



Session 8: Matthew 24-25

for the week of November 21st

The Triumph of the King: Awaiting the Final Victory

The conflict of Matthew 21–23 leads to Jesus pronouncing “woes” upon the religious leaders. Now he announces a coming judgment against the temple and various trials that will characterize the age until his future return. This leads to a series of parables that Jesus gives to encourage his people to be prepared for his return. Although the following chapters will show Jesus’ death and resurrection, we already learn that he will be leaving, after those events, for an indefinite period of time.

Matthew 24–25 is fifth of the five major teaching discourses of Jesus with his disciples recorded by Matthew. In this final block of teaching, Jesus forewarns his disciples about the coming judgment against Jerusalem, teaches about the coming trials, and motivates his followers to prepare for his glorious return.

This summary and the following questions are adapted from Drew Hunter’s Knowing the Bible: Matthew

Discussion

- 1) **Read Matthew 24:1-2.** As they walk alongside the Mount of Olives, the disciples point to the beautiful temple in the distance. How does Jesus respond and how did the end of Matthew 23 prepare us for this statement (note that their temple was often referred to as a “house”)?
- 2) **Read Matthew 24:3–35.** In this passage, Jesus answers his disciples’ questions, “when will these things be?” (that is, the judgment of the temple and Jerusalem), and “what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?” (Matt. 24:3). Jesus first gives a general description of what the disciples should expect to be normal characteristics of their lifetime and beyond (Matt. 24:4–14). What are they to expect?
- 3) According to 24:4–6, why did Jesus tell his disciples about these impending trials (see also Matt. 24:22–28)? What lessons should we learn from this?
- 4) In Matthew 24:15–21 Jesus fills out what he meant when he spoke of the Jews’ “house” being left desolate, that is, their temple being destroyed (Matt. 23:38; 24:2). According to historical records, the fall of Jerusalem to the Romans in AD 70 was indeed a horrible devastation. Identify the specific ways that Jesus assumes his disciples might be deceived (Matt. 24:22–28). What does Jesus say in order to keep them from being deceived?
- 5) It is difficult to discern what Matthew 24:34 means. Some understand “this generation” as referring to the people alive at the time while “all these things” refers to the beginning but not the completion of the events described in Matthew 24:4–28. However we understand the details, how does Matthew 24:35 give us confidence in the ultimate fulfillment of such things?

- 6) **Read Matthew 24:36-51.** Jesus compares his return to the sudden judgment of the flood in Noah's day, where some people were judged and the others saved (Matt. 24:37–41). What is Jesus' central point about the nature of his return?
- 7) What does "stay awake" (Matt. 24:42) mean, and how do 1 Thessalonians 5:1–8; 1 Peter 4:7; and 2 Peter 3:10–13 fill out our understanding of how we are to live in light of Christ's second coming?
- 8) Five parables in Matthew 24:42–25:46 each uniquely fill out the theme of preparedness for Jesus' return. What is the point of the first parable (Matt. 24:42–44)?
- 9) Note the behavior and destiny of the "wicked servant" in the second parable, Matthew 24:45–51. What does this indicate about whether or not he is a true disciple (consult 1 Cor. 6:9–11 and Gal. 5:19–21)?
- 10) **Read Matthew 25:1-13.** As the parable of the ten virgins indicates, Jesus' return will be after a lengthy period of time (Matt. 25:5; see also Matt. 24:48; 25:19). Identify the main lesson for God's people regarding this period of waiting. What do we learn about the importance of heeding this lesson when we compare Jesus' response in Matthew 25:12 with his similar response in Matthew 7:21–23?
- 11) **Read Matthew 25:14-30.** In this fourth parable, note the identical praise given to the first two servants even though both earned different amounts. What does this indicate about what is most important to the master? How, then, does Jesus want us to live in light of his return?
- 12) **Read Matthew 25:31-46.** What is the fundamental difference between the sheep and the goats at the last judgment? (Matt. 25:32–33). Additionally, who are the hungry, sick, needy, or imprisoned "least of these my brothers" of Jesus? (Matt. 25:40). Consider your answer in light of other texts in Matthew where we read of the identity of Jesus' "brothers" (Matt. 12:48–50; 23:8; 28:10) and those he calls "little ones" (Matt. 10:42; 18:6, 14), as well as his statements about his missionary disciples in Matthew 10:40–42.
- 13) Given Jesus' teaching about last things in these chapters, what are some specific ways that the certainty and hope of Jesus' return and final victory should change our attitudes and actions in the here and now.

Prayer

Spend some time in prayer together, praying for each other's needs and that the Spirit will grant us a deeper understanding of the goodness and authority of Christ and empower us for living as representative of his kingdom in this world.