

Jesus' Olivet Discourse

There are certain passages of Scripture that are vastly important, messages of Christ that the believer needs to understand. Scriptural passages such as, the Sermon-on-the-Mount, or Jesus' upper room message – called “*The Holy of Holies*” of Scriptures – found in John 13 through 17, and Matthew 13, where Jesus gives His illustrious parables of “*The kingdom of Heaven*.”

In the 24th and 25th chapters of Matthew Jesus gives His “***Olivet Discourse***,” answering urgent questions asked by His disciples concerning His return to earth and the end of this age.

Matthew 24:1 tells us, “*And Jesus went out, and departed from the Temple: and His disciples came to Him for to shew Him the buildings of the Temple.*”

Notice the setting, Jesus was leaving the Temple and was walking away when His disciples came up to Him to call His attention to the beautiful Temple buildings. **Why?** Why would they draw His attention to the Temple? They had been in and out of it many, many times! The reason was because of what Jesus had just said. Let's take note of what Jesus says in Matthew **23:37-39**,

“O, Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing. Look, your house is left to you desolate. For I tell you, you will not see me again until you, say, ‘Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.’”

Jesus' disciples were saying, in essence, “***There is nothing that indicates desolation here***.” See the beauty of the Temple, its strength and sturdiness. The appearance of the Temple seemed to contradict what Jesus had just said.

Verse two, “*And Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things? verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.*”

Jesus gives a definite, positive prophecy that was fulfilled a generation later in A.D. 70.

Jesus and His disciples walk silently out of the city of Jerusalem and pass on to the Mount Olive.

Verse 3, “*And as He sat upon the Mount of Olives, the disciples came unto Him privately, saying, ‘Tell us, when shall these things be? **and** what shall be the sign of Thy coming, and of the end of the world?’”*

The disciples ask:

1. “*Tell us when these things will be?*”
2. “*What shall be the sign of Your coming?*”

3. “What will be the signs of the end of the age?”

First, the disciples were asking about the destruction of the Temple, however, they then asked about the “*presence*” of Jesus, Himself.

We must not take this text out of its setting, or interpret these questions just to make them fit our belief about prophecy. It is true that Jesus' answer leads to a much larger area of prophecy than their questions, however it is important to remember that Jesus' answer *began* with these questions. It was these three questions of Jesus' disciple that prompted and initiated Jesus' response in this Olivet Discourse.

You will note that Jesus spoke of wars, plagues, famines, natural disasters, religious apostasy and intense persecution of the people of God, - these are miserable conditions that will exist on the Earth just prior to the return of Jesus Christ according to the Bible.

This is not a pleasant scenario, but it is the truth. I didn't make this up! These are the words of Jesus Himself. He said in verse 8 that these things would be the “*beginning of sorrows,*” or literally the “*birth pangs,*” the world would experience in the Last Days.

As we study , keep in mind that, Matthew 24 begins with Jesus talking to *His disciples*. He had just told the *multitude of people* in Matthew 23 of the woes and judgments that were to come upon Jerusalem and He had berated the Jewish religious leaders for their self-righteous hypocrisy. In fact, He called them “*hypocrites*” seven times in that passage. He also said they were blind fools, children of hell, and snakes who could not escape damnation – these were pretty strong words.

Jesus prophesied that the Temple itself, the center of Jewish religious life, would be destroyed so completely that not one stone would be left on top of another (Matthew 24:2).

Jesus' disciples were amazed at His radical predictions, and they wanted to know three things: ***when*** would all these destruction occur, and ***what*** would be the sign of the end of the world, ***when*** Jesus would return?

Matthew 24:4-6, “*Jesus answered, ‘Watch out that no one deceives you, For many will come in My name, claiming, ‘I am the Christ,’ and will deceive many. And ye shall hear of wars and rumors of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet.’*”

Jesus spent the next verses answering those specific questions the disciples had asked about, and what Jesus said is still pertinent to us today.

Wars and Rumors of Wars

These verses are a real eye-opener, Jesus said, “*Many will make use of My name, but don't be deceived by them and don't be troubled, the end is not yet!*” Note that Jesus reveals the answer to their question about the destruction of Jerusalem, but, He tells them, “*the end is not yet.*”

Jesus continues in verses 7-8,

“For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places. All these are the beginning of sorrows.”

There are eight signs Jesus mentions that will take place at the beginning of “*Jewish sorrow*.” There are:

1. *“Many will make use of My name”* – verse 5
2. *“They will deceive many”* – verse 5
3. *“There will be rumors of war”* – verse 6
4. *“Nation will go to war with nation”* – verse 7
5. *“Kingdom will fight against kingdom”* – verse 7
6. *“There will be famines”* – verse 7
7. *“There will be pestilences”* – verse 7
8. *“There will be earthquakes in different parts of the world”* – verse 7

In verses 9-14 Jesus gives signs that will take place during the time of “*Israel’s sorrow*,” the Tribulation period. Jesus states, “***THEN*** these things will happen . . .”

1. *“They will be delivered to be afflicted”* – verse 9
2. *“They will be killed”* – verse 9
3. *“They will be hated of all nations for Christ’s sake”* – verse 9
4. *“Many will be offended”* – [stumble, fall away – lose heart] – verse 10
5. *“Many will betray one another”* – verse 10
6. *“Many will hate one another”* – verse 10
7. *“There will be many false prophets”* – verse 11
8. *“Iniquity will abound”* – verse 12
“He who endures to the end will be saved” – verse 13
9. *“The Gospel of the kingdom [Note: Not the Gospel of salvation, but the Gospel of the kingdom] preached to all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end [not the Rapture – but the end of this age] come”* – verse 14

Verse 15 speaks of the “*abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel the prophet*.” The “*abomination of desolation*” refers to the Antichrist and his image in the Jewish temple at Jerusalem during the last 3 1/2 years of this age (Daniel 8:9-14; 9:27; 11:45; 12:1, 7, 11; Revelation 13:1-18; 14:9-11; 20:4-6).

Jesus predicts the defeat of Israel during this period of time in verses 16-20

Verse 16, “***Then*** let them which be in Judea flee into the mountains” - when Antichrist enters Judea and takes over the Temple (Daniel 9:27 and 11:40-45). Israel will have to flee from Judea. The “*mountains*” referred to is Edom and Moab, where Israel goes to escape the Antichrist, Revelation 12:6, 14 [See notes in study of Revelation].

Verses 17-18, “*Let him which is on the housetop not come down to take any thing out of his house*” – that is, let Israel flee from Judea without taking time for valuables, lest they be over- taken by Antichrist's armies.

Verse 19, “*Woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days.*” It will be hard on women with children or those great with child to flee before the swiftness of the invaders.

Verse 20, “*But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the Sabbath day.*” Pray that the invasion will not take place in winter as it would be difficult to flee without preparation at this time; nor on the Sabbath, because orthodox Jews hold it unlawful to travel more than a mile on that day (Acts 1:12), so would be overtaken by the invaders.

*“For **then** shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect’s sake those days shall be shortened”* (Matthew 24:21-22).

In verses 23 through 26 Jesus gives the signs that will take place during the Great Tribulation, the last 3 and ½ years.

1. “*Men will say, ‘Lo here is Christ’*” – verse 23
2. “*False christs will arise*” – verse 24
3. “*False prophets will arise*” – verse 24
4. “*There will be signs and wonders preformed to deceive many*” – verse 24
5. “*Some will say ‘Christ is in the desert, or some secret place’*” – verse 26

Jesus tells of the manner of His coming, when He returns with His saints “*in power a great glory,*” at the end of the Tribulation period.

“For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be For wheresoever the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together. Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: And 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. And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other” (Matthew 24:27-31).

Verse 32 through 35 gives the parable of the fig tree (the Jewish nation):

“Now learn a parable of the fig tree; When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh: So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors. Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away” (Matthew 24:32-35).

The generation that witnesses the fulfillment of these signs “*will not pass away, until all these things will be fulfilled!*”

When will this happen?

“But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only” (Matthew 24:36).

What Will Christ’s Coming Be Like?

“But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Two women shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken, and the other left” Matthew 24:37-41).

Therefore – “*Watch, for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come.*”

Let’s review some things!

Jesus began the Olivet discourse by giving general information about what things would be like in the Last Days before the end of the world - or **literally**, in the Greek, at the “***end of the age.***” That phrase, “*the end of the age,*” has the connotation of the end of a distinct period of time, rather than the ultimate end of everything that exists. So what Jesus is talking about here is the end of the current “*age,*” or the period of human history in which we now live.

Jesus said in verse 6, that there would be turmoil on the world-political front because of “*wars and rumors of wars,*” with many nations and kingdoms fighting one another. This scenario has been common before in human history, but never so widespread as in modern generations.

The 20th Century spawned an unprecedented escalation in the destructive power of modern warfare and the bloodshed it produces. World War I introduced modern machine guns and tanks and heavy artillery to the battlefield, as well as poison gas. World War II produced mass destruction from the air and unleashed the awesome power of the atomic bomb to kill hundreds of thousands. The Cold War advanced missile technology and nuclear weapons capable of annihilating all human life on the planet. Hitler, Stalin, MaoTse Tung, and scores of lesser dictators have combined to make the 20th century the bloodiest in human history.

The total death toll from the five major wars of the 20th Century - World War I, World War II, the Korean War, Vietnam, and the Gulf War - stand at a gruesome 59.5 million.

Headlines are filled with reports of conflict in Chechnya and Bosnia and Africa, and despite our oft-expressed desires for world peace, new conflicts continue to spring up around the globe. The Middle East is a powder keg waiting to explode, as Iran and Iraq race to acquire more potent weapons and Israel struggles just to survive. There have also been significant

international geopolitical developments in this century related to wars, not specifically mentioned in Matthew 24 but found in other prophetic passages. This combination of events makes our time unique in all of human history and causes serious Bible scholars to believe that we are definitely living in the Last Days.

See the study on "*The Signs of the End Time*" for further study

The disciples did not understand the concept of Jesus' "*Advent*" – His return to earth. Like the prophets of the Old Testament, they did not see this present Church Age in God's prediction for the future. This concept was revealed to them later [Read Ephesians 2:13-14 and 3:1-6]. They, probably, realized that Jesus would pass from their midst and somehow escape from the hostility of the Roman rulers, however, they did not understand the concept of His leaving earth and returning again sometime in the future. They were asking, "*If this Temple is to be destroyed, when will it be? If You are coming in judgment, how, and when, will it take place?*"

These disciples not understand, nor did they realize anything concerning this present Church Age. They were puzzled about this prophecy of Jesus and asked, "*When will these things be?*" "*When are You coming?*" And, "*When is the consummation of this present age?*"

We have the *longest* answer Jesus ever gave to any question.

Verse 4, "*And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you.*"

Don't pass over this verse too lightly! Notice first, Jesus warns His disciples lest they be led astray. He speaks of future things dealing with matters of utmost importance, things of great peril, and then He tells them, "*Don't wonder from the clear declaration of Scripture and arrive at some fanciful interpretation.*"

Jesus began this discourse by words, "*Take heed,*" or, in modern vernacular, He says, "*Watch out!*"

Jesus was careful to discriminate on the *three* questions they had asked Him.

1. First question, "*What is the future for Israel?*" (Answered in verses 5-35).
2. The answer to the second question shows what is in store for the Church (Matthew 24:36 to 25:30)
3. Jesus' answer to the third question shows the future for the Gentile nations of the world - (Matthew 25:31-46)

Jesus separates, "*these things*" – from – "*the sign of His coming*" – (the questions the disciples asked in verse 3) – by His statement in verse 27, "*For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shines even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be.*" He continues after saying this by declaring His coming to be followed by "*mourning*" of the tribes of the earth, and the "*gathering together of all Israel.*" And, finally, He says, in verse 36, "*But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only.*"

Jesus is extremely careful in removing:

1. "*His coming*" from the destruction of the Temple
2. He separates "*His coming*" and "*the end of the age,*" and
3. "*The end of the age*" from the destruction of Jerusalem!

For this study, let's look, in particular, at the prophecies that pertain to us today.

The Church's Responsibility

Beginning with verse 45, Jesus changes the subject matter from future prophetic events to ask a serious question, thus begins a second part of His message. In this section Jesus commences with the question, "**Who then is the faithful and wise servant?**" and ends, speaking of the Church's present responsibility, in the 30th verse of chapter 25.

In this passage of Scripture, (Matthew 24:45 through 25:30), Jesus does not once refer to Himself as "*the Son of man*" (The King James does mention the title in 25:13, however, it is not in the original, and other translations have left it out). The point is: **The title, "*Son of man*" was the one by which Jesus most often described Himself in the days of His earthly ministry.** He never called Himself "*the Son of God,*" except when it was necessary in order to answer to criticism, or inquiry, or investigation concerning the deepest truth concerning Himself. This title, "***Son of man,***" was one that indicated His relation to the purpose of establishing the heavenly Kingdom on earth.

This was the purpose included in the mission of Christ and does not, for a moment, to deny the fact that Jesus came to seek and to save lost men individually, to change men, that when this probationary life is over, they shall enter into the home, the joy and the rest He promises to all believers.

However, if anyone thinks of the mission of Jesus as one simply of saving men here on earth, in order that they may be ready for the life beyond, then they have misread all that He ever said, all He ever did and taught us to pray for. He taught us to pray, "***that the Kingdom might come, and the will of God be done, on earth as in heaven.***"

It is very significant that this title, "*the Son of man*" drops out of use in the writings of the New Testament and is never found in the epistles, and is not referred to in all the rest of the New Testament, until this title, "*the Son of Man,*" comes into sight again in the book of Revelation, where the title, "*Son of man,*" re-appears.

Here in Matthew, chapters 24 and 25, the title, "*the Son of Man,*" appears in the first part, again immediately at the 31st verse of the 25th chapter, in the third section of the Olivet discourse, when Christ states, "***When the Son of man shall come in His glory!***"

This second section of the Olivet Discourse (Matthew 24:45 to 25:30) has no references to **Prophets**, **the Temple**, the **Sabbath day** - no references to any of those sacred signs and symbols of the old economy, which indicated the truth concerning the government of God in the world during the days of the Old Testament. The time of the employment of these means passed forever away with the beginning of the age of His redeeming reign.

This passage consist of three parables, indicating the responsibilities resting upon those whom Christ was leaving in charge during a period in which He (as to bodily presence) would be absent from them.

Let's now read this passage, Matthew 24:45-25:30, and then I want to share what I believe to be insight into what Jesus was teaching here.

Keep in mind that in the midst of this Olivet Discourse, (Matthew 25:45), Jesus asks this essential and crucial question, "*Who then is the faithful and wise servant, whom the master has put in charge of the servants in his household to give them their food at the proper time?*"

Keep in mind that Matthew 24:36, through 44, Jesus deals with the *immanency* [that His coming will be *unexpected* – any moment] and the important theme of the believer being ready.

Jesus had been speaking of the "*people of earth*," however He then changes, in Matthew 24:45, from the prediction of future events to give a revelation of the present *responsibility* of the Church. From the question in 24:45, through chapter 25:31 is a prophecy that deals with the Church's responsibility during this present age.

After characterizing two kinds of servants, beginning with Matthew 24:46 and running through the rest of the Olivet discourse, He gives three parables:

1. The Parable of the Household
2. The Parable of the 10 Virgins
3. The Parable of the Talents

Jesus tells of the *manner* of His coming in 24:44, "*So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect Him.*" He speaks of days that are to come *when* the Son of Man shall be manifested. However, now, in this day, He is still a "*servant.*"

Matthew 24:46-51 gives a picture of rebellious souls, rejecting Him, saying, "*He delays His coming.*" They smite their fellowmen, and are drunken, but still He is patient. However, there is coming a day when His eyes will flash and He will descend from heaven in fire and flame, flashing glory. He will cast out all evil and take vengeance.

Jesus teaches that the purpose and mission of Christ in this day of God's grace – in this Church Age – is to seek and to save the lost. Today, we are living in a probationary period, but someday that time will be over.

If anyone thinks of the mission of Jesus as simply *saving* men in order to take them to a life beyond, they have misread what Jesus taught – and what He prayed for!

Jesus turns from the negative survey to a more positive one beginning with Matthew 24:46, running through 25:30. This passage consists of *three* parables, indicating the responsibilities that rest upon the Church. Christ's *bodily* presence would be absent from the earth, but He would be present through His Mystical body, the Church.

NOTE THE SIMILARITIES OF THESE THREE PARABLES

1st Parable: Matthew 24:42-51, *“Therefore keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come. But understand this: If the owner of the house had known at what time of night the thief was coming, he would have kept watch and would not have let his house be broken into. So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him. Who then is the faithful and wise servant, whom the master has put in charge of the servants in his house- hold to give them their food at the proper time? It will be good for that servant whose master finds him doing so when he returns. I tell you the truth, he will put him in charge of all his possessions. But suppose that servant is wicked and says to himself, ‘My master is staying away a long time,’ and he then begins to beat his fellow servants and to eat and drink with drunkards. The master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he is not aware of. He will cut him to pieces and assign him a place with the hypocrites, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”*

2nd parable Matthew 25:1-13, *“At that time the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. Five of them were foolish and five were wise. The foolish ones took their lamps but did not take any oil with them. The wise, however, took oil in jars along with their lamps. The bridegroom was a long time in coming, and they all became drowsy and fell asleep. At midnight the cry rang out: ‘Here’s the bridegroom! Come out to meet him!’ Then all the virgins woke up and trimmed their lamps. The foolish ones said to the wise, ‘Give us some of your oil; our lamps are going out.’ ‘No,’ they replied, ‘there may not be enough for both us and you. Instead, go to those who sell oil and buy some for yourselves.’ But while they were on their way to buy the oil, the bridegroom arrived. The virgins who were ready went in with him to the wedding banquet. And the door was shut. Later the others also came. ‘Sir! Sir!’ they said. ‘Open the door for us!’ But he replied, ‘I tell you the truth, I don’t know you.’ Therefore keep watch, because you do not know the day or the hour.”*

3rd Parable, Matthew 25: 14-30, *“Again, it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted his property to them. To one he gave five talents of money, to another two talents, and to another one talent, each according to his ability. Then he went on his journey. The man who had received the five talents went at once and put his money to work and gained five more. So also, the one with the two talents gained two more. But the man who had received the one talent went off, dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money. After a long time the master of those servants returned and settled accounts with them. The man who had received the five talents brought the other five. ‘Master,’ he said, ‘you entrusted me with five talents. See, I have gained five more.’ His master replied, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!’ The man with the two talents also came. ‘Master,’ he said, ‘you entrusted me with two talents; see, I have gained two more.’ His master replied, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!’ Then the man who had received the one talent came. ‘Master,’ he said, ‘I knew that you are a hard man, harvesting where you have not sown and gathering where you have not scattered seed. So I was afraid and went out and hid your talent in the ground. See, here is what belongs to you.’ His master replied, ‘You wicked, lazy servant! So you knew that I harvest where I have not sown and gather where I have not scattered seed? Well then, you should have put my money on deposit with the bankers, so that when I returned I would have received it back with interest. Take the talent from him and give it*

to the one who has the ten talents. For everyone who has will be given more, and he will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken from him. And throw that worthless servant outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

THE SIMILARITIES IN EACH PARABLE:

(I) THE MASTER IS ABSENT

1. The master of the household, commits certain duties to his servants and then, he is absent!
2. The bridegroom is absent
3. The master (owner of goods) gives talents to his servants and then, he is absent

(II) THE RELATIONSHIP OF THE ABSENT MASTER

(with those from whom he is absent)

1. The servants represent his authority
2. The "waiting" of the virgins attest to their belief in his return
3. The servants prosecuted the master's business, with his goods
 - the talents - which he gave to them - are all his goods
 - not their ability - not their capacity
 - the talents do not stand for quality, but for quantity in this parable!

(III) THE RESPONSIBILITY WAS ALWAYS TO THEIR MASTER ALONE

1. The servant's responsibility to the absent master
2. The virgins responsible to be ready at any given moment
3. The servants who received talents and their responsibility to the master

THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE PARABLES:

1. Pictures of the master's household's **COMMUNAL** responsibility
2. Pictures the **INDIVIDUAL** soul's relation to his master, showing the wise and the foolish
3. Pictures the responsibility of carrying out master's enterprise in the world.

We will not, at this time, take these parables in all its detail, but look at them as a

“whole.”

1. The parable of the Household gives the two examples, those who are faithful and wise and those who are called, “*The wicked.*” This parable presents the Church as a household, over which Christ is Master.
2. The parable of the 10 Virgins shows our attitude toward Christ in the days of His absence.
3. The parable of the Talents show our responsibility of Christ's enterprises

First, let's look at the parable of the **Household**. Here, the church is Christ's household. He is the Master Who has left us in charge of is household.

The Greek word, translated “*household,*” is found only one other time in the Scripture. It's in Revelation 22:2, where it states, “*the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.*” Note, here, that this same Greek word is translated as “*healing.*”

What relation can there be between “*healing*” and “*household?*” This question can only answered by an understanding of what this word translated as, “***household***” really signifies. It is a word from which we derive our word “*therapeutic.*” The basic idea of this word is *healing*. This word “*household*” refers to those in the house that *serve*.

Look at Matthew 24:45 again, “*Who then is the faithful and wise servant?*” This word translated as “*servant*” is the word, “*bond-slave,*” while the Greek word translated “*household*” also means “*servant,*” it come from an entirely different word – a Greek word meaning “*one who performs a loving service*” – or, “*one whose purpose is to bring about a healing in service.*”

This is a case of “*metonymy,*” – meaning, “*the use of a word for that of another to which it is related, to emphasize a concept.*” For instance, we say, “*A man keeps a good table,*” when we are really referring to his food – or, we might use the word “*scepter*” when referring to *sovereignty*.

This word, “*household,*” found in Matthew 24:45, is a parable suggesting the picture of a great house, with one Master. All those in the house are under His control. Their interests are constantly in His thoughts, while they are serving under His command.

Jesus uses the word that indicates the *love* principle in service – the tender healing ministry that only grows out of love. Thus, in a word, flaming and flashing with meaning, we discover our Lord's conception of His Church during the time of His absence.

His “*household*” serve, however, they serve by love – and their ministry is a *healing* ministry.

Note Matthew 24:45 carefully, “*Who then is the faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath set over his household?*” This word, “*household,*” must be interpreted by the consistent teaching of the Lord, that **service is the condition of greatness!**

The servant is “*set over*” – made ruler over; put in charge – he is a servant. Jesus taught “*Whosoever would be first among you, shall be servant of all*” (Mark 9:35 and 10:44).

This is not a picture of one in an official authority, but rather, it is a picture of one in the exercise of the ministry of healing – and of love!

SERVICE IS THE CONDITION FOR GREATNESS

We see the attitude of a faithful and wise servant. One who expresses an attitude of caring for all others while His Lord is away.

The attitude of “*the evil servant*” who says, “*My master is staying away a long time*” (delays his coming) and he turns to an evil course, instead of feeding and caring for the household. He “*beats*” them and, then, turns to companions of drunkards.

TWO RESULTS WHEN THE MASTER RETURNS:

1. The servant who was loyal is promoted and put in a place of authority.
2. The unfaithful servant is cut asunder and cast out.

We come to chapter 25

We must not carry this parable farther than God meant it to go. Jesus is teaching that we prove our loyalty in the Church to our Lord by the way we serve one another. Disloyalty beats and slays the brethren.

In the parable of the Virgins, we see two attitudes – the attitude of the wise and the attitude of the foolish. They **all** “*went forth,*” however, some of them were careless. This parable is not a story of service, but rather, one of personal relationship.

There is no apparent difference between the ten virgins. They all spoke of their desire to meet the Bridegroom. Jesus, in this parable, is *not* speaking of particular section of Christendom, as some teach, but rather He is speaking of **individual** souls in relation to the Master.

Nothing is said in this parable about the “*responsibility in the household,*” but rather, it speaks of the “*attitude of the **individual** toward the Master.*” It speaks of those who have no eyes, no thought, no care, except for Bridegroom and the hour of His coming.

The Last Parable in Jesus' Olivet discourse begins with, “*For the kingdom of heaven is as a man traveling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods*” (Matthew 25:14).

This parable speaks of the faithful use of talents brought the Master's “*Well done thou good and faithful servant, thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will set thee over many things.*” One of servants was **un**faithful – his life is exposed, his talents are recalled and he is “*cast out.*”

Note, again, that in the first Parable reveals the mutual ministry that is to exist within the household, Matthew 24:46-51. We are to care for, and feed, others, not ill-treat, or beat, our fellow servants.

The second Parable reveals what our personal life must be within the church, Matthew 25:1-13. It is to be an attitude of loyalty of love to Jesus Christ. Our love will be tested in loyalty in small, seemingly insignificant, things.

The third Parable reveals our responsible for Master's work, Matthew 25:14-30. Jesus has committed to us His goods and, in His absence, we are to represent Him to this world during this Church age.

1. The "*household*" at peace!
2. Lamps burning - ready!
3. The individual character is using his talents (working) for eternity!