

# How Can We Be Wise Virgins?

Rick Railston

Recorded on July 23, 2022

Given what's happening in the world today, it seems like every day, every week, the world is changing very quickly. There is some new crisis or some new development or problem, both in this nation, and around the world. Let's start with a scripture that pictures where we would all like to be at some point down the road, depending on God's time frame. Let's go to Revelation 14:1 Let's look at a time that we all yearn for and want to be there for.

**Revelation 14:1** *And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads. (KJV)*

Just put yourself in his situation—imagine this, try to imagine it.

*2) And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps:*

*3) And they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth.*

*4) These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb. (KJV)*

We all want to be among the Firstfruits, we all want to stand beside Jesus Christ on Mount Zion. These verses tell us that the Firstfruits who are standing there in this vision are virgins. With that fact in mind, you would think if Christ gave us a parable about virgins, that would be something we best pay attention to—serious attention to. That's what we're going to do today. First, before we get into that parable, let's look at the context in which the parable occurs. One of the rules of understanding any verse or any section of scripture in the Bible is that we have to look at the context. Let's go to Matthew 24:3. For a little easier reading I will read this out of the NIV.

**Matthew 24:3** *As Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately. "Tell us," they said, "when will this happen [referring to the temple being destroyed in a previous verse], and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?" (NIV)*

Notice what Christ says.

*4) Jesus answered: "Watch out that no one deceives you. (NIV)*

We better take note of that.

*5) For many will come in my name, claiming, 'I am the Messiah, 'and will deceive many. (NIV)*

We have to be prepared for that.

*6) You will hear of wars and rumors of wars, but see to it that you are not alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come.*

*7) Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes in various places.*

*8) All these are the beginning of birth pains. (NIV)*

Of course, we know that all of these are increasing all around the world.

*9) Then you will be handed over to be persecuted and put to death, and you will be hated by all nations because of me. (NIV)*

That is yet to happen but it is something that will happen.

*10) At that time many will turn away from the faith and will betray and hate each other ... (NIV)*

That is happening in the greater churches of God today. Various groups hate other groups or hate individuals within other groups or betray in the sense of saying very evil things about individuals in other groups.

*11) and many false prophets will appear and deceive many people.*

*12) Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold ... (NIV)*

Again, that is happening in front of us this very day.

*13) but the one who stands firm to the end will be saved. (NIV)*

That's important for us to note. Now let's pick it up in verse 24 and this just verse 24 out of the New Living Translation.

*24) For false Messiahs and false prophets will rise up and perform great miraculous signs and wonders so as to deceive, if possible even God's chosen ones. (NLT)*

We had best be prepared for this. Great miracles, great signs that are designed to deceive the elect of Almighty God. Let's go to verse 36 back in the NIV.

36) *“But about that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. (NIV)*

A clear distinction between the Father and the Son and their roles and their titles and their authority.

37) *As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. (NIV)*

What is being referred to here? How is that going to happen?

38) *For in the days before the flood, people were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, up to the day Noah entered the ark;*

39) *and they knew nothing about what would happen until the flood came and took them all away. That is how it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. (NIV)*

So we need to take note of that.

40) *Two men will be in the field; one will be taken ... (NIV)*

It doesn't say one will take off with a bag of money and a credit card and a passport, it says "One will be taken."

40 continued) *.... and the other left.*

41) *Two women will be grinding with a hand mill; one will be taken and the other left. (NIV)*

Verse 42, here's the big warning.

42) *Therefore keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come. (NIV)*

Verse 44, another warning.

44) *So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him. (NIV)*

This is the context leading up to the parable that we are going to discuss today. Verses 43 through 51, Christ talks about a faithful and wise servant. He contrasts that with a wicked servant and what happens to both of them when their master returns. Then, Christ tells us, after that, from verse 45-51, about the very return of our Master. That is what we want to talk about today. Matthew 25:1—Notice what is said.

**Matthew 25:1** *At that time ... (NIV)*

Remember this is all the same context that's referring back to Matthew 24:3, "the end of the age".

*1 continued) ... the kingdom of heaven ... (NIV)*

The next few words are out of the NLT.

*1 continued) ... can be best illustrated by the story of ten virgins. (NLT)*

*1 continued) ... who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. (NIV)*

Obviously, Christ is referring to Himself. Let's understand that all ten are virgins. The Greek word for *virgin* is Strong's #3933, it's the Greek word *parthenos* and it means "a maiden, by implication an unmarried daughter; one who has not been defiled sexually; pure, untouched". So, in this context, all ten did not have any illicit physical or spiritual relations with Satan or this world; they were all virgins. So, the parable is not talking about *converted* versus *unconverted*. The parable is talking about ten who were converted. It is not that the ten virgins never sinned. We know from Romans 3:23 *all have sinned and come short of the glory of God*. But when they sinned, they repented and their sin was wiped clean by the blood of Christ. Not meaning that they were perfect, but they were in a right standing with God Almighty. So up to this point, this very verse, all ten are virgins, all ten are in a right standing with their Father. But now we see there is a distinction between the two groups—the five and five.

*2) And five of them were wise, and five were foolish. (KJV)*

There's the differentiation. The Greek word for *wise* is Strong's #5429 and it's the Greek word *phronimos*, but notice what it means. It means "thoughtful, discerning, discrete". Strong's says, "implying a cautious character". Spiros Zodhiates in his Complete Word Study Dictionary of the New Testament says, "to think, to be prudent, to be sensible". So we see the wise are cautious, they're careful about what they say, what they think, what they actually do. The Greek word for *foolish* in contrast is Strong's #3474, we've talked about that one before, it's the Greek word *moros* where we get the English word moron. It can mean "dull" or "stupid" but it can also mean "heedless", which is probably more applicable to the context. Strong's says it can mean, "morally a blockhead". That is kind of unusual for a serious book, but morally a blockhead. We would say today, "thick headed"—just dense. Spiros Zodhiates says in his Complete Word Study Dictionary of the New Testament says about *moros* "it can mean foolish, morally worthless". But notice what else he says: *It is a more serious reproach than raca—* (remember in Matthew 5:22, Christ was chiding someone who called somebody *raca*)—*which scorns a man by calling him stupid. It's more serious than that. Whereas moros scorns him concerning his heart and character.*

So we see the foolish had a flaw in their heart or in their character. We would say today, instead of "Ready, aim, fire". The foolish would say, "Ready, fire and then aim". They had a degree of foolishness—they didn't think ahead or plan.

Let me quote this verse 2 out of the Amplified Bible—the last part of verse 2 talking about the foolish.

*2) ... five of them were foolish, thoughtless, silly and careless and five were wise, far sighted, practical and sensible. (AMP)*

We get the contrast of what is being meant here by the Greek. Five were wise, thoughtful, sensible and careful not to get themselves into a bad situation and so avoid sin. But five foolish lack the character and they were heedless; they would stumble into sin without thought or foresight. It reminds me of Proverbs 22:3, where Solomon is writing about a prudent man. We could also say the word means *wise*—a wise man.

**Proverbs 22:3** *A prudent man foreseeth the evil [in other words he's cautious and careful], and hideth himself: but the simple [we could say foolish] pass on, and are punished. (KJV)*

We would say today “The foolish go where angels fear to tread.” They just plow on through, heedless, careless, without caution, without foresight, without forethought. In closing out the introduction, what is the difference between the two groups of five? One of the most logical words would be *wisdom*. It seems imperative that we all become “wise virgins” if we want to stand on that day with Jesus Christ, we must become wise virgins. That leads to our title today.

### How Can We Be Wise Virgins?

We'll cover the subject in seven points.

#### **1. The wise virgins take their calling seriously.**

The wise are not frivolous, they are not casual about their calling. Allen talked about that and touched on it in his sermonette. The other five are not serious about their calling. They took their calling lightly. Let's look at an example in the Old Testament in 1 Kings 16, of King Ahab. He was a king of Israel who did not take his kingship seriously; he took it lightly. This is a perfect example of how the unwise virgins looked at their calling, versus the wise.

**1 Kings 16:29** *And in the thirty and eighth year of Asa king of Judah began Ahab the son of Omri to reign over Israel: and Ahab the son of Omri reigned over Israel in Samaria twenty and two years.*

*30) And Ahab the son of Omri did evil in the sight of the LORD above all that were before him.*

*31) And it came to pass, as if it had been a light thing for him to walk in the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, that he took to wife Jezebel the daughter of Ethbaal king of the Zidonians, and went and served Baal, and worshipped him. (KJV)*

The Hebrew word that is translated into the English term *light thing* is one Hebrew word, Strong's #7043 and it means to “causatively to make light” or “figuratively it’s trifling”, it’s trivial, it’s unimportant. To Ahab, it was no big deal

“Who I worship. If it keeps my wife happy, if it keeps her gods happy then I’ll go serve Baal.”

It was a light thing and as we know he went on to commit some horrible sins and died at the hands of the Syrians in his chariot. He bled and the dogs licked his blood as was prophesied. The fact is, he didn’t take his kingship seriously, he took it lightly.

The Apostle Peter affirms to us today in 2 Peter 1:10, that we have to be serious about our calling. Ahab should have taken his kingship seriously, he did not. We, being called by God Almighty, should take our calling seriously. Out of the New Living Translation, Peter says:

**2 Peter 1:10** *So, dear brothers and sisters, work hard to prove that you really are among those God has called and chosen. Do these things, and you will never fall away.* (NLT)

The wise virgins took their calling seriously. As we’re going to see they worked very hard to exercise the Holy Spirit that was in them, to prove to their Father that they were worthy of that calling. That is something that every day all of us must do. We must work hard to prove to our Father that we honor our calling—not that any of us are worthy of anything—and that we take it very seriously.

## **2. The wise virgins used the Holy Spirit continually; they exercised the Holy Spirit continuously.**

Let’s go back to Matthew 25:3 of the parable.

**Matthew 25:3** *They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them: 4) But the wise took oil in their vessels ...* (KJV)

The Greek word for *vessels* just means “a container”.

*4 continued) ... with their lamps.* (KJV)

Let me read from the Expositor’s Bible Commentary, Volume 8, page 513.

*The lamps here are either small oil fed lamps or more plausibly torches whose rags would need periodic dousing with oil to keep them burning. In either case, the prudent would bring along a flask with an additional oil supply.*

The wise virgins had this separate container with additional oil. Clark's Commentary says this, about this same verse.

*The wise took care to make a proper provision beforehand and left nothing to be done at the last minute.*

That's a differentiation between the wise and the foolish. The foolish didn't plan ahead, they just stumbled onward. The wise were thoughtful and careful and planned. We all know oil in this parable symbolizes the Holy Spirit and that is a sermon in itself so we won't take the time to cover that. There's plenty of material in our website that proves that. Let's notice a verse that tells us how the Holy Spirit works inside human beings—inside all of us. Proverbs 1:23 is just one verse but there's a lot in this verse. Solomon is actually quoting Yehovah and Yehovah is issuing a warning that I think we all need to pay attention to.

**Proverbs 1:23** *Turn you at my reproof: behold, I will pour out my spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you. (KJV)*

That will happen if we turn when we are corrected. When we turn when we sin. If we do our part by repenting, by turning from our sin, by changing who we are and not repeating the sin, our Father then responds by giving us more of His Holy Spirit. The more we use, the more we exercise His Spirit, the more He will give us. The wise planned in advance for a long journey and they were ready with their containers when the call came. Today, the wise realize that our journey is not a sprint; our journey is a marathon, because we want to be there at the end. We don't want to rush ahead in the first few yards of the race and be ahead in the middle of the race, we want to be there at the end of the race. We don't want to collapse along the way. The wise remind us that our journey is a marathon. My good friend James Smyda reminds me of that from time to time because my character is such that I tend to go Mach 3 with your hair on fire and then you crash later.

We have to pace ourselves and James understands that—about me anyway. We must consistently be filled with the Holy Spirit and we do that by being directly connected to the source of the Holy Spirit. Which means a close personal relationship with our Father. If we turn away, we are turning away from our Father. If we turn away, we are turning away from the source of the Holy Spirit. If we turn away that Spirit will diminish. We know the scripture that tells us, *Quench not the Spirit*. We do that when we turn away. We must be constantly filled with the Holy Spirit by staying close to our Father and His Son.

That leads us to the third point.

### **3. Matthew 25:5.**

**Matthew 25:5** *While the bridegroom tarried [the NIV says the "bridegroom was a long time in coming] ... (KJV)*

For those of us who came in the church in the '60's or '70's or '80's, none of us would have thought we would be here in 2022. We just never dreamed of that. All the virgins slept. Let's go back now, we went there before to Matthew 24, the previous chapter and pick it up in verse 44. As we know there are no chapter breaks, there are no verses in the original text and this is the parable of the good and evil servant that we skipped over in the introduction, but it is part of the context.

**Matthew 24:44** *Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh. (KJV)*

Verse 48.

*48) But and if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming;  
49) And shall begin to smite his fellowservants, and to eat and drink with the drunken; (KJV)*

In other words, go back to his pre-converted state, to go back into the world.

*50) The lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of,  
51) And shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. (KJV)*

So, looking at verse 5, when the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept. All the modern translations say, instead of "*slumbered and slept*", "*became drowsy and fell asleep*". They are two different Greek words. The Greek word for *slumbered* is Strong's #3573 and it means "to nod". All of us have done that. In fact, we have been in Sabbath services and have nodded; we've all been there. That's not falling asleep—that's on the edge but just nodding off. The Greek word for *slept* is Strong's #2518 and it actually means "to lie down to rest", by implication "to fall asleep". So, we see that they were all either nodding off or they were sound asleep. Toward the end, all ten virgins were at times either nodding off or they were sound asleep. Of course, we know that that is a trademark of the Laodicean era of being spiritually asleep. All of us, if we are honest with ourselves, have been there, done that. We have at times been asleep spiritually. We've gotten off the path—we have just gone to sleep. We don't want to go back there. It's a scary time when you're off the path and asleep and sometimes you don't realize you are asleep. But our Father, in His mercy always gives us warning, gives us a wakeup call, notice verse 6 of Matthew 25.

**Matthew 25:6** *And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him.  
7) Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps. (KJV)*

So, a wakeup call was issued and it caused all the virgins to be wide awake now. In these end times, what could be that wakeup call? Of course, we don't know but could it



be some worldwide crisis that gets our attention and makes us think, this is serious stuff now. Or could it be a crisis within God's church—something bad happens; some division or some problem or something we can't even think about. Could it be persecution against the church of God? Would that get our attention? Could this trial—whatever it is, this awakening—cause the wise to examine themselves? Maybe possibly see something in ourselves that we never noticed before—a wakeup call? Maybe not putting our Father first in our lives? Not loving our neighbor as much as we love ourselves? Allowing pride or selfishness to creep into our character?

The problem is, if you're like me, most of us only learn through pain. God can suggest but sometimes we just plow on through the suggestion and then we get—as my dad says—hit upside the head really hard—that will get your attention. Could whatever this wakeup call is be some kind of pain to get our attention? But at this juncture, we see for sure, all awoke and all had some amount of oil. They hadn't run out of oil, they had some amount of oil in varying degrees as we're going to see. They had oil in their lamps and their lamps were burning at this point. And all responded to the wakeup call; all were awake to some degree and now they all know that time is short. The call goes out at midnight, time is short. But there was a problem with half of them. That leads us to the fourth point.

#### **4. The foolish virgins will be unprepared for this call, whatever it is.**

The foolish virgins will be unprepared. Verse 8 of Matthew 25.

*8) And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out. (KJV)*,

But the New King James, the RSV, the New American Standard Bible, the NIV, translate it as, *“are going out”*. I think that is a more accurate translation. The flame hadn't gone out yet, but the oil supply is getting low, the flame is getting dim. All of a sudden, after this call goes out, they wake up and see “my flame is just itty bitty, it's not a full flame, I'm in trouble”. The foolish now realize that they are missing something. They finally realize that they are in spiritual trouble. They are not as close to the Father as they should be, and they do not have enough of His Spirit and they are now concerned about that. Remember, what was the purpose of the lamp in this context or back in those days without electricity? You wouldn't light a lamp unless it was dark out. The point is, a lamp lights the path that people walk along. So, the foolish finally realized that they didn't have what it took to identify the path, to see the path ahead of them and to stay on that path. Because the flame is getting smaller and smaller and it's illuminating less and less around them and so now, they are worried, “I could get lost, I don't know where I am”. Could they be confused as to which direction to go? Look at Matthew 24:24, we read this earlier in the introduction out of the NIV.

*False messiahs and false prophets will deceive many, if possible, even God's chosen ones.*

Could they start to be confused because the oil in their lamp is now diminished and the Holy Spirit is diminished, and they are now getting confused. Remember the miracles that are prophesied and that will be performed.

The foolish didn't have a reservoir of the Holy Spirit. Let me read from Clark's Commentary about this verse.

*When the oil that was in their lamps burned out, they had none to pour into the lamp to maintain the flame.*

Or they had nothing to pour onto the rags of the torch to maintain the flame; it was starting to go completely out.

*The foolish reacted at the last minute [they didn't have forethought] with no planning.*

What has happened is, over time—prior to this moment—the foolish had not been putting in the time and the effort to grow closer to God Almighty and His Son. They hadn't been putting in the time and the effort to become more like Them, growing in the Holy Spirit. They had not done that. So the foolish did not have a reserve of the Holy Spirit to carry them through. The foolish had been coasting, as we would say today, or treading water spiritually. Verse 9.

*9) But the wise answered, saying, Not so; lest there be not enough for us and you: but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves. (KJV)*

We see that the foolish had to turn aside and get off the path to try and go someplace and find a supply of oil and pay whatever the going price was. We understand that you can't buy the Holy Spirit but this is part of the analogy—part of the parable. Today, too many are turning aside. It's a sad fact—too many are turning aside. Let's go to some advice Paul gave Timothy in 1 Timothy 4:1. As we know, Timothy was a young elder and Paul had ordained him. He was much younger than many of the people who he had to pastor and that created a set of problems so Paul was always advising Timothy to help him.

**1 Timothy 4:1** *Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith [what's giving them to depart from the faith?], giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; (KJV)*

Could this possibly be in response to these miracles that these false prophets, false teachers, are performing with Satan backing them up? Let's go to 2 Timothy for some more advice, chapter 4:3. This is out of the NIV.

**2 Timothy 4:3** *For the time will come when people will not put up with sound doctrine.* (NIV)

They just won't put up with it. Something new, something titillating, something exciting, I've never heard this before, and they will not put up with sound doctrine.

*3 continued) ... Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear.* (NIV)

I can't tell you the number of people who have walked away from the church because they had a preconceived notion of what a doctrine should be. Or what they feel God should say or God's view of the matter—Allen again touched on that in his sermonette—so they shop around until they find somebody who says what they want to hear and they are all over it.

*4) They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths.* (NIV)

In the King James the words “*turn away*” are together and those two English words are translated from one Greek word, Strong's #654. That Greek word means “to turn away or turn back”. In other words, you're walking on a path of conversion that leads us to the Kingdom, to God Almighty and His Son Jesus Christ. But some people “turn back and go backward”, back into the world as we read earlier. It also means “to pervert or to turn away from”. So when the call came for the foolish, it was too late to do what was necessary. It was too late to put in the time to study and pray and fast and get close to the Father and the Son. You can't do that in a short period of time. That relationship with God Almighty has to be built over months and years and decades. It has to be carefully built over time. At the last minute, you can't just jump in and make up for lost years of prayer and study and meditation and thought about God Almighty. All of that takes time.

The wise plan for all of that, years before. “I better get close to God and stay close to God Almighty. I had better understand what the Bible says”. They were preparing in advance for the day that we are reading about right now. We know that we cannot buy our way into the Kingdom. We cannot borrow our way into the Kingdom at the last minute. We cannot ride on the coattails of others. Whether it's a self-proclaimed apostle or prophet or somebody who says that they have a special relationship with God Almighty. We cannot ride on any human being's coattails. We cannot get into the Kingdom of God because we are members of this particular group—this exclusive group. Or we sit in this particular seat, in this particular hall on this particular Sabbath, every Sabbath. But people have believed that over the years. Or we cannot buy or borrow our way into the Kingdom by having a stash of money somewhere. I know people who have a stash of money and when the call comes and we jump on a 747, “I have my stash of money and I'm going to be just fine.” That will not make a difference; what makes a difference is being filled with the Holy Spirit of God Almighty. The issue for us today is the following; let's go to Romans 8:14 because Paul, in this one verse, gives us a fundamental fact that we dare not ever forget.

**Romans 8:14** *For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.* (KJV)

This doesn't say that as many that *have* the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God—it doesn't say that. It says those *who are led* by the Spirit of God are the sons of God. As we know, our Father's Spirit is not like Satan's provocations where people are kicked, shoved, pushed, prodded and provoked—that's how Satan works. Our Father works far more subtly than that. He whispers gently in our ear or our mind's ear, the way we should go. We have to be tuned to that to be led by the Spirit, led by Christ's example when He walked on this earth. We have to look into scripture and see what He did, what He said, how He thought and we need to follow suit. Our conscience, which is God's Spirit talking to us, speaks to us very gently. "Maybe you should do this" or "maybe you should act on that." Let's go to 2 Timothy 1:6 for some advice which the foolish virgins dearly needed, but did not heed. Paul is giving advice to this young minister and giving us advice today.

**2 Timothy 1:6** *Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up ...* (KJV)

The NIV translates that as, "*fan into flame*". A little ember, you fan it into a flame.

*6 continued) ... the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands.* (KJV)

So even Timothy needed to be jacked up and Paul said

*"Look, you need to start fanning the flame. You need to start stirring up, exercising, using the Holy Spirit if you're going to make it. If you're going to survive. If you're going to do your job as an elder, if you're going to lead these people, this is what you have to do. Right here, right now!"*

Given what has happened in the last couple of years and what seems to be happening week by week and day by day, all of us know that the Father and Son are coming a lot sooner than we thought they were ten years ago or five years ago. I'm not saying they are coming in the next year or the year after that—a lot of "stuff" has to happen—but it can happen very fast. We know the world has changed dramatically in the last two years. We know how fast our country is falling apart.

On the radio coming down, I think it was in Iowa, there was a family of three—a mom, dad and child—in a tent and somebody walked up and shot them all. Then they found the body of the killer because he walked down a little way and shot himself. No rhyme, no reason, just did it. They were out camping. We see how fast this country is falling apart politically, falling apart as far as our morals go, and the fact is that common sense is nowhere to be found. The things that politicians come up with and educators come up with just blow your mind if you have any basic knowledge of God's Word. The U.S. is falling fast. The world is falling fast. The wise see the end coming and they begin to

prepare themselves. Not begin—they are preparing themselves, by drawing near to their Father. By becoming more like His Son and the example His Son set while He was on this earth. They are preparing for the midnight call. They don't know when it's going to come—midnight, one o'clock, two o'clock, three o'clock—we don't know what day but they are preparing for that time to come.

That leads to the next point.

## **5. The wise virgins will be ready.**

Let's go back to Matthew 24, remember we read this in context leading up to this parable in Matthew 25. Let's just read verse 44 again because Christ was leading up to this parable of the ten virgins. Notice what He said in Matthew 24:44.

**Matthew 24:44** *Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh. (KJV)*

Now let's go to Matthew 25:10 because the theme is the same, the message is the same.

**Matthew 25:10** *And while they [referring to the foolish] went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut. (KJV)*

The Greek word for *ready* means "prepared". It just means "to be prepared"; they were prepared. They had been prepared.

*11) Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us.  
12) But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not. (KJV)*

That's a scary thought. Remember they had the Holy Spirit, they had oil, but now down the road from when they were baptized, when they had hands laid on, when they received the initial amount of Holy Spirit, at some point down that road, Christ said I don't know you. You don't look like Me, you don't look like My Father. Why? Because the foolish chose not to prepare. Remember the definition of *foolish*? Silly—they were frivolous, with a lack of preparation. "Hey, life's good, I'm having too much fun. I love my NFL, I love my toys, I love going out to dinner, I love all this kind of stuff. I'll fit Bible study in once or twice a week and I'll pray every other day or two or three." Not prepared, not ready, not seeing the signs of the times.

All the time, the foolish were running out of the Holy Spirit and they didn't know it. It was getting smaller and smaller and smaller. Let's go to Romans 8:9 and see where Paul provides another fundamental fact that we need to pay really close attention to.

**Romans 8:9** *But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.* (KJV)

Christ just told the foolish, “*I don’t know you.*” So does that not tell us that Christ couldn’t see any of His Spirit in them worth noting? “I don’t know who you are because you’re certainly not acting like I acted when I was on this earth.” The scriptures are here for the foolish to read. Same as a decade ago, the same now. They will be the same in the years to come; those scriptures are there for the foolish to read and those scriptures warned them, but the foolish did not heed them.

Here is the key; let’s go to Revelation 19:7. This is the key for us because it tells us what we need to be doing—preparing for the marriage of the Lamb.

**Revelation 19:7** *Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready.* (KJV)

It doesn’t say the wife *was* made ready by some outside force; it says the wife *made* herself ready. It takes daily effort to pray and to study and to fast and just to meditate and think on God’s way of life, to think about that way of life contrasted with the world that we live in. It takes daily effort to discipline the mind to control what comes into our mind and what we allow to stay in our mind. If Satan puts a thought in, do we ruminate on it and enjoy it or do we get rid of it immediately. Discipline of the mind takes daily effort. Discipline of the mouth, to control what comes out of our mouth. Discipline of our actions to control what we do. The bride has already put in the effort to make herself ready for this event in Revelation 19. The wise had already overcome Satan and had already overcome their human nature. Let’s notice Revelation 3:12. This is Christ’s letter to the Philadelphia church but this gets down to the nitty gritty and it gets down to our reward if we do what is required and we follow the example of the wise virgins.

**Revelation 3:12** *Him that overcomes will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name.* (KJV)

The preface is and the premise is—to *him that overcomes*. The Greek word for *overcomes* is Strong’s #3528 and it literally means “to subdue”. It can be literal or figurative. It means “to conquer, prevail, get the victory”. So, we see that if we want to be in our Father’s Kingdom, we want to be a pillar in the temple of our Father, we have to overcome. We have to conquer our human nature. We have to subdue Satan and his efforts at trying to pervert us.

The wise had been taking time to transform themselves through the power of the Holy Spirit to the image of Christ. That’s the job we have. The last scripture in this fifth point, is Ephesians 4:13. This has been mentioned many, many times. We can’t forget this.

**Ephesians 4:13** *Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, [this is what we shoot for] unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: (KJV)*

The wise are becoming more Christ like every single day.

Point six.

## **6. The wise virgins will be watching.**

Look at Matthew 25:13. Obviously Christ is talking to His disciples, but He's also talking to us today.

**Matthew 25:13** *Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh. (KJV)*

It's a repeat of Matthew 24:42 which we read in the introduction. The Greek word for *watch* is Strong's #1127 and it means "to keep awake". Remember they all went to sleep. It can mean literally or figuratively, "to watch, to keep awake". Remember they all fell asleep before. We're told to watch, but the question becomes, what are we watching for? In the past, in the '60's, '70's and '80's we were told to watch for world events to unfold. Watch what happens in Jerusalem. Watch what happens in prophecy, for when it's time to flee. Watch for all of those signs when it's time to go. We have to ask the question, could we have missed something big back in those days? Something that got us a little bit off the track. Could it be that we have been watching for the wrong things? It ties in with *being ready*, which was the fifth point—Matthew 25:10. Remember what Christ said in Matthew 24, "*as in the days of Noah, so will it be when I come*". *Eating, drinking, marrying, giving in marriage, right up until the time Noah went into the Ark.* This tells us that life is going to be relatively normal right up until the end. I say relatively normal because normal is changing very fast. Talk about the new normal, it seems like a new normal every few weeks or few months. Whatever is normal for us at that time, as it gets closer to the very end, it says it's going to stay that way. There's not going to be any warning. If life is relatively normal, then what on earth are we supposed to watch for? Normal means the same yesterday, today and tomorrow. So, if we're supposed to watch and it's normal, what are we supposed to watch for? Maybe we should be watching for something else other than what we were told in the past. Let's go to Luke 17:20 and see a confirmation of that notion. I'm going to read this out of the NIV.

**Luke 17:20** *Once, on being asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come ... (NIV)*

This is pertinent to what we're talking about today; Christ was asked by the Pharisees when the Kingdom of God would come, notice His reply in the middle of the verse.

20 continued) ... Jesus replied, "The coming of the kingdom of God is not something that can be observed, (NIV)

Oh really? The Greek word for *observation* means "inspection with the eye". Zodhiates says, "watching as can be observed by the eye". So, this verse says the Kingdom doesn't come by what you're going to be able to see with your eyes. What we're told is you can't see in advance, the coming of the Kingdom. This is because the events are going to be "normal" right up to the end, then the midnight call will surprise us as it did the ten virgins and that leads to the last point.

## 7. What should the wise virgins be watching for?

If it's not something we can see readily with the eye and say, if this happens then tomorrow, Christ is coming—the Father is coming. That's not the way it's going to work. One scripture tells us we need to watch—Christ said that—but another scripture says the Kingdom doesn't come by observation, by watching with the eyes. Like watching world events unfold or what is happening in Jerusalem. So how do we sort out this apparent contradiction. The Bible gives us the answer; very plainly, very clearly. The rest of the chapter—Matthew 25—tells us what to watch for. Look what comes next in the context. Christ says watch—what's next? Matthew 25, the parable of the talents, begin in verse 14 and end in verse 30. They are covering bearing fruit as a Christian, growing what you've been given and after that the parable of the sheep and the goats starts in verse 31 and goes to the end. That shows the end result of our works—what we do. Both talk about—the rest of the chapter—our fruit as Christians. Could it be when Christ is saying watch, He's saying watch your conduct, watch your fruit, watch your thoughts, watch your words, watch the results of what you're doing—is it good or is it evil? Is it Christlike or is it like Satan?

We won't turn there but we read this in 2 Corinthians 3:15, right before Passover, *examine yourselves whether you be in the faith*. Either Jesus is in you, Paul said, or you are reprobates. We do that before Passover. The Greek word for *examine yourselves* means "to test" "to put yourself to the test or scrutinize" or the word we don't use often to "assay". 150 years ago, if you were a gold miner you knew what an assay office was, because you would take what you thought was gold and have them look at it and see if it was legitimate or not. Christ is saying here, *examine yourself, assay yourself*. Are you really producing gold or are you producing fake gold—fools' gold? We need to see by examining ourselves if we are living the way Christ lived. When Christ says watch, I personally believe that He is saying watch yourself; watch your mind, watch your thoughts, watch your conduct, watch your words. Look at yourself; are you becoming like Me or are you becoming like the adversary. Let's go to 1 Corinthians 6:9. Paul is writing to this church that had all kinds of problems and he is trying to set them on the straight and narrow track. He's laying it out for them very, very clearly. I wish people who claim to be religious and then support some of the causes they support, would read these verses.



**1 Corinthians 6:9** *Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? [There's a fact.] Be not deceived: (KJV)*

I'm going to read the rest of the verse out of the New Living Translation.

*9 continued) ... Those who indulge in sexual sin, or who worship idols, or commit adultery, or are male prostitutes, or practice homosexuality ... (NLT)*

Verse 10 back to the King James.

*10) Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. (KJV)*

It is very plain, it is very clear that if we have that kind of conduct and want to take the first step into the Kingdom of God, it's not going to happen. We're not going to be there if we indulge in this kind of behavior.

*11) And such were some of you: (KJV)*

Some of those people in Corinth were identified to appear in previous verses; they used to do that, they used to be like that.

*11 continued) ... but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God [the Father]. (KJV)*

So, when Christ says to “watch”, we need to understand what He really means. I believe it is that we have to watch and measure ourselves and the standard—the bar—that we measure by is Jesus Christ and His life on this earth. We just read it at the end of point five—Ephesians 4:13. The measure, the stature, the fullness of Jesus Christ. The question as we close out this last point is, are we making ourselves ready in that way? Are we becoming more and more like Jesus Christ and His Father every day? Are we doing that? Because we have to put in the time now because the end is coming unexpectedly. It will not be with observation of the eyes; we are told that very plainly.

Let's close now. When you read the whole parable, as we say in the business world, what's the bottom line? Do you have a profit or a loss? The bottom line is that not all who start off as virgins will inherit the Kingdom of God. Not everybody is going to make it. Those who have been baptized and received the Holy Spirit by the laying on of hands as all ten had been, five of them did not make it. All ten were virgins but only five were ready to be with Christ, only half were allowed to be with Christ. I remember Mr. Armstrong saying—I heard him say it in the big buildings that we used to have, in the big tents we used to have where you had 5000 to 12000 people in those tents—I heard him say the same thing in ministerial conferences, looking out at all the ministers there. He said, “I don't think half of you are converted”. You look at the numbers and he is pretty much right on. Therefore, we ought to learn the lessons from the parable of the ten virgins. The wise take their calling seriously and the wise virgins constantly exercise

the Holy Spirit. We better be careful not to sleep—but all the virgins did. We have to be careful about that. We have to realize the foolish virgins were unprepared whereas the wise virgins were ready and they were watching—they were watching themselves and measuring themselves against Jesus Christ.

Let's close with a most appropriate scripture. Let's go to Matthew 18:1; the disciples came and of course they were carnal at that time and wanting to know what you had to do to be the greatest in the Kingdom of God. They wanted it for themselves, they wanted the glory for themselves.

**Matthew 18:1** *At the same time came the disciples unto Jesus, saying, Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?  
2) And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them,  
3) And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted ... (KJV)*

That is a concept we understand within the church of God. But I just stop and make mention that we've had new people coming into the church or inquire about the church who don't have a Worldwide background and do not understand the concept of conversion. It's foreign to them; they don't understand it—what it means to change from the old person to the new person. That is totally foreign to them. So, He says, except you be converted and changed from the old to the new, from the world, to My Son Jesus Christ That's what it means to be converted.

*3 continued) ... and become [the word "become" implies a process—it takes time] as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. (KJV)*

The Greek word for *converted* is Strong's #4762 and it just means "to turn around" or "to reverse course". When we're converted, we do exactly that; from the old man to the new man and the new man is in the image of Jesus Christ.

*4) Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven. (KJV)*

We have to think about that. If we watch ourselves, if we humble ourselves, allowing the Holy Spirit to light our path, seeking our Father's will all the time then we will all become wise virgins.