

# GracePoint: A Weekly Sermon Discussion

## 79 – The Rapture?

### Announcements:

8/2 @7:30 -

Prayer

8/3 @6:30 -

Grace Group

8/6 @8:30 -

Sunday School

8/6 @6:00 -

**FAMILY NIGHT**

Large Group

**ICE BREAKER:** Do you have a story about when you said one thing but meant another?

**READ:** Matthew 24:36-51

This passage is, in many ways, the most straightforward of any of the passages that we will look at in the Olivet Discourse. The overarching message is, as we noted on Sunday, that **NO ONE KNOWS** when Jesus is coming back. “But concerning that day and hour no one knows” (36) “Therefore, stay awake, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming” (41), “for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect” (44), “The master of that servant will come on a day that he does not expect him and at an hour he does not know” (50). Yet even in saying this, we can note that there are many questions that we might have here. What are the days of Noah exactly? What is going on with that wicked servant? And what we will be looking at today: What exactly is Jesus talking about in verses 40-44?

There are two basic options in understanding how to read this passage, either he is talking about the rapture, or he is talking about something else. To cut to the chase, I do not think this is talking about the rapture. I believe this can be seen in two ways, by making what we would call a “negative case” for why it **ISN'T** about the rapture then by making a “positive case” as to what Jesus is actually saying here. Let's start with the negative case.

*As a preliminary note, one of the difficulties here comes in the “pre” “mid” “post” debate I had originally thought we would look at that debate today, but there is far too much to adequately cover in one short study, so much of those things I will make some assumptions on or just gloss over.*

The first issue as to why this is not Jesus speaking of what we would classically call “the rapture” is that he does not use that word. We get the word rapture from 1 Thessalonians 4:17. There Paul says we will be “caught up” (greek *harpazo*). But the word used in this passage twice is *paralambano*. Instead of being “caught up” this means more being snatched away or, as the ESV translates it: taken. While it is true that sometimes different words can point to the same thing, I am not convinced that that is the case here. Because the second issue is the greater one. The larger context in both of these two passages is very different. Paul uses this thought to comfort and encourage. His goal is assurance of the safety and security of all believers in Christ. Jesus has a completely different (and almost opposite) thought: which is that we should beware and be alert, because if you are caught unaware, you are definitely **NOT** safe and secure.

Now we can turn our attention to a positive case. The first thing to do is to note the context. Right before this Jesus says that his coming will be “like the days of Noah” (37). But instead of focusing on Noah, the larger focus is on those who were “swept away”. In other words, this is not “rapture of the church” language, but rather “wrath on the world” sort of language. We noted this on Sunday as we read through the thoughts here of judgment. This is highlighted even further as we contemplate the two servants in verse 45-51. He is coming not just for the good servant, but also for wrath and judgment on the wicked one. The context then points us to the proper reading, and I do not think that I could say it any better than Leon Morris: “In both the field and the mill the emphasis is on *division*. The coming of Jesus marks a complete and permanent division. Jesus makes clear that the coming of the Son of man does not mean that all indiscriminately will enter into the joys of that day. Those who have chosen to live without God will find their choice respected when the great day comes. It will be the portion of the godless to be without God.” And what a terrible day it will be!

**DISCUSS:**

1. What are your thoughts? Is Jesus here referring to the rapture or something else?
2. Why is it so important to look to context to help us understand concepts like this?
3. What do you think of when you read Morris's words that "the emphasis is on division?" Do you agree?
4. Morris ends by saying "Those who have chosen to live without God will find their choice respected". What does this mean? Is he right in saying this?