



Coptic Orthodox Diocese of the Southern United States



The Holy Gospel According to St. Matthew

Chapter 24

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Introduction

Chapter Main Points:

- The fulfillment of events foretold by Jesus
- The importance of being prepared and productive



An Overview

- Introduction (24:1-2)
 - ❖ Destruction of the Temple
- Signs of the Coming Disaster (24:3-14)
 - ❖ False messiahs
 - ❖ Wars, famines, earthquakes
 - ❖ Persecution of the elect, false prophets and growth of sin
 - ❖ Gospel of the Kingdom proclaimed throughout the world



An Overview

- The Great Tribulation of Jerusalem (24:15-27)
 - ❖ Desecration of the Temple
 - ❖ False prophets and false messiahs

- The Second Coming of the Son of Man (24:29-25:30)
 - ❖ Signs of His coming
 - ❖ Parable of the Fig Tree
 - ❖ Parable of the Two Stewards

Jesus Predicts the Destruction of the Temple (24:1-2)



- These seem to have been the last words Jesus spoke as He left the temple, into which He never afterwards entered
- His disciples were pointing out its splendor, especially the amazing stones used in its construction Mark 13:1; Luke 21:5
- On His last teaching day in Jerusalem, Jesus unites His prophecy of the Temple's destruction to the destruction of His own Body in His Passion
- His death will become a sign of the future destruction of the Jerusalem Temple that will inaugurate the new and Final Age of mankind

Jesus Predicts the Destruction of the Temple (24:1-2)



- Jesus' prediction of the destruction of the Temple of His own Body and the raising up of His Body/Temple on the third day (Jn 2:19) will be used against Him at His trial before the Jewish Sanhedrin, and He will be mocked with His claim as He suffers on the Cross (Mt 27:39-40; Mk 14:57-58)
- Jesus' prophecy was literally fulfilled when the Roman's destroyed the Temple in 70 AD
- It has entirely disappeared from the face of the earth, and a mosque stands on the spot where it stood

Jesus Predicts the Destruction of the Temple (24:1-2)



- In predicting the destruction of the Temple, Jesus was not expressing hostility to the Temple
- Jesus had the most profound love and respect for His "Father's house," as He called the Temple (Jn 2:16)

Jesus connection to the Temple:

1. It was at the Jerusalem Temple that His mother came with Joseph forty days after Jesus' birth to present Him to receive her ritual purification, and to present her sacrifice under the Law (Lk 2:22-24)

Jesus Predicts the Destruction of the Temple (24:1-2)



2. When Jesus was twelve, He stayed in the Temple three days to discuss theology with the priests and scribes (Lk 2:41-52)
3. He kept the holy days by attending the annual Temple feasts at their appointed times (Jn 2:13; 7:2,10; 11:22-23; 12:1)
4. He paid the Temple tax to support the upkeep of the Temple (Mt 18:24-27)
5. He cared about abuses of the Temple, cleansing His "Father's house" (Jn 2:13-21; Mt 21:12-13; Mk 11:15-17)

The Signs of the Times and the End of the Age (24:3-14)



- Mount Olives was on the east side of the city of Jerusalem "*over against the temple*", as St. Mark says, and where He could sit and take a full view of it; for the wall on the east side was lower than any other
- There are three questions here:
 1. When should those things take place?
 2. What should be the signs of His second coming?
 3. What should be the signs that the end of the world was near?

The Signs of the Times and the End of the Age (24:3-14)



- There is the possibility that the apostles themselves did not understand that they were asking about two distinct events
- Being filled with the idea of a temporal kingdom, they thought that Christ's second coming would take place soon; and that Jerusalem, once destroyed, the Messiah would begin His reign on earth

The Signs of the Times and the End of the Age (24:3-14)



- The world is full of deceivers, and it is only by taking heed to the counsel of Christ that even His followers can escape being deceived by them
- They were to be constantly on their guard, because many would arise to deceive them
- These false teachers are not coming in the name or by the authority of Jesus, or claiming to be His followers, and to be sent by Him, but in the name of the Messiah, or claiming to be the Messiah

The Signs of the Times and the End of the Age (24:3-14)



- From this to Matthew 24:31, our Lord mentions the signs which should precede His coming
- There is no reasons for us to be surprised if many were tempted or if we see the antichrist since our Lord declares that
- This is the first sign, the seduction of many souls from the true faith by heresies, and is common to both events
- It is the effect of Divine Providence for the increase of our faith, that this prophecy, which was to take place with regard to Jerusalem, is not mentioned by St. John, who lived long enough to see it accomplished, but by the other evangelists, who died long before the event

The Signs of the Times and the End of the Age (24:3-14)



- Most authors understand this second sign of the Jewish wars which preceded the destruction of Jerusalem; others of the wars of Antichrist, previous to the end of the world
- Both are very probable
- The third sign is, “*And there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places*”
- As the bodies of men generally grow weak previously to dissolution, so will it be with the earth before the destruction of the world; so that this inferior globe will be shaken with unusual convulsions, as if making its last effort for existence

The Signs of the Times and the End of the Age (24:3-14)



- There should be not only wars, in the midst of their country, but there should be wars in other nations, one with another; and with the Jews, and the Jews with them
- *Famines*, Of these we know that of which Agabus prophesied (Acts 11:28), and which was felt severely, in the ninth year of Claudius, not only in Syria, but in Rome
- All that had already been mentioned were only the beginning of more dreadful sorrows and of pain and suffering and nothing in comparison of that which should afterwards take place

The Signs of the Times and the End of the Age (24:3-14)



- *The beginning of sorrows*, The words mean strictly, the beginning of labor pain
- The troubles through which the world passes are thought of as issuing in a “new birth”—the “regeneration” of Matthew 19:28
- So a time of national suffering and turmoil is one in which “the children are come to the birth, and there is not strength to bring forth” (Isa 37:3)

The Signs of the Times and the End of the Age (24:3-14)



- Our Lord proceeds to explain to His disciples, what should happen to them in this time; and quite contrary to their expectations, who were looking for a temporal kingdom, and worldly glory, assures them of afflictions, persecutions, and death
- Both Jew and Gentile will unite in persecuting and tormenting them
- Around these times, when these various signs should appear, and this beginning of sorrows take place; while these will be fulfilling in Judea, and other parts of the world
- The Jews would deliver them up to courts, to be scourged and imprisoned by

The Signs of the Times and the End of the Age (24:3-14)



- Either to their own Sanhedrim, as were Peter and John; or to the Roman governors, Gallio, Festus, and Felix as was the Apostle Paul
- All the apostles, except John, suffered martyrdom and that was before the destruction of Jerusalem
- The sufferings, bloodshed, and complete devastation which took place at the destruction of the city and temple of Jerusalem, are a figure of the still more dreadful sufferings, bloodshed, and catastrophes to be expected towards the end of the world
- However, many shall stumble and fall, rather than suffer for Christ

The Signs of the Times and the End of the Age (24:3-14)



- Many who "professed" to love Christ will then show that they had no "real" attachment to Him
- In those trying times it will be seen that they knew nothing of genuine Christian love, 1 John 2:19
- Not only that, but they will also betray others who really love Him
- St. Luke adds that they should be betrayed *"by parents, and brothers, relatives and friends"* Luke 21:16
- They would break over the most tender ties to surrender Christians to punishment

The Signs of the Times and the End of the Age (24:3-14)



- The later writings of the New Testament bear repeated testimony to this feature of the ten years that preceded the destruction of Jerusalem
- St. John speaks of false prophets (1 Jn 4:1), and many antichrists (1 Jn 2:18); St. Peter of “false teachers” (2 Pet 2:1)
- By reason of these trials and persecutions from without, and those apostasies and false prophets from within, the love of many to Christ and His doctrine, and to one another, shall grow cold
- Some openly deserting the faith, Matthew 24:10

The Signs of the Times and the End of the Age (24:3-14)



- Others corrupting it, Matthew 24:11
- Others growing indifferent about it, Matthew 24:12
- Even at this early period there seems to have been a very considerable defection in several Christian Churches; Galatians 3:1-4; 2 Timothy 1:15

The Signs of the Times and the End of the Age (24:3-14)



- In the midst of this trying and afflicting scene, he that shall preserve his patience to the end proof against heresies, persecutions, hatreds, or scandals *shall be saved*
- To perseverance alone this promise is made
- Part of this prediction was, beyond all doubt, accomplished with regard to the faithful, in the first persecutions raised by the Jews against the infant Christian Church; but the entire and literal completion of it is reserved for the latter times

The Signs of the Times and the End of the Age (24:3-14)



- It is very remarkable that not a single Christian perished in the destruction of Jerusalem, though there were many there when Cestius Gallus invested the city
- Had Cestius Gallus persevered in the siege, he would soon have rendered himself master of it; but, when he unexpectedly and unaccountably raised the siege, the Christians took that opportunity to escape
- The gospel had been preached throughout the major part of the, then known, world

The Signs of the Times and the End of the Age (24:3-14)



- St. Paul declares that it was preached to every creature under heaven Colossians 1:6, 23
- That the faith of the Romans was spoken of throughout the whole world Romans 1:8
- That he preached in Arabia Galatians 1:17, and at Jerusalem, and round about unto Illyricum Romans 15:19
- We know also that St. Paul traveled through Asia Minor, Greece, and Crete
- That he was in Italy, and probably in Spain and Gaul, Romans 15:24-28

The Signs of the Times and the End of the Age (24:3-14)



- At the same time, the other apostles were also active
- There is full proof that within thirty years after this prophecy was spoken, churches were established in all these regions
- If it refers to the end of the world, there is the greatest probability that the true faith will have been announced to every part of the globe, before that period
- With the invention of mass media and the internet, we can truly say that today the Gospel of salvation has been preached to the ends of the earth

The Great Tribulation (24:15-28)



- The *abomination of desolation* is the Hebrew expression found in Daniel 9:27; 11:31 and 12:11
- The words, as they stand in Daniel 12:11, seem to refer to the defilement of the sanctuary by the mad attempt of Antiochus Epiphanes to stop the “daily sacrifice,” and to substitute an idolatrous worship in its place (2 Macc 6:1-9)
- We read in St. Luke 21:20, “*When you shall see Jerusalem surrounded by an army*” Christ said both
- But the words in St. Luke, seem rather to give us a sign of the destruction of Jerusalem, than of the end of the world

The Great Tribulation (24:15-28)



- After Cestius Gallus had raised the siege, and Vespasian was approaching with his army, all who believed in Christ left Jerusalem and fled to Pella, and other places beyond the river Jordan
- They all marvelously escaped the general destruction of their country: not one of them perished, Matthew 24:13
- Those who read Daniel should think about the meaning till they learn to recognize their fulfillment in the events that should pass before their eyes

The Great Tribulation (24:15-28)



- It is well known that this prophecy was verified to the letter, in the destruction of Jerusalem
- For, as the Roman army advanced, all the Christians who were in the province, warned by divine counsel, left, crossed the Jordan, and took refuge in the city of Pella, situated in Trachonitis
- The mountains of Palestine have many caves where they can be places of shelter

The Great Tribulation (24:15-28)



- The houses in the streets of Jerusalem were built in a continuous line, and with flat roofs, so that a man might pass from house to house without descending into the street until he came to some point near the wall or gate of the city, and so make his escape
- He who should be on the house-top when this tribulation come upon the city "should flee without delay;"
- He should not even take time to secure any article of apparel from his house
- So sudden would be the disaster, that by attempting to do this he would endanger his life

The Great Tribulation (24:15-28)



- The men would be working in the field with the short tunic and normally leave the flowing outer garment at home in the city
- Here also the flight was to be rapid and immediate
- Once the army of the Romans sits down before the city, there shall be no more any possibility of escape, as they shall never remove till Jerusalem be destroyed
- Woe here is a tone of pity rather than condemnation
- The hardships of a hurried flight would press most heavily on those who were burdened with infant children, or were expecting childbirth

The Great Tribulation (24:15-28)



- The destruction was certainly coming
- Yet it was right to pray that it might be as mild as possible
- The winter is an inconvenient season for flying away
- *Or on the sabbath*, when it was lawful to travel only about a mile
- Long journeys were prohibited by the law on the Sabbath, Exodus 16:29
- It was almost impracticable to travel in Judea on that day, as the gates of the cities were usually closed, Nehemiah 13:19-22

The Great Tribulation (24:15-28)



- *great tribulation*, This is urged as a reason for their speedy flight; since the suffering that would come upon those who should remain in the city, would be through the sword, famine, diseases, murders, robberies
- It would be such as was not since the beginning of the world, to this time, no, nor ever shall be
- If such awful work should continue, it would exterminate the human race
- Our Lord wept at the foresight of these disasters

The Great Tribulation (24:15-28)



- Josephus, the Jewish historian, counts the number of those who perished in the siege at eleven hundred thousand, besides those who were slain in other places
- If the Romans had gone on destroying in this manner, the whole nation of the Jews would, in a short time, have been entirely destroyed
- No one would have escaped death, had the war continued
- From this place, Jesus Christ foretells the coming of Antichrist, and warns Christians of latter ages, to guard all they can against temptation

The Great Tribulation (24:15-28)



- The word "elect" means "to choose."
- Jesus' implied promise is that those days of tribulation will be shortened so the faithful elect will be saved
- The "elect" here doubtless means "Christians." 1 Peter 1:1-2; Romans 1:7; Ephesians 1:4; 1 Thessalonians 1:4
- The meaning here is that the siege of Jerusalem and the sufferings attending it, should be sooner ended: not than God had determined, but than the sin of the Jews deserved, and the justice of God might have required in strict severity, and might be reasonably expected, considering the aggravated circumstances of their iniquities

The Great Tribulation (24:15-28)



- During this period of tribulation, give no heed to false prophets, false Christs, or to those who say Christ is here or there
- Our Lord had cautioned his disciples against false Christs and prophets before, Matthew 24:11
- But He seems here to emphasize that there would be especial need to attend to this caution about the time of the siege
- The Jews expected the Messiah to deliver them from Roman oppression
- In the time of these great calamities they would anxiously look for Him

The Great Tribulation (24:15-28)



- They have evidence that the Messiah has come, and they are not to be deceived by others
- These false christs will pretend to work miracles
- So nearly would their pretended miracles resemble true miracles as to render it difficult to detect the imposture; so much so, that if it were possible they would persuade even true Christians that they were the Messiah
- Our Savior says that if this "*were possible*," it would be done then; but it was not possible, John 10:28-29
- He told them so they might be on their guard, and be prepared for those adversities

The Great Tribulation (24:15-28)



- Our Lord not only foretold the appearance of these impostors, but also the manner and circumstances of their conduct
- There would be whispered rumors that the Christ was hiding Himself in the wilderness beyond the Jordan, or in the inner recesses of some believer's house
- Many of those deceivers persuaded the people to follow them to the desert, promising to show them signs and wonders done by the providence of God, is well attested
- Believers in Christ would hear such words without any concern for they would know that such was not to be the manner of His approach

The Great Tribulation (24:15-28)



- Lightening in the sky is the sign of a coming storm
- The sign of the coming judgment will be as clear an event as the lightening that announces a storm and as fast as is the lightening
- The disciples in their questions (Mt 24:3) had connected the destruction of Jerusalem with the “coming” of their Lord
- In whatever way He comes, whether in the final destruction of the Temple, or at the end of the world and His second coming, the advent would be sudden and unlooked-for as the lightning-flash

The Great Tribulation (24:15-28)



- *For wherever the carcass is, there the eagles will be gathered together;* Is a proverb or common saying among the Jews

There are two interpretations of this verse

- (1) Some interpreted the “eagles” as the well-known symbols of the strength of the Roman legions, and the “carcass” as the decayed and corrupted Judaism which those legions came to destroy. Eagles easily ascertain where dead bodies are, and hasten to devour them. Jerusalem is like a dead body and it is ready to be devoured. The Roman armies will find it out, as the eagles do a dead carcass, and will come around it to devour

The Great Tribulation (24:15-28)



- (2) The Fathers said that the “carcass” is Christ Himself, as crucified and slain, and that the eagles are His true saints and servants who hasten to meet Him in His coming
- “eagle” in this this passage may refer to the Sacrifice of the Mass around which God the Father would gather His children till the end of time
 - In the parallel passage in Luke 17: 20-37 Jesus tells of His second coming
 - He tells of how “one” will be taken and one will be left

The Great Tribulation (24:15-28)



- His disciples asked Him, “*Where, Lord?*” And in verse 37 Jesus replies, “*Wherever the body is, there will the eagles be gathered together.*”
- The word used for “body” in the above verse is the same Greek word used in the institution of the Eucharist when Jesus said, “*This is my Body.*”
- It is also interesting to note that the Greek does not state that the eagles will gather, rather it says that the eagles will be gathered

The Great Tribulation (24:15-28)



- However, *For wherever the carcass is, there the eagles will be gathered together*, may simply also mean that:
The appearance of eagles indicates dead body, or when there is a dead body, eagles will gather
Like wise when we see all these signs, false prophets and false christs, betrayal and the love of many will go cold, when we see the “abomination of desolation”, we must know the end is near and the Second Coming of Christ is at the door



The Coming of the Son of Man (24:29-31)

- The first question, When shall these things be ? (Mt 24:3) has now been answered
- Jesus uses prophetic language to express the serious consequences of the "Day of the Lord" when all creation will signal the coming of the Son of Man
- This is the same imagery the prophet Joel uses in Joel 3 a passage St. Peter quoted from in his homily on Pentecost Sunday (Acts 2:19-21)
- Also see similar language in the books of other Old Testament prophets (Isa 13:10; 34:4; Ezek 32:7; Amos 8:9; Joel 2:10, 31; Hag 2:6,21)



The Coming of the Son of Man (24:29-31)

- These signs may literally happen
- After the destruction of Jerusalem, the causes began to work that led to the great apostasy of the church and produced the Dark Ages of the church
- Stars represent great teachers of the church, apostles and evangelists, Revelation 1:20
- When the apostles were defeated by the Romish apostasy, the early apostasy in the church, the stars fell from heaven, figuratively



The Coming of the Son of Man (24:29-31)

- In using these phrases, Jesus may be referring to the prophecy in Zechariah 12:10-12 which refers to the Messiah's death and the nations of the earth mourning and to Daniel 7:13-14 in which a divine "Son of Man" ascends on the glory cloud to take His place beside the "Ancient of Days" as the ruler of all earthly nations
- *The sign*, This sign is the cross, much more resplendent than the sun itself
- Therefore the sun hides its diminished head, while the cross appears in glory; because the great standard of the cross, excels in brightness all the refulgent rays that dart from the meridian sun, (St. Chrysostom)



The Coming of the Son of Man (24:29-31)

- All the wicked shall mourn seeing their destiny, Revelation 1:7
- The cause of their wailing at the day of judgment will be mainly because they have pierced, killed, rejected the Savior, and that they deserve the condemnation that is coming upon them, John 19:37; Zechariah 12:12
- He ascended in a cloud, Acts 1:9
- He shall return in like manner, Acts 1:11
- *The Son of man coming* will be visible to every eye and will be in splendor



The Coming of the Son of Man (24:29-31)

- The gathering of God's "elect" is also described in the Old Testament (Deut 30:4; Isa 11:11,16; 27:12; Ezek 39:27)
- In this passage the trumpet blast is the sign of the gathering of God's elect from the ends of the earth where they have been scattered
- *Four winds*, The four quarters of the earth

The Parable of the Fig Tree (24:32-35)



- It was on the Mount of Olives, where then, as now, fig trees were found as well as olives (Mt 21:19), and the season was that of early spring, when “the flowers appear on the earth” and the “fig tree puts forth her green figs” (Song 2:11-13)
- Unlike most trees in the Holy Land, the fig tree sheds its leaves in winter
- When the fig tree begins producing leaves and buds it is a sign that summer is coming

The Parable of the Fig Tree (24:32-35)



- Our Lord proceeds to declare that the signs which He had given would be as certain an indication of the time of His coming, as the fig-tree's putting forth its leaves is of the approach of summer; and that the time of His coming was at no great distance
- The words are spoken to the four Apostles as the representatives of the whole body of believers who should be living first, at the destruction of Jerusalem, and afterwards at the end of the world

The Parable of the Fig Tree (24:32-35)



- Some hold that *all these things*, in Matthew 24:32,33, refer only to what was said of the fall of Jerusalem, ending with Matthew 24:28
- Others have contended that the phrase includes the second coming, but refers directly to the end of Jerusalem, which was a type of the end of the world
- *All these things* embraces all thus far predicted
- This generation may mean the Jewish race, instead of only those then living
- Christ has described the awful end of the Jewish state; after such a destruction and scattering of the remnant to the ends of the earth

The Parable of the Fig Tree (24:32-35)



- All the examples of history would declare that the Jewish race would be wiped out
- Christ, however, declares that, contrary to all probability, it shall not pass away until He comes
- The nation of the Jews shall not cease to exist, until all these things shall be accomplished: thus we see the nation of the Jews still continue, and will certainly continue to the end of the world
- If we understand it as the destruction of Jerusalem, the sense may be the Jewish race

The Parable of the Fig Tree (24:32-35)



- If of the last day of judgment, *this generation* means the generation of the faithful shall be continued: i.e. the Church of Christ, to the end of the world
- Thus says the psalmist: *this is the generation of them that seek the Lord.* (Ps 24:6)
- *Heaven and earth*, The tone is that of One who speaks with supreme authority
- By this expression our Savior confirms the truth of what He had said, assuring those to whom He spoke, that although there should be a change of the heavens and the earth, 2 Peter 3:10,12,13, which then commonly look upon as the most stable and abiding things, yet the truth of what He had said should not fail

No One Knows the Day or Hour (24:36-44)



- The words in St. Mark 13:32 are still harder: *neither the angels, nor the Son, but the Father*
- Some heretics objected this, to show that Christ being ignorant of the day of judgment, could not be truly God
- They added that by the same words, *no one knoweth, but the Father alone*, the Holy Spirit must be excluded from being the true God
- In answer to this difficulty is that it is certain that the eternal Son and the Holy Spirit could never be ignorant of the day of judgment

No One Knows the Day or Hour (24:36-44)



- As they are one and the same God, so they must have one and the same nature, the same substance, wisdom, knowledge, and all absolute perfections
- It is also certain that Jesus Christ knew the day of judgment, and all things to come, by a knowledge which He could not but have, because of the union by which His human nature was united to the Divine person and nature
- It is the common answer of the Church Fathers, that Christ here speaks to His disciples, only as He was the ambassador of His Father; and so He is only to know what He is to make known to men

No One Knows the Day or Hour (24:36-44)



- He is said not to know, says St. Augustine, what He will not make others know, or what He will not reveal to them
- By this Jesus Christ wished to suppress the curiosity of His disciples
- In the same manner after His resurrection, He answered the same question, (Acts 1:7)
- Also, it may have been said that the apostles might not be discouraged and think their Divine Master esteemed them unworthy of knowing these things

No One Knows the Day or Hour (24:36-44)



- Here we note some similarities with the Epistles of St. Peter, 1 Peter 3:20; 2 Peter 2:5; 3:6
- St. Mark and St. Luke did not mention this reference but substituted for it a general warning-call to watchfulness and prayer
- Possibly the two Evangelists who were writing for the Gentile Christians did not refer to a history that was not so familiar to those whom they had in view as it was to the Hebrew readers of St. Matthew's Gospel

No One Knows the Day or Hour (24:36-44)



- *they were eating and drinking*, That is, they spent their time in rapine, luxury, and riot
- For, as then they indulged their appetites, unmindful of the fate that was attending them marrying and given in marriage, solely occupied with the concerns of this life, and indifferent to those of the next; so shall it be at the end of the world
- They did not lay Noah's warning to heart, till it was too late to profit by it: so shall it be and so it was in this coming of the Son of man
- The design of these verses seems to be, that the desolation should be as general as it should be unexpected

No One Knows the Day or Hour (24:36-44)



- The point of the two people doing the same tasks with one "taken" and the other "left behind" points out not only the common theme of daily life that will be suddenly ended in the crisis but also the division that will come about "when the Son of Man comes"
- Some churches have interpreted this passage to suggest the faithful believers will be taken into heaven but the others who have not accepted the Gospel message of salvation will be left to endure the final tribulation
- However, the passage does not say which are the better off "the taken or those left behind"

No One Knows the Day or Hour (24:36-44)



- This theory does not agree with other passages in Scripture about the Second Coming while will immediately be followed by the final judgment of both the righteous and the wicked (Rev 20:11-15)
- Of what importance is it then that we should be found watching, and properly attentive to the one thing necessary, the salvation of our immortal souls
- We will not benefit anything, if we have gained the whole world, which we must then leave, and lose our immortal souls

No One Knows the Day or Hour (24:36-44)



- Jesus urges caution since the exact time is unknown
- The comparison of such an unexpected event to a thief breaking in a man's house appears five times in the New Testament (Mt 24:43; 1 Thess 5:2; 2 Pet 3:10; Rev 3:3; 16:15)
- In verse 44 Jesus urges all of us to be prepared for His coming; in the hour of our death and in the final hour for all mankind
- *an hour you do not expect*, the signs, like the budding of the fig-tree at the approach of summer, were intended only to rouse the faithful to watchfulness, not to enable men to fix the times and the seasons which the Father has set in His own power

The Faithful Servant and the Evil Servant (24:45-51)



- This passage is, in fact, "a parable," though it is not expressly so called
- The adjective faithful, in the sense of one who is trustworthy and reliable, is frequently used as the ideal characteristic of a Christian leader (1 Cor 4:1-2, 17; Col 1:7; Eph 6:21; Tit 1:9)
- This parable can be applied to Christian ministers, it means that they are to feed the flock of God, to "minister" to their needs, and to do it as they need it, John 21:15-17; Acts 20:28; 1 Corinthians 4:1-2
- The design is to show that His disciples should act as if the servants were each moment expecting His return

The Faithful Servant and the Evil Servant (24:45-51)



- The Lord had asked - *Who is the faithful and wise servant?*
- He virtually answers - *whom his master, when he comes, will find so doing*
- Such a one He pronounces "blessed;"
- What happier destiny can happen to a man in a responsible position, than to be taken while diligently and rightly performing his appointed work (Mt 25:21)?

The Faithful Servant and the Evil Servant (24:45-51)



- The parables of the talents and the pounds show that those who have been faithful to the trusts given them here shall receive additional trusts in the Savior's eternal kingdom
- *He shall make him ruler over* denoting permanency of occupation
- The work of the faithful servant does not cease, either after his own removal from his earthly labor, or even in the Kingdom of God
- How we are to take this promise as applied to the rewards of the kingdom of heaven, we do not know yet

The Faithful Servant and the Evil Servant (24:45-51)



- *“Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, Nor have entered into the heart of man The things which God has prepared for those who love Him.” 1 Cor 2:9)*
- There are similar statements elsewhere; Matthew 19:28; Romans 8:32; Revelation 2:26; 3:21
- This may be one of those passages in which we are not meant to press or understand all the details of the parable

The Faithful Servant and the Evil Servant (24:45-51)



- *But, and if that evil servant*, Here are three characters of a bad servant
1. He has little or no faith in the speedy coming of Christ
 2. He governs with an absolute dominion, oppressing his colleagues and doing violence to the followers of Christ
 3. He leads a bad life, does not love the company of the children of God, but eats and drinks with the drunkards, preferring the tables of the great and the rich, whose god is their belly, and thus feeds himself without fear

The Faithful Servant and the Evil Servant (24:45-51)



- The Master's stewards will either receive blessings for faithful service in governing God's household/the Church and feeding the members of His household at the proper time, or they will be judged and condemned for their mistreatment of the servants
- *My master is delaying*, The worst enemy of Christ is the professed servant of the Lord whose practices are evil, and who supposes he can evade punishment for his crimes
- He will certainly come, and come when the servant is unprepared for him
- St. Matthew places the unfaithful Christian leader in the same class as the failed Jewish leaders (Mt 23:15, 33)

The Faithful Servant and the Evil Servant (24:45-51)



- The unfaithful Israelite "children of the kingdom" (Mt 8:11-12), those who reject God's call to salvation and become the children of the evil one/Satan (Mt 13:42)
- The wicked that the angels separate from the righteous (Mt 13:50), and the wedding guest who came to the banquet but did not come in the garment of grace (Mt 22:13)
- When they face Divine Judgment, all these will be cast into the outer darkness where there will be wailing and grinding of teeth
- St. Matthew will use the expressing "wailing and grinding of teeth" one more time in Jesus' description of the Last Judgment in Matthew 25:31, for a total of six times



Conclusion

- What are some examples of Jesus connection to the Temple throughout His life?
- What are the "signs" that Jesus gives them in verses 4-14?
- What is Jesus' warning in verses 16-21?
- What is the point of comparison between the Second Coming of Jesus and the days of Noah in verses 37-39?
- What are the two possible outcomes for God/the Master's stewards?



Conclusion

- How does Christian tradition understand Jesus' apparent lack of knowledge of His Second Coming?
- What has been your response to invitations to join lifestyles, new movements, or religious practices that promise peace, serenity, self-fulfillment, or inner harmony but are different from or inconsistent with the Christian message?