

Message #88

Matthew 25:1-13

At the glorious return of Jesus Christ at the end of the Great Tribulation, there will be three main judgments: 1) The judgment of loving Jews; 2) The judgment of living Gentiles (25:31-46); 3) The judgment of national Israel (Ezek. 20:33-44; Zech. 13:1). All of these judgments will occur prior to Jesus Christ establishing His kingdom.

The illustration of the ten virgins has to do with the judgment of the Jews who will be alive when Christ returns. They will survive the Tribulation. In the illustration, 50% are permitted to enter the kingdom and 50% are kept out of the kingdom. The primary point of telling this story is seen in **verse 13**—Israel needed to be on alert because she did not know the exact moment of the King’s return. The key point is this:

WHEN THE SIGNS OF CHRIST’S SECOND COMING APPEAR, THOSE WHO ARE WISE ALERTLY PREPARE THEMSELVES TO MEET JESUS CHRIST.

This truth is a great truth for any dispensation. As Walvoord said, “What is true of the second coming is, of course, also true of the rapture.”... When believers see the stage being set for the Rapture of the Church, those who are wise live their lives with a godly alertness that will enable them to face Christ with confidence and not shame (I John 2:28).

Now the illustration comes from a Jewish wedding. 1) In the wedding customs of Christ’s day, a bridegroom would first go to the home of the bride to negotiate the dowry price for the bride and enter into contractual agreement. 2) Then he would leave and eventually come back again to the bride’s home to claim his bride, and a ceremony was conducted. 3) Then the bridegroom would take his bride in a procession from her parent’s house to his house. 4) There they would have a great banquet and then consummate the marriage. Christ uses that imagery here in this illustration. The scene of this parable is apparently in the processional process to the bridegroom’s home. **Verse 1** makes it clear that the ceremony is completed and they are on their way to meet the bridegroom. This noun “meet” (ὄψανθησις) is important because it is a Greek word that means to meet in the sense of going to meet a dignitary in a military setting (Smith, p. 456). In other words, the signs clearly demonstrated to Israel that the coming of the King was near and they needed to prepare to meet Him; He had militarily won.

We may also notice from **verse 1** that this is a comparison illustration. Christ is intent on describing what things will be like when He establishes His kingdom on earth. That is the contextual point. Notice how the verse begins, with a comparative adverb “then” (τότε). This connects us to the preceding context which is clearly the glorious return of Jesus Christ to earth to establish His kingdom on earth (Matt. 24:3, 14, 27, 30, 39, 44, 51).

Now **verse 2** gives us the specific comparison—five wise virgins versus five foolish virgins. The Greek word for foolish is the word from which we get our English word “moron.” The Greek word for “prudent” is one that means to be practically wise and sensible (Smith, p. 474). So the comparison is between a Jewish person with sense and one without sense.

FACT #1 – The foolish took their lamps with no oil and the wise took their lamps with oil.
25:3-4

Walvoord points out that oil is often used as a symbol of the Holy Spirit. His point is five foolish Jewish people were religious but not really right with God, because they did not have the oil. Five were right with God because they did have the oil.

FACT #2 – The foolish and the wise began to sleep because of the delay of the groom's return.
25:5

Now because the King did not come back immediately, both the foolish and prudent got sluggish and drowsy and went to sleep. Keep in mind this is all taking place in the Tribulation. The Gospel of the kingdom has been proclaimed by the 144,000 Jewish evangelists to the whole world. However, as the Tribulation drags on, all of the Jews become weary and fatigued and they start to lose some of their alertness. There is one big difference, however, and that is the five wise people are asleep with oil and the five morons are asleep without it.

FACT #3 – At the right moment the announcement came that the Bridegroom had arrived.
25:6

Notice the difference between the command to the Church—"Come Up Here" (Rev. 4:1) versus the command to Israel—"Come out to meet." At a moment when all Jewish people were not expecting it, the King came.

FACT #4 – The foolish and the wise rose from their sleep to trim their lamps. **25:7**

The King has returned and all Jews want to enter the kingdom, and all Jews are excited.

FACT #5 – The foolish virgins want some of the oil of the wise virgins. **25:8-9**

When it is announced that the King has returned, there is an immediate acknowledgment that the oil is needed and that the foolish don't have it. Instantly those who don't have what it takes to enter the kingdom know it. When the foolish virgins ask if they can have some of the oil of the wise virgins, the answer is you must have your own. In other words, you cannot get into the kingdom on the basis of another's oil. You must have your own.

FACT #6 – The foolish virgins go to get their own oil but it is too late. **25:10**

When the King comes, there are no more chances. Dr. Toussaint observes that there is very little time difference between the announcement of the coming of the bridegroom and the arrival of the bridegroom.

FACT #7 – The foolish virgins want in the kingdom but it is too late. **25:11-12**

The Jewish people who professed to be right with God but weren't, do not enter the kingdom. Just because one is Jewish and survives the Tribulation does not automatically mean he is right with God.

Now notice **verse 13**—be on the alert. As the Israelites go through the Tribulation, they need to be ready for the coming of the King, because not every Israelite is going to enter the kingdom.

No matter what the dispensation, no one knows the exact moment God will end that dispensation. That is why it is important that in any period of time, we are alert.