

## "The Olivet Discourse"

### Matthew 24-25

#### Part 20

**Introduction:** Tonight as we return to our study of the Olivet Discourse we are going to look a little closer at the verses which we have looked at over the past 2 weeks.

Now we have been looking at what Jesus said about His return at the end of the *Great Tribulation*. We also looked at 2 points which He spoke about.

1. Expectation
2. Preparedness

Now let us remember that these 2 points in the context which we are looking at are for those who will be alive during the *Great Tribulation*. There is an application for us pertaining to the rapture which will happen before the tribulation but the words which Jesus spoke here are for the people who will have survived the tribulation.

#### **Notice Matthew 24:36-39**

These verses are focused upon the need for those who are alive at the time of the *Great Tribulation* to be prepared for His return. The past 2 weeks we looked at these verses and we learned how they do not speak of the rapture. In this section Jesus points back to the people of Noah's day and how those who were not prepared were all swept away in the flood. Then He takes that Old Testament illustration and applies it to those who will be alive at the end of the *Great Tribulation*.

#### **Notice Matthew 24:40-41**

The one that is taken here will be taken in judgment just as those who were taken away by the flood. Those who are left will be the saved and they will enter into the Kingdom with all the other saints.

Now last week we considered how this event in Matthew 24:40-41 and the Battle of Armageddon could be harmonized and I told you that I believed they are two different events that seem to happen at almost the same time. I had suggested that possibly the one who is taken is simply taken in death.

In my reading this week I came upon another passage that may give us a little more clarity on this event.

**Luke 17:34-37**

*<sup>34</sup> I tell you, in that night there shall be two men[people] in one bed; the one shall be taken, and the other shall be left.*

*<sup>35</sup> Two women shall be grinding together; the one shall be taken, and the other left.*

*<sup>36</sup> Two men shall be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left.*

*<sup>37</sup> And they answered and said unto him, Where, Lord? And he said unto them, Wheresoever the body is, thither will the eagles be gathered together.*

The question which Jesus' disciples asked is the same question which we were considering last week. "Where will they be taken to?"

Jesus answer was, "Wheresoever the body is, thither will the eagles [buzzards] be gathered together." So we must ask, "Where will the

buzzards be gathered?" The answer is that they will be gathered at the Battle of Armageddon.

### **Revelation 19:17-19**

*<sup>17</sup> And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God;*

*<sup>18</sup> That ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great.*

*<sup>19</sup> And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army.*

So these people will be taken to the Battle of Armageddon but there is something else here.

We talked about the word "taken" last week also and how many people want to see the rapture in this word. But it is not here. But I did find out that the word is used another place in the Scriptures that may help us understand this a little better.

### **John 19:16**

*<sup>16</sup> Then delivered he him therefore unto them to be crucified. And they took Jesus, and led him away.*

Here is the very same word and it is used to describe how Jesus was "taken" to the cross. We could say that the word speaks of how He was led as a lamb to the slaughter.

So it could be that when the people are taken they are forced to go to the Battle of Armageddon and therefore they are led to a slaughter. Let me give you one more thought, maybe they die in the field or at the mill and their bodies are **taken** to where the battle is fought for the fowls to feed on.

As I said last week we cannot be dogmatic about some of this because we do not have enough information to connect all the dots. The bottom line is they will not be prepared.

Now let us get back to the thought of Jesus on being prepared.

## I. Preparedness

### **Notice Matthew 24:36-39**

There is something here that we need to understand. In verse 39 we are told that the people of Noah's day "knew not" until the flood came and took them all away. We have talked about all the warnings which the people of Noah's day received:

1. Noah's preaching.
2. Enoch's prophecies.
3. The building of the ark.
4. The animals coming to the ark.

So how is this verse to be taken when we are told that they "knew not"? The idea is not that they did not know the flood was coming. Those who heard the preaching of Noah would have heard of the coming flood. But what they did not know was the hour and the day the flood would come.

### **Matthew 24:36**

*<sup>36</sup> But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only.*

Here is a key verse in this section. Jesus says here that no one knows the day or the hour of Jesus return. Then He ties this very thought with Noah's day.

**Matthew 24:37**

*<sup>37</sup> But as the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.*

The word "but" here shows a contrast between the Father's knowledge of the Son's return in the previous verse and man's inability to know the day and the hour of the Lord's return at the end of the Great Tribulation. In this verse and the next couple of verses Jesus uses the flood of Noah's day to illustrate how many will be caught completely unprepared when He comes back.

Now we need to know that just as the people of Noah's day heard the warnings of the coming flood and were really able to see the signs in Noah's construction of the ark and the entrance of the animals on the ark, so it will be the same way at the end of the Great Tribulation. They will witness the signs which we have studied in Matthew 24:4-28 but the point which Jesus is making here is they will not know the day or the hour.

This makes me ask a question. **Why did the people of Noah's day not heed the signs and why will the people in the great Tribulation not heed the signs?**

I believe there is within the answer to this question several warnings which we need to look at. I want to consider several reasons as to why the warnings will be ignored before the return of Jesus Christ.

**1. Many will be controlled by their love for this world's goods.**

Let me show you a passage that deals with the collapse of this world's economic system.

**Revelation 18:2-4**

*<sup>2</sup> And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird.*

*<sup>3</sup> For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies.*

*<sup>4</sup> And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.*

In verse 2 we can see that the economic system (commercial Babylon) can be a trap and it is controlled by demonic spirits.

In verse 3 we see that all nations have been lured in the trap because of the desire for her delicacies which are the riches of this world.

In verse 4 we can see that God's people were even caught in the trap.

Now let me show you the response of the merchants at the end of the Great Tribulation when the final collapse comes.

**Revelation 18:9, 11, 15, 18, 19**

*<sup>9</sup> And the kings of the earth, who have committed fornication and lived deliciously with her, shall bewail her, and lament for her, when they shall see the smoke of her burning,*

*<sup>11</sup> And the merchants of the earth shall weep and mourn over her; for no man buyeth their merchandise any more:*

*<sup>15</sup> The merchants of these things, which were made rich by her, shall stand afar off for the fear of her torment, weeping and wailing,*

*<sup>18</sup> And cried when they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, What city is like unto this great city!*

*<sup>19</sup> And they cast dust on their heads, and cried, weeping and wailing, saying, Alas, alas that great city, wherein were made rich all that had ships in the sea by reason of her costliness! for in one hour is she made desolate.*

These verses help us to see that in the midst of all the devastation going on in the Great Tribulation much of the population is all caught up in the material things of this world. They are more concerned about the riches of this world than they are about eternity.

**2. Many will be too attached to their sin.**

Let me show you a passage that helps us to see just how powerful sin is. We will step into a scene where the 6 seal judgments have been sent upon the earth and 6 trumpet judgments have been carried out.

**Revelation 9:17-21**

*<sup>17</sup> And thus I saw the horses in the vision, and them that sat on them, having breastplates of fire, and of jacinth, and brimstone: and the*

*heads of the horses were as the heads of lions; and out of their mouths issued fire and smoke and brimstone.*

*<sup>18</sup> By these three was the third part of men killed, by the fire, and by the smoke, and by the brimstone, which issued out of their mouths.*

*<sup>19</sup> For their power is in their mouth, and in their tails: for their tails were like unto serpents, and had heads, and with them they do hurt.*

*<sup>20</sup> And the rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues yet repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship devils, and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood: which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk:*

*<sup>21</sup> Neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts.*

He we are able to see that those who had not been killed by the judgments which have been sent upon the earth refuse to repent and turn from their sin. They are so attached and addicted to their sin that even in the face of death and destruction they will not repent.

**3. Many will have gone so far as to harden their heart to the point of no return.**

Let me take you to a passage where the final bowl judgments are being poured out.

**Revelation 16:8-11**

*<sup>8</sup> And the fourth angel poured out his vial upon the sun; and power was given unto him to scorch men with fire.*

<sup>9</sup> *And men were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the name of God, which hath power over these plagues: and they repented not to give him glory.*

<sup>10</sup> *And the fifth angel poured out his vial upon the seat of the beast; and his kingdom was full of darkness; and they gnawed their tongues for pain,*

<sup>11</sup> *And blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and repented not of their deeds.*

Within these verses we can clearly see the hardness of the hearts of these people.

**4. Many will be deceived by false teachers and will believe a false message.**

#### **Matthew 24:4-5**

<sup>4</sup> *And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you.*

<sup>5</sup> *For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many.*

There will be many who will harden their hearts and many will love their sin while others will be caught up in the riches of this world. But many will be deceived and will believe with all their heart they are saved but they will have believed a false message from a false teacher.

#### **Conclusion:**

The same conditions apply to the people of Noah's day also.

#### **Ecclesiastes 1:9**

<sup>9</sup> *The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be; and that which is done is that which shall be done: and there is no new thing under the sun.*

Looking at the people of the Great Tribulation and the people of Noah's day helps us to see the sinfulness of mankind.

We also see the same thing today. People are being warned about the coming judgment of God but many are trapped in this world's economic system, some are deep into sin, some have suppressed the Truth and have hardened their hearts, and many have been deceived by Satan into believing a false gospel.

What does this have to do with us?

It is our responsibility to share the Truth of God's Word. Let us not forget the power in the spoken Word of God.

### **Hebrews 4:12**

<sup>12</sup> *For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.*