

Title:

“The Last Day Church”

Scripture Reading: 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope.

14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.

15 For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep.

Scripture Reading: 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18

16 For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:

17 Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

18 Wherefore comfort one another with these words.

What then is the true Last Day Church?

1. The Last Day Church will be raptured.

Like the early Christians, we must not be ignorant of certain precious truths.

A. Do not be ignorant about God's plan for our lives

B. Do not be ignorant about spiritual gifts that God has empowered us with.

C. Do not be ignorant about suffering and trials in the Christian life.

D. Do not be ignorant about the rapture and the Second Coming of Jesus.

Paul then goes on with the exciting news: 'The Lord himself will descend from heaven with a shout.' The Greek word for 'shout' is the same word used for the commands that a ship captain makes to his rowers.

Apparently, there will be some audible signals.

Actually, the dead in Christ will rise first

Then saints on earth are caught up to be together with the departed saints and to be with Him.

The word **'caught'** up means **'to seize, or to carry off by force'**. There is often the notion of a sudden swoop, and usually that of a force which cannot be resisted.

In the ancient Greek, the phrase to meet was used as a technical term to describe the official welcoming of honored guests.

The word **'rapture'** is not in the ancient Greek text, but comes from the Latin Vulgate, which translates the phrase **'caught up'** with **'rapturus'** from which we get our English word, rapture.'

Hebrew 12:5 says, 'By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God.'

2 Kings 2:11 says, 'And it came to pass, as they still went on, and talked, that, behold, there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven.'

The third group that will be raptured will be the last day church as described in **1 Thessalonians 4:13-18.**

2. The Last Day Church will be a glorious church

This church that will be raptured will not be a weak church but a glorious church. Charles Finney, when his revivals were in full blast, often thrilled his congregation by calling out to them: **'Look, the tides are rising.'**

Something is going to happen to the church before it is raptured. Humanly we cannot really explain God's irresistible, sweeping, ever onward tide but it will be what many people call, a double Pentecost.

But we must understand the way God works. The Lord brings revival in and through local congregation.

The Book of Revelation says 'He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.' The local congregation is the basic unit for the great and mighty working of the Holy Spirit.

Of course, things must change in this church that when finally, the tide is in its highest peak a few characteristics would have emerged in the process.

A. It will be sanctified church

Ephesians 5:27 says, 'that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.'

Before God, we are declared righteous and holy, that is how God sees us. That is justification. It is instantaneous. But we still struggle with becoming righteous and holy. Sanctification is the process of becoming holy.

But God's chief concern is to sanctify us. So, what is He going to do. In order to ensure the progressive holiness God intended for us, he allows discipline to come in.

For this aspect of being made holy by discipline there are two things we must avoid:

- Not to kick.
- Not to despond.

B. A power church.

2 Kings 2:12-13 says, 'He took up also the mantle of Elijah that fell from him, and went back, and stood by the bank of Jordan;

14 And he took the mantle of Elijah that fell from him, and smote the waters, and said, Where is the Lord God of Elijah? and when he also had smitten the waters, they parted hither and thither: and Elisha went over.

The mantle was an outward symbol of prophetic office.

Very interestingly the Septuagint picked up the repetition of the verb 'struck' and assumed the Jordan did not part at Elisha first attempt but on his second attempt.

Today, we must rise up and ask God:

- I.** Where is the God who kept Elijah faithful when the whole nation turned from God?
- II.** Where is the God who mightily answered prayer from Elijah?
- III.** Where is the God who provided miraculously for Elijah?
- IV.** Where is the God who raised the dead through Elijah?
- V.** Where is the God who answered prayer by sending fire from heaven?
- VI.** Where is the God who encouraged the discouraged Elijah?
- VII.** Where is the God who carried Elijah away into heaven?

Very interestingly for the last point, Elijah too, was raptured. I believe the power of prophetic ministry will come to the church and to individuals to perform power before we are raptured.

The world today are people high in idolatry, sunken in moral degradation, stubborn in their will. No human argument can change the granite mind. No human power can change their persistent course of life action leading to hell. Your Master degree or PHD will not change them. When Elijah went up to heaven, he left behind only one possession on earth. His mantle.

The mantle represented the badge of Elijah's office. He is a prophet, a man of God, of faith, miracles, and power.

John 7:37-38 is a prophetic declaration. It says, 'In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.'

C. It must be a Christ-Centered Church

Galatians 2:20 says, 'I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.'

When God created man, He made a place in the very center of that man for himself. When one is born again, Christ comes into the center of our life and disposes self to a lower position.

Most Christians are drawn away from the Christ-centered position by what we call legitimate pursuits of life.

Our life and work revolve around self.

D. A praying church

When you hear this sermon, and the failures and conviction, you know you need to go to God alone and pray.





