

THE HARMONY OF THE OLIVET

DISCOURSE – PART 6

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The Lord Jesus gave some of the most detailed prophecies of future events just a couple days before His crucifixion. This teaching by Jesus was recorded in Matthew 24-25, Mark 13, and Luke 21. Theologians refer to these sections of scripture as the *Olivet Discourse* because Jesus spoke these prophecies while on the Mount of Olives.

There has been much confusion and debate about this discourse over the centuries. Much of the mystery has been removed with the rebirth of the nation of Israel, but views about who is being addressed and the timing of the events are still debated by sincere Christians.

After 35 years of pondering the different views and arguments, I feel it is time to contribute some thoughts in the form of this commentary. I have put the three passages from the three Apostles' writings side by side (using the New King James) so the entire context of Jesus words can be more easily compared and discerned. This handout picks up where Part 5 left off.

Matthew 24	Mark 13	Luke 21
45 "Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his master made ruler over his household, to give them food in due season? 46 "Blessed is that servant whom his master, when he comes, will find so doing. 47 "Assuredly, I say to you that he will make him ruler over all his goods. 48 "But if that evil servant says in his heart, 'My master is delaying his coming,' 49 "and begins to beat his fellow servants, and to eat and drink with the drunkards, 50 "the master of that servant will come on a day when he is not looking for him and at an hour that he is not aware of, 51 "and will cut him in two and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."	34 "It is like a man going to a far country, who left his house and gave authority to his servants, and to each his work, and commanded the doorkeeper to watch. 35 "Watch therefore, for you do not know when the master of the house is coming-- in the evening, at midnight, at the crowing of the rooster, or in the morning-- 36 "lest, coming suddenly, he find you sleeping. 37 "And what I say to you, I say to all: Watch!"	36 "Watch therefore, and pray always that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man."

Today, many Americans who have professed to be Christians in the past are turning away from the faith (which is another sign of the last days - 2 Thess. 2:3). Their professions of faith were made with ulterior (hypocritical) motives. Some profess faith in Jesus so they can enjoy the company of “good” people while enjoying life on Earth, not because they truly believe in Jesus as their savior. Many count on the Christian “rapture” to get them to heaven before any hardship and persecution comes. But as “the Lord delays His coming,” and as the persecution is worsening in the Western world, many are beginning to turn against true Christians and join in the drinking, drugs, and carousing of this wicked world, thus revealing their hypocrisy. They are like Judas, who appeared to be a sincere follower of Jesus, but was actually motivated by the financial benefits he thought he would enjoy with Jesus as the Messiah (John 12:6).

I believe this is the final sifting phase, as Jesus prepares to take the true believers into heaven with Him, before plunging the unbelieving world into the tribulation period.

Jesus said He would spew the lukewarm out of His mouth (Revelation 3:16), and it appears that this is happening now, soon to be followed by the rapture of the Church. I pray you are watching and praying, so that you “may be counted worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man (Luke 21:36).”

Only Matthew records (in Chapter 25) the final portion of Jesus’ teaching on that day. Jesus emphasized several times the need to watch and pray. The following parables were given to further emphasize the need for perseverance until the end. Jesus knew that His mercy and grace will tolerate more wickedness of man than His believing saints would want him to:

2 Pet 3:9 The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance. 10 But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up. (NKJ)

Rev 6:10 And they cried with a loud voice, saying, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, until You judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?" 11 Then a white robe was given to each of them; and it was said to them that they should rest a little while longer, until both the number of their fellow servants and their brethren, who would be killed as they were, was completed. (NKJ)

He also knew that many would become burdened under the weight of persecution and would question whether Jesus was really going to come as He promised. Matthew 25 becomes a strong encouragement to persevere till the end trusting in His promise that His Kingdom will come, His will, *will* be done, on Earth as it is in Heaven.

CHAPTER 25

1 "Then the kingdom of heaven 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 in their vessels with their lamps.

Apparently these virgins went out during the day. All took lamps, even though they were not needed at first. The wise ones took their lamps AND the oil to light them just in case the announcement came after sunset. The foolish ones brought the lamps but not the oil. Why would anyone bring a lamp without the oil? Today, it would be like carrying a flashlight without any batteries. It seems obvious from the rest of the parable that the reason they carried the lamp was so they could LOOK like they were fully prepared and excited about the Bridegroom coming; but in fact were only willing to do so if they were not inconvenienced by any delay in His coming.

It should also be noted that oil is symbolic of the Holy Spirit. Those who took no oil did not have the Holy Spirit. In John 7, Jesus said,

He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water. But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.

If one does not believe in Jesus as the scriptures say, then they will not have the Holy Spirit. Today, many believe in a Jesus that is not the Biblical Jesus. They call themselves Christians and attend church, but they don't know Him. More importantly, Jesus goes on to say that He doesn't know them, and in Matthew 7:21-23 Jesus says that He *never* knew them.

- 5 "But while the bridegroom was delayed, they all slumbered and slept.
6 "And at midnight a cry was heard: 'Behold, the bridegroom is coming; go out to meet him!'
7 "Then all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps.
8 "And the foolish said to the wise, 'Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.'
9 "But the wise answered, saying, 'No, lest there should not be enough for us and you; but go rather to those who sell, and buy for yourselves.'

Notice that the foolish virgins maintained their deceiving appearance well into the night. It was not until they awoke and needed the light in order to safely navigate to the wedding location that it was discovered the foolish virgins were conning their wise virgin friends.

Implied in this parable is the fact that it is not possible for us to give the Holy Spirit to others. It must be obtained from the source, in this case God Himself. Each person must have faith in Jesus as their Savior, sacrificing their own futures in exchange for being a humble bondsman of Jesus.

- 10 "And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding; and the door was shut.

Jesus is teaching that those who truly have the oil (Holy Spirit) to endure till the end will be allowed into the wedding feast (of the Lamb).

- 11 "Afterward the other virgins came also, saying, 'Lord, Lord, open to us!'
12 "But he answered and said, 'Assuredly, I say to you, I do not know you.'
13 "Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man is coming.

Those who do not have true saving faith in Jesus, but have instead pretended to be like the ones who were anxiously awaiting the Bride Groom, will be locked out of the wedding feast because God does not KNOW them. Jesus' encouragement to watch must mean that the unbeliever must be fully aware of their fallen condition and receive (by faith) the gift of true salvation (and the Holy Spirit) in order to be prepared for the day of Jesus' return for His church. There will be many church going people who have professed themselves as Christians who will be wondering why they were left behind when the rapture comes.

- 14 "For the kingdom of heaven is like a man traveling to a far country, who called his own servants and delivered his goods to them.
15 "And to one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one, to each according to his own ability; and immediately he went on a journey.
16 "Then he who had received the five talents went and traded with them, and made another five talents.
17 "And likewise he who had received two gained two more also.
18 "But he who had received one went and dug in the ground, and hid his lord's money.
19 "After a long time the lord of those servants came and settled accounts with them.

20 "So he who had received five talents came and brought five other talents, saying, 'Lord, you delivered to me five talents; look, I have gained five more talents besides them.'

This is an obvious sign that this servant invested the money in the name of his Master and did so to increase the assets of the Master.

21 "His lord said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.'

Jesus is teaching that in the eternal kingdom, his servants will rule over "things." Those who have allowed their gifts (given to them by God) to further the Kingdom of God in this life will be given "many things" to rule over in heaven. The degree to which they rule in heaven is based on their faithfulness during their time on earth. Revelation 22:5 teaches that this reward is eternal.

Rev 22:1 And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb. 2 In the middle of its street, and on either side of the river, was the tree of life, which bore twelve fruits, each tree yielding its fruit every month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. 3 And there shall be no more curse, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His servants shall serve Him. 4 They shall see His face, and His name shall be on their foreheads. 5 There shall be no night there: They need no lamp nor light of the sun, for the Lord God gives them light. **And they shall reign forever and ever.** (NKJ)

22 "He also who had received two talents came and said, 'Lord, you delivered to me two talents; look, I have gained two more talents besides them.'

23 "His lord said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.'

The one who was given less gifting still rules over "many things" because He/She used what was given them to glorify God.

24 "Then he who had received the one talent came and said, 'Lord, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you have not sown, and gathering where you have not scattered seed.

25 'And I was afraid, and went and hid your talent in the ground. Look, there you have what is yours.'

26 "But his lord answered and said to him, 'You wicked and lazy servant, you knew that I reap where I have not sown, and gather where I have not scattered seed.

27 'So you ought to have deposited my money with the bankers, and at my coming I would have received back my own with interest.

28 'Therefore take the talent from him, and give it to him who has ten talents.

29 'For to everyone who has, more will be given, and he will have abundance; but from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away.

30 'And cast the unprofitable servant into the outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'

The unprofitable servant did not have a relationship with the master. He considered the master to be a hard man. Today, many consider the biblical God to be narrow-minded. They disagree with God's salvation plan, thinking it shouldn't matter what someone believes about God as long as they believe in God; that everyone who is "good" should be able to go through the pearly gates into heaven. In doing so they fashion their own god, a god of their liking, thus putting another god before the true God, which is idolatry. As such, they are violating the first two of the Ten Commandments and fall into the same trap as Eve did in the Garden. This is why the unprofitable servant will find himself in the lake of fire for eternity.