

Sunday July 19th 2015
Matthew Chapters 24-25
Part Six

1). Mt 25:31 ¶ *"When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory. 32 "All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats. 33 "And He will set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left.*

a). All that we have looked at so far in connection with the answer to Christ's disciples' question concerning the desolation of the house of Israel and the sign of His coming and the end of the age [Matthew 24:3] has presented events as they must unfold with respect to the Jews during the time we know as the tribulation, leading into Christ's Millennial Kingdom and Christians with respect to the time of preparation seen during this dispensation, preceding the tribulation, but also in anticipation of the Millennial Kingdom. As we look at all this though we will realize that any reference to the end of the age must also take into account the Lord's dealings with yet another group of the eternally saved within God's economy, those who are neither Jews nor Christians – the Gentiles - those who have been eternally saved and have survived through the horror of the Great tribulation and the events which follow it. And again the whole focus here, with regards to these Gentiles remains, as it has been from the outset, the coming Kingdom of Christ.

b). The timeframe for the verses we have just read takes us beyond the end of the Tribulation, really to the very end of the 75 days that come after it, on the cusp of the Kingdom itself.

c). And in order to make sense of these events we will need to remember this verse from the beginning of our study, a verse which is part of the overview of the tribulation that the Lord presents to His disciples in preparation to answering their questions – Mt 24:14 *"And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.*

And we will remember that 'this gospel of the Kingdom' is preached to the Gentile nations by the 144000 Jewish evangelists during the final 3 ½ years of

the Tribulation as a result of the 144000, who were previously caught up to God and His throne to escape the wrath of Antichrist, being sent back to the earth from the heavens with this message. Then, as a result of their ministry during this time, amidst the appalling and ever worsening conditions on the earth, conditions which would be hard to describe, a great number of Gentiles will be eternally saved having heard the gospel of grace and then, having passed from death unto life, they have heard the message concerning Christ's imminent Kingdom. A very large number of these Gentiles who hear the gospel of grace and then receive the message concerning Christ's Kingdom will be killed during this time and many others who survive the horror of the Great Tribulation will, beyond the battle of Armageddon, be gathered together for judgment, just as we saw in our opening scripture.

d). And as these eternally saved Gentiles are gathered together for judgment we will realize that there is only one thing that will ever be judged with respect to the eternally saved and Christ's Kingdom and that is works of faithfulness and unfaithfulness. And we will remember that Christ's Kingdom cannot begin until all the eternally saved have passed through a time of judgment with respect to having a place in that Kingdom. Eternal salvation has always been the precursor to performing works of faithful obedience or not with respect to Christ's Kingdom leading to a separation of the faithful from the unfaithful.

e). The judgment of those Gentiles who will have been eternally saved through the ministry of the 144000 and then killed through various means during the Tribulation is seen recorded in - *Re 20:4 And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. Then I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received his mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. 5 But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished.*

Those seen here who sit on the thrones, to whom judgment [rulership] has been committed are those that we have come to call the Tribulation martyrs and although the actual judgment that takes place prior to these events is not shown here we can know it has occurred because of the separation that we see. The faithful have been placed upon thrones and rulership has been given to them, but the rest of the dead, those who are eternally saved but have been unfaithful, do not have 'life' with respect to rulership again 'until the 1000 years were finished'.

f). Then the nature of the faithfulness exercised by the martyrs is shown to us through the second sentence in v4, *Then I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received his mark on their foreheads or on their hands.*

And this action on the part of the martyrs can only be in response to that which they had received through hearing 'this gospel of the Kingdom' – faith can only ever be in response to that which God has said – and so we can assume that they will have been taught from the scriptures concerning the events they have witnessed firsthand leading up to and during the tribulation, knowing full well who Antichrist/the beast is and what the final outcome for him will be. And knowing this and believing this, having faith, they have refused to worship the beast, not taking his mark. And for them, as a result of their faithfulness, there is reward - *And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.*

g). And although it is not stated directly in these scriptures it would have to be that 'the rest of the dead', those who are eternally saved but unfaithful, did worship the beast and his image and did receive his mark – their actions being contrary to those who had faith. Although they will have heard the same message concerning Antichrist, the tribulation and Christ's Kingdom, they will have chosen not to believe. And their reward is to experience 'death', separation from a position in Christ's Kingdom – not having life with respect to rulership again until the 1000 years of the Kingdom are completed and by comparing scripture with scripture we would have to conclude that they will have to suffer the same consequences as the unfaithful servant and the foolish virgins and the unfaithful OT saints. Incredible though it seems, given the circumstances they will find themselves in at this time, believing that which God has said will remain, as it always has been, a personal choice and a choice that will require a price to be paid. For these unfaithful eternally saved Gentiles they will not be willing to pay this price in the short term and in this respect they are really no different to the unfaithful Christian from this dispensation.

h). In fact taking the mark of the beast seen here in Revelation contains the same idea as us choosing to side with our enemy as a result of our actions in the present. We might remember the condemnation the Lord gives to the eternally saved religious leaders of Israel recorded in - Joh 8:44 *"You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is*

no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it.

Now obviously the devil is not the literal father of Israel's religious leaders, but their actions, in plotting to kill the Christ aligns them with Satan in such a way that they can be seen as his children.

i). We might also remember this with regards to Peter in - Lu 4:8 *And Jesus answered and said to him, "Get behind Me, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the LORD your God, and Him only you shall serve.'"*

Again, obviously Peter is not Satan, but his actions, described in Matthew and Mark as, *not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men*, places Peter in a position where he and Satan are on the same page and in our verse from Luke we see that Peter's actions are equated with worshipping Satan, hence the Lord's rebuke.

j). It is an easy thing to see how all of this can be applied to the experience and practice of Christians in the present, particularly those who give heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons.

k). For the eternally saved Gentiles who survive the Tribulation their judgment at what we have come to call 'the sheep and goats judgment' must be after exactly the same fashion – works of faithfulness or unfaithfulness with respect to that which they had received within the context of 'this gospel of the Kingdom', with a separation made between those who have been faithful and those who have been unfaithful.

l). And this is exactly what we see - Mt 25:34 *"Then the King will say to those on His right hand, 'Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: 35 'for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; 36 'I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me.' 37 "Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed You, or thirsty and give You drink? 38 'When did we see You a stranger and take You in, or naked and clothe You? 39 'Or when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?' 40 "And the King will answer and say to them, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.'*

Faithfulness within the context of this judgment will have been determined by how the eternally saved Gentiles have treated the Jewish people, whom Antichrist will be trying to exterminate, during the final 3 ½ years of the Tribulation – and again their treatment of the Jews can only come out of having faith in that which God had said. Now we should be careful not to think

that this group received a different message from those who were killed whom we saw earlier – they all will have heard ‘this gospel of the Kingdom’ – And if we think about this for a moment we will realize that any teaching from the scriptures concerning the period of time in which they find themselves must include God’s purpose for Israel - Isa 14:24 ¶ *The LORD of hosts has sworn, saying, "Surely, as I have thought, so it shall come to pass, And as I have purposed, so it shall stand: 25 That I will break the Assyrian in My land, And on My mountains tread him underfoot. Then his yoke shall be removed from them, And his burden removed from their shoulders. 26 This is the purpose that is purposed against the whole earth, And this is the hand that is stretched out over all the nations. 27 For the LORD of hosts has purposed, And who will annul it? His hand is stretched out, And who will turn it back?"*

Essentially then what all the eternally saved Gentiles will hear is the same message that we have heard – it really couldn’t be anything else.

m). What the Lord has done through the description of faithfulness seen through the faithful in the heavens and that seen through the faithful on the earth is to provide 2 facets of the same picture – there must then be an intimate connection between the worship of the Antichrist and the treatment of the Jewish people.

n). Again it would not be difficult to see how this can be seen in Christendom in the present with the widely taught ideology that the Church has replaced Israel – to completely remove Israel from God’s purpose is exactly the aim of Satan. It is one of the most subtle and yet most grotesque forms of anti-Semitism imaginable.

o). And for the unfaithful eternally saved Gentiles who will have chosen not to believe that which God’s word says and act upon it, exactly the opposite outcome to the faithful will be theirs – Mt 25:41 *"Then He will also say to those on the left hand, 'Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels: 42 'for I was hungry and you gave Me no food; I was thirsty and you gave Me no drink; 43 'I was a stranger and you did not take Me in, naked and you did not clothe Me, sick and in prison and you did not visit Me.' 44 "Then they also will answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to You?' 45 "Then He will answer them, saying, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me.' 46 "And these will go away into everlasting[age lasting] punishment, but the righteous into eternal [age lasting] life."*

This group, the goats, even though eternally saved, will then have chosen to ignore that which they had heard and will have chosen not to treat the Jewish people after the correct fashion - Ge 12:3 *I will bless those who bless you, And I will curse him who curses you; And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.*"

In fact we could go as far as to say that not to minister to the Jews during the time of their greatest darkness would be the same as condoning the actions of the Antichrist – and wouldn't this equate with his worship and taking his mark?

p). And the end of the matter is very simple – faithfulness is rewarded – Mt 25:34 *"Then the King will say to those on His right hand, 'Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:*

And unfaithfulness is rewarded, but in a negative way - *"And these will go away into everlasting[age lasting] punishment,*

It can be no other way.

q). And once again through that which we see in God's dealings with the Gentiles who are eternally saved during the Tribulation there is a separation between the faithful and the unfaithful – the same separation we have seen with respect to the Jews and the OT saints in the 'From Here To Eternity' series and the same separation we have seen in the past 2 weeks with respect to Christians through the one taken and one left, the faithful servant and the evil servant, the wise and the foolish virgins and the profitable and unprofitable servant.

r). And what should be overwhelmingly, glaringly obvious to us is that this separation is an absolute certainty and which group we will find ourselves in is based entirely upon our faithful obedience - 2Pe 1:2 *Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord, 3 as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, 4 by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. 5 ¶ But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, 6 to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, 7 to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love. 8 For if these things are yours and abound, you will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. 9 For he who lacks these things is shortsighted, even to*

blindness, and has forgotten that he was cleansed from his old sins. 10 Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble; 11 for so an entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. 12 ¶ For this reason I will not be negligent to remind you always of these things, though you know and are established in the present truth. 13 Yes, I think it is right, as long as I am in this tent, to stir you up by reminding you,

5). As we move from Matthew Chapter 25 into Chapter 26 this is what we find Mt 26:1 ¶ *Now it came to pass, when Jesus had finished all these sayings, that He said to His disciples, 2 "You know that after two days is the Passover, and the Son of Man will be delivered up to be crucified."*

a). Everything that He has told them about in the previous 2 Chapters can only be set in motion through His crucifixion – It is only as a result of this that those who will comprise the Church can be brought into being and as we would remember from Daniel's 70 weeks, the Lord's crucifixion is the marker beyond which the 70th week is to be seen – and of course it is the Lord's crucifixion that makes possible eternal salvation for the Gentiles in the last half of that week.

b). But please note something else in that which the Lord says in these verses, *"You know that after two days is the Passover* – well this is a literal 2 days beyond which the Lamb of God would be slain, but it is also beyond the 2 days, the 2000 years allotted to Israel that Passover will be fulfilled, the first of the feasts given to Israel that must be brought to fulfillment to complete the restoration of Israel and usher in the Millennial Kingdom and it would seem, from that said at the beginning of v2, that His disciples knew this.

6). And so as we come to the end of Matthew Chapter 25, taking into consideration the first 2 verses of Chapter 26, we arrive at a point in time, when the Kingdom Age begins, when Israel's desolation will be a thing of the past, the nation now being healed and restored and righteous and set at the head of the nations just as God had always intended - Jer 31:34 *"No more shall every man teach his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for they all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, says the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more."*

a). Faithful Christians, the one taken, the faithful servant, the wise virgins, the profitable servant, will now have become the Wife of Christ and

will be seated with Christ upon His throne in the New Jerusalem to rule and reign with Him over the nations with a rod of iron for 1000 years - Re 3:21 *"To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne."*

b). Eternally saved Gentiles from the time of the Tribulation will rule with Christ and inherit the Kingdom.

c). And this is how matters will continue throughout the 7th Day – The disciples' questions have been answered and as a result of the answer the Lord has given we have been told one more time exactly what is expected of us in the time that we wait for our Lord's return.

7). As we come to the end of our study of Matthew Chapters 24-25 we will no doubt realize the extraordinary depths to the answer that the Lord gives to His disciples' questions from the beginning of Chapter 24 - Mt 24:3 *Now as He sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, "Tell us, when will these things be? And what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?"*

a). An answer that sets out for us scriptural truth that we have encountered many times, in many places over the years we have been studying the scriptures together.

b). And faced with all that we have begun to learn throughout the course of this study we are left with one question, a question we have faced many times over the years and a question that continues to present itself; the same question that was put to Rebekah - Ge 24:58 *Then they called Rebekah and said to her, "Will you go with this man?"*

8). We will put the finishing touches to this next week – if the Lord is willing.