

Sent: Wednesday, April 15, 2020 2:25 PM
Subject: Last Nite's MOB Study (On-Line) on Matthew 25

"His master said to him, "Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your Lord!" (Matthew 25:21)

Last week, in Matthew 24, Jesus addressed His disciples' questions that seemed to come out of the blue! Questions that we assumed could only have been inspired by God Himself, the Holy Spirit! Questions concerning the "last days" (speaking of what we now know as the "Tribulation Period) and concerning the "signs of His Second Coming"--and the "end of the age"! And the \$64,000 question: "When will these things will happen?" (Now those are some good questions!)

It's clear in retrospect that the disciples had no way of understanding all that Jesus revealed to them at this time, since they didn't even understand that He would, in just a few days, be crucified and buried, and that He would rise from the dead, and then ascend up into heaven, from that very spot on the Mount of Olives where they were gathered together! This would "rock their world" and it would take a while before they would be able to look back and, after being indwelt by the Holy Spirit, be able to put it all together and become the men that Jesus called them to be! And so it's clear that what Jesus had to say to His disciples on that day, recorded in Matthew 24-25 (known as the "Olive Discourse,") were words (now recorded in the divinely-inspired Scriptures) for all "believers"--who would become known as "Christians" (including us!) who would be able to see and grasp at least part of the wonders of the redemptive plan of God (the "wonders of it all!"), including the "mysteries" of His second coming and God's "plan" for the ages to come! Whew!

Matthew 24 sets the scene, in awesome terms, about the second coming of Christ--coming "immediately after the tribulation" (according to Matthew 24:29). The "sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give us light, and the stars will fall from the sky, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken! And then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky with power and great glory! And He will send forth His angels with a great trumpet and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of the sky to the other!" Wow!

And with that we come to Matthew 25--with Jesus giving two more parables and other words, to reveal more about His "second coming," and about the "judgment of nations," and about the beginning of the promised "millennial kingdom"! All of which challenges us to "watch and wait and work"! And to be "ready" for the things to come!

He begins with the parable of the "ten virgins"! You know the story! How five of them had their lamps "trimmed" (or "in order"!) and were prepared (with oil in their "flasks") for the bridegroom to come! (Oil is a symbol in the Bible for the Holy Spirit! I Samuel 16:13 tells us how Samuel "took the horn of oil to anoint David (as king) in the midst of his brothers" and how "the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon him from that day forward...!") The five "foolish" virgins didn't have the oil they needed and were "unprepared" for the coming of the bridegroom, and thus "shut out" of the wedding feast! It's a clear picture of "believers" and "unbelievers" and the importance of being ready for the "return" of Christ, whether for the "rapture" or His "second coming"! (Christians, we believe, will be "raptured" prior to the tribulation, according to I Thessalonians 4:16-18--and aren't we glad?) Dr. Constable adds that the "shut door" represents "security and bliss" for those ready, and "banishment and untold gloom" for those not ready!

Then the parable of the "talents"--speaking of the need for "faithfulness"! (Interesting that Verses 21 and 23 report the same commendations (and rewards) for the one who was given five talents and the one given only two talents, indicating that the Lord values, and rewards, believers based on faithfulness, and not just results!)

We see the contrast with the plight of the so-called "slothful" servant, who "buried" his one talent--to "save" it! (Ha!) Fearful that he might otherwise "lose" it! And then, when called to accountability, dared to blame his "master" for being "hard"--cruel and ruthless, and untrustworthy! He obviously didn't really "know" His master and suffered the consequences--thrown into "the outer darkness, in that place (verse 30 says) where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth"! (We don't like talking about a place called "hell," but Jesus talked about it often, describing it (in verse 41) as a place "prepared for the devil and his angels"! So really not for people! And elsewhere making it clear that He is "not wishing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance"!)

Jesus closes His discourse, in verses 31-46, with the "downside" (for some!) of His second coming! The "judgment of the nations"! "When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him, He will sit on His glorious throne and all the nations will be gathered before Him! And He will separate...the sheep from the goats...the sheep on His right, and the goats on the left...and say to those on the right to come inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world!" Wow! (We get from this again, the wondrous plan of redemption of our God!) But, sadly, the words for those on the "left"! The "unbelievers"! He will say to them: "Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels!"

And so, this concludes the "Olivet Discourse," which Dr. Constable calls "one of the great prophetic utterances of Scripture and provides facts nowhere else in quite the same way (there are other passages!). In it, Christ, the master Teacher, describes the age as the climax of the troubles of earth in a great tribulation! The time of unprecedented trouble will be terminated by the second coming of Christ. The saved and unsaved will be separated, and only the saved will enter the millennial kingdom. This is the final word, which Matthew brings in answer to the leading question of this first gospel, concerning the fulfillment of the prophecies of the Old Testament of a glorious kingdom on earth. Matthew states clearly that while Christ, in His first coming, suffered and died and was rejected as both King and Savior, by His own people, He will come again and, in triumph, will bring in the prophesied kingdom literally, just as the Old Testament prophecies had anticipated! There is postponement but not annulment of the great prophecies of the kingdom on earth!" (Some of which draw differences of view from Bible-believing readers!)

Well, there are more surprises ahead--at least for the disciples! Jesus will be betrayed by one of His own, and "handed over for crucifixion"!

So, what's our response?

Men: Let's go with God and be "watching and waiting, and working and witnessing" and, most importantly, faithful to the end!

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