



The Parable Of The Ten Virgins

The Lord Jesus taught about salvation in at least seven different parables—the parable of the ten virgins is just one. The parable of the ten virgins shows, among other things, the need to endure, even when others do not. Ponder the Lord’s salvation message carefully and you’ll learn from both the wise and the foolish virgins. Here is his teaching:

- At that time the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. Five of them were foolish and five were wise. (Mat 25:1,2)

Clearly, this teaching is about ten real, genuine virgins. While none were counterfeit virgins, five were foolish. Again, it isn’t that those five virgins were never really virgins in the first place, but they were foolish virgins. That is why things ended the way they did for them. Regarding the term virgin, ponder carefully what Paul wrote to Christians:

... I promised you to one husband, to Christ, so that I might present you as a pure virgin to him. (2 Cor 11:2)

Jesus, the bridegroom, is to be presented pure spiritual virgins as his bride. This is the type of person Jesus is referring to in his teaching on the Ten Virgins. At an earlier time, the Lord Jesus also spoke of the wise and foolish. In that case they were all house builders:

Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. (Mat 7:24)

But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. (Mat 7:26)

James also wrote of the wise (and understanding):

Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show it by his good life, by deeds done in the humility that comes from wisdom. (James 3:13)

(In every case, the wise are always faithful obedient followers of God’s way.) Getting back to Mat 25:1-13, note that all ten of the virgins went out to meet the bridegroom (Jesus). This is more evidence that they all had salvation at that early point.

- The foolish ones took their lamps but did not take any oil with them. The wise, however, took oil in jars along with their lamps. (Mat 25:3,4)

This is a key passage showing what made the wise virgins wise and the foolish virgins foolish. While both groups had a burning lamp, only the wise brought along extra lamp oil to keep their lamps burning while waiting to meet the bridegroom.

Elsewhere Jesus taught Christians:

Be dressed ready for service and keep your lamps burning. (Luke 12:35)

While Jesus commands the saints to keep their lamps burning, it is man’s responsibility to actually keep them burning. If it was solely left up to God, no

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spiritual lamp would ever stop burning. Only the wise, by bringing extra lamp oil in a jar, were able to keep their lamps burning.

- The bridegroom was a long time in coming, and they all became drowsy and fell asleep. (Mat 25:5)

Here and elsewhere Jesus taught a late coming, thus implying a post tribulation rapture. All ten virgins became drowsy and fell asleep while awaiting the bridegroom — even the wise.

- At midnight the cry rang out: “Here’s the bridegroom! Come out to meet him!” (Mat 25:6)

At the darkest time of the night (midnight) the bridegroom came. It was then that the virgins needed to be ready.

- Then all the virgins woke up and trimmed their lamps. The foolish ones said to the wise, “Give us some of your oil; our lamps are going out.” “No,” they replied, “there may not be enough for both us and you. Instead, go to those who sell oil and buy some for yourselves.” (Mat 25:7-9)

The foolish had a lamp burning for God, but it was now dying out. This is a real danger which few seem to recognize. They needed oil to keep their lamps burning, but it would have to be purchased. It was not freely given, even to the wise. Again, there was a price that needed to be paid to get that oil to keep their lamps burning as God wants. The wise, who were thinking ahead and knew they would have to endure, had already paid that price and were ready at that crucial time.

- But while they were on their way to buy the oil, the bridegroom arrived. The virgins who were ready went in with him to the wedding banquet. And the door was shut. (Mat 25:10)

The negligence of the foolish caught up with them. They were not ready to meet the bridegroom anymore. Only the wise, who still had a burning lamp, were ready. They alone went into the wedding banquet.

- Later the others also came. “Sir! Sir!” they said. “Open the door for us!” (Mat 25:11) But he replied, “I tell you the truth, I don’t know you.” (Mat 25:12)

The foolish returned, but the door was closed. (Apparently, the foolish didn’t have the knowledge

that once the door is closed it won’t be opened for late comers, who are not ready.)

Jesus’ response to the five foolish virgins is most revealing about the vital need of enduring. Unlike the wise virgins, Jesus didn’t know the foolish virgins anymore. NOTE: He didn’t say to those foolish virgins, *I never knew you*, as he tells a different group of continuous tense evil doers:

Then I will tell them plainly, “I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!” (Mat 7:23)

The Lord Jesus no longer had a relationship with the five foolish virgins as he did at an earlier time when their lamps were burning and they were ready to meet the bridegroom. That relationship ended because of their negligence. The Lord finishes off his teaching about the ten virgins with a warning to all of his followers:

- Therefore keep watch, because you do not know the day or the hour. (Mat 25:13)

That was the second time such a warning was given. The first was in the same discourse:

Therefore keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come. (Mat 24:42)

In other words, if you are a Christian, do not end up like the five foolish virgins. What happened to them could happen to you. Keep watch over yourself. Don’t let your lamp burn out. Clearly, such is a salvation issue and nothing less since the foolish ones were no longer known by the Lord. Are you now, at this time, keeping watch over your own soul? If you were once saved, is your lamp still burning or has it died out? Does Jesus still know you?

NOTE: Jesus taught a great falling away before his return. See also 2 Thess 2:3 and Mat 24:10. The Bible does not teach there will be a great revival, as some declare. It was five out of ten or one out of two or 50% who fell away from their salvation. The parable of the ten virgins directly applies to the very end of this age when the Lord returns.

“I tell you the truth, I don’t know you.” (Mat 25:12)

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