

Matthew 25:1

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom.

Analysis

The parable's opening 'Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom' uses a wedding metaphor for Christ's return. The ten virgins represent those professing faith awaiting Christ (bridegroom). All had lamps (external profession) but only five had oil (genuine faith/Spirit). The delayed bridegroom tests perseverance. This parable warns that external religious participation doesn't guarantee salvation—genuine preparation is essential.

Historical Context

Ancient Jewish weddings involved the groom coming to claim his bride, with a procession to the wedding feast. Attendants with lamps joined the celebration. The parable assumes this cultural context. The kingdom's consummation is portrayed as a wedding feast—imagery used throughout Scripture (Revelation 19:7-9).

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Study Questions

1. What does this parable teach about the difference between external profession and genuine faith?
2. Are you living as a wise virgin with oil, or foolish virgin with only a lamp?

Interlinear Text

Τότε ὄμοιωθήσεται ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν δέκα
Then be likened shall the kingdom of heaven unto ten
G5119 G3666 G3588 G932 G3588 G3772 G1176

παρθένοις αἵτινες λαβοῦσαι τὰς λαμπάδας ἀντῶν
virgins which took lamps and went forth to meet the bridegroom
G3933 G3748 G2983 G1519 G529 G3588 G3566 G1831 G846 G2985

ἐξῆλθον εἰς ἀπάντησιν τοῦ νυμφίου
and went forth to meet the bridegroom
G1519 G529 G3588 G3566

Additional Cross-References

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

Revelation 21:9 (Parallel theme): And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife.

Revelation 21:2 (Parallel theme): And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

Matthew 13:24 (Kingdom): Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field:

Revelation 14:4 (Parallel theme): 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.

Isaiah 54:5 (Parallel theme): For thy Maker is thine husband; the LORD of hosts is his name; and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel; The God of the whole earth shall he be called.

John 3:29 (Parallel theme): He that hath the bride is the bridegroom: but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice: this my joy therefore is fulfilled.

Matthew 22:2 (Kingdom): The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his son,

Titus 2:13 (Kingdom): Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ;

Matthew 3:2 (Kingdom): And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

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