

## THE WISE LIVE READY!

Parables generally have just ONE main point. The main point of the parable of the 10 virgins in Matthew 25:1-13 is the importance of preparedness and being ready for the Lord's return. This parable has "LIVE READY" written all over it!

### **Matthew 25:1–13 (NKJV)**

**1 "Then the kingdom of heaven shall be likened to ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom.**

The kingdom of heaven refers to the rule of heaven on earth in the coming kingdom age. The Jews rightly understood the kingdom era would be preceded by a time of great trouble as noted in the Old Testament Scriptures. What they did not understand is that the first phase of Christ's return (the Rapture) would set in motion Israel's last days culminating in Christ's return to the earth and the setting up of His kingdom.

The term "***that day***" (as seen for example in Mt. 24:36) sometimes refers to the whole span of both aspects of Christ's second coming and the 70<sup>th</sup> week of Daniel with emphasis on its inauguration at the beginning. This collectively is the era that will usher in the kingdom. That is why during the tribulation period they will once again be preaching the "***gospel of the kingdom***" (Mt. 24:14). So both phases of Christ's second coming are closely linked to the kingdom in the sense that in fairly close succession they will usher in the kingdom. This package of Christ's coming in conjunction with the Tribulation Period (bracketed by the 2-phase second coming) is the era that will usher in the kingdom.

God's children in the church age are "***kingdom children***" but we are not in the kingdom yet. We are on our way, but the kingdom is yet future. Still, we are exhorted as kingdom children to walk worthy of our kingdom calling as seen in 2 Thessalonians (cf. 2 Thess. 1:5, 11).

The illustration given here by Christ in Matthew 25 relates to a Jewish wedding celebration. The bridegroom is clearly Christ because verse 13 directly relates this parable to the coming of the Son of Man.

In the Old Testament God is often referred to as the "husband" of Israel (cf. Isa. 54:4-6; Ezek. 16:7-34; Hos. 2:19). But in the New Testament Jesus is

pictured as the bridegroom of the Church and not Israel (cf. Mt. 9:14-15; Jn. 3:29; Rom. 7:4; 1 Cor. 6:16-17; 2 Cor. 11:2-4; Eph. 5:30-32; Rev. 19:7; 22:17).

So intimate is Christ's union with the Church that we are said to be married to Him in Romans 7:4. In 1 Cor. 6:16-19 Paul uses the "one flesh" quote from Genesis 2:24 to illustrate the "one spirit" union we as believers now have with Christ. We are the body of Christ and just as in a marriage union the two shall become one – in like manner, we are now joined to the Lord spiritually. Paul told the Corinthians he had betrothed them to Christ as their husband in 2 Cor. 11:2-4. And in Eph. 5:30-32 Paul uses the marriage illustration to illustrate the body of Christ's union with Jesus (cf. Rev. 22:16-17).

All this to say if the coming bridegroom is Christ (which in this context it clearly is), and if the coming is unexpected (which Matt. 25:13 makes clear it is) then it makes sense that the coming in view in this parable is talking about the rapture. The great issue in this parable is being prepared for the rapture.

"The Parable of the Wise and Foolish Virgins relates to the theme of readiness for the beginning of the day of the Lord and the rapture of the Church." – ***The Moody Bible Commentary***

This parable uses the analogy of a Jewish wedding which in other places also depicts the rapture and Christ's formal union with His bride (cf. 2 Cor. 11:2).

In the Jewish culture there first would be a betrothal period that loosely corresponds to what we call the engagement period. But betrothal was stronger than our idea of "engaged". They were officially considered married but the marriage was not yet consummated. Normally after the betrothal the bridegroom would go back to his father's house and build his own house – perhaps as an attachment to "father's house" in preparation for his bride to come and live with him.

This is where we are right now as the CHURCH. We are betrothed to Christ and He is presently preparing a place for us.

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**2 Corinthians 11:2 (NKJV)**

**2** For I am jealous for you with godly jealousy. For I have betrothed you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.

**John 14:2–3 (NKJV)**

**2** In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.

**3** And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also.

This is where we as the Church (the bride of Christ) are. We are waiting for Christ to come and get us and take us back to Father's house where Christ's official union with us as His bride will be consummated.

In a Jewish context normally the betrothal period would be about one year. The bride and her attendants would not know for sure when the bridegroom would come and so they were to be watching and ready so that when he showed up they would immediately be ready.

That is the picture of these virgins. They are likened to those in the wedding party who are waiting for the groom to come.

**Matthew 25:2 (NKJV)**

**2** Now five of them were wise, and five were foolish.

The distinction between them is that 5 were wise and 5 were foolish. These virgins represent professing Christians who by outward appearance look a lot alike. They are all waiting. They all have lamps. They are all virgins. They all expect to participate in the wedding. However, some of them are saved (the wise) and some of them are merely nominal professors (the foolish).

**Matthew 25:3–4 (NKJV)**

**3** Those who were foolish took their lamps and took no oil with them,

**4** but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps.

Note the plain language here: The foolish while having their lamps "took no oil with them". They had NO oil. Commentators who say they ran out of oil are wrong. They had NO oil to start with. The sole distinction between the

foolish virgins and the wise is that the foolish took NO oil, while the wise did.

OIL in the Scriptures is often symbolic of the Holy Spirit (cf. Isa. 61:1; Zech. 4:1-6). In the early Church (Acts) there was a time of transition related to the sign-gift of tongues and receiving the Holy Spirit. But that transitional time was not normative. As we go along the Spirit was also clearly given to believing Gentiles (Acts 10-11) and what is normative from then on in the Church Age is that every believer at the moment of saving faith receives the Spirit.

**Romans 8:9 (NKJV)**

**9** But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His.

**1 Corinthians 12:13 (NKJV)**

**13** For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free—and have all been made to drink into one Spirit.

This defines true believers in the Church Age. We all have the Holy Spirit living in us and we have all been placed into the body of Christ by the Spirit.

Thus, we as believers all have this spiritual bond brought about by the Holy Spirit. We all possess the Holy Spirit and we have all been placed into the body of Christ by the Spirit. This is the dividing line between all true believers and those that are just bogus professors. If you are saved you have the Spirit, if you are lost you don't.

And by the way, the Spirit is a PERSON. Just like Jesus you either have Him or you don't. To be filled with the Spirit simply means you are controlled by Him – you are living under His influence and control. It does not mean you have MORE of Him. You either have all of Him or none of Him. He is a person. Just like Jesus – you either have Him or you don't.

So, the analogy of having oil representing true believers who have the Spirit certainly fits the theology of the New Testament.

“Though this passage does not specifically interpret the meaning of the oil, many commentators see it as representing the Holy Spirit and His work in salvation. Salvation is more than mere profession for it involves regeneration by the Holy Spirit.”

– ***The Bible Knowledge Commentary***

**Matthew 25:5 (NKJV)**

**5** But while the bridegroom was delayed, they all slumbered and slept.

The concept of “delay” is often the perceived issue during the Church Age, but not during the Tribulation Period (cf. 2 Pet. 3:4, 9). The “delay” here represents the time between Christ’s ascension and His coming in the rapture. It is the time period that corresponds to the GAP period between the 69<sup>th</sup> and 70<sup>th</sup> week of Daniel as brought out in Daniel 9:26.

Slumbering here is not depicting a moral problem but simply highlighting the point of an extended wait.

**Matthew 25:6 (NKJV)**

**6** “And at midnight a cry was heard: ‘Behold, the bridegroom is coming; go out to meet him!’

This represents an unexpected time. They might have expected him to come earlier in the evening, but not at midnight. But that is the point – the bridegroom comes at a time unexpected. This again is in keeping with imminency. It will happen suddenly and unexpectedly.

At midnight the cry rang out, “He is here, the bridegroom is coming – go to meet him.” The “midnight cry” is a symbol of eschatological climax which here corresponds to the RAPTURE SHOUT in 1 Thess. 4:16-17 which will be loud enough to raise the dead (so to speak).

**1 Thessalonians 4:16–17 (NKJV)**

**16** For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.

**17** Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.

**Matthew 25:7–8 (NKJV)**

**7** Then all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps.

**8** And the foolish said to the wise, ‘Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.’

They all arose and trimmed the wicks to their lamps but the foolish had NO oil. The lamp would not remain lit without oil. The point is they were caught unprepared. They had no oil (v. 3). The distinction between the two groups becomes very evident at this point.

“The reason the wise virgins brought oil was because the oil was carried in flasks and added to the lamps at the time of need. There must have been some residue of oil on the rag or wick of the five empty lamps, which quickly burned out, only moments after being lit. This would explain why all five torches went out at the same time. ...The difference between the five wise virgins and the five foolish virgins is salvation. These five foolish virgins were not once saved, but then ‘ran out’ of salvation. They were lost, and never had it. They never had oil. They were just empty lamps. They looked useful, they seemed to give promise of light, but they never produced it.”

- ***Bob Deffinbaugh***

“Possessing oil illustrates the concept of being prepared; a lack of oil represents being unprepared for Christ’s return.”

– ***The Nelson Study Bible***

The kingdom of heaven is a prepared place for a prepared people.

Live Ready!