

"The Parable of the Wise and Foolish Virgins"

Matthew 25:1-13

- Wisdom and foolishness: *"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and instruction.; The way of a fool is right in his own eyes, but a wise man listens to advice.; Whoever trusts in his own mind is a fool, but he who walks in wisdom will be delivered.; Give instruction to a wise man and he will still be wiser; teach a righteous man and he will increase in learning.; The fool says in his heart, "There is no God." They are corrupt, they do abominable deeds; there is none who does good."* (Proverbs 1:7; Proverbs 12:15; Proverbs 28:26; Proverbs 9:9; Psalm 14:1)
- A Wedding Culturally:
 - A Jewish wedding was a time of great joy. It was a grandiose social event. In most Jewish weddings almost everyone in the village would have been invited and a significant amount would have specifically participated.
 - A Jewish wedding would have three parts.
 - *The Engagement*: This was a contract of marriage arranged by the fathers' of the bride and the groom. The couple had very little involvement in this.
 - *The Betrothal*: This was a marriage ceremony at which the bride and the groom exchanged their vows in the presence of family and friends. Then the groom would go and establish his vocation and his home, this could take up to a year.
 - *The Marriage Feast*: This is where the community would feast and celebrate for up to a week. The groom and the groomsmen would come to the bride's house, where her bridesmaids would also be waiting on her and together they all would have a parade. The parade would usually begin at night and was lit by lamps or torches. At the end of the feast, the "best man" would hand the bride to the groom and they would leave to the home the groom had made to consummate their marriage.
- The Characters of the Parable:
 - The *Ten Virgins* are professing believers. *The Bridegroom* is Jesus Christ. *The Lamps* represent their identification with Christ. *The Oil* represents the genuineness of their faith.
- The main points of the Parable:
 - 1) Christ is coming again. 2) Judgment is inevitable. 3) His coming will be unexpected. 4) There is a limit to God's grace.
- The breakdown of the Parable:
 - All the virgins looked the same, but were not equally prepared. A Lamp without Oil cannot serve its main purpose. The confession is confirmed by the transformation/obedience (2 Timothy 3:1-5; James 2:17-18).
 - Foolish and Wise are spiritual conditions. Spiritual conditions are observable, but we must be careful in our evaluations (James 4:12; 1 Timothy 3:1-7); for God is the one who sees our hearts (1 Samuel 16:7; Jeremiah 17:10; John 2:24-25).
 - All the virgins grew tired. As Christians we still will struggle in this life, we will grow weary, but we will also persevere (Isaiah 40:29-31 & 41:10; 1 Corinthians 15:58; Acts 14:22).
 - Because the Exodus of the Jews began at midnight (Exodus 12:29) there was a tradition that the Messiah would come at midnight.
 - Five of the virgins were prepared for the arrival of the Bridegroom and five of the virgins were unprepared. The wise virgins' preparation was not sufficient for the other virgins. They were all individually responsible for their own oil (Romans 10:13-17; Ephesians 2:8-9; John 3:16).
 - Once the bridegroom had come, their opportunity had passed. There is a limit on God's grace, today is the Day of Salvation (2 Corinthians 6:2; Hebrews 3:7-8). Do we know Christ and does He know us (Matthew 7:21-23)?

(continued →)

- Christians should be watchful....
 - Watchful for the second coming (Matthew 25:13).
 - Watchful for the Devil (1 Peter 5:8).
 - Watchful in prayer (Colossians 4:2).
 - Watchful for spiritual apathy (1 Corinthians 16:13).