

Jesus' Olivet Discourse

Matthew 24 & 25



Matthew 24:36 "But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only.

Matthew 24:37 But as the days of Noah *were*, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be.

Matthew 24:38 For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, Matthew 24:39 and did not know until the flood came and took them all away, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be.

Matthew 24:40 Then two *men* will be in the field: one will be taken and the other left.

Matthew 24:41 Two *women* will be grinding at the mill: one will be taken and the other left.

Matthew 24:42 Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming.

The Bible is very precise in describing the timing of the Tribulation. Daniel called it the seventieth week on God's prophetic calendar of four hundred and ninety years. It means a 'week' of years, or seven years.

The two halves of the Tribulation are described as **a time and times and half a time** in Revelation 12:14. The two halves of it are described as one-thousand two hundred and sixty days in Revelation 11:3 and 12:6.

It has a distinct beginning, middle, and end:

1. It will begin when the antichrist signs a peace treaty with Israel guaranteeing their safety and allowing them to rebuild their Temple in Jerusalem.

2. At its mid-point the antichrist enters the Holy of Holies in the Temple and desecrates it by demanding he be worshipped.
3. The Tribulation ends with the Second Coming of Jesus Christ during a great battle on the earth in the Valley of Megiddo.

Daniel and John (in the Revelation) both speak of an expanded period of one thousand two hundred ninety days, or thirty additional days after Daniel also uses the figure one thousand three hundred thirty five days. It seems that those additional days are when Jesus judges the nations, separating the sheep from the goats, in anticipation of the one thousand year kingdom on earth.

If the timing is so precise how can Jesus say,

Matthew 24:36 "But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only."

One possible explanation has to do with the massive cosmic changes that will occur throughout the Tribulation. It will render it difficult to keep time! Without the usual reference points of sun, moon, and stars in their normal patterns people will have a difficult time. The specific units of time Jesus mentioned were the **day** and the **hour**. It will be very hard to pinpoint the exact hour of the exact day.

However, that doesn't explain why **the angels of heaven** wouldn't know at least the **day** if not the **hour**.

Maybe we're being too analytical. It could be Jesus was simply saying that no one, not even **angels**, can predict the exact **hour** of the **day** – the exact moment on the last day of the Tribulation – when Jesus will return.

It may seem inconsequential but it's not. Once Jesus returns it will be too late to repent and be saved. **The exact moment of His coming is of monumental importance to millions left on the earth.**

Thus the theme of the upcoming verses is to watch and be ready. People always think they can put-off believing in Jesus. It's a bad spiritual strategy, a poor gamble with your soul.

Matthew 24:37 But as the days of Noah were, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be.

One similarity between the days of Noah and the Tribulation is that God gave the pre-flood population of the earth a time period before judgment:

Genesis 6:3 And the LORD said, "My Spirit shall not strive with man forever, for he *is* indeed flesh; yet his days shall be one hundred and twenty years."

The pre-flood population might not have known the day or hour but they knew the year! Instead of using that time to repent,

Matthew 24:38 For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark,

It doesn't mean men on the earth during the Tribulation will be engaging in these same activities. It means they will try to go on with their sinful lives as usual despite the warnings of the impending final judgment.

It's always amazing to me how fast we try to get back to normal after some terrible disaster. Or how we tend to ignore warning signs of impending tragedy. We have some weird sense that life will right itself and go on just as it always has.

- being changed to bring change -

By the way, when Jesus said, **marrying and giving in marriage**, He might have been referring to more than just weddings. One of the catalysts for God judging the world by the flood was that the Sons of God were taking the daughters of men as wives. We believe that to mean demons were somehow marrying and impregnating human women and producing an offspring of giants.

(My theory is that demons possessed men who then wed women but that everyone involved was consenting to it).

Jesus' reference is to the continuing of that kind of marriage – not just to weddings in general.

Matthew 24:39 and did not know until the flood came and took them all away, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be.

A key to understanding the next few verses is to ask, *Who was taken away at the time of the flood?* The answer is, *Nonbelievers were taken away to judgment.* Noah and his family were kept safe through the flood to be left on the earth and repopulate it.

Read the next verses with that in mind.

Matthew 24:40 Then two men will be in the field: one will be taken and the other left.

Matthew 24:41 Two women will be grinding at the mill: one will be taken and the other left.

It sounds like the Rapture but it isn't. It's the Second Coming. The men and women who are taken are taken away to judgment – just like the people during Noah's flood.

The men and women who are left are left to repopulate the earth – just like Noah and his family.

Matthew 24:42 Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming.

The believers alive after nearly seven years of Tribulation will know the signs and the general timing but not the exact moment itself. It speaks of having a great sense of anticipation that builds and builds.

If Tribulation believers who have some general sense of when Jesus will return are watching for Him, how much more should we be watching – since the Rapture has no signs and is imminent?