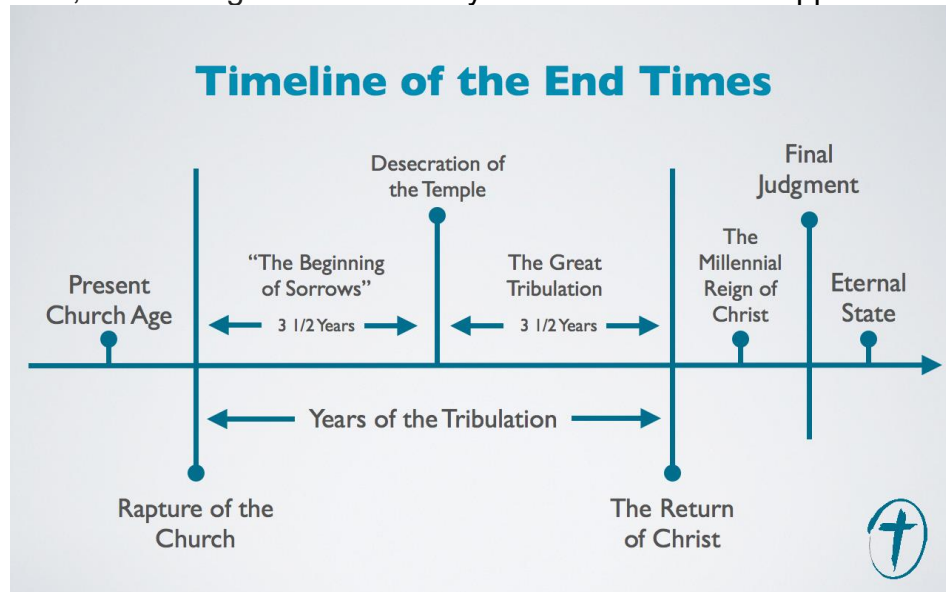
William Barclay, the great Scottish author, and preacher told a story during one of his messages where he described a meeting that Satan had with three of his head Demons. He called them together and said, “Okay, how do we trick the humans into not following Jesus?”

The **first Demon** said, “Tell them there is no God.” Satan said, “No, that’s too limited. Only a few will believe that...because deep down in their gut, they know like I know that they were created in the image of God...there is no denying that. No! That won’t work for the majority. Next!”

The **second Demon** said, “Tell them there is no Hell.” Satan replied, “No, that won’t work, because they are always telling each other to go there, so they obviously believe it’s real. No! That won’t work! Next!”

The **third Demon** came and said, “Tell them there is no hurry.” Satan smiled: “Hmmm... No God...nah! No Hell...nah! No Hurry...yeah...that’ll work! That’s what we’ll use! We’ll convince them all that there is no hurry!”

And that’s what Satan has been doing for millennia. Even today...before we’re finished...I’m afraid Satan might convince some of you that there is no hurry...you have time to get right with God. Well, he’s wrong! Because at any moment this could happen... See the Timeline...



The Rapture! When Jesus returns to take His church, the Bride off the earth. And it could happen at any moment! Ready or not, here I come! The Rapture could happen at any moment! Are you ready? Are you saved? Or are you listening to Satan who says, “Oh, there’s no hurry. Just wait!”

This morning I want to tell you that the passage we just read, in Matthew 24, is one of the most misunderstood and misapplied passages in the entire New Testament, because this teaching of Jesus on the Mount of Olives is pointed to as Jesus’ description of the Rapture, but Jesus is not describing the Rapture in His Olivet Discourse. He’s describing “Time of Jacob’s Trouble” that will occur before His Second Coming.

Because you see, one day, Jesus will return to the Mount of Olives and fulfill His promise to the nation of Israel, when He then walks across the Kidron Valley, through the Eastern Gate, and sets up His Millennial Kingdom, fulfilling the promise to the nation of Israel that He would rule and reign on the throne of David. But, here’s where people get confused... It’s mainly from **verses 40-42**. Look at it with me...

Matthew 24:40-42

⁴⁰Then two men will be in the field; one will be taken and one left. ⁴¹Two women will be grinding at the mill; one will be taken and one left. ⁴²Therefore, stay awake, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming.

Now, how have you heard those verses taught? The Rapture, right? The one taken is the one Raptured...snatched up to heaven. That's what I was taught, but it's wrong. The one taken is the one who will die during the Tribulation period. Bible Commentator Warren Wiersbe says this:

“The verb ‘taken’ means ‘taken away in judgment.’ Do not apply these verses to the Rapture of the church when believers are caught up in the air to meet the Lord. During the Tribulation, a division will take place: Some people will perish in judgment (be taken away), while others will remain to enter into the Kingdom. The use of ‘taken’ makes this clear.”
Warren Wiersbe, NT Bible Commentator

Church family, we'll see this on Wednesday nights as we go through the 7 seals, 7 trumpets and 7 bowl judgments...please understand:during the 7 year Tribulation period, fully ½ of the world's population will die because of plagues, wars and the famines. That's what Jesus is describing:

Matthew 24:40-41

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

Listen to me...here's what I take from these verses: You can be close to a person who is right with God...I mean even live with them, in the same house...you can work right beside of them or sit at the lunchroom table at school and YOU still not be right with God. Do you understand that?

Listen, you can grow up in a Christian home and still not know Jesus! You can come to church and still not know Jesus. You can serve in the church and still not know Jesus. Oh, listen this morning, there are people who are going to miss heaven by 18," the distance from your head to your heart.
The difference between believing facts about Him and actually KNOWING HIM!

You see, Jesus is warning His disciples. Don't ever forget that Judas was in that group as Jesus pointed back to the Temple Mount on the Mount of Olives that Tuesday afternoon...



Judas was there and chose not to believe! He was TAKEN IN UNBELIEF. In just three days, by Friday afternoon...Judas would be hanging from a tree in field that would become known as Gehenna...the city landfill that burned with fire day and night.

You see, Judas was the unfaithful servant, that Jesus described, who wasn't prepared and he wasn't ready... He was just like the people of Noah's day.

Matthew 24:37-39

³⁷For as were the days of Noah, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. ³⁸For 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, ³⁹ and they were unaware until the flood came and swept them all away, so will be the coming of the Son of Man.

You remember Noah's Ark. They've built a replica of it in KY now...



It's called the **Ark Encounter**. And I'm so glad they built it, because there are so many misconceptions about Noah's Ark. Skeptics say Noah's Ark is a myth and a fairy tale. And the truth is with pictures like this on nursery walls, I can see why that might be true...



The ark pictured as an oversized bathtub boat. But, that's not accurate according to the dimensions found in **Genesis 6. Turn there with me.** As you do: Take a look, this was the Ark...



GRAPHIC BY KARBEL MULTIMEDIA, COPYRIGHT 2011 LOGOS BIBLE SOFTWARE 1.4 million cubic feet, capable of animals and food.

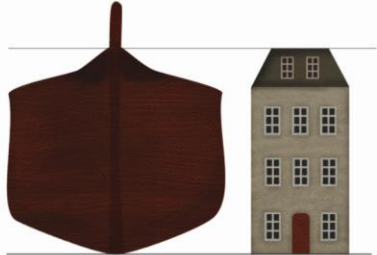
You see, if you go to the Ark Encounter, this is what you'll see inside...it's huge!!!



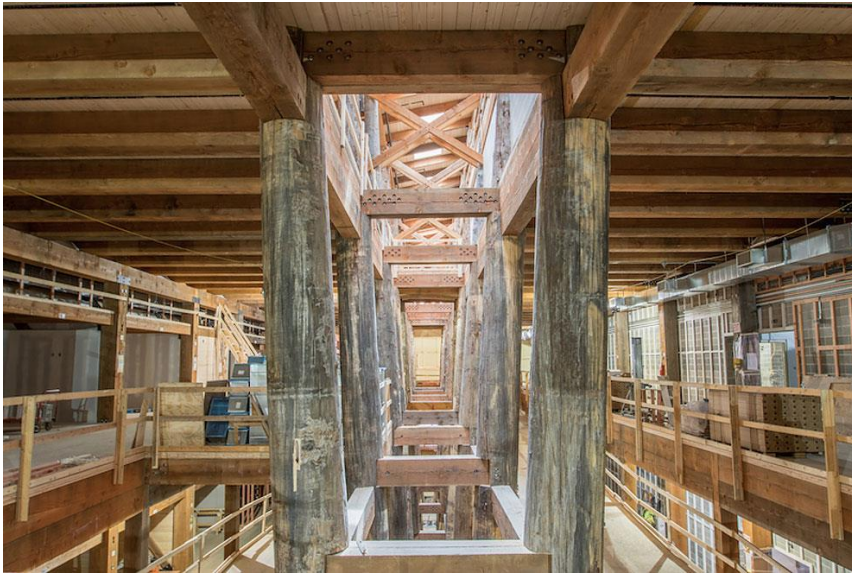
The ark was close to 50 feet tall...

How Tall Was the Ark?

The roof of Noah's Ark was more than 50 feet from the ground—higher than a modern four-story house. That's plenty of space for three extra-tall inner decks as the Bible describes.



Here's the depiction of those three decks from the "Ark Encounter."



The Ark was massive, and it had to

be...because Noah had all that cargo to carry...

Genesis 6:19-22

¹⁹ And of every living thing of all flesh, you shall bring two of every sort into the ark to keep them alive with you. They shall be male and female. ²⁰ Of the birds according to their kinds, and of the animals according to their kinds, of every creeping thing of the ground, according to its kind, two of every sort shall come in to you to keep them alive. ²¹ Also take with you every sort of food that is eaten, and store it up. It shall serve as food for you and for them.” ²² Noah did this; he did all that God commanded him. ²² Noah did this; he did all that God commanded him.

Did you notice the word: “kinds?” How many dogs did we need to give us wolves and coyotes and jackals did we need? Two. Because they all come from the same kind...

Variety Within Kinds

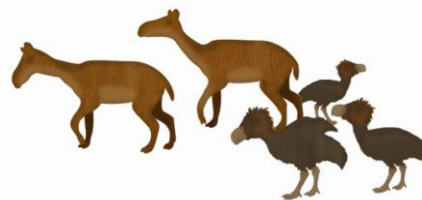
There can be a tremendous amount of variation within a created kind. For example, various types of dogs, such as wolves, dingoes, coyotes, jackals, and domestic dogs, can often breed with one another. When dogs breed together, you get dogs; so there is a dog kind.



But, people ask...

How Many Kinds of Animals?

Recent studies estimate the total number of living and extinct kinds of land animals and flying creatures to be about 1,500. With our “worst-case” scenario approach to calculating the number of animals on the Ark, this would mean that Noah cared for approximately 7,000 animals.



Understand this: according to researchers who have studied the taxonomy charts of animals, the vast majority of the animals in our world today are very small, about the size of a sheep, weighing around a few hundred pounds on average. In fact, only about 11% of land animals are actually larger than a sheep. But, the question is always asked about these animals...



The dinosaurs. See them depicted as being on the Ark at the Ark Encounter? That's because it's Biblical. They were on the ark too, because they were part of the land animals created on Day 4 of creation week and Adam named them, just like he named the Giraffes, Elephants, Rhinoceros, Lions, Tigers, Bears, OH MY!

You see, unfortunately, many Christians have been indoctrinated through the media and the education system of our day to think in a secular way regarding creation, Noah's Ark and the dinosaurs. And so, they allow the culture to inform their thinking, instead of the Bible to inform their thinking. And people are doing that today about sexuality, cohabitation, gender...you name it!

Listen, I want you to get this about the dinosaurs, because the Evolutionists have hijacked the dinosaurs. Did you know there are over 650 names of dinosaurs, yet there are only about 55 different "kinds" of dinosaurs? And we know not all dinosaurs were huge like the *Brachiosaurus*, or T-Rex and even those dinosaurs were likely simply "adolescents" and much smaller than adult T-Rexes. And understand this, even the biggest dinosaurs came from eggs no larger than footballs. And what is more, most reptiles keep growing till they die, unlike mammals, and since dinosaurs were reptiles, even the evolutionists will have to admit that the very largest dinosaurs are indeed the very oldest ones.

Oh Listen Church Family, Dinosaurs got on the ark and they GOT OFF the ark... because the Bible said all the land animals got and all of them got off. What happened to them? They went extinct. It was not an asteroid that killed the dinosaurs 65 million years ago! Listen, the earth was very, very different after the world-wide flood. All the vegetation was stripped and the food sources were very limited. They simply went extinct over time, just like animals still do today.

You say, "Pastor Kevin, why are you spending so much time telling us about Noah and the dinosaurs and the ark?" I'll tell you why, because Jesus believed in Noah...it's not a fairy tale. Because if you can't and won't believe in Noah's Ark and a worldwide flood, because it seems impossible, then you won't believe in a worldwide Rapture of Christians and worldwide chaos by way of the Tribulation.

Yet, people say Noah could have never built a ship that big! He was too primitive to have done this



I say to you, with the authority of

God's word, Noah did build the ark, just as the Bible describes because he was brilliant...he was only 8 generations removed from Adam...who was created with perfect DNA... Oh I am confident Noah built the ark and he hired men to help build the ark. I'm convinced he probably had crews working night and day...just as depicted here...



Men who would later drown,

even though they worked side by side, with Shem, Ham and Japheth (Noah's sons). They would eventually be swept away... Can you imagine the scene?



People banging on the side of the ark and, "Let us in! Let us in!" But the door closed... God shut the door, remember. And it was too late! And that's what Jesus was describing.

Those people of Noah's day, doubted Noah...but when the rains started and the geysers under the earth ruptured, they believed then...but it was too late! And I'm telling you...there are people still today, who doubt Jesus. And they are just going through the motions of life...

Matthew 24:37-39

³⁷For as were the days of Noah, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. ³⁸For 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, ³⁹and they were unaware until the flood came and swept them all away, so will be the coming of the Son of Man.

How about you today? Are you just going through the motions of life? It's so easy to do that, even as Christians. To live like Jesus is never coming back. To live as if there will never be an end...to live as if there will never be a Rapture, as the Bible describes or a Tribulation for those who reject Jesus. **"They were eating, drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, up to the day when Noah entered the Ark."** All that tumult and they were blinded...just business as usual!

You see, what Jesus was teaching His disciples about the Tribulation is true for us, the Church, waiting for the Rapture. We must be ready. What if Jesus said...



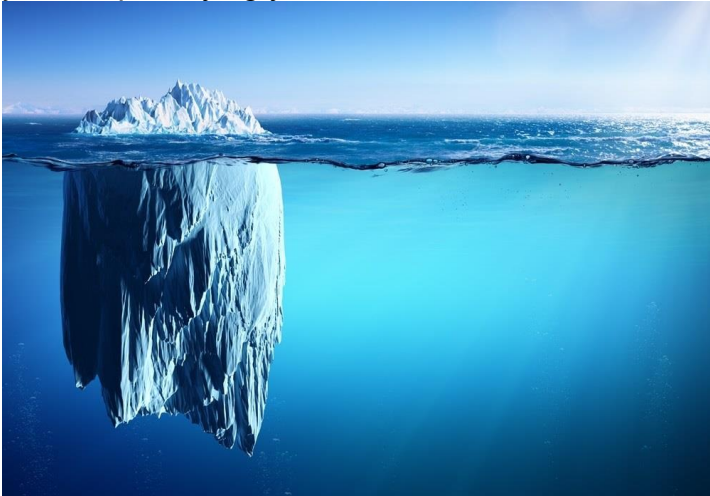
Ready or not, here I come! What did He say to His disciples? What He said to them about His coming at the Tribulation applies to us about the Rapture. **So what should we do? See verses 42-46 again: Be READY!**

Matthew 32:42-46

⁴²Therefore, stay awake, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming. ⁴³But know this, that 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. ⁴⁴Therefore you also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect. ⁴⁵“Who then is the faithful and wise servant, whom his master has set over his household, to give them their food at the proper time? ⁴⁶Blessed is that servant whom his master will find so doing when he comes.

If Jesus were to come back in 10 minutes...how would He find your life? Are you currently serving Him, or just yourself? Are you living a life pleasing to the lord? Are you prepared for His coming? I ask myself these question... Will He find us faithful?

How is it with you and the Lord? Really. I'm asking you to be honest with yourself...no...not how you are portraying yourself to others. Because it's so easy to hide the truth. What is this?



It's an iceberg...right? 80-90% of an iceberg is unseen, and that's us! 80-90% is unseen. People only see the tip of who we are and we only let them see the part we want to see. But do you know what the Master sees? All of it! So, let me ask again, if He were to come in 8 minutes, what would He find in you? What's under the water that needs to be revealed and dealt with today?

Oh, so many Christians are hiding things...even from ourselves...excusing sin...justifying bitterness, anger...hatred...and oh how we struggle AND TRY TO HIDE IT! Oh...we have junk programmed in our brains from childhood, buried deep under the water's surface and that junk is like ditches in our brains that have the pain and suffering of the past lying rotting sewage...still stinking up our live and replaying in our minds like a broken record. It's time to expose the iceberg. It's time to become what Jesus desires. It's time to stop hiding and stop running and come to Jesus.

Jesus is coming back...and it could be in five minutes.... Ready or not...here I come!
