

# 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 = Days teaching in temple, Nights on Mt of Olives, In temple early next morning

What lesson did Jesus teach in the temple on Monday?

Luke 19:45-46 = Condemned the abuse of God's holy place - revere God

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 = His time had come and He would soon *draw all men to Myself*

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 = The power of faith and prayer aligned with God

What lesson did Jesus teach from three parables he shared on Tuesday? = Not ancestry or position

Matthew 21:31-32, 43; 22:14 = Faith-filled repentance is needed to enter God's kingdom

How did those who relied on their ancestry and position respond to Jesus' lesson?

Luke 20:20, 26, 40 = They tried to trap Jesus, it backfired, they stopped asking questions

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 = Warned others not to follow the self-righteousness of the leaders

What other lesson did Jesus teach on Wednesday? = It's not the amount but the commitment of all

Luke 21:1-4 = God wants us to give Him everything – all our time, talents, treasures

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 = They commented about how people had given greatly to God's temple

How did Jesus respond to the greatness of what man had built for God?

Matthew 24:1-2 = He foretold the destruction of the temple in 70 AD

Was Jesus just giving a fact or was his response one of concern?

Luke 19:41-44 = Concern - While riding into Jerusalem in glory His concern was for their future

When does Jesus show this concern again?

Luke 23:26-31 = He was more concerned for Jerusalem than Himself while carrying His cross

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Signs Before the Destruction (*Matthew 24:3-22*) = Called *Olivet Discourse* since it was on the Mount of Olives

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

Mark 13:3-4 = Peter, James, John and Andrew asked when it would happen and about signs

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

Matthew 24:3-8 = *Such things must happen, but the end is still to come* – not the signs

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

Matthew 24:9-12 = Faithful will be persecuted, many will lose faith, false prophets will deceive

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

Matthew 24:13-14 = No, those who stay faithful will be saved, gospel will go world-wide

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 = No. They are signs of false Christs and false prophets, not of Jesus

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

Matthew 24:26-27 = No. Everyone will see His return on their own at the same time

How will the world react to Jesus' return?

Matthew 24:30 = *all the nations of the earth will mourn* (Greek – *wail in grief*)

Should we be afraid of Jesus' return? = Great victory for those who belong to Jesus

Luke 21:27-28 = No – *stand up & lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near*

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

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

1 John 2:28 = As we continue in Him, we will be *confident and unashamed before Him*

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

Psalms 130:3-4 = No one can stand except with His forgiveness

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

Luke 21:34-36 = *Be careful ... be always on the watch, and pray*

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

2 Peter 3:11 (3-14) = *You ought to live holy and Godly lives*

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

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

Matthew 24:36 = Only the Father knows, not even angels or Jesus know

Won't God warn us in time for people to prepare themselves? = He already has warned us

Matthew 24:37-39 = No, look at the example of the flood in Noah's time

Will we have at least a few hours notice?

Matthew 24:40-41 = No, people will be busy with business as usual

How much notice will we get?

Matthew 24:27 = None, He will appear everywhere as quick as lightning

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

What does this not knowing when mean for our lives?

Matthew 24:42 = We should keep watch

What example did Jesus offer that is timely even today?

Matthew 24:43-44 = Like a homeowner would prepare for a thief

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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 = Servant put in charge while master is away, rewarded

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

Matthew 24:48-50 = Our master will return when we don't expect Him

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

Matthew 24:51 = Cut to pieces and sent where there is *weeping and gnashing of teeth*

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

Psalms 112:10 = The hopeless despair of the wicked

### 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 = Ten bridesmaids (virgins) who went out to meet the bridegroom

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

Isaiah 54:5 = God and Israel

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

Revelation 21:2 (Ephesians 5:22-29) = Jesus the Christ and the true, faithful church

### 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 = Church members wanting to go with Jesus to His wedding feast

What do we learn about these ten bridesmaids?

Matthew 25:2-4 = Five were wise and brought extra oil, Five were foolish and didn't

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

Hebrews 10:36-39 = Persevere in faith to get the promise, Shrink back and be destroyed

### 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 = Came in the middle of the night; Bridesmaids no longer alert, but asleep

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

Matthew 25:7-9 = The faith of the foolish ones wasn't strong enough to last the wait

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

Ezekiel 18:20 = You can't borrow faith and righteousness from another

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

Ezekiel 18:24 = If someone turns from faith, their earlier faithfulness will be forgotten

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

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

Matthew 25:10 = The bridegroom came, wise bridesmaids joined the feast, the door was shut

What happened when the foolish bridesmaids tried to get in?

Matthew 25:11-12 = They weren't allowed in, weren't known by the bridegroom

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

2 Thessalonians 1:8-10 = Yes, only His holy people, the faithful, will enter

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

Matthew 7:21-23 = No, only those who do the Father's will and live in faith

How did Jesus summarize the point of this parable?

Matthew 25:13 = *Keep watch, because you do not know the day or the hour*

### 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*)