

Matthew 24:39

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.

Analysis

And knew not until the flood came—The Greek *ouk egnōsan* (οὐκ ἔγνωσαν = they did not know/perceive) indicates willful ignorance, not lack of information. They had 120 years of warning, visual evidence of the ark, and Noah's preaching (2 Peter 2:5), yet chose not to know. **And took them all away** (*kai ēren hapantas, καὶ ἤρεν ἅπαντας*)—the flood 'took' them in judgment, lifting them off the earth in death.

So shall also the coming of the Son of man be—the terrifying parallel is complete. Christ's parousia will find a world absorbed in earthly pursuits, ignoring clear signs, mocking warnings. The 'taking away' in judgment contrasts with believers being 'caught up' to meet the Lord (1 Thessalonians 4:17). The flood didn't take the righteous; it took the wicked in destruction.

Historical Context

Genesis 7:17-24 describes the flood lifting the ark while destroying everything else. Only eight souls survived. Jewish tradition emphasized the sudden onset—after seven days of delay, the floodgates opened without further warning. Jesus uses this as a warning to first-century Israel (facing AD 70 judgment) and to all generations before His return. The parallel is exact: warning given, warning ignored, judgment executed.

Related Passages

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. What biblical warnings are you in danger of 'knowing' intellectually but not responding to practically?
2. How does the reality of Noah's flood as historical judgment inform your confidence in future eschatological judgment?
3. In what ways might you be treating Christ's return warnings the way Noah's generation treated his ark-building?

Interlinear Text

καὶ	οὐκ	ἔγνωσαν	ἕως	ἦλθεν	ὁ	κατακλυσμὸς	καὶ	ἦρεν
And	not	knew	until	came	G3588	the flood	And	away
G2532	G3756	G1097	G2193	G2064		G2627	G2532	G142
ἅπαντας	οὕτως	ἔσται	καὶ	ἡ	παρουσία	τοῦ	υἱοῦ	
them all	so	be	And	G3588	the coming	G3588	of the Son	
G537	G3779	G2071	G2532		G3952		G5207	
τοῦ	ἀνθρώπου							
G3588	of man							
	G444							

Additional Cross-References

John 3:20 (Parallel theme): For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd.

Matthew 24:37 (Parallel theme): But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.

Acts 13:41 (Parallel theme): Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish: for I work a work in your days, a work which ye shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you.

Proverbs 24:12 (Parallel theme): If thou sayest, Behold, we knew it not; doth not he that pondereth the heart consider it? and he that keepeth thy soul, doth not he know it? and shall not he render to every man according to his works?

Proverbs 29:7 (Parallel theme): The righteous considereth the cause of the poor: but the wicked regardeth not to know it.

2 Peter 3:5 (Parallel theme): For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water: