

Jesus' Overview of the Forerunner Message (Mt. 24-25)

I. JESUS' PRIMARY TEACHING ON THE END TIMES (MT. 24-25)

- A. The best teaching on the forerunner message in the Bible was given by Jesus in “one teaching” that is recorded in four chapters—Matthew 24-25, Mark 13, Luke 21—which are to be studied together. He was preparing His people to thrive spiritually in the unprecedented pressures in the end times.
- B. In this message (Mt. 24-25), Jesus revealed Himself as ***Bridegroom*** (25:1-13), ***King*** (25:31; 24:30), and ***Judge*** (25:32-46). He is a King with power, a Bridegroom with desire for deep relationship, and a Judge with zeal to remove everything that hinders love. There is no contradiction in this. The Church is best prepared to thrive spiritually in pressure by encountering Jesus in these three ways.
- C. Jesus identified *22 signs of the times*—20 are negative (Mt. 24:4-28; Mk. 13; Lk 21). After that, He described His coming in glory (24:29-31). Then in four parables, He clarified the responses that He wants from His people and how He will respond to their varying responses (Mt. 24:32-25:30).
- D. He highlighted *12 negative trends* as the “beginning of birth pains” that will increase throughout the generation in which He returns (Mt. 24:4-8; Mk. 13:5-8, Lk. 21:8-11) and mentioned an additional *5 negative trends* that will escalate during the final 7 years of this age (Mt. 24:9-12). Then He identified another *5 signs* that will occur in the 3½ years of the Great Tribulation (Mt. 24:14-28).
⁷***“Nation will rise against nation...and there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes...”***
⁸***All these are the beginning of sorrows [birth pains; ESV, NIV].” (Mt. 24:7-8)***
- E. There will be intense resistance against God’s people (24:9) and a need for endurance (24:13).
⁹***“Then they will...kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for My name’s sake. ¹⁰And then many will be offended, will betray one another...¹³But he who endures to the end shall be saved. ¹⁴And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached...to all the nations... (Mt. 24:9-14)***
⁹***...behold, a great multitude...of all nations...standing before the throne [saved]... (Rev. 7:9)***
- F. The Great Tribulation will be the most difficult and the most important 3½ years in history.
²¹***“Then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world...²⁹After the tribulation...³⁰the Son of Man will appear in heaven...all the tribes of the earth... will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds...with power and great glory. ³¹And He will send His angels...they will gather His elect...from one end of heaven to the other.” (Mt. 24:21-31)***
- G. In the parable of the fig tree, Jesus commanded His people to recognize the signs of the times as (Mt. 24:32-36), but He warned that most will not recognize the signs of His return (Mt. 24:37-39).
- H. Jesus urged His people to *watch* so as to be spiritually ready and avoid suffering loss. He often used *watch* related to the end times (Mt. 24:42; 25:13; Mk. 13:9, 33, 34, 35, 37; Lk. 21:36; Rev. 16:15).
⁴²***“Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming. ⁴³But know this, that if the master of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and not allowed his house to be broken into. ⁴⁴Therefore you also be ready.” (Mt. 24:42-44)***

- I. Luke included more of Jesus' exhortation on the necessity to watch and pray (Lk. 21:34-36). A heart weighed down with sin and fear is *unresponsive to Jesus*. Believers can *stand in victory* as overcomers and *escape* being entrapped by bitterness that refuses to embrace Jesus' leadership. We respond to pressure much better if we see it coming and understand its purpose.
- ³⁴***“Take heed...lest your hearts be weighed down with carousing [immorality], drunkenness... and that Day come on you unexpectedly.³⁵ For it will come as a snare on all those who dwell on the...whole earth.³⁶ Watch therefore, and pray always that you may be... [strengthened] to escape all these things...to stand [victoriously] before the Son of Man.” (Lk. 21:34-36)***
- J. ***Watch and pray***: Jesus' counsel is to *watch* (inform your mind) and *pray* (engage your heart).
1. ***Watch***: This is an exhortation *to grow in understanding* by watching the biblical signs unfold progressively so as to regularly acclimate and realign with Jesus' leadership.
 2. ***Pray***: This is an exhortation *to grow in strength in our heart* by connecting with Jesus.

II. THREE PARABLES: HOW JESUS WANTS HIS PEOPLE TO RESPOND (MT. 24:45-25:30)

- A. Parable #1: The parable of the faithful and wise servant (Mt. 24:45-51) teaches us that there are two types of Christian leaders. We are challenged to be *diligent* to do God's will in the face of pressure and disappointment. Some respond in bitterness which can eventually lead to doing “evil.”
- ⁴⁵***“Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his master made ruler over his household...?⁴⁶ Blessed is that servant whom his master...will find so doing...⁴⁸ But if that evil servant says in his heart, “My master is delaying...”⁴⁹ and begins to beat his servants, and to...drink with the drunkards...⁵⁰ the master...⁵¹will cut him in two and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites.” (Mt. 24:45-51)***
- B. Parable #2: The parable of the ten virgins (Mt. 25:1-13) emphasizes the need to cultivate intimacy in relationship with Jesus as our Bridegroom God, along with being diligent to do God's will.
- ¹***“Then the kingdom...shall be likened to ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom.² Now five of them were wise, and five were foolish.³ Those who were foolish took their lamps and took no oil with them,⁴ but the wise took oil...with their lamps. (Mt. 25:1-4)***
- C. The word *then* (25:1) points back to Matthew 24—in the generation that Jesus returns, the kingdom will function like virgins meeting the Bridegroom. The foolish took their lamps (ministry) but they ***took no oil***. They pursued ministry *before* acquiring the “oil of intimacy” in their walk with Jesus. The wise ***took oil*** with their lamps—they pursued acquiring oil *before* expanding their ministry.
- ¹⁷***The Spirit and the Bride say, “Come!” (Rev. 22:17)***
- D. Parable #3: The parable of the talents (Mt. 25:14-30) focuses on seeing the value of our life assignment even when it is small and difficult, knowing that He rewards faithfulness in the age to come.
- ²²***“...[he] said, ‘Lord, you delivered to me two talents...’²³ His lord said to him, ‘Well done...you have been faithful over a few things; I will make you ruler over many things...’²⁴ “Then he who had received the one talent...²⁵ went and hid your talent in the ground.” (Mt. 25:22-24)***