

*Rediscovering Jesus in the Jewish Gospels*

**The Sheep and Goats Judgment**

Lesson 48 Matthew 25

The sermon was only halfway finished and Jesus had already answered the two questions that the disciples asked in Matthew 24:3, about the timing and signs of the end of the world or age of Gentile domination of Israel and of His coming to restore the kingdom to Israel. The sign of the end of the age was given as an unprecedented period of global tribulation, punctuated in the middle of the 7 years by the Abomination of Desolation in the third Temple. (24:15; Daniel 9:24-17). The sign of His second coming to earth will be like lightning, globally visible in great glory (24:27,30, 31).

The teaching in chapter 24 was prefaced and concluded with the bookends of 1) Don't be deceived. 2) Be ready, don't be unprepared. With their questions addressed, why would He continue? Is chapter 25 just a bonus section? Once they knew the indicators of that day approaching and concluding what else is there? Many today say, Jesus will be here and that's all we need to know. They were thinking beyond "so shall we ever be with the Lord," and wanted to know about the day *after* His second coming. The Jewish disciples, were rightly focused with kingdom of Heaven literally on earth as all their Jewish prophets had foretold. See my online series "Thy Kingdom Come" about the 1000-year Millennium.<sup>i</sup>

Jesus begins the second half of the sermon with the familiar language that marked His turn of focus in Matthew 13. Immediately after the official blasphemy of the Holy Spirit, in which the Jewish elders attributed His undeniable miracles to the power of Satan, Jesus changed His message from "the kingdom of Heaven" is imminent "at hand," to "The kingdom of Heaven is like" or "likened unto." In Matthew 13e gave seven parables in a row beginning with this new phrase. The literal prophesied kingdom of Israel ruled by King Messiah Jesus was postponed until it could be given to "another nation" (21:43) of Israel in the end days who would "bringing forth the fruits" and say "blessed is He who cometh in the name of the Lord" (23:39).<sup>ii</sup> Many cults recruit with this question which pulpits have too long neglected.

Alva J. McClain in *The Greatness of the Kingdom*, groups these two parables as the last two of seven final parables. McClain points out that Jesus "drives home certain facts concerning His Messianic Kingdom. "The first three, directed primarily against the ecclesiastical rulers who had challenged His divine authority (Matthew 21:45), are the parables of the two sons (21:28-32), the wicked husbandman (21:33-41), and the king's marriage feast (22:1-14). The other four given to his disciples (24:3) were the parables of the budding fig tree, (24 :33-350, the faithful and wise servants (24:43-51), the ten virgins (25:1-13), and the talents (25:14-31). It is noteworthy that... these parables present a composite picture of the kingdom as something definitely future, associated with the glorious advent of the King with great power; and that its establishment will be sudden, catastrophic, accompanied by the ordeal of Messianic judgment on the wicked and reward for the faithful... Furthermore, this same idea, so prominent in the parables, is repeated and underscored in the Lord's direct teaching which immediately follows this series (25:32-56). Here He unfolds in detail a picture of that messianic judgment of living nations; a judgment on earth, not in Heaven, an assize convened at the beginning of the Millennial Kingdom of God, not at its close."<sup>iii</sup>

**The Last Two Kingdom Parables**

Parables are usually limited to a single point supporting the sermon message as illustrations. To deduce doctrine from them is just as inappropriate as using a parable to define the minute details of eschatology. However, detailed interpretation is necessary in the case where the details of the message are included. The parable of the talents reveals the rewards that await those who wisely use their resources. Following these two illustrations, Jesus reveals additional details that the disciples did not request of the eschatological sequence after He returns. The sermon concludes with the

Judgment of the Nations, in which Gentiles who aid the people of Israel are allowed to enter, and those Gentiles who did not aid His brethren are excluded from the kingdom.

### **Ten Virgins Awaiting the Bridegroom (25:1-13)**

Greek terms Ten Virgins – (δέκα deka - παρθένος parthenos) Bridegroom – (νυμφίος numphios)

Kenneth E. Bailey in the book *Jesus Through Middle Eastern Eyes*, gives the cultural context to a Jewish wedding.

“The scene focuses on preparations for a wedding banquet that is to take place in the home of the groom. As the crowd is gathering, the groom and several close friends are making their way to the home of the bride...From there the groom collects his bride and escorts her back to his family home, where the crowd awaits and the marriage feast will be held. She would be placed on the back of a riding animal, and the groom with his friends would take the longest possible route back to the groom's home deliberately so that most of the populace could see and cheer them as they passed. The parade, winding slowly through the streets takes longer than these ten women (virgins) anticipate. Finally, the front of the parade enters the alley and the cry goes out, ‘Behold the bridegroom. Come out to meet him.’ Guests still in the house rush into the street. The young women (virgins) arise quickly and begin to ‘service their lamps.’ To their horror, five of the women suddenly realize their mistake. Their lamps are almost out of olive oil and they had no reserves. The other five take out their little clay flasks and calmly replenish their lamps. The five foolish crowd around them demanding oil. In the meanwhile, the groom and his new bride arrive and...enter the house and the door is shut. The five arrive back at the house. ‘Sir/Lord Open to us!’ they shout through the door. ‘Sorry,’ replies the groom, ‘I don’t think I know you’.”<sup>iv</sup>

The illustration is connected to the exposition of His explanation of His return as the “Son of Man,” the Messianic title by which He often referred to Himself from (Daniel 7:13,14). “The Son of Man” is prophesied to leave the throne of the Ancient of Days and descend to earth like a crushing stone (Daniel 2) that grows into a mountain filling the earth with an everlasting kingdom. For those who have commonly misinterpreted Jesus’ last sermon in the context of the Rapture of the Church, it is important to note that the bridegroom is not arriving to take the bride away from Earth to Heaven. The rapture of the Church is often assumed here in common Christian culture, preaching, and song. The Jewish Kingdom context that we have thoroughly identified in this study mandates that this is about Jesus the Messiah King of Israel. He has previously received his bride and is here bringing her from his Father’s house to His earthly Kingdom not to Heaven from the earth. Those who interpret this as Church and Rapture confuse the two words in the phrase “Kingdom of Heaven” as meaning Kingdom IN Heaven rather than a kingdom of Heaven ON Earth. Jehovah’s Witness organization capitalize on this ignorance especially among biblically illiterate church goers.

**Eschatological Timeline** - The Messiah King of Israel has taken a Jewish/Gentile bride; the Church, from every tribe, tongue, and nation. This is important in the eschatological timeline. The marriage supper of the Lamb has already taken place (Revelation 19:6-9). His bride will join Him adorned in white (Revelation 19:11-14) when Jesus returns to earth on a white horse with the saints. His second coming is to deliver Israel from the nations at the battle of Armageddon. Jesus is returning with His bride to restore the Kingdom promised to Israel and rule on the throne of David establishing an everlasting Kingdom, as the conclusion of the sermon details (25:31-46). As in the previous parables Jesus is again urging preparedness as the main point (25:13). Tribulation believers are warned not to be like the one taken at the mill or the one in the bed that was taken unawares. It is not enough to be in the house of Israel but one must personally become one of the remnant by faith in the coming Messiah King. The argument that because the Jewish people of Israel are still nationally in unbelief, therefore they cannot be the fulfillment of that end-of-days nation to which Jesus returns, displays an ignorance of the scriptural order of eschatology, that she will be regathered in unbelief before being redeemed (Jeremiah 30:3,9; 31:1-30, 31). It should be obvious that if all Israel shall be saved (Romans 11:26) at the point of seeing the Messiah come in great glory to deliver them from annihilation (Zechariah 13:8-9), then they must already

be present in the land as a national entity. Israel's regathering in rebellion must precede her repentance and redemption to righteousness. The same order existed in His first advent. Jesus came to a rebellious and rejecting national Israel and provided redemption for those condemned under the Law. 3000, 5000, and then great multitudes of Jewish individuals believed. "But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons" (Galatians 4:4,5). As they were in unbelief when He came the first time, even so the regathered Israel today are in unbelief nationally though tens of thousands of Israelis have believed in Jesus. The parable of the ten virgins "ends with the same refrain as all these parables; lack of foresight is inexcusable. Ignorance of the time of the Second Coming does not excuse neglect. It is a reason for readiness."v

**Parable of the Talents** (25:14-30) There are similarities to another parable of the "pounds" (Luke 19:11-28).

Jesus again opens with the phrase "the Kingdom of Heaven is as." This fitting transition of this parable from the emphasis on readiness to reward is chronologically and logically followed by the closing section on the Judgment of the Nations (25:31-46). The readiness for His arrival not only ensures that they won't be foolish but exhorts that they be faithful with the responsibilities entrusted to them.

**Common Misinterpretation** It is necessary once again to address the all too common misinterpretation that injects the Rapture of the church into this text. Interpretation must be limited to the literal Kingdom of Israel context. The Church Rapture view interprets these rewards as the rewards given to believers at the Judgment seat of Christ (Romans 14:10; 2 Corinthians 5:10). The motivation is to live to warrant the Lord's approval, "His lord said unto him, Well done, *thou* good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord" (25:21). There is a key difference in the Judgment of the Nations compared to the Judgment Seat of Christ. In this judgment one servant is called "wicked and slothful" and is banished from entering the "Kingdom of Heaven" with the judgment "cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth" (25:30). There is no such punishment or rebuke at the Judgment seat of Christ, nor banishment from Heaven. Rather it is an Olympic-style award platform (Greek - βῆμα *bēma*). In the Judgment of the Nations that follows this parable, people are excluded from entering the Kingdom of Heaven on earth and banished into punishment (25:31-46).

**Interpretation** In this parable, the householder entrusts assets to middle management in his absence. Different amounts are entrusted to different servants with "several ability" five, two, and one talents respectively (25:15). Two of the servants invested and multiplied the talents entrusted and were praised and granted entrance into a joyful celebration presumably a banquet. The one servant with one talent did nothing profitable with it. He was rebuked by the Master, divested of the talent which was given to the one who had ten talents, and excluded from entrance into the joyful celebration. This parable is connected by a segue with the teaching on the Judgment of the Nations, "And before him shall be gathered all nations" referred to as being like sheep or goats who are separated by a shepherd (25:31,32).

**The Judgment of the Nations** (25:31-46)

Just as the last two parables highlighted personal individual accountability so the next Judgment has both national and individual consequences. The word translated *nations* (Greek - ἔθνος *ethnos*) is best translated *Gentiles* because the actions and consequences of the sheep and goats in this text result in individual entrance or exclusion. Nations don't visit the sick or imprisoned. Individuals rather than whole nations get cast into hell. The consequences are individual.

**According to God's main purposes of the Tribulation**

1. **Purpose For God's Glory** - "The heathen shall know that I am the Lord when I shall be sanctified in you before their eyes." (Ezekiel 36:23).

## **After the Glorious Appearing, Once He is enthroned in Jerusalem**

“then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.” (25:31) “When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory.” (24:30)

### **2. Purpose the salvation of Israel**

Between the arrival of the royal bridegroom Messiah to earth at Armageddon and the Judgment of the Nations, the nation of Israel corporately and individually will experience rescue and redemption (Matthew 23:39; Romans 1:25,26; Isaiah 10:10-23; Jeremiah 31:31-33; 32:39,40; 33:8,9; Hosea 6:1-3; Joel 3:1-3; Zechariah 12:10-13:1).

### **3. Purpose For Gentile nations - Judgment of those who are “against thy people” (Dan. 9:24-27)**

(Revelation 11:18) “And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged”

- **Gathering of all nations/Gentiles (25:32)**
- **Separation of nations into two groups Sheep and Goats (25:33)**
- **Judgment of the Nations**
- **Inclusion of the Gentile sheep into the Kingdom (25:34)**  
“Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world”
- **Exclusion of the Gentile goats from the Kingdom (25:41)**  
“Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.”

### **The Prophet Joel describes this Judgment (3:1-3)**

Right after Israel is redeemed (2:32)

For the survivors of the Battle of Armageddon (2:5-11; Isaiah 63:1-6)

In the Valley of Jehoshaphat (3:2,12) the Kidron Valley between the Temple Mount and the Mt. of Olives.

Grounds of the Judgment (25:35-45)

Goats committed acts of antisemitism and the sheep committed acts of pro-semitism (Joel 3:2,3).

“The scripture makes it quite clear that how the Gentiles treated our Lord’s Jewish brethren will be the evidence of genuine saving faith. Treatment of the Jews and Israel will become the dividing line for those who are believers and those who are not. Only true believers will be willing to violate the laws of the Anti-Christ and aid the Jews. Only believing Gentiles will be allowed into the Kingdom, and the evidence of their faith will be their pro-semitic works.”<sup>vi</sup>

Jesus warned, Don’t be deceived. Don’t be unprepared. Don’t be goats to His brethren. Those who are deceived, unprepared, and hateful to the Jews in the Tribulation will not only be excluded from the kingdom but will suffer everlasting punishment (25:46). This is the time that Daniel spoke of when the Old Testament saints will be resurrected and go into the Kingdom. The “sheep” from this Judgment and those who are in the Bride of Christ (Revelation 19:14). Only those with genuine faith would risk their lives to help the Jews in open defiance of the Anti-Christ. The Satanic attempt to annihilate Israel the woman who birthed the Messiah is seen in Revelation chapter 12,

“And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars: And she being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered. And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads. And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth: and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born. And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne.”

<sup>i</sup> <https://www.jewishawareness.org/wp-content/uploads/SBJS-Kingdom-Come-Notes.pdf>

<sup>ii</sup> [SBJS - Thy Kingdom Come - YouTube](#)

<sup>iii</sup> The Greatness of the Kingdom, Alva J. McClain, BMH Books, Winona Lake, Indiana, 1974, p. 355

<sup>iv</sup> Jesus Through Middle Eastern, Kenneth E. Bailey, InterVarsity Press, Downers Grove, Illinois, Eyes P 273

<sup>v</sup> Word Pictures of the New Testament, Volume I, A.T. Robertson, Kregal Publications, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 2004, p 208

<sup>vi</sup> Israelology, Arnold Fruchtenbaum, Ariel Ministries, Houston, Texas, 1989, p755,756

## Appendix to Lesson 48

## The Judgments Compared Matthew 25

It is important to understand which of the three judgments the scripture reference applies to in context. Confusion rules when Judgments 2 and 3 below are viewed as one general judgment for all people.

- 1. The Judgment Seat of Christ** which takes place in Heaven is for believers in the Church age from the time of Jesus until the Rapture. (1 Corinthians 3:11,12; 4:4; Rev. 4:10,11) It determines reward for service or lack thereof.
- 2. The Great White Throne Judgment** which takes place in Heaven is for all the wicked of all time. (Daniel 12:2,3; Revelation 20:4-14) It determines eternal bliss - Heaven or contempt - Hell.  
The Book of Life containing all eternal created souls is opened (Ex. 32:32; Ps 69:28; Rev. 20:12).  
The Lamb's Book of Life will be checked for verification of the absence of the wicked ones names who were never made righteous (justified) through faith Christ (Rev. 20:15; 21:27)  
Those not found in the second book, The Lamb's Book of Life, will be blotted out of the first book, The Book of Life, and cast into the lake of fire. This implies they are blotted from God's knowledge yet eternally existing in torment.
- 3. The Judgment of the Nations** which takes place on the earth is for living Gentiles present when Christ comes to rescue and redeem Israel and set up His earthly kingdom and determines their entrance into or exclusion from the Kingdom. (Matt. 25:31-46)

### Contrasting the Two

#### Judgment of the Gentiles/nations (Matt. 25:31-46)

On Earth  
After the coming of Christ  
After a regathering of living elect  
Mentions the living Gentiles among the nations  
No books consulted  
Occurs at the 2<sup>nd</sup> Coming of Christ  
Two categories - righteous and wicked  
Two possible destinations Kingdom or not  
Judge is seated on the throne of His glory in Israel  
Basis is the treatment of "my brethren"  
Three classes of men sheep, goats, brethren  
Perpetrators separated before judgment  
No utopia preceding, (hungry, thirsty naked persecuted)  
Satan is bound for 1000 years

#### Great White Throne Judgment (Revelation 20:4-14)

In Heaven  
No coming of Christ mentioned - 1000 years in the past  
All wicked dead following resurrection  
After Earth/nations have dissolved "fled away"  
Books opened  
Occurs after the 1000 year Kingdom  
One category - wicked  
One destination - eternal punishment  
Judge is seated on a Great White Throne in Heaven  
Basis is their evil deeds  
One class of men - wicked  
Perpetrators severed from God after judgment  
After the utopia of the Kingdom  
Satan is cast into the eternal lake of fire