

END TIMES: BACK TO THE FUTURE

Lesson 6 w/Answers

Matthew Chapters 24 and 25 – Part 2

We continue our study of the Olivet Discourse, Matthew Chapters 24 and 25, picking up our study at verse 32 of Chapter 24. Christ has just finished giving the disciples an overview of the events that will occur over the time called the Tribulation Period, and he has highlighted the effect of these events on the Jews.

After describing the signs that will be indicative of the end times, Jesus goes on to teach an important lesson to the disciples, and this is where we will pick up our study with this lesson.

Review Matthew Chapters 24 and 25, and answer the following:

1. What phrase in Matthew 24:32 indicates to us that Jesus is about to teach the disciples something important about these End Time events?
 - a. ANSWER: Jesus uses the phrase "Now learn this lesson". Clearly this teaching must be important, if Christ begins the lesson with these words. He wants the disciples to understand the signs and the importance of knowing how they will recognize that his coming again is close.
2. The lesson that Jesus has for them to learn about the End Times is simple and yet profound. What is he telling them? (Matthew 24:32-35)
 - a. ANSWER 1: Jesus uses the analogy of a fig tree in bloom in the spring. You know that summer is not far off once you see the buds and early young leaves. The same will be true during the Tribulation Period. Once the Jews see these signs, they will know that Christ's return is imminent.
 - b. ANSWER 2: Jesus is also telling them that once these events begin to unfold, the people (or "generation") on the earth at that time will not pass away until all is fulfilled; meaning his coming will relatively short in terms of time, once the judgments begin.
3. Read Matthew 24:36-41. This passage is often mistaken or misinterpreted as referring to the rapture. One reason why we know that this is not referring to the Rapture of the church is because these verses are addressing the Jews and not the church. There is also a second reason why these verses could not be referring to the Rapture. Read 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 and Revelation 3:10, and note why this passage in Matthew cannot be referencing the Rapture.
 - a. ANSWER 1: Christ is describing judgment coming to the earth, just as it was in the days of Noah. The Rapture of the church is not a judgment.
 - b. ANSWER 2: In the flood, the unrighteous were "taken" by the flood; and the righteous, Noah and his family, were left. The same will be true in this case; as those not taken, meaning those left behind, will be included in Christ's Millennial Kingdom – not so those taken in this judgment.
 - c. ANSWER 3: In Revelation 3:10, Christ promises to keep his church from the coming punishment. If Matthew 24 was referring to the Rapture, then the church would have had to endure the Tribulation period and before being raptured – which would be a direct contradiction of this promise.
4. What is remarkable about the events described in Matthew 24:38-39?
 - a. ANSWER: After seven years of famine, wars, earthquakes, disease, great almost unbelievable amounts of death and destruction – not to mention three and half years of the testimony of the 144,000 witnesses warning of Christ's return and the coming judgment – we read in these verses that people are "eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage" right up to the day Christ returns. They are devoid of any knowledge of Christ and completely unaware of the coming judgment.
5. Read Matthew 24:42-44. What do these verses tell us about the hour that Christ comes? (see verse 44)
 - a. ANSWER: It tells us Christ is coming at an hour when no one will expect him. This also indicates to us that by the time Christ returns, no one will be watching for him, no one will be expecting him. This is also remarkable, and almost incredible, given all of the death, destruction, and worldwide uncertainty and fear that will be prevalent in the days before Christ returns. Even with

all of the evil and devastation surrounding mankind, and the hopelessness and despair, they will not be looking for, nor expecting, Christ's return. This is converse to the mindset of many people today, for which every disaster or major earthquake causes them to think that Christ's return is imminent.

6. What is Christ telling his disciples in Matthew 24:45-51, and what can we learn from it as well?
 - a. ANSWER: He is telling them that He expects them, and us, to be ever alert and vigilant, doing the work that He has put us here to do. He is also telling them, and us, that there will be people who will not take his return seriously; nor will they believe that He is coming back as quickly as He actually will. The problem is of course in that these servants' attitudes and behavior also affects all of the people that these servants are responsible for. Instead of doing the work of the Master, they go and do their own will, following their own desires, and ignoring the work and people that they were instructed to care for. As we can see from this passage, Christ does not want us, or his disciples, to fall into that trap. He wants us to be ever alert and watching for His return.
7. Beginning with verse 1 of Matthew Chapter 25, we see "judgment" as the common theme throughout the chapter. Who is being judged in the first 14 verses, and what is the discriminating test that causes some to be included in the kingdom and others to be thrown out? Let's begin by looking at verse 1; it tells us when this judgment will occur, when it happens. Can you also tell by reading verses 1-13 who is being judged? (And no, it is not the church or "Christians", because they have already been resurrected and have returned with Christ.) (See also Ezekiel 20:33-44.)
 - a. ANSWER 1: "At that time" refers to Christ's sudden and unanticipated return; and then this judgment will occur.
 - b. ANSWER 2: The people being judged are the Jews: (1) the ones who believed and were watching for His return, and (2) those who heard about His coming, but ignored it until it was too late.
8. What do you believe is the significance of the oil in the lamps, i.e., those that have it and those that do not?
 - a. ANSWER: Many scholars believe that the oil represents the Holy Spirit. During the Tribulation Period, those who hear the gospel of Christ's imminent return and believe will have the Holy Spirit living in them; represented by those with oil in their lamps in the parable.
9. So, in the first parable of Matthew 25, verses 1-14 stressed the need for the Jews to be alert, to be ready and always watching for Christ's return. What does the second parable, found in verses 14-30, teach them?
 - a. ANSWER: This parable stresses the need to serve the King while he is away.
10. The last verses of Matthew Chapter 25 deal with the judging of the goats and sheep. Given the context of this judgment occurring upon Christ's return and at the beginning of the establishment of His earthly kingdom, and given that He has just finished judging the Jews; what group of people would comprise the goats and sheep, and what are they being judged on?
 - a. ANSWER 1: Having judged the Jews and how they responded, or did not respond, to the Gospel during the Tribulation Period; Christ now turns his attention to the Gentiles and how they treated the Jews who accepted Christ during the Tribulation Period.
 - b. ANSWER 2: Scriptures reveal to us how the Antichrist, and the world, will hate the Jews for Christ's name sake. We have been told of their inability to buy food nor to obtain shelter, and we are aware of the brutality they will suffer during the Tribulation. This judgment sets apart those who helped and cared for these Jews from those who did not.

Using the foundation of our study of Old Testament prophecy in our previous lessons, and Christ's teaching in Matthew Chapters 24 and 25, we are now ready to begin our study of the book of Revelation. We will begin that study in the next lesson, as we look toward the day when Christ will physically return, and the entire world will see Him as Lord of Lord and King of Kings!

In Christ,

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