

# *The Case for Pre-Trib Rapture in Luke 17*

By Gene Lawley

---

In Luke 17:26-35 Jesus links the incidents of Noah and Lot with the coming Day of the Lord, the coming of the Son of Man. Those passages recording the judgments of Noah's day and that of Lot are at Genesis 6-8, and Genesis 18-19, respectively.

The passage in Luke reads as follows (NKJV): "And as it was in the days of Noah, so it will be also in the days of the Son of Man; they ate, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all.

"Likewise as it was also in the days of Lot, they ate, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they built, but on the day that Lot went out of Sodom, it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all. Even so will it be in the day when the Son of Man is revealed. In that day, he who is on the housetop, and his goods are in the house, let him not come down to take them away. And likewise the one who is in the field, let him not turn back. Remember Lot's wife.

"Whoever seeks to save his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life will preserve it. I tell you in that night there will be two men in one bed; the one will be taken and the other will be left.

Two women will be grinding together; the one will be taken and the other left. Two men will be in the field; the one will be taken and the other left."

To analyze the statements of Jesus under the umbrella of the time-line of events in the last days, I have thought to take them in segments of activities described, as this:

1. Activities of mankind when God intercedes.
2. The day "Noah entered the ark and Lot went out of Sodom".
3. What happens to individuals "on that day".
4. (On that day) judgments came upon those left behind.

## **A Population Primed for Surprise**

The activities of people around the world are the normal, daily activities of people in the normal course of life. They are eating, drinking, sleeping, buying, selling, building, marrying and giving in marriage. There is no evidence seen of the judgments of Revelation 6-19, when, if one thinks clearly on it, people will be concentrating on only one main thing—mere survival of life.

For example, Revelation 16:4 tells us that the waters will be turned to blood, and elsewhere, so will the seas. Things inhabiting the seas will die. It is surely reasonable to think that there will be no fishing industry, no market for fishing boats or gear and tackle.

The same situation will occur in all industries and activities around the earth. That should raise a bright flag of warning to those who hold to the deception that the rapture will not happen until the end of the seven-year tribulation period.

Don't count on being able to put off a commitment to Christ until you can see the end approaching. It will not delay, but will come upon us "as a thief at night". That deception of delay is a tool of the enemy.

But, then, some say that it does not get that bad until half-way through the tribulation, or, at least, until the wrath of God kicks in, as we have been told, between the fifth and sixth seals of Revelation 6 (where the word "wrath" is first used).

Just take another look at the accompanying devastation and despair that will be associated with the advent of the four horsemen of Revelation 6. Will the ship of state be sailing through smooth and still waters during those days? Natural disasters in our present experiences, alone, have shown that life as normally experienced will not be happening. Add to that the economic demise we are already enduring, and it will certainly challenge any claim that the coming of our Lord will delay until after the tribulation begins. Remember? Jesus did not include “turmoil and despair” as any dominating concern in the activities of those days just before the coming of the Lord’s judgments.

Also notice that it is Jesus who is the one opening the seals of judgment, the only one worthy to do so. Whose wrath, then, is it, which propels these four horsemen forth to do their dirty work? In God’s eyes it is wrathful judgment; in Satan’s eyes it is the progress of his purpose to conquer the earth. This is the beginning of sorrows.

A parallel passage in I Thessalonians 5:2-3 seems to lay out the same pattern, and describes it as a time that will come as a thief in the night: “for you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night, for when they say ‘Peace and safety!’, then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman, and they shall not escape.”

The element of sudden surprise is couched in a backdrop of apparent unreadiness and lack of alertness.

### **In the Twinkling of An Eye**

The sudden transformation of believers from mortal to immortal, and “corruption to incorruption”, as described in I Corinthians 15:50-54 will have no prior notice issued. There will be no time to clean up the mess we are leaving behind, or even say “goodbye” to those around us. The things of this world that are a part of us—our clothing, eyeglasses, wedding rings, wrist watch, pocket change—these will be left, right where we will have been seated or standing. What a surprise, too, will it be for those nearby, when believers are caught up to meet the Lord in the air!

God actually put Noah and his family in the ark and closed the door on them, then waited seven days before the rains came. Perhaps this was to bring the magnitude of sinfulness of those outside to a greater awareness and conviction. It is unclear, yet judgment came just as surely as proclaimed.

The angels had a struggle with Lot, however; he was reluctant to leave, and the angel said, “Hurry. Escape there [to a nearby city], for I cannot do anything until you arrive there.” Genesis 19:22. God would not bring destruction until the believers were out of danger!

Jesus brought this forward as an illustration of how things will fall into place in that day of His coming. It is a clear validation of the promise in Revelation 3:10, “...I also will keep you from the hour of trial to come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth.”

The somewhat controversial passage in II Thessalonians 2:6-7, where Paul writes of the role of the “restrainer” in the time frame of the last days, clearly parallels the accounts of the rapture of believers in I Corinthians 15:50-54 and I Thessalonians 4:16-17, as well as the illustrations of that event in the accounts of Noah and Lot.

Identifying the restrainer is not difficult when we realize that entity’s removal is the main point of comment in connection with God’s allowance of the free reign of lawlessness in the world, in preparation for His final judgment.

The only entity that has ever stood in the way of the progress of evil is the church whose head is the Lord Jesus Christ. He promised His Spirit to the disciples in a special new way in John 14:17, “...for He

dwells *with you and will be in you*". That restrainer is the Holy Spirit indwelt body of Christ, the church, and its removal from the path of evil opens up the next step in the plan of God.

### **Then Judgments Came**

The earlier passage in I Thessalonians 5:3 describes the judgments as "a sudden destruction, as birth pangs upon a pregnant woman", which actually come without reservation, gradually increasing in intensity until the event is culminated. Just in this way are the judgments of Revelation 6-19 laid out, increasing in intensity until that final great battle when the Lord takes out the enemy by the power of His might. Those days will not be days of normal life as we have known it. It will be terrible, for there will not be any tolerance for righteousness. The evilness of man will rise to great heights, beyond all imagination. Evil will reign supreme...until Jesus comes.

However, the whole of scripture bears out the time-line of events that pinpoints the rapture's occurrence before the beginning of the seven years of tribulation, the "time of Jacob's trouble", (Jeremiah 30:7), not that of the church.

The harvest time of the Great Commission is over. The church is gone. God has another plan for the 70<sup>th</sup> week.

Blessings from:

[www.christsbondservants.org](http://www.christsbondservants.org)