

THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW – THE OLIVET DISCOURSE

YOUR KINGDOM COME...ON EARTH – Fall 2022

“...whoever reads, let him understand” Matt. 24:15b

Week 9 – The End or...the Beginning?

November 8, 2022

But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. ¹⁴ For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus. ¹⁵ For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. ¹⁶ For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷ Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. ¹⁸ Therefore comfort one another with these words.

(I Thessalonians 4:13-18)

Matt. 24:29-31 - *Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. ³⁰ Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. ³¹ And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other*

Is the rapture the same as Jesus' Second Coming to earth? A careful study of Biblical references placed side-by-side might answer some of your questions.

RAPTURE

Jesus will meet NT believers* in the air (I Thess. 4:17) *Jewish/Gentile believers-from Pentecost on....

Believers in Jesus are taken to the Father's house (Jn. 14:1-3)

The NT saints will be in heaven (Jn. 14:3; Rev. 4 & 5)

Jesus' imminent return will occur at any moment

PHYSICAL 2ND COMING

Jesus will come WITH resurrected "saints" to the earth (Rev. 19:14)

Resurrected saints, NT/OT, will reign w/ Jesus on earth (Rev. 19 & 20) (Dan. 12:1-2)

Jesus will set up His kingdom on earth (Rev. 20:4-6; Isa. 2:1-4; Zech. 14:4ff)

Jesus' physical second coming cannot occur until

(I Thess. 4:13-18; I Cor. 15:50-54)

the end of the 7-yr. Trib.
(Matt. 24:29-31)

2

RAPTURE

PHYSICAL 2ND COMING

There are no signs preceding it
(Rev. 22:20)

There are numerous signs
preceding it (Matt. 24:3-33)

It affects believers only
(I Thess. 4:13-18)

It affects all humanity
(Rev. 19:11 – Rev. 20:15)

It is a time of joy (I Thess. 4:18)

It is a time of mourning (Rev. 19:11 -
Rev. 20:15)

It occurs before the day of wrath
(I Thess. 5:9)

It occurs after the
Tribulation (Matt. 24:29ff)

There is no mention of Satan (note
The omission of Satan (Jn. 14:1-3;
I Thess. 4:13-18; I Cor. 15:51-52)

Satan is bound in the abyss
for 1,000 years (Rev. 20:1-
3)

The judgment seat of Christ occurs
after the Rapture (I Cor. 3:9-15;
II Cor. 5:9-11). See Rev. 4 – the
24 elders have rec'd their crowns.
Tribulation begins in Rev. 6

There is no mention of the
judgment seat of Christ at
His physical second coming

The marriage of the Lamb
(Rev. 19:7)

Jesus' bride descends w/
Him to earth (Rev. 19:9, 11-14)

Only believers will see Him
(I Thess. 4:13-18)

Every eye will see Him
(Rev. 1:7)

The Rapture occurs before
the Tribulation

The physical second
coming occurs after the Trib. and
prior to
the Millennial reign of Jesus

“We don’t see the Holy Spirit during the Tribulation.” How would you respond to that statement? If you tell a person, “The Holy Spirit will be active in the Tribulation” ...and that person asks you, “WHY?” ...how would you respond?

WHO is the Holy Spirit?

The Holy Spirit...also called “the Spirit of God” – is GOD! He possesses all the attributes of God the Father and of God the Son because the Holy Spirit is GOD the Holy Spirit!

Since God the Father and God the Son are omniscient (all-knowing), omnipresent (everywhere present; everything is in God’s presence), omnipotent (all-powerful)...God

3

the Holy Spirit is omniscient, omnipresent, omnipotent. Are God the Father and God the Son eternal? Yes! The word *eternal* means “everlasting; having no beginning and no end.” God the Holy Spirit is eternal! The Bible does NOT try to prove God’s existence or His eternality...but simply begins with the statement, *In the beginning God...* PERIOD!

God the Holy Spirit is eternally at work. God the Holy Spirit regenerates. Another word for *regeneration* is *rebirth*, related to the biblical phrase “born again.” Our rebirth is distinguished from our *birth*...our natural birth/our first birth. The new birth is a spiritual, holy, and heavenly birth (born again – born from above) that results in our being made ALIVE spiritually. Man in his natural state is “dead in trespasses and sins” until he is “made alive”...regenerated (Eph. 2:1). The eternal Holy Spirit regenerates (Titus 3:5).

Were people saved before Pentecost? Yes! The Holy Spirit eternally regenerates! Gen. 15:6 – Abraham – *he believed in the LORD, and He accounted it to him for righteousness.*

Psa. 51/Psa. 32 – (read during your study time)

Isa. 55:6-7 - *Seek the LORD while He may be found, call upon Him while He is near.*

⁷*Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; let him return to the LORD, and He will have mercy on him....*

Hab. 2:4 – *the just shall live by faith.*

Heb. 11:13, 16 – *These all died in faith (speaking of OT saints), not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced them and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth...¹⁶ But now they desire a better, that is, a heavenly country. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them.*

How were OT people saved? By grace through faith in God’s revealed message which always points to the Messiah Jesus.

How are NT people saved? DITTO!

Those living in OT times were NOT saved by the law –

Rom. 3:20 - *...by the deeds of the law NO flesh will be justified (declared righteous) in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin.*

Paul wrote in Gal. 3:24 that the law was their tutor/trainer/guardian – responsible for the care and discipline of the those children under their care...to bring us to Christ/the Messiah.

Rom. 8:3 – *For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh (our flesh; humans are weak because we cannot keep one commandment of the law faithfully), God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh.*

Jesus, nearly three years before His death/before Pentecost, told Nicodemus, *Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God* (John 3:3ff). Jesus verified that the Spirit's work in the OT brought men to a new birth – to regeneration. Any man in the OT who was rightly related to God was rightly related because of the Spirit's work.

4

The Holy Spirit's ministry of regeneration will continue into the Tribulation and beyond. But, why are we told that the Holy Spirit will be taken away?

II Thess. 2:5-7 - *And now you know what is restraining (holding back), that he (the antichrist) may be revealed in his own time. ⁷ For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only He who now restrains will do so until He is taken (caused to be taken) out of the way.* Whoever the restrainer is, he is someone of great power who is hindering the advance of the antichrist preventing the satanic kingdom from overwhelming the world!

Who could hinder the advance of the antichrist? Who is most powerful? GOD! The Restrainer appears to be God the Holy Spirit. And, when would this Restrainer be taken out of the way? Before the antichrist is revealed.

Paul, in his first letter to the Thessalonians, mentioned the rapture repeatedly in I Thess. (1:10; 2:19; 4:13-17; 5:1-11). And Paul spoke of the comfort that the rapture brings. The Thessalonians were being led astray by false teaching and were thinking that the “Day of the Lord” had already come. “The Day of the Lord” speaks of God's judgment in the prophecies of the OT. And, Paul speaks again of the rapture in II Thessalonians.

II Thess. 2:1-4 - *Now, brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, we ask you, ² not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled, either by spirit or by word or by letter, as if from us, as though the day of the Lord had come. ³ Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day (of judgment) will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, ⁴ who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.* GOD the Holy Spirit is the only One Who has the Power to restrain Satan! When the Restrainer is taken out of the way, the antichrist will be revealed.

Do we read of people being saved during the Tribulation?

Rev. 7:9-10, 14 - *After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands, ¹⁰ and crying out with a loud voice, saying, ‘Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the*

throne, and to the Lamb!’ 14 ...These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.
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Why will there be a Millennial Kingdom?

The kingdom of God on earth is not an option. It must occur! God MUST deliver on His promises. Do we realize that this is the Kingdom of God that Jesus offered to Israel during His first coming? The first believers in Jesus were Jewish. When the Jewish leadership, representing the nation of Israel, rejected Jesus as the Messiah, the Kingdom of God was postponed UNTIL God will pour out His Spirit upon the Jews who are alive at the end of the Tribulation. They will at that time mourn for Jesus...crying out, “Blessed is He Who comes in the name of the Lord.

And, Jesus will return because...

5

God MUST dwell with man:

Ex. 25:8 – God told Moses, *let them make Me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them.* This has been God’s desire which will be fulfilled in the 1,000 year Kingdom on earth.

Jesus MUST receive His inheritance:

Psa. 2:8 – God the Father speaking to God the Son, *Ask of Me, and I will give You the nations for Your inheritance and the ends of the earth for Your possession.*

Creation MUST be redeemed:

- Rom. 8:19-23 – the creation groans as it waits for its redemption which God has promised.
- Without a literal Millennium on earth under the reign of Jesus, God’s purpose for this world can never be fully realized. God will reverse His curse on the creation and fulfill His original purpose for the earth. The Millennium will demonstrate what life on earth would have been had man not rebelled.

The Biblical Covenants MUST be fulfilled:

- God promised Abraham and his descendants through Isaac and Jacob land, seed, and a blessing. These promises are expanded in the Land Covenant (Deut. 30:1-6); the Davidic Covenant (II Sam. 7:12-16); and the New Covenant (Jer. 31-34; Eze. 36:24-27).
- During the Millennium, Israel will be given the land (Eze. 47:13-20) that God had promised in Gen. 15:18-20; the Messiah (the Seed [Gen. 3:15]) will sit on the throne of David in Jerusalem (Lk. 1:32-33); Israel will be restored as a nation at the end of the Tribulation (Zech. 12:10) and will enter into the Millennial Kingdom born again (Dan. 12:1-2). And the entire world will be blessed with Millennial conditions on the earth (Isa. 11; the curse being reversed) when Israel as a nation comes to faith in Jesus and shares God’s word (Isa. 2:2; Zech. 8:23; Rom. 11:15).

Israel MUST be vindicated before the eyes of all the nations

(Deut. 28:13; Isa. 49:22-23; Isa. 60:14-16)

Isa. 62:1-4 - *For Zion's sake I will not hold My peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until her righteousness goes forth as brightness, and her salvation as a lamp that burns. ² The Gentiles shall see your righteousness, and all kings your glory. You shall be called by a new name, which the mouth of the LORD will name. ³ You shall also be a crown of glory in the hand of the LORD, and a royal diadem in the hand of your God. ⁴ You shall no longer be termed Forsaken, nor shall your land any more be termed Desolate; but you shall be called Hephzibah, and your land Beulah; for the LORD delights in you,*

So that the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of God (Hab. 2:14)

The next event for the Church...

I Thess. 4:16-18 - *For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷ Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the*

6

clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. ¹⁸ Therefore comfort one another with these words.

And, we who will be raptured, will return to earth in glorified bodies, and enter that Millennial Kingdom with our Jesus...

Rev. 19:6-10, 11-16 - *And I heard, as it were, the voice of a great multitude, as the sound of many waters and as the sound of mighty thunderings, saying, 'Alleluia! For the Lord God Omnipotent reigns! ⁷ Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready.' ⁸ And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints. ⁹ Then he said to me, 'Write: Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!' And he said to me, 'These are the true sayings of God.... ¹¹ Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. ¹² His eyes were like a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself. ¹³ He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God. ¹⁴ And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses. ¹⁵ Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. ¹⁶ And He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written:*

*KING OF KINGS AND
LORD OF LORDS*

And when the thousand years will expire...

Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea. ² Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. ³ And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, 'Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God. ⁴ And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away.'

⁵ Then He who sat on the throne said, 'Behold, I make all things new.'

The New Jerusalem will have twelve foundations...and twelve gates of pearl. John Phillips, who has written NT commentaries, penned these thoughts concerning those gates of pearl...

John Phillips – re: the New Jerusalem and the gates of pearl (Rev. 21:21) - “All the precious gems are metals or stones but a pearl is a gem formed within an oyster. The only one formed by living flesh. The humble oyster receives an irritation or a wound - and around the offending article that has penetrated and hurt it, the oyster builds a pearl. The pearl, we might say, is the answer of the oyster to that which injured it. The glory land is God's answer in Christ to wicked men and women who crucified heaven's

7

Beloved and put Him to open shame. How like God to make the gates of the new Jerusalem a pearl. The saints, as they come and go, will forever be reminded as they pass through the gates of glory that access to God's home is only because of Calvary. What gigantic suffering is symbolized by those enormous gates of pearl. Throughout the endless ages we will be reminded of the immensity of the suffering of Christ. Those pearls hung eternally at the access routes to glory will remind us forever of the One Who hung on a tree. And, His answer to those who injured Him is to invite them to share His home. We shall never forget that He is the reason why we are here.”

QUESTIONS:

How did this lesson impact you?

What was new?

What didn't you understand?

What might be your disagreements with what was shared?

What is your takeaway?

With whom are you going to share this lesson?

Will you delve deeper into Scripture re: any of the end times aspects that we discussed?

How has your life been transformed by God through His word that we've studied?

SUGGESTED HOMEWORK:

Reread Week 9's handout with the Bible references.

Continue to jot down your observations and note questions.

Continue answering your questions from Scripture.

With whom will you share what you've learned/been impacted by?

Read Week 10's handout when you receive it.