

Matthew 25:2

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And five of them were wise, and five were foolish.

Analysis

And five of them were wise, and five were foolish (πέντε ἦσαν φρόνιμοι καὶ πέντε μωραί, *pente ēsan phronimoi kai pente mōrai*). The Greek *phronimos* ('wise') denotes prudent foresight, practical wisdom, not mere intelligence. *Mōros* ('foolish') is the root of 'moron'—denoting moral and spiritual dullness, not intellectual deficiency (cf. Matthew 7:24-27 where the same terms distinguish the wise and foolish builders).

The equal division (five/five) is striking: not all professors of faith are genuine believers. External religious activity (carrying lamps, awaiting the bridegroom) cannot distinguish true from false. The difference becomes apparent only when crisis reveals preparation. This parable warns against presumptive assurance—outward participation in the visible church does not guarantee entrance to the wedding feast.

Historical Context

Part of the Olivet Discourse (Matthew 24-25), spoken Tuesday of Passion Week (AD 33), two days before Jesus's crucifixion. Jesus taught this on the Mount of Olives in response to disciples' questions about the Second Coming. The parable addresses readiness for Christ's return—a central concern of the early church.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. What distinguishes your faith from mere religious participation—are you 'wise' or 'foolish' in Jesus's terms?
2. How does the 50/50 split challenge assumptions that most churchgoers are genuine believers?
3. Where in your life might you be relying on external Christian activity without the internal reality that sustains in crisis?

Interlinear Text

πέντε	δὲ	ἦσαν	ἐξ	αὐτῶν	φρόνιμοι	καὶ	αἱ	πέντε
five	And	were	of	them	wise	and	G3588	five
G4002	G1161	G2258	G1537	G846	G5429	G2532		G4002
μωραὶ								
were foolish								
G3474								

Additional Cross-References

Jeremiah 24:2 (Parallel theme): One basket had very good figs, even like the figs that are first ripe: and the other basket had very naughty figs, which could not be eaten, they were so bad.

Jude 1:5 (Parallel theme): I will therefore put you in remembrance, though ye once knew this, how that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed them that believed not.