

Matthew Chapter 24-25 – The Olivet Discourse – Part 14
The Parables of the Olivet Discourse – Matthew 24:36-41 – The Days of Noah

Introduction

We have come to the portion of the Olivet Discourse where Jesus teaches in parables. There are three parables in this section: The Parable of the Fig Tree, the Ten Virgins, and the Talents. The final section in this discourse (Matthew 25:31-46) informs the disciples about the judgment of the nations after His return.

Jesus is done with the revelatory section, answering the questions from Matthew 24:3, “Tell us when will these things happen, and what is the sign of Your coming and the end of the age?”

The answer to the latter question, the sign, is not answered directly, but Jesus takes that question and walks the disciples through the timeline of events. Jesus describes an expansion of what Daniel details in Daniel 9-12 in the final seven-year period of Israel we call the Time of Jacob’s Trouble (The Seven-Year Tribulation). Matthew 24:4-31 details the time of Jacob’s Trouble and is about the greater sign of Jesus’ coming.

The answer to the first question, “When will these things be?” is being answered in Matthew 24:32-25:30. But as He did in the first section, He does not answer the question directly but focuses on the real lesson, “be on the alert” (be watchful, guard, stay awake) and be ready.

All these lessons deal with the “coming of the Son of Man.”

Parable of the Fig Tree

Matthew 24:32-35

In this parable, Jesus takes a well-known agricultural understanding and uses it to make a point concerning His return. There is a sure way to know the changing of the seasons.

In the parable, the timing of summer is tied to observing the branches of the fig tree, whereas the timing of the coming of Jesus is tied to the events previously discussed. In this parable, Jesus is giving the general timing of His return.

When you see these things, you recognize that (He) is near, at the door.

When Israel sees the events that are discussed in this text, then they will know that the Son of Man will soon come in the clouds of the sky with power.

Matthew 24:36-51 provides three pictures to elaborate the message of the parable.

The days of Noah

As a thief

The good and evil slaves

Exposition of the Parable of the Fig Tree – The Days of Noah

Matthew 24:36-41

Verse 36 is the key verse in this text. “Of that day and hour, no one knows, not the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone.”

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As we have discussed previously, I believe “that day and hour” refers to the day of the Lord. Nobody knows when the day of the Lord will begin; consequently, nobody knows when Jesus will return until the day of the Lord commences.

What does it mean that the Son does not know? This is Jesus speaking in His humanity, not His divinity. We do not understand this paradox, nor do I think we can understand it. In His humanity, He has set aside aspects of His divinity.

Omniscience – There are some things Jesus does not know.

Omnipresence – Jesus is not in all places; He is at the Father’s right hand.

Omnipotent – Jesus yields to the Father.

However, in His deity, Jesus has all the attributes of the Father.

Verse 37 refers to the days of Noah. This passage has caused many controversies.

A book called *As It Was in the Days of Noah* claims that it “reveals the parallels between the time before the flood and our current culture, highlighting the rise in evil, the surge in immorality, and the pandemic of godlessness.”

Some have taken this statement and extrapolated very outlandish doctrines.

Layman Ministries – This is led by a group that hides the fact that they are Seventh-day Adventists. They have a series on most streaming services that uses “the days of Noah” to falsely conclude that the prophecies of the return of the Son of Man had been announced in 1844; they falsely concluded that we are living in the days of judgment now, and we are to work with Jesus to sympathize with the less fortunate and “bring them into the ark of the Gospel.” The Gospel, according to them, is to follow the Law of Moses.

One prominent theological personality teaches that the “days of Noah” reference has a main point, the Nephilim. Now, to what does the term Nephilim refer? He says it’s aliens. He points to the recent “alien” involvements. He states that these aliens are demonic and are another precursor to the end-time and the return of the Son of Man.

And even more unusual, some have come to believe that the Nephilim are a human hybrid. They believe that the days of Noah are being fulfilled now in that some are trying to make hybrids with animals and bionics.

All of these “interpretations” take a verse and couple it with erroneous cross-references and human imagination to conclude false and misleading doctrines.

Matthew 24:37-41 – What does the day of Noah mean? We do not need to extrapolate; we do not need to even go back to Genesis for this passage; we need to understand the entire passage. When a person uses an analogy, it is not intended to have the reader run with their imagination.

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Verses 38-39 give the explanation of “the days of Noah.”

This passage gives us the extent of this analogy. “They” refers to those who were not heeding the message of Noah. They lived their lives as though there was no flood coming. Then they were overtaken by the flood.

The coming of the Son of Man is like this. Again, remember that the coming of the Son of Man refers not only to His literal return to Earth but also to the judgments of God (the day of the Lord). The judgments of God in the Seals are all precursors to the wrath of the beast and the trumpets and bowls of wrath.

Concerning Israel: During the signs in the early portion of Jacob’s Trouble, the Remnant will be trying to convince “the many” of what is happening. But they will ignore the witness and the signs, and they will be overtaken by the flood of wrath.

Verses 40-41 – One will be taken

There will be a time when one individual will be taken and the other left behind. Also, it is clear that one is a believer and the other is not. This describes a clear separation process. The question related to this passage is who is taken and who is left behind.

As we have established, nothing in this passage refers to the rapture. So, who is taken and who is left?

Is the one taken in judgment or for preservation?

The Greek word used in verses 40 and 41 is “paralambano,” made up of the root word “lambano,” which means “to take” or “receive” and the preposition “para,” which means “alongside of.” The meaning of this verb is “to take into close association, take to oneself, take with/along.”

This is used in John 14:1-3 which we looked at in our study of the Upper Room Discourse. This is also not the rapture but refers to the coming of Christ and the New Jerusalem. Does this prove that Matthew is referring to a “salvation” sense? No, but with that word, we also have the context of Matthew 24:31. Verse 39, “the flood came and took them away,” is not the same word group, and the flood did not discriminate.

Some have argued, very effectively, that this is referring to judgment. Stating that the immediate context of Matthew 24:38-39 is the determining factor. I do not think we need to make this into a big issue. In my mind, both are a real possibility, but I do lean toward “taken for the purpose of preservation” as the proper understanding.

Next week, we will finish the exposition of the Parable of the Fig Tree (Matthew 24:42-51).