

# The Unprepared Ones

The days of Noah and the days of Lot



*Peter McArthur*

One of the most important truths I've ever learnt is that wisdom is an important End-Time requirement for spiritual maturity and having the ability to "understand the times". While (spiritual) "knowledge" is good, and (spiritual) "understanding" is better, what will carry us through the mire of the coming deception is (spiritual) "wisdom".

Simply put,

- ① Knowledge is the **acquiring** of spiritual truth;
- ② Understanding is the **interpretation** of that truth; but
- ③ Wisdom is the **application** of both.

With so many evil, unrighteous and generally "bad" things happening on the face of the earth, as Christians we can so easily miss some important principles if we rely too much on what we think to be "truth". For example, many believers are saying we're in the "Days of Noah" because of the violence, rise of Islam, same-sex issues, apostasy in the church, etc. Just Google it and see how many sites there are! You'll note that the focus is nearly always on the ascendancy of evil and ungodliness.

The assumption being that Jesus warned us that the "Days of Noah" and its accompanying iniquity would be repeated just before His return. Therefore with so much wickedness happening around us, some say we're in those Days again. Now while it's quite true that evil is on the rise and apostasy is gaining ground, Jesus did NOT directly say those specific things were signs of His return.

Yes He DID make a comparison between the last days and the "Days of Noah" (and "of Lot" – something that's often left out in this discussion), but His central theme here was NOT that there would be great wickedness as in Noah's and Lot's time. Instead, the point He was actually making was simple and clear, **things would go on as normal for most people** right up until the End!

Read what He DID say (Luke 17:27-30).

“And just as it happened in the days of Noah, so it will be also in the days of the Son of Man: **they were eating, they were drinking, they were marrying, they were being given in marriage**, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all. 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**; but 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.”

And in Matthew 24:37-39.

“For 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**, 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.”

Note that in Jesus’ teaching the idea of moral corruption and the rise of evil are NOT emphasized. So was Jesus telling us that the last generation would be marked by extreme rebellion and wickedness as in Noah’s generation? Not directly, but what are emphasized are the common events found in everyday societies throughout the world and throughout history. Things like drinking, eating, marrying and building. These are the ordinary things of our common human existence that both saved and unsaved partake of; no direct reference here to wickedness.

Please note I’m NOT denying that the last days will be marked by ungodliness and wickedness. Of course they will, and Jesus’ reference to the “Days of Noah and Lot” indicates that. The people who heard Jesus say that, would’ve known from their scriptural texts that the times of Noah and Lot were indeed marked by great evil.

But Jesus main thrust was that the majority of people living back then simply did “not understand” what was going on until it started to happen (Mtt 24:39). That’s His point – they had no way to comprehend the times. His point for us today is the same – when the moment comes most people will be going about their normal daily routines. They simply will not recognize what will be unfolding right before their eyes! Because of that they will not be prepared for it, and therefore unable to cope.

So what’s the gist of all this? To understand the actual meaning of any of Jesus’ sayings (parables and teachings) we need to look at the last things He says. In the culture of Jesus’ day the point of any discourse was what was said at the end of the teaching. In other words, the point a teacher was trying to make was summed up in his closing remarks, almost the last few words.

In our western culture we’re more prone to dissect a parable and look at all the ins and outs, and the obscure meanings it might contain. In Biblical times this was not the case. A parable may have many facets to its meaning, but you could always understand the point of it by recalling the final few words or sentence. The concluding remark of a teacher was the point to be remembered. That’s a good solid rule of interpretation to keep in mind for us as we study Scripture.

For example, we’ve probably all heard sermons about the new wineskins (Matthew 9:17). Now without reading the text again, what’s the point of the parable according to sermons you’ve heard? Well it’s most likely to be something like “old wine skins aren’t useful anymore, we need the new wine” – “out with the old, in with the new” – “time to jettison the old revelation, time to bring in a new anointing”. Or something similar. It may surprise you to know that the point we’ve subtly been taught in sermons is NOT what Jesus was trying to tell us.

Using the rule I outlined earlier, let's see what the parable is actually telling us. Here is the conclusion of Jesus' teaching according to Matthew (Mark doesn't have this particular ending, but Luke has something similar): "... **they put new** (*neos* = freshly made; youthful) **wine into new** (*kainos* = not worn out; unused; newer in quality) **wineskins, and BOTH are preserved**".

See the point, BOTH the wine and the wineskins are to be preserved. Now how many sermons have you heard emphasize that part of the parable? Not too many I would think. The focus generally by preachers is on the "newness" of the wine, not so much on the ability of the "quality" of wineskins to contain the fresh wine.

But the point Jesus is making is that BOTH the wine and the wineskins should be preserved. (Here "wine" and "wineskins" is a common rabbinic analogy for "teaching").

As a sideline note in Luke's version of this teaching (5:37-39) the sentence finishes off with a rather striking saying "...**the old is good**". Again this is not often preached on either! We do need to be more discerning when deciding what to preach/teach on, and not be so selective just because a comparative text is easier to fit our pre-conceived views.

Now back to our main point in regard to the Days of Noah and Lot. What is said near the ending of that teaching is the important thing. As in those ancient days, so will it be like at Jesus' return – ordinary everyday events will continue without the vast majority of people realizing what's about to happen. Yes great catastrophic events will come upon the earth, but Jesus warns us that most will not be alert enough until that very moment.

So I'm not saying that there are no comparisons between the days of Noah/Lot and the final generation, I'm just saying it wasn't Messiah's main point in this teaching. The people of Noah's day, and those of Lot's time, were just like the unsaved will be in the final generation – lack of awareness of what's coming. They simply did not realize the end was that close. They suspected nothing catastrophic was about to hit. "As then, so now".

Interestingly in this teaching Jesus indicates that His Coming will be a catastrophic event for the unsaved, just as the flood was in Noah's day, and the fire and brimstone was in Lot's. Gives us pause to think! When He comes it will be a day of rejoicing for the saved and prepared, but a day of great catastrophe for the unsaved and unprepared.

We know, and the people of Jesus' day, all knew that the majority of people alive in Noah's day, as well as Lot's, were sinners, disrespectful of God, and unrighteous. However in His teaching Jesus mentions none of that, at least directly. His focus is on their lack of awareness – and we could add – the lack of preparedness that goes with it.

So the point being considered here is the (spiritual) **unpreparedness** of most people for what's coming. While the teaching seems to indicate Jesus is referring to the unsaved not being prepared, we could also add that many "saved" people are likewise not prepared.

Hence the invariable question must arise: are WE prepared, are YOU prepared?

I will finish with this quote from a great and insightful writer, [Theodore Austin-Sparks](#) (1888-1971).

**"There seems to be something in the air that says His coming must be near. We seem to feel that it cannot be far off. As the Lord's children, we "groan within ourselves" more than ever; and there is an increasing groan in the whole creation. The travail in this creation is becoming almost unbearable.**

**But however that may be, there is something in the spirit of the true child of God which says that His coming is drawing nigh. It is the only hope; there is no hope in any other direction. Unless God Almighty intervenes, there is no hope for this world.**

**Ah, but He is going to intervene! He is going to intervene in His Son, and there is the hope. And so the Apostle speaks of that “blessed hope” — the “appearing of the glory of our Saviour Jesus Christ” (Tit. 2:13). May the Lord fill us with new joy in the very contemplation of His near coming, to complete all that which He has begun.”**

May this be so very true for all of us in this generation. We await what is coming, not with fear - yes with some trembling perhaps – but we wait with hope and expectancy.

The point for the unsaved is **“are you prepared?”**

The point for the saved is **“HOW well prepared are you?”**

Blessings to you all,

Peter McArthur ([issachar.org](http://issachar.org))