

## Review

Our study of the gospel of Matthew has taken us to the middle of the Olivet Discourse. We pick up in chapter 24, verse 35...

### **24:35-36 No One Knows**

God has been very tight-lipped about when the events of the end times are going to take place. The angels don't have access to His Day-Timer or Palm Pilot where the schedule is all worked out. Even Jesus Himself, who chose to set aside His omniscience when He came to earth as a human being, did not know at this time when the Father planned to bring all of these things to pass.

What amazes me is how often we see people in the church trying to come up with dates for these things. The fact is, if God wanted us to know, then He would have given us the date. But instead, as we will see repeated over and over and over again in today's passage of Scripture, God's desire is that we live in a constant and habitual state of readiness.

### **24:37-42 A Day When Some Are Taken**

Many have asserted that this is referring to the second coming, at the end of the Great Tribulation. But I have a practical problem with that. Notice that at this coming, there is joy, partying, and farming. At the end of the Great Tribulation, there will be none of that happening. All the green grass of the earth will be burned up - nobody's going to be in the field or grinding at the mill.

No, I believe that Jesus is speaking here of the rapture of the church - a day when everything in the world is going along normally, it's business as usual. Just like the day that Noah and his family entered the ark.

Paul described that day as being somewhat of a mystery:

**1Cor. 15:51-52 Behold, I tell you a mystery; we will not all sleep, but we will all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed.**

The day of the rapture, when the church is caught up to meet the Lord in the air. Jesus is saying that this day will be a day like any other day, when every Christian on the planet disappears from the face of the earth.

#### **24:43-44 The Head Of The House In The Dark**

Here, we get a glimpse into one of the big reasons that God's time-frame has been kept a secret: The devil, who is the ruler of this world (John 16:11), and the prince of the power of the air (Eph. 2:2), has to be kept in the dark for some reason. And so the devil doesn't know the date of the rapture, but the church is instructed to live in such a way that we are always ready, like every day is the date of the rapture.

When Paul was writing to the Thessalonians about the rapture, he said,

**1Th. 4:17-5:2 ...we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord. Therefore comfort one another with these words. Now as to the times and the epochs, brethren, you have no need of anything to be written to you. For you yourselves know full well that the day of the Lord will come just like a thief in the night.**

But then he said,

**1Th. 5:4 But you, brethren, are not in darkness, that the day would overtake you like a thief**

And so the devil is kept in the dark. But if we walk in the light, we will have no problems with the rapture happening this week, next month, or whenever.

Now, Jesus warns what would happen if we walk in the darkness while waiting for Him to return...

#### **24:45-51 The Evil Slave**

The slave who doesn't expect his master to be returning soon becomes rebellious and evil. And when the Master returns unexpectedly,

his judgment is severe. This is a truly troubling statement, for the servant who does not live in eager expectation of his master's return, and falls into such wickedness ends up "cut in pieces" and assigned a place where "there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

People often have trouble reconciling this concept with their doctrine. But remember what Jesus said back in chapter seven:

**Matt. 7:21 "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven will enter."**

It is the faithful and expectant servant who has no need to fear his master's return.

### **25:1-13 Parable Of The Ten Virgins**

Jesus compares the day that Christ comes for His church to ten virgins with lamps, waiting for the bridegroom. But half of them don't have oil for their lamps, and end up missing the arrival of the bridegroom.

There are lots of ways that the symbolism in this parable has been interpreted. But at this point in my understanding of Scripture, I believe that the bridegroom is Jesus, the ten virgins with the lamps are the entirety of people in the world who fall under the label of "Christian," and the oil is representative of the Holy Spirit.

On the day when Christ comes for his church, He is going to find only a fraction of those who are called "Christians" having the Holy Spirit (2Cor. 1:22; Eph 1:13; 4:30), people who have been born again (John 3:3; 1Pet. 1:3). For those who attended church, who thought they were Christians because they were Americans, for those who thought that they were fine because their dad was a minister or their brother was an elder, it will be an abrupt awakening. They will not be taken in the rapture. They will be left behind, having missed the opportunity to be the bride of Christ, to be in the Church.

### **25:14-30 The Parable Of The Talents**

Again, Jesus equates the time period between His ascension and

the rapture to a master on a journey, having left his servants in charge of his possessions.

In the previous parable (24:45-51), the wickedness of one slave was pointed out. In this parable, three slaves are entrusted with a monetary amount, and expected to be productive with the money of which they have been given stewardship.

The two slaves who had a return on the money of their stewardship were rewarded in an a big way - they were given charge of many things. But the one slave who simply buried the money and gave it back to the master when he returned was punished severely. Again, we see the unfaithful person being put in a place where "there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

Saints, too many Christians are living like Jesus isn't coming back. Too many are not building the kingdom by investing what God has given them. Too many are falling into wickedness. The warnings are clear: Live like Jesus is coming back today. Give heed to the words of the Apostle John:

**1John 2:28 Now, little children, abide in Him, so that when He appears, we may have confidence and not shrink away from Him in shame at His coming.**