

**The Parable of
the Foolish and Wise Virgins**

“Then the kingdom of heaven will be comparable to ten virgins, who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. Five of them were foolish, and five were prudent. For when the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them, but the prudent took oil in flasks along with their lamps. Now while the bridegroom was delaying, they all got drowsy and began to sleep. But at midnight there was a shout, ‘Behold, the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.’ Then all those virgins rose and trimmed their lamps.

(Matthew 25:1-7)

The foolish said to the prudent, ‘Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.’ But the prudent answered, ‘No, there will not be enough for us and you too; go instead to the dealers and buy some for yourselves.’ And while they were going away to make the purchase, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding feast; and the door was shut. Later the other virgins also came, saying, ‘Lord, lord, open up for us.’ But he answered, ‘Truly I say to you, I do not know you.’ Be on the alert then, for you do not know the day nor the hour.”

(Matthew 25:8–13)

In this session, I will address the parable in two very different ways.

(1) To analyze the order of events to see if it gives us any insight into the rapture.

(2) To discuss the actual message and warning of the parable, which is its main purpose.

Hebrew Wedding Rituals and the Rapture.

“This parable reflects 1st century Jewish wedding customs”

**—J. Jeremias, The Parables of Jesus
(Philadelphia: Westminster, 1972), 173–74.**

When Does the Bridegroom Come?

**Revelation 19 shows the marriage supper
happening after the tribulation:**

I heard something like a loud voice of a great multitude in heaven, saying, “Hallelujah! Salvation and glory and power belong to our God; because His judgments are true and righteous; *for He has judged the great harlot who was corrupting the earth with her immorality, and He has avenged the blood of His bond-servants on her.*” And a second time they said, “Hallelujah! Her smoke rises up forever and ever.” And the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshiped God who sits on the throne saying, “Amen. Hallelujah!” And a voice came from the throne, saying, “Give praise to our God, all you His bond-servants, you who fear Him, the small and the great.”

(Revelation 19:1–5)

Then I heard something like the voice of a great multitude and like the sound of many waters and like the sound of mighty peals of thunder, saying, “Hallelujah! For the Lord our God, the Almighty, reigns. “Let us rejoice and be glad and give the glory to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb has come and His bride has made herself ready.” It was given to her to clothe herself in fine linen, bright and clean; for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints. Then he said to me, “Write, ‘Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.’ ” And he said to me, “These are true words of God.”

(Revelation 19:6–9)

Pretribulationists most often wrongly use the parable to claim that Jesus (the Bridegroom) will come before the tribulation and bring us back to heaven (the Father's House).

The historical records we have suggest the celebration was at the bride's house. The language of the parable also suggests as much.

“If Greco-Roman sources are used and if Palestinian customs are assumed to be similar, *which is not unreasonable, the groom is understood as bringing his bride back to his (or his parents’) house after observing a banquet at the home of the bride.* The virgins then wait in the home of the groom. This is an attractive explanation and would make good sense of the text, *but certainty does not exist about where they are and exactly what is described.*”

—Klyne Snodgrass *Stories with Intent: A Comprehensive Guide to the Parables of Jesus*

“We have little knowledge of the specifics of wedding customs among first-century Jews, and we do not know how fixed various patterns were. The present story, however, seems to work best if we imagine the bride as already at the bridegroom’s destination and as sending out her maidens to welcome him in... In a much simpler form, the pattern of the bridegroom being brought to the bride is reflected in Tobit 8:1”

—Klyne Snodgrass

Then Raguel called his daughter. When she came in, he took her by the hand and gave her to Tobias with his blessing, “Take her to be your wife according to the teachings in the Law of Moses. Take her safely with you to your father’s house. May the God of heaven give you a happy life together.” Raguel asked his wife to bring him a blank scroll so that he could write out the marriage contract. Edna brought him the scroll, and Raguel wrote out the agreement, saying that Sarah was given to Tobias according to the teachings in the Law of Moses.

(Tobit 7:13-16)

After the ceremony they began the meal. Ragucl called his wife and said, “Get the spare room ready, my dear, and take Sarah there.” Edna made up the bed as Ragucl had told her. Then she took Sarah into the room with her, and Sarah began to cry. But Edna wiped away her tears and said, “Don’t worry, Sarah. I’m sure the Lord of heaven will make you happy this time and not sad. So cheer up, my dear.” Then Edna left the room. When they had finished the meal, and it was time to go to bed, Sarah’s parents led young Tobias to the bedroom.

(Tobit 7:17-18, 8:1)

If this is the case, then the maidens go out to meet Him and escort Him back to the Bride's House.

A careful reading of the parable has the Bridegroom coming and they all go in together to the banquet.

It says nothing about Him collecting them or taking them back. The language suggests Him arriving.



**Bride's
House**



**Groom's
House**



**Bride's
House**



**Groom's
House**



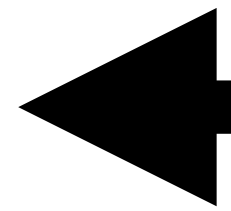
**Bride's
House**



**Groom's
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**Bride's
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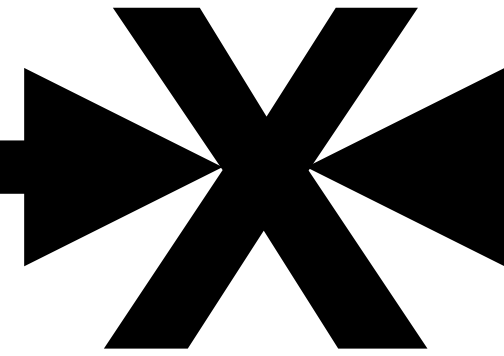


**Groom's
House**





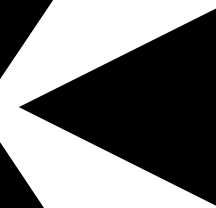
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(Matthew 25:8–13)

ἀπάντησις apantésis:

**To meeting someone, often in the
sense of a dignitary or returning
victorious king or warrior.**

“Then the kingdom of heaven will be comparable to ten virgins, who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. Five of them were foolish, and five were prudent. For when the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them, but the prudent took oil in flasks along with their lamps. Now while the bridegroom was delaying, they all got drowsy and began to sleep. But at midnight there was a shout, ‘Behold, the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.’ Then all those virgins rose and trimmed their lamps.

(Matthew 25:1-7)

For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. 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. Therefore comfort one another with these words.

(1 Thessalonians 4:15–18)

The Triumphal Entry: The Prophetic Foreshadow

“The disciples went and did just as Jesus had instructed them, and brought the donkey and the colt, and laid their coats on them; and He sat on the coats. Most of the crowd spread their coats in the road, and others were cutting branches from the trees and spreading them in the road. The crowds going ahead of Him, and those who followed, were shouting, ‘Hosanna to the Son of David; Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest!’ When He had entered Jerusalem, all the city was stirred, saying, ‘Who is this?’ And the crowds were saying, ‘This is the prophet Jesus, from Nazareth in Galilee.’”

(Matthew 21:6–11)



Jerusalem



Galilee



Jerusalem



Galilee



Jerusalem



Galilee



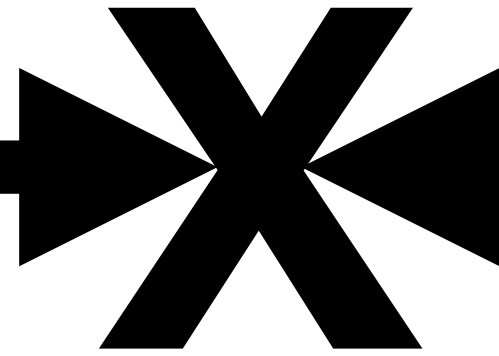
Jerusalem



Galilee



Jerusalem



Galilee



Jerusalem



Galilee



Jerusalem



Galilee

**The Scriptures directly state that
the Marriage Banquet
is in Jerusalem:**

“When the Lord has washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion and purged the bloodshed of Jerusalem from her midst, by the spirit of judgment and the spirit of burning, then the Lord will create over the whole area of Mount Zion and over her assemblies a cloud by day, even smoke, and the brightness of a flaming fire by night; for over all the glory will be a chuppah.”

(Isaiah 4:4–5)

“The Lord of hosts will prepare a lavish banquet for all peoples on this mountain (Zion); a banquet of aged wine, choice pieces with marrow, and refined, aged wine. And on this mountain He will swallow up the covering which is over all peoples, even the veil which is stretched over all nations.”

(Isaiah 25:6–7)

“You are those who have stood by Me in My trials; and just as My Father has granted Me a kingdom, I grant you that you may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom, and you will sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

(Luke 22:28–30)

And Jesus said to them, “Truly I say to you, that you who have followed Me, in the regeneration when the Son of Man will sit on His glorious throne, you also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

(Matthew 19:28)

Then the Holy One, blessed be he, will reveal his great arm in the world, and show it to the gentiles: it shall be as long as the world and as broad as the world, and the glory of its splendor shall be like the brilliant light of the noonday sun at the summer solstice. At once Israel shall be saved from among the gentiles and the Messiah shall appear to them and bring them up to Jerusalem with great joy. Moreover, the kingdom of Israel, gathered from the four quarters of the world, shall eat with the Messiah, and the gentiles shall eat with them.

(3 Enoch 48:9-10)

The Message of the Parable

Qualifier:

This is just a parable.

“Went out to meet the bridegroom”

- **This imagery establishes a pattern for the return of Jesus.**
- **The bridegroom comes or arrives.**
- **They go out to meet him and accompany Him to the Wedding Banquet.**
- **He does not come to take them away.**

“Five of them were foolish, and five were prudent. For when the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them, but the prudent took oil in flasks along with their lamps.”

- **This is the primary point of the parable.**
- **Having a secret history with Christ, and an ongoing relationship and life with Him.**
- **Which means having a heart that is awake, aware of its condition, and thus ready for the arrival of Jesus.**

Main Exhortation and Warning of the Parable

**The two groups of virgins are described as
exactly alike in everything...**

Except their preparations.

“Now while the bridegroom was delaying, they all got drowsy and began to sleep.”

- **He delayed.**
- **All became sleepy.**

**“But at midnight there was a shout,
‘Behold, the bridegroom! Come out
to meet him.’”**

**His arrival takes place relatively
suddenly.**

“those who were ready went in with him to the wedding feast; and the door was shut.”

A terrifying and devastating statement.

“Later the other virgins also came, saying, ‘Lord, lord, open up for us.’ But he answered, ‘Truly I say to you, I do not know you.’”

- We can all think we are safe as Christians and actually be deceived.**
- Being a Christian is not a one time experience, but an ongoing life of repentance.**

The five foolish girls finally arrive “after” and beg permission to enter.

But the bridegroom refuses to let them in.

It is impossible to hear the parable without any pre-existing theological bias' and not understand that the five foolish virgins don't make it, they do not inherit eternal life.

Notice:

- **The danger is not that you are not a Christian.**
- **The danger is not having abided in the vine to the degree that when the end times come, they are not ready and fall away.**

“Be on the alert then, for you do not know the day nor the hour.”

All of us are to be mindful of our own life and faith, ready to be tested and judged.

“Keep watch” means be prepared and not necessarily stay awake.

The warning of this parable cautions us to always remember the cost of perseverance in ongoing discipleship.

Another critical lesson:

- **Spiritual preparedness can only be encouraged.**
- **It cannot be transferred from one individual to another.**
- **All people are responsible for themselves.**

In Conclusion:

- **Like the bridegroom in the parable, Jesus will delay his coming longer than people expect.**
- **Like the wise bridesmaids, his followers must be prepared for such a delay—discipleship may be more arduous than we think.**
- **Like the foolish bridesmaids, those who do not prepare adequately will likely discover a point beyond which there is no return—when the end comes it will be too late to undo the damage of neglect.**







