

HE WHO ENDURES TO THE END  
MATTHEW 24:1-14  
Richard Yen

- 1A. What did the disciples want to know?
- 1B. What aspect about the temple were the disciples so proud of?
- 1C. This could not be the first time that Jesus or the disciples saw the temple. What was the disciples' interest at this time? (Herod the Great started building this temple in 20 B.C. which was not completed yet at this time. Luke 21:5)
- 2C. How would Jesus' prediction have shocked the disciples? (Titus burned the temple in 70 A.D. The rubble was sifted to retrieve the molten gold.)
- 2B. What was the disciples' main question?
- 1C. How far away was the Mount of Olives from the temple? (a hill to the East, directly opposite the temple, across the Kidron Valley, with full view to Jerusalem.)
- 2C. At what point of Jesus' ministry did this discourse occur? (Matt 26:1)
- 3C. How were the disciples' anxiety manifested in their multiple-part question?
- 1D. If you are worried about a major disaster, which would you want to know first, the timing of its occurrence or warning signs preceding its occurrence?
- 2D. The second part about the warning signs, did the disciples see "Christ's coming" as the same event as "the end of the age"?
- 1E. It would be easy to understand why a Jew would equate the unthinkable destruction of the temple with "the end of the age." Why would they equate that also with "Christ's coming"?
- 2E. What did they come to expect of Jesus?
- 3E. Is the "end of the age" same as "end of the world"? (Matt 28:20 also has "end of the age," Chinese translation confusing.)
- 4E. Would there be any people left on Earth if both Jesus and the disciples were talking about the "end of the age"?
- 2A. What did Jesus tell them?
- 1B. Jesus apparently divided the answer into 2 phases. What was Phase I?
- 1C. What were the characteristics of Phase I? (Deceptions; wars and rumors of war.)
- 2C. What would be the sources of "birth pangs" (some translate it as "sorrows")?
- 1D. When do we see these events in human history?
- 2D. What are the characteristics of "birth pangs" (more frequent and more painful)?
- 3D. So if someone tells you that wars, famines and earthquakes are signs of Jesus' second coming, how accurate is that information?
- 3C. Why are we sure that these "natural" and "man-made" disasters really are not the immediate signs of Christ's second coming? (They are only the "beginning.")
- 2B. What was Phase II?
- 1C. Matt 24:9 started with the word "Then." That indicated a point on a time-line

- after which the following predictions would occur. What would follow?
- 2C. In reality, when would Phase II start? (Soon after Jesus' resurrection.)
- 3C. What was the purpose behind all the persecution of Christians?
- 1D. Jesus talked about "betrayal" and "hatred." Was He predicting events that will happen among "religious" or "non-religious" groups?
- 2D. How is it possible that "Christians" would betray each other? (What is the definition of a "Christian" today?)
- 3D. When "lawlessness" increases, love will "grow cold." Was Jesus talking about the "Christian" or "non-Christian" community?
- 1E. Does "lawless" refer to a community without laws, or a community with laws (and morals) which are ignored?
- 2E. Given that the term "Christian" was not even in existence yet (Acts 11:26) what would be a good example of a "lawless" religious community? (Matt 23:13)
- 3E. So would a "lawless" community have outward displays of religion or not?
- 4E. How can a Christian guard against "lawlessness"?
- 3B. What will the "end" come?
- 1C. What hope did Jesus give to His disciples?
- 1D. Did Jesus suggest that people will welcome the gospel at the end?
- 2D. Did He mean that there will be lots of churches around the world at the end?
- 2C. Did Jesus promise that the "end" will come soon?
- 1D. When Jesus said the "end," did He mean the "end of all sufferings"?
- 2D. Did He mean "the end of all Christian sufferings"?
- 3D. Why do people (including Christians) always expect a "happy ending"?
- 4D. Would there be any people left on Earth at this "ending"? (End of the Age or End of the World?)
- 3C. What is the main responsibility of all Christians?
- 1D. What does the word "endure" indicate?
- 2D. Would the "end" in verse 13 mean "end of our lives" or "end of the age" (whichever comes first)?
- 3D. Another way to look at "endurance" is "faithfulness to Christ" (because the opposition is always trying to deceive or to demolish the faithful.)
- 1E. What will happen if a person does not "endure to the end"?
- 2E. Some people think that Jesus had promised "once saved, forever saved" salvation. Would Jesus' warning here support this kind of viewpoint?
- 1F. Was Jesus saying that all Christians will fail?
- 2F. Is it better to issue a stern warning if the consequences are severe, or is it better to assume that everything will be OK?
- 3F. People who insist on "once saved, forever saved": are they trying to reassure the strong in faith, or the weak in faith?
- 4F. How is past performance ("once saved") related to future results ("forever saved")?
- 4D. What are some things that will enable us to "endure to the end"?

- 1E. Of all the support systems we now enjoy (worship service, religious music, fellowship meetings, Christian homes, good friends) which will still be helpful for Christian endurance during hard times?
- 2E. If a Christian does not share the gospel when he is free, what hope is there that he will share the gospel when oppressed?
- 3E. To many Christians "evangelism" means an annual church activity (where a speaker will come and preach about the gospel.) Will that be enough to build endurance during hard times to come?
- 4E. What will it take for Christians to develop "personal faithfulness" so that they can "endure to the end"?

## THE SIGN OF THE SON OF MAN

MATTHEW 24:15-31

Richard Yen

- 1A. What will precede the “end of the age”?
- 1B. What is the “end of the age”?
- 1C. To the disciples the destruction of the Jerusalem temple (Matt 24:2) had to be the “end of the age” (meaning all civil and religious life as they knew it.) In what way is the “end of the age” different from the “end of the world”?
- 2C. We who live in the 21<sup>st</sup> century know that indeed the temple was destroyed by the Romans in 70 A.D. Does that mean the “end” has already come?
- 1D. Some scholars suggested that Matthew was written around 50 A.D. What does that tell us about Jesus’ prophetic ability?
- 2D. Although questions about the “end” was first raised by the disciples, did Jesus have other people in mind that need to learn about the “end”?
- 1E. Prophecy is often not restricted to only one historical fulfillment. The first fulfillment can be the forecast of greater events. Exodus from Egypt was a prophecy fulfilled not only for Moses’ people, but also applicable for the Christian experience. (See I Cor 10:1-6) In what way is the destruction of the temple similar to the calamity to come for Christians?
- 2E. Has this calamity occurred yet for today’s Christians?
- 2B. What was one strong signal for the “end”?
- 1C. What does the term “abomination of desolation” indicate?
- 1D. How destructive would this force (or person) be?
- 2D. How would it/he impact on religious life?
- 2C. Many Christian leaders talk about the “Anti-Christ.” Is that one person and is that the same as the “abomination of desolation”?
- 1D. John made a comment about the anti-Christ (I John 2:18) When does one see this anti-Christ?
- 2D. What are their characteristics? (I John 2:19, 22)
- 2D. So there could be many antichrists (people who deny the Father and the Son) since the first century, but the “abomination of desolation” is the strongest. How do we know? (Matt 24:21)
- 3C. Referring to the conquest of Titus who did unspeakable atrocities to the Jews, what was Jesus’ warning?
- 1D. How many different situations did Jesus use?
- 2D. What was the common theme? (No time to waste; go not where you are expected; complete surprise)
- 1E. How much time does it take to go from the housetop into the house?
- 2E. What would be the first priority of a nursing mother?
- 3E. What do devoted Jews do (or will not do) on a Sabbath?
- 4E. What would be the consequence if Jesus’ warning was ignored?
- 3D. When Jesus said, “Therefore, when you see” (24:15) who was the ‘you’ that He was talking about? (the disciples)

- 4C. Referring to the coming calamity, what term did Jesus use to describe it?
- 1D. The term “great tribulation” was used only 3 times in the Bible, primarily to refer to this historically unprecedented period of oppression. (Other verses did not include the word ‘great’ but point to this period.) Why did Jesus call it the “great” tribulation? (Matt 24:21)
  - 2D. The term “tribulation” covers several concepts in the Bible, but primarily refers to suffering of the righteous (undeserved.) Can you think of another term which means the well-deserved suffering (punishment) of the unrighteous? (“retribution”)
  - 3D. So there are two kinds of suffering: one for the sake of righteousness, another because of unrighteousness. Which group is Jesus talking to here?
  - 4D. The other place that “great tribulation” was mentioned was in Revelation 7:14. From the description there (“These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation.”) does it appear that Christians have to go through the “great tribulation”?
- 2A. What must Christians do when the “abomination of desolation” appears?
- 1B. How will people know about this “abomination of desolation”?
  - 1C. Jesus described the event as “when you see.” There was no question in the Jewish mind when the Roman authority stood in their “holy place.” How can we see similar events today?
  - 2C. Why must we not be slowed down or inconvenienced by physical, biological and religious reasons?
- 2B. Matthew 24:15 started with “Therefore.” This suggests a reason for the hurry. Where can we find the reason?
- 1C. 24:14 talked about “witness to all the nations” so that cannot be the reason to run away immediately. What about 24:13?
  - 2C. In a day of calamity, most people are concerned about survival. What was more important than saving one’s life?
  - 1D. In addition to utter brutality, the abomination of desolation will aim at destruction of anything noble and religious. What effort will it take for the average Christian to endure this period?
  - 2D. Can we understand why Jesus’ advice was to “run”?
  - 3D. What will happen to the religious person who does not run?
- 3C. What does the authority know about Christians and their hope?
- 1D. Who preached in the desert not long before this time? (John the Baptist)
  - 2D. Who taught about praying in the “inner room”? (Matt 6:6)
  - 3D. What does this show about the authority’s ability to master Christian language and ideology?
- 3B. What will God do to shorten this period?
- 1C. What will happen if those days were not “shortened”(24:22)?
  - 2C. Does the term “elect” mean Jews or Christians? (see Romans 9:6-7)
  - 3C. So do Christians have to endure the great tribulation, or will they be removed before the great tribulation hits?
  - 4C. How will this “great tribulation” end?

- 3A. What is the sign of the Son of Man?
- 1B. What will be the propaganda to get Christians to come out of hiding? (24:23)
- 1C. These false christs and false prophets will use language familiar to Christians. Why should the faithful not listen to anyone even though they bring a message that Christians would want to hear? (24:27)
- 2C. What did the comparison of the “corpse and the vultures” (24:28) suggest?
- 1D. Who is actively looking for whom?
- 2D. What will a vulture do to the corpse once it is found?
- 3D. What will happen to the naïve Christian?
- 2B. What will Jesus’ second coming do to the period of “great tribulation”?
- 1C. Matthew 24:29 said “Immediately after the tribulation of those days.” What does that suggest about this period of tribulation?
- 2C. Does it mean that there will be no more suffering on Earth after that?
- 3C. Again, do Christians have to go through this period or not?
- 4C. Many people who confused “tribulation” with “suffering” wrongly taught that Christians will not have to endure the great tribulation despite Jesus’ clear teaching. Why?
- 3B. What will people be able to see on that day?
- 1C. What will happen on Earth before Jesus appear on the cloud?
- 1D. What will happen to the heavenly objects (sun, moon and stars)?
- 2D. Is this something that only Christians can see?
- 2C. The disciples asked about “the sign of Your coming” (24:3) What then is this sign? (The Son of Man appearing in the sky)
- 3C. The Son of Man will also bring angels. What will they do for the elect?
- 1D. After the elect is removed from the face of the Earth, will they have to suffer any more?
- 2D. What will happen to the rest of the people on Earth after all godly influences are removed?
- 3D. Will things get better or worse?
- 4D. Do they deserve it? (Retribution)
- 4C. So who will be lifted up to heaven to be with Jesus?
- 1D. If a person does not endure to the end, where will he be at that time?
- 2D. Since not every Christian will be alive when Jesus returns in the sky, does the same principle hold for Christians in every century?
- 3D. What then is the principle? (Matt 24:13)
- 4D. Does it make a difference whether a Christian is aware of this principle or not?
- 5D. What can we do to make sure our friends and family know about it and practice it?

YOU DO NOT KNOW WHICH DAY  
MATTHEW 24:32-42  
Richard Yen

- 1A. What is known and what is not known about the time of Jesus' return?
- 1B. The disciples asked two main questions ("When will these things be" and "What is the sign") What had Jesus told them up to this point?
  - 1C. What was the good news/bad news from 24:4-14?
  - 2C. What was the main teaching in 24:15-31 regarding what Christians need to do?
- 2B. If you were one of the disciples, would the discourse from 24:4-31 put you at ease?
  - 1C. What do most Christians want in any teachings about the "End Times"?
  - 2C. Why did Jesus focus on the importance of being faithful-to-the-end? (26:2)
  - 3C. Of the many things that Jesus could have talked about (Christian love, reaching to the lost, church-building) why is faithfulness most important?
  - 4C. To whom is the faithfulness directed?
    - 1D. Today many areas of our life demand attention and devotion: our healthy, job, family, church activities. How do we know which will be helpful in building our faithfulness to the Lord?
    - 2D. Was there any suggestion from Jesus that we can expect help from others or even a group when the time of testing come? Or is it more of a personal trial when faithfulness is required?
- 3B. What can a Christian know about Jesus' return?
  - 1C. What parable did Jesus tell His disciples?
  - 2C. What did Jesus mean by "all these things"? (24:33, 34)
    - 1D. Jesus said "this generation will not pass away until all these things take place." What generation was He talking about?
    - 2D. When Jesus taught about the "End Times," was it a point in time or a process (a period of time)?
    - 3D. If it is a process, then there is a "beginning point" and an "ending point." Is it possible that "all these things" (as mentioned in Matt 24:4-14) could have started before the disciples all died?
    - 4D. If all the attempts to mislead believers, global suffering and Christian tribulation indeed were all started before the disciple died, when would the "ending point" come? (after the first century.)
    - 5D. Many people question why it "takes such a long time" before Jesus will return. Revelation 6:9-11 provided a very good answer. What in short is God's reply? (God is waiting for the number of the faithful to be filled.)
  - 3C. What assurance did Jesus give that His warnings are truthful?
- 4B. What will a Christian not be able to know?
  - 1C. Who alone knows the day and hour?
  - 2C. Why so secretive?
    - 1D. If a student knows that the final examination will not come in his life time, what will he be tempted to do?
    - 2D. In contrast, if the final exam will come hopelessly soon (e.g. in the next

- minute,) what may the student do? (Given up.)
- 3D. If the student's focus is only on the final examination, what is he missing?
- 4D. Why are most people interested in "when Jesus will return" instead of what they need to do to prepare for "His return at any time"?
- 5D. Why is self-centeredness a problem even among those that wait for His return?
- 3C. What are the characteristics of people in the "days of Noah"?
- 1D. What is wrong with "eating and drinking" and "marrying and giving in marriage"?
- 2D. What did these people know (were told) and yet still did not know?
- 2A. What would be the condition of the faithful immediately before Jesus returns in the sky?
- 1B. Matt 24:40 started with "Then." What time point was Jesus referring to?
- 2B. What were the two examples that Jesus gave?
- 1C. What was common between the "two men in the field" and "two women grinding at the mill"? (very similar in activity)
- 1D. What did the physical labor suggest about life during the great tribulation? (in contrast to the list from 24:17-20)
- 2D. Will some Christians have successfully escaped arrest by the authorities?
- 2C. What was the difference in their "ending"?
- 1D. From the text, how do we know whether being "taken" is the preferred result or "left behind" is better? (24:31)
- 2D. Is this something that the 12 disciples needed to know? (24:42)
- 1E. If Jesus was talking about the time when He is about to appear in the sky, these disciples would have died long time ago, why did they need to be warned? (Matt 26:31)
- 2E. What principle was Jesus trying to teach the 12 disciples (and all who will have died before the great tribulation period)? (24:13)
- 3B. In what way is the parable of the "head of the house" similar to the first two examples?
- 1C. A thief is certainly not a welcome person. In what way will Jesus' return be treated?
- 2C. Jesus' emphasis so far was on Christians' not knowing when He will come back. Yet there is a twist here that seems to contradict Jesus' teaching. What did it reveal about human nature? ("They do not think He will." 24:44)
- 3A. What was the point of the parable that Jesus taught His disciples here?
- 1B. How many slaves are there in the story? (One slave, but two possible endings)
- 1C. How do we know for sure that these are not two different persons? ("But if that slave" 24:48)
- 2C. How does this "same person, two endings" argue about "fate" deciding everything in a person's life? (Fate means "no choice." It cannot be "fate" if one looks back after a certain result has irreversibly occurred. It was the result of his decision.)
- 2B. What brought about the happy ending of the good slave?

- 1C. What was the good slave asked to do?
  - 1D. Can we argue that this person is a non-Christian?
  - 2D. Can we say that because he is a slave, he has no choice?
  - 3D. Can we argue that this person does not fully understand his duty?
- 2C. What qualities does he have to be so trusted by the Master?
  - 1D. Why is faithfulness (see 24:13) so important?
  - 2D. How do we know that faithfulness does not mean “doing the same thing day-in and day-out regardless of the results” but that it has to fulfill the wishes of the master (i.e. results are important)? (He needs to be “sensible” in addition to being “faithful.”)
- 3C. What criteria did the Master use to reward this slave?
  - 1D. Was it because he started right?
  - 2D. Was it because he served for a long time?
  - 3D. Was it because there were no complaints?
  - 4D. Was it because he was still doing it when the master returned?
- 3B. What caused the disastrous outcome for the next scenario?
  - 1C. If this is the same person, how come he is now described as “evil”?
    - 1D. Is he evil because he was pre-destined to be evil?
    - 2D. Is he called evil because of a change in behavior?
  - 2C. Why did this same person change?
    - 1D. Had he started serving yet?
    - 2D. Who told him that the master is not coming for a long time?
      - 1E. Did he know that the master will “eventually” come back?
      - 2E. What does “not coming for a long time” reflect on his attitude about his master and the work given to him?
      - 3E. How did this attitude lead to changed behavior?
  - 3C. What punishment did this slave get?
    - 1D. Once the slave told himself that the master was “not coming for a long time” he became convinced that the master will not return on that day. What does this tell us about human self-deception?
    - 2D. “Cut in pieces” in the original language means “cut in the middle.” Is that too severe a punishment? (This is figurative because the slave can still weep and gnash his teeth later.)
    - 3D. Why did the master assign him a place with the hypocrites?
    - 4D. If the consequence is so bad, do we need to debate if this person had “initially truly believed” or if he “never truly believed”?
- 4B. What warning did Jesus want His disciples to hear?
  - 1C. Did all 12 disciples hear the warning?
    - 1D. Some people think that once a person has decided to follow Jesus, all will be well. Was it true of all 12 disciples?
    - 2D. Others will argue that if a person (unlike Judas) has truly believed, he will not be able to change. Is that the main lesson of the parable?
  - 2C. Did the parable mean to say that people who have already followed Jesus will change?
    - 1D. How does “sensible” enable a Christian to be “faithful”?
    - 2D. Do you think that the rest of the household (those being served) can

contribute to the faithfulness of the leader?

3C. If a Christian has already experienced the “calling” and has already been engaged in Christian service, what then becomes the challenge when he gets older?

1D. What is the main challenge for those who have been serving for a long time?

2D. Is there a consequence for unfaithfulness?

## I DO NOT KNOW YOU

Matthew 25:1-30

Richard Yen

- 1A. What was the lesson from the parable of the Ten Virgins?
- 1B. Jesus said that the parable of the Ten Virgins was actually used to illustrate the kingdom of heaven. What do we already know about the kingdom of heaven?
- 1C. From the parable of the Sower (Matt 13:1-9) how many kinds of seeds are there? (Only one kind)
- 2C. How many outcomes? (4 outcomes.)
  - 1D. Was Jesus saying that all were acceptable except the first kind, or was He saying only the fruitful one was acceptable?
  - 2D. So which was more important: how you begin, or how you finish?
- 2B. Were the foolish virgins born foolish, or were they called foolish because of their actions?
  - 1C. Some people think that the foolish virgins must be non-Christians (because they were not accepted into the wedding.) What characteristics did they actually share with the wise virgins?
    - 1D. Would non-Christians be waiting alongside Christians for the return of the "groom"?
    - 2D. Can you tell the difference between a wise and a foolish virgin at the beginning?
  - 2C. Other people think that the foolish virgins cannot be Christians because they "do not have oil in their lamp." Why was this view wrong?
    - 1D. Where did the wise ones put their extra oil? (vessels, or flasks; not lamp)
    - 2D. Were the lamps of the foolish ones still burning when the groom appeared?
    - 3D. Could the mistaken view be related to a popular song we sing: "Give me oil in my lamp" (which redirects the attention to the lamp, away from the flask)? A correct rendition would be "I'll keep oil in my flask to keep me going."
- 3B. What made the foolish ones fail to bring extra oil?
  - 1C. Did anyone tell them that the groom would come right away?
    - 1D. What did the failure to bring extra oil indicate about the attitude of the foolish ones? (I can do whatever I like.)
    - 2D. Was it the groom's fault that He came late?
    - 3D. Was it the fault of the wise ones who refused to "share"?
  - 2C. What quality would you say was missing among the foolish ones? (faithfulness)
- 4B. What was the outcome of their foolishness?
  - 1C. The foolish ones cried out "Lord, Lord." But the Lord said "I do not know you." Was that too severe a punishment for a little mistake?
  - 2C. How difficult was it to bring extra oil?
  - 3C. What was Jesus concluding remarks to even His 12 disciples? (24:13)
  - 4C. In our busy schedule today, we have many things "on the plate." How do we know if we are missing the most important?

- 2A. What was the lesson from the parable of the lazy servant?
- 1B. What did the master give to the servants?
- 1C. Did he tell them what to do with the talents?
- 1D. From the actions of the two wiser ones (and the complaints of the lazy one) what did the servants know about this master?
- 2D. How much is a talent of gold or silver? (One talent is 66 pounds)
- 3D. What can you say about the trust and the generosity of the master for his servants?
- 2C. Was the master unfair in giving the first one 5, the second one 2 and the third one only 1 talent?
- 1D. Did the first servant complain that it was too much work to earn 5 talents?
- 2D. Children often complain today "It is not fair." What do they focus on when they say that?
- 3D. What do these children ignore when they say "It is not fair."
- 4D. What did the fact that the 2 servants went to work right away tell us about their faithfulness? (Don't know when the master is coming back; but they do know that they have a duty to perform.)
- 2B. Why did the third servant do what he did?
- 1C. If you were to choose between putting that talent in the bank versus digging a hole to hide it, which would be easier?
- 2C. What was this servant's excuse?
- 1D. Logically, if the servant truly felt that the master was demanding, he should have done what?
- 2D. Was it safer hiding the talents in the ground than depositing it with the bankers?
- 3D. Had the servant earned the interest (via the banker's labor) instead of a whole talent, would the master have accepted that?
- 3C. What was the lazy servant punished for?
- 1D. Was he punished for not earning enough?
- 2D. What did the master do with that one talent?
- 3D. Was the "lazy" servant punished for being born lazy, or acting with laziness?
- 4D. If this servant had the right attitude, would he be behaving lazy?
- 5D. So what is the relationship between one's attitude and the resulting behavior?
- 4C. What was the lazy servant's punishment?
- 1D. "Outer darkness" was not fully explained here (but in Revelation.) But from this text, what can we conclude about it?
- 2D. From the description of "weeping and gnashing of teeth" (deep regret) in Matt 24:51; 25:30 and "I do not know you" what can we understand about the relationship of these three parables?
- 3A. What is the common theme from the parables regarding the "Evil Slave" "the Foolish Virgins" and the "Lazy Servant"?

- 1B. What is common between their relationship with the master or groom?
  - 1C. Do they understand their duty?
  - 2C. Are they capable of performing their duty?
  - 3C. At the time they receive their commission, can one tell who is faithful and who is not faithful?
- 2B. When does the "separation" become obvious?
  - 1C. In the case of the lazy servant, it is obvious from the start. Can he complain that he has no "role model" to pattern after?
  - 2C. In the case of the foolish virgins, the outcome is determined the moment they decided not to bring extra oil. How come they do not question why the wise ones were carrying (full) flasks?
  - 3C. In the case of the evil slave, he does not get punished even when he starts beating his household. Had he repented and became faithful again, would he have a chance of being accepted by the master?
  - 4C. What is the likelihood of this evil slave repenting once he started beating his fellow slaves?
  - 5C. How is it possible that a Christian leader would abuse his fellow servants?
- 3B. What are the mistakes made by the evil slave, the foolish virgins and the lazy servant?
  - 1C. What was the conclusion (by himself to himself) of the evil slave regarding the day of the master's return? (Not for a long time.)
  - 2C. What was the conclusion (by themselves to themselves) of the foolish virgins regarding the hour of the groom's coming? (Cannot be that long.)
  - 3C. What was the conclusion (by himself to himself) of the lazy servant about this "stern" master's return? (I don't care.)
  - 4C. What do these parables tell us about human nature? (If I do not think He will come back on this day or hour, then He simply cannot or will not.)
- 4B. What is the outcome of their mistakes?
  - 1C. What is the main lesson of the parables: that we should be smarter in guessing when Jesus will come back; or be faithful (endure) to the end?
  - 2C. It seems that none of the evil slave, foolish virgins or lazy servant were really killed. So there was nothing to be worried about?
  - 3C. Jesus described some being "taken" and some being "left behind." (Matt 24:40-41.) How do we know these 3 parables are all related to that warning?
  - 4C. Is the principle of "enduring to the end" only applicable at the moment of Jesus' return in the sky; or is it applicable to all the saints in all the centuries?
  - 5C. What can we do to promote greater personal faithfulness?
    - 1D. Personal faithfulness does not imply a selfish motive, nor ignoring the welfare of our group or community. How can we tell if our activities are helpful in building our own faithfulness to the Lord?
    - 2D. Jesus commanded us to "make disciples." Is making disciples a personal or group activity; and what is the ultimate purpose of this command?
    - 3D. Does your group emphasize more on loyalty to the group (or community) or does it also highlight individual responsibilities?

## YOU DID IT TO ME

Matthew 25:31-46

Richard Yen

- 1A. What will happen in front of the Throne?
  - 1B. Jesus' discourse in Matt 24 and 25 was His answer to the disciples' questions. What did they want to know?
    - 1C. How did Jesus handle the first question ("When will it be")?
      - 1D. Did Jesus say the end will be there right away?
      - 2D. Did Jesus say when the end will come?
    - 2C. What was His answer to the second question ("What will be the sign")?
      - 1D. If the disciples (and other faithful ones) will be delivered from the great tribulation, does that mean they will not have to suffer?
      - 2D. Is there a consequence to being faithful to the end, or not faithful?
  - 2B. The three parables (the good/evil slave, the 10 virgins, the 3 servants) shared a common theme. What was that?
    - 1C. How could a person be saved (whether at the time of the Abomination of Desolation or before, or even after)? (Matt 24:13)
    - 2C. What will happen to a person who is "left behind"?
  - 3B. How is that parable in Matthew 25:31-46 different from the other 3 parables?
    - 1C. Where is everyone standing now? (The King has returned.)
    - 2C. Is this a parable about a small group of followers, or is it about all people?
    - 3C. Is this a time to teach about the importance of faithfulness, or is it a time of reckoning?
    - 4C. The word "Judgment" is often used today to mean "rendering an opinion" (as in "making a judgment .") In what way is this parable beyond that? (The judgment had been made. This is to expound on why. )
- 2A. On what basis are some people classified as "sheep"?
  - 1B. What are the things that the sheep had done which the King/the Son of Man was so pleased?
    - 1C. Is it a difficult thing to do to give some needy soul food to eat and water to drink?
    - 2C. If so, would professional social workers have all the advantage in qualifying to "go to heaven"?
  - 2B. Are people rewarded for their actions or for their faith?
    - 1C. Why were the sheep surprised?
      - 1D. Would they be surprised if their action was a result of being aware of the reward?
      - 2D. Would it be easy to give someone water to drink if you do not have enough for yourself?
      - 3D. The fact that the least of the brethren is in prison shows that all Christians are under persecution. What will you reveal to the authorities by visiting another Christian in prison?
      - 4D. Society now recognizes the importance of a safety net to the poor and the misfortunate. Was Jesus teaching here about the importance of

- governmental action to the “down and out,” or individual actions (because of personal convictions and with personal risks)?
- 2C. Why would people do things without thinking about a reward?
- 1D. Can the “least of the brethren” return a favor?
- 2D. Most people will not “lift a finger” unless there is something to gain for them. Why are the sheep so different?
- 3D. Did Jesus say the reward was for Christian acts for the benefit of other Christians?
- 4D. How can anyone survive if he keeps giving away his possessions (whether it is food, water, clothes, time or comfort)?
- 1E. Was Jesus encouraging people to trade “temporary” things for “eternal” life?
- 2E. Was Jesus teaching how to be saved on the basis of actions (without reference to motive)?
- 3C. How much does a person have to give to please God?
- 1D. Is there an “objective” criteria on how much a person has to give? (“Objective” meaning “same for everyone” i.e. a million dollars regardless of whether you are a billionaire or a “working poor.”)
- 2D. The phrase Jesus used was translated as “inasmuch as you did” (New King James) or “To the extent” (New American Standard) or “Whatever you did” (New International.) Is there a difference between the three?
- 1E. If a billionaire gave a dollar to a Christian in need, would that fit the description of “whatever you did”?
- 2E. If Jesus’ teaching here means “to the extent you can, according to what you have, whether you are rich or poor” what difference will that make?
- 3E. Proper Christian communication is important. How will people be misled if we say there is “no objective criteria” or “everything is subjective” in the qualification to the kingdom? (Or, “Jesus never taught about the qualification to the kingdom.”)
- 4E. Can we say “everything is by faith” (meaning action is not important)?
- 3A. On what basis are some people judged as “goats”?
- 1B. What was the penalty for those on the left?
- 1C. Was the “everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels” a temporary arrangement like the one set aside for the “hypocrites” in the first 3 parables?
- 2C. So was the judgment (pronouncement) final or not?
- 2B. What reason did the King give for the goats’ eternal punishment?
- 1C. How can the King expect the same from non-Christians?
- 2C. Would it be fair if the King had a separate expectation of non-Christians?
- 1D. Are there people who were born as non-Christians while others were born as Christians?
- 2D. So how did some become Christians?
- 1E. Did these become Christians because they have done some wonderful deeds like the list of the things the King talked about?
- 2E. Or was it some internal change which ultimately led to changes in

external behavior?

3B. Why were the goats surprised at the reason the King gave?

1C. The goats asked, "When did we see." How come people do not see?

2C. The sheep also asked "When did we see." Yet they were rewarded. Why?

4A. What is the relationship between faith and deeds?

1B. As early as 350 B.C. Plato already taught that humans have a soul (the immaterial part which is the basis of change.) Religious people have at different times emphasized the internal (holiness) or the external (holy deeds.) What is the link between the two?

1C. Which is easier to measure (actions or attitudes)?

2C. If God already knew our innermost "heart," why do we have to care?

1D. Is Jesus' emphasis here on how to measure other peoples' faith?

2D. Is it important to know our present situation if faith is a process (not a point)?

2B. Why did the King not mention the faith of the sheep? (None of "because you have believed in Me.")

1C. In what way are "actions" (during hard times) more indicative of a person's relationship with God than "faith"?

2C. What is the danger of a Christian saying "in these hard times, it is most important that I keep my faith in God and avoid any involvement with other people"?

3C. Is it possible for the "goats" to do kind deeds in order to qualify for the kingdom?

1D. What is the significance of the sheep not remembering or not even knowing that they have done something pleasing to God?

2D. Now that everyone in this discussion group is aware of the importance of deeds, will it count if we go out to do them in order to earn our way into heaven?

4C. How did the response of the goats show that they cannot fool God, or even themselves?

3B. Why should Christian excel in their deeds as well as their faith?

1C. Why Jesus first recruited His disciples, He emphasized on faith. Why?

2C. Why is "deeds" truly the "expression of faith"?

3C. What is the problem if people still just focus on the "activity" ("building hospitals and bridges") as if the internal reason for so doing does not count?

4C. What are some things that Christians can do on an individual basis that will enhance our inner spiritual growth?

