



Matthew 25:1-13

HERE COMES THE BRIDEGROOM!

In a modern world where “churchianity” has so often replaced reality in spiritual things, and church membership and mere outward conformity of religious exercises is substituted for a genuine work of the Spirit, the warning of Christ to the ten virgins may be understood as a warning to the church today. Individuals should search their hearts to be sure that they have a genuine work of the Spirit. In all dispensations, the test is ultimately whether the individual has eternal life through the Spirit of God. Apart from the presence of oil in the lamp bearing its testimony of spiritual illumination, there can be no security in Christ, no certainty of hope, no reward when Christ comes. —John F. Walvoord

In the Olivet Discourse (Matt. 24-25), Jesus addresses two questions: *When will the world end? And how will the world end?* (24:3)

In 24:4-31, Jesus describes the tribulation, prophesied in the OT as the *time of Jacob’s trouble* (Jer. 30:7) or the *day of the Lord* (Joel 3:1-16).



In 24:32-25:30, Jesus uses seven parables to teach His disciples how to live in light of His coming...which may be sooner than expected (24:45-51) or later than expected (25:1-13). Regardless, we must be ready!

THE UNIQUE BACKGROUND

Ancient Jewish wedding customs provide the backdrop to this story:

1. _____. The bridal price is paid by the groom. The marriage covenant is made. They drink a cup of wine together.
2. _____. During an interval of about a year, the groom goes and prepares a place for his bride (cf. Jn. 14:1-3).
3. _____. The groom would come to the bride’s house, usually at night, to lead her back to their new home. The wedding party joined this joyful procession with lighted torches.
4. _____. The bride and groom would enter a private room (*huppah*) together to consummate their marriage.
5. _____. The bride and groom would remain in the *huppah* for seven days while the wedding party celebrated.

The Code of Jewish Law details the two stages of marriage: the betrothal (kiddushin, “sanctified”) and the consummation of the marriage (nisuin, “elevation”). Kiddushin is a binding agreement in which the woman is legally considered the wife of the man.

—gotquestions.com

The taking of the bride usually took place at night. The groom, best man and other male escorts would leave the groom's father's house and conduct a torch light procession to the home of the bride. Although the bride was expecting her groom to come for her, she did not know the exact time of his coming. As a result, the groom's arrival would be preceded by a shout [1 Thess. 4:16].

—Renald E. Showers

Outside the huppah the grooms-men and bridesmaids stood as guards awaiting the good tidings that the union had been happily consummated...while the people indulged in dancing, singing, and especially in praises of the bride. The bride had to remain in the huppah for seven days, as long as the wedding festivities lasted.

—Kaufmann Kohler
jewishencyclopedia.com

THE CRUCIAL DISTINCTION

The ten young maidens have a lot of things in common:

But five are called _____ and five are called _____.

The difference between them hinges on the possession of _____.

This difference is not noticed or consequential until the groom comes.

There is debate among dispensationalists whether the coming of the groom is the rapture or the second coming. Since I believe there is a transition in 24:36 to the unknown beginning of the Day of the Lord (which is preceded by the rapture) then I see the parables of 24:36-25:30 as related to the “mystery form of the kingdom” or to the church age (cf. Matt. 13:1-52). Thus, I see this coming as the rapture. Either way, there is still application to us as believers today.

THE URGENT APPLICATION

I must be _____!

Jesus Christ is the coming bridegroom (Isaiah 54:5; Hosea 2:19; Matt. 9:15; 22:1-14; John 3:29; 2 Cor. 11:2; Eph. 5:25-27; Rev. 19:7; 21:9-21). He is also the coming judge (Jn. 5:22-27; Acts 17:30-31; Rev. 19:11-16).

Being prepared to meet Him requires a decision.

- It is an _____ decision.
- It is a _____ decision.
- It is a _____ decision.
- It is an _____ decision.

Do you know Jesus as your personal Savior? Have you joined your life to Him? If so, then as a faithful bride, watch for Him and live for His glory!

Wise. Greek, *phronimos*, “prudent, thoughtful; one who has quick and correct perceptions.”

Foolish. Greek, *moros*, from a root meaning “to be silly.” Thus, “dull, sluggish, stupid.” It points to a defect of heart and character.

Apparently their lamps had no oil at all and when they lit the wicks they immediately burned out.

—John F. Walvoord

Oil. Grk, *elaion*, “olive oil.” Often used in the Bible as a symbol of the Holy Spirit (cf. 1 Sam. 10:1,6; 16:13; Isaiah 61:1-3; Zech. 4:1-6).

God is frequently pictured as a bridegroom in the OT (cf. Is. 54:4-6; Ezek. 16:7-34; Hos. 2:19). Jesus is...equating himself with God.

—Craig L. Blomberg

The sequel to the wedding procession is the wedding feast in the bridegroom’s house, the high point of the celebration. To miss that is to miss everything.

—R. T. France

Just as one person cannot transfer his physical life to another person, neither can he share spiritual life... Like physical life, spiritual life is a direct, individual gift from God and is nontransferable.

—John MacArthur, Jr.

There are some who want a third choice. They are continually seeking to make a partial commitment, trying to find some kind of compromise arrangement with God in which they may subscribe to the truth of Scripture but refuse to let it change their heart or life. That third alternative simply does not exist.

—Ray Stedman