

## The sign of His coming and of the End of the Age? Mt 24:36 – Mt 25:46

- In the last lesson we learned of three questions the disciples had concerning Jesus' statement of judgment on Jerusalem. The first question was basically "When will the temple be destroyed?" To which Jesus described a series of signs that would precede the destruction, including false messiahs, wars and rumors of wars, famines and earthquakes, persecutions, heresies and wide-spread evangelism. He said that there would be the fulfillment of the "Abomination of Desolation" from Daniel 9:27, an event to occur before the complete and utter cataclysmic destruction. History teaches that it all occurred just as Jesus prophesied when Rome finally marched in and destroyed it on July 30<sup>th</sup>, 70 AD.
- There still remained the second and third question from the disciples, what will be the sign of Jesus' coming and of the end of the age?" These two inquiries were really considered only one question for the typical Jew of the day, for they understood the coming of the Messiah and the end of the age to be the one and the same. I am persuaded this is why Luke and Mark cut one of the questions off the three of Matthew's account. With that in mind, Jesus makes a transition to the second coming and the end of the age portion.

Mt 24:36-41 "But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone. 37 "For the coming of the Son of Man will be just like the days of Noah. 38 "For as in those days which were before the flood they were eating and drinking, they were marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, 39 and they did not understand until the flood came and took them all away; so shall the coming of the Son of Man be. 40 "Then there shall be two men in the field; one will be taken, and one will be left. 41 "Two women {will be} grinding at the mill; one will be taken, and one will be left.

- Matthew uses the pair of participles "peri de" BUT, to introduce this section. This is definitely an emphasis on a transition to the other question, "What shall be the sign of your coming and the end of the age?"
- The Jews classified time into two categories, the present age and the age to come. Paul inferred to the two in referring to eternal life in *1 Tim 4:8 For bodily exercise profiteth little: but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come*. They correctly believed that there is a present age and an age that is to come. Some other verses from the NT that mention this are Luke 18:30, Eph 1:21 and Heb 6:5.
- The Jews taught that when the Christ would come, He would bring about the terrible day of the Lord, a day of judgment against the enemies of God, and then usher in the new age, having set everything straight.

- Unlike the destruction of Jerusalem that had many signs prior to the arrival, including the surrounding armies of Rome, this coming event that Jesus describes, will not be as obvious and specific.
- Of that great day, no one knows, not man, not the angels and not even Jesus Himself, but only the Father. It will be like the days of Noah, when the people were practicing the “prevailing wickedness”, eating and drinking and living like adulterating heathen. For 120 years as Noah built and ark in preparation to the flood, the people lived in ignorance of what was about to come upon them. They were completely blind to the danger until it was too late and it began to rain.
- Three elements are clearly exposed that need to be emphasized
  - a) People cannot know when it will occur. Despite what the televangelist or doomsday prophets on the street say, they cannot know! If the angels and Jesus do not know the time, then how can a homeless guy on the street that picked up a Bible from the Salvation Army be able to know?
  - b) People will be completely surprised. When Jesus comes back, those that were not expecting Him to come back will have their eyes wide-opened.
  - c) People will be selectively chosen. It does not matter how close people are when it occurs, whoever is prepared will be taken and those that are not will not. If a couple of guys are working together in the field, one could be taken and the other left behind. If two women who work next to each other at the mill, one might be taken and the other left behind. Luke 17:34 says if there are two people in bed, one could be taken and the other left behind. People will be selectively chosen during this time, based on whether or not they are right with God.
- With that in mind, we had better be ready, for that is the only strategy that deals with all three. How can we know we are ready for that inevitable Day of Judgment?

### 1) Be ready for Jesus in a way that is ALERT.

Mt 24:42-44 "Therefore be on the alert, for you do not know which day your Lord is coming. 43 "But be sure of this, that if the head of the house had known at what time of the night the thief was coming, he would have been on the alert and would not have allowed his house to be broken into. 44 "For this reason you be ready too; for the Son of Man is coming at an hour when you do not think {He will.}

- Thieves do not call you up on the phone prior to the heist, letting you know the time and place of the pre-meditated crime, but sneak in without you knowing. The only way that you can be ready for the thief is to always be on guard against him. You must be ALERT to be ready for the potential thief.

- In the same way, God is not letting the Christians or the world know that His Son is coming on a Tuesday or in the month of May or in the year 2011 or today or tomorrow or next week or next year. He will be coming when you least expect it so the only way to be prepared is to be alert and on guard all the time, for He could come at any moment.
- You know that you are ready for the Day of Judgment if you are ALERT.

## 2) Be ready for Jesus in a way that is ACCOUNTABLE.

Mt 24:45-51 "Who then is the faithful and sensible slave whom his master put in charge of his household to give them their food at the proper time? 46 "Blessed is that slave whom his master finds so doing when he comes. 47 "Truly I say to you, that he will put him in charge of all his possessions. 48 "But if that evil slave says in his heart, 'My master is not coming for a long time,' 49 and shall begin to beat his fellow slaves and eat and drink with drunkards; 50 the master of that slave will come on a day when he does not expect {him} and at an hour which he does not know, 51 and shall cut him in pieces and assign him a place with the hypocrites; weeping shall be there and the gnashing of teeth.

- While a master was gone, he put one of his slaves in charge of the other slaves. This head slave was to make sure that the master's slaves were going to be fed and taken care of. That was his job and he was expected to carry it out. The master will put him in charge of many possessions. But if that slave mistreats his fellow-slaves and instead fellowships with the drunkards, the master will not be happy when he comes back. Not only will the slave not be promoted, but punish him in the end. He failed to live a life that was accountable to the master.
- The coming of the Great Day of Judgment will come to us in a way that seeks for accountability in our lives. When the Master Jesus comes back, He is going to find out if we have been accountable to a life of sacrifice and good service; He is going to be looking to see if we are accountable to treating our fellow slaves with care and candor; He is going to know if we were accountable to Him in a way that communicates the message "Well done thou good and faithful servant".
- You know that you are ready for the Day of Judgment if you are ACCOUNTABLE.

## 3) Be ready for Jesus in a way that is PREPARED.

In Mt 25:1-13, Jesus told a kingdom parable of ten virgins with ten lamps, five of the prudent and five of them foolish. This statement is based on the fact the the foolish virgins did not have oil in the lamps.

- In the first century, when the bride accepted engagement to the groom, he would go back home to build a room onto the father's house, "for there were many mansions" built on to the father's house (John 14:2). When the father finally decided that the groom's addition was complete, for only the father would know that (Mt 24:36), he would give the okay to go and fetch

- the bride for the ceremony. He would head out possibly even in the middle of the night to bring his bride back for the wedding.
- The bride, who was waiting for weeks and even months with packed bags, also had her neighboring bridesmaids (in this case referred to as virgins) waiting to make the trip with her to the celebration. Like the bride, they also needed to make sure they were PREPARED. Because they did not know when the groom was arriving, for the time was not known until the father revealed it, they had to be prepared for it, whether day or night. The daytime was not so much the problem, but the night required a light source called a lamp. These lamps were fueled by oil and only half of these virgins prepared for it.
  - When the groom came, only five were prepared while the other five went in search of the oil. By the time they caught up, it was too late, for the door was locked and the ceremony was started. They were not prepared for all times; therefore they were not prepared at all.
  - We also need to be ready on that Great Day of Judgment, for the Groom has gone away to prepare a place for His Bride, the church. He is coming back just as soon as the Father reveals that time and when He does, are you PREPARED? It is not the oil in the lamp that will prepare you for that day, but if Jesus is in your heart, soul and mind. It does not matter if your lamp does not give light, but whether or not we are allowing the light of Christ to shine.
  - When Jesus comes back, we better be living for Him; and you know that you are ready for the Day of Judgment if you have taken the time to be PREPARED.

#### 4) Be ready for Jesus in a way that is PRODUCTIVE.

In Matthew 25:14-30, Jesus told a parable of a man that went on a journey. Before departing, he entrusted his servants to his possession for the purpose of being PRODUCTIVE.

- He gave one five talents to invest, another two talents and yet another one talent and then headed out on his journey. Immediately the five talent servant put the money to work and shortly doubled the investment for the master. In the same manner the two talent servant doubled his investment for the master. The servant that received one talent went home and buried it in a jar in the backyard. He did not lose money, but did not invest it like the master wanted him to.
- When the master came back, he wanted to see how his servants invested and the gains that they made. When said to the first two servants who doubled his money, (21) "Well done, good and faithful slaves; you were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things, enter into the joy of your master." The master was pleased because he knew they were productive for him.
- The one talent slave said, "Master, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you scattered no {seed.} 25 'And I was afraid, and went away and hid your talent in the ground; see,

- you have what is yours.” This did not make the master happy at all for he expected PRODUCTION, but got an excuse.
- He said (26-30) 'You wicked, lazy slave, you knew that I reap where I did not sow, and gather where I scattered no {seed.} 27 'Then you ought to have put my money in the bank, and on my arrival I would have received my {money} back with interest. 28 'Therefore take away the talent from him, and give it to the one who has the ten talents.' 29 "For to everyone who has shall {more} be given, and he shall have an abundance; but from the one who does not have, even what he does have shall be taken away. 30 "And cast out the worthless slave into the outer darkness; in that place there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.
  - If we are ever going to be right with God when the Day of Judgment comes, we must be PRODUCTIVE! He wants us multiplying the souls for the kingdom through the preaching of His gospel. He wants us multiplying our wisdom in our lives through the studying of His word. He wants us multiplying our presence in this dark and evil world by living a life that glorifies Him.
  - Jesus has only given each of us a short time down here and a certain amount to invest. There will come a time in the future when the Master will be coming back and He is going to want to know what we did with the investment that He made in us at Calvary. Will you be ready on that day? You know that you are ready for the Day of Judgment if you have taken the time to be PREPARED.

### Be ready for Jesus in a way that is LOVING.

Jesus will conclude this chapter talking about the throne seat of judgment in Matthew 25:31-46.

- All the nations shall be gathered for judgment on that day. They will be placed into two groups, just like a shepherd with the sheep and the goats. On the right those that followed the Shepherd and on the left the goats that did not.
- The Messiah will say to the saved sheep '*Come, you who are blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.* What was the focus of this righteous decision of the Christ?
- You fed Me when I was hungry. You gave drink to Me in thirst. You invited Me into your home as a stranger. You clothed Me in My nakedness. You visited Me in sickness. You came to Me in prison. When asked by them WHEN?
- The King responded in verse 40 "*Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of Mine, {even} the least {of them,} you did it to Me.*" They were LOVING to their fellow saints of the kingdom.
- To the accursed goats on the left He confirmed in verse 45 '*Truly I say to you, to "the extent that you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me.*" They did not show love to their fellow saints nor fellow man, hence were found guilty.