

Bible Stories for Adults

Ten Bridesmaids / End Times

Matthew 24 - 25

Opening

- Gathering: Do most people feel they are ready to meet Jesus? Why or why not?
- Today's Focus: Jesus promised to return and warned us to be ready to join Him at any time.
- Key Verses: *Men will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory.* Mark 13:26
Keep watch, because you do not know the day or the hour. Matthew 25:13

Opening Prayer

Lesson

Daily Lessons - Monday (*Matthew 21:12-17*)

- How were the days of Jesus' last week in Jerusalem spent?
Luke 21:37
- What lesson did Jesus teach in the temple on Monday?
Luke 19:45-46
- What did Jesus teach later on Monday when Andrew and Philip brought some Greeks to see Him?
John 12:23, 27, 31-32, 35-36

Daily Lessons - Tuesday (*Matthew 21:18-22:46*)

- What lesson did Jesus teach on the road to Jerusalem on Tuesday morning?
Matthew 21:20-22
- What lesson did Jesus teach from three parables he shared on Tuesday?
Matthew 21:31-32, 43; 22:14
- How did those who relied on their ancestry and position respond to Jesus' lesson?
Luke 20:20, 26, 40

Daily Lessons - Wednesday (*Matthew 23*)

- What lesson did Jesus teach on Wednesday in response to his interactions with the Jewish leaders?
Matthew 23:2-3, 11-12
- What other lesson did Jesus teach on Wednesday?
Luke 21:1-4

Temple Concerns (*Matthew 24:1-2*)

- How did the disciples later try to show they were listening to Jesus' lesson on giving?
Luke 21:5
- How did Jesus respond to the greatness of what man had built for God?
Matthew 24:1-2
- Was Jesus just giving a fact or was his response one of concern?
Luke 19:41-44
- When does Jesus show this concern again?
Luke 23:26-31

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Signs Before the Destruction (*Matthew 24:3-22*)

Who were especially bothered by Jesus' comments about the destruction of the temple?

Mark 13:3-4

Would the signs include the return of Jesus or world wars or natural catastrophes?

Matthew 24:3-8

What other scary things will happen before Jesus returns and the end of the age?

Matthew 24:9-12

Will all fall away from faith in God during the course of all of this?

Matthew 24:13-14

Signs of Jesus' Return (*Matthew 24:23-31*)

So how will we know when Jesus returns? Will we hear news of a man of God with signs and miracles?

Matthew 24:23-25

Should we then check out each rumor of Jesus' return on our own?

Matthew 24:26-27

How will the world react to Jesus' return?

Matthew 24:30

Should we be afraid of Jesus' return?

Luke 21:27-28

Our Response (*Luke 21:34-36*)

How will we be able to stand before this tremendous return of Jesus?

1 John 2:28

How can we be *confident and unashamed before Him* knowing our sinful past?

Psalms 130:3-4

How can we be prepared to stand before Jesus on that day?

Luke 21:34-36

How should we live while we are waiting for Jesus to return?

2 Peter 3:11 (3-14)

The Day and Hour (*Matthew 24:32-41*)

How do we know the date and time when Jesus will return?

Matthew 24:36

Won't God warn us in time for people to prepare themselves?

Matthew 24:37-39

Will we have at least a few hours notice?

Matthew 24:40-41

How much notice will we get?

Matthew 24:27

Keep Watch (*Matthew 24:42-44*)

What does this not knowing when mean for our lives?

Matthew 24:42

What example did Jesus offer that is timely even today?

Matthew 24:43-44

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A Fable of Apprentice Devils

Three apprentice devils were coming to earth to finish their apprenticeship.

They were talking to Satan about their plans to tempt and ruin men.

The first said, "I will tell them there is no God."

Satan answered, "That won't delude many, for they know that there is a God."

The second said, "I will tell men there is no hell."

Satan said, "You'll deceive no one; men know even now that there is a hell for sin."

The third said, "I will tell men there is no hurry."

"Go," said Satan, "and you will ruin them by the thousands."

Plenty of Time? (*Matthew 24:45-51*)

What example did Jesus give to point out the importance of staying steadfastly faithful?

Matthew 24:45-47

What if we tell ourselves there will be plenty of time to be faithful later?

Matthew 24:48-50

What reward will be given to those who put off faith?

Matthew 24:51

What was understood by the phrase *weeping and gnashing of teeth*?

Psalm 112:10

Another Example (*Matthew 25:1*)

What example from His culture did Jesus then give to further show the need to be prepared?

Matthew 25:1

Who would the Jews think of as the bridegroom and bride in this parable?

Isaiah 54:5

Who do we as Christians understand to be the bridegroom and bride?

Revelation 21:2 (Ephesians 5:22-29)

Marriage in Palestine

Engagement - A man or his father would select a bride and negotiate with the woman's father

A settlement was formalized by payment of a *bride price* to the bride's father

Betrothal - A ceremony was then held in the house of the bride's parents

A *betrothal* period would pass before the couple lived together, Usually around a year

Betrothal was legally binding, Could only be broken by divorce

If a man died during the betrothal period, the woman was considered a widow

Marriage - The bridegroom and his friends went to fetch the bride from her father's house

The bride's friends would meet the bridegroom and guide the way with lamps or torches

The bridegroom could come at any time, day or night, on the specified date

A man would first shout through the streets that the bridegroom was coming

Bride in wedding dress and veil joined group in parade through town to bridegroom's home

Bride was given away with blessing from father or responsible relative

Wedding Feast - Instead of a honeymoon, the couple would hold a huge feast and party

Wedding festival would last days, up to a week (Judges 14:8-17)

Wedding feast included all relatives, neighbors, friends; Seated by groom in order of importance

Meals were as elaborate as the family could afford, disgraceful not to have enough for all

Doors were locked to keep out party crashers

Only those with invitations or personally known by the groom could get in later

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The Bridesmaids (*Matthew 25:2-4*)

Who are the ten bridesmaids in this parable?

Revelation 19:9

What do we learn about these ten bridesmaids?

Matthew 25:2-4

Why should Christians store up extra oil by growing in faith and spiritual maturity?

Hebrews 10:36-39

You Can't Borrow Faith (*Matthew 25:5-9*)

How did Jesus point out in this parable that His return will be a surprise?

Matthew 25:5-6

What happened when the bridesmaids awoke and needed their oil of faith to join the bridegroom?

Matthew 25:7-9

Shouldn't the bridesmaids with extra oil have given some to the others so they could join the feast?

Ezekiel 18:20

Is it a true analogy that someone could run out of oil and not be able to join the feast?

Ezekiel 18:24

The Door is Closed (*Matthew 25:10-13*)

What happened while the foolish bridesmaids tried to make last minute preparations?

Matthew 25:10

What happened when the foolish bridesmaids tried to get in?

Matthew 25:11-12

Will people really be shut out of the feast of heaven?

2 Thessalonians 1:8-10

Isn't everyone who calls on the name of Jesus going to be saved?

Matthew 7:21-23

How did Jesus summarize the point of this parable?

Matthew 25:13

Closing Prayer

Response - Consider and meditate on one each day this week

1. Would I be afraid or thrilled if Jesus returned today?
(*Luke 5:8; 21:25-27, 34-36; Matthew 25:14-30; John 14:1-4; 20:19-20; 21:7; Philippians 1:20; 1 John 2:28*)
2. Do I sometimes act as if I expect God to warn me before the time of judgment is here?
(*Matthew 24:23-27, 36-44; Luke 16:27-31; Acts 2:40; 1 Thessalonians 5:1-3; 2 Peter 3:10*)
3. How ready am I for Jesus to return right now?
(*Matthew 24:45-51; Luke 12:35-40; Philippians 1:20-26; 1 Thessalonians 5:4-11; 2 Peter 3:11-14; Revelation 3:3; 16:15*)
4. When have I relied upon the faith of others (parents, family, friends, pastors)?
(*Matthew 25:7-9; 1 Samuel 2:22-25; Ezekiel 18; Acts 19:13-16*)
5. Will Jesus know me and invite me into His wedding feast?
(*Matthew 25:11-12, 31-46; 7:21-23; Luke 13:23-27; John 10:14-16; 14:2-3; 17:24*)