

# Connect Group Studies



*'Bringing God and people together'*

## **Extra Study notes for Leader:**

The following is a possible interpretation, which you may or may not wish to use in preparation for your discussion of the parable:

Let's start with what we know and then try and make an informed interpretation regarding what we're not sure of.

The bridegroom is Jesus! (*Ref. John 3:29*)

The bride is the Church (*2 Cor. 11:2, Eph. 5:22-33 & Rev. 19:7-9*)

Q: Who are the ten virgins who are waiting for the bridegroom?

The one person they can't be is the Church - she's the Bride!

We understand then that this parable is not talking about the Church, the Bride of Christ. Rather, if we look at Jewish wedding traditions of the 1<sup>st</sup> Century we find that the "virgins" are the friends of the bride and groom.

They participated in the celebrations as invited guests of the bride and groom.

Much like our modern-day bridesmaids.

In this parable then they represent the nation of Israel: - those invited to the wedding feast of Jesus and His Church.

e.g. Similar to the Parable of the Wedding - *Matthew 22:1-14 (See also Revelation 16:15)*

In that parable the...

King of the kingdom	=	God the Father
Son of the King	=	Jesus
Servants	=	Prophets & John the Baptist
Guests	=	Jewish people
Invitation	=	Entrance into the Kingdom

So, in the Parable of the Virgins the wise and foolish virgins may represent two groups within the nation of Israel who are all invited to the wedding feast though some are granted entrance to the feast and some are not.

The Church is not portrayed here. Christians are the Bride, not the 10 Virgins.

The application for the Jewish people is that they will see the signs indicating that the Messiah is coming... some will prepare themselves by placing their trust in Jesus, while others will not be prepared for the Lord's return because they will not surrender their lives to Him.

In that sense then it will be just as it was when Jesus' first came to earth.

All the Jewish people were invited to enter the Kingdom of God/Heaven by trusting in Jesus.

Some did, some did not.

So we find Jesus rebuking the religious leaders for failing to acknowledge Him as Messiah and thereby missing the opportunity to enter the Kingdom!

Read Matthew 21:31b-32

Then Jesus explained his meaning: "I tell you the truth, corrupt tax collectors and prostitutes will get into the Kingdom of God before you do. <sup>32</sup> For John the Baptist came and showed you the right way to live, but you didn't believe him, while tax collectors and prostitutes did. And even when you saw this happening, you refused to believe him and repent of your sins.

The difference is that those who rejected Jesus at His first coming were still able to repent of their foolishness and have opportunity to accept Jesus' offer. At Jesus' second coming there won't be any second chances! When He returns those who are prepared (know Him as Saviour & King) will enter the Kingdom, while those who are not prepared (rejected Him) will be denied entrance into the Kingdom.

Different interpretations about the oil:

The Bridegroom always symbolizes the Lord; the Bride always symbolizes the Church, and so on. By assuming the oil was meant to be understood literally, you could inadvertently violate these rules.

Typically in the scripture oil is used as a symbol, or type, of the Holy Spirit; His presence in our life; His power to do the work of God.

If we interpret the oil to represent the Holy Spirit then we have some problems!

How do you "run out" of the Holy Spirit?

Where do you go to "buy" more of the Holy Spirit?

If the foolish virgins had at one time been given the Holy Spirit, would the Lord say "I don't know you."?

It seems better then to focus on the main theme of the parable, that we're called to be prepared for Jesus' return by entering into a relationship with Him - than to try and assign some meaning to the oil.

Q: Are the wise virgins selfish for not giving oil to the foolish virgins? (v8-9)

What this verse might mean is that faith is not transferable. Just because you were reared in a Christian home or you are in church with other Christians does not mean that you are a Christian. It cannot be transferred from one person to another. You can't get the Holy Spirit from someone else. You have to get it yourself.

Perhaps the five foolish virgins had the Holy Spirit at the start, but lost their faith (and therefore their salvation) while they were waiting. In the context of the parable, borrowing oil is like trying to have some one else vouch for you. It doesn't work.

And buying more oil might symbolize restoring their faith and re-committing to the Lord.

Unfortunately while they were trying to do this they discovered that time had run out. The Lord had already come back and it was too late. The door to the Kingdom was closed. That's the most important point of the parable, and that's why He said He didn't know them when they tried to get in.

## **Revelation Studies**

If you are reading through Revelation this month...

The link below is to a series of devotionals including four sections on Revelation by four different authors. (31 devotionals on Revelation to choose from if you want to study part of a chapter in-group.)

Go to

[http://www.scriptureunion.org.uk/SU\\_Core/DailyBread/Archive/41821.id?dd=1&mm=7&yyyy=2006](http://www.scriptureunion.org.uk/SU_Core/DailyBread/Archive/41821.id?dd=1&mm=7&yyyy=2006)

Then

Click on 1-9 July 2006 for Rev 1-3

Click on 1-9 Aug 2006 for Rev 4-11

Click on 1-7 Sep 2006 for Rev 12-17

Click on 24-30 Sep 06 for Rev 18-22