



# STORY TIME

Discovering the Parables of Jesus



# Why is it important to study the Parables?

- One-third of the recorded sayings of Jesus in the Synoptic Gospels are in parables.
- If we do not understand the parables, we miss what may be known about the historical Jesus. One must understand parables to know Jesus.
- The parables are designed to portray a reality. In a world of metaphorical redescription, the reality behind the parable is dramatized in word-pictures. (Brad H. Young)
- The gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke are referred to as the Synoptic Gospels because they include many of the same stories, often in a similar sequence and in similar or sometimes identical wording. They stand in contrast to John, whose content is largely distinct. (Wikipedia)

## Hebrew noun mashal מִשָּׁל

- Definition: a parable, proverb, riddle, anecdote, allegory
- It defines the unknown by using what is known.
- The mashal begins where the listener is, but then pushes beyond into a new realm of discovery.

## Greek noun parabole παραβάλλω

Definition: a comparing, comparison of one thing with another, likeness, similitude, juxtaposition

# 39 Parables of Jesus

PARABLE/LESSON	MATTHEW	MARK	LUKE
Wheat and tares	13:24-30		
Barren fig tree			13:6-9
Children in market	11:16-19		7:31-35
Budding Fig Tree	24:32-36	13:28-32	21:29-33
Lamp under basket	5:14-16	4:21-23	8:16-18
Dinner guests ✓			14:15-24
Divided Kingdom	12:24-30	3:22-27	11:14-23
Faithful servants			12:35-40
Feast invitations ✓			14:12-14
Friend at midnight			11:5-13
Good Samaritan ✓			10:25-37
Great physician	9:10-13	2:15-17	5:29-32
Groom's attendants	9:14-15	2:18-20	5:33-35
Growing seed		4:26-29	
Hidden treasure	13:44		
Humbled guest ✓			14:7-11
King's war plans			14:31-32
Laborers in vineyard ✓	20:1-16		
Leaven	13:33		13:20-21
Lost coin			15:8-10
Lost sheep ✓			15:4-7

PARABLE/LESSON	MATTHEW	MARK	LUKE
Marriage feast	22:1-14		
Mustard seed	13:31-32	4:30-32	13:18-19
Net of fish	13:47-50		
New cloth	9:16	2:21	5:36
New wine	9:17	2:22	5:37-39
Pearl of great price	13:45-46		
Persistent widow			18:1-8
Sower ✓	13:3-23		
Rich man			12:13-21
Talents ✓	25:14-30		
Minas			19:11-27
Prodigal son ✓			15:11-32
Steward and rich man			16:1-8
Ten virgins	25:1-12		
Great supper			14:15-24
Two sons	21:28-31		
Merciless servant in debt with his master ✓	18:23-35		
Wicked Vinedressers	21:33-46	12:1-11	12:35-48



# Matthew 24

As He [Jesus/Yeshua] was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, “Tell us, when will these things happen, and what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?”

Matthew 24:3

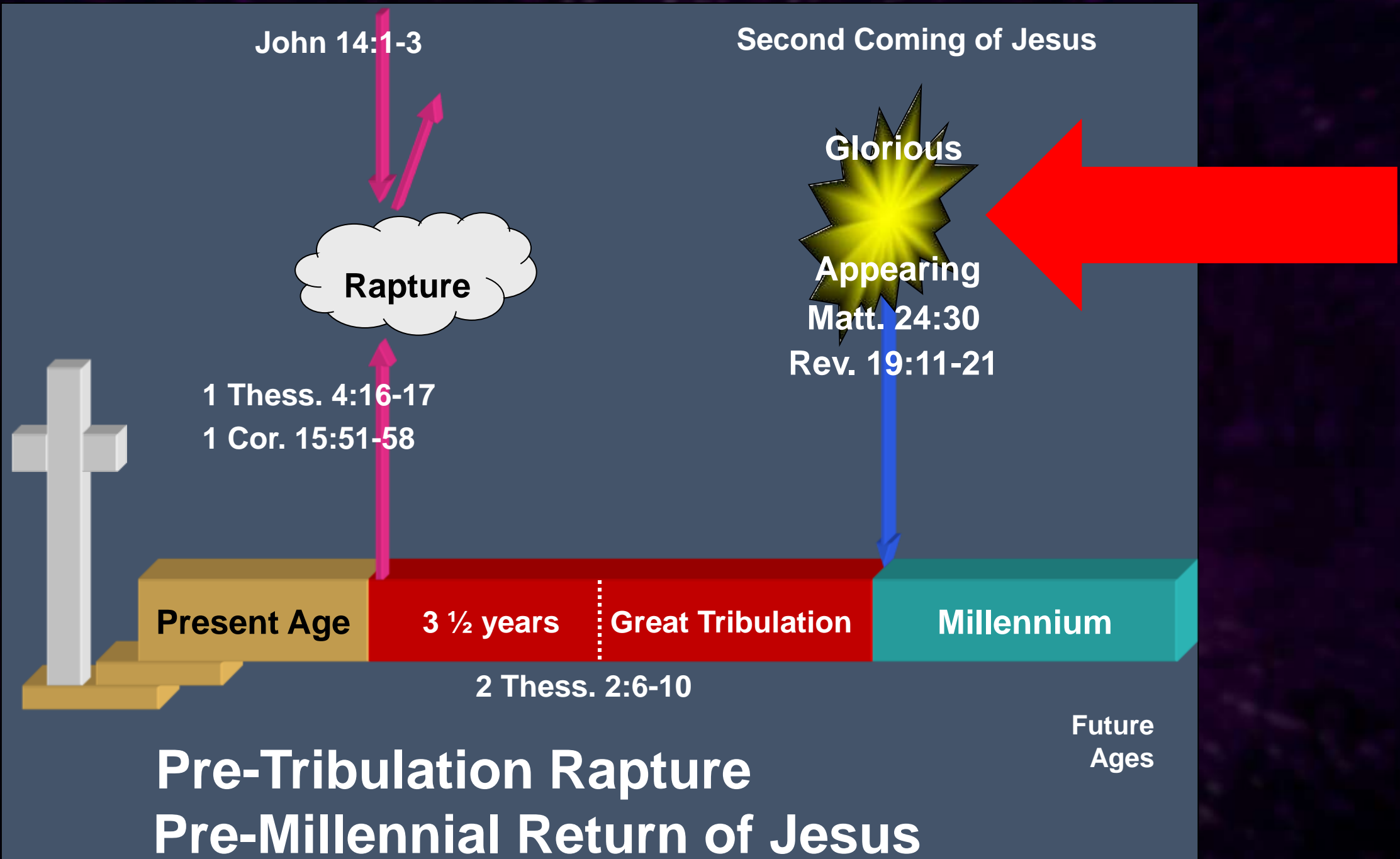
And Jesus answered and said to them, “See to it that no one misleads you. For many will come in My name, saying, ‘I am the Christ,’ and will mislead many. You will be hearing of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not frightened, for those things must take place, but that is not yet the end. For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and in various places there will be famines and earthquakes. But all these things are merely the beginning of birth pangs. Then they will deliver you to tribulation, and will kill you, and you will be hated by all nations because of My name. At that time many will fall away and will betray one another and hate one another. Many false prophets will arise and will mislead many. Because lawlessness is increased, most people’s love will grow cold. But the one who endures to the end, he will be saved. This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all the nations, and then the end will come.” Matthew 24:4-14



Jesus said, “But immediately after the tribulation [Greek noun θλίψις *thlipsis*] of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from the sky, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. And then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming [Second Coming] on the clouds of the sky with power and great glory. And He will send forth His angels with a great trumpet and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of the sky to the other.” Matthew 24:29-31



- “Therefore be on the alert, for you do not know which day your Lord is coming.” Matthew 24:42
- Jesus said, “Therefore, be on the alert—for you do not know when the master of the house is coming, whether in the evening, at midnight, or when the rooster crows, or in the morning—in case he should come suddenly and find you asleep. What I say to you I say to all, ‘Be on the alert!’” Mark 13:35-37





# Parable of the Bridesmaids

Matthew 25

Yeshua told this parable to His disciples privately. Neither His adversaries nor big crowds were present. It is only for those who are His followers, or who think they are His followers. The story suggests that the difference between believers and unbelievers may not be obvious until His return. It serves as a warning.



“Then the kingdom of heaven will be comparable to ten virgins [Greek noun παρθένος *parthenos*... bridesmaids], who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom.” Matthew 25:1

\* There was a wedding to which ten young virgins were invited as participants. It seems that they were instructed to bring lamps so that at the right time they could form a torchlight procession.

- Bob Deffinbaugh <https://bible.org/seriespage/26-ten-virgins-what-it-means-be-ready-matthew-251-13>

\* The wedding theme is in this parable because of a wedding covenant's similarity to God's covenant with followers of Jesus.

- <https://www.messiah-of-god.com/parable-of-the-ten-virgins-bridesmaids.html>



The background of this parable is the Jewish wedding system. When the marriage was to be consummated, the bridegroom would go to the home of the bride to fetch her and bring her to his home. As he approached his own home, he would be met by a procession of virgins who would conduct the bride and groom to the marriage ceremony, which would be followed by the marriage feast.

## The Parable of the Ten Virgins by Phoebe Traquair

Mansfield Traquair Church, Edinburgh

- Arnold Fruchtenbaum



The wedding had three stages: (1) parents of the bridegroom [*chatan*] and bride [*kallah*] would agree on the marriage of their children and the dowry would be paid. This was the legal marriage; (2) sometime later, according to their customs, the bridegroom accompanied by friends would proceed from his home to the home of the bride to claim her as his own. This procession often took place in the middle of the night. The bride, prepared for his coming, would join the procession which would then return to the home of the bridegroom and (3) friends would join the procession in order to participate in the marriage feast held at the home of the bridegroom. Such a feast would often continue for days depending upon the wealth of those involved.

A wedding's three stages: (1) the legal stage, arranged by the parents, (2) the procession, or the bridegroom claiming his bride, and (3) the marriage feast.

# Three distinct parts to the ancient Jewish wedding:

- *shiddukhin* (mutual commitment)
- *erusin* (engagement)
- *nissuin* (marriage)

During the *erusin* period, the groom was to prepare a place for his bride, while the bride focused on her personal preparations: wedding garments, lamps, etc.

Although the bride knew to expect her groom after about a year, she did not know the exact day or hour. He could come earlier. It was the father of the groom who gave final approval for him to return to collect his bride.

For that reason, the bride kept her oil lamps ready at all times, just in case the groom came in the night, sounding the shofar (ram's horn) to lead the bridal procession to the home he had prepared for her.



- The final step in the Jewish wedding tradition is called *nissuin* in Hebrew (“to take”), a word that comes from *nasō*, which means to lift up.
- At this time, the groom, with much noise, fanfare and romance, carried the bride home. Once again, the bride and groom would enter the *chuppah*, recite a blessing over the wine (a symbol of joy), and finalize their vows.
- Now finally, they would consummate their marriage and live together as husband and wife, fully partaking of all the duties and privileges of the covenant of marriage.

## The Groom Comes for the Bride – Marriage [*Nissuin*]

Jesus said, “Do not let your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father’s house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also.” John 14:1-3



# חופה *chuppah*



**Orthodox Jewish wedding  
with *chuppa* in Vienna, 2007**

The *chuppah* represents a Jewish home symbolized by the cloth canopy and the four poles. As a *chuppah* is open on all four sides, so was the tent of Abraham open for hospitality. The *chuppah* represents hospitality to guests. This "home" initially lacks furniture as a reminder that the basis of a Jewish home is the people within it, not possessions. The covering of the *chuppah* represents the presence of God over the covenant of marriage, to signify that the ceremony and institution of marriage has divine origins. The groom enters the *chuppah* first to represent his ownership of the home on behalf of the couple. When the bride enters the *chuppah* it is as though the groom is providing her with shelter or clothing, and he publicly demonstrates his new responsibilities toward her.

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chuppah>



# *Chuppah* in the Old Testament

Which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber (חֶפְזָה *chuppah*); it rejoices as a strong man to run his course.

Psalms 19:5

Gather the people, sanctify the congregation, assemble the elders, gather the children and the nursing infants. Let the bridegroom come out of his room and the bride out of her bridal chamber (חֶפְזָה *chuppah*).

Joel 2:16



*chuppah* at a synagogue in Washington, D.C.



According to the Mishnah the wedding would take place on a Wednesday if the bride was a virgin and on a Thursday if she was a widow (*Ketubot* 1:1). The bridegroom and his friends made their way in procession to the bride's house. This was often done at night, when there could be a spectacular torchlight procession. There were doubtless speeches and expressions of goodwill before the bride and groom went in procession to the groom's house, where the wedding banquet was held.

[Jesus taught using a parable...] “Then the kingdom of heaven will be comparable to ten virgins [bridesmaids], who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom.” Five of them [bridesmaids] were foolish [Greek μωρός *moros*... without forethought or wisdom], and five were prudent [Greek φρόνιμος *phronimos*... wise].” Matthew 25:1-2

\*From the Old Testament, the contrast of wise and foolish is a contrast between believers and unbelievers. - Arnold Fruchtenbaum



“For when the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them, but the prudent [wise] took oil in flasks along with their lamps.” Matthew 25:3-4

\* NOTE: This is NOT a distinction between taking a LITTLE oil and a LOT, this is a distinction between taking NONE and SOME.

The word which is used for “lamp” here (Greek λαμπάς *lampas*) is not the normal term for “lamp” in Matthew or in the New Testament.

It is used five times in this parable of the virgins in Matthew 25, once in John 18:3, once in Acts 20:8, and twice in Revelation (4:5; 8:10).

The *lampas* is more of a torch, a larger, brighter “lamp” than that which is normally used inside a house.

In John 18:3, the *lampas* was the torch held by those who came in the night to arrest Jesus near the Garden of Gethsemane.

There were many of these larger lamps in the room where Paul was teaching in Acts 20:8 (thus the extra warmth which must have contributed to the young man’s sleepiness and fatal fall).



Jesus said, “Now while the bridegroom was delaying, they all got drowsy and began to sleep.” Matthew 25:5

Jesus said to His disciples, “But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone. For the coming of the Son of Man will be just like the days of Noah. For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and they did not understand until the flood came and took them all away; so will the coming of the Son of Man be.”

Matthew 24:36-39

Jesus continues the parable...

“But at midnight there was a shout, ‘Behold, the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.’”

Matthew 25:6

\* This world will be at its darkest hour [midnight] when Messiah Yeshua/Jesus returns. Yeshua teaches us in Matthew 24:12, because of lawlessness, or Torah-lessness, the love of many will grow cold. This world we live in will abandon the Torah, God's teachings, His way of life.

- <https://www.olivetreebiblebook.com/blog/the-storyparable-of-the-ten-virgins-not-what-you-think>



Jesus said, “Then all [wise AND foolish] those virgins [bridesmaids] rose and trimmed their lamps.” Matthew 25:7

\* All ten virgins brought their lamps, but only five brought the necessary oil as well. They all waited for the groom to arrive. Time passed and darkness set in. The groom tarried longer than expected and so all ten bridesmaids (virgins) slept until he arrived. Suddenly, at midnight someone cried out that the groom was approaching. All ten virgins are awakened by this cry, and they begin to prepare their lamps for ceremonial service. The need for these lamps is now particularly obvious (it is midnight, pitch dark).

Jesus said, “The foolish [bridesmaids] said to the prudent [wise], ‘Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.’ 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.’” Matthew 25:8-9

- There was not enough oil for both. These ladies were not being selfish. You need to make your own preparations. You have to have your own faith. Someone else can't believe for you. “God has no grandchildren. He only has children.”
- Preparedness is the response of faith which will enable one to enter the kingdom at the time of the Bridegroom's unexpected arrival. The lack of proper preparation is the demonstration of unbelief which will disqualify one from the entrance and enjoyment in the kingdom.



# The Parable of the Wise and Foolish Virgins by William Blake



The scene is a village wedding, with the virgins (bridesmaids or friends or servants of the bridegroom) waiting to escort the bridegroom in a torch-light procession at the end of the ceremony, as he brings his bride home. The lamps are probably torches made of oil-soaked rags wrapped on a stick, which would burn for several minutes before being dipped in oil again. Without a further supply of oil they would go out as soon as they were lit. - New Bible Commentary

Jesus said, “And while they [bridesmaids] were going away to make the purchase, the bridegroom came, and those [bridesmaids – NOT THE BRIDE] who were ready went in with him to the wedding feast; and the door was shut. Later the other virgins also came, saying, ‘Lord, lord, open up for us.’ But he answered, ‘Truly I say to you, I do not know you.’” Matthew 25:10-12

\* The ten young ladies would be somewhere along the route between the bride’s house and the groom’s house. They are waiting for the bride and groom to return and they hope to join the procession and enter with them into the party. If they are with the crowd, they will be able to slip right in. If they aren’t with the procession, then the door keepers will turn them away because they don’t know them. They don’t have an invitation.

- Hampton Keathley IV <https://bible.org/seriespage/28-ten-virgins>



- If they traveled in the daylight, these lamps would not have been needed on their journey to the wedding place. The reason the wise virgins brought oil was because the oil was carried in flasks and added to the lamps at the time of need. There must have been some residue of oil on the rag or wick of the five empty lamps, which quickly burned out, only moments after being lit. This would explain why all five torches went out at the same time. Perhaps, too, these foolish virgins minimized their foolishness by describing their plight as “running out” or “going out” so as to look less foolish.
- Not only is the text clear about the foolish virgins bringing no oil with them, it is difficult to interpret the parable if, indeed, they did run out of oil. The difference between the five wise virgins and the five foolish virgins is salvation. These five foolish virgins were not once saved, but then “ran out” of salvation. They were lost, and never had it. They never had oil. They were just empty lamps. They looked useful, they seemed to give promise of light, but they never produced it.

Jesus/Yeshua previously said..

“Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven will enter. Many will say to Me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?’ And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness.’” Matthew 7:21-23



Jesus said, “Be on the alert then, for you do not know the day nor the hour.”

Matthew 25:13

\* Like a soldier on guard duty or a firefighter on shift... be ready at all times because the call will come

# “Be on the alert”

- Greek verb γρηγορέω *gregoreuo*... “to take heed lest through remission and indolence some destructive calamity suddenly overtake one”
- Be on the alert, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong.  
1 Corinthians 16:13
- Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. But resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished by your brethren who are in the world.  
1 Peter 5:8-9
- With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints,  
Ephesians 6:18



# “Be on the alert”

- This admonition applies in the FUTURE to followers of Jesus who come to faith after the Rapture and live through the Great Tribulation awaiting the Second Coming of Messiah Jesus
- This admonition applies NOW to followers of Jesus living before the Great Tribulation begins and awaiting the Rapture of the Church

# The Marriage Supper of the Lamb

Then I [John the Apostle] heard something like the voice of a great multitude and like the sound of many waters and like the sound of mighty peals of thunder, saying, “Hallelujah! For the Lord our God, the Almighty, reigns. Let us rejoice and be glad and give the glory to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb has come and His bride has made herself ready.” It was given to her to clothe herself in fine linen, bright and clean; for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints. Then he said to me, “Write, ‘Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.’ ” And he said to me, “These are true words of God.”

Revelation 19:6-9



When the bridegroom – the Messiah – returns to earth with His Bride – the Church – for the marriage feast, the virgins will be responsible for both watching for His return and being ready to light the lamps upon His return. The five virgins who were wise will be the ones who are believers; they will be ready and watching. They are the ones who have the oil, a common symbol of the Holy Spirit. Only the wise ones enter the marriage feast, the common symbol for the Messianic Kingdom. Because the Messiah is pictured as already with His Bride – the Church, which had been, raptured – these who have the oil are people who became believers during the Tribulation. They are saved and invited to the wedding feast as guests. The five foolish virgins will be the unbelievers and, therefore, will be neither ready nor watching. They do not have any oil. It should be noted that the text does not say that the foolish virgins ran out of oil, but that they have no oil with them; they never had the oil or the Holy Spirit to begin with. - Arnold Fruchtenbaum

Remember that when Jesus spoke these words of warning in the parable of the ten virgins, Judas Iscariot was among the disciples, and Judas was not a believer. Surely his true spiritual condition came as a great shock to the eleven.

He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that being justified by His grace we would be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life. Titus 3:5-7



**Jesus is coming again**

**Do you have the light of God?**

**Are you ready for His return?**