

Reading in Context: Jesus' Parables about the End Times in Matthew 24 and 25

Are the condemned ones those who remain behind, or those taken away?-- Those inside or outside?

As in the days of Noah:

Matt 24:37-ff (NIV): "As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. 38 For in the days before the flood, people were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, up to the day Noah entered the ark; 39 and they knew nothing about what would happen until the flood came and took them all away. That is how it will be at the coming of the Son of Man."

Two men in a field:

Verse 40: "Two men will be in the field; one will be taken and the other left."

Two women at the mill:

Verse 41: "Two women will be grinding with a hand mill; one will be taken and the other left."

The thief:

Verse 43: "But understand this: If the owner of the house had known at what time of night the thief was coming, he would have kept watch and would not have let his house be broken into."

The wicked servant:

Read Matt 24:45-49. Then 50: "The master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he is not aware of. 51 He will cut him to pieces and assign him a place with the hypocrites, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

The virgins:

Read Matthew 25:1-9. Then 10: "But while they were on their way to buy the oil, the bridegroom arrived. The virgins who were ready went in with him to the wedding banquet. And the door was shut."

11 "Later the others also came. 'Lord, Lord,' they said, 'open the door for us!'

12 "But he replied, 'Truly I tell you, I don't know you.'"

The bags of Gold:

Read 25:14-28. Then 29: "For whoever has will be given more, and they will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what they have will be taken from them. 30 And throw that worthless servant outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

The sheep and goats/least of these:

Read 25:31-45. Then 46: "Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life."

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One more important task: The parallel passage for Matthew 24:1-35 occurs in Luke 21 (and in Mark 13). But the parallel passage for Matthew 24:36-ff is in Luke 17. Be sure to read Luke's and Mark's accounts. What difference might Luke's and Mark's accounts make on your understanding of Matthew 24/25?