

THE WORDS AND WORKS OF KING JESUS

PART 15: THE KING TELLS OF THE END TIMES

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Matthew Chapters 24-25

"Jesus left the temple and was walking away when his disciples came up to him to call his attention to its buildings. ² "Do you see all these things?" he asked. "Truly I tell you, not one stone here will be left on another; every one will be thrown down." ³ As Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately. "Tell us," they said, "when will this happen, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?" (Matt. 24:1-3 NIV)

Chapters 24 and 25 are often called the "Olivet Discourse" because it took place on the Mount of Olives (24:3). It is the fifth of Jesus' five major discourses recorded in the book of Matthew, taking place on the Tuesday of Passion Week of Jesus. This discourse contains some of the most important prophetic material in all of the Bible.

The Olivet Discourse is also known as the "Little Apocalypse" because it includes the use of apocalyptic language, and Jesus' warning to his followers that they will suffer tribulation and persecution before the ultimate triumph of the Kingdom of God. The disciples then came to Jesus privately asking him: when will these things happen and what will be the sign of your coming and of the close of the age.

I. COMMENTS

A. The Disciples' Two Big Questions (24:1-3)

1. *When* will this (destruction of the temple) happen?
2. *What* will be the sign of your coming¹ and of the end of the age?

B. Nine Signs of the End of the Age (24:4-31)

1. False _____ and false _____ will come (24:5, 11, 23-26).
2. _____ will take place (24:6-7a).
3. There will be _____ in various places (24:7b).
4. Followers of Jesus will be _____ (24:9).
5. Many will _____ from the faith (24:10).
6. The love of many people will _____ (24:12-13).
7. The gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the _____ (24:14)
8. The _____ will take place (24:15-20).
9. There will be a time of _____, like never before (24:21-22).

C. Five Signs of Jesus' Return (24:26-31)

1. Jesus' return will be visible to all (24:26-27).
2. The world will be very dark just before Jesus returns (24:29).
3. People will mourn when Jesus returns (24:30).
4. His return will be announced as a returning King (24:31a).
5. Angels will gather God's elect when Jesus returns (24:31b).

¹ The coming of the Son of Man: "Parousia ('coming') is used only in this chapter in the Gospels (vv. 3, 27, 37, 39), though in the Epistles it is used several times of Jesus' return in glory. Its literal meaning is 'presence' (as in 2 Corinthians 10:10), but it was used for official visits by high-ranking persons, state visits, and also for divine visitations, hence its technical use for Jesus' ultimate 'return' (Guzik).

² Merrill C. Tenney, Zondervan Pictorial Bible Dictionary (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing, 1963) 48.

D. Five Parables Relating to Jesus' Return (24:32—25:30)

Jesus then gives five parables to teach the necessity for being ready and prepared for his return.

1. Parable #1: The fig tree. When a fig tree buds, there is an inevitable result – summer is near and fruit is coming. In the same way, when these signs are seen, the coming of Jesus in glory with His church to this world will inevitably follow. (24:32-33).
2. Parable #2: Two men/ two women in the field. The second parable teaches that the time of Jesus' return will be unexpected. Since the day and hour of this coming are unknowable, Jesus' followers must be on constant alert for His coming (24:40-42).
3. Parable #3: The master/servant. Jesus warns us of the attitude which says, "my master is delaying his coming." We must live in constant anticipation of Jesus' return, and that means being about our business for Him now. (24:45-51).
4. Parable #4: Ten bridesmaids. The point of this parable is simple – be ready. The price for failing to be ready is too high. (25:1-13).
5. Parable #5: Loaned money (KJV/talents). The fifth parable of the loaned money speaks of the need for the faithful to be productive in Kingdom living until Jesus returns. It is a matter of being about our business for the Lord. In light of this parable, we must ask ourselves: What have we done with our knowledge? Our time? Our money? Our abilities? (25:14-30)

E. The Judgment of Nations³ (25:31-46)

After the tribulation, the Lord Jesus will sit in judgment over the Gentile nations. They will be judged according to their treatment of Israel during the tribulation. This judgment is also called the judgment of the sheep and the goats because of the imagery Jesus uses in this Olivet Discourse.

Those who showed faith in God by treating Israel favorably (giving them aid and comfort during the tribulation) are the "sheep" who will enter into the Millennial Kingdom. Those who followed the Antichrist's lead and persecuted Israel are the "goats" who will be consigned to hell.

³ This particular judgment seems distinct from the great white throne judgment described in Revelation 20:11-15.

