



## Lesson 13 - When will this happen?

Matthew Chapter 25 - Verses 1 - 46

### Lesson 13

Let's take a moment and summarize where we are as Jesus is explaining this to His disciples. First, the disciples asked Jesus ““when will this happen, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?” As to the question “when” and Jesus laid out a series of events that actually span millennia. False messiahs, famine, wars and rumors of wars; followed by persecution and hatred against believers in Jesus Christ. This is followed by an increase in wickedness and at the same time the Gospel will be preached across the entire world. THEN we see the abomination that causes desolation spoken of by Daniel the prophet which was followed by a warning of great distress and more warnings of false messiahs.

Then, as we saw in the last lesson Jesus gives the signs of His return, His second com-

ing. Jesus told the disciples Matt. 24:27 - “For as lightning that comes from the east is visible even in the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man.” As this is written it means that it will be clear when we see Jesus return. It will not be like some of the signs other people may be misled by. It will be obvious.

Jesus has just described a lot of difficulties and trials and tribulations for the Christians in the world and in v. 29 He tells the disciples that immediately AFTER those days of distress the sun and the moon will be darkened and other celestial events will be announcing His coming. After those days then the sign of Jesus will appear in heaven. Jesus will send His angels to collect His elect from the four winds of the earth.

Matt. 24:42-51 shifts gears as Jesus begins telling them about the Kingdom of Heaven. Jesus told them about the fig leaves and that the hour and the day are known only by the Father and not even by Him. Jesus gives examples to stress how urgent this time will be. Being a wise and obedient servant requires us to be watching for the signs so we are not left out. Matt. 24: 50-51 gives the disciples a stern warning about not being aware and obedient. So, in reflecting on the disciple’s questions Jesus has given them many signs of His coming and the signs that point to the end of the age. In Chapter 25 Jesus shifts to talking about being prepared for these times and how we should live our lives in a state of readiness.

Chapter 25 is Jesus, the King, telling His people how to live in light of the uncertainty of these future events. Jesus outlines this in 3 parables.

### The Parable of the Ten Virgins

Matt. 25:1-2 - *“At that time the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. Five of them were foolish and five were wise.”*

“At that time ...” refers to the time that Jesus is returning to set up His kingdom. The ten virgins represent all the people of the earth who have been invited to participate in the Kingdom of God. As we will see the foolish and wise represent the ones who responded to the gospel message and took heed and stayed ready.

Matt. 25:3-4 - *“The foolish ones took their lamps but did not take any oil with them. The wise ones, however, took oil in jars along with their lamps.”*

The Greek word used here is “moros” and it is where our English word moron comes

from. It means being dull, inattentive and unthinking. To illustrate this Jesus says that the wise virgins brought their lamps and oil but the foolish ones only brought their lamp but did not bring any oil. The problem here is that no one knows how long they will be waiting and that also underscores the uncertainty of Jesus' return. None of us know when this will be but Jesus has stressed that we are to be ready at any moment.

Matt. 25:5-6 - *“The bridegroom was a long time in coming, and they all became drowsy and fell asleep. “At midnight the cry rang out: ‘Here’s the bridegroom! Come out to meet him!’”*

The bridegroom - Jesus was a long time in coming. Jesus is giving the disciples a hint that the wait will be long. Then, as you can see and as Jesus has already warned He will return when they are not expecting it.

Matt. 25:7-8 - *“Then all the virgins woke up and trimmed their lamps. The foolish ones said to the wise, ‘Give us some of your oil; our lamps are going out.’”*

The foolish ones are wanting the wise ones to help them out. This is a time when no one can help you. You have to be ready for yourself.

Matt. 25:9-10 - *“No,’ they replied, ‘there may not be enough for both us and you. Instead, go to those who sell oil and buy some for yourselves.’ “But while they were on their way to buy the oil, the bridegroom arrived. The virgins who were ready went in with him to the wedding banquet. And the door was shut.”*

The invitation to be with Jesus is not a never ending invitation. It is open until He returns and just like Jesus pointed out in comparing this to the time of Noah, people will be going about their merry, wicked lives until it is too late - and that is the way it will be again. As Christians we must live as if we are ready at any moment.

Matt. 25:11-13 - *“Later the others also came. ‘Lord, Lord,’ they said, ‘open the door for us!’ “But he replied, ‘Truly I tell you, I don’t know you.’ “Therefore keep watch, because you do not know the day or the hour.”*

The consequences of not being prepared are clear and unambiguous. Jesus replied - “Truly I tell you, I don’t know you”. Then Jesus, once again, reiterates His warning

- *Therefore keep watch, because you do not know the day or the hour.*” It is a common misunderstanding that since Jesus said no one knows the day or the hour that we just mosey through life and do not worry about it. Jesus’ repetitive and strong warnings to watch clearly tell us that this is not the case.

## Parable of the Talents or Bags of Gold

Matt. 25:14-30 - *“Again, it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted his wealth to them. To one he gave five bags of gold, to another two bags, and to another one bag, each according to his ability. Then he went on his journey. The man who had received five bags of gold went at once and put his money to work and gained five bags more. So also, the one with two bags of gold gained two more. But the man who had received one bag went off, dug a hole in the ground and hid his master’s money.*

*“After a long time the master of those servants returned and settled accounts with them. The man who had received five bags of gold brought the other five. ‘Master,’ he said, ‘you entrusted me with five bags of gold. See, I have gained five more.’*

*“His master replied, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master’s happiness!’*

*“The man with two bags of gold also came. ‘Master,’ he said, ‘you entrusted me with two bags of gold; see, I have gained two more.’*

*“His master replied, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master’s happiness!’*

*“Then the man who had received one bag of gold came. ‘Master,’ he said, ‘I knew that you are a hard man, harvesting where you have not sown and gathering where you have not scattered seed. So I was afraid and went out and hid your gold in the ground. See, here is what belongs to you.’*

*“His master replied, ‘You wicked, lazy servant! So you knew that I harvest where I have not sown and gather where I have not scattered seed? Well then, you should have put my money on deposit with the bankers, so that when I returned I would have received it back with interest.*

*“So take the bag of gold from him and give it to the one who has ten bags. For whoever has will be given more, and they will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what they have will be taken from them. And throw that worthless servant outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”*

This parable illustrates that we are not to be lazy. God has a plan for the lazy and it is the same plan that He has for all the other wicked people. Pretending to be a Christian and then not doing anything is not being a Christian at all. Being a Christian

carries with it many responsibilities. Rest assured that we do not have to earn our salvation but if we are truly saved then God fully expects us to bear fruit. He does not mince words about this. Just as Jesus did when He passed the fruit tree that had not produced any fruit and Jesus cursed it and it died. Think of it like a sport and a player shows they have the skills and abilities to play on a team and the coach puts them on the team. Then they do not come to practice and they do not prepare for the game - what will the coach do? The coach will kick them off the team. They never really were a part of the team.

## The Sheep and the Goats

This is not a parable, this is about judgment and sorting out those who belong in the Kingdom of God and those who do not. It is to motivate us to obedience in preparation for the future.

*Matt. 25:31-46 - "When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his glorious throne. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left.*

*"Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.'*

*"Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?'*

*"The King will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.'*

*"Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, I was a stranger and you did not invite me*

*in, I needed clothes and you did not clothe me, I was sick and in prison and you did not look after me.'*

*"They also will answer, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or needing clothes or sick or in prison, and did not help you?' "He will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me.' "Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life."*

Notice that this is concerning ministering to the needs of other people. This passage builds on the principle in 25:26 that failure to utilize our gifts for the Master (sins of omission) as well as overt acts of evil (sins of commission) will be judged. Sins of omission are as serious to God as sins of commission. Once again, my way of looking at it is that God's plan for the lazy people who want to pretend to be Christians but not really do anything is the same as for the wicked. As He ends He tells them their fate - *"Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life."*

Jesus is delivering quite a forceful message to His disciples who have followed Him obediently for the past 3 years, but Jesus knows what is ahead for each one of them. He wants them to be prepared and hardened for the challenges that lay ahead. All Christians should take up this challenge and strive to be producing fruit for the Kingdom.

Focus on this passage intently - notice what Jesus says in v. 41 - *"Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.'" But his is followed by their reply - "They also will answer, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or needing clothes or sick or in prison, and did not help you?'"* These people on the left - the goats - they THINK they know Jesus, they indicate that if they had known it was Him they would have done something. But Jesus replies that whenever they did NOT do it for others it was just as if they had not done it for Him.

If nothing else makes us, as Christians, recognize that we need to be looking for opportunities to serve and minister to the needs of others as well as watching for the signs of Jesus' return. Yes, Jesus has been a long time in returning and we have no idea how much longer it might be. It could be on the way home from church today or 20 years from now or 100 years from now. These parables and Jesus' giving us a glimpse into His judgment should be a powerful motivator for us.

Part of Satan's deception would obviously include deluding ourselves into thinking we have done plenty and we do not need to do any more. We have evaluated ourselves and give ourselves an A+ for what we have done and we think we can coast on in to Heaven on the merits of our past. Satan can lure us into laziness and the consequences are just as bad as if he lured us into wickedness.

Remember, being a Christian is one job we cannot retire from until we are called home to meet Jesus. Until then we persevere on!

*Lesson Goals - What did we learn?*

