

# Bible Study

## THE PARABLES OF JESUS

### Lesson 5

## End Time Parables:

### **The Ten Virgins**

(Mt. 25:1-13)

### **The Talents**

(Mt. 25:14-30)

# Background

**Time:** Late Tuesday of Holy Week

**Place:** Mount of Olives—Continuation of the Olivet Address

**Historical Context:** The day was nearly finished. Jesus and His disciples were leaving Jerusalem, no doubt to spend the night in Bethany. They were sitting on the Mount of Olives overlooking the city and Herod's temple. Jesus had been answering the questions of the disciples—questions asked after Jesus announced that the grand temple they were viewing would be destroyed. The disciples could not imagine that the temple would be destroyed before the end of time and so had asked a dual question, which they assumed would have one answer: *"When will these things be? And what will be the sign of Your coming, and the end of the age?"* (Mt. 24:3) Having completed His discussion of the coming destruction of Jerusalem, Jesus continued with a series of parables dealing with the end times, concluding with the three parables recorded in Matthew 25.

## Parable I: The Ten Virgins

(Mt. 25:1-13)

### Background Information

- ◆ A bridegroom would come to the bride's home to receive her and then lead her to their new home for the wedding celebration—an event that generally lasted seven days. In this case, he must have come from some distance since his precise arrival time was unknown.
- ◆ The virgins' lamps consisted of a round receptacle for pitch or oil for the wick. This was placed in a hollow cup or deep saucer, which was fastened by a pointed end into a long wooden pole, so that it could be held aloft.
- ◆ It was customary to have ten such lamps, since ten was the number required to be present at any office or ceremony, such as at the benedictions accompanying the marriage ceremonies.



## Quotations:

*“The main lessons of the Parable are the need of individual, personal, and spiritual preparation. Only such will endure the trial of the long delay of Christ’s Coming; only such will stand that of an immediate summons to meet the Christ.”* [Alfred Edersheim, *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, Part 2, p. 454]



## Discussion and Application:

- ♦ Why is it important to recognize the point of comparison—that the “oil” in the parable is personal faith, something that cannot be shared?
- ♦ What warning is contained in this parable regarding faith in church membership?
- ♦ How can we be sure that we are personally prepared for the coming of Jesus—our Bridegroom?

## Parable II: The Talents

(Mt. 25:14-30)

### Background Information

- ♦ A talent was a piece of money. In the parable it represents everything that God entrusts to each of us—our talents, abilities, resources, and time. These we are to use faithfully.

### Quotation:

*“Did God create you? Did Christ redeem you? Did the Holy Spirit sanctify you? Are you not trebly God’s property?”*

*“The Lord left this earth to go to a far country, to be gone for a long time. On leaving He lent His property to us to carry on the business of His kingdom. He lent talents to every man according to his several ability. He has lent you some of His money as a stock in trade, as a working capital. Are you a faithful trustee? Are you very busy doing your very best doing business for your Lord?”*

*“After a long time the Lord will come back to audit your books. Will He be delighted and cry, Fine! And give you the*

*degree of G.F.S., Good and Faithful Servant? Will He reward your faithfulness and promote you by setting you over many things? Will He bid you, Enter into the joy of thy Lord?*

*“Why shouldn’t He? You are the only one that can stop Him. And the only way you can stop Him is by being unfaithful, by not doing your very best. You are only good in that you are faithful.”* [William Dallmann, “Short Stories by Jesus,” p. 185-186]

## **Discussion and Application:**

- ◆ Note the similar response of the man to his first two servants. What is the significance of that similarity?
- ◆ The third servant returned the man’s money in full. He did not waste it or steal it. Why was he considered to be so wicked?
- ◆ What personal lessons ought we draw from this parable?

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## **Study Outline**

**Lesson 6** The Sheep and the Goats (Mt. 25:31-46)

**Lesson 7** Parabolic Metaphors: Wedding Guests; Patches; Wineskins; Blind Leaders (cf. Mt. 9:4-17; Mk. 2:19-22; Lk. 5:33-39)

**Lesson 8** Sermonic Parables: Salt; Lights; Treasures; Lamps; Birds and Lilies; Specks/Logs; Pearls/Pigs; Gates; Trees/Fruit; Houses (Mt. 5:13-16; 6:19-23, 25-34; 7:1-20, 24-29)



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