

"The Olivet Discourse"

Matthew 24-25

Part 33

Introduction: Tonight as we come back to our study of the Olivet Discourse we are going to step into the verses where our Lord will describe for us the Judgment which will happen shortly after His second coming. This will be the "Judgment of the Nations" found in Matthew 25:31-46. Now last week I told you that this Judgment we read about here is Judgment of the Gentiles who have survived the Great Tribulation. Many will die during the tribulation but there will also be many survivors.

Notice Matthew 25:31-32

Here we see that when Jesus sits upon His throne He will gather ALL nations before Him for this Judgment. I need also to remind you that this is not the same as the Great White Throne Judgment. This Judgment of the Nations happens at the beginning of the Millennial Kingdom and the Great White Throne happens after the 1000 year reign of Jesus Christ. Let me show you a verse that will support this:

Hebrews 9:27

²⁷ And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment:

This verse tells us that there is a Judgment AFTER death. The subjects in Matthew 25:31-46 are people who are alive. Therefore, there will be another Judgment for those who are not saved 1000 years after this Judgment.

Now the Judgment of the Nations will be a Judgment that will determine who the Gentiles will be that enter the Kingdom. But there must also be a Judgment of the Jews to determine the saved from the lost. So we must ask, "When will the Jews be judged?"

Charles Ryrie tells us the Judgment of the Jews will take place at the same time. That account is recorded in Ezekiel 20:33-42.

I. The Separation of the Two Groups

Notice Matthew 25:32

As the nations are gathered together before the Lord they are then separated into 2 groups. This is a separation of the righteous from the unrighteous. This separation is also seen in Matthew 13 where we find the Parable of the Wheat and the Tares.

Matthew 13:24-30

²⁴ Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field:

²⁵ But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way.

²⁶ But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also.

²⁷ So the servants of the householder came and said unto him, Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? from whence then hath it tares?

²⁸ He said unto them, An enemy hath done this. The servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up?

²⁹ But he said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them.

³⁰ Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn.

Jesus compares this separation to the separation which a shepherd does with his sheep and his goats. The sheep were separated from the goats at night because the goats were unruly animals. Matthew Henry says, "The godly are like sheep-innocent, mild, patient, useful: the wicked are like goats, a baser kind of animal, unsavoury and unruly." This illustrates the heart differences in the saved and the unsaved.

On this day Jesus will separate the saved from the lost. Until this time they have lived together but now the Lord has come to separate the two groups.

Malachi 3:18

¹⁸ Then shall ye return, and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not.

Notice Matthew 25:33

Here we see that the sheep were set on the RIGHT hand of the Lord and the goats were set on the left hand. Let me just say that in the Bible the RIGHT hand is the place of honor and blessing. We see this when Jacob blessed the children of Joseph.

Genesis 48:13-14, 17-19

13 And Joseph took them both, Ephraim in his right hand toward Israel's left hand, and Manasseh in his left hand toward Israel's right hand, and brought them near unto him.

14 And Israel stretched out his right hand, and laid it upon Ephraim's head, who was the younger, and his left hand upon Manasseh's head, guiding his hands wittingly; for Manasseh was the firstborn.

17 And when Joseph saw that his father laid his right hand upon the head of Ephraim, it displeased him: and he held up his father's hand, to remove it from Ephraim's head unto Manasseh's head.

18 And Joseph said unto his father, Not so, my father: for this is the firstborn; put thy right hand upon his head.

19 And his father refused, and said, I know it, my son, I know it: he also shall become a people, and he also shall be great: but truly his younger brother shall be greater than he, and his seed shall become a multitude of nations.

Ephraim was the younger but he would be blessed greater than his brother therefore he was under the right hand. The right hand was the hand of blessing and honor. Back to Matthew: that is why the sheep are on the right hand of the Lord.

II. The Acceptance of the Sheep

Notice Matthew 25:34

Here we see that the sheep are invited to enter the Kingdom of our Lord that was prepared for them from the foundation of the world. Let me just say that the Kingdom was prepared not just for these people but the Kingdom was prepared for all people. The invitation to enter is for ALL people and not just a chosen few. It was prepared for all

people but all have not accepted the invitation to enter in. The ark of Noah's day was also prepared for all of Noah's day but only 8 people chose to enter in.

Revelation 22:17

¹⁷ And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.

I point this out because there are those who would teach you that only those chosen by God are able to enter the Kingdom and those who are not chosen by God are damned from the foundation of the world. Now let me show you another verse.

Notice Matthew 25:41

Here we see that Lake of Fire was prepared NOT for those who were not chosen but for the devil and his angels. It was never God's plan to send one person into the Lake of Fire. Jesus died for every person and salvation is available to all.

2 Peter 3:9

⁹ The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

Notice Matthew 25:35-36

Now some people would look at this and reach the conclusion that these people were accepted based upon their good works. But those who would teach that false doctrine are missing the point here. In Matthew 25:35-36 we see EVIDENCE of the salvation of the sheep. In these

verses we see the FRUIT of their salvation. This is exactly what we have been talking about on Sunday mornings in our study of James.

James 2:14-18

¹⁴ What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him?

¹⁵ If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food,

¹⁶ And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit?

¹⁷ Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.

¹⁸ Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works.

Here in Matthew 25 we see exactly what James is talking about. When a person has TRUE saving faith then that True faith will manifest itself through good works and obedience.

John 8:31

³¹ Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed;

Salvation is a life changing experience! It is not just doing charitable works at certain times of the year. It is not helping someone so that you will get accolades. Jesus said if you CONTINUE in my word then you are my disciples indeed.

Let me point out a little more detail here: a mark of TRUE saving faith is a love for fellow believers.

1 John 3:14

¹⁴ We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death.

III. The Response of the Sheep

Notice Matthew 25:37-40

There is so much to be learned in these verses. The response these people give is wonderful. They did not keep records of how many people they helped. They did not boast in the way that they reached out to those in need. They were just doing what they knew needed to be done. This was the love of God flowing from their lives. As believers this was now just something that they did. But there is far more here that we do not see on the surface.

Notice Matthew 25:40

Here we see who it was that they reached out to. It was the "brethren of Christ" who were the remnant of the Jews. This would have been the Jews who were saved during the tribulation as well as the 144,000 Jewish missionaries. Now there is more to see. Remember when we came through Matthew 24 we looked at how the Jewish people would be persecuted when the anti-Christ breaks the peace treaty? Even before the treaty is broken believers and Jews will be hated by many.

Matthew 24:9-10

⁹ Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake.

¹⁰ And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another.

Now think about how costly it would be to reach out to these Jewish believers or any believers who are identified with Christ in the midst of a world that will be anti-God. But the sheep of Matthew 25 were never concerned about the cost. The love of God was dwelling in them it came pouring out when they saw the needs of these fellow believers.

Application:

Let me just remind you that this is what TRUE salvation looks like.

James 1:27

²⁷ Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.

When is the last time you made time for someone who was shut in? When was the last time you sacrificed from your financial account so that you could meet the need of someone less fortunate? I need to remind you also that when these people were made aware of a need they did not go back to the church and suggest that that the church do something. They made personal sacrifices, out of their own lives.

Notice Matthew 25:40 again.

Notice carefully that Jesus identifies with the LEAST of those who were believers. He tells them that when they reached out to the most "insignificant" believer they were reaching out to Him.

Application:

When we reach out to meet the need of the needy person whose path intersects with ours it is the same as you and me reaching out to Christ

Himself. When is the last time you sacrificed to meet the need of "Christ"?

Let me just drive this home a little more. I want you to think of last week. Now what did you do for you last week? Now think about what you did for someone in need last week. Do you know anyone in a personal care home? Do you know anyone who is not able to get out of their house because of their health? Phone calls are nice but personal visits can really brighten a person's day. The sheep of Matthew 25 did not make phone calls but they were personally involved in ministering to the needy.

IV. The Rejection of the Goats

Notice Matthew 25:41-46

When I read this Judgment of the Goats I am reminded that this must break the heart of God. He sacrificed His only begotten Son to pay for the sins of these people and they refused to accept Christ and therefore they will be damned for all eternity.

1 John 2:1-2

My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous:

² And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

Now let me just add that when these unbelievers are rejected here they will all be killed at this time. There will not be one unsaved person enter into the Kingdom. The Kingdom will cover the entire earth and

therefore there will not be one unsaved person on the earth when the Kingdom is set up.

Conclusion:

This concludes our study of the Olivet Discourse. In closing let me ask you several questions:

1. Is your faith manifest through your sensitivity to people in need?
2. Do you desire to help others but lately you have failed?
3. Are you sure your faith is TRUE saving faith?