



Lesson 9

Chapter 25: Be Ready for Jesus' Return

Chapter 25 tells us about the judgement at the return of Jesus. It contains two parables and a picture of what will happen when he comes. The whole chapter gives us a clear warning that we must be ready and waiting for Jesus to come back and shows us how we can prepare to meet him.

The Bible teaches us that when the Lord comes, everybody who has heard the Gospel message and understood it will have to account for the way they have lived and behaved. Those who have died will be resurrected and taken to be with those who are still alive – they will be together at the Judgement Seat when Christ returns. Faithful disciples will be given the reward of immortal life in the Kingdom of God. Unfaithful people will be sent away by the Lord; they will die and remain in the grave forever.

The Parable of the Wise and Foolish Maidens (25:1-13)

The ten virgins, or maidens, represent Christian believers. They all took lamps with them but only five had spare oil for light. Psalm 119:105 says: *"Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path"*. Oil represents the Word of God which helps us prepare for the coming of the Lord Jesus. Reading it and acting on what we read is essential in our lives.

All the maidens fell asleep while waiting for the bridegroom. This represents the death of disciples before Jesus returns.

When the bridegroom came, all the maidens woke up but only the wise ones had oil for their lamps. The foolish ones tried to get oil but had no time to do this before the call came to go to the wedding. The wise ones went in and the door was shut leaving the foolish outside.

It is very important for us to learn the lesson of the maidens from this parable. Now is the time to put our lives right with the Lord, when Jesus returns it will be too late.

The Wise Maidens Represent people who have made a commitment to be disciples of the Lord Jesus. They live their lives following his example as he commanded. Their faith lasts to the very end of their lives so that when Jesus returns and they are resurrected from the dead, they are ready answer the call and they go immediately to meet him. Because of this, they are invited into his kingdom.

The Foolish Maidens Represent people who made a commitment to be disciples of the Lord Jesus. However they do not follow his example in their lives. When they are resurrected from the dead they realise that they are not ready to answer the call to go to be with the Lord. Later they try to go but find it is too late and they are rejected and not allowed into the kingdom.

Notice that the maidens only had **one** opportunity to respond to the call to go to be with the bridegroom. This tells us of the urgency of our response to the Gospel now for we never know when our lives may end.

We must all use God's Word to help us grow spiritually now; otherwise the Lord may say to us that he never knew us. This is the same judgement as in Matthew 7:21-23, which was given to people who thought they were serving the Lord Jesus by their deeds.

The Parable of the Talents (25:14-30)

A talent was a very large sum of money. This parable teaches us that the blessings we have been given – our different abilities, opportunities and above all, the blessing of the Gospel – are to be used to serve God. Two of the servants in the parable understood this and they set to work. Both doubled the number of talents they were given. Although the third did not have as much ability as the others, he hid the one talent that he did have – he let it remain idle. He made excuses for his laziness and was severely punished. We are not equal in ability, but should make full use of what we have in service to our Master.





Lord, Lord!

Three times the Gospels tell us of people rejected by Jesus but who protest to him calling him 'Lord, Lord.

"On that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?'

And then will I declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.'

(Matthew 7:21-23)

"Afterward the other virgins came also, saying, 'Lord, lord, open to us.

But he answered, 'Truly, I say to you, I do not know you.'

(Matthew 25:11-12)

"Why do you call me 'Lord, Lord,' and not do what I tell you?" (Luke 6:46)

Those who do not build their lives on the foundation of Jesus Christ will be totally rejected by him at his return. To some this will come as an awful shock. They will protest that the things they have done should save them saying '*Lord, Lord!*' but Jesus will tell them that he never knew them!

Separating the Sheep from the Goats (25:31- 46)

Verse 31 refers to the return of the Lord Jesus to the earth in great glory. Jews and Gentiles will be brought to judgement before him. In this section we are shown that we should help others who are in need, especially those who are brothers or sisters of the Lord Jesus. It is a privilege to help them because the Lord Jesus considers that we have helped him by what we have done to others.

