

**ALERT TO THE COMING KING**  
**Matthew 24-25 – The Olivet Discourse**

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50+ Class

**AN OVERVIEW OF THE OLIVET DISCOURSE – MATTHEW 24-25**

**1. Two Questions (Matthew 24:1-3)**

“When will these things happen?”

“What will be the sign of Your coming (parousia), and of the end of the age?”

Jesus answers them in reverse order

**2. The “What” question: What will be the signs of His return (His coming again) and of the end of the age? (Matthew 24:4-35)**

- 24:5 “For many will come in My name, saying, ‘I am the Christ,’ and will mislead many.”
- 24:11 “Many false prophets will arise and will mislead many.”
- 24:24 “For false Christs and false prophets will arise and will show great signs and wonders
- 24:30 “And then the **SIGN** of the Son of Man will appear in the sky

**3. The “When” question: When will these things happen? (Matthew 24:36-41)**

- Short answer? No one knows! Not even angels or the Son. Only the Father knows.
- Just like the days of Noah. Even Noah didn’t know God’s timing for the judgment. But he lived in a state of readiness.
- Jesus continues, “So will the coming of the Son of Man.”
- Some people will be carrying on as usual. Some will be ready. When Christ returns, the ready people – faithful believers – will be taken up. Unbelievers, scoffers will remain behind.

**JESUS ISSUES A COMMAND FROM THESE TWO QUESTIONS (Matthew 24:42-44)**

- 1. 24:42 “THEREFORE, be on the alert, for you do not know which day your Lord is coming.”**
- 2. He reinforces His command with a commonsense story – The house owner should get ready.**
- 3. How much more, then, should we be ready for Christ’s return?**
- 4. So Jesus reinforces this call to alertness by giving three PARABLES and an EVENT of what readiness looks like.**

**Parable #1 – Be alert to Routine Faithfulness – The Parable of the Faithful Slave (24:45-51)**

- The master is coming back – that is for sure. The servant just doesn’t know when. What will the master find? How will he assess?
- Two types of people – faithful or unfaithful?
- Two outcomes – blessings from his master or being cast out to the place of weeping and gnashing of teeth?

**Parable #2 – Be alert to Coming Joy – The Parable of the Ten Virgins (25:1-13)**

- In the Jewish customs concerning marriage, the bride does not know when the bridegroom is going to come to snatch her away under the darkness of night to the wedding feast. So she must be prepared for any moment.
- Ten attendants join her in the wait with oil lamps to guide them in darkness when the bridegroom

comes. All are giddy in anticipation of the joyous feast.

- Five foolishly fail to prepare. Five have wisely gotten their supply of oil ahead of time.
- The magical moment comes; the prudent ones rush through the night to join the celebration, but the door is shut to the foolish ones. They miss out on all the joy because they were not alert.
- Two types of people – prudent & foolish

### **Parable #3 – Be alert in Caring for the Resources God has given us – The Parable of the Talents (25:14-30)**

- Talents here represent not just money but any resource God gives us – spiritual gifts, natural skills, life experiences, even jobs.
- Three servants receive large sums from their master to use in his absence – 10, 5, and 1 talent.
- Two of them double their talents and receive the master’s “Well done” when he returns. Their reward is additional responsibility and authority in the kingdom because of their faithfulness.
- The servant who received one talent hid his away out of fear and just plain laziness. His reward was to be cast out to the place of weeping and gnashing of teeth.
- Two types of stewards – the faithful steward and the wicked, fearful, or lazy steward,

### **AND NOW TO THE EVENT – ALERTNESS TO JUSTICE AND MERCY – THE SEPARATION OF THE SHEEP AND THE GOATS (Matthew 25:31-46)**

#### **1. Six examples of Mercy in action in addressing injustices.** Jesus speaks as the Son of Man:

- To the Sheep on His right, “To the extent you did them to the least of Mine ...
- To the goats on His left, “To the extent you did NOT do it to the least of mine ...

Two types of people – sheep and goats.

#### **2. Where did all this come from? This comes in the context of calling Christ followers to be alert to and prepared for the promised return of Christ.**

- **Luke 4:16-21** “The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, Because He anointed Me to ...”
- **Isaiah 61:1-2** “The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, Because the Lord has anointed me to ...”
- **Isaiah 58:6-7** “Is this not the fast which I choose, To loosen the bonds of wickedness ...”
- **Micah 6:6-8** “to do justice, to love kindness, And to walk humbly with your God”

### **QUESTIONS**

1. What is your reaction to this last section of Matthew 25? Is this passage a surprise?
2. Is this just some minor point to be optionally considered in the broad sweep of the Gospel? Or is it central to the new life Jesus gives us?
3. Does this passage sort of smuggle in a works requirement for salvation? After all, Jesus says the sheep will “inherit the kingdom prepared for you” (verse 34) and the goats “will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life” (verse 46).
4. Does this passage stir us to mercy and to righting injustice? If so, how? How can we build “Habits of the Heart” around mercy and compassion as described here?
5. How do we be alert to these examples in a daily way – as individuals? As the church?
6. Does this passage require us to engage in a formal “justice” or “mercy” ministry? Does this passage obligate us in some political way?