

THE END TIME COMING: “WAIT”

THESIS: Are you prepared in waiting?

TEXT: Matthew 25:1-13

OPEN: (Repeated false predictions of Jesus’ return—turned into an allegory or a spiritual, unseen event)

In **Matthew 25:1-13** let’s discover how to “wait” for the End Time coming wisely not foolishly like those who fall for false prophets.

Parable (Greek: *parabole*) means to compare or place beside. It’s an analogy or illustration to set forth a lesson—the “moral of the story.” Jesus also used parables to keep some things a secret from those who had no interest in spiritual matters (*Mark 4:11*). Theologian W.E. Vine says, “Two dangers are to be avoided in seeking to interpret the parables in Scripture, that of ignoring the important features, and that of trying to make all the details mean something” (*Vine’s Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*, p. 158).

Matthew 25:1 “*At that time the kingdom of Heaven will be like ten virgins (bridesmaids) who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom.*”

“At that time”—what *time* is Jesus referring to? The time of His Second Coming which He refers to earlier in *Mtt 24:44* “So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect Him.”

The “kingdom of heaven” here is not Paradise Heaven, but rather those who claim to belong to God (i.e. servants of the Lord). Some Jews were afraid to come close to taking the Lord’s name in vain so they would use other spiritual descriptions (“kingdom of heaven” instead of “kingdom of God”).

Matthew 25:2-5 “*Five of them were foolish and five were wise. ³The foolish ones took their lamps but did not take any oil with them. ⁴The wise, however, took oil in jars along with their lamps. ⁵The bridegroom was a long time in coming, and they all became drowsy and fell asleep.*”

Historical: Bridesmaids needed a supply of oil to replenish their light, and hence were obliged to carry vessels to contain the supplies of oil. Great efforts were made to have an abundance of light at Middle Eastern weddings, which always took place at night. Lamps, torches, and lanterns are freely used in the marriage procession, and at the house of the bridegroom, where the ceremony is performed (*Manners and Customs of the Bible*, p. 377). Torches required large amounts of oil to keep burning, and the oil had to be replenished often (*Archaeological Study Bible*, p. 1608).

This wedding procession tradition—even with a long wait for the invited—was within expectations. Therefore, the preparation of bringing extra oil jars was wise and not doing so was very foolish. **Foolish** (Greek: *moros*) means dull, empty-headed, morally worthless, silly, or stupid.

Matthew 25:6-9 “*At midnight the cry rang out: ‘Here’s the bridegroom! Come out to meet him!’ ⁷Then all the virgins woke up and trimmed their lamps. ⁸The foolish ones said to the wise, ‘Give us some of your oil; our lamps are going out.’ ⁹‘No,’ they replied, ‘there may not be enough for both us and you. Instead, go to those who sell oil and buy some for yourselves.’”*

Scripture teaches that Jesus' return will be a surprise to many people: "About times and dates we do not need to write to you, for you know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night" (*1 Thessalonians 5:1-2*). What makes His Second Coming "thief-like" in its timing is not the "short or long" of it. The "thief-like" nature of Christ's return is *so* for those who don't expect it and thus take faith in Him seriously.

There will be a great heralding of the return of Jesus—audibly and visually everyone dead and alive will behold it:

***Matthew 24:27, 30-31** “For as lightning that comes from the east is visible even in the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man...At that time the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and all the nations of the earth will mourn. They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky, with power and great glory. And He will send His angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather His elect from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other.” How ridiculous it is for bridesmaids not to prepare for the arrival of the bridegroom. Far more foolish it is for someone not to think and live in such a way expecting to meet Christ at any time—whether by death or His Second Coming.

As I said earlier, it's only “like a thief in the night” return for those who don't care about the Lord's Word. It's not the “short or long” of His timing, but the indifference of unprepared. People, like the foolish virgins, cannot claim they didn't know because the gospel has been preached throughout the world (*Col 1:23*). There is no excuse for unbelief.

v8 “*The foolish ones said to the wise, ‘Give us some of your oil; our lamps are going out.’*” You are accountable for your own faith. One will have to give account for their own unbelief, too. No excuses—it's nobody else's fault—as to why somebody doesn't have enough “oil” to keep the their flame of faith burning.

Excuses such as “church is full of hypocrites”...“Religion was forced on me as a child”...“Someone didn't shake my hand at church—they hurt my feelings or made me mad—I had a bad experience”...“Why do I need Jesus? I'm just as good as the church guy. I'll believe in a god-of-my-own way”—these will not suffice in gaining one entrance into the wedding supper of the Lamb in Heaven (*Revelation 19:6-9*).

Matthew 3:8b-9 “Produce fruit in keeping with repentance. And do not think you can say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our father.’ I tell you that out of these stones God can raise up children for Abraham.”

Quote: Somebody once said, “God has not grandchildren.” This means that one's family heritage or connections will not suffice for saving faith. Everyone is called to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ for themselves (*John 3:16*).

John 1:12-13 “Yet to all who received Him, to those who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God—children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.”

Right (Greek: *exousia*) means power or privilege.

Salvation is a gift from God—it's charity. No one can make it to Heaven on their own merit. Eternal life in Heaven is not automatic for everyone who dies. It's not an entitlement—it's a grant from God through faith in His Son Jesus Christ. The Lord is graceful that way.

Romans 6:23 “For the *wages of sin* is death, but the *gift of God* is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

By saying, “children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband’s will, but born of God,” the Apostle is testifying that just because one may belong to a religious family or heritage like the Jews of His day, for example, it doesn’t mean that you will automatically be a part of His eternal kingdom because of the relation. You must be born again, that is born of God.

This is what Jesus tells Nicodemus who was a member of the Jewish ruling council (*John 3:1*). However, Jesus said to him as He does to everybody including us: “I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit” (*John 3:5*). **Mark 16:16** “Whoever believes *and* is baptized (immersed) will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.”

Illustration (author unknown): Below is a “Tuit.” Guard it with your life because “Tuits” are hard to come by—especially the round ones. This is an indispensable item. It will help you become a more efficient person. For years we have heard people say, “I’ll do it as soon as I get around to it.” Now that you have one, you can accomplish all those things you put aside until you got a “Round Tuit.” <http://www.xoterik.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/04/Tuit.jpg>



Luke 9:57-62 “As they were walking along the road, a man said to Him, I will follow You where You go.’ Jesus replied, ‘Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay His head.’ He said to another man, ‘Follow Me.’ But the man replied, ‘Lord, first let me go and bury my father.’ Jesus said to him, ‘Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and proclaim the kingdom of God.’ Still another said, ‘I will follow you, Lord; but first let me go back and say good-by to my family.’ Jesus replied, ‘No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God.’”

Luke 14:15-27 “When one of those at the table with Him heard this, he said to Jesus, ‘Blessed is the man who will eat at the feast in the kingdom of God.’ Jesus replied, ‘A certain man was preparing a great banquet and invited many guests. At the time of the banquet he sent his servant to tell those who had been invited, ‘Come, for everything is now ready.’ But they all alike began to make excuses. The first said, ‘I have just bought a field, and I must go and see it. Please excuse me.’ Another said, ‘I have just bought five yoke of oxen, and I’m on my way to try them out. Please excuse me. Still another said, ‘I just got married, so I can’t come.’ The servant came back and reported this to his master. Then the owner of the house became angry and ordered his servant, ‘Go out quickly into the streets and alleys of the town and bring in the poor, the crippled, the blind and the lame.’ ‘Sir,’ the servant said, ‘what you ordered has been done, but there is still room.’ Then the master told his servant, ‘Go out to the roads and country lanes and make them come in, so that my house will be full. I tell you, not one of those men who were invited will get a taste of my banquet.’ Large crowds were traveling with Jesus, and turning to them He said: ‘If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, his wife and children, his brothers and sisters—yes, even his own life—he cannot be My disciple. And anyone who does not carry his own cross and follow Me cannot be My disciple.’”

Are you prepared to wait for the Lord's return? Are you prepared in waiting for the Second Coming of Jesus?

Matthew 25:10-13 *"But while they were on their way to buy the oil, the bridegroom arrived. The virgins who were ready went in with him to the wedding banquet. And the door was shut. ¹¹Later the others also came. 'Sir! Sir!' they said. 'Open the door for us!' ¹²But he replied, 'I tell you the truth, I don't know you.' ¹³Therefore keep watch, because you do not know the day or the hour."*

It's not just that Jesus is warning against predicting times of His return—the theme of His parables about the Second Coming and Judgment Day is that—you don't know when so, because of that, you better be prepared when He does.

Luke 12:35-36 "Be dressed ready for service and keep your lamps burning, like men waiting for their master to return from a wedding banquet, so that when he comes and knocks they can immediately open the door for him."

1 Peter 1:13 "Prepare your minds for action; be self-controlled; set your hope fully on the grace to be given you when Jesus Christ is revealed."

1. Identify a godly characteristic that you desire to increase in your life.
 - A. **Galatians 5:22** "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self control."
2. Study that quality in the Bible. For example, look up the word "patience" in the concordance of your Bible. List verses that interest you.
3. Pray to the Lord that He increase His qualities in you.
 - A. **2 Peter 1:8** (Regarding goodness, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, kindness, love) "If you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ."
4. Fellowship with people who possess godly characteristics.
 - A. The Bible warns us that "Bad company corrupts good character" (*1 Corinthians 15:33*). Life's too short and valuable to waste your time around people who are negative influences. Get around people who are adding value to others and imitate them.
 1. **1 Corinthians 16:15-16** "You know that the household of Stephanas were the first converts in Achaia, and they have devoted themselves to the service of the saints. I urge you, brothers, to submit to (follow) such as these and to everyone who joins in the work, and labors at it."
5. Think about what you're learning from Scripture—prepare a plan of action and do it.
 - A. **James 1:22** "Do not merely listen to the Word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says."
 - B. **Quote from John Maxwell:** "Instead of putting off tomorrow what you should do today—plan today what you want to do tomorrow."

Insight from John MacArthur: "The world did not accept Christ when He came to earth the first time, although His coming had been clearly and repeatedly predicted by the Old Testament prophets. The Messiah was to have a forerunner who would be a voice crying in the wilderness, and John the Baptist was the forerunner. The Messiah was to be born in Bethlehem, the son of a virgin, and in the line of David. Jesus uniquely and exclusively met those qualifications. He was to minister in Galilee and exhibit great miraculous power, and He did those things. Nevertheless, when 'He came to His own...those who were His own did not receive Him' (John 1:11). Preparation for His second coming will be more decisive and consequential than preparation for His first, because those who rejected Him during His incarnation had continued opportunity to be saved as long as they were alive. Doubtlessly many of those who cried out for Jesus' crucifixion

in place of Barabbas or who voted against Him in the Sanhedrin were later convicted to turn to Him as Lord and Savior. But there will be no such continued opportunity when Jesus comes again. When He appears then, the opportunity for salvation and citizenship in the kingdom of Heaven will be past...As with all of Jesus' parables, the message of this one is simple. It is meant to illustrate truths He has just been teaching: that He is coming again, that He will then judge sinners and reward the righteous, that people must be ready, and that His coming will be unexpected. The central truth is that once He has arrived, there will be no second chance and the opportunity for salvation will be gone forever" (*MacArthur NT Commentary, Matthew 24-28*, p. 85-87).

Matthew 7:24, 26 "Jesus said, 'Therefore everyone who hears these words of Mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man...But everyone who hears these words of Mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man...'"

CLOSE: Are prepared in waiting for the return of Jesus?