

Where Will You Spend Eternity?

Matthew 25.31-46

In the Olivet Discourse, Jesus prophesied dramatic events at the end of the age: Great tribulation, and His return to reign (Mt.24.1-44). He told parables revealing that these events would come unexpectedly, urging us to be ready, and revealed the final event before His kingdom.

Three Parables About Being Ready for the Rapture

- The faithful vs. the evil servant (Matt. 24.45-51)
Faithfulness rewarded; unfaithfulness punished!
- The wise and foolish virgins (Matt. 25.1-13)
Be prepared for the imminent return of Christ!
- The Talents (faithful vs. lazy servant) (Matt. 25.14-30)
We will be judged on how we have used what God gave us.

A Parable About the Second Coming of Christ (Matt. 25.31-46)

- When Christ returns, ‘sheep’ and ‘goats’ separated (31-33)
- ‘Sheep’ (believers) are rewarded for good works (34-40)
- ‘Goats’ (unbelievers) works condemn them (41-45)
- Two destinations: Eternal Punishment, or Eternal Life (46)



1. In addition to vivid and breathtaking prophecies, Jesus told many parables in His famous Olivet Discourse (Mt. 24-25). Let's begin by reviewing the focus of Jesus' prophecy. In Matt. 24.1-3, what prompts the disciples' question? What event happens at "the end of the age"? In Mt. 24.4-31, Jesus prophesied a time of awful spiritual deception, persecution, lawlessness, and tribulation, culminating in His return to reign. In verses 32-44, what is Jesus impressing on His disciples about this time to come? What does He want them – and us – to do in response?
2. With prophecy of terrible tribulation that will come unexpectedly on their minds, and Jesus' warning to be ready, the four parables that follow in Matt. 24.45-25.46 are intended to drive home that warning. The first three parables – the faithful vs. the evil servant (24.45-51), the ten virgins (25.1-13), and the Talents (25.14-30), all refer to a time that will come suddenly and unexpectedly (see 24.50; 25.6,13,19). What do these parables indicate is the way for someone to be ready for the end of the age? What will be judged on that day? For other New Testament references to this judgment, see Rom. 14.10-12; 1 Cor. 3.12-15; 4.5; 2 Cor. 5.9-10. Since this judgment of the Christian's works takes place before Jesus Christ, what event must precede it (see 1 Thess. 4.13-18)?
3. The final parable – the Sheep and the Goats (25.31-46), is different from the preceding three. When does this judgment take place (31)? What group of people does the sheep represent? the goats? The acts of kindness in vv.35-40 may refer to Christians today, or believers during the Great Tribulation (or both). What do you think? Why? If no one gets into heaven by virtue of their good works (and no one does; see Rom. 4.4-5; Eph. 2.8-9; Tit. 3.5), then why did Jesus mention the good works of the sheep here? (See question 2 above!) What is the destination for unbelievers (41)? What do the works of the 'goats' demonstrate about their spiritual condition? (See Rev. 20.11-15 for a description of unbelievers' judgment.) Verse 46 is a sobering reminder of two eternal destinies. Does knowing of this reality motivate you to share Christ with others?