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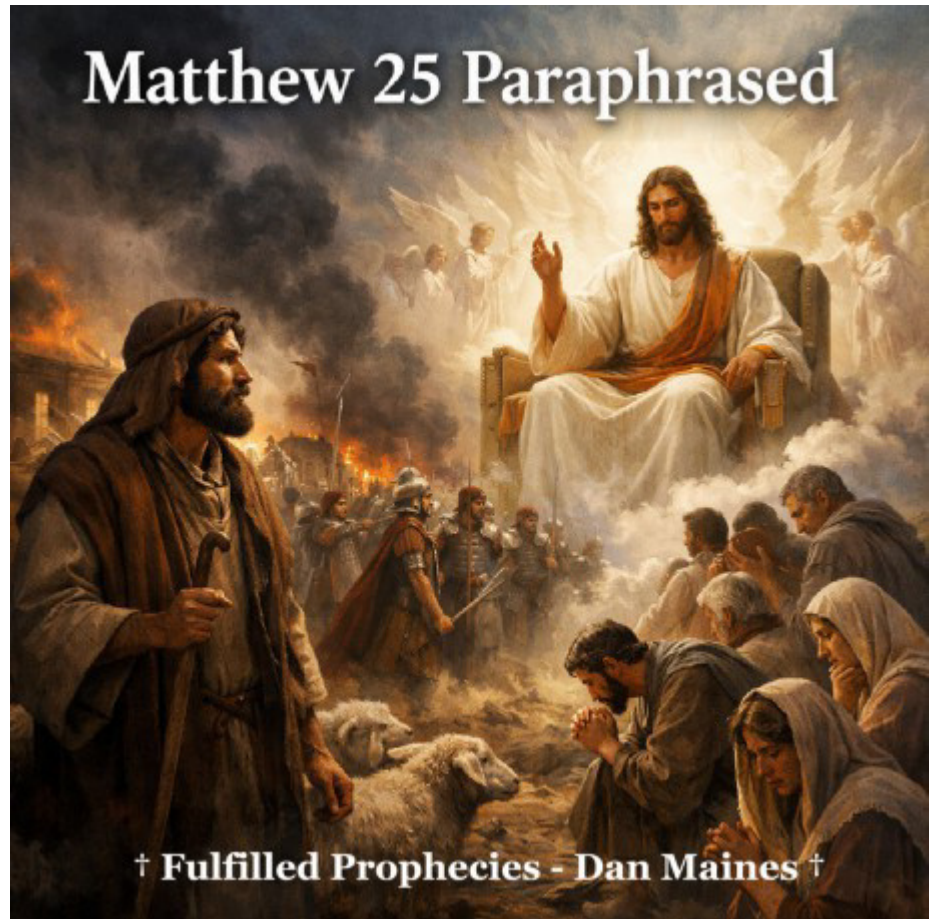
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Matthew 25 Paraphrased



By Dan Maines

Matthew 25 Paraphrased

Introduction

† Matthew 25 continues the same conversation Jesus began in Matthew 24 on the Mount of Olives. The disciples asked about the destruction of the temple and the end of that age (Matthew 24:3). Everything in this chapter continues that same discussion.

† Jesus had just declared that the judgment He described would come upon that generation (Matthew 23:36; Matthew 24:34). The illustrations in this chapter explain readiness,

faithfulness, and the separation that would occur when that judgment arrived.

† These parables were given to warn Israel that the kingdom was arriving and accountability was near. Some would be ready and faithful, others would ignore the warnings.

† Early Christian writers confirm that believers took these warnings seriously. Eusebius records that Christians fled Jerusalem before the Roman armies surrounded the city because they recognized the signs Jesus gave (Luke 21:20-22; Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History 3.5).

The Parable Of The Ten Virgins

Matthew 25:1

Then the kingdom of heaven will be comparable to ten virgins, who took their lamps and went out to meet the groom.

† Jesus uses a wedding illustration familiar to first century listeners. Nighttime wedding processions required lamps to greet the groom.

† The focus is readiness. Some were prepared for the arrival, others were not.

† This mirrors Jesus' earlier warnings about watching carefully for the approaching judgment (Matthew 24:42-44).

Matthew 25:2

Five of them were foolish, and five were prudent.

† The difference was not appearance but preparation.

† Jesus often divided people this way, those who listened and obeyed and those who ignored the warning (Matthew 7:24-27).

† This division also reflects Israel in that generation, believers and rejecters of the Messiah.

Matthew 25:3

For when the foolish took their lamps, they did not take extra oil with them.

† The foolish assumed the wait would be short and made no preparation.

† Many in Israel assumed their religious identity guaranteed safety while ignoring Christ's warnings.

† Outward religion without faith left them unprepared (Matthew 23:27-28).

Matthew 25:4

But the prudent ones took oil in flasks with their lamps.

† The wise expected delay and prepared accordingly.

† Faithful disciples listened carefully to Jesus' warnings about Jerusalem's coming destruction (Luke 21:20-22).

† Because they were attentive, they were able to respond when the signs appeared.

Matthew 25:5

Now while the groom was delaying, they all became drowsy and began to sleep.

† The delay represents the time between Christ's ascension and the coming judgment.

† Believers continued daily life while remaining watchful.

† Peter later addressed those who mocked the delay, explaining that judgment would still come (2 Peter 3:3-10).

Matthew 25:6

But at midnight there finally was a shout: Behold, the groom! Come out to meet him.

† The sudden announcement illustrates how quickly the events surrounding Jerusalem unfolded.

† When the Roman armies surrounded the city, the warnings of Jesus became unmistakable (Luke 21:20).

† Josephus recorded the rapid escalation of the siege once the armies arrived.

Matthew 25:7

Then all those virgins got up and trimmed their lamps.

† Everyone suddenly realized the moment had arrived.

† The warnings Jesus gave were no longer theoretical once the siege began.

† Those who prepared could respond, those who had not were suddenly unready.

Matthew 25:8

The foolish said to the prudent ones, Give us some of your oil, because our lamps are going out.

† Spiritual readiness cannot be borrowed.

† Each person had to respond personally to Christ.

† Many relied on tradition instead of faith (Romans 9:31-32).

Matthew 25:9

But the prudent ones answered, No, there most certainly would not be enough for us and you too, go instead to the merchants and buy some for yourselves.

† Preparation had to occur before the crisis arrived.

† When the siege began there was no time left to prepare.

† Jesus had spent years warning that generation.

Matthew 25:10

And while they were going away to make the purchase, the groom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding feast, and the door was shut.

† The shutting of the door represents the closing of opportunity.

† When the temple system ended in AD 70 the old covenant system was removed (Hebrews 8:13).

† Those who followed Christ entered the kingdom while the old system passed away.

Matthew 25:11

Yet later the other virgins also came, saying, Lord, lord, open up for us.

† This reflects Jesus' earlier warning that many would claim allegiance yet be rejected (Matthew 7:21-23).

† Outward profession without obedience was not enough.

† Israel's leadership rejected the Messiah they claimed to serve.

Matthew 25:12

But he answered, Truly I say to you, I do not know you.

† This language reflects covenant separation.

† Jesus warned that many who assumed they belonged would be excluded (Matthew 8:11-12).

† The destruction of Jerusalem demonstrated that separation historically.

Matthew 25:13

So stay alert, because you do not know the day nor the hour.

† The disciples were not given the exact day but they were given clear signs (Matthew 24:15-33).

† Believers who watched carefully escaped the coming destruction.

† Eusebius records that Christians fled Jerusalem before the siege.

The Parable Of The Talents

Matthew 25:14

For it is just like a man about to go on a journey, who called his own slaves and entrusted his possessions to them.

† Jesus illustrates the time between His departure and the coming judgment.

† The disciples were entrusted with the gospel during that period (Matthew 28:18-20).

† Accountability would come when the master returned.

Matthew 25:15

To one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one,

each according to his own ability, and he went on his journey.

† Each servant received responsibility according to ability.

† Faithfulness, not comparison, was the measure of success.

† The gospel spread rapidly during the apostolic age

(Colossians 1:23).

Matthew 25:16

The one who had received the five talents immediately went and did business with them, and earned five more talents.

† Faithful servants used what they were given.

† The early church spread the gospel throughout the Roman world.

† This work occurred before the destruction of Jerusalem.

Matthew 25:17

In the same way the one who had received the two talents earned two more.

† Faithfulness was measured by obedience, not quantity.

† Every believer contributed to the growth of the kingdom.

† The kingdom expanded across the Roman world.

Matthew 25:18

But the one who received the one talent went away and dug a hole in the ground, and hid his master's money.

† This servant represents unfaithfulness.

† Israel's leadership rejected the responsibility given to them.

† Instead of receiving the Messiah they persecuted His followers (Acts 7:51-52).

Matthew 25:19

Now after a long time the master of those slaves came and settled accounts with them.

† The settling of accounts represents judgment.

† Jesus said He would come to reward each person according to his deeds (Matthew 16:27-28).

† That reckoning occurred in connection with Jerusalem's fall.

Matthew 25:20

The one who had received the five talents came up and brought five more talents, saying, Master, you entrusted five talents to me. See, I have earned five more talents.

† Faithful servants produced results.

† The gospel spread widely before AD 70.

† The kingdom message reached across the known world.

Matthew 25:21

His master said to him, Well done, good and faithful slave. You were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things, enter the joy of your master.

† Faithfulness brought reward.

† Believers entered the joy of the kingdom Christ established.

† The removal of the temple system confirmed the transition of the ages.

Matthew 25:22

Also the one who had received the two talents came up and said, Master, you entrusted two talents to me. See, I have earned two more talents.

† The servant with two talents receives the same praise as the one with five.

† Faithfulness was never measured by comparison with others.

† The kingdom work involved many faithful servants during that generation.

Matthew 25:23

His master said to him, Well done, good and faithful slave. You were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things, enter the joy of your master.

† The identical reward shows that faithfulness matters more than quantity.

† Christ values obedience in whatever responsibility we receive.

† Early believers remained faithful despite persecution.

Matthew 25:24

Now the one who had received the one talent also came up and said, Master, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you did not sow and gathering where you scattered no seed.

† This servant blamed the master instead of admitting his own failure.

† Many in Israel blamed God while rejecting the Messiah.

† Their accusation revealed their hardened hearts.

Matthew 25:25

And I was afraid, so I went away and hid your talent in the ground. See, you still have what is yours.

† Fear and laziness produced inaction.

† Instead of trusting the master, he hid what was given.

† Israel hid the truth instead of proclaiming it to the nations.

Matthew 25:26

But his master answered and said to him, You wicked, lazy slave, you knew that I reap where I did not sow and gather where I scattered no seed.

† The master exposes the servant's excuse as empty.

† Responsibility still remained regardless of fear.

† The generation that rejected Christ could not escape accountability.

Matthew 25:27

Then you ought to have put my money in the bank, and on my arrival I would have received my money back with interest.

† Even the smallest effort would have shown faithfulness.

† The servant's total inactivity revealed his rebellion.

† Israel's leaders completely failed in their responsibility.

Matthew 25:28

Therefore take the talent away from him, and give it to the one who has the ten talents.

† Responsibility was transferred from the unfaithful to the faithful.

† Jesus already warned that the kingdom would be taken from Israel and given to a people producing fruit (Matthew 21:43).

† The gospel was spreading among believers while the old system was collapsing.

Matthew 25:29

For to everyone who has, more will be given, and he will have an abundance, but from the one who does not have, even what he does have will be taken away.

† Faithfulness leads to greater responsibility.

† Unfaithfulness results in loss.

† This principle explains the shift that occurred during the apostolic age.

Matthew 25:30

And throw the worthless slave into the outer darkness, in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

† This phrase appears repeatedly in Jesus' warnings to Israel.

† It describes the severe consequences of rejecting the kingdom.

† The destruction of Jerusalem fulfilled these warnings.

The Judgment Of The Nations

Matthew 25:31

But when the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him, then He will sit on His glorious throne.

† This language comes directly from Daniel's vision of the Son of Man receiving authority (Daniel 7:13-14).

† Jesus connected this coming with the lifetime of His disciples (Matthew 16:27-28).

† The authority of Christ was revealed in the judgment of Jerusalem.

Matthew 25:32

And all the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them from one another, just as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats.

† Nations surrounding Israel were affected by the events of that generation.

† The gospel had already gone out across the Roman world (Colossians 1:23).

† The judgment imagery reflects Old Testament language for national judgment.

Matthew 25:33

And He will put the sheep on His right, but the goats on the left.

† The right side represents favor and acceptance.

† The left side represents rejection and judgment.

† Jesus often used shepherd imagery to describe His followers.

Matthew 25:34

Then the King will say to those on His right, Come, you who are blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.

† The kingdom promised throughout scripture was now being fully revealed.

† Believers were receiving what had been prepared long before.

† The destruction of the old system marked the arrival of the new covenant kingdom.

Matthew 25:35

For I was hungry, and you gave Me something to eat, I was thirsty, and you gave Me something to drink, I was a stranger, and you invited Me in.

† These acts represent love and care for Christ's people.

- † Helping believers was considered service to Christ Himself.
- † The early church practiced this kind of care among believers.

Matthew 25:36

Naked, and you clothed Me, I was sick, and you visited Me, I was in prison, and you came to Me.

- † Persecution was common in the first century church.
- † Faithful believers supported one another through hardship.
- † Their compassion demonstrated genuine faith.

Matthew 25:37

Then the righteous will answer Him, Lord, when did we see You hungry, and feed You, or thirsty, and give You something to drink?

- † The righteous were surprised because they served others naturally.
- † Their actions flowed from genuine faith.
- † They did not seek recognition.

Matthew 25:38

And when did we see You as a stranger, and invite You in, or naked, and clothe You?

- † They did not realize their service reflected devotion to Christ.
- † Their compassion revealed the character of the kingdom.
- † Love for others was evidence of faith.

Matthew 25:39

And when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?

- † These believers had simply cared for others.
- † Christ identifies Himself with His followers.
- † Serving His people meant serving Him.

Matthew 25:40

And the King will answer and say to them, Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did it for one of the brothers of Mine, even the least of them, you did it for Me.

† Christ closely identifies with His people.

† Acts of compassion toward believers were acts of loyalty to the kingdom.

† The early church lived out this principle daily.

Matthew 25:41

Then He will also say to those on His left, Depart from Me, you accursed people, into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels.

† Those who rejected the kingdom faced judgment.

† This language reflects severe covenant judgment.

† The destruction of Jerusalem displayed the consequences of rejecting Christ.

Matthew 25:42

For I was hungry, and you gave Me nothing to eat, I was thirsty, and you gave Me nothing to drink.

† These individuals ignored the needs of Christ's followers.

† Their lack of compassion revealed their rejection of the kingdom.

† Their actions exposed their unbelief.

Matthew 25:43

I was a stranger, and you did not invite Me in, naked, and you did not clothe Me, sick and in prison, and you did not visit Me.

† Their failure to care for believers showed hostility toward Christ.

† Indifference revealed spiritual blindness.

† Their behavior exposed their true allegiance.

Matthew 25:44

Then they themselves also will answer, Lord, when did we see You hungry, or thirsty, or as a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not take care of You?

† Like the foolish virgins earlier, they realized too late what had

happened.

† Their blindness continued until judgment arrived.

† They misunderstood the importance of how they treated Christ's followers.

Matthew 25:45

Then He will answer them, Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did not do it for one of the least of these, you did not do it for Me.

† The treatment of Christ's people revealed the heart.

† Loyalty to Christ is demonstrated through love for His followers.

† Rejection of believers meant rejection of Christ.

Matthew 25:46

These will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.

† This verse concludes the chapter with a final separation.

† The faithful enter life in the kingdom Christ established.

† The unfaithful face the consequences of rejecting the Messiah.

Historical References

† Eusebius recorded that Christians fled Jerusalem before the Roman siege after recognizing the warnings Jesus gave.

† Josephus described the devastation of Jerusalem and the massive loss of life during the Roman destruction in AD 70.

† Tacitus confirmed the Roman destruction of the city and the temple.

How It Applies To Us Today

† Matthew 25 reminds believers that faithfulness matters.

† Christ's kingdom has already been established and we live within its reality.

† Followers of Christ are still called to live faithfully and care for

others.

† Our confidence rests in Christ's finished work and the kingdom that cannot be shaken.

Q & A Appendix

Q: Was Matthew 25 describing the end of the world?

A: No. Jesus was answering the disciples about the destruction of the temple and the end of that age (Matthew 24:3).

Q: Did Jesus say these events would occur in that generation?

A: Yes. Jesus clearly stated that all those things would happen before that generation passed away (Matthew 24:34).

Q: Did early Christians understand these warnings as applying to their time?

A: Yes. Historical records show that Christians fled Jerusalem before the Roman siege after recognizing the signs Jesus gave (Luke 21:20-22).

† This is the fulfilled perspective we proclaim at Fulfilled Prophecies †

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Source Index

† Matthew 7:21-27; Matthew 8:11-12; Matthew 16:27-28; Matthew 21:43; Matthew 23:36; Matthew 24:3, 15-33, 34, 42-44; Matthew 25:1-46; Matthew 28:18-20; Luke 12:35-40; Luke 21:20-22; John 5:39-40; Romans 9:31-32; Acts 7:51-52; Colossians 1:23; Hebrews 8:13; 2 Peter 3:3-10; Daniel 7:13-14
† Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History 3.5; Josephus, Wars of the Jews; Tacitus, Histories 5.13

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