

PARABLES OF JESUS

THE PARABLE OF THE TEN VIRGINS - MATTHEW 25:1-13

A. Introductory Notes

1. Passion Week
 - a. Jesus headed to Jerusalem with His disciples and foretold His death for the third time.
 - b. He had a triumphal entry into Jerusalem.
 - c. He cleansed the Temple.
2. Eschatological (future events) chronology of Matthew 24-25, see conclusion for greater detail.
 - a. Chapter 24
 - 1) The destruction of the Temple
 - 2) Signs of the End of the Age
 - 3) The abomination of desolation
 - 4) The Second Coming of Christ
 - b. Chapter 25
 - 1) Judgment on Israel: The Parable of the Ten Virgins and the Parable of the Talents
 - 2) The Final Judgment
3. On what basis will Israel be judged? The answer to this question is found in the next two parables, The Ten Virgins and the Talents.

B. The parable introduced (1-4)

1. The kingdom of heaven is compared to ten virgins who took their lamps to meet the bridegroom (1), *Then the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom.*
 - a. Notes
 - 1) *then*, looks back to the previous verses in chapter 24 which deal with the return of the Messiah.
 - 2) *will be like*, it deals not with how things are now but how they will be at the coming of the Messiah.
 - 3) The beginning of the kingdom of heaven on earth will be similar to what is described in this parable.
 - 4) The number of virgins (unmarried friends of the bride or bridegroom) and that they are virgins has no significance to the interpretation of the parable.
 - 5) *to meet*, denotes an official welcome of a visiting dignitary.
 - 6) Based on the preceding and following parables, the virgins represent Jewish believers in the Tribulation waiting for the coming King, Jesus, note Ezekiel 20:33-44.
 - b. Background information on weddings in the ancient Near East.
 - 1) The parents arranged the marriage with the consent of bride and groom.
 - 2) There would be an engagement period of many months.
 - 3) On the wedding day, the groom with friends would go to the bride's house and claim her from her parents.
 - 4) The marriage ceremony would take place at the bride's home.
 - 5) The groom would take his bride to his home after the ceremony where the marriage would be consummated.
 - 6) There would be a banquet at the groom's house that would last as long as seven days.
2. There were two groups of virgins, five were foolish and five were wise but all fell asleep waiting for the bridegroom (2-5), *Five of them were foolish, and five were wise. 3 For when the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them, 4 but the wise took flasks of oil with their lamps. As the bridegroom was delayed, they all became drowsy and slept.*
 - a. The five wise virgins represent Jewish believers who not only were looking for the Messiah but also prepared for it, Matthew 4:17, *Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.*
 - b. The five foolish virgins were looking for Messiah's return but had not prepared for it.
 - c. Stanley Toussaint, *Perhaps their spiritual condition will be analogous to the Jews at the Lord's first coming. With eyes only for the physical benefits of the kingdom, the foolish Jews fail to prepare themselves spiritually for its coming.*

- d. The bridegroom's delay took place between the first signs of His coming and His appearance.
 - 1) The bridegroom did not blame them for falling asleep.
 - 2) The problem was that the foolish were not prepared whereas the wise were ready whenever he came.

C The arrival of the bridegroom (6-12)

1. The bridegroom came and all the virgins began to trim their lamps but the foolish women did not have enough oil (6-9), ***But at midnight there was a cry, 'Here is the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.'*** ***7 Then all those virgins rose and trimmed their lamps. 8 And the foolish said to the wise, 'Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.' But the wise answered, saying, 'Since there will not be enough for us and for you, go rather to the dealers and buy for yourselves.'***
 - a. At midnight the bridegroom arrived which was often the time of judgment in the Bible.
 - b. All the virgins *trimmed their lamps*, the word normally means *to put into order*.
 - 1) The virgins were turning on their lamps but the foolish virgins realized they had no oil, note R. T. France, *A torch without a jar of oil was as useless as a modern flashlight without a battery.*
 - 2) Thomas Constable, *The foolish ones evidently just lit their torches or wicks without oil. The symbolism of oil is probably significant since it often represents the Holy Spirit in Scripture Thus those with oil would be believers and those without oil unbelievers.*
 - c. The bride in the parable is the church, 2 Corinthians 11:2, *For I feel a divine jealousy for you, since I betrothed you to one husband, to present you as a pure virgin to Christ.*
 - 1) The church will unite with Christ at the Rapture and be in heaven with Christ during the Tribulation, 1 Thessalonians 4:13-17.
 - 2) Christians will return to earth with Jesus at His second coming will have some part in the judgment which begins the kingdom, 1 Corinthians 6:2, *Or do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if the world is to be judged by you, are you incompetent to try trivial cases?*
 2. The door to the wedding feast was shut while the foolish virgins were away buying oil and the foolish were not allowed to enter upon their return (10-12), ***10 And while they were going to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the marriage feast, and the door was shut. Afterward the other virgins came also, saying, 'Lord, lord, open to us.' 12 But he answered, 'Truly, I say to you, I do not know you.'***
 - a. The groom returned arrived without allowing the foolish virgins time to be adequately prepared and enter before the doors were shut.
 - 1) Matthew 24:27, *For as the lightning comes from the east and shines as far as the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man.*
 - 2) Matthew 24:38-39, *For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day when Noah entered the ark, 39 and they were unaware until the flood came and swept them all away, so will be the coming of the Son of Man.*
 - b. The groom did not permit the foolish virgins to enter because they were not adequately prepared.
 - 1) Matthew 7:21-23, *Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. 22 On that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?' 23 And then will I declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.'*
 - 2) The foolish virgins were known by acquaintance not by relationship.
 - 3) William Taylor on the foolish virgins, *They were animated by impulse alone, not by principle or conviction.*
 - 4) Alfred Plummer, *The closed door, which to those who were ready meant security and untold bliss, to the others meant banishment and untold gloom.*
 - 5) Thomas Constable, *These verses picture the judgment of Jews that will happen at the end of the Tribulation and before the establishment of the messianic kingdom.*
- D. Jesus told the hearers of the parable to be alert (ready) for the coming of the Messiah (13), ***Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour.***

1. The problem with the foolish virgins is that they did not prepare for the coming Messiah.
2. It is not enough to expect the appearing of Messiah but to prepare for His coming, as well.
3. Thomas Constable, *The prudent disciple is the one who makes the necessary preparation by trusting in Jesus.*

CONCLUSION

- A. The point of the parable is to be prepared.
- B. Truths to note in this parable.
 - 1. Relationship is revealed by crisis.
 - 2. Relationship is personal and can't be given by one to another.
 - 3. Lost opportunities can't be recalled.
 - 4. Always be prepared.
- C. Eschatology (Study of the End Times)
 - 1. Basis for interpreting Scripture concerning End Times
 - a. God will keep unconditional covenants made to the nation of Israel.
 - b. Necessity of a literal interpretation of Scripture.
 - 2. Dispensational
 - a. That God's work in humanity is evident in three specific systems.
 - b. Key dispensations: Law (Pre-Church), Gospel (Church), Kingdom
 - c. In each dispensation, salvation is by grace through faith in the person and work of Jesus Christ.
 - 3. Premillennial
 - a. Definitions
 - 1) Premillennial - Jesus Christ will return bodily to earth and establish His 1,000 year earthly kingdom.
 - 2) Millennium - 1,000 years during which Christ will reign on earth, Revelation 20:1-6, *Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, holding in his hand the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain. 2 And he seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years, 3 and threw him into the pit, and shut it and sealed it over him, so that he might not deceive the nations any longer, until the thousand years were ended. After that he must be released for a little while. 4 Then I saw thrones, and seated on them were those to whom the authority to judge was committed. Also I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus and for the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast or its image and had not received its mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. 5 The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended. This is the first resurrection. 6 Blessed and holy is the one who shares in the first resurrection! Over such the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ, and they will reign with him for a thousand years.*
 - a) Satan will be bound for 1,000 years.
 - b) He will be loosed for a short period of time.
 - c) Martyred Tribulation saints given special resurrection and share with other saints in Millennial reign.
 - d) Wicked dead are not raised until after the Millennium.
 - b. Purpose of the Millennium
 - 1) Promises made to the nation of Israel will be fulfilled in the Millennium, Jeremiah 31:31-34, *Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, 32 not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, declares the LORD. 33 For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people. 34 And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more."*
 - 2) The kingdom promised David will be instituted, Revelation 19:11-16, *Then I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse! The one sitting on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he judges and makes war. 12 His eyes are like a flame of fire, and on his head are many diadems, and he has a name written that no one knows but himself. 13 He is clothed in a robe dipped in blood, and the name by which he is called is The Word of God. 14 And the armies of heaven, arrayed in fine linen, white and pure, were following him on white horses. 15 From his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron. He will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty. 16 On his robe and on his thigh he has a name written, King of kings and Lord of lords.*

4. Pretribulational

a. Definitions

- 1) Pretribulational - all Christians will be raptured by Christ to Heaven before the Tribulation.
- 2) Rapture - instantaneous gathering up of the entire church to meet Christ in the air by resurrection of the dead and translation of the living from the earth.
- 3) Tribulation - 7-year period before 2nd Coming of Christ during which there will be great suffering on earth.
- 4) Second Coming of Christ - bodily return of Christ with His church to the earth in glory.

b. The Church and the Rapture

- 1) It is a comforting hope, 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17, *For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. 17 Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord.*
- 2) It is imminent, James 5:8, *You also, be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand.*
- 3) It is not a reward for faithful service but the fulfillment of Christ's redemptive work, Philippians 3:20, *But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ,*

c. Purposes of Tribulation

- 1) Prepare the nation of Israel for her Messiah, Deuteronomy 4:30-31, *When you are in tribulation, and all these things come upon you in the latter days, you will return to the LORD your God and obey his voice. 31 For the LORD your God is a merciful God. He will not leave you or destroy you or forget the covenant with your fathers that he swore to them.*
- 2) Bring Gentiles saved through preaching of saved remnant into Kingdom, note Rev. 7:13-14, *Then one of the elders addressed me, saying, "Who are these, clothed in white robes, and from where have they come?" 14 I said to him, "Sir, you know." And he said to me, "These are the ones coming out of the great tribulation. They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.*
- 3) Pour out judgment on unbelieving people and nations, 2 Thessalonians 2:11-12, *Therefore God sends them a strong delusion, so that they may believe what is false, 12 in order that all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.*

d. The Church and the Tribulation

- 1) The church is saved "away from" the coming wrath, Revelation 3:10, *Because you have kept my word about patient endurance, I will keep you from the hour of trial that is coming on the whole world, to try those who dwell on the earth.*
- 2) There is no reference to Church in Revelation 6-18, chapters dealing with the Tribulation.
- 3) The restraining ministry of the Holy Spirit will be removed from earth before Tribulation necessitating the removal of the Church, 2 Thessalonians 2:7-8, *For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work. Only he who now restrains it will do so until he is out of the way. 8 And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will kill with the breath of his mouth and bring to nothing by the appearance of his coming.*

e. Distinctions between Rapture and Second Coming

- 1) Necessity of an interval between these two events (i.e., roles of Church and Israel).
- 2) Two-stage return of Christ
 - a) Rapture - Christ will come for His saints.
 - b) Second Coming - Christ will come with His saints

5. Order of future events

- a. Increase in apostasy as the Church Age draws to a close, 1 Timothy 4:1-3.
- b. The rapture of the dead in Christ and those still alive, 1 Corinthians 15:20-50; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18.
- c. 7-Year Tribulation on earth, Revelation 6-16.
 - 1) Judgment Seat of Christ, 1 Corinthians 3:12-15.
 - 2) Marriage of the Lamb, Revelation 19:7.
- d. Battle of Armageddon and the end of the Tribulation
 - 1) Christ comes with His own, Revelation 19:11-16.
 - 2) Israel will be re-gathered and judged, Matthew 24:37-25:46.
 - 3) Gentile nations will be judged, Matthew 25:31-46.

- e. Millennial reign of Christ
 - 1) Before it begins, Satan will be bound in bottomless pit, Revelation 20:1.
 - 2) After 1,000 years, Satan will be loosed for a short time, Revelation 20:7.
 - 3) Satan will deceive people, lead a revolt against God, be defeated by Christ who will cast Satan into the lake of fire, Revelation 20:10.
- f. Great White Throne Judgment - unsaved of all ages will appear and then be cast into lake of fire, Rev. 20:11-15.
- g. Creation of a new heaven and a new earth, Revelation 21:1.
- h. Eternity, Revelation 22.