

## Teaching Outline

### Lesson 9: “Wise or Foolish?”

Matthew 25:1-13

#### I. The Kingdom of Heaven and YOU

- A. If we make Jesus our King, our lives on earth become the preparation for an eternity with Christ.
- B. Oil (the Holy Spirit’s Presence) is the evidence of a genuine relationship with the King. No oil – No relationship.

#### II. The Two Aspects of Jesus’ Return and Their Differences

##### A. The Rapture: 1 Thessalonians 4: 16

- 1. A “stealth” event witnessed by believers only (1Thess. 4: 17)
- 2. Christ comes for His Bride and takes her to heaven (John 14: 1 – 3)
- 3. Takes place before the beginning of the Tribulation (Rev. 3: 10; 1 Thess. 5:9)
- 3. Time of great distress upon the earth (Matt. 24: 15-28)
- 4. Believers rescued from God’s wrath (Rev. 3:10)
- 5. Church Age believers receive glorified bodies (1 Cor. 15:50 -54)
- 6. Christ comes in the air (1 Thess. 4:14 – 17)
- 7. This event is imminent and can happen at any time (Titus 2: 13)
- 8. No signs precede it (Titus 2:13)
- 9. Time of great joy for believers (1 Thess. 2:19-20)

##### B. The Second Coming: Revelation 19: 11 – 16

- 1. A Public event witnessed by all (Rev. 1:7)
- 2. Christ returns with His Bride to set up His 1000 year reign (Rev. 19:11-16)
- 3. Occurs at end of Tribulation (Matt. 24:29-35)
- 4. Ushers in a time of great peace on earth (Isaiah 2:6; 19:21; 23:25)
- 5. Believers rule with Christ (Rev. 20:4)
- 6. Old Testament saints receive their glorified bodies (Isaiah 26:19-21)
- 7. Christ returns to the Earth (Second Coming) (Rev. 19:11-16)
- 8. At least 7 years away from the present time (Daniel 9:26-29)
- 9. Many signs precede it – including the 7 year Tribulation (Matt. 24:4-28)
- 10. A time of great sorrow for unbelievers (Rev. 1:7)
- 11.

#### III. An Ancient Galilean Wedding: The Parable of the Wise and Foolish Virgins

##### A. The Proposal and Betrothal

- 1. The Acceptance or Rejection
- 2. The Dowry
- 3. The Cup of Wine
- 4. The Decision
- 5. The Groom’s Acceptance of the Cup
- 6. The Covenant of Betrothal Sealed

**B. The Preparation of One Year**

1. The Groom's Preparation
2. The Bride's Preparation

**C. The Wedding Celebration**

**D. Three Principles:**

1. Not knowing when Christ will return, we must live in a state of readiness.
2. Having an adequate supply of oil is vital to our readiness.
3. There is a time when the door of opportunity to enter the Kingdom will be shut.

**GOD'S PURPOSE IN THIS PRESENT AGE IS TO PROVIDE AN ETERNAL  
COMPANION FOR HIS SON.**

**Lesson #9**  
**Series 3 – Story 10**

**“Wise or Foolish?”**  
Matthew 25:1-13

**THE WISE PROVE THEIR READINESS BY BEING WATCHFUL OF  
CHRIST’S RETURN THROUGH OBEDIENCE TO THE WORD AND THE  
INDWELLING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.**

**Story Outline:**

- I. Watching for the Bridegroom
- II. Watching Wisely
- III. Watching Foolishly

**Life Application Principles:**

- 1. The return of the Lord Jesus Christ will be sudden and unexpected; therefore we must be ready and watchful.
- 2. Watching is a matter of understanding and obeying the Word of God.
- 3. Do not delay or put off learning the word of God and living out its truths.
- 4. Be prepared for patient obedience.
- 5. Wise people plan and prepare in advance for the Lord’s return.
- 6. Being ready to face Christ requires a lifetime of preparation.
- 7. One’s preparation cannot be transferred or shared with another.
- 8. Our deep commitment to the person of Jesus Christ and the indwelling power of the Holy Spirit will enable us to hold steady during the hour of crisis.
- 9. The foolish have only superficial knowledge of truth which is never enough for the crises of life.
- 10. Commitment only to a certain truth rather than a genuine commitment to the Person of Christ will eventually result in falling away.
- 11. Truth must move from the head to the heart.
- 12. The door of heaven is shut to the one who has no reserve of oil (the Holy Spirit).

## NAME OF JESUS

### Devotional Reading

#### “JESUS OUR BRIDEGROOM”

One of the happiest and most memorable days of my life was the day I got married. After months of planning and preparation, going over checklists and making sure every detail was in order, the long-awaited day arrived with much anticipation and excitement. As I awoke that day, I remember thinking that my life was about to be forever changed. I would no longer be just a daughter, sister or friend, but I would also be a wife, joined in holy matrimony to the man I deeply loved. On that day, by the end of the sacred ceremony, I would not only have a new name, but also a new identity. My husband’s last name would become mine and I would become a member of his family from that moment forth. As I slipped into my white bridal gown that afternoon and headed to the church, my heart overflowed with joy knowing that my groom was waiting there by the altar to receive me. After we exchanged our vows before God, he slipped a gold ring on my finger and promised before God and man to take care of me, to lead me, to cherish me and to love me all the days of our lives. In turn, I slipped a gold ring on his finger and I promised to love, honor and obey him as long as we both lived. Then with a final blessing and a sealing kiss we walked out that day united as husband and wife. Two became one flesh. *“Therefore, a man should leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife and the two shall become one flesh.” (Ephesians 5:31)*

In his letter to the Ephesians, Paul unveils a “profound mystery” hidden in the covenant of Christian marriage and how it is a mirror image of the union between Jesus Christ, the **BRIDEGROOM** and the church, His Bride:

*“Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is head of the church, His body, and is Himself her Savior. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands. Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her, that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, so that He might present the church to Himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife, loves himself. For no one ever hated his flesh, but nourishes it and cherishes it just as Christ does the church because we are members of His body. This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church.” (Ephesians 5:22-30, 32)*

From this passage it is easy to see that in God’s eyes marriage is not simply about two people who fall in love and “tie the knot.” To Him it is a very sacred and personal union because it is a

picture of His love for us and within its covenant there is much to learn about WHO Jesus is and why He came to earth. Not only is He the Creator of all things, the Sustainer of life, the Holy One, Messiah, Savior, and Lover of our souls, He is also the **BRIDEGROOM** God of Israel who deeply loves and passionately pursues His people. He is the faithful One who couldn't let His people go, no matter how faithless they were. He is the merciful Groom who left the sacred altar in heaven in order to redeem, forgive and sanctify His sinful bride and unite her to Himself in an everlasting covenant of love.

If you look at the characteristics and qualities of a believer's marriage you will see how it closely mirrors the relationship between Jesus, the **BRIDEGROOM** and the church, His Bride. Just as there is passionate love and special intimacy between a husband and wife, so there is also passionate love and special intimacy between Christ and His church. Just as when a woman leaves behind her old life, her old identity, takes the name of her husband and becomes a part of his family when she gets married, so too the believer leaves behind his old life, his old identity and is given a new life, a new identity, a new name and a new family when joined to, or "marries," Jesus Christ. *"And I will write on him the name of My God and the name of the city of My God, the new Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven, and My own new name"* (Revelation 3:12). And just as a wife willfully submits to her husband as head over her, so too, the bride of Christ (the believer) willfully submits to her Husband (Jesus Christ) as head over her life and lives to honor and please Him from that moment forth.

*"Listen, O daughter, consider and incline your ear; forget your own people and your father's house; So the King will greatly desire your beauty. Because He is your Lord, worship Him."* (Psalm 45:10-11)

In turn, as promised, the husband, like Jesus, the **BRIDEGROOM**, loves, nourishes and cherishes his bride. He faithfully provides for her daily needs. He does good to her and for her, all the days of her life. However, Jesus the **BRIDEGROOM** goes further with His love and passion for His bride than a human husband ever could. Although a husband might willingly die to protect his wife, his death cannot truly save her. Only Jesus, the righteous **BRIDEGROOM** can. His life, His blood, His water, is the only acceptable sacrifice before God to redeem His bride. And it is the only thing that has the power to cleanse and purify her and make her ready for future glory. You see, when Jesus, the **BRIDEGROOM** gave Himself up as a sacrifice on the behalf of His Bride, to pay the penalty for her sins on the cruel Cross of Calvary, He was fulfilling His call as her Savior. On the day Jesus the **BRIDEGROOM** gave up His life for His Bride, He gave the greatest love gift of all time...salvation from sin, acceptance and peace with God, and eternal life with Him in the glory and splendor of heaven now and forevermore.

Something we need to understand however that marriage is not just a "Church age" or New Testament institution. It has actually been God's idea from the very beginning. In fact, it has been said that God performed the very first wedding in the Garden of Eden when He presented Eve to Adam to be his wife and declared, *"therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother*

*and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh” (Genesis 2:24).* Ann Spangler comments, “over and over, the Hebrew Scriptures present Israel’s relationship with God in the most intimate terms possible. He is not just Maker and Lord, but also Israel’s husband. But they also describe this as a troubled marriage because even though God is a perfect Lover, His people are not. Instead, they are broken, infected by sin, unable to trust, seduced by other gods. But still the Lord persists in loving them.”

“Intent on restoring the relationship, He sends prophets to call them back and troubles to bring them home. But nothing works for so long. So, in a final act of mercy, He sends His own Son. This is why the Bible is best understood, neither as a book of rules nor as a compendium of wisdom, but as a love story, prolonged and painful, but one that ends on a tremendous note of joy with the greatest of all celebrations: the wedding feast of the Lamb. This is why the New Testament reveals Jesus as the **BRIDEGROOM** whom the church awaits with longing. He is the Promise we hope for, the purpose for which we were made. He is the One who is able to deal with our brokenness, to heal our sin, and to woo us back to Himself through His self-sacrificing love. He is the paradise we seek.” (Ann Spangler)

*“Your Maker is your husband, the Lord of Hosts is His name; and the Holy One of Israel is your Redeemer, the God of the whole earth He is called. For the Lord has called you, like a wife deserted and grieved in spirit, like a wife of youth when she is cast off. For a brief moment I deserted you, but with great compassion I will bring you back.” (Isaiah 54:5-7)*

Are you “married” to Jesus? Is He your **BRIDEGROOM**? Have you ever taken the “vows of marriage” with Him and pledged to live with Him as His faithful bride all the days of your life? If so, how well are you keeping your vows? Are you as passionately in love with Him now as you were in the beginning? Or like many, have you lost the love you had at first and started to look at other lovers for satisfaction and completion? If like an unfaithful wife you have lost your passion, broken your vows and started chasing other lovers, will you confess your sin so that you may receive His mercy and grace and be restored to a right relationship with Jesus your **BRIDEGROOM** today?

Are you longing for the return of your **BRIDEGROOM**? If so, how are you waiting? Like the five wise virgins in Jesus’ parable, are waiting with eager expectation and fully prepared for His coming? Do you have plenty of oil for your lamp, which “is often used in the Bible as a symbol of knowledge and understanding” (Mary Ann Bishop)? More importantly, do you have an extra supply of oil on hand in case the Lord delays a bit longer in His coming? If not, get into the Word of God, seek to know Him that you might better understand His plans and purposes. Ask Him to fill your flasks to overflowing with His oil so that He will not find you unprepared when He returns.

If you are waiting for the Lord’s return, are you also keeping watch? The Lord Jesus Christ Himself said *“Watch, therefore, for you do not know neither the day nor the hour when your*

*Lord comes” (Matthew 24:42). Are you watching expectantly? Are you staying awake and alert to the signs and the seasons with your ears tuned to His voice? If so, then you will not miss His coming. Like the wise virgins, if you are prepared, waiting and watching, you will hear the midnights cry “Here is the **BRIDEGROOM!**” (Matthew 25:6). And at that very moment you will be swept off your feet and ushered in to the most beautiful and meaningful wedding the world has ever known...the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. It is going to be spectacular!*

***“Hallelujah!***

***For the Lord our God the Almighty reigns.  
Let us rejoice and exult and give Him the glory,  
For the marriage of the Lamb has come  
And His Bride has made herself ready;  
It was granted her to clothe herself  
With fine linen, bright and pure”  
Revelation 19:6-8***

Brothers and sisters in the Lord, if you have strayed from Jesus Christ your **BRIDEGROOM**, in any way, do whatever it takes to return, o faithfulness Bride. Be reconciled to Jesus. Ask Him to cleanse your soiled wedding gown in His blood and water, so that you may be found pure and spotless, holy and without blemish and worthy to be presented to Himself. You don't miss your WEDDING DAY!

***“The royal daughter is all glorious within the palace; her clothing is woven with gold.” (Psalm 45:13)***

***“Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.” (Revelation 19:9)***

# **THE DOCTRINE**

## **“RAPTURE OF THE CHURCH”**

Matthew 25:1-13

### **The Gospel Includes Jesus’ Return**

Between a promise and its fulfillment, there are times of doubt – especially if the fulfillment is a long time in coming. On March 11, 1942 at Corregidor during World War II, General Douglas MacArthur made a promise to the Philippine people to establish an additional front to fortify and defend the entrance of Manila Bay which was being attacked by enemy warships. It was the largest city and the most important seaport in the Philippines Islands of the South Pacific. Just before he left, he spoke words that have echoed down through the centuries and can be found in almost every history textbook: “I SHALL RETURN.” He didn’t tell them when because in his case, he didn’t know. However two and a half years later, on October 20, 1944 he waded ashore and announced, “I HAVE RETURNED! By the grace of Almighty God, our forces stand again on Philippine soil.” It was a turning point in the great world war that devastated so many millions of lives.

At the perfect time in history, the Son of God joined Himself to human flesh in the womb of the virgin Mary. After living a sinless life, He was betrayed, executed, and buried – but death could not hold Him down, and on the third day, He rose from the grave in a glorified human body that can never decay or die. Yet He did not remain on earth. Forty days after His resurrection, He ascended into heaven. The Scriptures - both Old and New Testaments – affirm: just as Douglas MacArthur returned again to the Philippine Islands, Jesus Christ also IS coming again. As to this fact, there is absolutely no doubt or question. This is the gospel message, and it includes the truth of Christ’s return through a second coming.

A close study of the Bible shows that the return of Christ holds a prominent place in God’s redemptive program. One out of every 30 verses of Scripture mentions either Christ’s return or events directly related to it. The New Testament alone contains 318 references to his coming again. In fact, only four of the New Testament’s 27 books do not mention it. Turning to the Old Testament, one can find the subject addressed by Job, Moses, David, Isaiah, Jeremiah and most of the Minor Prophets. Jesus’ return therefore is so important in Scripture that it comes up twice as much as the atonement, and eight times as much as Christ’s first coming.

### **The Certainty of Christ’s Return: Predictions that Affirm Our Assurance**

#### **1. Matthew 24:42-44**

In the Olivet Discourse when Jesus was asked, “What will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?” Jesus answered: “Be on alert, for you do not know which day your Lord is coming. But be sure of this, that if the head of the house had known at what time of the night the thief was coming, he would have been on the alert and would not have allowed his house to be broken into. For this reason you be ready too; for the son of Man is coming at an hour when you do not think He will.”

## **2. Mark 8:38**

Another time Christ told His disciples, “Whoever is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will also be ashamed of him when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels.” Here Jesus confirms that his coming again is certain and that it will be a triumphal and glorious event, at least for Christians. However for unbelievers, His return will bring rejection and judgment.

## **3. John 14:1-13**

The night before Jesus was crucified, he told His disciples that he would soon be betrayed and depart from them (13:21; 36-38). Because His comments deeply distressed them, he spoke these comforting words: “Let not your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father’s house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also” (14:1-3). Jesus assured them with two promises. First, He said He was going away to prepare a heavenly home for them – one where they could dwell forever in peace. Second, He guaranteed He would return personally to take them to their new home. This promise applies to all believers. One day, the Lord will come back to move his children from earth to heaven, from the corruptible to the incorruptible, from a life of pain to one of everlasting bliss. That is something more than wonderful for those of us who are believers to look forward to!

## **4. Acts 1:6-11**

Three days after Jesus’ crucifixion, he rose from the dead, conquering death forever. Then over a 40 day period, He presented Himself alive to the disciples . . . “by many convincing proofs” (v.3). At the end of this time, the disciples asked Him again about His return (v.6). Christ’s answer was simple and specific; “It is not for you to know times or epochs which the Father has fixed by His own authority; but you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the remotest parts of the earth” (vs. 7-8). With these words still fresh in their minds, the disciples watched Jesus ascend into heaven (vs. 9-10). Suddenly, two angels appeared and spoke saying: “Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into the sky? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into

heaven, will come in just the same way as you have watched Him go into heaven” (v.11). The angels repeated Jesus’ message: Christ is coming again, but until He returns, His followers are to stop staring into the sky and start living as responsible Christians in a dark and needy world. That’s our task – nothing less.

### Christ’s Second Coming and the Resurrection

In Paul’s letters to the Thessalonian believers, written not more than 20 years after the death and resurrection of Christ, Jesus’ coming again is presented by way of comfort and encouragement to those whose Christian friends had died. Paul had been compelled to leave Thessalonica before he had time to give his converts there as much teaching as they required in understanding the gospel message and particularly the elements of His return that involved the resurrection of the dead. Therefore, when some of their number died shortly after Paul’s departure, their friends wondered if they would suffer some serious disadvantage at the Second Coming, in contrast to those who would still be alive to greet the returning Lord. “No!” says Paul, “those who have fallen asleep” (died) will suffer no disadvantage whatsoever! On the contrary, the first thing to happen when the “Lord himself will descend from heaven” is that “the **DEAD IN CHRIST** will rise.” Only after that, will those who survive until then be “caught away” (rapture) to join them and be forever “with the Lord” (1 Thessalonians 4:15-17). Paul gives additional insight and information in his letters to the Corinthian believers. In 1 Corinthians, written about five years later he refers to the resurrection of believers as the “full harvest” that was inaugurated by the resurrection of Christ. “But each in his own order: Christ, **the first fruits** (of the full harvest), then at his coming (return) - those who are Christ’s own will be resurrected with incorruptible, immortal bodies – at His coming” (1 Corinthians 15: 23). An additional revelation is imparted as well; not only will each believer who has died be raised in a “spiritual body” (v. 44) but also those who are still alive will be “changed” so as to have bodies suitable for life in the new dimension we know of as heaven. For dead and living believers alike, Paul proclaimed that “as we have borne the image of the man of dust (Adam: Genesis 2:7), we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven” (the risen Christ) (1 Corinthians 15:49). To the same effect Paul wrote only a few years later in Philippians 3:20-21 that from heaven “we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will change our lowly body to be like his glorious body.” A deeper unveiling of what this will involve is further stated by Paul to the Roman believers in Romans 8:18-23, where the resurrection of the people of Christ is the catalyst for the liberation and glorious renewal of all creation.

“For I consider (from the standpoint of faith) that the sufferings of this present life are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is about to be revealed to us and in us! For the whole creation waits eagerly for the children of God to be revealed. For the creation was subjected to frustration and futility, not willingly because of some intentional fault on its part, but by the will of Him who subjected it, in hope. That the creation itself will also be freed from its bondage to decay into the glorious freedom of the children of God. For we

know that the whole creation has been moaning together as in the pains of childbirth until now. And not only this, but we too, who have the first fruits of the Spirit (a joyful indication of the blessings to come) even we groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for the sign of our adoption as sons – the redemption and transformation of our body (at the resurrection).” (Romans 8:18 -23)

### **Our Destiny**

Essentially there are two events that encompass Christ’s second coming – the Rapture of the Church of Jesus Christ described in 1 Thessalonians and His final coming which will take place at the end of the Great Tribulation on earth bringing human history to a close described in Revelation 19. These separate events have led to much confusion in theological circles along with differing interpretations of these end time events.

Paul further explains in 1 Corinthians 15:50-58 that although we are all in the process of dying physically, at some future time, there will be a generation of believers that will be changed “in a moment - in the twinkling of an eye.” Our perishable bodies will become imperishable; our mortality will be robed in immortality (vs. 52-54). This miraculous change will occur when Jesus returns for His church (the event we know of as The Rapture), and it will happen to Christians both alive and dead. From that incredible moment on, believers will live and rule with their Savior forever, completely free from and victorious over sin and its devastating effects. “Therefore,” Paul adds, “be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not in vain in the Lord” (v.58).

In 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 Paul details what will occur when Christ returns for his Bride in the event called the “rapture of the church,” His Bride. The rapture is the Christian term used to denote the ascension – or “lifting up” of Christians – a worldwide event that will usher in the remaining end time events that bring Christ’s final and second coming along with the establishment of His Millennial Kingdom. The Rapture of the church is the event that opens the door to what will take place upon the earth (The Great Tribulation) as the wrath of God is poured out upon the unbelieving world as recorded in the books of Daniel and Revelation. The Rapture corresponds to the event spoken of by Paul in 1 Thessalonians 4:17 where those believers who are still alive at the coming of Christ are described as being “caught up” together with their resurrected fellow Christians to meet the Lord in the air. It is interesting to note that the verb of 1 Thessalonians 4:17 (“caught up”) is the same word used in 2 Corinthians 12:2-3 to denote Paul’s mysterious experience of being “caught up” into the third heaven, or paradise when he received visions and “heard inexpressible words which a man is not permitted to speak – words too sacred even to tell.” For such, Paul was given his “thorn in the flesh” to keep him from exalting himself.

## The Order of Christ's Return

Paul therefore, cites four future happenings affecting genuine believers for us to remember and look forward to. These future happenings describe the Rapture of the Church, the Bride of Christ and will usher into motion the final seven years of Great Tribulation that will take place on earth and end with the Second Coming of Jesus Christ, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

1. "The Lord Himself will descend from heaven."
2. "The dead in Christ shall rise first."
3. "We who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them."
4. All of us will rise up to "the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and thus we shall always be with the Lord."

To summarize: After this transition into heaven for believers (Rapture), a seven year period of intense divine judgment (the wrath of God) will occur on the earth. The Great Tribulation will end with Christ's return to earth to finally defeat His remaining enemies, **fulfill His promises to the nation of Israel**, and establish a 1000 year reign of world peace and prosperity (Millennial Kingdom).

Believers will be reunited with all our believing family members, friends, and fellow saints. We will finally see and live forever with all those we miss now. What an encouraging and thrilling thought!

## Actions that Reveal our Readiness

1. **Walk by Faith.** Though we do not know WHEN He will come again, we know that he WILL come again, and we should live responsibly in light of His return.
2. **Live in Peace.** Present day struggles need not overburden us. We can find rest in the fact that someday all things will be made right.
3. **Rely on Hope.** Christ is our hope – our only hope. Because He lives and is coming again, we can live with the assurance that the final chapter of our lives is not death - but everlasting life with Him.

## What Is Needed?

It is impossible for us to have God's perfect perspective on the events of our world, but we must remember this – God is central in the unfolding of all these events. As we hear it said so often these days: "Things are not falling apart – they are falling into place." The meaning of history is a problem today that is confounding the minds of thinking men. Just how can we keep progressing at such a pace with the advancement of technology and knowledge that is often too

dangerous to man to even grasp and understand. There are still remaining mysteries that the human mind cannot fathom. In former generations, the philosophy of progress was widely accepted – not so much today. There is a frighteningly dark side to our progress today. Other interpretations of history have been utterly pessimistic. They lead nowhere and reflect no pattern of significance or meaning in this life. The Bible states however that the ultimate meaning of history must be found in the action of an all knowing and all powerful God who orchestrated and is in control of history as recorded and interpreted through the inspired and infallible Word of God.... God's redemptive plan has been unfolding and at work in human history from the very beginning of time, and His divine action will yet bring human history to its divinely destined goal.

## Questions for Reflection

**Read: Matthew 25:1-7**

1. Reflect on last week's lesson. What was the key word or central theme that Jesus taught about that is carried over into the parable of the 10 virgins? Why do you think He spent so much time teaching and repeating this concept?
2. Who do you think the Bridegroom represents in this parable? (see also John 3:29, Rev. 19:7)
3. From the above verses, list the similarities of the foolish virgins and the wise virgins. (Hint) There are 7 in all. Can you find them?
4. Why DO YOU THINK Jesus did not rebuke the virgins for sleeping?
5. What is the one critical difference between the foolish virgins and the wise virgins?
6. a. What DO YOU THINK the lamp represents in this parable? Give scripture references to back up your answer.

b. What do you think the oil represents? Give scripture references to back up your answer.

c. Explain how the “light” and the “oil” work together to prepare us for the Lord’s imminent return.

**Read: Matthew 25:8-13**

7. a. According to verse 8, what did the foolish virgins do, further proving how truly foolish they were?

b. What does this teach you about the importance of having a personal and ongoing relationship with Jesus?

8. Reflect on vv. 10-12. What are some important lessons you learn about the Lord’s return? With whom do you need to share these lifesaving truths?

9. (Personal) How does your life today reflect your readiness to meet Jesus?

10. Regarding Jesus’s statement in v. 13, how can you be a light to those around you who are living foolishly?

11. Are you truly ready for the return of Jesus, or are you among those who seem ready, but in fact are not? How can you be sure the Bridegroom will accept you into the wedding feast at the end of the age?

### **JESUS, OUR BRIDEGROOM**

What did you learn about Jesus, the Bridegroom, through this week's devotion? How has this aspect of His character impacted your life? What encouragement have you received and how can you use this in your ministry?

### **SALVATION CHALLENGE**

What is your response when you think of Jesus' return? Are you fearful or joyfully expectant? Might your response be an indication of your personal relationship with Christ or lack of it? Will you make a decision to receive Jesus into your life today so that you will be secure in Him and actively anticipating His return?