

Comparison of Matthew 24-25, Mark 13, and Luke 21

Matt. 23:37 O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, *thou* that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under *her* wings, and ye would not!

Matt. 23:38 Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.

Matt. 23:39 For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed *is* he that cometh in the name of the Lord.

I wanted to start with these verses since they show Jesus' thoughts connecting His second coming to the time when Israel accepts Him as Messiah. That will be at the end of the 70th week of Daniel, the period we know as the *tribulation*.

Matt. 24:1 And Jesus went out, and departed from the temple: and his disciples came to *him* for to shew him the buildings of the temple.

Matt. 24:2 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.

Matt. 24:3a And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying,

Mark 13:1 And as he went out of the temple, one of his disciples saith unto him, Master, see what manner of stones and what buildings *are here!*

Mark 13:2 And Jesus answering said unto him, Seest thou these great buildings? there shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.

Mark 13:3 And as he sat upon the mount of Olives over against the temple, Peter and James and John and Andrew asked him privately,

Luke 21:5 And as some spake of the temple, how it was adorned with goodly stones and gifts, he said,

Luke 21:6 *As for these things which ye behold, the days will come, in the which there shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.*

Jesus is talking to his disciples. At some point he sits down, and Mark tells us that Peter, James, John, and Andrew go to Him privately with some questions. They are admiring the Temple and its surroundings. Jesus tells them that the buildings (plural) of the temple (Matt & Mark)—temple in general in Luke—will be destroyed to the extent that not one stone will be left upon another. Note: This was fulfilled in AD70 by the legions of Titus.

Matt. 24:3b Tell us, when shall these things be? and what *shall be* the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?
Mark 13:4 Tell us, when shall these things be? and what *shall be* the sign when all these things shall be fulfilled?
Luke 21:7 And they asked him, saying, Master, but when shall these things be? and what sign *will there be* when these things shall come to pass?

Matthew: “thy coming” – **3952. parousi÷a parousia**, *par-oo-see´-ah*; a being near, i.e. advent (often, return; specially, of Christ to punish Jerusalem, or finally the wicked);

“end” - **4930. sunteleia**, *soon-tel´-i-ah*; entire completion, i.e. consummation (of a dispensation):—end.

“world” - **165. aion**, *ahee-ohn´*; properly, an age; by extension, perpetuity (also past); by implication, the world; specially (Jewish) a Messianic period (present or future):—age, course, eternal, (for) ever(-more), (n-)ever, (beginning of the , while the) world (began, without end).

My first thought was why did the disciples link together questions about Jesus’ return and the destruction of the temple. The word *coming* in Matt 24:3 gave some insight to that; it included the idea of the return of Christ to punish Jerusalem and the wicked. Their questions were: 1) When was this destruction of the temple going to happen? 2) What is the sign that will indicate it is going to happen? 3) What will be the sign of Your coming? 4) What will be the sign of the end of the world?

In considering the combined passages, it seems that they were associating the destruction of the temple with Christ’s coming as King to judge the wicked and establish His Kingdom. I also think they would term the end of the reign of evil with the end of the world/present age preceding the Kingdom. So I think they were basically asking two questions as indicated in Mark and Luke.

I do think it is important to note that Jesus is answering these Jewish believers relevant to their Jewish expectations as founded on the scripture and from their time of instruction/discipleship spent with the Savior. The things emphasized by the three writers would be pertinent to the intended audience (Matthew=Jewish, Mark=Roman, Luke=Greek) and purpose for their writing.

In reading through this again, I was reminded of Paul’s statement to the Corinthians.

1Corinthians 1:22 “For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom....”

**Matt. 24:4 And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you.
Matt. 24:5 For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many.**

**Mark 13:5 And Jesus answering them began to say, Take heed lest any *man* deceive you:
Mark 13:6 For many shall come in my name, saying, I am *Christ*; and shall deceive many.**

Luke 21:8 And he said, Take heed that ye be not deceived: for many shall come in my name, saying, I am *Christ*; and the time draweth near: go ye not therefore after them.

MML: “take heed” – Beware (with eyes wide open)

“deceive” - 4105. **planao**, *plan-ah'-o*; to (properly, cause to) roam (from safety, truth, or virtue):—go astray, deceive, err, seduce, wander, be out of the way.

Jesus warns them not to be deceived; they were to be aware, be discerning, because many will come claiming to be
Mt - *Christ* (the anointed One, the Messiah)
Mk & L - *I am* – “eimi” (it is I); in other words--**claiming to be me**

Even as He warns the disciples of the false messiahs, Jesus also prepares them for the fact that these false messiahs will be very convincing and will actually deceive many people.

“the time is near” - I think the reason Jesus tells them this is because we are susceptible to deception according to our expectations. We are told later on by Matthew (24:24) that some of these *false Christs* will do miracles that would deceive the very elect “if that were possible.” This definitely implies that that is not possible, yet Jesus still considers it important to warn them to “take heed.” Why? So that they can instruct others. To protect their testimony. To guard their heavenly rewards.

**Matt. 24:6 And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all *these things* must come to pass, but the end is not yet.
Mark 13:7 And when ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars, be ye not troubled: for *such things* must needs be; but the end *shall* not be yet.
Luke 21:9 But when ye shall hear of wars and commotions, be not terrified: for these things must first come to pass; but the end *is* not by and by.**

All three gospels state that they will hear of wars.

MM: shall hear of wars and rumors of wars

L: shall hear of wars and commotions

“commotions” - **181. akatastasia**, *ak-at-as-tah-see´-ah*; instability, i.e. disorder:—commotion, confusion, tumult.

I think “rumors of wars” is equivalent to “commotions,” instability / tumult in various places.

All three gospels agree that the news of these wars and unstable situations that could result in wars should not trouble / terrify / scare / frighten the disciples (as representing the body of believers). Why? Because they are necessary (must = dei = necessary) to the fulfillment of God’s plan for planet earth.

Mt & Mk – end is not yet

L – end is not “by and by”

“by and by” - (**eutheos**, *yoo-theh´-oce*; adverb; directly, i.e. at once or soon:—anon, as soon as, forthwith, immediately, shortly, straightway.)

This phrase indicates that there is more to come in addition to the wars and commotions.

Matt. 24:7 For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places.

Matt. 24:8 All these *are* the beginning of sorrows.

Mark 13:8 For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be earthquakes in divers places, and there shall be famines and troubles: these *are* the beginnings of sorrows.

Luke 21:10 Then said he unto them, Nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom:

Luke 21:11 And great earthquakes shall be in divers places, and famines, and pestilences; and fearful sights and great signs shall there be from heaven.

MML: Nation vs. nation (**ethnos** – race), kingdom (**basileia** – realm of rule) vs. kingdom

In light of today and looking back on history, that is an interesting distinction to make. The wars and commotions will include fighting between the races as well as fighting between kingdoms, “peoples united under a common ruler/authority.”

Arnold Fruchtenbaum provided some interesting insight on the Jewish origin of “nation against nation, and kingdom against kingdom.”

“This expression, found in Jewish sources such as the Bereshit Rabbah (written shortly after Yeshua’s time) and, later, the Zohar Chadash—is a Hebrew idiom for a world war. What Jesus was saying, then, is that it would be a world war rather than merely a local war that would mark the beginning of the end of the age.”

Regarding World War I and II: “Both wars had a decisive impact on Jewish history. The first gave impetus to the growth of the Zionist movement, and the Second World War led to the re-establishment of the Jewish State.”

Added to wars/commotions would be:

1. famines (MML)
2. pestilences (Matt/L) - **loimos**, *loy'-mos*; a plague (literally, the disease, or figuratively, a pest):—pestilence(-t).
3. earthquakes (MM), great earthquakes (L) in divers/various places (MML)
4. troubles (Mark) - **tarache**, *tar-akh-ay'*; disturbance, i.e. (of water) roiling, or (of a mob) sedition:—trouble(-ing).
5. fearful sights and great signs from heaven (Luke)

Matthew and Mark clarify that these *signs* will only be the *beginnings of sorrows*.

“sorrows” - (**odin**, *o-deen* ; a pang or throe, especially of childbirth:—pain, sorrow, travail.)

The point being made is that these signs would indicate the onset of birth pangs; the onset of signs that would culminate in His return and the end of the age—in their mind, the establishment of Christ’s kingdom. Comparing the signs to childbirth indicates that they would eventually increase in frequency and intensity as the time for fulfillment drew near.

It’s interesting to note how these verses compare to seals 1-4 in chapter six of Revelation; this emphasizes that the birth pains will find culmination in the judgment to come.

*Revelation 6:1–8 “And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals, and I heard, as it were the noise of thunder, one of the four beasts saying, Come and see. And I saw, and behold a white horse: and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering, and to conquer. [My note: This is Satan coming to take control of the world eventually by indwelling the person of the final Antichrist—the ultimate false Christ.] And when he had opened the second seal, I heard the second beast say, Come and see. And there went out another horse that was red: and power was given to him that sat thereon to take peace from the earth, and **that they should kill one another**: and there was given unto him a great sword. And when he had opened the third seal, I heard the third beast say, Come and see. And I beheld, and lo a black horse; and he that sat on him had a pair of balances in his hand. And I heard a voice in the midst of the four beasts say, **A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny**; and see thou hurt not the oil and the wine. [My note: represents famine] And when he had opened the*

fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth beast say, Come and see. And I looked, and behold a pale horse: and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him. And power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth."

There is also an interesting cross-reference in Ezekiel regarding God's choice of particular judgments to accomplish His purposes on planet earth:

Ezekiel 14:21 "For thus saith the Lord GOD; How much more when I send my four sore judgments upon Jerusalem, the sword, and the famine, and the noisome beast, and the pestilence to cut off from it man and beast."

Matt. 24:9 Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake.

Mark 13:9 But take heed to yourselves: for they shall deliver you up to councils; and in the synagogues ye shall be beaten: and ye shall be brought before rulers and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them.

Luke 21:12 But before all these, they shall lay their hands on you, and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues, and into prisons, being brought before kings and rulers for my name's sake.

Luke 21:13 And it shall turn to you for a testimony.

"Take heed to yourselves" (Mark) – This phrase indicates that the following statement had direct personal application to the disciples, but I don't discount the fact that it has further application to "future" believers (from the perspective of the disciples). The language used makes specific reference to Jewish believers, which ties in perfectly with the fact that God has turned His focus back to the Jews in the 70th week.

Prophecy is full of *types/examples* and of *near and far* or *partial and complete* fulfillment or *foreshadowing* (or whatever terminology you want to use). There is a verse in the Old Testament that sheds light on prophecy in this aspect:

Ecclesiastes 1:9 "The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be; and that which is done is that which shall be done: and there is no new thing under the sun."

"before all these things" – Before what? Even before the onset of these "birth pains."

The somber message is that the disciples would be afflicted /beaten/ persecuted, be put in prison and /or killed because of Jesus. History proves this to be true for the apostles, and has continued to be proven through the lives of believers throughout history. Revelation 2:10, which is part of the letter to the church of Smyrna, appears to have connection to these verses: *“Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.”*

This seems to tie directly to the judgment of the 5th seal in Revelation 6.

Revelation 6:9 “And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held....”

As I remember that Matthew is written with a more direct address to the Jews, it makes the phrase “ye shall be hated of all nations for my name’s sake” take on a more particular meaning. They would be hated just for being Jews, the chosen people of God. They would suffer at the hands of *Christian* nations because they would be considered the “Christ killers.”

The word for *councils* indicated a tribunal, especially the Sanhedrin, as suggested by the Greek, “sunedrion.” The synagogues were the buildings where the Jews gathered for worship. This is a direct reference to actions of Jews against other Jews. The Jewish nation as a whole rejected Jesus as the Messiah. Those who chose /choose to follow Jesus as the Son of God were /are considered heretics. Jewish believers would suffer at the hands of their own people as well as those of the Gentiles.

Since Mark and Luke were addressed predominantly to the Romans and Greeks, these writers emphasized being brought before “kings and rulers”—again “for my name’s sake.”

Mark and Luke include a statement of comfort or motivation or encouragement according to your perspective. The unjust treatment of the disciples /believers would result in a testimony /witness /evidence on behalf of the disciple /believer in determining rewards. This testimony would be used against the unjust religious /government leaders. The question becomes by whom and when they will be judged. I think the implied answer is Jesus; this is what He had taught the disciples.

John 5:22 “For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son....”

John 5:26-27 “For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself; And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man.”

Matt. 24:10 And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another.

“offended” - **4624. skandalizo**, *skan-dal-id´-zo*; to entrap, i.e. trip up (figuratively, stumble (transitively) or entice to sin, apostasy or displeasure):—(make to) offend.

“betray” - **3860. paradidomi**, *par-ad-id´-o-mee*; to surrender, i.e. yield up, intrust, transmit:—betray, bring forth, cast, commit, deliver (up), give (over, up), hazard, put in prison, recommend.

This is a verse that has application to Jewish and Gentile believers regarding their friends and families. This verse seems to go hand in hand with upcoming verses in Mark and Luke.

Mark 13:12 Now the brother shall betray the brother to death, and the father the son; and children shall rise up against their parents, and shall cause them to be put to death.

Mark 13:13a And ye shall be hated of all *men* for my name’s sake:

Luke 21:16 And ye shall be betrayed both by parents, and brethren, and kinsfolks, and friends; and *some* of you shall they cause to be put to death.

Luke 21:17 And ye shall be hated of all *men* for my name’s sake.

Sad to say, Jesus is one who divides friends and families. This too, the Lord had taught His disciples.

Matthew 10:34–38 “Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law. And a man’s foes shall be they of his own household. He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me.”

Mark 13:10 And the gospel must first be published among all nations.

Matt. 24:14 And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.

In light of the coming persecution, imprisonment and death facing the disciples/believers, the Lord thought it important that the disciples/believers understand that the gospel would reach ALL nations before He returned as King. Their

persecution/ death would not prevent others from hearing the gospel. These Jewish disciples knew that God had chosen their nation through Abraham with the purpose that ALL nations of the world might be blessed.

Genesis 22:18 "And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice."

The Gentile believers needed to understand that God's plan of salvation was purposed for ALL mankind. He does not take pleasure in the death of the wicked.

Ezekiel 33:11 "Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live...."

1 Timothy 2:1-4 "I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth."

God is not going to depend upon man to accomplish this task, even though that is His commission to each of us as believers.

Matthew 28:19-20 "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."

The apostle John confirms this truth for us:

Revelation 14:6 "And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people."

The gospel is the good news of God's provision for our salvation, and it is everlasting. There is not one gospel for some and another gospel for others. The good news of the gospel is that our salvation is dependent upon God through faith. Paul tells us in Romans that we are all without excuse because God has revealed Himself to each of us. It is our response in faith to that revelation that will determine our eternity.

Romans 1:16-21 "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall

live by faith. For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse: Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened."

Mark 13:11 But when they shall lead *you*, and deliver you up, take no thought beforehand what ye shall speak, neither do ye premeditate: but whatsoever shall be given you in that hour, that speak ye: for it is not ye that speak, but the Holy Ghost.

Luke 21:14 Settle *it* therefore in your hearts, not to meditate before what ye shall answer:

Luke 21:15 For I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay nor resist.

Both Mark and Luke continue regarding the time the disciples/believers are delivered up to the spiritual and governmental authorities because of their faith in Jesus. It's a *when* statement, not an *if* statement.

Jesus is telling the disciples/believers not to plan in advance how to answer their accusers. They are to trust Jesus/God to put the words in their mouth through the ministry of the Holy Ghost. That way they will be assured of sharing the truth that God wants to share with their accusers at that time. God's answer through them will not be able to be denied/contradicted or resisted (stand against, oppose). This is a statement of promise for provision when it is needed.

Notice that Jesus is identifying Himself with the Holy Ghost when you compare the accounts. It also jumps out to me that in Luke's account it stands out that Jesus is emphasizing that He will not be present with them physically when this happens, but He will personally be ministering to them through the Holy Spirit according to their need.

Matt. 24:11 And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many.

This statement goes hand in hand with verse 5. Just as surely as there will be false Christs, there will also be false prophets. I thought the Greek for *prophet* was interesting; it indicated a "pretended foreteller or religious impostor." Webster defines an *impostor* as "One who imposes upon others; a person who assumes a character or title not his own, for the purpose of deception; a pretender." We are so quick to identify the prophet with the foreteller, but the term also identifies one who is supposed to be a forthteller of the truth.

Matt. 24:12 And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.

“iniquity” - **458. anomia**, *an-om-ee´-ah*; illegality, i.e. violation of law or (genitive case) wickedness:—iniquity, x transgress(-ion of) the law, unrighteousness.

Iniquity is the transgression of the law, and in the minds of these disciples, there was no question as to the law being referenced; it is God’s law. God’s law was given for man’s benefit. It was intended to keep our focus on God; and as John tells us, God is love.

1John 4:8 “He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.”

1John 4:16 “And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.”

When God’s law is ignored, then wickedness and unrighteousness become more prevalent. That in turn pulls us away from the source of love. Love produces warmth and comfort and righteousness. The lack of love makes one cold, without feeling, hurtful, and unrighteous.

In trying to understand why the Lord stated the things in the order He did, I realized that one of the reasons the disciples/believers would be persecuted and killed would be because of the teachings of false Christs and false prophets. These religious impostors are always going to lead one away from the truth of God’s word. The further we get from God and His word, iniquity becomes more prevalent, and the more love vanishes from our way of life. As current events show (as of 5/15), this also results in a lessening of the value placed on human life.

Luke 21:18 But there shall not an hair of your head perish.

After telling the disciples/believers that some would be faced with execution, the Lord encouraged them to look beyond this life. Obviously, this is referencing other than physical death. This is referencing our resurrected body that will live for eternity. Our life here is but a vapor. In comparison, our life in eternity will be an everflowing river.

James 4:14 “Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.”

This also reminds me of scripture that states that God knows the number of hairs on our head.

Matthew 10:30 "But the very hairs of your head are all numbered."

Luke 12:7 "But even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not therefore: ye are of more value than many sparrows."

Matt. 24:13 & Mark 13:13b But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.

Luke 21:19 goes hand in hand with the thought in the above verses —“In your patience possess ye your souls.”

The word for *patience* and *endure* is the same in the Greek. Salvation and possession of your soul are synonymous.

“endure” - **5278. hupomeno**, *hoop-om-en'-o*; to stay under (behind), i.e. remain; figuratively, to undergo, i.e. bear (trials), have fortitude, persevere:—abide, endure, (take) patient(-ly), suffer, tarry behind.

“saved” - **4982. sozo**, *sode'-zo*; to save, i.e. deliver or protect (literally or figuratively):—heal, preserve, save (self), do well, be (make) whole.

“possess” - **2932. ktaomai ktaomai**, *ktah'-om-ahee*; to get, i.e. acquire (by any means; own):—obtain, possess, provide, purchase.

John makes it clear that endurance / perseverance is evidence that we are part of the family of God.

1John 2:19 "They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us."

My understanding has continued to evolve and has clarified to the point of rewording and reordering the following sections referencing Luke 21:20-24, Matthew 24:15-28, and Mark 13:14-23. It now seems clear to me that Luke's account is referencing the attack of Titus and his legions, while Matthew and Mark are referencing the actions of the Antichrist during the tribulation. For that reason, I will comment on Luke's account first.

It's very interesting that the Holy Spirit can use the same teaching to make distinct application to two different time periods. I allowed that to stumble my understanding for a long time. The biggest pitfall in my study of prophecy still continues to be previous teaching that seems to cloud my understanding until I allow the Lord to open my eyes a bit more. Then I began to realize that all scripture was inspired for specific purpose, and that the writers often did not even

fully understand their inspiration—especially in the area of prophecy. It's also very probable that Luke's account has further application as a "type" of the events that will occur in the tribulation as recorded in Matthew and Mark.

I am also reminded of the words of Daniel, and I think an excerpt from that journal is appropriate here.

Dan. 12:4 But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, *even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased.*

After writing the Revelation, John was instructed not to seal the book. Why? Because the time was at hand. It was relevant to the people at that time.

Rev. 22:10 And he saith unto me, Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand. Daniel, however, is told to seal the book. Why? Because the time was not at hand; it would apply to a people in the distant future. The words for *shut up* and *sealed* indicate to close it and keep it hidden; this seems to be implying keep it safe, preserve it. The message of Daniel was not meant to remain sealed; it was only to be sealed until the time of the end. Personally, I think "the time of the end" references all time after the death and resurrection of Jesus—after the end of the 69th week.

I usually hear the last part of this verse used to reference modern transportation and the huge advances in our knowledge of science and technology, and I don't think you can say that is wrong since the reality of our day and age reflects the truth of it. However, I believe it has a direct reference to the increased interest in "end times" and the ability to understand God's plan since the "Revelation" given to John on the Isle of Patmos.

I was reading in Amos, and thought that a couple of verses applied here:

Amos 8:11 Behold, the days come, saith the Lord GOD, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the LORD:

Amos 8:12 And they shall wander from sea to sea, and from the north even to the east, they shall run to and fro to seek the word of the LORD, and shall not find *it*.

This is talking of a time when men will run to and fro and not be able to find understanding in the word of God. Daniel is speaking of a time when men will be running to and fro and knowledge shall be increased—they will find understanding of the word of God.

Luke 21:20 And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh.
Luke 21:21&23a Then let them which are in Judaea flee to the mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out; and let not them that are in the countries enter thereinto....But woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck, in those days!

The danger is imminent and the response should be immediate and without hesitation. No thought should be given to material possessions. Obviously, being with child would slow a person down. Luke also includes a warning for those Jews/believers in other countries not to come to Israel at this time.

Luke 21:22 For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled.

“vengeance” = vindication, retribution, revenge, punishment

My first thought was to look up passages from the Old Testament that talk about vengeance that the Lord has promised. Scripture is clear that vengeance and recompense are God’s prerogative and is reserved for God’s enemies. God also declares that He will avenge/vindicate the blood of His servants.

Deuteronomy 32:35 “To me belongeth vengeance, and recompence....”

Deuteronomy 32:41 “If I whet my glittering sword, and mine hand take hold on judgment; I will render vengeance to mine enemies, and will reward them that hate me.”

Deuteronomy 32:43 “Rejoice, O ye nations, with his people: for he will avenge the blood of his servants, and will render vengeance to his adversaries....”

Nahum 1:2 “God is jealous, and the LORD revengeth; the LORD revengeth, and is furious; the LORD will take vengeance on his adversaries, and he reserveth wrath for his enemies.”

I believe the vengeance spoken of by Luke is a reference to the declaration of Jesus in Matthew when denouncing the scribes and Pharisees.

Matthew 23:35-36 “That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar. Verily I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation.”

I understand this in the same way that I understand we are all guilty of Adam’s sin. These religious leaders were in essence condemned as guilty for the sin of all godly men—from the murder of Abel to the death of Zechariah (specific identity not verified; possibly the prophet Zechariah)—when guilty of killing even one (i.e., Jesus).” This vengeance would be fulfilled with the destruction of the temple and Jerusalem and deportation of the Jews in 70 AD.

I think it is also important to note as we read the gospels, that Jesus is always emphasizing that the fulfillment of prophecy is important to God. It is a unique proof of His truth and deity.

Isaiah 42:8-9 "I am the LORD: that is my name: and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images. Behold, the former things are come to pass, and new things do I declare: before they spring forth I tell you of them."

Isaiah 46:9-10 "Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me, Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure...."

John 13:19 "Now I tell you before it come, that, when it is come to pass, ye may believe that I am he."

John 14:29 "And now I have told you before it come to pass, that, when it is come to pass, ye might believe."

Luke 21:23bfor there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people.

Luke 21:24 And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.

These verses emphasize that the distress and wrath being mentioned here are referencing the land of Israel and the Jews in particular. Again, I believe this is a direct reference to the events that occurred after Titus and his legions destroyed Jerusalem in 70AD, and took many Jews captive and sold them as slaves throughout the empire. Since that time, Jerusalem has been "trodden down by the Gentiles." Although many Jews have returned to Israel since it became a nation in 1948, it is a small percentage compared to the whole of their population throughout the world. The times of the Gentiles won't be fulfilled until Antichrist is defeated and Christ returns to reestablish the throne of David. Some posit that the times of the Gentiles were over once Israel regained the Temple Mount in the 1967 Six-Day War; but the truth is that Israel ceded the Muslims control of the Mount, and they maintain that control to this day.

Matt. 24:15 When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:)

Mark 13:14a But when ye shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing where it ought not, (let him that readeth understand,)

Matthew and Mark make it clear in their accounts that Jesus is referencing a specific prophecy made by Daniel—*Daniel 12:11* “*And from the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up, there shall be a thousand two hundred and ninety days.*”

“abomination” - **946. bde:lugma bdelugma**, *bdel'-oog-mah*; from 948; a detestation, i.e. (specially) idolatry:—abomination.

Even though we know that Antiochus Epiphanes seemed to fulfill this prophecy in history when he sacrificed to Zeus by offering a pig on the altar in the temple, Jesus is making the point that this prophecy was yet to be fulfilled (as was the case with many prophecies—foreshadowing and fulfillment); it was future to the time that Jesus was speaking. This would be a desecration of the temple, which means that there will be a functioning temple prior to the occurrence of the event being referenced. This abomination would be a thing or person *standing* where it ought not—that would seem to reference something like an idol. “The holy place” and “where it ought not” could reference any part of the temple, the whole of which is considered holy, but more likely refers to the inner sanctum, the holy of holies. There is no indication in history that such an abomination was perpetrated when Titus and his armies came through in 70AD; they were intent on total destruction.

Paul makes it fairly clear in his second letter to the Thessalonians what this abomination will be.

2Thessalonians 2:3-4 *Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.*

It's interesting that the Spirit inspired Matthew and Mark to include a special note to those *reading* this passage. Obviously, the gospel narratives were written to be read by others. It also indicates to me that they were aware they might not be around at the time this event occurred. The word for *readeth* was quite interesting.

ajnaginw;skw anaginosko, *an-ag-in-ocē'-ko*; to know again, i.e. (by extension) to read:

This implies that this message should serve as a reminder of something of which you already have knowledge. The word for *understand* means to exercise the mind in order to comprehend. The statement implies that one should be able to comprehend and take action when the event comes about.

Matt. 24:16-20 Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains: Let him which is on the housetop not come down to take any thing out of his house: Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes. And woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days! But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day:

Mark 13:14b-18 then let them that be in Judaea flee to the mountains: And let him that is on the housetop not go down into the house, neither enter *therein*, to take any thing out of his house: And let him that is in the field not turn back again for to take up his garment. But woe to them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days! And pray ye that your flight be not in the winter.

This part of the message is directed mainly to the Jewish people, but I think would be pertinent to all believers in the area. The immediate danger is to those in Judea, a reference to the southernmost part of Israel. This would make sense, since the sign to flee is the abomination of desolation taking place in the temple in Jerusalem; this marks the point in time when the Antichrist will begin to show his true colors as the agent of Satan. It is the time that Satan is thrown out of heaven and I believe indwells the Antichrist and sets out to persecute Israel.

Revelation 12:12-14 "Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time. And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man child. And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent."

As in the passage in Luke, the danger is imminent and the response should be immediate and without hesitation. No thought should be given to material possessions. Obviously, being with child would slow a person down and winter weather can make travel more hazardous. Again, it's Matthew who makes the obvious inclusion to his targeted audience (the Jews) regarding the hardship of having to flee on the Sabbath. It would do them well to remember at that time that the law was made for man's benefit, as David did when he and his men took the shewbread from the temple to eat because they were hungry (an example Jesus used in teaching this truth). (CF Matthew 12, Mark 2, Luke 6)

Mark 2:27 "And he said unto them, The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath...."

Matt. 24:21 For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.

Mark 13:19 For *in* those days shall be affliction, such as was not from the beginning of the creation which God created unto this time, neither shall be.

"Then" and "in those days" = the time of the desecration of the temple.

Notice again that it is not just one day, but days, which is an indefinite period of time. My study of prophecy indicates that this will happen at the midpoint of the 70th week and is describing the beginning of the time we call the *great tribulation*, the last half of the 70th week.

The prophet Daniel pinpoints the timing of the breaking of the covenant and the beginning of trouble for Israel—the middle of the week, after the first 3.5 years; and Revelation declares that the remnant of Israel will be protected for the last 3.5 years—1,260 days.

Daniel 9:27 “And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.”

Revelation 12:6 “And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days....”

The Greek is the same for the words “tribulation” (Matt) and “affliction” (Mark).

The wording in both Matthew and Mark describe this time of tribulation as a time that we have to consider as future. It is described as the worst time of tribulation that will ever impact planet earth. This cannot be said of the destruction caused by Titus and his armies in 70AD.

These verses echo the prophecy given to Daniel: "There shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time" (12:1).

Matt. 24:22 And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect’s sake those days shall be shortened.

Mark 13:20 And except that the Lord had shortened those days, no flesh should be saved: but for the elect’s sake, whom he hath chosen, he hath shortened the days.

“shortened” = **koloboo**, *kol-ob-o’-o*; from a derivative of the base of 2849; to dock, i.e. (figuratively) abridge:—shorten. 2849. (dwarf); properly, to curtail, i.e. (figuratively) to chastise (or reserve for infliction):—punish.

As I meditated on the word *shortened*, I came to the conclusion that it means to curtail—that it references a time reserved for infliction. In other words, if God in His omniscience had not determined the specific timeframe with a predetermined

end point, the result would have been the elimination of “flesh” on planet earth. This has not really been a possibility until more recent times with the advent of nuclear technology and the development of biological and chemical warfare.

God is specifically safeguarding the existence of the remnant of Israel, his chosen people, “the elect”; but I think it also includes the whole body of believers on earth at that time, those who were saved as a result of the preaching and testimony of the two prophets/witnesses and the 144,000 Jewish witnesses sealed at the beginning of that period of time. (cf Revelation 7)

“elect” - 1588. **eklektos**, *ek-lek-tos*´; select; by implication, favorite:—chosen, elect.

Matt. 24:23 Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here *is* Christ, or there; believe *it* not.

Matt. 24:24 For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if *it were* possible, they shall deceive the very elect.

Matt. 24:25 Behold, I have told you before.

Matt. 24:26 Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert; go not forth: behold, *he is* in the secret chambers; believe *it* not.

Matt. 24:27 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.

Mark 13:21 And then if any man shall say to you, Lo, here *is* Christ; or, lo, *he is* there; believe *him* not:

Mark 13:22 For false Christs and false prophets shall rise, and shall shew signs and wonders, to seduce, if *it were* possible, even the elect.

Mark 13:23 But take ye heed: behold, I have foretold you all things.

“Then” – During the timeframe after the abomination of desolation, the great tribulation.

This statement is very appropriate at this time, since people are most susceptible to deceit when their need is great and things look hopeless. Anyone who claims to be able to provide deliverance and can back up that claim with signs and wonders will find people eager to follow him. Jesus is emphasizing that they are not to believe anyone claiming to be the Messiah.

Jesus is warning them in advance that these false Christs and prophets will be able to do great signs and wonders. The Greek for the word “signs” implies miracles, the supernatural. These signs and wonders will be so convincing that even the “elect” would be deceived—if that were possible. The obvious implication here is that it will not be possible. I believe that is because the Lord protects His sheep (“...no one can take them out of His hand” John 10:28-29). Still, the Lord reminds

them that they are to expect these powerful impostors; they are not to be deceived just because someone can work “miracles.” That brings to mind the magicians of Pharaoh who were able to duplicate some of Moses’ signs from the Lord. (Exodus 7)

Revelation 13:13 “And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men....”
[my note: speaking of the false prophet]

2 Thessalonians 2:9 “Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders....” [my note: speaking of the Antichrist]

Matthew tells us the way that Jesus will return to earth as King. He will not come in secret. He will come as visibly as lightning that shines from the east to the west—all the way around the globe. All people will be able to see Him. Upcoming verses will confirm this truth.

There is also an interesting passage in Psalms that can be applied to these verses.

Psalm 10:4-8 “The wicked, through the pride of his countenance, will not seek after God: God is not in all his thoughts. His ways are always grievous; thy judgments are far above out of his sight: as for all his enemies, he puffeth at them. He hath said in his heart, I shall not be moved: for I shall never be in adversity. His mouth is full of cursing and deceit and fraud: under his tongue is mischief and vanity. He sitteth in the lurking places of the villages: in the secret places doth he murder the innocent: his eyes are privily set against the poor.”

Only the wicked will try to deceive people by claiming special knowledge of secret things. They always have selfish motives. When Jesus returns, He will come in great glory with all the armies of heaven to defeat Satan and his armies and set up His earthly kingdom.

This is also not the first time that Jesus had taught His disciples this truth.

Luke 17:22-24 “And he said unto the disciples, The days will come, when ye shall desire to see one of the days of the Son of man, and ye shall not see it. And they shall say to you, See here; or, see there: go not after them, nor follow them. For as the lightning, that lighteneth out of the one part under heaven, shineth unto the other part under heaven; so shall also the Son of man be in his day.”

Matt. 24:28 For wheresoever the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together.

I like the wording of the New Living Translation for this verse: "Just as the gathering of vultures shows there is a carcass nearby, so these signs indicate that the end is near."

Arnold Fruchtenbaum had some interesting thoughts regarding this verse.

"Messiah gave a hint as to the place of His Second Coming. He said that where the body (Israel) is, the vultures will be gathered together (the Gentile nations coming against the body of Israel). The place of the Second Coming of Christ will be in that place where the body of Israel is located, and where the Gentile nations are gathered together. The exact place is known as Bozrah in Hebrew, or Petra in Greek: it is where the body will be gathered (Micah 2:12-13), where the vultures will come against them (Isaiah 34:1-7, 63:1-6) and where the Second Coming will occur (Habakkuk 3:3)."

This concludes the reworded / reorganized section. At this point the narrative from Luke definitely jumps in time to join Matthew and Mark in reference to the tribulation.

Matt. 24:29 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:

Mark 13:24 But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, Mark 13:25 And the stars of heaven shall fall, and the powers that are in heaven shall be shaken.

Luke 21:25 And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring;

Luke 21:26 Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken.

Mt & Mk: the sun will be darkened
 The moon shall not give her light
 The stars will fall from heaven

MML: The powers (forces) of the / in the heavens / heaven shall be shaken

L: there shall be signs in the sun, moon, and stars and upon the earth
 Distress of nations with perplexity (Men will be anxious because they don't understand what is happening.)
 The sea and the waves roaring
 Men's hearts failing them for fear and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth.

Context is clear that this is referencing events after the abomination of desolation during the subsequent great tribulation period, so I think this has to be associated with the vial judgments just preceding the Lord's visible return.

Other places in the Old Testament that could tie in to these verses in Matthew are:

Joel 3:15-16 "The sun and the moon shall be darkened, and the stars shall withdraw their shining. The LORD also shall roar out of Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem; and the heavens and the earth shall shake...."

This section of Joel is a reference to the battle of Armageddon.

Isaiah 13:9-13 "Behold, the day of the LORD cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate: and he shall destroy the sinners thereof out of it. For the stars of heaven and the constellations thereof shall not give their light: the sun shall be darkened in his going forth, and the moon shall not cause her light to shine....Therefore I will shake the heavens, and the earth shall remove out of her place, in the wrath of the LORD of hosts, and in the day of his fierce anger."

This chapter in Isaiah is a prophecy concerning the destruction of Babylon, the kingdom of the Antichrist.

Though there are many direct connections in the prophecies given in the scripture, there is no reason to assume that we have been given every piece of the puzzle—just every piece of the puzzle we need to stay strong in the faith and live victoriously as we await His coming.

Matt. 24:30 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.

Mark 13:26 And then shall they see the Son of man coming in the clouds with great power and glory.

Luke 21:27 And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.

Mt: Then shall appear **the sign** (the supernatural appearance) of the Son of Man in heaven
Then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn.

MML: Then shall they see the Son of Man

Mt – coming in the clouds of heaven

Mk – coming in the clouds

L – coming in a cloud

Mt & L – with power and great glory

Mk – with great power and glory

Several scriptures speak of Christ returning in the clouds. It's interesting to note that Matthew and Mark see Him coming in clouds (plural) and Luke in a cloud (singular). Maybe Luke is referencing the great cloud of witnesses (of which we raptured believers would then be a part) referenced in Hebrews; or maybe Matthew and Mark are speaking of the armies of heaven and Luke of the Shekinah glory cloud (representative of God's presence when He led the children out of Egypt and declaring His presence in the tabernacle).

*Hebrews 12:1 "Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great **a cloud of witnesses**, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us...."*

*Daniel 7:13-14 "I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came **with the clouds of heaven**, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed."*

*Matthew 26:64 "Jesus saith unto him, Thou hast said: nevertheless I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in **the clouds of heaven**."*

*Mark 13:26 "And then shall they see the Son of man **coming in the clouds** with great power and glory."*

*Mark 14:62 "And Jesus said, I am: and ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and **coming in the clouds of heaven**."*

*Revelation 1:7 "Behold, **he cometh with clouds**; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen."*

Matthew and Luke see Him coming with power and great glory, while Mark uses the phrasing great power and glory (in which the word *great* could modify either one or both words). I'm not sure there is any significance to this difference.

Again, Arnold Fruchtenbaum had some interesting thoughts on this section.

"From these passages, we learn that immediately after the Tribulation of those days, there will be a total blackout with no light penetrating at all, followed by a sudden, glorious, tremendous light that will penetrate through the blackout. This is the Shechinah Glory, and this Shechinah light will be the sign of the Second Coming of Christ."

Matt. 24:31 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.

Mark 13:27 And then shall he send his angels, and shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from the uttermost part of the earth to the uttermost part of heaven.

Mt & Mk – He shall send His angels

Mt – with a sound of a trumpet

Mt & Mk – and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds

Mt – from one end of heaven to the other

Mk – from the uttermost part of the earth to the uttermost part of heaven

“he” = the Son of Man, Jesus

Trumpets have many uses in the scripture that are distinguished by how trumpet is blown.

1Corinthians 14:7-8 “And even things without life giving sound, whether pipe or harp, except they give a distinction in the sounds, how shall it be known what is piped or harped? For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle?”

This “sound” of a trumpet could also reference the voice of God as described in Revelation.

Revelation 1:10-11 “I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet, Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last....”

It has always been God’s intent to regather all of Israel and that all of Israel should be saved.

Ezekiel 37:11 & 13-14a “Then he said unto me, Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel....And ye shall know that I am the LORD, when I have opened your graves, O my people, and brought you up out of your graves, And shall put my spirit in you, and ye shall live, and I shall place you in your own land....”

Romans 11:26 “And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob....”

I believe this promise, this regathering of all Jewish people, will be completely fulfilled when the Lord returns as King and places Israel in the position of prominence among the nations. This is what is being pictured here.

Luke 21:28 And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh.

What things? The signs being discussed previously—false Christs, wars, earthquakes, famines, the signs in the sun, moon, and stars, and the powers of the heavens being shaken. That is the time to be looking up and lifting up your heads, because Christ will soon (in our perspective) be coming to rule as King of Kings. I thought the Greek for the phrase “look up” was revealing; it is a word expressing elation for the expectation. The phrase “lift up your heads” is a reference to the physical process of looking toward the skies.

It’s also important to note that the instruction is for when things **begin** to come to pass. It is the onset of the final signs that should get one excited.

Matt. 24:32 Now learn a parable of the fig tree; When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh:

Matt. 24:33 So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, *even* at the doors.

Mark 13:28 Now learn a parable of the fig tree; When her branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is near:

Mark 13:29 So ye in like manner, when ye shall see these things come to pass, know that it is nigh, *even* at the doors.

Luke 21:29 And he spake to them a parable; Behold the fig tree, and all the trees;

Luke 21:30 When they now shoot forth, ye see and know of your own selves that summer is now nigh at hand.

Luke 21:31 So likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand.

MML – Parable of the fig tree

Mt & Mk – When the branch is yet tender and putteth forth leaves...

L – Behold the fig tree **and all trees** – When **they** now shoot forth...

Mt & Mk – you know that summer is near

L – ye see and know of your own selves that summer is now nigh at hand.

I know that many prophecy scholars equate the fig tree with Israel, but I personally don't see this as the primary point being made here although I do believe that the truth of Israel's rebirth is the most significant sign regarding the nearness of the second coming of Jesus. The Lord is drawing a word picture here. According to *Eerdman's Dictionary*, the first fruit of the fig tree appears in February before the leaves appear in April/June; when the leaves appear, the fruit is usually ripe. When you see the leaves shooting forth on the fig tree, you know that summer is right around the corner. Luke even adds the phrase "and all the trees" since the sprouting of the leaves on the trees in spring are the harbinger of summer soon to come.

Mt & L – Likewise

Mk – In like manner

Just as the sprouting of leaves is a sign that summer is coming, the emergence of the signs previously discussed are announcing that the kingdom of God is at hand—the return of Jesus to rule as King on planet earth.

Matt. 24:34 Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled.

Mark 13:30 Verily I say unto you, that this generation shall not pass, till all these things be done.

Luke 21:32 Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass away, till all be fulfilled.

MML – Verily, this generation shall not pass

Mt – til all these things be fulfilled.

Mk – til all these things be done

L – til all be fulfilled

Which generation? The one that sees the signs. Once hard labor sets in the baby is soon to follow. These signs include events that are a part of the 70th week of Daniel, the tribulation period, which is seven years long. The generation that sees these last labor pains will see the fulfillment of the prophecy.

Note: False labor sometimes precedes onset of actual labor. It is similar to actual birth pains, but is premature. Events could happen similar to the birth pains before actual labor begins—but even false labor is a signal of labor soon to commence. Labor pains that produce birth continue to increase in intensity and frequency until birth occurs.

In his book The Last Times, Joseph Seiss defines as generation as "a race, a class, a family of people," and the Greek supports his definition. His conclusion: "The plain meaning of the Savior is that the family of Abraham, the Israelitish people, should not pass out of existence as a distinct class or race before all these predictions should be verified." I can't really argue the truth of that statement.

Matt. 24:35 Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.

Mark 13:31 Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away.

Luke 21:33 Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away.

These verses are self-explanatory. There will be a new heaven and earth, but God's word is sure and everlasting.

Isaiah 51:6 "Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look upon the earth beneath: for the heavens shall vanish away like smoke, and the earth shall wax old like a garment, and they that dwell therein shall die in like manner: but my salvation shall be for ever, and my righteousness shall not be abolished."

Isaiah 65:17 "For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind."

2Peter 3:13 "Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness."

Isaiah 40:8 "The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever."

Matt. 24:36 But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only.

Mark 13:32 But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father.

What day and hour? The day that Christ will return to earth as King has been the subject. This is a little bit confusing in that once the 70th week of Daniel starts, a specific timeline is given regarding its duration. I think the key is that no one before those who experience the tribulation will have a clue regarding the day or hour. Even those who live through the tribulation will not be able to be specific as to the hour.

The other hard thing to understand is that the Father has information that the Son does not have. Again, I think the answer is found in the fact that the Son at the time of this prophecy is functioning in the human realm through the leadership and teaching of the Spirit. Until He was resurrected to His glorified state, He was just as dependent on revelation through the Spirit as we are now. It is also thought-provoking to know that neither do the angels in heaven know the appointed time. They know the plan and they helped reveal it to John. They just don't know the exact timing.

I found a helpful explanation by Dr. George Madray regarding this passage:

"The above passage (Matt. 24:36) was certainly true while Christ appeared in human flesh, but it did not pertain to Christ

in His post-resurrection / glorified state, approximately forty days later, nor does it pertain to all people future to the time that it was stated. It is axiomatic, that all will know when it is all over. The words translated there as "no one knows" do not mean "no one will know." Actually, the word in the Greek is *eido*, which is used in the perfect tense and describes an action which is viewed as past tense. Accordingly, it should be translated as it is in the YLT (Young's Literal Translation) as "no one hath known." No one having known before Christ's resurrection in any way precludes everyone from knowing later. Therefore, let us not stumble over one passage, but continue to seek from the prophetic word of God."

From the perspective of the Old Testament saints, the coming of the Messiah would end up being a two-part process—first as the Suffering Servant and next as Victorious King. That could lend credence to the same type of perspective in the eyes of the New Testament saints—first as Deliverer of the church and next as Victorious King.

Although the Greek for the words *day* and *hour* allow for more general time references, it would seem that their use as a unit is significant to a specific day and hour which would include the thought of a specific year.

It's hard not to think of this as a reference to the rapture, the catching away of the church before the start of Daniel's 70th week, since that concept is presented in scripture as something that could happen at any moment with no preceding signs of identification, but that is not the context here.

Mark 13:33 Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is.

"take heed" = behold, beware, perceive

"watch" = to be sleepless; the root word defined sleep as "spiritual torpor"; torpor = inactivity, insensibility, numbness

"pray" = to God, to supplicate, to entreat, to ask for humbly and earnestly

This is addressing spiritual readiness. We are to be perceptive of what is happening around us—able to recognize the signs given by the Lord. We are to be spiritually alert and not affected by the world's outlook.

2Peter 3:4 "And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation."

We are to be approaching God with earnestness and eagerness for His return, even though we don't know when that will be.

Matt. 24:37 But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.

Matt. 24:38 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,

Matt. 24:39 And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.

I continue to struggle with this section. Though the context throughout has been the return of Jesus as King and the tribulation period, I believe after reading through this again, that the plain meaning has to apply to the rapture. Jesus is using an example of life going on as usual when He comes. That just won't be the case in the tribulation—especially as it gets closer to the end and people on earth are suffering the effects of the vial judgments. Just as with the other prophets, this prophecy is not necessarily revealed in chronological format.

Again, the Lord is painting a word picture. I think the main point of these verses is that life will be going on as normal, just as it did until the very day that Noah entered the ark. Only then did the people recognize the truth of Noah's preaching. Only then did they realize the truth that they would die in the flood.

I think it is interesting to note that Noah knew all along that God was going to destroy "all flesh wherein is the breath of life" under heaven.

Genesis 6:13 & 17 "And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth. And, behold, I, even I, do bring a flood of waters upon the earth, to destroy all flesh, wherein is the breath of life, from under heaven; and every thing that is in the earth shall die."

Scripture also tells us that Noah was a preacher of righteousness.

2Peter 2:5 "And spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly...."

This tells me that his situation was much like that of Christians who share the truth of God's coming today. He knew the truth and was faithful to preach it, but the people ignored his message because they didn't believe it. We who have been redeemed by Jesus know the truth and are faithfully declaring it to those around us, but they choose to ignore it because they don't believe it.

Noah entering and sealed in the ark = Israel fleeing to and protected in the wilderness

In thinking this through again, I think Noah better represents the raptured body of believers that have been declaring and will escape the coming judgment just as Noah and his family escaped the flood.

I also don't deny that there is a secondary truth in making a comparison between how things were in the days of Noah and how things will be before the tribulation that will coincide with God's wrath and destruction of the heathen when He returns as King of Kings.

Genesis 6:5 & 12-13 "And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually....And God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth. And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth."

Again, this is not the first time that Jesus had taught the disciples this truth.

Luke 17:26-30 "And as it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man. They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all. Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all. Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed."

Jesus also included the example of Lot in His earlier teaching to emphasize His point.

I think the important truth to note is that God is going to deliver His own before exacting judgment on the wicked. The phrase in v38 "before the flood" establishes the timeframe as before the judgment begins.

"and knew not until" – This indicates many will not recognize the truth until the time of judgment comes—at which point it is too late. It would also tie in with the truth of 2Thessalonians.

2Thessalonians 2:10-12 "And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness."

Could this be the turning point regarding the people of Israel and their faith in the Messiah? The teaching of the rapture is widely known today, and I think it will serve to cause many Jews to realize that Jesus was who He claimed to be and the teachings of the New Testament are to be taken as scripture.

Matt. 24:40 Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left.

Matt. 24:41 Two women shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken, and the other left.

Matt. 24:42 Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come.

“taken” = to receive near, i.e. associate with oneself (in any familiar or intimate act or relation)

“left” = to send forth, in various applications (as follow):—cry, forgive, forsake, lay aside, leave, let (alone, be, go, have), omit, put (send) away, remit, suffer, yield up.

“know not what hour” – This emphasizes the need to be expectant daily.

I think the most natural reading of these verses fits the rapture. It is describing when some will be “taken” (Greek: “received near” – to be with Jesus) and others left behind to go through the coming time of judgment.

The emphasis of these verses is on being prepared—watching. The root word in Greek for *watch* is a reference to mental awareness. Men and women of faith should be ever vigilant and expectant regarding the Lord’s return. The Lord will continue to emphasize the importance of being prepared by presenting that truth in several different ways in the coming verses.

Mark 13:34 For the Son of man is as a man taking a far journey, who left his house, and gave authority to his servants, and to every man his work, and commanded the porter to watch.

Mark 13:35 Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cockcrowing, or in the morning:

Mark 13:36 Lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping.

Mark 13:37 And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch.

Mark explains that the time between Jesus’ first and second comings can be illustrated by a man who is taking a journey (“far” is not in the original); there is no indication of how long he will be gone. He has left His home, the place where he is in authority. Knowing that he will be gone for an indefinite period time, he delegates duties to each of his servants and commands the porter to watch/be vigilant. The porter is the one that controls entrance to his property.

Jesus then makes the application to his audience. You are supposed to stay vigilant and busy at your assigned duties, because you don’t know when I am coming back. It could be at any time of the day or night. Obviously, He is not saying that we are not supposed to sleep; we are to stay diligent with our responsibilities—not being negligent—focused on the fact that He will return. That constant awareness should be a strong motivation to be found doing His will when He returns.

Verse 37 is a statement that what is being said to this small group of Jewish believers is applicable to all believers.

Matt. 24:43 But know this, that if the goodman of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up.

Matt. 24:44 Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh.

Jesus now uses a different word picture. He tells us that the master of the house would be able to protect his house from thieves if he knew when they were coming.

In other words, the Son of man is going to come like a thief—without warning.

Revelation 3:3 “Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee.”

Revelation 16:15 “Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame.”

These verses from Revelation tie directly to the truth the Lord is presenting here in Matthew. He will come as a thief *to those who are not watching*. The one who is truly watching will be prepared—will not be in a position of shame to meet the Savior. This is a truth that has become much more important and real to me as I have grown older and more absorbed in His Word. I am so much more aware of what I am doing each minute. I so want the Spirit to be at home in my being. This makes it much easier to make choices in entertainment and in how I prioritize my time.

Matt. 24:45 Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season?

Matt. 24:46 Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing.

Matt. 24:47 Verily I say unto you, That he shall make him ruler over all his goods.

“meat” = nourishment

“shall find so doing” = being faithful and wise, performing his duties well

Jesus is saying that those believers who are found faithful and wise and obedient when He returns will be given joint ownership of all that Jesus possesses. What is one of the main duties of the faithful and wise servant? Nourishing the

household, the family. Not only that, but giving them the food appropriate to their stage of development. This is true not only for physical well being, but for spiritual well being. According to our position and maturity in the family, we are to be nourishing/feeding those who are younger and/or more immature with a spiritual diet that promotes spiritual growth and maturity.

Matt. 24:48 But and if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming;

Matt. 24:49 And shall begin to smite *his* fellowservants, and to eat and drink with the drunken;

Matt. 24:50 The lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for *him*, and in an hour that he is not aware of,

Matt. 24:51 And shall cut him asunder, and appoint *him* his portion with the hypocrites: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

There will be many who think they don't have to worry about the Lord's return. After all, He has been gone a long time. The wicked/worthless servants tend to think they are not going to get caught. Left to their own devices, they usually end up in fights with one another and fulfilling the lusts of the flesh to the excess.

Thomas Ice had a pertinent quote regarding this section: "It is very important what one thinks about the future since it impacts present behavior."

When the Lord returns, those *servants* will be identified for who they really are—hypocrites, actors under an assumed name. They may claim to know Jesus, but their actions will prove otherwise. This will cause great crying and rage at being exposed for the wicked people that they are.

Not everyone who claims to be a servant is a true servant.

Matthew 7:21 "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity."

"his portion" – This phrase jumped out to me. God already knows (and has known from the beginning) who would make up this category of people and each one has "his portion" in judgment allocated for eternity.

Luke 21:34 And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares.

Luke 21:35 For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth.

Luke 21:36 Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man.

“surfeiting” - 2897. **kraipale**, *krahee-pal'-ay*; properly, a headache (as a seizure of pain) from drunkenness, i.e. (by implication) a debauch (by analogy, a glut):—surfeiting.

The warning is to guard against behavior that would cause you to be caught unawares at Jesus' coming—things such as surfeiting (eating to the point of sickness), drunkenness and the cares (distractions) of this life. (I have to remind myself that Jesus is talking to His followers here.) Jesus' coming will actually be a snare/trap for everyone living on planet earth at that time.

“escape” – 1628. **ekpheugo**, to flee out

“that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass and to stand before the Son of man.”—“All these things” is a reference to the whole time of God's wrath. There will be a body of believers who will be accounted worthy to escape this judgment—those who make up the true church.

The ability to “stand” before the Son of man reminds me of Psalm 1. There the reference is regarding not being able to stand.

Psalm 1:5 “Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous.”

The wording is difficult in the KJV, but the idea is that the ungodly will not be upheld or successful when they stand in judgment before God; they will stand condemned. No sinner will be found in the company of those declared righteous for eternity through their faith in God and all that His truth declares.

This implies that the righteous will be able to stand before the Lord in righteousness during this time of judgment.

I expect to be back to this section many times in the future as long as the Lord tarries. I continue to ask for understanding. I think it is better to lay out the thought processes as they come and follow them to conclusion. I don't want to force

meanings based on my mindset. I want the Holy Spirit to teach me the truth and will continue to be open to correction and enlightenment.

As we go into the next two parables, we need to remember that they are emphasizing the importance of “watching” with expectation and preparation. Each parable depicts those who are saved—who are obedient servants, who are prepared, and who are investing of their God-given abilities—AND those who are lost—who are servants in name only, who are unprepared, and who are wasting their God-given abilities. The emphasis in the first parable is on those waiting to go in to celebrate the wedding—not the bride.

Reminder – In context the Lord is speaking to the Jewish remnant that will be living at the end of the age prior to the millennial kingdom.

Matt. 25:1 Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom.

Matt. 25:2 And five of them were wise, and five *were* foolish.

Matt. 25:3 They that *were* foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them:

Matt. 25:4 But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps.

Matt. 25:5 While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept.

Matt. 25:6 And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him.

Matt. 25:7 Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps.

Matt. 25:8 And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out.

Matt. 25:9 But the wise answered, saying, *Not so*; lest there be not enough for us and you: but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves.

Matt. 25:10 And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut.

Matt. 25:11 Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us.

Matt. 25:12 But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not.

Matt. 25:13 Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh.

These teachings are not found in Mark and Luke. There is no break in the discussion. Jesus is continuing His discourse regarding the end of the age and His coming again. Up until now, the kingdom of heaven has been present in the lives of believers, but not as an actual visible, earthly kingdom. The kingdom is now going to be established on earth with Jesus reigning as King.

Context of the passage is identified first – The kingdom of heaven. This follows right in line with those who are able to stand before the Son of man at his coming to establish His kingdom on earth.

Again, the Lord is making a point about watching and being prepared for the unknown arrival of the bridegroom. He had already taught with reference to himself as the bridegroom.

Matthew 9:15 "And Jesus said unto them, Can the children of the bridechamber mourn, as long as the bridegroom is with them? but the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken from them, and then shall they fast."

An example is presented of ten virgins (maidens, unmarried daughters) waiting for the bridegroom. According to my understanding of the Jewish wedding, the marriage is celebrated after the honeymoon week. It stands out to me that the focus is on the guests or attendants at the wedding—not the bride. The bride isn't even mentioned. Why? She is already

there. She has just completed her honeymoon week—the week of seven years of tribulation that has produced a purified remnant of Israel that has accepted Jesus as Messiah.

It would seem that they all expected the bridegroom, but they were not all prepared. Only the five wise virgins had oil in their lamps and extra oil in vessels to replenish the oil that was burned if needed; the five foolish virgins had only the oil in their lamps, which they allowed to burn out.

Oil in the lamps provide light.

Light = knowledge

Extra oil = preparation based on that knowledge

2Corinthians 4:6 “For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.”

Both the wise and foolish virgins possessed oil (knowledge) to begin with and had the ability to purchase more. How do we obtain more knowledge, more light, more understanding? Through the teaching of the Holy Spirit. How do we get access to the teaching ministry of the Spirit? Through the saving grace of the Lord Jesus. The wise virgins had responded in faith to the knowledge of the gospel message. They were prepared for the return of the bridegroom.

Considering the context, I think the application is to those who make it through the tribulation, the Jewish remnant in particular, and whether or not they get to enter the earthly kingdom.

I was listening to Jimmy DeYoung this morning, and as he was emphasizing that these teachings were regarding the Jewish people—not the church—all of a sudden a light bulb went off in my head. I had always struggled with the fact that all ten virgins were looking for the bridegroom. It hit me that all Jews are looking for the Messiah to come, but only those who have placed their faith in Jesus as the Messiah would get to go to the marriage. They all had knowledge that Messiah was coming. The extra oil referenced being prepared for His return through recognizing and placing faith in Jesus as the Messiah (the bridegroom).

As in the previous parables, the Lord (the bridegroom) returns when He is not expected.

Another truth seems to be jumping out at me. Once the Lord comes, it's too late to change your position. Your choice has been made. This is something that has bothered me a lot, since I have talked to many people who indicate that they'll make their decision when the rapture happens, or when they recognize the antichrist, etc. I'm just not sure there is a

second chance for those who have heard the gospel message and chosen to reject it. There are verses in 2Thessalonians that seem to support this thought.

2Thessalonians 2:8-12 "And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness."

Bottom line is that I wouldn't want anyone staking their eternal destiny on the premise of a "second chance."

Matt. 25:14 For the kingdom of heaven is as a man travelling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods.

Matt. 25:15 And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability; and straightway took his journey.

Again, the subject of the parable is the kingdom of heaven. This teaching seems to enhance the teaching of the last parable in chapter 24 regarding the faithful and wise servant and the evil servant as well as the teaching from Mark 13:34-37.

In this parable, when the master leaves, he gives money to three of his servants based on his assessment of their ability to make wise investments on his behalf. Then he promptly leaves for his journey abroad.

Matt. 25:16 Then he that had received the five talents went and traded with the same, and made *them* other five talents.

Matt. 25:17 And likewise he that *had received* two, he also gained other two.

Matt. 25:18 But he that had received one went and digged in the earth, and hid his lord's money.

Matt. 25:19 After a long time the lord of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them.

Matt. 25:20 And so he that had received five talents came and brought other five talents, saying, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me five talents: behold, I have gained beside them five talents more.

Matt. 25:21 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.

Matt. 25:22 He also that had received two talents came and said, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me two talents: behold, I have gained two other talents beside them.

Matt. 25:23 His lord said unto him, Well done, 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.

The servants who had received the five talents and the two talents immediately went to work. The servant with the one talent didn't invest the money; he hid it in the earth for safekeeping. *After a long time* the master comes home and wants to see how the servants have profited him. Both the servant with the five and the servant with the two talents had doubled his money through their diligence and wise investment. The servants were rewarded commensurate with their performance according to their assessed abilities.

Matt. 25:24 Then he which had received the one talent came and said, Lord, I knew thee that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed:

Matt. 25:25 And I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth: lo, *there* thou hast *that is* thine.

Matt. 25:26 His lord answered and said unto him, *Thou* wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strawed:

Matt. 25:27 Thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and *then* at my coming I should have received mine own with usury.

The third servant made excuses as to why he had not put his talent to work. As I think of the application, I can't help but think of the book of James.

James 2:18 & 26 "Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works....For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also."

It would seem that the third servant was a servant in name only; he only had fear of the master, not respect or obedience to the master. He was lost—an unbeliever.

There is a section in John Walvoord's Matthew, Thy Kingdom Come that I would like to include as food for thought at this point.

"If the servant had actually believed what he had said, it should have made him all the more diligent....An interesting question that is not directly answered in the text is why the one-talent man did not put it in the bank....So the wicked one-talent man likewise reasoned: If my Lord returns, I will be able to give him back his talent and cannot be accused of being a thief; but if he does not return, there will be no record that the money belongs to him, such as would be true if I deposited it in the bank, and then I will be able to use the money myself. His basic problem, like the problem of Judas, was a lack of faith. The one-talent man did not believe that it was

sure his lord was coming back. It is therefore clear that his basic problem was that of being an unbeliever, not simply being unfaithful in service.

Matt. 25:28 Take therefore the talent from him, and give *it* unto him which hath ten talents.

Matt. 25:29 For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath.

Matt. 25:30 And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

We have two groups of people here—the *haves* and the *have nots*. The *haves* are in a position to be blessed in abundance. The *have nots* are going to lose everything worth having and will be cast into outer darkness (a place of shadow) where they will experience the tears of mourning and pain so intense as to cause gnashing of the teeth.

“from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath” – This is a hard phrase. There is a verse in Luke that adds a little more insight:

Luke 8:18 “Take heed therefore how ye hear: for whosoever hath, to him shall be given; and whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he seemeth to have.”

As I continue to meditate on these verses, I realize that God has given everyone abilities that can be used to His glory. It’s up to us to choose to use those abilities to His glory or not. For His good pleasure we are and were created (Rev 4:11). Technically, we are all servants of God. Those who choose not to serve God or to use His giftings to them to His glory are identified as unprofitable/worthless servants.

There is another parable in Luke that has great similarity to this teaching.

*Luke 19:11-27 “And as they heard these things, he added and spake a parable, because he was nigh to Jerusalem, **and because they thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear.** He said therefore, A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return. And he called his ten servants, and delivered them ten pounds, and said unto them, Occupy till I come. **But his citizens hated him, and sent a message after him, saying, We will not have this man to reign over us.** And it came to pass, that when he was returned, **having received the kingdom,** then he commanded these servants to be called unto him, to whom he had given the money, that he might know how much every man had gained by trading. Then came the first, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained ten pounds. And he said unto him, Well, thou good servant: because thou hast been faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities. And the second came, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained five pounds. And he said likewise to him, Be thou also over five cities. And another came, saying, Lord, behold, here is thy pound, which I have kept laid up*

*in a napkin: For I feared thee, because thou art an austere man: thou takest up that thou layedst not down, and reapest that thou didst not sow. And he saith unto him, Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee, thou wicked servant. Thou knewest that I was an austere man, taking up that I laid not down, and reaping that I did not sow: Wherefore then gavest not thou my money into the bank, that at my coming I might have required mine own with usury. And he said unto them that stood by, Take from him the pound, and give it to him that hath ten pounds. (And they said unto him, Lord, he hath ten pounds.) For I say unto you, That unto every one which hath shall be given; and from him that hath not, even that he hath shall be taken away from him. **But those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me.**"*

The audience for this teaching included more than just his disciples. The context of the teaching was the establishment of the earthly kingdom of God. The servants were all given money with which to invest and make profit for the nobleman. They were to "occupy" (get busy, put the money to work) until the master returned. The actions of the servants show that some invested more wisely and profited the master more than others. They were rewarded according to their profitability. The one who did nothing with his assigned portion, lost the allotted portion but was not cast away.* The citizens who rejected the leadership of the nobleman (i.e., those who refused to acknowledge Jesus as the Messiah sent by God), his enemies, were slain. The two categories in this teaching were identified as *servants* (those who accepted the authority of the master as their king) and *citizens* (enemies who rejected the authority of the master). The servants were judged in order to determine whether they would be rewarded; the enemies were judged as deserving of condemnation/death.

*This seems to connect to the judgment of the believer regarding rewards as taught by Paul.

1 Corinthians 3:13–15 "Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire."

Matt. 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:

Matt. 25:32 And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth *his* sheep from the goats:

Matt. 25:33 And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left.

Jesus continues in the context of when He returns as King to planet earth. At that time He will be accompanied by the angels and will assume His throne. All those who have made it through the tribulation, the 70th week of Daniel, alive will be gathered before Him. (The Greek for *nations* is a reference to "races.") He uses the picture of a shepherd separating

the sheep from the goats to explain how He will separate the people before His throne. The sheep will be placed on His right hand and the goats on the left.

Matt. 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:

Those on the right hand of Jesus the King, the sheep (predominantly Jewish), will be invited to inherit the kingdom; the context is in reference to the earthly kingdom, the millennium, the 1000-year reign. This inheritance is identified as having been prepared for this body of believers from the very conception in the mind of God (from the Greek for *foundation*) of the world, before creation.

Matt. 25:35 For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in:

Matt. 25:36 Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me.

What qualifies the sheep to inherit the kingdom? Providing for the needs of the King. How?

Matt. 25:37 Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed *thee*? or thirsty, and gave *thee* drink?

Matt. 25:38 When saw we thee a stranger, and took *thee* in? or naked, and clothed *thee*?

Matt. 25:39 Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee?

Matt. 25:40 And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done *it* unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done *it* unto me.

By providing for the needs of His brethren. Who are His brethren? I hear many who reference the brethren as only composed of Jews. I think at this time that the majority of the sheep will be Jews, but I think it will also include believing Gentiles. Those who **do** the will of the Father, who are righteous because of their faith, who are led by the Spirit of God, and who are rich in faith and love God are those who are declared to be brethren, joint-heirs with Christ, and heirs of the kingdom.

Matthew 12:48-50 "But he answered and said unto him that told him, Who is my mother? and who are my brethren? And he stretched forth his hand toward his disciples, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother."

Romans 4:13 "For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith."

Romans 8:14 "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together."

James 2:5 "Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?"

Matt. 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:

Matt. 25:42 For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink:

Matt. 25:43 I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not.

Matt. 25:44 Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee?

Matt. 25:45 Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did *it* not to one of the least of these, ye did *it* not to me.

Those who have been identified as goats and are on His left hand are told to go to the place prepared for the devil and his angels. It was not prepared for man, because man was created to fellowship with God. It was prepared for Satan and his followers. When man chose to reject God and follow Satan, he "inherited" Satan's punishment. The "goats" had not shown any compassion for those who loved God and lived righteously in faith before Him. Why? Obviously, because they were not part of the family of faith; their actions (or lack of action) were proof of their position before God.

Matt. 25:46 And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.

This verse is making a distinction between the goats and the sheep. "These," the goats, will go away into everlasting punishment, and the "righteous," the sheep, into life eternal.

The question becomes as to when the goats actually are thrown into the lake of fire. The wording sounds as if it is immediate; as if this is their time before the throne of God in judgment. It could also mean that they are just being

designated to join those who will have part in the second death to await their time of judgment at the great white throne. Frankly, I don't think it really matters; the point is that the eternal destiny of both these groups, the sheep and the goats, is sealed at this point in time.

It is interesting that both the sheep and the goats questioned the Lord as to why. The sheep as to how they had met His needs, and the goats as to how they had not met His needs. The sheep were obviously not depending on their works for salvation. The goats were counting on their works, but obviously had no clue about obedience in faith to the Lord. Again, the emphasis is that their actions or lack thereof proved their standing before God as righteous or unrighteous. They did not understand that all their righteousnesses are filthy rags and that they needed to be clothed in the righteousness of Jesus. This would fit in with the Old Testament dispensation of faith proved by obedience without the seal of the Holy Spirit. This is the end of the 70th week of Daniel and distinct from the church age.

In this chapter of Matthew, Jesus has used three different ways to emphasize the importance of being expectant and prepared for His coming to earth to establish His kingdom. In each case, there are those who are expectant and prepared, and those who are not—those who are rewarded and those who are punished/cursed. You are either in one group or the other—there are no in-betweens.