

# The Parable of the Ten Virgins and the Religious Spirit

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## Preface

There have been several times in my walk with Jesus that my studies have led me to life changing treasures buried deep in the mystery of His word. The inability to just read and move on without digging deeper to find the answer to the question that needs to be solved. That gnawing inside that needs to be satisfied as if the Holy Spirit Himself has prompted me to search out His word for the resolution. One was the significance of Elijah outrunning a horse that led me to a lifestyle of learning to outrun the horses of Revelation 6. Another was a three-year verse-by-verse study of the book of Isaiah that opened the eyes of my heart to the love that the Lord has for the world and His imminent return.

Another such area of scripture was the parable of the Ten Virgins in Matthew 25. There were too many questions that I knew the Holy Spirit wanted to answer through deeper study. So, I took out my Bible concordance, dictionaries and encyclopedias and began to search and pray through this area of scripture.

This work I share is a summary at best. I do not propose that I speak for the Lord Himself, He is quite capable of doing that without me. Yet I know deep in my heart that this is a word He wants me to share. I do not stand back pointing a finger accusing my brethren, I too was convicted on many points during this study. It is my sole desire to share this study to show yet another perspective on this well-known parable. Perhaps someone who reads this may see that their lamp is not properly filled. Then they too will be joyfully awaiting His return and not be turned away from the Bridal festivities.

This Bible study is broken into four parts. Part One examines the parable of the Ten Virgins and using Biblical references defines and clarifies the roles and symbolism. Part Two asks the question, “Who else did Jesus say, ‘Depart from Me, I did not know you?’” Again, using Biblical references, the character of the foolish virgins and those similar are examined. A series of introspective questions are listed to help the reader to examine their own hearts to discern a religious spirit in Part Three. Finally, in Part Four, the study goes further to determine who Jesus says He does know.

## Introduction

*“As Jesus 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 the end of the age?’” (Matthew 24:3)*

While sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples asked Jesus what the sign of His coming will be. Jesus proceeded with instructions and parables to answer their query. He cautioned them not to be misled: that there will be wars and rumors of wars. He warned them of tribulation, persecution, and perilous times. His description of the time before His coming was dark and dangerous. But immediately after the tribulation of those days, the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and all will see Him coming on the clouds with power and great

glory. At that time He will send forth His angels to gather His elect (chosen ones).

He tells His disciples to learn from the parable of the fig tree; to watch and discern the signs of the times in order to be ready. He instructs them to be on the alert because no one knows the day He is coming. *“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.”* (Matt 24:37) There will be those who will be going about their lives oblivious to the day of the Lord’s return. Jesus gave warning to His disciples, men who walked and communed with Him for three years, that even they may be unaware of His coming.

After His warning He reiterated His words with two parables, one of the Ten Virgins and the other of the use of Talents. These parables were illustrations of the Kingdom of Heaven, to describe the events to take place at the return of Jesus. The discussion ended with a depiction of the Judgment. Its purpose was to explain who will be allowed to enter the kingdom and that not all will enter.

Why did Jesus find it necessary to warn His disciples, men who knew Him better than anyone else on earth? Why are these warnings to those who believe He is the Christ? Why are those who are close to the bride and to their master turned away? Who else will be turned away, despite their religious activity? How can we know if we will be turned away? How can we know that Jesus knows us? This study is an attempt to answer these questions.

## Part One

### The Parable of the Ten Virgins

#### Matthew 25:1-13

*“Then shall the kingdom of Heaven be likened to ten virgins, who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. And five of them were wise, and five were foolish. The foolish ones took their lamps but took no oil with them. But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept. And at midnight there was a cry made, ‘Behold, the bridegroom comes! Go out to meet him.’ Then all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said to the wise, ‘Give us some of your oil, for our lamps have gone out.’ But the wise answered, saying, ‘No, lest there be not enough for us and you. But rather go to those who sell and buy for yourselves.’ And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came. And they who were ready went in with him to the marriage, and the door was shut. Afterwards the other virgins came also, saying, ‘Lord, Lord, open to us.’ But he answered and said, ‘Truly I say to you, I do not know you.’ Therefore watch, for you do not know either the day or the hour in which the Son of Man comes.”*

### Eastern Wedding Tradition

Understanding the traditions of weddings during the days of Jesus helps enlighten the

happenings of what is taking place in the parable. Being aware of these traditions also helps us to appreciate our position as the Bride of Christ. He tells us He has gone to prepare a place for us to one day return and take us back to heaven with Him.

John 14:2,3

*“In My Father’s house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And 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.”*

Below is a list of the events as they would take place in an Eastern wedding at the time of Jesus:

- The bride is usually hand-picked by the bridegroom’s father.
- He brings his son to meet her.
- The betrothal covenant is as binding as the marriage covenant itself.
- The father and the bridegroom return to the father’s house where the bridegroom then prepares a place for he and his new bride.
- The time spent apart was so that the bride could prove her faithfulness and virginity.
- The marriage supper was held in the groom’s parent’s house. It entailed the bringing home of an already accredited bride to her covenanted husband.
- When all was prepared, the bridegroom’s attendants fetch the bride at night. This was done with a “light show”.
- This usually took place at night so that all who worked by day could attend. This is also known as the Wedding procession (Judges 5:30; Psalm 45:15. Mt 9:15; John 3:29)
- The voice, cry of the Bridegroom (Jeremiah 7:34, Rev 18:23)
- A company of attendants of her own gender escorts the bride. Some think that on these occasions they had usually ten virgins; for the Jews never held a synagogue, circumcision, kept the Passover, or contracted marriage, but at least ten persons were present. Boaz, when he married Ruth, had ten witnesses, (Ruth 4:2).
- At the house where the bridegroom receives his friends, (some may come late) speeches of congratulations are made, poems are recited or sung in praise of the groom and to honor his family.
- When the bridegroom indicates it is time, all arise and candles and torches are supplied to those who are to form the procession.
- A cry ascends along the route to give warning to those who are waiting with the bride that it is time to arise and light up the approach and welcome the bridegroom with honor.
- Often it is midnight when the procession begins.
- Meanwhile, as the night wears on, the duties of the bridesmaids were to help the bride

adorn herself with her garments and jewels.

- Afterward a period of relaxing and napping may take place.
- In the parable, the bride and both wise and foolish virgins fell asleep.
- The cry of the coming bridegroom wakes up the bridesmaids, warning them to prepare for his reception. It is their job to light his way.
- Upon notice given of the bridegrooms' approach, the bridesmaids were to go out with lamps in their hands, to lead him into the house with ceremony and formality.
- The job of these virgins is to meet the bridegroom, which is as much their joy as their duty.
- They were to wait for the bridegroom until he appears, then to wait upon him.
- Of the large group with the bridegroom, a limited number would enter. Their chief duty being that of escort.
- At the dispersion of the crowd, according to custom, the doors would be closed, leaving within the relatives and invited guests.

As this is a parable, simply an illustration to depict a spiritual lesson, some portions of the story must be defined. To bring this allegory relevance, the following suppositions are made with biblical references:

#### The wedding refers to the marriage supper of the Lamb

*“Let us be glad and rejoice and we will give glory to Him. For the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has prepared herself.”* (Revelation 19:7)

#### The Bridegroom refers to Jesus

*“And Jesus said to them, ‘Can the sons of the bride chamber mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them? But the days will come when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then they shall fast.’”* (Matthew 9:15)

*“The kingdom of Heaven is like a certain king who made a marriage for his son.”* (Matthew 22:2)

#### The Bride refers to the Church

*“For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy. For I have espoused you to one Man, to present you as a pure virgin to Christ.”* (2 Corinthians 11:2)

*“For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church; ...Therefore as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for it, that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the*

*washing of water by the Word, that He might present it to Himself as the glorious church, without spot or wrinkle or any such things, but that it should be holy and without blemish.” (Ephesians 5:23-33)*

### The virgins are the Bride’s companions and members of the Church

*“She shall be brought to the king in clothing of needlework; the virgins, her companions after her, shall be brought to You.” (Psalm 45:14)*

*“These are those who were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are those who follow the Lamb wherever He goes. These were redeemed from among men, as a firstfruit to God and to the Lamb.” (Revelation 14:4)*

### Five virgins were **wise**

The Greek word used for wise is *phronimos*: meaning prudent, sensible, practically wise, shrewd. To have understanding, to think, concern, intent on purpose, live in harmony, observe, set their minds.

### Five virgins were **foolish**

The Greek word used is *moros* meaning: primarily denotes dull, sluggish, from a root *muh*, to be silly; hence, stupid, foolish; it is used of persons, Matt. 5:22. “Thou fool”; here the word means morally worthless, a scoundrel, a more serious reproach than “Raca;” the latter scorns a man’s mind and calls him stupid; **moros scorns his heart and character; hence the Lord’s more severe condemnation** in Matt 7:26 “a foolish man” Matt 23:17, 19 “fools;” Matt 25:2,3,8, “foolish.”

It is important to note that it does not mean other words for fool in Greek:

- *Aphron* – signifies without reason, want of mental sanity and sobriety, a reckless and inconsiderate habit of mind, or the lack of common sense.
- *Anoetos* – signifies not understanding, not applying the mind.
- *Asunetos* – signifies without discernment or understanding, hence senseless.

*“Then everyone who hears these Words from Me, and does them, I will compare him to a wise (phronimos) man who built his house on the rock; and the rain came down, and the floods came up, and the winds blew, and fell against that house; but it did not fall, for it had been founded on the rock. And everyone who hears these Words of Mine, and who does not do them, he shall be compared to a foolish (moros) man who built his house on the sand; and the rain came down, and the floods came up, and the winds blew and beat against that house; and it fell, and great was the collapse of it.” (Matthew 7:24)*

*“Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves. Therefore, be **wise** (phronimos) as serpents and harmless as doves.” (Matthew 10:16)*

*“Who then is the faithful and wise (phronimos) servant whom his Lord has set over His household, to give to them the food in season? Blessed is that servant whom his Lord shall find so doing when He comes.” (Matthew 24:45)*

### Oil in the vessels represents the anointing of the Spirit of Jesus Christ

*“And you shall command the sons of Israel that they bring you pure olive oil beaten for the light, to cause the lamp to burn always” (Exodus 27:20)*

*“And you shall make it an oil of holy ointment, an ointment compound after the art of the perfumer. It shall be a holy anointing oil.” (Exodus 30:25)*

*“And you shall take the anointing oil and anoint the tabernacle, and all in it, and shall sanctify it and all the vessels of it. And it shall be holy.” (Exodus 40:9)*

*“You love righteousness, and hate wickedness; therefore God, Your God, has anointed You with the oil of gladness above Your fellow.” (Psalm 45:7)*

### The light represents Jesus

*The people who sat in darkness saw a great Light; and Light has sprung up to those who sat in the region and shadow of death.” (Matthew 4:16)*

*“Nor do men light a lamp and put it under the grain-measure, but on a lampstand. And it gives light to all who are in the house.” (Matthew 5:15)*

*“In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overtake it.” (John 1:4-5)*

*“Then Jesus spoke again to them, saying, I am the Light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness but shall have the light of life.” (John 8:18)*

### **The Bridesmaids**

Up to this point, everything was pretty clear. Many Bible scholars have taught using these same interpretations. I was satisfied with my studies thus far. The description of the wise and foolish virgins were apparent:

*“The foolish said to the wise, ‘Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.’” (Matthew 25:8)*

- 1) The wise were named so because they were prepared.

- 2) The foolish were named so because they were unprepared; their duty was to light the way for the coming Bridegroom. They knew this when they were called to be bridesmaids.
- 3) They were like the people of Noah's days, busy about their own business, when they had warning.
- 4) The wise bridesmaids were not selfish in not sharing their own oil. They knew there would not be enough for all of them. Had they shared their oil the way would not be lit for the Bridegroom at all. Their priorities were correct.

It was at this point that I could not go farther. The bridesmaids were the bride's closest companions; usually chosen from the bride's closest of friends and relatives. Selected to attend her because of their loyalty and commitment. They agree to participate in this honor by helping to plan the wedding and reception. They also help the bride with her personal preparations. It was customary in many cultures, and in modern times that the bridesmaids all wear similar dresses.

However, if there were five among them with character that was foolish (moros), then they must have had the bride duped. They looked good on the outside but were not what they appeared on the inside. Obviously, the bride did not truly know these five.

According to Jesus, their hearts and character were morally worthless. Their lamps would not allow them to light the way for the Bridegroom - they did not have the anointing of Jesus Christ. Even after these five had gone and acquired more oil they were still denied entrance into the wedding feast.

*“And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came. And they who were ready went in with him to the marriage, and the door was shut. Afterwards the other virgins came also, saying, ‘Lord, Lord, open to us.’ But he answered and said, ‘Truly I say to you, I do not know you.’” (Matthew 25:10-12)*

### **“I do not know you”**

What does it mean I do not know you? It has been established that the bridesmaids (virgins) represent the Church and those who attend to Her today. Why would the Savior say to these – “*I do not know you.*”? There are several words in the Greek language that mean know. The two that will be considered are *ginosko* and *oida*.

**Ginosko** – signifies to be taking in knowledge, to come to know, recognize, understand, or to understand completely. In the New Testament *ginosko* frequently indicates a relation between the person knowing the object known, in this respect, what is known is of value or importance to the one who knows, and hence the establishment of the relationship. *Ginosko* suggests progress in knowledge, as in getting to know someone. This implies an active relationship.

**Oida** – means to see, signifying, primarily, to have seen or perceived; hence to know, to have knowledge of, whether absolutely, as in Divine knowledge, or in the case of human knowledge, to know from observation. *Oida* that the object has simply come into the scope of the



knower's perception. (On their radar screen.)

### **Who else were told, "I do not know you?"**

I prayed and searched the scriptures, knowing there was more than what "appeared" with the five foolish bridesmaids. Who else in scripture looked good on the outside, but were *moros* on the inside? Who else, even though giving good account of their actions were told, "*I do not know you,*" and were denied entrance?

*"Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord! Lord!' Shall enter the kingdom of Heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in Heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord! Lord! Did we not prophesy in Your name, and through Your name throw out demons, and through Your name do many wonderful works?' And then I will say to them 'I never knew you!' (ginosko – I never had an active relationship with you) Depart from Me, those working lawlessness!"* (Matthew 7:21-23)

*"Afterwards the other virgins came also, saying, 'Lord, Lord, open to us.' But he answered and said, 'Truly I say to you, I do not know you. (oida – I never even perceived you on my radar screen)'"* (Matthew 25:11, 12)

*"And once the Master of the house has risen up and has shut the door, and you begin to stand outside and to knock at the door, saying, 'Lord, Lord, open to us,' and He shall answer and say to you, 'I do not know you; (oida – I never perceived you) from where are you,' then you shall begin to say, 'We ate and drank in Your presence, and You have taught in our streets.' But He shall say, 'I tell you, I do not know you; (oida – I am not even aware of you) from where you are.' Depart from Me, all workers of unrighteousness!"* (Luke 13:24-27)

Not all are granted entrance, even though a good argument can be given. Those denied had prophesied, cast out demons, and even performed wonderful works in the name of Jesus. The virgins were in intimate relationship with the bride. Others ate and drank in the Lord's presence and even taught His word. Yet Jesus says He did not know them. He did not even have perception of them.

The next section will examine the words of Jesus to the Pharisees and assess the character of those He says He does not know.