The Judgments at His Coming

- Matthew 24:43-25:46
- Pastor Jeremy Thomas
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We are studying the Olivet Discourse, what I like to call The Discourse on Kingdom Coming because it sketches the conditions in the world that immediately precede His coming in His kingdom. I have divided it into three sections. Matthew 23:37-24:31, The Sign of His Coming; Matthew 24:32-42, The Exhortation to Be Prepared for His Coming; and Matthew 24:43-25:46, The Judgments at His Coming. We have covered the first two sections and will cover the third section today. You can see how these periods relate by this chart, which adds one thing from the chart last week, and that is the period of 75 days during which there will be judgments preceding the kingdom. The first section in the discourse, The Sign of His Coming, deals exclusively with events of the Tribulation, a period of seven years which immediately precedes His coming in His kingdom. During this time, there will be many false Messiahs, there will be wars and rumors of wars, nations warring against nations, coalitions of nations warring against coalitions of nations, famine and earthquakes, the abomination of desolation, marking the mid-point when the Jews should flee Judea to the wilderness in order to avoid being captured and executed. The world will be experiencing vast geophysical catastrophes so great that if the time were not suddenly terminated by the second coming of Christ no flesh would survive. Immediately after the tribulation of those days there will be a cosmic blackout giving the backdrop for the sign of His coming. Then the Son of Man will appear as all the tribes of the land of Israel mourn and he will destroy the armies of the world who have gathered against Israel. He will then send forth His angels to gather the Jewish people for judgment. There is a judgment of living Jews at this time that was predicted by Daniel 12:11-12. Dan 12:11 says, "From the time that the regular sacrifice is abolished and the abomination of desolation is set up, there will be 1,290 days. How blessed is he who keeps waiting and attains to the 1,335 days!" The point is that from the setting up of the abomination of desolation at the mid-point if you count 1,260 days you come to the end of the Tribulation, if you count to the 1,290 days the abomination of desolation is taken down and if you are still around to the 1,335 days then you are blessed because you are going to enter into the most blessed period of history, the kingdom. So, Daniel 12:11-12 predicted a 75-day period of transition from the end of the Tribulation to the formal beginning of the Kingdom and during that period there are judgments for entrance and reward in the kingdom. It's the judgments during that 75-day period that we will be looking at today in Matt 24:45-25:46.

Before we look at those judgments we have the practical exhortation for this living in the time of the Tribulation. It is common to give exhortation after doctrine. So, our Second Section is Matt 24:32-42, The Exhortation to be Prepared for His Coming. The exhortation is primarily addressed to the Jewish people. As soon as they realize that these things predicted by Jesus are taking place around them they need to get prepared. The way to be prepared is to believe in the Messiahship of Jesus. The reason to be prepared is because the exact moment of His coming will be unknown. The exhortation to be prepared begins with the parable of the fig tree in 24:32, "Learn the parable of the fig tree..." They knew that when the fig tree put forth new shoots that summer was near. This was the life cycle of the fig tree. In verse 33 the parallel is drawn, "so you too, when you see all these things," that is, the things of the Tribulation, "recognize that He is near, right at the door." They should recognize that these things are harbingers of His any-moment-arrival. In verse 34, the "generation" that sees these things "will not pass away until" they have all taken place." Therefore, the Tribulation events are compacted into a very short time frame. From Daniel, we know they are compacted into exactly seven years of 360 days. In verse 35, "Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will not pass away." In other words, heaven and earth are temporary but His words regarding these things is not temporary. They will most certainly come to pass. As certain as His words are, in verse 36 we are told there is one thing that is not certain; the exact moment of His coming. "But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angel of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone." No one will be able to know with specificity the moment of His coming, Therefore, the exhortation to be prepared is all the more important. Verses 37-41 give an explanation and comparison of the coming of the Son of Man to the days of Noah. "For the coming of the Son of Man will be just like the days of Noah." The way they are the same is explained in verses 38-39. "For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage until the day that Noah entered the ark, and they did not understand until the flood came and took them all away; so will the coming of the Son of Man be." The main idea is that they were living in an extraordinary time, when Noah and his family were building an ark on dry land and preaching righteousness in light of an impending global flood, and yet the people did not understand. They did not understand the significance of the times in which they lived and so they did not get ready, and consequently they were swept away by the Flood. It will be the same way with the coming of the Son of Man. They will be living in the Tribulation which will be an extraordinary time of false Messiahs, false prophets, wars, earthquakes, famines, signs and wonders, etc...and they will not understand the significance of these things as harbingers of his soon Coming and so they will not get ready. In verses 40-41 we have a picture of the results when He comes. There will be judgments between those who are prepared with salvation and those who are not prepared. "Then there will be two men in the field; one will be taken and one will be left. Two women will be grinding at the mill; one will be taken and one will be left." The one taken is taken in judgment. The one left is left to enter the kingdom and repopulate the millennial earth. These are the judgments we will look at later on today. The important thing at this point is to note that when He returns there will be a judgment and so it is very important to be prepared before He returns. Verse 42 is the application for those living in that time. "Therefore be on the alert, for you do not know which day your Lord is coming." The word "alert" means watchful. They need to be watchful of the

events so they recognize that He is near, right at the door, just as the parable of the fig tree taught that when you see the fresh sprouts you know summer is near.

We come to verse 43 today and I probably should have connected these with the prior lesson but I didn't so we have to deal with them today. But I think they still fit in the exhortation section. In verse 43 we have a comparison between a householder and a thief coming to break into the home with the world and the Son of Man breaking into it. But be sure of this, that if the head of the house had known at what time of the night the thief was coming, he would have been on the alert and would not have allowed his house to be broken into. The point seems to be that if a homeowner knew the exact time during the night that a thief was coming then obviously, he would be ready at that time and not allow his house to be broken into. But the problem is that thieves don't notify householders what time they are going to break in. Therefore, for the householder to stop a thief from breaking in he must be continually alert. The application to the Second Coming is verse 44, For this reason you also must be ready; for the Son of Man is coming at an hour when you do not think He will. The word be ready is different from the word "be alert." They had previously been told to "be on the alert," which means be watchful. They need to be watchful of the events occurring around them. But here they must also be ready. This is the word that means be prepared and that is the major exhortation of the whole section. They must be prepared for His coming. And the only way to be prepared is to have believed in the Messiah. It was faith that separated those who got on the ark and were saved from those who were swept away in judgment and it will be faith that separates those who enter the kingdom and are saved from those who are swept away in judgment.

We now come in 24:45, the third section of our exposition, The Judgments at His Coming. When the Messiah returns, He returns in judgment. Although the judgments during this time may be thought of in three categories. First, the entire Tribulation time should be viewed as a time of judgment. The Tribulation is God's way of cleansing the earth in preparation for His kingdom to come. Second, the day of His Second Coming immediately after the Tribulation is a day of judgment as described in Matt 24:28. When Messiah returns He is rescuing Israel from certain annihilation by the anti-Christ and his armies. Therefore, that day is a day of great judgment. However, third, there will be people of all nations that do not go up against Israel in the war and these must be judged. Finally, there are Jews who are believers and Jews who are unbelievers and they will need to be judged as well. That's what the 75-day interval Daniel spoke of was referring to; the judgments on the Jews that precede the kingdom. And blessed is the one who survives this judgment.

Now these judgments occur on planet earth and are for Jews and Gentiles still in mortal bodies and so they are not the judgment seat of Christ, which occurs in heaven and is for the Church who will have been resurrected and in immortal bodies. So, these judgments are distinct from the judgments of the Church. This will be a judgment upon living Jews and Gentiles to determine entrance into the kingdom, which is based on faith alone, and those who do have faith will also be rewarded. All those who do not have faith will be cast out. Now in 24:31

Jesus sent forth His angels to gather the elect from the four corners of the earth. This is Israel being gathered for their judgment according to Isa 27:12-13 which says that this gathering will occur in connection with a great trumpet. It is a gathering of living Jews in mortal bodies for judgment on earth, and therefore has nothing to do with the gathering of the Church later in immortal bodies for judgment in heaven. Two distinct judgments and not seeing that has caused many people a lot of confusion. So, verse 31 says Jesus will send forth His angels to gather the Jewish people. They are being gathered to go to judgment. Daniel 12:12 said this judgment occurred during the 75-days and is for kingdom entrance.

There are three judgments described in this section. The first is a judgment of the Jewish Leadership in Matt 24:45-51, the second of the Jewish People in Matt 25:1-30, and the third of the Gentiles in Matt 25:31-46. The first we will look at is 24:45-51, The Judgment of the Jewish Leadership. They are being judged for kingdom entrance and reward. In verse 45, Who then is the faithful and sensible slave whom his master put in charge of his household to give them their food at the proper time? Blessed is that slave whom his master finds so doing when he comes. Truly I say to you that he will put him in charge of all his possessions. But if that evil slave says in his heart, 'My master is not coming for a long time,' and begins to beat his fellow slaves and eat and drink with drunkards; the master of that slave will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour which he does not know, and will cut him in pieces and assign him a place with the hypocrites; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Basically, what you have here is a master leaving on a journey. Before he leaves he appoints some of his slaves to be in charge of the others. Those put in charge of the others had the responsibility of feeding the other slaves at the proper time. When He returned one slave was feeding the others and the other was beating them. Consequently, one entered into a higher position of responsibility and the other one was cast out.

By parallel what does this mean? The master of the house is Jesus. He was going away because the nation Israel rejected Him. The slaves He appointed over others are the Jewish leadership. He's looking at the Jewish leadership during the Tribulation time. They have a duty to discharge during the Tribulation. That duty is to recognize the events happening around them as extraordinary events indicating the Messiah's soon return and to lead the Jewish people to faith in Him. Who then is the faithful and sensible slave? He is the leader of Israel who recognizes the events of the Tribulation as heralding the Second Coming of Messiah and leads the people of Israel in getting spiritually prepared by faith in Him. What does this leader receive when Jesus returns? Great reward. Blessed is that slave whom his master finds so doing when he comes. Truly I say to you that he will put him in charge of all his possessions. This leader will have great possessions in the kingdom. Who then is the evil slave? The leader of Israel who does not recognize the events of the Tribulation as signaling the nearness of the Messiah's return. Consequently, he begins to beat his fellow Israelites, and eat and drink with drunkards, that is, fraternizing with the enemy, with the anti-Christ and the false prophet, and because of that association he is mistreating the people of Israel. What does he receive when Jesus returns? He will be cut in pieces and assigned a place with the hypocrites, in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of

teeth. Twice He says this is a **place.** They're going to be put in a place with the hypocrites, which in Matthew are the Pharisees. So, they are clearly not believers and so they will not be permitted to enter the kingdom but will be cut in pieces and assigned a place with the Pharisees. This place is Sheol and after the 1,000 year kingdom they will be cast in the lake of fire. Judged. So, the first judgment is of the Jewish Leadership and they will either be believers and enter into the kingdom to be rewarded or they will be unbelievers and cast out of the kingdom.

The second judgment is on the Jewish People. There are two parables teaching this judgment. Matthew 25:1-13, the Parable of the Ten Virgins, and Matthew 25:14-30, The Parable of the Talents. They are both about judgment for kingdom entrance and reward but the first emphasizes kingdom entrance and the second kingdom reward. Let's look at the first one, The Parable of the Ten Virgins. Then the kingdom of heaven will be comparable to ten virgins, who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. ²"Five of them were foolish, and five were prudent. 3"For when the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them, 4but the prudent took oil in flasks along with their lamps. ⁵"Now while the bridegroom was delaying, they all got drowsy and began to sleep. 6"But at midnight there was a shout, 'Behold, the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.' ⁷"Then all those virgins rose and trimmed their lamps. ⁸"The foolish said to the prudent, 'Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out." 9"But the prudent answered, 'No, there will not be enough for us and you too; go instead to the dealers and buy some for yourselves.' 10" And while they were going away to make the purchase, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding feast; and the door was shut. 11"Later the other virgins also came, saying, 'Lord, lord, open up for us.' ¹²"But he answered, 'Truly I say to you, I do not know you.' ¹³"Be on the alert then, for you do not know the day nor the hour. Obviously, verse 13 is the main teaching and it stretches back to the idea of 24:36, that no one knows the day or the hour of the Second Coming, and so one needs to be prepared so that when He does arrive they are granted entrance into the kingdom. Verse 1 begins with the words, **Then the kingdom of** heaven will be comparable to ten virgins. There is some comparison here and the comparison relates to entrance into a wedding banquet and entrance into the kingdom. This is a fitting comparison because the kingdom is a wedding banquet, a period of great joy and celebration. Some were permitted to enter into this banquet and some were not and the reason is because some were prepared and some were not. The point is that when the King comes some Jews will be prepared and others will not.

The comparison is taken from 1st century Jewish wedding customs. In these customs, the marriage ceremony would take place at the bride's home. After the ceremony, they would take a nighttime procession through the city streets from her house to his. The wedding party would go ahead of them and gather outside of his home waiting for their arrival. When the bride and groom arrived, they would all go into the wedding banquet in his home. The banquet could often go on for seven days of joy and celebration. We see in verse 1 **ten virgins** waiting at the groom's house for the bride and groom to arrive so they can go into the banquet. It says all ten **took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom.** But the problem is verse 5 tells us that **the bridegroom was delaying.** So, they are having to wait a long time for the bride and groom to make their way

through the city streets. In verse 2 we see the difference in the ten virgins. five are foolish and five are prudent. Verse 3 tells us the foolish are foolish because they took their lamps, but they took no oil with them. That is, they took no extra oil, because the **prudent**, in verse 4 took oil in flasks along with their lamps. They took an extra flask just in case there was a delay. So, the point of difference is not that some had oil and some did not, but some had extra oil and the others did not. Now in verse 5, while the bridegroom was delaying, they all got drowsy and began to sleep. That's not a difference, all ten went to sleep. There's nothing wrong with going to sleep. People get tired, they all got tired. The problem is verse 6, But at midnight there was a shout, 'Behold, the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.' Then all those virgins rose and trimmed their lamps. So here they all are, yawning and trimming their wicks so that they would burn properly to meet the new couple. But verse 8, The foolish said to the prudent, 'Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.' The **foolish** were running low on oil, they didn't bring an extra flask of oil. The prudent had brought an extra flask. So, one group was prepared and the other group was not. And now it's too late to get prepared because the bridegroom is already arriving. So, in verse 9, the prudent answered, 'No, there will not be enough for us and you too; go instead to the dealers and buy some for yourselves.' And while they were going away to make the purchase, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding feast; and the door was shut. Now you see the main point. Five were ready when the bridegroom came and five were not. The five who were ready went into the wedding banquet and then the door was shut. In 25:11, Later the other virgins also came, presumably with more oil and they get to the shut door and they are saying, 'Lord, lord, open up for us.' But he answered, 'Truly I say to you, I do not know you.' The simple point is they could not get entrance to the **wedding feast** because they were not prepared when the bridegroom arrived. In verse 13 the whole thing is applied to the coming of the Son of Man. Therefore, be on the alert then, for you do not know the day nor the hour. In other words, the Jewish people will not know the exact time of His coming in His kingdom and so they need to be prepared before He comes. That way when He arrives in His kingdom they are granted kingdom entrance. This parable of the ten virgins emphasizes being prepared before He arrives in order to be granted kingdom entrance.

The Parable of the Talents, which follows in Matt 25:14-30, is another description of the judgment of Jewish people when Christ returns, it also speaks of entrance into the kingdom but it emphasizes rewards. For it is just like a man about to go on a journey, who called his own slaves and entrusted his possessions to them.

15"To one he gave five talents, to another, two, and to another, one, each according to his own ability; and he went on his journey. 16"Immediately the one who had received the five talents went and traded with them, and gained five more talents. 17"In the same manner the one who had received the two talents gained two more. 18"But he who received the one talent went away, and dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money. 19"Now after a long time the master of those slaves came and settled accounts with them. 20"The one who had received the five talents came up and brought five more talents, saying, 'Master, you entrusted five talents to me. See, I have gained five more talents.' 21"His master said to him,

'Well done, good and faithful slave. You were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.' 22" Also the one who had received the two talents came up and said, 'Master, you entrusted two talents to me. See, I have gained two more talents.' 23"His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful slave. You were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.' 244 And the one also who had received the one talent came up and said, 'Master, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you did not sow and gathering where you scattered no seed. 25' And I was afraid, and went away and hid your talent in the ground. See, you have what is yours.' ²⁶"But his master answered and said to him, 'You wicked, lazy slave, you knew that I reap where I did not sow and gather where I scattered no seed. 27'Then you ought to have put my money in the bank, and on my arrival I would have received my money back with interest. 28'Therefore take away the talent from him, and give it to the one who has the ten talents." ²⁹"For to everyone who has, *more* shall be given, and he will have an abundance; but from the one who does not have, even what he does have shall be taken away. 30"Throw out the worthless slave into the outer darkness; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. This parable speaks of entrance into the kingdom but emphasizes rewards for those who enter versus those who do not enter at all. We don't have time to go into all the details. The main idea draws on 1st century travelling customs. If a man was going on a journey it was normal for him to entrust his possessions to his slaves according to their ability because he would be gone for a long time. This man was doing just that. He entrusted his possessions to three different men, each according to his ability. Then he left. Immediately, the first two immediately invested their talents and doubled them. When the master returned they eagerly presented their profits to Him; whereas the other one shrunk back from the master. The main idea is that some used what they were entrusted with for the master's advantage and others did not. Those who did were rewarded and the one who did not lost everything. So, we have two who enter the kingdom and even though one received more to invest, they both doubled their portion and so received the same reward for faithfulness. These are Jews who during the Tribulation time are prepared with salvation and service and hence they both enter and are rewarded. Then there is the one who hid his portion, he was afraid of the master, he did not have a relationship with the master, he was an unbeliever, he would lose everything that was entrusted to him and he would be thrown into outer darkness, a place where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth. The contrast is clear, entrance into the kingdom for those who believe in the Tribulation time as well as rewards for service, regardless of ability, and no kingdom entrance for those who did not believe and they will lose everything. Therefore, the Jewish people in that time need to be prepared with salvation in order to enjoy kingdom entrance and with service in order to enjoy kingdom rewards; whereas those who are not prepared with salvation will be cast out.

The last of the four sections is Matt 25:31-46. It describes The Judgment on Gentiles, or the nations. So, we know that there will be Gentiles who survive the Tribulation time, Gentiles who did not go up against Israel in the war of Armageddon, and therefore, they will have to be judged for kingdom entrance. This is The Parable of the

Sheep, Goats, and Brethren. Often the Brethren are forgotten, but they are a critical group to identify in this Parable. "But when the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him, then He will sit on His glorious throne. 32" All the nations will be gathered before Him; and He will separate them from one another, as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats; ³³ and He will put the sheep on His right, and the goats on the left. 34"Then the King will say to those on His right, 'Come, you who are blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. 35'For I was hungry, and you gave Me something to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me something to drink; I was a stranger, and you invited Me in; ³⁶naked, and you clothed Me; I was sick, and you visited Me; I was in prison, and you came to Me.' 37"Then the righteous will answer Him, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry, and feed You, or thirsty, and give You something to drink? 38' And when did we see You a stranger, and invite You in, or naked, and clothe You? 394When did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You? 404The King will answer and say to them, 'Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of Mine, even the least of them, you did it to Me.' 41"Then He will also say to those on His left, 'Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels; 42 for I was hungry, and you gave Me nothing to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me nothing to drink; ⁴³I was a stranger, and you did not invite Me in; naked, and you did not clothe Me; sick, and in prison, and you did not visit Me.' 44"Then they themselves also will answer, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry, or thirsty, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not take care of You?' 45#Then He will answer them, 'Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me.' 46"These will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life." Verse 31 is descriptive of the Second Coming of Christ in His kingdom. When you see the **angels with Him** you know it's the Second Coming and not the Rapture. I'll keep showing you these differences as we work through this series. You see Him coming in His glory, which is in His resurrection body to reign over the earth. So before that He judges the nations. These are Gentile nations exclusively because the Jewish nation has already been judged. And every Gentile will be separated. One group are the sheep, placed on His right. The other group are the goats, placed on His left. The right is the privileged position. In verse 34 He will say to them, 'Come, you who are blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." So they are clearly believers because to enter the kingdom you must be born again. But look what He says about why in verse 35ff. 'For I was hungry, and you gave Me something to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me something to drink; I was a stranger, and you invited Me in; ³⁶naked, and you clothed Me; I was sick, and you visited Me; I was in prison, and you came to Me.' 37"Then the righteous will answer Him, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry, and feed You, or thirsty, and give You something to drink? 38' And when did we see You a stranger, and invite You in, or naked, and clothe You? 39'When did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?' ⁴⁰"The King will answer and say to them, 'Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of Mine, even the least of them, you did it to Me.' Who are the brethren? They're the Jews who have already been judged and given kingdom entrance and reward. Jesus was a Jew and if you blessed the Jewish

believers during the Tribulation time you blessed Him. Now why does it say that they inherit the kingdom, which is the same thing as enter into eternal life in verse 46, which is to enter the kingdom, but why does it say that they do so on the basis of their treatment of Jewish believers? Very simple. Because doing these things for Jewish believers during the Tribulation time is taking a stand against the anti-Christ. And seeing that the whole world must take a stand during that time for either Christ or anti-Christ, taking a stand for Christ is a sure sign of a believer. The Jewish people will be under such persecution and distress by all the Gentiles of the world, that for any Gentile to risk their life to help them is a clear sign that they have sided with Christ. They know the plan of God and that the kingdom of God is breaking into history and that the kingdoms of this world are going to destruction and they put everything on the line and do whatever they can to help the most hated people in the world, Jewish believers in the Messiah, Jesus. They are the sheep. Those Gentiles who do not help the Jews and thereby do not help Christ, are the goats, they will go into everlasting punishment. There is a clear dichotomy in 25:46. "These will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life." The sheep are righteous by faith and that is why they help the Jews and that is why they go into eternal life, which is the kingdom. Daniel was the first to use the expression "eternal life" and he used it in 12:3 of the kingdom, and Jesus uses it the same way. The sheep go into the **eternal kingdom**; the goats go into **eternal punishment**. This is no problem. This all fits in Daniel's 75-day interval. The living Jews and Gentiles have been judged for entrance into the kingdom. The believers will go in in mortal bodies rewarded and with great joy. They receive everything. The unbelievers will be cast out. They lose everything. It is a win all-lose all situation. It is critical that people living in that time recognize the events around them and understand that they are signaling the soon coming of Christ and that they thereby get prepared with salvation by faith and begin to serve others humbly, for the Son of Man is right at the door and when He comes it will be too late to change one's mind. But these are all basically OT truths.

Next time I want to teach you some new prophetic truths, what are described in the NT as mysteries. And we need to know that a mystery is something previously unrevealed that is now being revealed for the first time. So, these are new pieces of the puzzle that will be introduced. Understanding the mystery truths is a vital piece of the prophetic puzzle.