

Intro: The teachings of Jesus from the **Mount of Olives** has provided us with great insight into Eschatology (*study of end times*). We've examined the Signs of the End and the Warnings Signs which prompt us to ask ourselves, Are we Ready? In this fourth and final study, Jesus reveals that **"When"** He returns, **it will be a time of Judgment!** Therefore, I've entitled this sermon: **ASSESSING ACTIONS (Matt 25:14-46)**, which applies to two different audiences. *

I. ...OF SUPPOSED SERVANTS (14-30) – As we begin, it's important to remember that in (25:1-13) Jesus taught an important lesson from the parable of the **10 Virgins**, *which emphasized PREPAREDNESS*. – Now in (v.14) Jesus continues with *[another parable]* ... which involves a **Traveling Investor and his Servants**. A **Kingdom Comparison** which stresses **PRODUCTIVITY**.

Let us first understand the...

A. Issuing of Talents (14b-15) – The **MAN** who planned to travel to a distant land and **distributed his goods to servants**, **speaks of Jesus Christ**, who **INVESTS** in His servants. – The **SERVANTS** are those who have been "GIVEN GIFTS," which are **to be invested in God's Kingdom**. – The **TALENTS** are a monetary measure of weight of precious metals such as **Gold or Silver**. – Notice also that these talents are given to each servant according to his own ABILITY – Not to be confused with the monetary talent, but rather a capability, skill, aptitude, or even proficiency (*which we will expound on in a moment*).

1. The **NUMBER** of talents was given *"to each according to his own ability"* as recognized in the distribution of **five, two, and one**.
2. **After the distribution, the man JOURNEYED** – (Eph 4:7-8) speaks of this act, *"But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ' gift. ⁸ Therefore He says: "When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts to men."*

Let us also understand the...

B. Investing of Talents (16-18) – These verses describe how each servant used the talents given to them. **Two of the servants doubled their Lord's Talents**. Using their own abilities, they **"traded"** and **"gained"** as they were instructed. – **The third servant chose to handle the one talent differently...HE BURRIED IT! (v.18)**.

- The Talents given were to be **invested** or **used for increase**. – Their **ACTIONS** would eventually be **ASSESSED**, and their account **SETTLED** by their lord. *Which takes place next...*

C. Inspecting Accounts (19-30) – As the lord returns, **a reckoning is made (19)**. As he deals with each one individually, **he assesses their words and their actions**.

1. **The Servant with 5 Talents (20-21)** – He came to his lord with an **EXCITEMENT** and reported **100% Increase...** *"Lord, you delivered... and LOOK, I gained."* His actions caused a **delightful response** from his lord...words which all servants should desire to hear: *"Well done, good and faithful servant..."*

2. **The Servant with 2 Talents (22-23)** – In like manner, he came and reported **100% Increase** to his lord saying, **“LOOK, I have gained two more besides them.”** His **Actions also resulted in a favorable response from his lord!** *In fact...*

- a. Both of these Servants were **PRAISED** for **THEIR WORK**, **“Well Done”**
- b. Both of these Servants were **COMMENDED** for **THEIR FAITHFULNESS**, **“Good and Faithful”**
- c. Both of these Servants were **PROMOTED** with a **RULERSHIP**, **“Over Many Things”**

Their **Actions Gained them Access** into a Joyful Relationship with their lord.

Now on to...

3. **The Servant with 1 Talent (24-25)** – His **ACTIONS** were quite different than the other servants. In fact, **rather than reporting about his use of the entrusted talent**, He actually came and **JUDGED** his master as **SHREWD** in his operations... **“Lord, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you have not sown, and gathering where you have not scattered seed.”**

- a. Rather than reporting an increase, he **gave an EXCUSE** for his inaction, **“I was afraid!”**
- b. Rather than investing the talent, he **BURIED IT in the ground...**
- c. He audaciously reported that **it was there for his master to retrieve it for himself!**
- d. His lord assessed his words and actions (26-28) – He calls him a **Wicked and Lazy servant!** – He then **repeated the servants charge against him...**saying, **“You KNEW!”** He therefore, **used it against him!** If he assumed his lord to be such, then all the more he **should have at least responded by depositing the talent in the Bank.**
 - The Master **took back the Talent** and gave it to the servant with 10 Talents (28).

D. Importance of the Lesson (29-30) – **Jesus makes His point and application here for the faithful and the unfaithful servants.** *(An Assessment of their Actions!)*

1. **He who has... more will be given!** – Yes, eternal life and Yes, God’s favor, but even more so, the faithful will be **recipients of God’s immeasurable blessings** for all eternity.

(Rom 8:32) says, **He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?**

2. **He who does not have...** – A direct reference to the **Wicked and Lazy Servant**, who will **ultimately lose everything he has** (cf. John 12:25), also (tt. Matt 6:19-21). *(This causes us to ask ourselves...where is my heart...where is my real treasure...what do I value most?)*

- a. **Jesus then refers to the Wicked and Lazy Servant as UNPROFITABLE!** *(To consider ourselves as unprofitable servants is one thing (Luke 17:10), but it is a fearful thing if Jesus determines it of us!)*
- b. **Jesus sentences such to be “Cast into outer darkness,”** which **position is furthest from the light!** Much like our conclusion in **(Matt 24:50)**, this speaks of **the discipline Christ exercises on unfaithful servants when He returns to give rewards.** Unfaithful Christians will experience **Weeping and Gnashing of Teeth at the Judgment Seat of Christ** **(1 Cor. 3:11–15; 2 Cor. 5:9–11).**

CLOSING THOUGHTS: While many use this parable to teach about financial stewardship, the main lesson is quite simple: **Use the chances that the Lord has given us to serve Him faithfully.** (tt. 1 Pet 4:10-11 *expound*) – Faithful Servants put their Talents to work for the Lord, but the Unfaithful bury their Talents in the earth! P/A: **Ask yourselves today, are you Profitable or Unprofitable?**

Jesus now finalizes His Olivet Discourse by Assessing their Actions...

II. ...OF ALL NATIONS (31-46) – After delivering the two Kingdom Comparisons, Jesus continues with His response to the disciples question of **“When”** and **“What”** (cf. 24:3). **These final verses describe a future judgment on the nations**, which takes place after His 2nd coming.

A. Seated on His Throne (31) – **“WHEN”** Christ returns, **He will sit on HIS GLORIOUS Throne!**

- In (Matt 16:27) Jesus foretold of this moment, **“For the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will reward each according to his works.”** – (Rev 20:4-6) further identifies this event as a throne of Judgment on earth, which differs from **the Great White Throne Judgment** of (Rev 20:11-15), which is in heaven!

B. Separating As A Shepherd (32-33) – The word **“Nations”** means **“Gentiles”** in the Greek, The **Gentile nations** which endure the Tribulation period will be **gathered and sorted by Jesus**, like a shepherd who separates between the **Sheep and the Goats**: a **Metaphor** which symbolizes those saved and those unsaved among the Gentiles. – According to (v.32), they were intermingled on earth and required a separation **by this special judgment.** – Worth noting is the fact that **Jesus’s Verdict addresses persons individually** amongst the nations!

C. Sayings to Those On His RIGHT (34-36) – Notice first that the **Son of Man** is also referred to as the **KING!** (34) – As He **sets the sheep** to His **RIGHT HAND**, He declares them as **“Blessed of My Father,”** and invites them to **“Come and Inherit the prepared kingdom.”**

- He explains **WHY** they were chosen for the **inheritance (35-36)** – During such a critical time **Their Moral Actions revealed their belief in God**, as implied in the next verse by the term **“righteous”** (37). – **Righteousness is imputed ONLY by faith in Jesus Christ!**
- Ironically, before the foundation of the world these were **Chosen by God** (Eph 1:4) – In (Rom 8:29) Paul tells us that these are **predestined to be conformed into Christ’s image.**
- Jesus said that **“these sheep,”** **offered kindness to Jesus during the difficult times...**i.e., **they saw the His need and met His need.** – Helping others in need is consistent with the commandment to **Love thy Neighbor** (Matt 22:37-40; Rom 13:8-10; Gal 5:14; Jam 2:8).

1. Curiosity of Actions (37-39) – The **righteous ones** **“wondered”** at the words and actions of their King... **When did we “see you hungry, thirsty, a stranger, naked, sick and in prison?”** They could not even recall coming to their King! (As if assessing their own actions!)

- For the record, **God is not only Omniscient, but Omnipresent also!** He sees all and knows all because **He is everywhere...always!** He even knows our motives, which drive our actions.

2. Clarifying His Actions (40) – What the King spoke next, reveals an important Kingdom Principal: ***“...Inasmuch as you did it to the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.”*** – First, the word ***“brethren”*** can be understood as ministering to the needs of ***“Jewish believers”*** during the Tribulation period, it can also be applied to ***“other disciples,”*** or even ***the needy*** in general. – Whatever the case, **Jesus credits their ministering to others, as if they did it directly to Him! (Col 3:23-24)** *And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men,*²⁴ *knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance: for you serve the Lord Christ.* (A delightful for all who practice this in truth!)

D. Sayings to Those On His LEFT (41-43) – Jesus speaks words of Judgment and Condemnation to the goats who were separated to his left. His words are not soft, but direct! ***“Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels.”*** WHY? ***Because their inaction reveals their indifference towards Jesus and His people!*** They did not give evidence of true faith by caring for others. Their inaction is actually the sin of Omission (James 4:17) *Therefore, to him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin.*

1. Curious of Inaction (44) – As Jesus stated their **list of inaction (42-43)**, they shockingly asked ***“Lord, When did we see you hungry, thirsty, a stranger, naked, sick and in prison?”*** They suggested that if they would have seen Him, they would have ministered to His need.

- ***The smallest actions is greater than the largest intention!***

2. Clarifying His Actions (45) – And in all fairness, **Jesus applied the same Kingdom Principal: *“...Inasmuch as you did it to the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.”***

E. Sentence for Eternity (46) – ***“And these will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.”*** – So much can be debated as to what eternal punishment can mean. I personally believe that this text is so clear that I will not attempt to debate other possibilities at this time. I will lean on Clarke’s comment on the matter: ***“Some are of opinion that this punishment shall have an end: this is as likely as that the glory of the righteous shall have an end: for the same word is used to express the duration of the punishment, as is used to express the duration of the state of glory.”*** (Clarke)

- It is true that when Jesus judges the nations there will be a separation of Sheep and Goats, but the fact of the matter is that **each individual has the opportunity to become Born Again!**

CLOSING THOUGHT: This address to All Nations is a stark reminder of WHO EXACTLY IS IN CONTROL. It solidifies that Judgment will finally come to the whole earth!