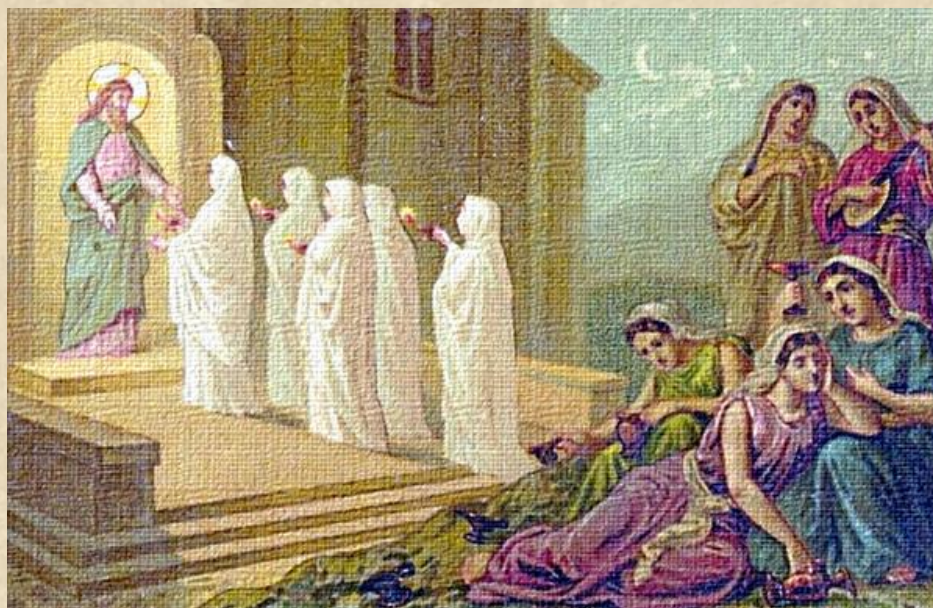


THE PARABLES OF JESUS, #041 A Chronological Study

**"To Him who opened His mouth in parables and
uttered things hidden since the creation of the world."
Psalm 78:2**



**"The Ten Virgins"
Matthew 25:1-13**

INTRODUCTION

Matthew 25 brings us to that time when Jesus speaks to His disciples about two different returns from Heaven after His death and ascension. History has taught us that God is focused upon the winning and training of believers – and the returns of His Son will occur when the Father's plans for the Church Age have been completed. These two returns concern two different groups of God's People. Time-wise Jesus will return, in the air, just before the Great Tribulation (pre-tribulation). He will come to rescue His believers of the Church Age, both the alive and the dead, and

take them back to heaven with Him for the first-time gathering of all the Church Saints, and their mass wedding to Jesus. That will be followed by a large and great Wedding Feast (dinner). This takes place during the tribulation times on earth. Then, at the end of those tribulation years, Jesus again returns, but this time to the earth. He has two priorities: first is the judgment of the world's unbelievers – both Gentile and Jew (Hebrew – Children of Abraham). Second, will be the establishment of a new Believing Nation of Israel that comes out of the results of the disciplining of that nation during the Tribulation. Joining Jesus in His return will be "The Bride of Christ," Those who have come to Jesus and believed Him and In Him as both members of His immediate family who will join Him in ruling and reigning with Him in this new 1,000-year epic.

Matthew 25:1-13 comes as a lesson from Jesus about the "signs of the times" that just precede His returns. While this particular parable seems to point to His first return – to the air – the lessons learned do apply to both returns. Timewise these verses directly follow Jesus' teaching in Matthew 24:42-51 about the timing of His return being unknown (at least at that time). His words are direct and carry a strong warning – Be Ready and Watchful at All times... until He comes. His strongest warnings have been to the Nation of Israel and their spiritual leadership who will be sentencing Him to death in just a few days. Upon His return to them... "The master of that slave (speaking of that leadership) will come on a day when he does not expect him and shall cut him in pieces and assign him a place with the hypocrites (two faced actors – making believe they belong to God... and doing godless things); weeping shall be there and the gnashing of teeth."

We'll explore these verses three times!

**ONE
THE TEN VIRGINS
THE TEXT**

Matthew 25:1-13 [NASB]

Parable of Ten Virgins

1 "Then the kingdom of heaven will be comparable to ten virgins, who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. 2 Five of them were foolish, and five were prudent. 3 For when the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them, 4 but the prudent took oil in flasks along with their lamps.

5 Now while the bridegroom was delaying, they all got drowsy and began to sleep. 6 But at midnight there was a shout, 'Behold, the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.' 7 Then all those virgins rose and trimmed their lamps. 8 The foolish said to the prudent, 'Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.' 9 But the prudent answered, 'No, there will not be enough for us and you too; go instead to the dealers and buy some for yourselves.' 10 And while they were going away to make the purchase, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding feast; and the door was shut. 11 Later the other virgins also came, saying, 'Lord, lord, open up for us.' 12 But he answered, 'Truly I say to you, I do not know you.'

13 Be on the alert then, for you do not know the day nor the hour.

TWO THE LESSON Matthew 25:1-13

We'll take it one verse at a time.

We will immediately understand that the bridegroom spoken of is Jesus. In the Old Testament God speaks of Himself as the "husband" of His people, the Covenanted nation of Israel. This parable speaks of His return (as mentioned earlier). This Old Testament expression of relationship leaves Israel out of the understanding of this parable. Again, like mentioned earlier, the end results apply to Israel, the Church, and the world in general. The fact that Jesus speaks of the "Bride" and the "Bridegroom" leads us to understanding this parable is ideally about Jesus (the bridegroom) and His Church (the bride).

In the background of this parable is the Jewish customs involved in the marriage ceremony. Briefly... The man and women are either brought together by family arrangement or by mutual attachment. It was necessary back then that they get engaged about a year before the actual marriage ceremony (physical relations were expressly out of the picture). The engagement process sealed their relationship, and the man went back to his father's home (remember 2000 years ago) and prepared a dwelling place – in his father's house – for them both to live following the marriage ceremony. A year later they became married. Following the wedding everyone gathers together for "The Wedding Feast." That feast does not occur until **that night** when the Groom and the Bride consummate their marriage in the prepared dwelling place. The best man stands at their door and at the right moment... announces that the Wedding Feast can begin!

So, here we are on **the night of the wedding** and the guests are arriving for the wedding and the feast. We'll bring up each verse again and just walk through what Jesus tells them. Then we'll take the verses again and shed some light on what Jesus is meaning and telling them.

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

So, what will the Kingdom of Heaven be like? We are to understand that these 10 young women are the expected brides' maids. The bride has been prepared and is awaiting her betrothed. At the designated time the bride's maids will arrive ready to the ceremony – to be late will be a great disgrace. They will meet with the bridegroom and the Rabbi before the bride is on the scene for the wedding. It's night, and they will need their lamps (no streetlights and no flashlights).

2 Five of them were foolish, and five were prudent. 3 For when the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them, 4 but the prudent took oil in flasks along with their lamps.

This is an event that has to happen "On Time," Following the wedding is the consummation of the marriage, and then the great feast. Jesus labels five of the girls "Wise," and five "Foolish," as He sets up His parable. The five who were wise took along extra oil for their lamps, not knowing how long they would need them. Following the wedding, the consummation, and the feast... it could be many hours... in the dark. The five who were foolish – just didn't think ahead for their needs.

5 Now while the bridegroom was delaying, they all got drowsy and began to sleep.

It is good to recognize that for whatever reason the bridegroom was delaying, they **ALL** became drowsy and began to sleep.

6 But at midnight there was a shout, 'Behold, the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.' 7 Then all those virgins rose and trimmed their lamps.

Midnight is definitely a late hour to begin a wedding – and it will be good to remember that when we begin to “decode” this parable. The alarm went out – “He’s here, come out to meet him.”

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

“Oh my, our lamps are running out of oil, what shall we do – How about you give us some of your oil?” Consider the situation. You, the foolish maid, have just been woken up from sleeping, only to find that your lamp is already flickering its last light – and you did not bring more oil. You can’t go to the bridegroom or the outdoor in-the-dark wedding, consummation, and feast without some light of your own – then you would need light to go home again too! There are five of you who need oil so you would drain most of the oil the five prepared, prudent maids, and leave them in the dark soon too.

9 But the prudent answered, ‘No, there will not be enough for us and you too; go instead to the dealers and buy some for yourselves.’

“Go buy your own oil!” the wedding can’t go on if all the bridesmaids are in the dark!” “Go to **the dealers** and buy some for yourselves.” A bad time to be looking for your local oil dealer – Midnight!

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

The five flee the scene and go on their way to find a dealer. While they are gone... The bridegroom comes. It becomes time for the wedding feast – and the five “foolish” maids are still searching for their oil dealer. Jesus says, **“and the door was shut.”**

11 Later the other virgins also came, saying, 'Lord, lord, open up for us.' 12 But he answered, 'Truly I say to you, I do not know you.'

So, sometime later – could be soon after the door is shut or later, the maids plead. “Lord, Lord, open up for us.” This is definitely a tragic moment. “Bridesmaids” locked out of the event because they did not have oil.

13 Be on the alert then, for you do not know the day nor the hour.

Definitely “Be on the alert – THEN – be prepared to be acceptable at the event – don’t be without enough oil when the time comes!

THREE BACK TO THE BEGINNING Matthew 25:1-13

Now we need to start finding meaning. It’s my prayer that each of us sees the importance of this parable for possibly ourselves, but certainly for man around us – we’ll be more dutiful in taking the Message of Jesus to the world around us in such a way that they understand our message.

1 "Then the kingdom of heaven

What shall we say about the “Kingdom of Heaven.” In past parables we’ve stressed the importance of understanding the Sovereignty of God as He exercises it upon heaven and earth. He is Almighty God. He is Holy and Just. He can do no wrong. He is the standard by which all else must align. Either we do align with His sovereignty and live – or not... and live a life of death – forever.

Heaven is God's residence. We're not talking of the skies above us, or the vast occupied space we call the solar system, or the galaxy, or the cosmos, or the totality and summation of the universe. Heaven, where God resides, is outside of all that. It is outside of our current observation and knowledge, except for what He has revealed to us about Himself.

He has revealed to us that this expression, "Kingdom of Heaven," refers to His specific focalization upon His desires and operations upon the earth. It is His earthly kingdom and He administers His will upon it from His Heaven.

will be comparable to ten virgins,

Jesus is telling His disciples at this time that this parable is about a comparison between what happens to these 10 virgins because of their actions.

who took their lamps

Why lamps? **Light in a dark place.** Who is the "**Light of the World**" – Primarily Jesus, and secondarily Believers of and in Jesus. So we should see these maiden's lamps as their way of carrying their light into a dark place – so they, and those around them can see in that dark place.

and went out to meet the bridegroom. 2 Five of them were foolish, and five were prudent. 3 For when the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them, 4 but the prudent took oil in flasks along with their lamps.

The bridegroom is coming. So, once again we're speaking of the bridegroom who biblically is Jesus, and He's coming to marry His Bride who is The Church (Church age Believers). Jesus divides up these maidens into two categories – The Wise and the Foolish. The difference between the wise and the foolish is of supreme importance to the parable – most all else falls at the wayside of

the story. The difference turns out to be having OIL when it's needed to gain entrance to the event of the bridegroom's arrival. From here on out, the parable is mostly about timing.

So, what we need to know is what does the oil represent that is so important.

Way back at the beginning of these studies of Jesus' Parables we looked at our second parable, "Light of the Earth." We discovered that that's what Jesus considers His believers are. Those who, if they are definitely in-Christ, carry His light around with them (a light that does not go out) illuminating us as His representatives. We show His light, we shed His light upon others, we lead others to His Light, on and on. So, the question I ask next is... What is that light that we carry with us at all times that accomplishes all these wonderful things

Are you one of those lights of the world? Are you one of those lamps in the parable? Are you one who is filled with the Oil Jesus is speaking of? So... what is that OIL?

In the Bible "oil" represents the Holy Spirit of God.

Romans 8:9-11

"However, you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him. If Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, yet the spirit is alive because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you."

If the Spirit of God does not dwell within you then you do not belong to God!

Your Oil is the Holy Spirit of God. Those virgins, maidens, who ran out of oil are those who call themselves Christians, but they have no commitment to Him or the Faith. They are either deceived, or they desire church, worship-like experience, safe fellowship with believers or whatever deception they fancy. When they Face the Lord God Jesus, their true nature will be already known, and they will be sifted and found wanting at that moment when He returns. They will not be permitted to join in to the festivities of those who truly belong to Him. They will not be permitted to join the throng of believers who have come to be married to Christ, and not available to enter into the Wedding Feast of the Lamb of God.

5 Now while the bridegroom was delaying, they all got drowsy and began to sleep. 6 But at midnight there was a shout, 'Behold, the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.' 7 Then all those virgins rose and trimmed their lamps. 8 The foolish said to the prudent, 'Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.' 9 But the prudent answered, 'No, there will not be enough for us and you too; go instead to the dealers and buy some for yourselves.'

You, go, get saved... go see the preacher, the minister, the Christian friend, or neighbor. Find Christ! But at that moment it will be too late to avoid the tribulation. That time of discipline of Israel and the World for not believing in the Son of God as the required Savior for entry into fellowship with God and becoming His children. If they have not found Christ by the end of the Tribulation their destination has already been set in place.

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

11 Later the other virgins also came, saying, 'Lord, lord, open up for us.' 12 But he answered, 'Truly I say to you, I do not know you.'

13 Be on the alert then, for you do not know the day nor the hour of His return!

"You need oil to be ready for His coming. Being **filled** with the holy spirit is a daily responsibility. Those who didn't have oil – looked prepared for His return but were not. Many will look prepared – but without oil... they are not, will not be prepared."

FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS WITHOUT ANSWERS

1. Why are there so many different interpretations of the times and stories that Jesus tells in His parables.

2. When is Jesus coming back?

3. *What's the main message of this Parable?*

FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS WITH ANSWERS

1. Why are there so many different interpretations of the times and stories that Jesus tells in His parables.

We've talked about this a few times in our lessons. Interpretation largely depends on where the interpreter stands on how all of Scripture should be read and understood.

Our interpretations are based on what is called the "Historical, Normal" hermeneutic (the study of biblical interpretation). Historical, meaning the long-term understanding of the meaning of the Scriptures. Normal, meaning the reading of Scripture in the same manner as one would read a letter from a friend, or read a good novel. The parts of speech reveal meaning – so that how a word is used in a sentence will lead you to what it means. Much of Jesus parables are based on metaphor as He illustrates His stories. Knowing the historical context of the moment gives insight into what He wants you to see. As a "for instance," this parable speaks of a bridegroom and 10 virgins. Knowing the context of a Jewish wedding at the time of Christ allows you to understand parts of the story that would be totally missed without the historical context.

And then there's where one stands on how "literal" one should interpret what's said – especially when metaphor is included. Some, who are very literal, would interpret the story as being about a wedding and virgins with lamps. Some who want to see everything as a mystery that needs solving – and only those equipped with special skills can solve it, would find all kinds of hidden messages in the text and it all would be very mystical. The Historical-Normal approach would try to understand just what Jesus wanted His disciples to know – not just a story and not something that would require a team of rabbis to expound. It's just about the importance of the oil in the lamps. You can't see in the dark without the light. Then understanding what that means to these men of Christ who have been with Him and listening to His parables for 3 years would understand when they heard His words.

2. When is Jesus coming back?

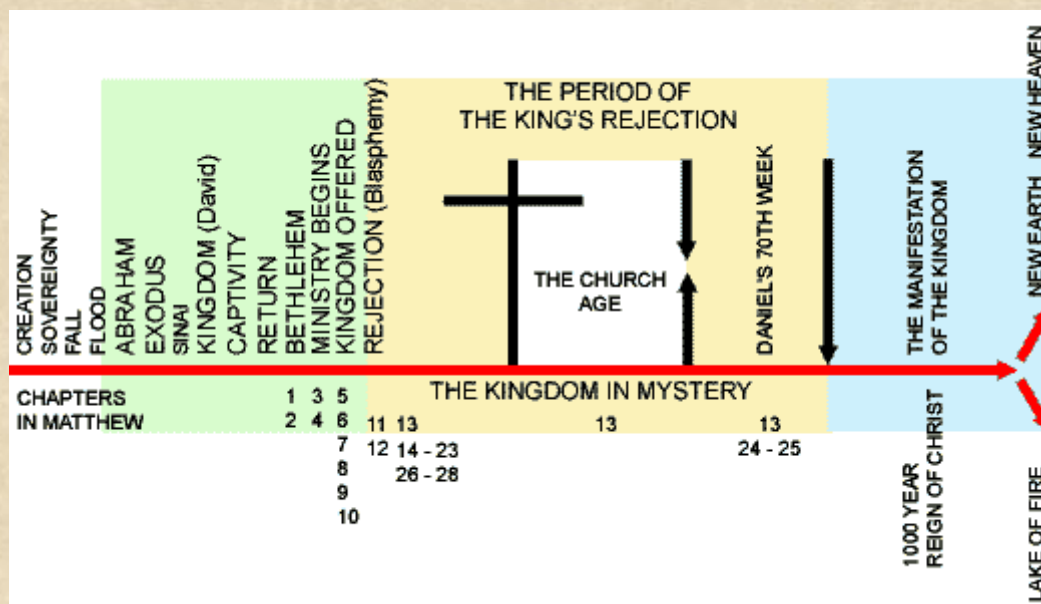
I have no idea. Our lesson tells us that when Jesus said He'll be back... No one knew when – not even Himself. Let us remember that when preachers and others begin forecasting His return, based on some secret code or numerical system they believe they have found in the bible. **They will be wrong every time. Jesus said, "No one knows" but His Father.**

3. What's the main message of this Parable?

There is a wonderful, amazing event that's going to happen in the future. It is called the Wedding, and Wedding Feast of the Lamb. It will be that time when all the Church Age Believers will gather together for the first time ever.

The lamp is seen as "light." The believer is seen as "The Light of the World." The Oil in the Lamp produces the light. You can't be "The Light of the World" if at Christ's return for His Bride... that which makes you "Light" has run out. That which is the oil that keeps the believer's "light" shining is the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. No Indwelling Holy Spirit... No Light. Having the light, or not having the light, when it comes time to enter the Kingdom of God... makes all the difference. No light, and the door is shut forever. Being a true Child of God, indwelled with the Holy Spirit of God, then you're in for the wedding of a lifetime, and ready for a great feast, a thousand-year kingdom, and then... an eternity of loving with all your heart, mind, and soul... your creator, your Lord, Your King, and your heavenly Father.

Here at the very end of this lesson I wanted to include this little chart of mine that gives a simple overview of the Plan of God through the ages. The chart begins with creation and ends with the New Earth and the New Heaven. The death of Christ is marked with the Cross in the middle. The chart was used in my study of the book of Matthew, which has the best timeline of the events in Jesus' life. It lists the chapters of the book at the bottom. The story of the Hebrew nation is in Green. The Church age is in White. The two arrows meeting in the middle is the Return of Christ "in the air" for His Bride and following Daniel's 70th week is the Second Coming of Christ. From beginning to end is all about the testing of man's responsibilities towards God through His Messiah – The Lord Jesus Christ – Man is without excuse for Not Believing.



For your own copy in color:

[The Kingdom In Mystery.png](#)

It is also in color in the PDF download of this lesson.

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J. Deering [AncientPath.net] is the author and editor of this study.

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Jeremiah 18:15

"Don't stumble from the Ancient Path."

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ⁱ 5 lessons from the Parable of the 10 Virgins, <https://www.crosswalk.com/faith/bible-study/lessons-from-the-parable-of-10-virgins.html>