

THE PARABLE OF THE TEN VIRGINS

Matthew 25:1-13

Is it an allegory? (How should we interpret this parable?)

Rather than being an allegory, Jesus tells this story to make one single point.

On the rare occasion when Jesus explained parables he did explain they were allegories (Matthew 13:1-30, 36-43).

Here however, there appears to be no such connections.

What's this movie rated!? (Historical context)

The fact that the girls are mentioned as virgins is simply meant to communicate that they were bridesmaids and not yet married.

Historically, it was common for bridesmaids to wait nearby for the groom to appear.

Why the groom comes at midnight is not explained. It makes the story work and that's all we know for sure.

It appears that the groom may not have known any of the bridesmaids (Matt 25:12).

So, it would have been very important for them to show up together (perhaps even with the bride).

I'm seeing red (Context in Matthew)

In order to understand the context of this passage we must go all the way back to the beginning of Matthew 24.

The disciples ask Jesus when the temple will be destroyed and about a sign of his second coming.

The parable of the ten virgins is a story told to help answer these questions.

Jesus answers the "when" in Matthew 24:36 and gives many signs of his coming in Matthew 24.

And the moral of the story is... (Interpreting the parable)

In light of the parable, Jesus says, "Therefore, keep watch because you do not know the day or the hour." (Matt 25:13)

Jesus can come at any time and we should be ready.

The moral of the story is that we should stay on the lookout for Jesus' sure and unpredictable return.

Should I invest in oil? (How should we apply this parable?)

We are to avoid being like the foolish, unprepared bridesmaids.

We are to be watchful and prepared like the wise bridesmaids.

However, it is easy to say these things, but difficult to apply them.

We need to wrestle with what this should look like for us. What does it mean to "keep watch?"

In one sense, we can apply this parable the same way we apply 1 Corinthians 10:31.