

Matthew Chapter 24-25 – The Olivet Discourse – Part 18
Matthew 25:31-46 – Judgment of the Gentiles

Introduction

This is the final section of the Olivet Discourse, the discourse about the end times.

1. The Question – 24:3
2. Basic Timeline – 24:4-14
3. Warnings – 24:15-28
4. The Return of Christ – 24:29-31
5. Three Parables
 - a. Parable of the Fig Tree – 24:32-41
 - b. Parable of the Ten Virgins – 25:1-13
 - c. Parable of the Talents – 25:14-30
6. Judgment of the Nations – 25:31-46

A clarification needs to be made. We get wrapped up in the meaning of the parables, and the parabolic language used is subjective and creates speculative debate. The majority of this discourse is not a parable; it is history written in advance. This next section has one word that is considered metaphorical. But the rest of this section is a factual, future, historical narrative.

Read Matthew 25:31-46

The Judgment of the Nations

Matthew 25:31-33 – The setting of this judgment is when Jesus returns and sits on His glorious throne. This is the second coming when Jesus establishes the kingdom.

This indicates that Jesus is not on His throne now. The belief that Jesus is currently ruling and reigning a spiritual kingdom is a false assumption and this section demonstrates it.

But when the Son of Man comes in His glory – Daniel 7:9-10, 13-14, 21-27

The disciples know this passage very well; the setting is one that would have been expected by all those in Israel. With the opening statement, Jesus gives them the exact scenario that Daniel saw over 450 years before He spoke these words. Jesus is simply repeating previously known information but putting it into the context of Himself.

Angels with Him – This is one of the passages that I use to demonstrate that there will be various classes of beings in the kingdom: Jesus (glorified humanity/God in the flesh), heavenly angels, glorified saints, and humans.

His glorious throne – 2 Samuel 7:12-13; Psalm 9:7, 89:20, 26-29; Isaiah 9:6-7; Jeremiah 3:15-17

The disciples knew what His glorious throne was; this is a well-established prophecy from the Hebrew Scriptures. We reaffirm that this is the restored throne of David in Israel, in Jerusalem, and all the Gentiles that survive will be gathered to Jesus for judgment.

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And all the nations - ἔθνος ethnos - a multitude associated or living together, a tribe, nation, people group. The word “ethnos” can be described for people who are not Jews. This word is typically translated as Gentiles (Matthew 4:15, 12:21, 20:19).

The question about this passage is whether this is a national judgment or an individual one. As a whole, will Portugal have a name in the kingdom? This is sometimes taught as a national judgment rather than an individual judgment.

I disagree. Primarily, if one were to translate this as “all Gentiles,” I believe that is a better understanding considering the context of Matthew. Also, the judgment is better suited for an individual evaluation.

The goats and sheep reference is not literal; He separates them *as* a shepherd would separate sheep and goats. The point is not to relate to the saved and unsaved as sheep and goats, rather it just demonstrates that there will be two groups. The word *goat* (ἔριφος eirphos) is never used to describe unbelievers. It preaches well, but it is not substantiated in the text.

One important idea comes from this observation. This judgment only has pass or fail. There are no degrees mentioned; there are no levels of good or bad. It’s simply do you get in or do you get destroyed?

Matthew 25:34-46

The evaluation will lead to one of two places: the kingdom or the eternal fire. First, we will evaluate the reward/punishment, then we will look at the reason.

In verse 34, we see how those on His right are distinguished from those on His left.

Blessed of My Father –

εὐλογέω eulogeo – spoken well of. This is an articular participle, the ones blessed.

Of My Father is a genitive phrase. This could either mean possessive (“My Father’s blessed ones,”) or it can be objective (“Ones who are spoken well of by my Father.”) Semantically, this is the same idea. Jesus has heard a report from the Father about what these on His right have done; consequently, the Father has given a good report.

Inherit the Kingdom –

Inheritance is a word that means to come into possession of something that is allotted to someone as an heir, to obtain by inheritance. The word itself indicates that this is not a reward but is something obtained by a promise. We will come back to this.

They inherit the kingdom. As humans, those who enter into the kingdom will all have an allotment appointed to them by Jesus. This is probably the initial property allotment. What portion of the earth in the Kingdom of Jesus (not Israel) will they receive?

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In verse 41, Jesus speaks of the ones on His left.

Accursed ones –

καταράομαι *kataraomai* - Ones who are cursed, speak a judgment against. These are the ones who have been deemed judged (2 Peter 2:14). This is not used for wayward saints but is directed to the rebellious and unbelieving.

Depart to the eternal fire – If the words *eternal fire* were not enough, the place is described as being prepared for the devil and his angels. This is hell, the second death, the eternal judgment, the lake of fire (Revelation 19:20, 20:11-15).

Why? In both scenarios, the reason was due to how they treated “the least of these brothers of Mine.” It is very important not to use a passage that is not fully clear to explain meaning for passages that are perfectly clear.

We know and do not need to rehash that being right before God is by grace through faith alone throughout the Scriptures and for all time.

In this text, the inheritance of the kingdom is stated to be based on how they treated the brothers of Jesus, namely the Jews. The Tribulation will be an extraordinary time. The gospel of the kingdom will be preached to the whole world as a testimony. The gospel of the kingdom relates to the Christ and to the re-establishment of the kingdom of the Messiah. If a Gentile believes the gospel of the kingdom, does he believe in the Jewish Messiah? Does he believe the Jewish people have a special place in the plan of God? Absolutely. What do you think he’s going to think about the Jewish people at that time? The Jewish people are going to be facing the greatest period of persecution and hatred in their entire history. Most of them will be killed.

Who then will be the ones who will be looking out for the Jews who are in a foreign country? The only ones who will help the Jews during this time will be believers.

All unbelievers will align themselves with the beast and will eagerly seek to destroy the Jews.

Those on the right of Jesus who inherit the kingdom are living Gentiles who are righteous by grace through faith and have helped the Remnant, the Jewish believers during the time of Jacob’s Trouble. They will be spoken well of by the Father and will have an inheritance in the Kingdom of Jesus the Messiah.

Conclusion

What about a believer who does not look out for Jews or even gives them up so they will not suffer the same fate? Based on a full evaluation of eschatology, I believe that they do not make it to the end. They are dead prior to the return of Jesus Christ.