

**Review:** after covering an overview of Millennial and Rapture views, and a survey of the Kingdom, we turn to an overview of eschatological passages in the New Testament.

## I. Matthew. (ca. A.D. 50)

- Presents Jesus as Messiah and King
- Written to present Christ to the Jews

We covered eschatological passages in Matthew 5-7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 16, 17, 18, 20, 21, 22, introduce 24-25

Note: at this point I depart from Custer's syllabus. As noted in the footnote last week, Custer holds that Mt 24.4-14 describes the whole Tribulation. I think this error throws off his whole discussion of Mt 24-25. Consequently, I replace it with my outline from my Thru the Bible study.

## Z. Mt 24.1-51

Matthew 24-25 contains the Olivet Discourse — a private message by the Lord for His disciples.

Last week we covered vv. 1-28, points 1-5.

6. The Lord then turns the attention of the teaching to the events that will attend his coming (Mt 24.29-31).
  - a. The trouble of those days will bring about great phenomena in the heavens – all creation will shake, men will be in literal darkness (29).
    - 1) Note that he clearly designates “after the trouble of those days”
    - 2) This points to the end of the Tribulation for the coming of the Son of Man
  - b. An environmental sign will precede the coming of the Son of Man (our Lord Jesus Christ), and then he himself shall appear (30).
    - 1) Zechariah prophesies that at that moment the majority of Israel that remains will ‘see him’ and ‘mourn for him’ (Zech 12.12).
      - 2) Paul says ‘so all Israel will be saved’ (Rm 11.26).

- c. The Lord will gather the elect (primarily Israel) who survive the Tribulation together from all over the earth to be with the Lord (31).
7. The Lord gives a Parable of the Fig Tree to teach those who hear and understand to know what they are seeing when they see it (Mt 24.32-35).
  - a. Observing these signs (32) shows that the Lord is near, at the gates (33).
  - b. The Lord promises that 'this generation' [a term often used for Israel, refers to the Israel of that day] will not pass away until all these things happen (34).
  - c. The Lord swears that heaven and earth will pass away, but his words will not pass away, they will certainly be fulfilled (35).
8. From certainty, the Lord turns to uncertainty: no one in the Church Age knows the day or the hour of the coming of the Son of Man (Mt 24.36).
  - a. The signs are for those called to understand (15) who are alive when the abomination of desolation appears.
  - b. Those who live in the Church Age are always to be ready, not knowing the day or the hour.
  - c. The knowledge of the Son here is his knowledge as a man, not his divine omniscience (*cf.* Lk 2.52, where the Lord grows in knowledge).
9. The Lord gives admonitions concerning readiness (Mt 24.37-51).
  - a. Life will be carrying on as usual, when suddenly the end will come, just as it did in the days of Noah (37-39).
  - b. The Lord again uses the figure of people working side by side with one taken for judgement and the other left (40-41).
  - c. The Lord admonishes readiness, and uses the image of a man who, if he had known when the thief would come, would have been ready for him (42-44).

- d. The Lord gives another parable concerning readiness with the prospect of reward for the servant who is ready – and judgement for the one who is not (45-51).
  - 1) This is a picture of distinctions made between people living on the earth at the time of the Lord's return.
  - 2) The Lord will divide between those who are ready to receive him and those who are not. Those who are ready will enter the kingdom; those who are not, he will destroy.

## AA. Mt 25.1-46

1. The parable of the ten virgins continues the theme of distinctions made between people at the Lord's return (Mt 25.1-13).
  - a. Jewish marriage customs involved the bridegroom going from his house to his bride's house to receive the bride, then returning to his own house in a procession, where the guests to the wedding assembled.
  - b. Jesus indicates that this wedding story is about the kingdom (1).
  - c. Ten virgins are among the wedding guests, preparing to meet the bridegroom and join in the celebration of the wedding (1-5).
    - 1) Five of the virgins were wise and were prepared for the bridegroom's return.
    - 2) Five were foolish and were not prepared.
    - 3) The bridegroom delayed his return a long time.
  - d. The late hour the bridegroom returned caught the unprepared unawares (6-12).
    - 1) The foolish rushed off to buy oil before it was too late.
    - 2) While they were out, the return occurred and the bridegroom entered the feast. The hosts shut the door to those who were not ready.
  - e. The parable closes with a warning to watch and be ready (13).
    - 1) Some commentators make this parable point to the Jewish nation at the Lord's return when some will be ready and some won't.

- 2) This could be true, but the parable seems to me to be more of a general warning to all who are anticipating the Lord's return during the tribulation period.
  - 3) Those who are believing and ready for the Lord's return will enter the kingdom with him. The Lord will shut out those who are not ready.
2. The parable of the talents continues the Lord's instructions concerning the beginning of the kingdom (Mt 25.14-30).
- a. The parable in Luke is like the parable of the pounds recorded in Lk 19.11-27.
    - 1) That parable emphasizes the delay before the kingdom comes. Jesus would not set up the kingdom immediately.
    - 2) The fate of the weak servant in the pounds emphasized his loss of reward; the Lord doesn't cast him out of the kingdom.
  - b. The parable of the talents continues the theme of distinguishing between entrants into the kingdom — 'For *it is just like*' (14).
  - c. The servants in this parable receive talents, a large sum of money, 58-80 pounds of silver; each gift is proportionate according to each servant's abilities (15).
  - d. Each servant made use of his talents, except for one (16-18).
  - e. The master, after a long time, returns to settle accounts with his servants – those who had been productive receive his commendation and reward of new and greater responsibilities in the kingdom (19-23).
  - f. The Lord rebukes and judges the servant who did nothing with his talent – not only is his talent taken away, but the Lord casts him into outer darkness (24-30).

This parable may well be another comment on the Lord's distinguishing between people who are living at the Tribulation, but since these servants are those left behind while the master went away, it would seem more likely to point to those servants who live during the Church Age, administering the Lord's goods while he is

away. The parable serves as a warning to those left behind – we must serve faithfully with the treasure God gives us if we expect the Lord's blessing on His return.

3. The Lord concludes the Olivet Discourse with a declaration of final judgement (Mt 25.31-46).
  - a. The Son of Man will come, accompanied by angels, and sit on a glorious throne of judgement (31).
  - b. The Lord gathers those living on the earth before the throne for judgement. Just as a shepherd would separate sheep from goats, the Lord will judge the people (32-33).
  - c. The sheep on the King's right hand will inherit the kingdom (34-40).
  - d. The goats on the King's left hand he sends into eternal fire (41-46).

The purpose of this judgement is to determine who will enter the kingdom. When the Lord returns at the end of the Tribulation, he will crush the enemies gathered against Jerusalem. All those still living on the earth will then undergo judgement. Those who are believers at that point in history will enter the Kingdom Age to populate the earth and serve in the Kingdom of Jesus Christ as his subjects. Of all generations, they will most completely fulfill the Creation Mandate. This judgement differs from the Great White Throne judgement at the end of the Kingdom Age (the Millennium) when only the wicked dead undergo judgement and are cast into the lake of fire.