

The Judgment **Matthew 24:35 – 25:46**

This discourse began in response to two questions posed by the disciples in 24:3 after Jesus had remarked on the destruction of the Temple as predicted in Daniel 9:26. The disciples wanted to know when that destruction would occur. Perhaps the disciples were confused about what would happen after that, perhaps thinking that Judgment Day would follow immediately. Jesus broke His answer into two parts: the signs leading up to the destruction of the Temple, and Judgment Day. The two answers are clearly separated at verse 34. The Temple would be destroyed within that generation. What follows is Jesus' description of Judgment. Since the destruction of the Temple is an historical fact, we can skip to the part which has not happened yet, Judgment.

- (24:35) The teachings by the earthly Jesus were not just for that time, nor for the remainder of the time the universe exists, but for all of eternity.
 - Jesus talked about character and truth and being consistent. These topics will continue in eternity.
 - Jesus often upbraided people for becoming focused on physical performance. He called people to begin thinking as a Spirit while on earth so as to be ready for eternity.
 - The transition from physical-spiritual existence to spiritual-only existence will not be a major change. The principles will all be the same.
- (24:36 – 44) Judgment will be without warning or sign.
 - Jesus said that He did not know the date of the end. However, after returning to heaven, He opened the scroll that contained the plan of God (Revelation 5 – 10), so maybe after than unrolling, He knew. Maybe the other inhabitants of heaven now know, also. But, nothing in the Bible gives any hints, so all is speculation.
 - Jesus compared Judgment to the Flood. Noah was described as a preacher of righteousness in 2 Peter 2:5. Although Noah knew a week before the Flood when it would come (Genesis 7:4), apparently he did not tell anyone else.
 - (40 – 41) “One taken; one left” has been applied to the Rapture theory for several centuries. However, as with all the Rapture passages, reading the entire context shows that this is Judgment (25:46). Further, the Rapture theory includes the resurrection of the wicked onto the earth so that all the unfaithful deceased can get a second change while living on earth again for 1000 years. That part of the theory is not in Jesus' description.
 - (42 – 44) The “thief in the night” image was repeated by Peter (2 Peter 3:10) and Paul (1 Thessalonians 5:2 – 4). All three specify that there will be no signs of the end.
- (24:45 – 51) The faithful are like servants who are prepared at all times.
 - Many claim to be faithful. An essential characteristic of the faith which God accepts as sufficient for inclusion into the family is that they live each day as if it were the last.
 - In that day, certain servants often were placed in charge of extensive holdings, for which they would give account when the master returned. Slow communication made micromanagement impossible.
 - The irresponsible and excuse-makers, despite their selection to positions of authority in the household, were classed with the hypocrites and condemned.
- (25:1 – 13) The faithful are like those who think about what may be needed to be prepared.
 - The ten virgins were waiting for the wedding celebration to shift from the house of the bride's family to the house of the husband's family. Each celebration could last

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- from one to seven days, depending on wealth. The wise virgins planned ahead and brought extra oil so they would be ready whenever the master came, to illuminate his path and join the party. Note that the wise virgins did not share with the foolish virgins.
- The wise faithful put some thought into how to be ready. Those who do not think ahead cannot be bailed out by others. The important point was that the foolish virgins lacked wisdom, not oil.
 - For the faithful today, one of the functions of the indwelling Spirit is to supply wisdom, but it requires prayer (James 1:5 – 8).
 - The unprepared (and therefore rejected) characters here were not evil, just foolish. Wisdom is an essential characteristic of the type of faith which is acceptable by God.
 - (25:14 – 30) The faithful are industrious, take risks, and use their gifts.
 - These talents likely were weights of silver. In today's silver market, each talent would be worth about \$27,000.
 - The servants were entrusted with significant but different amounts, likely based on the master's assessment of the experience and potential of each. A large return on investment was expected. The scenario would have been common in that day.
 - The one-talent servant did not lose the money, but failed to earn a return, so was condemned.
 - The disciples did not have a detailed understanding of the work of the indwelling Spirit yet. Their impression at the time probably was restricted to the attributes of the eternal kingdom described in the prophets. But by the time Luke wrote, the work of the Spirit would be common knowledge.
 - God's expectation is that we make a significant return on investment based on that with which we are entrusted. Everyone does not need to "earn" the same, but everyone is expected to use what has been given. See 1 Peter 4:10 – 11, Romans 12:3 – 8, 2 Corinthians 8:12. Further, some level of risk is involved. The faithful are not allowed to become custodians of their gifts, or they will be taken away.
 - Again, unprofitable servants are condemned.
 - (25:31 – 46) The faithful do not serve Jesus directly, but rather just serve.
 - Note that the acceptable faithful were serving people, whereas the unacceptable faithful were not. Both groups were surprised. The servant mentality is humble.
 - In Matthew 7:21, in a similar parable, the unacceptable group tried to gain entrance through doing showy things (prophesying, casting our demons, performing miracles), but had failed to serve the lowly so were condemned.