

The Ten Virgins

Matthew 25:1-13

Introduction

- Jesus declares the Parable of “The Ten Virgins” to expose the reasons for those that would be judged at His appearing.
- This parable emphasis salvation and not service. It focuses on life and not labour.
- The parable brings to light the profession of person; it challenges the hearer to examine themselves whether they be in the faith.
- Jesus proclaims this parable 2 days before His death.

Note: We will look at 3 things in this Parable:

- A. The SETTING of the Parable
 - B. The SCENARIO of the Parable
 - C. The SINGULAR truth of the Parable
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A. The SETTING of the Parable

Note: Looking into the context of the passage is a major requirement to shed light to the parable at hand.

- The parable of the “Ten “Virgins” is only found in the gospel of Matthew.

1. The Hearers of the Parable

- This parable was directed to the disciples.
- The parable was given in response to 2 questions that were put forward by the disciples.

Matthew 24:3 “And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall

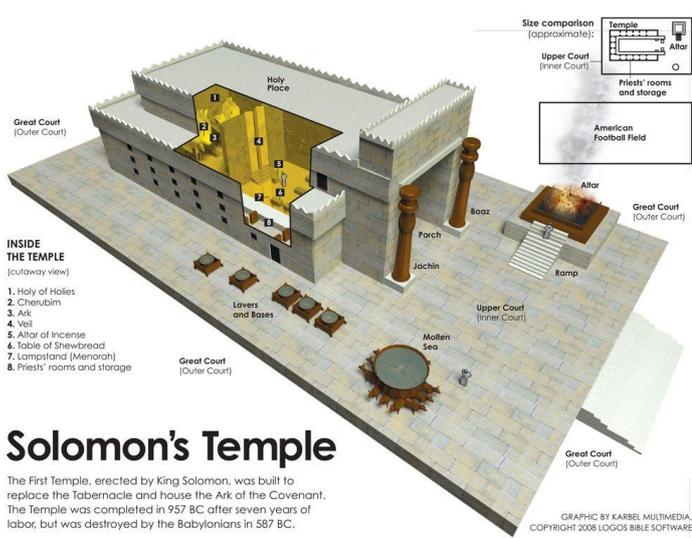
these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?"

a. **Question 1:** When shall these things be?

- What things?
- Verse 1 and 2 is what prompted the question. Notice what Jesus said:

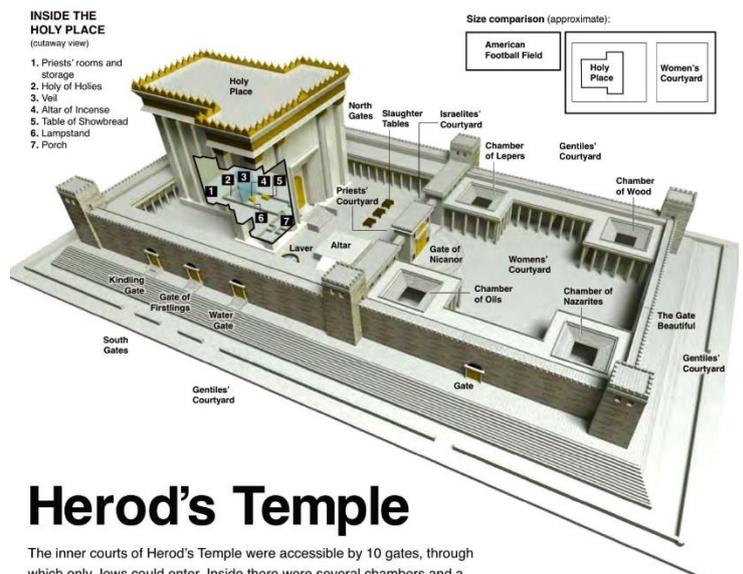
Matthew 24:1-2 “And Jesus went out, and departed from the temple: and his disciples came to him for to shew him the buildings of the temple. (2) And Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things? verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.”

- Jesus foretells and prophecies the **“Destruction of the Temple”**
- This temple that Jesus was referring to was initially rebuilt by the Jews under the leadership of Zerubbabel and Ezra.
- It was nothing like the first temple that Solomon built. The people of God were disappointed with the basic structure of the temple.
- However, the temple was greatly expanded and improved by Herod. Herod beautified the temple.



Solomon's Temple

The First Temple, erected by King Solomon, was built to replace the Tabernacle and house the Ark of the Covenant. The Temple was completed in 957 BC after seven years of labor, but was destroyed by the Babylonians in 587 BC.



Herod's Temple

The inner courts of Herod's Temple were accessible by 10 gates, through which only Jews could enter. Inside there were several chambers and a courtyard where sacrifices were made. At one end was the holy place—a two-room sanctuary used by Jewish priests. The expansive building project of Herod's Second Temple and Temple Mount was completed in approximately AD 62–64, only to be destroyed by the Romans in AD 70.

- Herod greatly enlarged the platform by using the floorplan from Solomon's temple.
- He doubled the height of the holy of holies building. He adorned every side of the building with heavy gold plates.
- Herod used great limestone blocks (40feet long x 18feet wide) and each block weighed hundreds of tonnes.
- Herod's work on the temple started in 19B.C, and was only completed in 63 A.D.
- The work took more than eighty years. The temple was finished only seven years before it was destroyed.

- About 40 years after Jesus prophesied, there was a Jewish revolt against the Romans in Palestine, and for the most part they succeeded.
- However, Rome would soon dominate; and in 70 A.D, Jerusalem was taken, and the temple was destroyed just as Jesus said it would.
- Some of the Jews fled to the temple for safety because it was one of the strongest buildings in the city.
- The Roman soldiers surrounded the temple and then General Titus scaffolded the building with wood and set it on fire.
- The immense flames of fire were so intense they caused the stones to crumble. The rubble and stone were shifted one by one in order to retrieve the plated gold.

b. The answer to their first question is found in Luke 21:20-21.

***Luke 21:20-24** "And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh. (21) Then let them which are in Judaea flee to the mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out; and let not them that are in the countries enter thereinto. (22) For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. (23) But woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck, in those days! for there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people. (24) And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.*

c. **Question 2:** What are the signs of thy coming, and of the end of the world?

- **Matthew 24:3** “...and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?”
- This is an interesting question. The destruction of the temple did not completely make sense to the disciples according to their prophetic timeline, so they asked for clarification.
- We would understand that the answer would no doubt refer to the second coming of Christ... it would be the time when the Lord shall come with ten thousands of His saints, and execute judgement, which would mark the end of the world.
- However, the disciples were referring to an immediate time. Something that would very soon take place.
- In the mind of the disciples they were not prepared to leave Jesus at any time. As far as they were concerned, Jesus was going to set-up His kingdom, where He would rule and reign.

Luke 19:11 “And as they heard these things, he added and spake a parable, because he was nigh to Jerusalem, and because they thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear.”

Note: Peter had this thinking from the beginning to the end.

Matthew 16:21-23 “From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day. (22) Then Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee. (23) But he turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men.”

John 18:10 “Then Simon Peter having a sword drew it, and smote the high priest's servant, and cut off his right ear. The servant's name was Malchus.”

Acts 1:6-8 “When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? (7) And he said unto them, It is not for you to

know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power. (8) But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

d. Jesus answers their second question first. (By the way, this was spoken 2 days before Jesus' death)

- In Matthew 24:4-35, Jesus describes the prophetic signs that will lead to His coming.

1) It is here we see Jesus introducing what is known as the "Tribulation Period"

- This is period that would last for 7 years. Israel will face 7 years of trouble.

- The beginning of the "Tribulation Period" is the first 3 and half years which Jesus refers to it as "**The beginning of sorrows**"

Matthew 24:8 "All these are the beginning of sorrows."

2) The second three and half years is what is known as "**The Great Tribulation**"

- THE GREAT TRIBULATION begins when the Anti-Christ reveals himself by entering into the holy place.

Matthew 24:15 "When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:)"

3) The Second coming of Christ will take place after "The Great Tribulation".

- Jesus gives the final signs for His coming.

- Signs in Heaven
- Coming with great power
- Gathering Israel

Matthew 24:29-31 "Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: (30) And then shall appear the sign of

the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. (31) And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.”

e. The Passages that are given before the parable of “The Ten Virgins”

1) The Fig Tree – Matthew 24:32-35

- This was given to encourage His disciples to be diligent to know the sign of the times.

Matthew 24:32-33 *“Now learn a parable of the fig tree; When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh: (33) So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors.*

- It was also given to confirm the fulfilment of prophecy before the coming of Christ.

Matthew 24:34 *“Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled.”*

2) The Example of the days of Noah – Matthew 24:36-42

- This was given so that the disciples would understand no one knows the exact time or hour.

Matthew 24:36-37 *“But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only. (37) But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.”*

- It was also given so the disciples would be watching and not sleeping.

Matthew 24:42 *“Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come.”*

- 3) The Example of the Householder – Matthew 24:43-44
- This was given so the disciples would be ready by being faithful servants of the Lord.

Matthew 24:44 “Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh.”

2. The Heart of the Parable

Two main interpretations

- a. Some Bible teachers believe: The parable of “the ten virgins” is referring to Christ returning for the rapture of the Church.
 - b. Others believe it is His return to set up the Millennial Kingdom at the end of the Tribulation
- It is important to note that one of the main reasons the parable of “The Ten Virgins” was given was to **PREPARE BELIEVERS within the Tribulation** to be ready for the second coming of Jesus Christ.
 - The word “then” places the parable after the Great Tribulation has taken place.
 - This parable specifically points to the “Second coming of Jesus Christ”

Matthew 25:1 “**Then** shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom.”

John Phillips states “In the parable the heavenly groom has come for His bride, the church, and the call is going forth to Israel to join the procession. A company is being formed of those willing and ready to go forth to meet the groom and the bride when the time comes. The groom of course is Christ. He is referred to as “Lord” by the foolish virgins (25:11) and as “the Son of man” by Jesus Himself (25:13).

Many people will be saved after the rapture (Revelation 7). They will not be in the church of course because the church will be in Heaven, but they will be in the kingdom. During the tribulation age they will be looking ardently for the coming back of the King - at least the wise ones will. Many other people will profess to be saved.”

- However, with that said, this parable can be absolutely applicable to anyone that is hearing the Parable, even before the tribulation begins.
- In other words, some of what we find in this parable can be applied to any **PROFESSIONG BELIEVER**.
- This parable can be applicable to professing believers within the church.
- Let us look into the parable and see how a person must be **PREPARED!**

B. The SCENARIO of the Parable

❖ *Matthew 25:1* “Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom.”

a. The Details

➤ **Ten Virgins** = 10 professing believers (Individuals)

- Some believe that the “ten virgins” may be bridesmaids who have been assisting the bride. It was not foreign for the bride to have virgins assisting her.

Psalms 45:14-15 “She shall be brought unto the king in raiment of needlework: the virgins her companions that follow her shall be brought unto thee. (15) With gladness and rejoicing shall they be brought: they shall enter into the king's palace.”

➤ **Bridegroom** = The Lord Jesus Christ

- God describes Himself to be a “Husband” to Israel. – Isaiah 54:5
- God pictures Himself to be a “Bridegroom” of the Church. – Ephesians 5:25-32

John Walvoord “It is significant also that the bride is not mentioned—only the bridegroom. The ten virgins were not the bride but the attendants at the wedding, and this will apply, of course, to those who are waiting for the second coming of Christ. Though the interpretation relates to the second coming, there is an application of this truth to the rapture in the sense that preparedness for the rapture is just as necessary as preparedness for the second coming.”

- **Note:** All ten virgins were waiting to meet the bridegroom.
- There were three stages to a cultural Jewish wedding in that day.
 - 1) The first was a meeting/engagement.
 - This is where a formal agreement is made by the fathers/parents.
 - 2) The second was betrothal.
 - This is where a ceremony was made where both parties made mutual promises to each other.
 - 3) The third was the marriage.
 - About one year later, the bridegroom comes at an unexpected time for his bride.
 - The wedding would begin at the bride's house. This is where the bridegroom would arrive to take his bride. Then a procession would follow as the bridegroom takes the bride to his house for a wedding feast and celebration.
 - For a night wedding, "lamps" light the way for the procession to take place.
 - No lamps meant no light, and no light meant you weren't able to find your way.
 - The lamp would have a small oil tank and wick with a rag soaked in oil on the end of it which would require regular refilling of oil and re-soaking to maintain the flame.



Note: All ten virgins “took their lamps” would indicate to us that they all **seemed** to be prepared for the coming of the bridegroom.

- ❖ **Matthew 25:2** “And five of them were wise, and five were foolish.”
 - **Five wise** = Prepared
 - **Five foolish** = Unprepared

- **Note:** This is ratio (5 and 5) does not have any particular significance, but perhaps reaffirming the fact found in Matthew 24.

Matthew 24:38-42 “For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, (39) And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. (40) Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left. (41) Two women shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken, and the other left. (42) Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come.”

- Judgment will come to all those who are outside of Christ.
- The Lord will execute judgement upon those that are not prepared.

2 Peter 2:4-9 “For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment; (5) And spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly; (6) And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrha into ashes condemned them with an overthrow, making them an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly; (7) And delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked: (8) (For that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds;) (9) The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished:”

❖ **Matthew 25:3-4** “They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them: (4) But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps.”

Prepared = Oil in the lamps

Unprepared = No oil in the lamps.

➤ **Oil** = Picture of the Holy Spirit

- Outwardly the five foolish virgins looked prepared, but inwardly they were not. They have neglected fundamental truth given by Christ “YE MUST BE BORN AGAIN”.

❖ *Matthew 25:5* “While the bridegroom tarried...”

Question: Why is the Lord taking His time to come?

2 Peter 3:1-4 “This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you; in both which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance: (2) That ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour: (3) Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, (4) And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.

2 Peter 3:9 “The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.”

- Do not let the scoffers discourage you! Keep your eyes on the Lord.

❖ *Matthew 25:5* “While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept.”

- This does not mean that the wise virgins were not ready for the coming of Christ. But it portrays that no one knows when the coming of the Lord will be.
- It could be at an unexpected time.
- We may know the signs of the times, but not the exact time.

2 Peter 3:10 “But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.”

❖ *Matthew 25:6* “And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him.”

- ❖ *Matthew 25:7* “Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps.”
- ❖ *Matthew 25:8* “And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out.”
- The second coming of Christ will expose the pure from the un-pure. These foolish virgins realized they were in trouble.
 - What these foolish virgins had did not last.
 - Living a double life will not last.
 - Deceiving others will not last
 - Being religious will not last.
- ❖ *Matthew 25:9* “But the wise answered, saying, Not so; lest there be not enough for us and you: but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves.”
 - When the Lord comes and finds you unprepared, no one can help you.
 - **By the way**, last minute faithless professions mock God. There are people who say “I will live the way I want, and on my death bed, I will receive Christ.”
- ❖ *Matthew 25:10* “And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage...”

Question: How does a person make sure that they are prepared and ready for the coming of Jesus Christ?

- Well according to this parable they must have the “oil” which is the “Holy Spirit”
- They **MUST** be indwelt by the Spirit of God.

Romans 8:8-9 “So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. (9) But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.”

Question: How does a person receive the Holy Spirit?

Acts 2:38-39 “Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. (39) For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.”

Question: What is the gift of the Holy Spirit based on?

Titus 3:4-7 “But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, (5) Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; (6) Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; (7) that being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.”

❖ **Matthew 25:10** “And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut.”

- Once the door is shut, the door is shut. There will be no more room for preparation after the door is shut.
- Like it was in the days of Noah, all those who walked into the ark by faith were saved, and the LORD shut the door.

Genesis 7:16 “And they that went in, went in male and female of all flesh, as God had commanded him: and the LORD shut him in.”

A man of God said “The foolish virgins not only miss the rapture; they miss the reception as well. They are shut out from everything.”

Isaiah 55:6 “Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near:”

❖ **Matthew 25:11** “Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us.”

- **Question:** What did these professing believers want?
- They wanted the celebration without Christ.
They wanted the kingdom without the King.

❖ **Matthew 25:12** “*But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not.*”

- **Note:** This must be the saddest and most miserable moment of a person’s life. For a person to think they are entering the kingdom of God, and they find out they are not going in.
- They profession to know the Lord. “**Lord, Lord**, open to us.”
- The Lord did not know them. “**I know you not.**”

➤ Jesus gave this warning in His Sermon on the Mount.

1) The Reality

Matthew 7:21 “*Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven...*”

- Being a professing believer is not enough to enter in the Kingdom of God.

2) The Reaction

Matthew 7:22 “*Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, **have we not** prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?”*

- Self-righteous works will never get a person into the Kingdom.
- These were self-righteous virgins that only had a profession that did not amount to anything.

3) The Revelation

Matthew 7:23 “*And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.*”

- Many people know the promises of God, but they do not know the God of the promises.

- *It is noted that the word “know” is often used in the sense of approving, loving, and acknowledging as real friends and followers.*

John 10:27-28 *“My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: (28) And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.”*

Titus 1:15-16 *“Unto the pure all things are pure: but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled. (16) They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate.”*

Psalms 1:6 *“For the LORD knoweth the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish.”*

2 Timothy 2:19 *“Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.”*

C. The SINGULAR truth of the Parable

Matthew 25:13 *“Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh.”*

Note: The Parable is not addressed to those who NEVER made any kind of preparation for the second coming of Christ, but to those who did not make SUFFICIENT preparation.

Conclusion

Ask yourself this question: “I am ready and prepared for the coming of Christ”

1 Thessalonians 5:1-11 *“But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. (2) For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. (3) For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape. (4) But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief.*

(5) Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness. (6) Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober. (7) For they that sleep sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night. (8) But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation. (9) For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, (10) Who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him. (11) Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do.”

Memory Verse:

Matthew 25:13 “*Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh.*”