

Glen Park Gospel Church
Tuesday Evening Bible Study Group Notes

Rev Chris Trinham

Stories Jesus Told

No 10

Watching For His Coming.

Scripture Reading: Matthew 24:36-25:13.

We can easily misunderstand Jesus' teaching if we casually read this story. Correctly interpreting this parable relies on four of our Ten Rules for Understanding Parables N° 1, 3, 5 & 6. Textual context, the culture and history of the day. There is one main point, but it does contain some dependent lessons. All this demands that if we want to understand, we must do our home work.

First, Carefully Consider the Topic.

Jesus had warned the disciples (24:1) about the coming destruction of Jerusalem and of *the* (singular) sign of His appearing, (His coming with the clouds) and now is discussing the end of the age (24:3&4). The passage begins by emphasizing our ignorance of timing:

But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone. Matthew 24:36.

And ends on the same note:

Be on the alert then, for you do not know the day nor the hour. Matthew 25:13.

The parable considers both our uncertainty and readiness about the instant when Jesus will come again.

Second, the custom of the day was for the bridegroom to be greeted by ten unmarried women, the bride's companions, carrying lamps fixed to long poles. Edersheim¹ points out that an empty lamp and a separate pole was supplied and brought to the celebration by each virgin to await the call of his arrival.

The lamp was a hollow cup with a wick lying in a canal. Trimming the lamp consisted of drawing oil up into the wick and igniting it. Some virgins brought a flask with oil in it, others neglected to do this, no reason being given to us. Edersheim surmised that they assumed it would be supplied from a common stock by the bride's household. This speaks of being prepared. There is no good reason to assume that the oil is a type of the Holy Spirit, intriguing as that thought might be to us.

Consider the Story.

At that time v1. The story of the parable applies only to the time of the coming of Jesus. The need to be ready is omnipresent in the church age.

Five foolish, five wise v2. Jesus in His teaching and parables consistently divided His 'followers' into two groups: Sheep and goats, wheat and tares, the rebellious and obedient sons etc. The teaching of Scripture is clear. There will be a group of people who will, on the day when He comes into His kingdom, be turned from the door.

The wise took oil v4. They were fully equipped for their function in the event. The foolish looked like the real thing, but could not provide the service socially required by the occasion.

The bridegroom was a long time coming v5. This suggests that he was away, even as Jesus is away at this time (John 14:1&2, Acts 1:6-11.)

Fell asleep v5. A normal thing to do, There is no suggestion of the need to be awake, unlike the charge to the three in the garden of Gethsemane. Others had the duty of watching.

At midnight v6, when sleep is deepest.

You also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him. Luke 12:40.

Lamps going out v8. A wick will burn momentarily, then burn out.

Not enough for both of us v9. Faith can be taught and caught from others, but each of us must trust God ourselves. The blessings of God cannot be traded or borrowed. We must each do our own

business with God. And the door was shut v10. Only those who are ready when Jesus comes will go in with Him. Noah was a preacher of righteousness while preparing the ark. Then the flood came and God shut him in and shut all others out. Genesis 7:16.

Important words². There are some key words which have meanings not fully transferred with translation into English. They help paint the highlights into the picture:

knows ch24v36. 1492 to know by observation, by the mind, the senses. Know by learning;

knew not v39 1097 did not come to understand;

took away v39 142 lift up and carry away; **all** v39 537 every one without exception; **one** and **other** v40 1520 the numeral one; **taken** 40 be taken near or beside;

be vigilant v42 1127 awake; **ready** v44 2092 make preparation (see Mark 14:14)

faithful v45 4103 worthy of trust; **sensible** v45 5429 thoughtful, prudent; **cut in pieces** v51 1371 divide into two parts;

hypocrites v51 5273 from a word meaning taking a role, play acting, pretending;

weeping v51 2805 lament, grief over loss; **gnashing** v51 1030 grating, bearing mental pain;

virgins ch25v1 3933 unmarried; **no** v3 3756 absolutely none at all; **in** v4 1722 spatial in, inside

with v4 3326 alongside (Genitive use); 'took olive oil in the jar alongside their lamps.' Does not say 'extra oil'; five did, five didn't.

know v12 1492 Same word as 24:36 used

in the perfect active tense meaning to have gained a full and definite knowledge of. "I haven't come to really know you," or, "I do not remember you." The dying thief, "Lord, remember me . . ."

Last, There is a Beautiful Picture Here.

Consider:

The virgins are those who serve the bride. The bride is not mentioned in this parable.

The virgins are those who have no allegiance any one else:

But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvellous light; 1 Peter 2:9

They are those who go to meet Lord in the air:

Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord. 1Thessalonians 4:17

The lamp is their testimony held high:

Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven. Matthew 5:16.

They shall enjoy the marriage celebration of the Lamb:

And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb. Revelation 19:9a.

But there are those who are ashamed before Him at His coming:

Now, little children, abide in Him, so that when He appears, we may have confidence and not shrink away from Him in shame at His coming. 1 John 2:28.

Bible quotations in this study are from the NASB, unless otherwise acknowledged.

1. Alfred Edersheim, The life and Times of Jesus the Messiah.

2. Strong's Greek word numbers.

Welcome

Glen Park Gospel Church

Lower Road, Eltham North

Sundays 10.30 am

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