

2019-2020 Bible Study

#31

5/5/20

Matthew 25

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Outline for Matthew 25

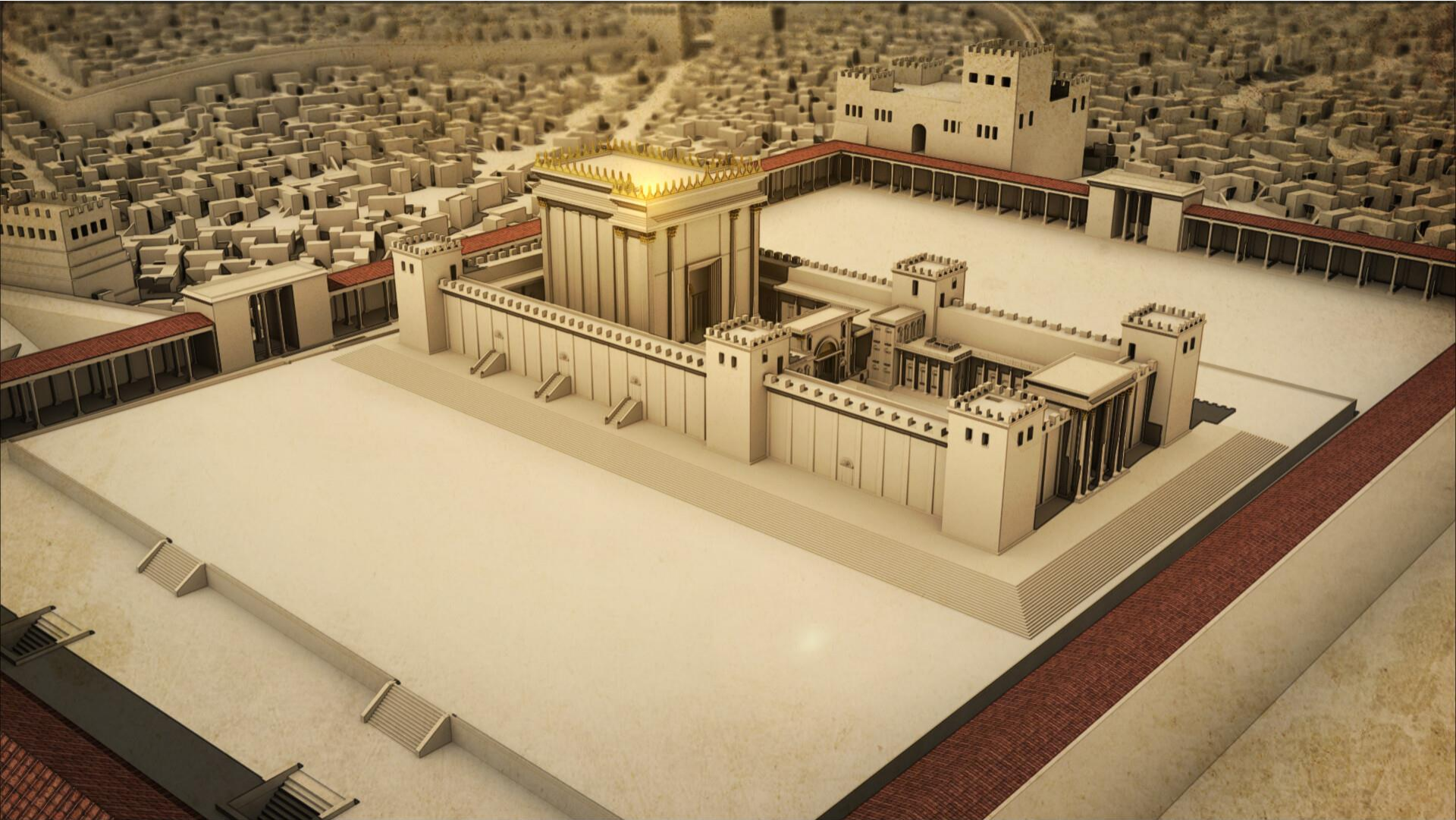
- **Matthew 25**
- The Parable of the Wise and Foolish Maidens
- The Parable of the Talents
- The Judgment of the Nations

Mathew 25

- Dr. Edward P. Sri in his book, *Mystery of the Kingdom – the Gospel of Matthew*, said in Chapter 9:
 - The temple area constituted approximately one-fourth of the entire city of Jerusalem
 - Jerusalem could be seen as a city around the temple
 - It stood at the center of Jewish life as the:
 - Place where God of the universe came to meet His chosen people
 - The connecting point between heaven and earth
 - The place where God radiated out to the rest of creation
 - A miniature replica of the universe made in architecture

Matthew 25 (Cont)

- The sacred space of the temple was for
 - Worship
 - Sacrifice
 - The dwelling place of God's presence
- The temple also served as the center for
 - The Jewish government
 - The judicial system
 - Trade and economics
- It could be seen as the 1st Century Jewish version of
 - The Vatican
 - White House
 - Supreme Court
 - Wall Street



Matthew 25 (Cont)

- When Jesus entered the temple, He performed a powerful symbolic action in light of Israel's prophetic tradition
 - He performed an act of judgment on the temple by **overturning the money changers tables** and by preventing anyone from buying and selling in the temple
 - This meant no one could obtain temple money; thus they were not able to purchase any animals for sacrifice
 - This put a stop to the entire "temple system" as a pre-figurement of how all sacrifices would soon be denied forever when the temple would be destroyed by the Romans in 70 AD

Matthew 25 (Cont)

- Jesus condemned the temple when he said, “My house shall be called a house of prayer; but you make it a den of robbers” (**Matthew 21:13**)
 - The Greek word *lestai* used here for thieves or robbers can also be used to describe Jewish revolutionaries who wanted to take up arms against the Romans
 - The temple had become a focal point for Israel’s resistance to Roman domination
 - When Jesus spoke of a house of prayer, He was emphasizing God’s universal plan for salvation to include the Gentiles, which he had advocated
 - But, when Jesus called the temple a den of thieves, He was denouncing the commercialization of God’s house and condemning the Jewish resistance leaders for making it a focal point for the Jewish rebellion

Matthew 25 (Cont)

- Later, from the Mount of Olives, Jesus responded to His disciples comments about the beauty of the temple with His dire prediction of its destruction
- He responded to their question as to when this would happen with an apocalyptic discourse on wars, earthquakes, famines, and the need to flee the city within in one generation
- Dr. Sri also pointed out how many scholars incorrectly see this to be about the end of the world
- But, in fact, it is a part of the Old Testament prophetic tradition on the judgment on Israel's enemies (but this time on the corrupt leaders of the temple who were leading the people away from Jesus, the true Messiah-King)

Matthew 25 (Cont)

- Jesus' predictions were right on the money as about forty years later the Roman troops would raid Jerusalem, burn down the city, and destroy the temple
- The end of the temple would mean:
 - The end of Israel's life with God
 - The end of the Old Covenant world
- This was exactly what Jesus brought about – the end of the old so that He could usher in the new
- Since the Jews viewed the temple as the center of the universe and symbol of the entire cosmos, its destruction could be seen as the end of the world
- So, we can see that Jesus' words also prefigure what will happen to the entire cosmos at the end of time

Matthew 25 (Cont)

- **Matthew 25**

- This is the last dialogue section from Jesus before the beginning of the **Passion and Resurrection** of Jesus (**Matthew 26-28**)
- It contains three parables given to His disciples (coming right after His description on the destruction of Jerusalem)
- Many people (once again) see these parables in terms of the “end of the world”
- Father directed us to Jesus’ reference to fire in the third parable

Matthew 25 (Cont)

- Again, Father pointed out that the righteous were the ones “left behind”
- Jesus’ reference to the wicked being tossed into “the lake of fire” is how Jerusalem will be destroyed (**70 AD**)
- According to the Jewish historian *Josephus*, the Jews began to fight among themselves, set fire to each other’s grain storage, and the city was eventually destroyed by fire
- Thus, the Jews did much of this to themselves
- Once again, Father asked if this is not about the destruction of Jerusalem (in **70 AD**), then will it occur at the end of the world?

Matthew 25 (Cont)

- As mentioned last week, looking at the predictions concerning the end of the world (which can be seen as a bit of a mystery), we need to look at **1st Thessalonians 4** and **Revelation 20-22**
- Father also pointed out that even though this is about the destruction of Jerusalem, it also can be seen typologically as being about the end of the world
- The Second Vatican Council document ***Dei Verbum* #12** tells us, as the church tells us, when you read a text of the Bible, you must start with the intention of the author and his intended audience (this would be the literal sense)
- The other interpretations based on this sense can then be seen to apply to the end of the world

Matthew 25 (Cont)

- This is much easier here with these parables (since they do not contain concrete details)
- Thus, we can understand that when Jesus returns for the final judgment, He will judge us like He judged Jerusalem at this point
- He will ask us:
 - Will we be found wanting?
 - Will we have our lamps burning?
 - Will we have the wedding garment?
 - Will we have done the right deeds for the poor and those around us?
 - Or will we be like the goats?

Matthew 25 (Cont)

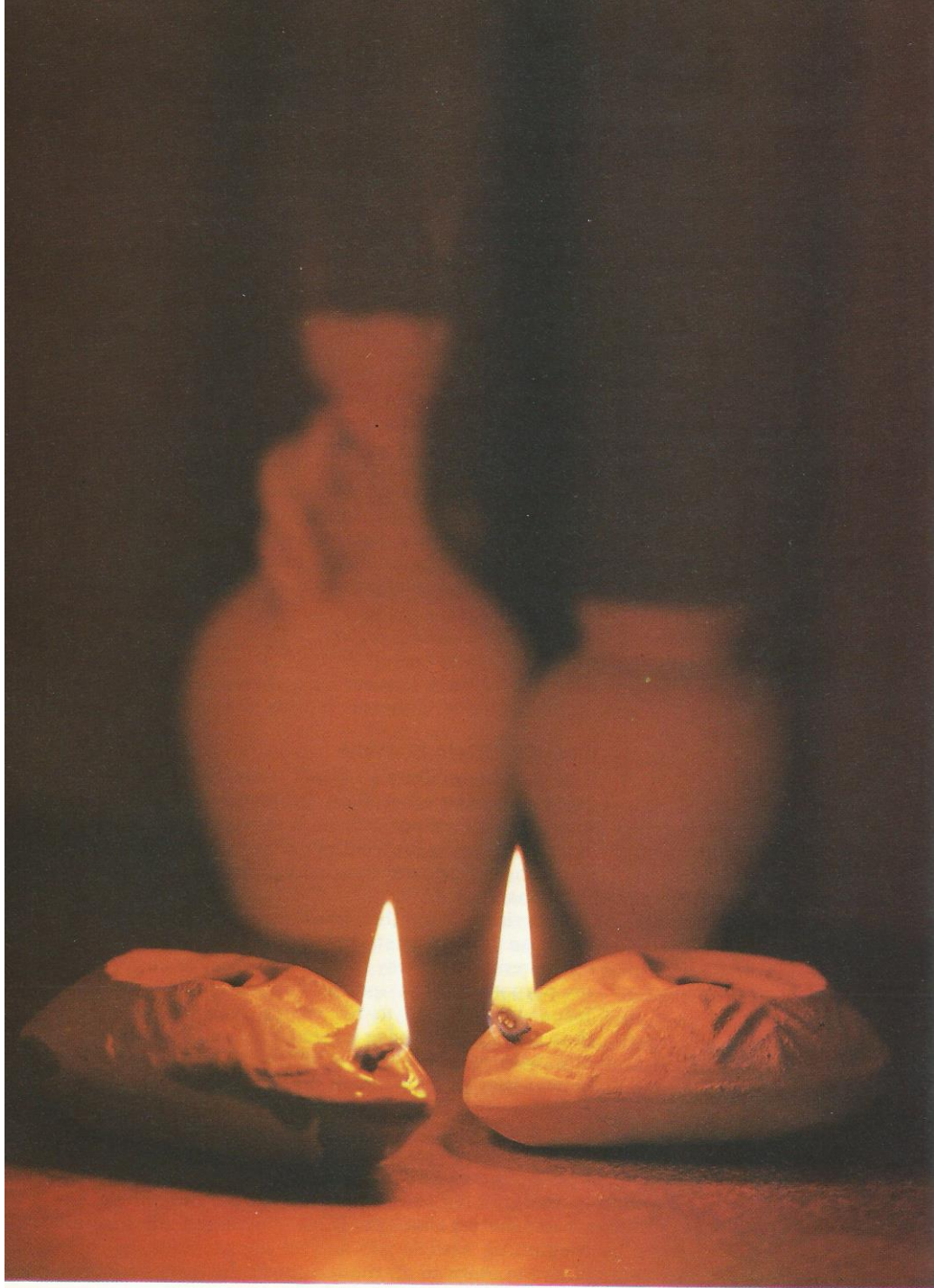
- These three parables are an easy vehicle to take the process of the destruction of Jerusalem and look forward to how the end of the world might come
- But, we cannot start with **Matthew 24** and see this section leading solely to the end of the world
- The parables give us an overview of the theological perspective on the whole thing
- Father said that we could use these parables (in addition to discussing the destruction of Jerusalem within the context of the end of the world) for each of us within our lifetime or for all of humanity

Matthew 25 (Cont)

- **Matthew presented three parables about the Kingdom to include:**
 - **The Ten Bridesmaids (Mt 25:1-13)**
 - **The Talents (Mt 25:14-30)**
 - **The Last Judgment (Mt 25:31-46)**

Matthew 25 (Cont)

- **Matthew 25:1-13**
- The parable of the Ten Bridesmaids
 - A traditional wedding came many months after the “betrothal ceremony” which was the fulfillment of actual contract between the bride and groom
 - The wedding ceremony consisted of the bridegroom’s friends going to the house of the bride and accompanying her through the streets of the town with her bridesmaids to the house of the groom where the wedding feast occurred
 - This often happened in the evening or early night (thus requiring the bridesmaids to carry small oil lamps)



Matthew 25 (Cont)

- In this story, the wedding was delayed until late in the evening
- During the interim, the bridesmaids fell asleep with their oil lamps lit
- Thus, there were five foolish bridesmaids who did not bring an extra flask of oil; while five were wise because they had extra oil
- At the end, when the bridegroom's party came the wise maidens were able to accompany the bride to the house of the groom, while the other five sought to purchase oil (in the middle of the night) causing them not to be permitted to enter the wedding feast upon their return

Matthew 25 (Cont)

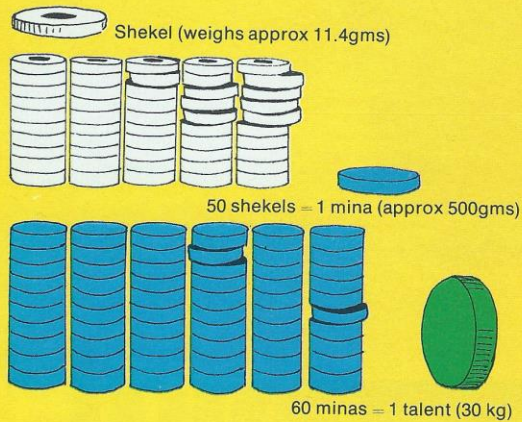
- The parable of the Talents (**Mt 25:14-30**)
 - One shekel was equal to one day's wage
 - Fifty shekels were equal to one mina
 - Sixty minas were equal to one talent
 - One talent was equal to 3000 days wage

Money

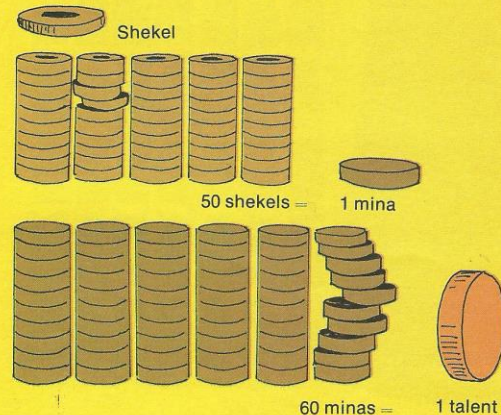
Old Testament times

Coinage seems to have been introduced in the 7th century BC. Before that, metals and perishable and imperishable goods were exchanged—wool, barley, dates, timber, livestock, etc. Gold, silver and copper were weighed out and the quality checked. Some of the names for weights were taken over as coin names. Early coins were simply pieces of metal impressed with a seal. They seldom weighed more than 1 shekel in gold or silver.

Silver coinage



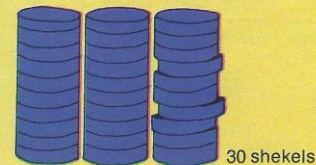
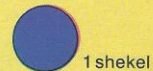
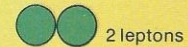
Gold coinage



New Testament times

Money from three sources circulated in Palestine in New Testament times. There was the official, imperial money (Roman standard); provincial money

Jewish

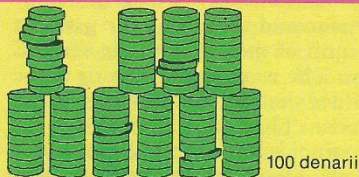
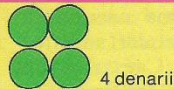
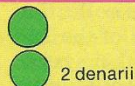
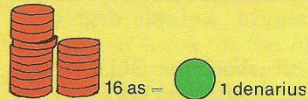
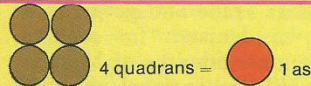
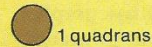
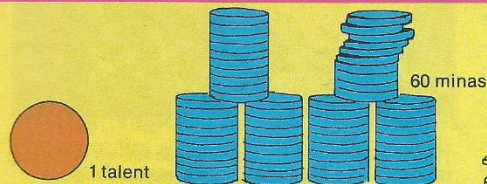
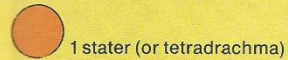
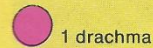


minted at Antioch and Tyre (Greek standard); and local Jewish money, possibly minted at Caesarea. It is not surprising that money-changers flourished. Money was coined in gold, silver, copper and bronze or brass. The

low-value Roman as and Jewish *lepton* were bronze coins. The commonest silver coins mentioned in the New Testament are the Greek *tetradrachma* and Roman *denarius*, which was a day's wage for the ordinary working man.

Greek

Roman



Matthew 25 (Cont)

- **The parable of the Last Judgment (Mt 25:31-46)**
 - The phrase, “When the Son of man comes in his glorywill sit on his glorious throne” (**Mt 25:31**) comes from **Dan 7:13**
 - Jesus enters Jerusalem as king and gives this parable about a king pronouncing judgment on his people

Matthew 25 (Cont)

- **Salvation is described as an inheritance which becomes a key theme to understand the teachings of St. Paul**
 - Our salvation and justification are a gift from God
 - We can be disinherited if we do things that cause us to be kicked out of the family
 - An inheritance is a gift from our parents (not something we earn)
 - We can break our relationship with our parents and be disinherited
 - Jesus and Paul describe our salvation as an inheritance

Matthew 25 (Cont)

- Next, Jesus presented the conditions for us to remain in the family and receive our inheritance (Mt 25:35)
- Six of these tasks are in the corporal works of mercy

Works of Mercy

The seven corporal works of mercy are as follows:

- ***Feed the hungry***
- ***Give drink to the thirsty***
- ***Clothe the naked***
- ***Shelter the homeless***
- ***Visit the sick***
- ***Visit the imprisoned***
- ***Bury the dead***

The Seven spiritual works of mercy

- Instruct the ignorant
- Counsel the doubtful
- Admonish the sinner
- Bear wrongs patiently
- Forgive offenses willingly
- Comfort the afflicted
- Pray for the living and the dead

Matthew 25 (Cont)

- This sets up the “Theology of the Body of Christ”
 - We are all a part of the Body of Christ
 - What we do for the poorest, we do for Christ
- This passage does not say anything about “faith”
 - Protestants often ignore this passage when discussing the faith vs. works controversy

Matthew 25 (Cont)

- Father gave a detailed explanation concerning the difference between sheep and goats
 - Sheep are herding animals and can always be found in flocks
 - Goats are solitary animals and have to be prodded to move them in a specific direction
- Next week we will look at Matthew 26