

# Matthew 25 Commentary

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MATTHEW CONTAINS 15 PARABLES 20 MIRACLES

KEY VERSES: 1:1 "The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham."

2:2 "Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him."

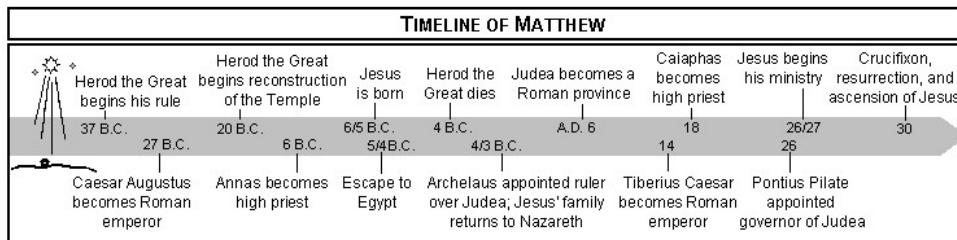


Click chart to enlarge  
Charts from Jensen's Survey of the NT - used by permission  
Another Chart from Swindoll

## THE LIFE OF JESUS AS COVERED BY MATTHEW (shaded area)



Click chart to enlarge



Source: Borrow Ryrie Study Bible

Matthew 25:1 "Then the kingdom of heaven will be comparable to ten virgins, who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom."

KJV Matthew 25:1 Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom.

NKJ Matthew 25:1 "Then the kingdom of heaven shall be likened to ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom.

NET Matthew 25:1 "At that time the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom.

BGT Matthew 25:1 Τ τε μοιωθ σεται βασιλε α τ ν ο ραν ν δ κα παρθ νοις, α πινες λαβο σαι τ ς λαμπ δας αυτ ν ξ λθον ε ς π ντησιν το νυμφ ου.

CSB Matthew 25:1 "Then the kingdom of heaven will be like 10 virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the groom.

ESV Matthew 25:1 "Then the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom.

NIV Matthew 25:1 "At that time the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom.

NLT Matthew 25:1 "The Kingdom of Heaven can be illustrated by the story of ten bridesmaids who took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom.

YLT Matthew 25:1 'Then shall the reign of the heavens be likened to ten virgins, who, having taken their lamps, went forth to meet the bridegroom;

MIT Matthew 25:1 The kingdom of heaven will be comparable to ten pure unmarried young women who took their small clay lamps and departed to meet the bridegroom.

NJB Matthew 25:1 'Then the kingdom of Heaven will be like this: Ten wedding attendants took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom.

NRS Matthew 25:1 "Then the kingdom of heaven will be like this. Ten bridesmaids took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom.

RSV Matthew 25:1 "Then the kingdom of heaven shall be compared to ten maidens who took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom.

NAB Matthew 25:1 "Then the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom.

GWN Matthew 25:1 "When the end comes, the kingdom of heaven will be like ten bridesmaids. They took their oil lamps and went to meet the groom.

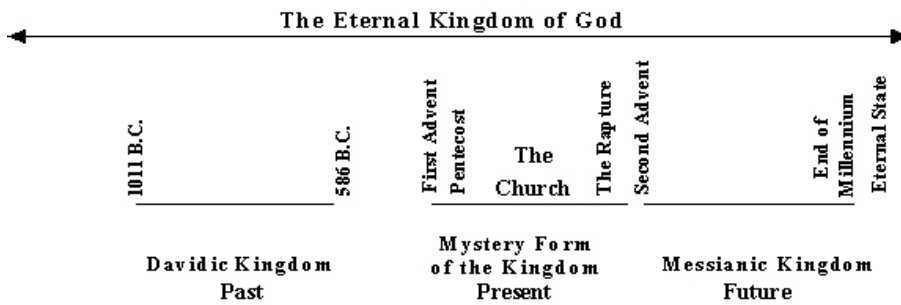
BBE Matthew 25:1 Then the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins, the friends of the bride, who took their lights, and went out with the purpose of meeting the husband.

- **the kingdom:** Mt 3:2 13:24,31,38,44,45,47 20:1 22:2 Da 2:44
- **ten:** Ps 45:14 Song 1:3 5:8,16 6:1,8,9 1Co 11:2 Rev 14:4
- **which:** Mt 5:16 Lu 12:35,36 Php 2:15,16
- **went:** 2Ti 4:8 Titus 2:13 2Pe 1:13-15 3:12,13
- **the bridegroom:** Mt 9:15 22:2 Ps 45:9-11 Isa 54:5 62:4,5 Mk 2:19,20 Lu 5:34,35 Jn 3:29 2Co 11:2 Eph 5:25-33 Rev 19:7 21:2,9

#### Related Passages:

Matthew 9:15+ And Jesus said to them, "The attendants of the **bridegroom** cannot mourn as long as the **bridegroom** is with them, can they? But the days will come when the **bridegroom** is taken away from them, and then they will fast.

## KINGDOMS OF GOD



KINGDOM OF GOD PAST, PRESENT, FUTURE  
FROM BIBLE.ORG

## A PARABLE ABOUT PREPAREDNESS

**Grant Osborne:** This is the next in the set of parables that center on **readiness** for the Lord's return. All have the same basic themes—ignorance of the time of the coming, importance of vigilance, being prepared for the sudden return, and accountability. (See [Matthew - Page 912](#))

*Preparedness for the unexpected time of  
the coming of the Son of Man is of the utmost importance.*

**Donald Hagner** - This parable makes yet once again, and in a most sobering way, the point that preparedness for the unexpected time of the coming of the Son of Man is of the utmost importance. That is, how one lives in the lengthening interim period between the first and second appearances of the Messiah must be consistent with one's claim to be a disciple. What matters is that one not be embarrassed by an "inopportune" coming of the Son of Man. (Borrow [Matthew Commentary](#))

I like the way [J C Ryle](#) divides Matthew 25 - The whole chapter contains three great divisions. In the first, our Lord uses his own second coming as an argument for watchfulness and heart-religion. This He does by the parable of the ten virgins. In the second, He uses His own second coming as an argument for diligence and faithfulness. This He does by the parable of the talents. In the third, He winds up all by a description of the great day of judgment, a passage which for majesty and beauty stands unequaled in the New Testament.

**Then** ([tote](#)) - Marks progression in Jesus' Olivet Discourse which began in Matthew 24:1+, as He presents the second parable that has end-times implications. Jesus will illustrate the vital need for every person to prepare for His return, for the time is coming when preparing will be as they say "too little, too late!"

**THOUGHT** - Remember that about 1 in every 20-25 verses in the NT allude to the Second Coming, so clearly the Holy Spirit wants this truth on our "radar" continually. He knows that what (Who) you are looking for will (should) radically impact what (Who) you are living for! Does your radar screen have any "blips" of His Second Coming or is a blank slate?

**William MacDonald** comments that "The first word, **Then**, referring back to chapter 24, clearly places this parable in the time preceding and during the King's return to earth. (Borrow [Believer's Bible Commentary](#))

**John MacArthur** contrasts the first coming of Christ commenting that "there will be no such continued opportunity (**ED**: TO RECEIVE HIM AS SAVIOR) when Jesus comes again. When He appears **then**, the opportunity for salvation and citizenship in **the kingdom of heaven** will be past. **Then** refers to the time of Christ's unexpected appearing in power and glory, about which He was speaking....The parable is not an allegory, as many interpreters have claimed. Every small facet of the story does not carry a mystical meaning that is subject to speculation and imagination. Nor does every part of the parable have application to Christian living, as devotionists frequently maintain. Still less is the parable a confused and clumsy teaching effort on Jesus' part, as some liberal interpreters suggest. The fact that details such as the bride's identity and the place where the virgins slept are not mentioned has no bearing on the point Jesus was making. For His purpose, the story was clear and complete. (SEE [Matthew Commentary - Page 85](#))

**Dwight Pentecost** - In the context that immediately precedes (Matt. 24:50–51+), Christ had spoken of a judgment that would exclude unprepared Israelites from Messiah's kingdom. A question then arose concerning this judgment: On what ground would the nation be judged? (Borrow [The Parables of Jesus](#))

[Parunak](#) points out that "We usually picture the virgins as leaving the bridal house and falling asleep on the road somewhere. But they are not called to "go out" until Mt 25:6, when he is seen approaching. This verse is better understood as a summary, or even a title (Luz), of the rest of the parable. "*Let me tell you about ten virgins who went to meet the bridegroom*"

**The kingdom ([basileia](#)) of heaven ([ouranos](#))** (See [note](#)) **will be comparable ([homoioo](#)) to ten virgins ([parthenos](#)), who took ([lambano](#)) their lamps ([lampas](#)) and went out ([exerchomai](#)) to meet ([hupantesis](#)) the bridegroom** - Note that the **Kingdom of Heaven** is synonymous with the Kingdom of God (see [note](#) below and also see comments on Lk 17:21). While **ten** is a number Jews used to signify completion (e.g., 10 men for synagogue, etc), it is otherwise of no obvious significance in the interpretation of the parable. **Virgins** were those who were selected as bridesmaids in Israel. **Lamps** ([lampas](#)) generally refers to torches (see [lampas](#) in Jn 18:3+), but occasionally had the meaning of oil lamp (which was usually [luchnos](#)) as in Acts 20:8. **Vincent** says these were lamps likely refer to "a short, wooden stem held in the hand, with a dish at the top, in which was a piece of cloth dipped in oil or pitch." The lighted **lamps** were important as they identified those who were members of the bridal party. All ten virgins had a similar appearance externally, but that similarity would soon be dispelled by their actions.

**Went went out ([exerchomai](#)) to meet ([hupantesis](#)) the bridegroom ([numphios](#))** - The **bridegroom** accompanied by his friends went to fetch the bride from her father's house and brought her back in procession to his own house where the marriage feast was held. It is interesting to note that the noun **meet** ([hupantesis](#)) is used only 3x in the NT and all 3 refer to coming out to meet Jesus - Mt 8:34+ the "whole city **came out** to meet Jesus." Jn 12:13+ as He entered Jerusalem they "**went out** to meet Him." The identity of the **Bridegroom** in this context is clearly Christ which the **virgins** represent those who professed to believe in Christ. The idea of keeping the **lamps** lit would speak of the professors maintaining an expectant attitude for the Bridegroom's [imminent](#) return (See Second Coming).

**Spurgeon** - According to Oriental custom, the bridegroom is represented as having gone to the house of his bride's father, whence he would conduct his spouse to her future home. The parable opens at the point where some of his professed friends are waiting to join the procession, and go in with him to the marriage-feast. Thus is the nominal Church of Christ waiting for the coming of the Lord. There did not seem to be much difference in the eternal appearance of the "ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom." They were all virgins, they all took their lamps, and they all went forth to meet the bridegroom. They all made a profession of attachment to him, which led them to separate themselves from their other companions and acquaintances, that they might go forth to meet him on his wedding-night. (Matthew Commentary)

[Gotquestions.org](#) has an interesting comment - According to Jewish marriage law, when the time came for [nisuin](#), the groom would return for his bride, accompanied by male escorts. The exact time of his arrival was not usually known in advance (see Matthew 25:1–15). The groom's arrival was announced with a shout. The Church's Bridegroom has been separated from His Bride now for nearly 2,000 years, and one day He will come for her and snatch her from the earth to meet Him in the air (1 Thessalonians 4:17). We don't know when exactly this will happen; we must be ready and remain faithful (Mark 13:33). Jesus will be accompanied by an angelic escort, preceded by a shout, when He returns for the Church (1 Thessalonians 4:16). After being whisked from her home, the Jewish bride remained hidden at the groom's father's house for seven days. Similarly, the Church will remain "hidden" for a period of seven years, during the prophesied tribulation period. After the seven days, the Jewish bride left the bridal chamber unveiled; likewise, after seven years the Church will return to earth with Christ, in full view of all (Colossians 3:4).

**James Freeman on Marriage Procession** - On the occasion of a marriage, the bridegroom, attended by his friends, went to the house of his bride, and brought her with her friends in joyful procession to his own house. In pre-Mosaic times, when the proposals were accepted and the marriage price given, the bridegroom could come at once and take away his bride to his own house (Genesis 24:63–67). But in general the marriage was celebrated by a feast in the house of the bride's parents, to which all friends were invited (Genesis 29:22, 27); and, on the day of the marriage, the bride, concealed under a thick veil, was conducted to her future husband's home. (Borrow [Manners and Customs](#))

**Matthew Henry** - As Christians we profess to attend upon Christ, to honour him, also to be waiting for his coming. Sincere Christians are like the wise virgins, and hypocrites are like the foolish virgins. Those are the truly wise or foolish reflect the state of their souls. **Many people have a "lamp of profession" in their hands, but have not, in their hearts,** sound knowledge and settled resolution which are needed to carry them through the services and trials of the present state.

**COMMENT:** IN SHORT, THERE ARE MANY WHO CLAIM TO KNOW ABOUT THE BRIDEGROOM (WHEN ASKED THEY ANSWER "I AM A CHRISTIAN") BUT WILL NOT BE TAKEN TO HIS MARRIAGE FEAST (Rev 19:7-9+) BECAUSE THEY HAD "HEAD KNOWLEDGE" WITHOUT "HEART CHANGE" (cf Ezek 36:26-27+) AND THUS THEY HAD NO PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP WITH HIM. IN OTHER WORDS THEIR HEART REMAINED "UNCIRCUMCISED" BY THE SPIRIT (cf Col 2:11-13+). THEY HAD NEVER BEEN BORN AGAIN

(Jn 3:3-8+) AS SHOWN BY THE FACT THAT THERE WAS NEVER A MOMENT IN THEIR LIVES WHEN THEY HAD A RADICAL TRANSFORMATION AND BECAME A NEW CREATION IN CHRIST (2Co 5:17+). THEY NEVER HAD A TIME WHEN THEIR BEHAVIOR CHANGED FROM UNGODLINESS TO GODLINESS. THUS, IN EFFECT, THEY DENY A TRUE RELATIONSHIP WITH CHRIST BY THEIR UNGODLY LIFESTYLE. THEIR "WORKS" DEMONSTRATE THE HYPOCRISY OF THEIR WORDS. (cf Mt 7:23+, Titus 1:16+, James 2:14-17+).

One needs to be careful in spiritualizing every aspect of this parable. For example, John Phillips, who I respect as a commentator, in my opinion is spiritualizing the text when he writes "The lamps symbolize the Word of God (Psalm 119:105), the only source of spiritual light in this dark world of sin."

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**D. A. Carson:** In a real sense, it is the bridegroom's delay that distinguishes the wise from the foolish virgins. Any interpretation that ignores this central element in the story is bound to go astray (cf. G. Bornkamm, *Geschichte*, 49–50). The context similarly shows that the overriding theme is preparedness for the coming of the Son of Man. Even when this involves certain forms of behavior (Mt 24:45–51; 25:14–30), that behavior is called forth by the **unexpectedness of the master's return**. From this perspective, Mt 25:1–13 fit well into this sequence of parables and agree with what we know Jesus taught. There is no good reason for doubting their authenticity or retreating to one of several reconstructed cores.

- The first parable (Mt 24:42–44+) warns of the unexpectedness of Messiah's coming.
- The second (Mt 24:45–51+) shows that more than passive watchfulness is required: there must be behavior acceptable to the master, the discharge of allotted responsibilities.
- This third parable (Mt 25:1–13) stresses the need for preparedness in the face of an unexpectedly long delay. (See [Matthew - Google Books](#) - scroll up/down for more text)

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**David Turner:** This parable stresses, for the last time in the discourse, that the time of Jesus's coming (Mt 24:3) is unknowable. This point has been stated (Mt 24:36) and then illustrated both historically from Noah's time (Mt 24:37–42) and parabolically from a burglary (Mt 24:43) and from good and wicked slaves (Mt 24:45–51). The present parable illustrates the point from another familiar scene, a wedding. Five foolish virgins do not prepare for nightfall by bringing extra oil for their lamps, because they expect the bridegroom to arrive immediately. But five others wisely prepare for a delay. The foolish virgins miss the bridegroom and are banned from the wedding feast, but the wise virgins share in the joy of the wedding (cf. Mt 9:15). . . Comparing Mt 25:5 to Mt 24:48 links the lesson of this parable to that of the evil slave. In both cases there is delay in the return of Jesus. But the two reactions to this delay are opposites, and these opposite reactions teach a crucial lesson. The evil slave is irresponsible because he overestimates the delay of the master's return. He is unpleasantly surprised by the master's seemingly early arrival. On the other hand, the foolish virgins are careless and underestimate the delay in the groom's arrival. The evil slave's lackadaisical approach to the master's return is similar to the generation of Noah and the homeowner, neither of whom expected an imminent event (Mt 24:36–44). But the foolish virgins took readiness to the extreme and did not plan for any delay. From these opposite errors, the church learns that it cannot know the time of Jesus's coming. It can assume neither an immediate nor an eventual return. Christians must constantly expect Jesus while they persevere in obedience and mission (cf. Mt 10:22; Mt 13:20–21; Mt 24:13). The duties of constant readiness and future preparedness must be held in dynamic tension if the church is to be faithful to the teaching of its master (cf. Luke 12:35–40; Meier 1980b: 294–95). Those who do not exhibit constant alertness jeopardize not only their present opportunities for effective service to Jesus but also their eternal destiny. (Quoted by Paul Apple - [Parable of the Ten Bridesmaids](#))

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*You must be prepared for Jesus. If you are, then you are wise  
and get to go with Jesus. If you are not prepared,  
then you are foolish and excluded from the party*

**Mark Moore** gives a **WARNING**: This parable has a number of details which are merely for rhetorical interest and should not be allegorized.

(1) Five were wise and five were foolish. This does not mean that about 50% of the church will not go with Jesus when he returns.

(2) The fact that they all fell asleep does not suggest that they were unfaithful or "backslidden." These maidens were expected to be prepared to escort the groom into the wedding gala, but they were not expected to stay awake as they waited. After all, they were not Roman soldiers, they were bridesmaids.

(3) The bridesmaids were virgins. This is not intended to symbolize the purity of the church. The term "virgin" is virtually equivalent to "young woman."



(4) Five of them took a flask of oil. This does not likely represent the Holy Spirit. Some have used such an allegory to explain the apparent selfishness of the five wise women. If oil represents the Holy Spirit then of course they did not share their "Spirit" because that is not possible whereas oil they may have been able to share. But that is an overinterpretation of the parable.

The point of the parable is simply this: You must be prepared for Jesus. If you are, then you are wise and get to go with Jesus. If you are not prepared, then you are foolish and excluded from the party. (Borrow [Chronological Life of Christ](#))

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**Kingdom of Heaven** - 32x/31v - Matt. 3:2; Matt. 4:17; Matt. 5:3; Matt. 5:10; Matt. 5:19; Matt. 5:20; Matt. 7:21; Matt. 8:11; Matt. 10:7; Matt. 11:11; Matt. 11:12; Matt. 13:11; Matt. 13:24; Matt. 13:31; Matt. 13:33; Matt. 13:44; Matt. 13:45; Matt. 13:47; Matt. 13:52; Matt. 16:19; Matt. 18:1; Matt. 18:3; Matt. 18:4; Matt. 18:23; Matt. 19:14; Matt. 19:23; Matt. 20:1; Matt. 22:2; Matt. 23:13; Matt. 25:1; Matt. 25:14

**Virgins** (3933) **parthenos** generally is used of a female who is beyond puberty but not married and still a virgin. In 2 Cor 11:2 parthenos is used figuratively of the church, the bride pledged to Christ.. Some contexts do not focus on the meaning virginity. The clear sense of **parthenos** in Mt 1:23 quoted from Isa 7:14+ (Lxx uses parthenos for Heb - '['almah](#)' - see below) is of a woman who has not been intimate with a man (cp Lk 1:27). Paul uses parthenos in First Corinthians to refer to a woman of marriageable age. In Mt 25:1, 7, 11 parthenos refers to young women of marriageable age.

**J D Watson** writes that "Even in all their excesses, the ancient Greeks highly valued virginity. It was, in fact, a characteristic of many of the goddesses of pagan religions (WHICH IS A BIT LUDICROUS AS THESE WERE MYTHOLOGICAL FANTASIES). The chief examples were the Greek goddesses Artemis (Diana among the Romans) and Athene (Roman, Minerva) (Ed: cp [Athena Parthenos](#)). Athene's temple in Athens was actually named the Parthenon (see [etymology](#))."

**PARTHENOS** - 14V - chaste(1), virgin(9), virgin's(1), virgins(4). - Matt. 1:23; Matt. 25:1; Matt. 25:7; Matt. 25:11; Lk. 1:27; Acts 21:9; 1 Co. 7:25; 1 Co. 7:28; 1 Co. 7:34; 1 Co. 7:36; 1 Co. 7:37; 1 Co. 7:38; 2 Co. 11:2; Rev. 14:4

**Bridegroom** (3566) **numphios** is distinct from "the sons of the bride-chamber" and here is the actual spouse, the one newly married. In classical Greek numphios carries the meaning of "bridegroom," "betrothed," and "young husband." In Homer's Iliad it refers to "one lately married" (cf. *Liddell-Scott*). In addition to the singular form the plural numphiois is used to signify the "bridal pair" (e.g., Euripides [Fifth Century B.C.]). Also, numphios is used adjectivally with the meaning "bridal."

**Numphios** - 12x - Matt. 9:15; Matt. 25:1; Matt. 25:5; Matt. 25:6; Matt. 25:10; Mk. 2:19; Mk. 2:20; Lk. 5:34; Lk. 5:35; Jn. 2:9; Jn. 3:29; Rev. 18:23

**Lamps** (TORCHES) (2985) **lampas** from **lampos** = to shine) is not the usual very small household type lamp ([luchnos/lychnos](#) in Mt 5:15) but more like a torch as in Jn 18:3 when they came to arrest our Lord "with lanterns and **torches** (lampas) and weapons." **Friberg** adds "(1) as a resinous burning brand of pine-covered or pitch-covered dry twigs torch (Jn 18:3); (2) as an oil-fed light lamp (Mt 25:1)"

**LAMPAS** - 9V - lamps(7), torch(1), torches(1). Matt. 25:1; Matt. 25:3; Matt. 25:4; Matt. 25:7; Matt. 25:8; Jn. 18:3; Acts 20:8; Rev. 4:5; Rev. 8:10

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#### QUESTION - [What is a bridegroom? | GotQuestions.org](#)

**ANSWER** - A bridegroom is a man just married or just about to be married. A bridegroom is the male version of a bride, a woman who is just married or just about to be married. The word *bridegroom* comes from the Old English *brydguma*, which was a combination of *bryd* ("bride") and *guma* ("man"). The word *bridegroom* appears in the Bible in both Testaments and carries the same meaning: the husband of the bride.

The word *bridegroom* is used often in the Bible as a metaphor for God, specifically for Jesus Christ. The church is likened to a bride with Christ as her bridegroom. When Jesus was with His disciples, He answered a question about fasting with an analogy involving a bridegroom: "How can the guests of the bridegroom fast while he is with them? They cannot, so long as they have him with them. But the time will come when the bridegroom will be taken from them, and on that day they will fast" (Mark 2:19–20). Jesus is the bridegroom, and His disciples are the wedding guests. [John the Baptist](#) presented himself as the "friend who attends the bridegroom," which is the person we would today call the "best man" (John 3:29). John said, "The bride belongs to the bridegroom," and by this he referred to Jesus and the church, His spiritual bride, who stands by His side and invites people in, saying, "'Come!' Let the one who is thirsty come; and let the one who wishes take the free gift of the water of life" (Revelation 22:17).

This church—the [Bride of Christ](#)—is not one specific local church or denomination but the entire body of believers throughout the ages. All who have trusted the Lord and received salvation by grace through faith are collectively His Bride. This analogy exists in several New Testament passages. Paul gives believers instructions about marriage, saying, “Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her” (Ephesians 5:25). Paul also refers to the church as a virgin waiting for her bridegroom (2 Corinthians 11:2) and uses the relationship between Christ and the church as an example of the importance of wives’ submission to their husbands (Ephesians 5:24).

The [New Jerusalem](#) is also referred to “as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband” in [Revelation 21:2](#), another passage that alludes to Christ as a bridegroom (verse 9).

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## **James Smith - FOOLISH VIRGINS Matthew 25:1–12**

From the closing verses of the preceding chapter we learn that the purpose of this parable is to teach the servants of God the necessity of being always ready for their Master’s appearing, and that readiness consists not in idly staring into Heaven, but in actively doing those things that are pleasing unto Him. They are always ready who are always doing His will: “Blessed is that servant whom when his Lord cometh shall find so doing” (Matt. 24:46). The good wife may watch for her husband because she longs to see him, but if he, when he comes, finds the house untidy and the supper unprepared, would he be satisfied with her watching? These foolish virgins represent those who have the appearance of being ready, but who will be found unprepared. Notice their—

**I. Blameless Character.** They were “virgins,” their characters were without reproach, blameless in the sight of men; they are typical of a large class of professing Christians whose outward life and conduct are unstained with iniquity. They are found in every sphere of Christian work; their motives are never for a moment questioned. They love the company of the virtuous and the wise, and even the truly wise love to have their help and fellowship; they are very courteous, congenial, and liberal-minded.

**II. Noble Intention.** “They went forth to meet the Bridegroom” (v. 1). The others are going, so they go too. They would like to see the Bridegroom, and to share the marriage feast. They make some little sacrifice for the hope that is in them; they never question their fitness. The counterpart of these is still to be found among us; religious people whose moral lives are beautiful, who have been good all their days, who never question their condition before God, nor imagine that they must be “born again.” Their intentions are good, but they are blind to their own real need.

**III. Thoughtless Neglect.** “They took no oil with them” (v. 3). All their hope was in their lamps of profession. This could only last for a very brief season. They would not go without their lamps—lamps could be seen, but the invisible oil was unheeded. Type of those satisfied with an outward resemblance to the real while strangers to the Holy Spirit of promise. Oil in the vessel is suggestive of the Spirit of God in the heart, which is the true witness that we are the children of God. This will stand when all outward evidences faint and fail.

**IV. Helpless Indifference.** “They all slumbered and slept” (v. 5). The Bridegroom tarried, and they grew tired, and sank into a state of insensibility. The waiting time is a testing time for all. The time the Bridegroom tarried was a time of grace and opportunity for the foolish virgins; now was their time to go and buy the oil they needed, but they slept. Even a little lawful indulgence with self-satisfaction may prove ruinous. Our Lord has tarried now for more than 1900 years; what a long opportunity for lamp-trimming! When the wise sleep, it is no wonder that the foolish become unconscious of their danger. “What meanest thou, O sleeper?”

**V. Anxious Request.** “Give us of your oil, for our lamps are gone out” (v. 8). The midnight cry is an awakening cry. There will be many alarming discoveries made when Jesus comes. The midnight cry of warning is followed with the cry of alarm, “Give us of your oil.” No oil, and the Bridegroom at hand. No fitness to go in, and the door of Mercy about to close. This oil cannot be borrowed; it must be bought of Him who alone can sell it (Luke 11:13). No mortal can give to another that which will fit him for the appearing of the Lord. “Buy of Me” (Rev. 3:18), saith He. “One thing thou lackest” (Mark 10:21).

**VI. Earnest Endeavour.** “They went to buy” (v. 10). They are indeed in dead earnest as they run to the nearest village, wiping the sweat from their faces, but their earnestness does not save them, for “while they went to buy the Bridegroom came.” They were busy seeking when they should have been rejoicing. Men may use the right means at the wrong time. Those that were ready went in; those who were getting ready were shut out. Hoping to be ready is no fitness for His coming. “Behold, now is the accepted time” (2 Cor. 6:2). “Be ye also READY” (Matt. 24:44).

**VII. Fearful Disappointment.** “Afterward came the other virgins, but the door was shut” (v. 11). The only answer that came to their urgent appeal, “Lord, Lord, open to us,” was, “I know ye not.” Notice, a personal acquaintance with Jesus Christ by the power of the Holy Ghost is the prime necessity for future fellowship with Him. The foolish virgins hoped to get in, but they were shut out. Out among the scoffing and the unclean, who never expected to be in, their virgin names did not save them. Only those who had met the Bridegroom entered with Him. “Acquaint now thyself with Him, and be at peace” (Job 22:21). “If any man have not the Spirit of



Christ, he is none of His" (Roman 8:9).

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**Theocratic Kingdom**—The phrases "Kingdom of Heaven," "Kingdom of God," "Kingdom of Christ," etc., denote the same Kingdom

It has already been shown (Props. 20–23, etc.) how the Jews understood and employed these phrases, and how the first preachers adopted them.

Obs. 1. Now attention is called to the fact that they are used as synonymous in the New Testament What Matthew pronounces "the Kingdom of heaven," is said by Mark, Luke, and John to be "the Kingdom of God," as e.g. comp. Matthew 5:3, with Luke 6:20, and Matthew 13:11 with Mark 4:11. So also "the Kingdom of God" is designated Christ's Kingdom, as e.g. comp. Matthew 16:28 with Luke 9:27, Mark 9:1, etc.

So also "the Father's Kingdom" and Christ's are represented as identical. Comp. e.g. Matthew 13:41–43 with Ephesians 5:5, and Matthew 26:29 with II Peter 1:11, etc., and Prop. 83. In reference to the usage of those phrases, comp. Props. 22 and 23, and the note by Dr. Craven in Lange's Com. Revelation, p. 93.

Obs. 2. These phrases thus interchangeably employed to denote the one Kingdom (Prop. 35) were understood to mean the Davidic Kingdom restored, as e.g. Acts 1:6, Matthew 20:21, Acts 15:16, Luke 1:32, etc. (comp. Props. 19–23).

This has been so frankly admitted by our opponents (as e.g. Dr. Campbell, Knapp, Neander, etc.) that more need not be added, leaving our argument to bring in the additional proof. On every side do we find this testimony, given, too, without any thought of its bearing on the subject. Thus e.g. Farrar (Life of Christ, vol. 1, p. 22) informs us that "waiting for the Consolation of Israel" is equivalent to Mark 15:43, "waiting for the Kingdom of God," and that among the Jews a prayer for the coming of the Messiah was, "may I see the Consolation of Israel." The Messiah and the Kingdom were united. We merely suggest that in addition to the meanings and derivation usually given to the phrase used by Matthew, "the Kingdom of heaven" (viz.: that the God of heaven gives it to the Christ, that through it the Father's will is manifested, that heavenly principles, etc., are exhibited, etc.), may there not, in the employment of the plural form, "heavenlies," be an allusion to the peculiar form of government (Theocratical) under chosen heavenly rulers (comp. Prop. 154). Dr. Meyer (Com. on Matthew 3:2) says: "It is called the Messianic Kingdom, not because the words 'of the heavens' express God, but because this Kingdom is conceived as descending from heaven and entering the world, Galatians 4:26." This idea may (comp. Revelation 19:11–16 and 21:2, etc.) indeed be included, but it does not exclude the old Jewish notion derived from Daniel, or the one just stated. It may include them all, making it the more expressive.

Obs. 3. In addition to the abundant testimony already adduced, that they were regarded as denoting the same Kingdom, and that the restored Theocracy, as existing under David, we add a few more. Nast (Com. on Matthew 11:1–6), allowing the Church-Kingdom theory as correct, frankly says: "Though John the Baptist, Zecharias, and those other Israelites who waited for 'the Consolation of Israel,' expected the Messiah to establish a spiritual Kingdom, a reign of righteousness, they connected, nevertheless, with it, the idea of a visible, terrestrial Kingdom, that he would literally sit on David's throne, and extend His reign from the river to the ends of the earth." Doddridge (Com. Matthew 3:2), cordially adopting the Church-Kingdom idea as intended by the phrase, says: "It is plain that the Jews understood it of a temporal monarchy, which God would erect; the Beat of which, they supposed, would be Jerusalem, which would become, instead of Rome, the capital of the world. And the expected Sovereign of this Kingdom they learned from Daniel to call 'the Son of Man'" (Were the Jews mistaken? Comp. Props. 19–23 and 31–35). Fairbairn (Herm. Manual, p. 41–43) tells us that the phrase, "points back to those prophecies of the Old Testament, in which promise was made of a King and Kingdom, that should unite heaven and earth in another way than could be done by a merely human administration," etc., which we cordially receive as true, remarking, however, that the plain Theocratical meaning contained in the grammatical sense (which he carefully avoids), as held by the Jews, by the disciples and apostles, introduces just such a union of heaven and earth (as e.g. God in Jesus condescending to reign as earthly Ruler, etc.) as he advocates. Our entire argument thus far conclusively proves that all these phrases do not denote separate things (as e.g. intimated by Lange, Com. Matthew, p. 73), or are given (so Fleck, quoted by Lange) "in order to distinguish the Christian Kingdom of God more fully from the Jewish Theocracy," but the restored Theocracy, as covenanted and predicted under the Messiah. They were applied to a definite, well-known Kingdom, viz.: the Theocratic-Davidic.

But able writers, wedded to the spiritual Church-Kingdom theory, can see nothing in the phrase but another and differing Kingdom, viz.: the Church regarded as militant and triumphant. Thus, to illustrate how confidently they appeal to its simplicity in their teaching, we refer to Gregory (Four Gospels, p. 146), who, speaking of "the Kingdom of heaven," and that Matthew by its use intended to correct false Jewish views (when [Acts 1:6](#), he still held them), confidently asserts: "The phrase clearly expresses the idea that it is a Kingdom distinct from all these kingdoms of this world after which the Jew had fashioned his idea of the Messiah's dominion. Its origin is in the heavens, where God dwells; its throne, the seat of the King, is there; its highest present and prospective glories are there. This simple phrase taught that the Kingdom of the Messiah was to be a spiritual and heavenly Kingdom, unlike the old Theocracy with its temple and throne in Jerusalem; unlike the magnificent empire patterned after Rome, which the worldly Jew was dreaming of; wholly unlike the temporal empire of the Papacy long after established." Here is a tissue of assumptions: (1) It ignores

the fact that it was a Jewish phrase, adopted without explanation by Matthew, and that it could not possibly convey the idea assumed, being definitely used to designate the restored Davidic Kingdom and its extent, etc., as given by Daniel; (2) it engrafts upon it a modern notion, which the Jews never entertained, being bound by the plain covenant and prophetic language which locates the Kingdom, not in heaven but on the earth; (3) he assumes that the phrase is so clearly full of his doctrine that it ought to have taught the Jew such a view, when the facts are just the reverse, viz.: that its usage fortified them and the disciples (including Matthew) in believing that it unmistakably taught the restoration of the downfallen Theocracy, which was—as we have shown—a Kingdom of God and of heaven; (4) its simplicity of teaching established and confirmed the almost universal Pre-Millenarianism of the early Church and its connected doctrine of the Kingdom—a position just directly opposite to that which Gregory finds in the “simple phrase,” and which Shedd (His. of Doc, p. 291) calls a peculiarity of the Jewish-Christian.”

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#### **QUESTION - [What is the meaning of the Parable of the Ten Virgins?](#) [WATCH VIDEO](#)**

**ANSWER** - As we take a good look at the Parable of the Ten Virgins (Matthew 25:1–13), we must acknowledge up front that there has been much debate as to the meaning of these words of our Savior. At least one aspect of this parable can be known with absolute certainty. The [bridegroom](#) is Jesus Christ, and this parable describes His return. In the Old Testament (Isaiah 54:4–6; 62:4–5; Hosea 2:19), God pictures Himself as the “husband” of Israel, and in the New Testament (John 3:27–30; Matthew 9:15; Mark 2:19–20), Christ is pictured as the bridegroom of the Church. The Church is described in Scripture as the bride of Christ (Ephesians 5:25–32).

The historical setting can also be known with a fair amount of certainty. In describing a first-century Jewish wedding, D.A. Carson in the Expositor’s Bible Commentary describes the setting this way:

“Normally the bridegroom with some close friends left his home to go to the bride’s home, where there were various ceremonies, followed by a procession through the streets – after nightfall – to his home. The ten virgins may be bridesmaids who have been assisting the bride; and they expect to meet the groom as he comes from the bride’s house...Everyone in the procession was expected to carry his or her own torch. Those without a torch would be assumed to be party crashers or even brigands. The festivities, which might last several days, would formally get under way at the groom’s house.”

The torch was either a lamp with a small oil tank and wick or a stick with a rag soaked in oil on the end of it which would require occasional re-soaking to maintain the flame.

Of interpretive significance is which return of Christ is this? Is it His return for the rapture of the Church, or is it His return to set up the Millennial Kingdom at the end of the Tribulation? Dispensational scholars divide over this issue, and no attempt will be made to answer that question here. Regardless of which return it is, the lessons to be learned are relevant to both.

The overall and easily seen thrust of the parable is that Christ will return at an unknown hour and that His people must be ready. Being ready means preparing for whatever contingency arises in our lives and keeping our eyes fixed on Jesus at all times while we eagerly await His coming. As seen in the fact that all the virgins were sleeping when the call came indicates that it doesn’t matter what we are doing when Christ returns. We may be working, eating, sleeping, or pursuing leisure activities. Whatever it is, we must be doing it in such a way that we don’t have to “make things right” (get more oil) when He comes. This would apply to either the coming of Christ for His Church or for the Tribulation saints as they await His second coming.

Being ready for Christ’s return ultimately involves one major thing which manifests itself in several areas of our lives. If we would be ready for Christ’s return, we must be born again through saving faith in Jesus Christ...His death, burial and literal resurrection from the dead (John 3:16; 14:6; Romans 10:9 and 10; 1 Corinthians 15:1-4; Ephesians 2:1-10). Saving faith in Jesus Christ will manifest itself in every aspect of our lives. The fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22) will begin to show. A desire for greater holiness and less sin will be apparent. And a consistent looking for His coming will mark our lives. One of the best passages articulating what saving grace and faith look like in a believer’s life is Titus 2:11-14, “For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. It teaches us to say ‘No’ to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope — the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good.”

The five virgins who have the extra oil represent the truly born again who are looking with eagerness to the coming of Christ. They have saving faith and have determined that, whatever occurs, be it lengthy time or adverse circumstances, when Jesus returns, they will be looking with eagerness. The five virgins without the oil represent false believers who enjoy the benefits of the Christian community without true love for Christ. They are more concerned about the party than about longing to see the bridegroom. Their hope is that their association with true believers (“give us some of your oil” of verse 8) will bring them into the kingdom at the end. This, of course, is never the case. One person’s faith in Jesus cannot save another. The “Lord, lord” and “I do not know you” of verses 11 and 12 fit very well with Jesus’ condemnation of the false believers of Matthew 7:21-23, “Not everyone who says to Me,

‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven will enter. Many will say to Me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?’ And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness.’”

May we not be found “going away to make the purchase” (v. 10) when Christ returns. Take the time now to fill your lamp with oil and take extra along. Keep waiting and watching with joy and anticipation.

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**QUESTION - [Are there parallels between Jewish wedding traditions and our relationship](#) to Christ? GOTQUESTIONS.ORG**

**ANSWER** - Jewish wedding traditions at the time of Christ are a fascinating study topic, and certain parallels can be seen between those customs and Christian theology. In the Bible, the Church is sometimes metaphorically understood to be Jesus’ [Bride](#) (Revelation 21:2, 9–10; 19:7; 22:17).

The [Mishnah Kiddushin](#) (the section of the [Talmud](#) dealing with “dedication” or betrothal) specifies that a bride is acquired by a groom in one of three ways; one involves the groom leaving his father’s home and traveling to the bride’s home to “purchase” her for a price. The groom gives a token or a [dowry](#), and its value must be known to the bride. In all cases, the wife can only be acquired with her consent. The marriage contract, or *ketubah*, is then established, and from that moment on the bride is sanctified, or set apart, exclusively for her bridegroom. It is customary for the groom and bride to drink from a cup of wine over which a betrothal benediction has been said.

*This prenuptial process can be seen  
as symbolic of Christ’s work on our behalf.*

This prenuptial process can be seen as symbolic of Christ’s work on our behalf. Jesus left the home of His Father (heaven) and traveled to the home of His prospective Bride (earth) to purchase her for a price; that is, His own blood (1 Corinthians 7:23, 1 Peter 1:18-19). His Bride has joyously consented to the match. He has given her a priceless token, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 2:6–16). With the establishing of the *ketubah* (the [New Covenant](#)), Jesus’ Bride was sanctified for Him (1 Corinthians 6:11). The communion wine is symbolic of the covenant by which Christ obtained His Bride.

The [Shulkhan Arukh](#), an exhaustive presentation of the details of Jewish law, elaborates regarding the two stages of marriage: the [betrothal](#) (*kiddushin*, meaning “sanctified”) and the consummation of the marriage ([nisuin](#), translated “elevation”). *Kiddushin* is not engagement as we understand it. It is a binding agreement in which the woman is legally considered the wife of the man. It was routine in Jesus’ day for *kiddushin* and [nisuin](#) to be separated by as much as a year. During that time the bridegroom would construct the marital home.

This, too, can be viewed as a metaphor for spiritual truth. After sealing the covenant with the Church, Jesus ascended to His Father’s home to prepare a dwelling place. Just prior to His death, Jesus told His disciples, “My Father’s house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am” (John 14:2–3).

According to Jewish marriage law, when the time came for [nisuin](#), the groom would return for his bride, accompanied by male escorts. The exact time of his arrival was not usually known in advance (see Matthew 25:1–15). The groom’s arrival was announced with a shout. The Church’s Bridegroom has been separated from His Bride now for nearly 2,000 years, and one day He will come for her and snatch her from the earth to meet Him in the air (1 Thessalonians 4:17). We don’t know when exactly this will happen; we must be ready and remain faithful (Mark 13:33). Jesus will be accompanied by an angelic escort, preceded by a shout, when He returns for the Church (1 Thessalonians 4:16+).

After being whisked from her home, the Jewish bride remained hidden at the groom’s father’s house for seven days. Similarly, the Church will remain “hidden” for a period of seven years, during the prophesied tribulation period. After the seven days, the Jewish bride left the bridal chamber unveiled; likewise, after seven years the Church will return to earth with Christ, in full view of all (Colossians 3:4+).

Viewed as an analogy, Jewish wedding customs have great significance for both believers and unbelievers. If you are a believer, you must remember your devotion to your Bridegroom so as not to commit spiritual adultery against Him (see James 4:4+). The apostle Paul says to the Church, “I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy. I promised you to one husband, to Christ, so that I might present you as a pure virgin to him.” He then warns us not to allow our minds to be “led astray from your sincere and pure devotion to Christ” (2 Corinthians 11:2–3+).

If you are an unbeliever, now is the time to reevaluate your belief system in light of Jesus’ words and the prophecies of Revelation. Don’t be [left behind](#) in the rapture. Jesus offers eternal life to all who repent and believe.

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## Related Resources:

- [How many parables are in the Bible?](#)

### Matthew 25:2 “Five of them were foolish, and five were prudent.”

KJV Matthew 25:2 And five of them were wise, and five were foolish.

NKJ Matthew 25:2 "Now five of them were wise, and five were foolish.

NET Matthew 25:2 Five of the virgins were foolish, and five were wise.

BGT Matthew 25:2 π ντε δ ξ α τ ν σ α ν μ ω ρ α κ α π ντε φ ρ ν ι μ ο ι .

CSB Matthew 25:2 Five of them were foolish and five were sensible.

ESV Matthew 25:2 Five of them were foolish, and five were wise.

NIV Matthew 25:2 Five of them were foolish and five were wise.

NLT Matthew 25:2 Five of them were foolish, and five were wise.

YLT Matthew 25:2 and five of them were prudent, and five foolish;

MIT Matthew 25:2 Five of them were shortsighted, and five were thoughtful.

NJB Matthew 25:2 Five of them were foolish and five were sensible:

NRS Matthew 25:2 Five of them were foolish, and five were wise.

RSV Matthew 25:2 Five of them were foolish, and five were wise.

NAB Matthew 25:2 Five of them were foolish and five were wise.

GWN Matthew 25:2 Five of them were foolish, and five were wise.

BBE Matthew 25:2 And five of them were foolish, and five were wise.

- Mt 7:24-27 Mt 13:19-23,38-43,47,48 22:10,11 Jer 24:2 1Co 10:1-5 1Jn 2:19 Jude 1:5

## Related Passages:

Matthew 7:24-27+ (DESCRIPTION OF WISE MAN AND FOOLISH MAN) “Therefore everyone who **hears** these words of Mine and **acts** on them (cf “doers...not merely hearers” James 1:22+), may be compared to a **wise** ([phronimos](#)) man who built his house on the rock. 25 “And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and yet it did not fall, for it had been founded on the rock. 26 “Everyone who hears these words of Mine and does not act on them, will be like a **foolish** ([moros](#)) man who built his house on the sand. 27 “The rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and it fell—and great was its fall.”

## TWO DIAMETRICALLY DISTINCT GROUPS

**Five of them were foolish** ([moros](#)), and **five were prudent** ([phronimos](#)) - **Foolish** is the direct opposite of **prudent**. **Foolish** is [moros](#) which gives us the English word “moron” describing a person as dull, inattentive, unthinking. Jesus does not say yet why they were foolish but will in the next verse.

[Parunak](#) makes an excellent point that “Outwardly, **all the virgins look the same**. They all have torches; they all come to the bridal house; they all claim to look forward to the coming of the bridegroom. But in fact, five of them have only the form of godliness, and not the true power (2Ti 3:5+). They are like the religious leaders whom the Lord has so vigorously condemned (Mt 15; Mt 23), appearing to be the Lord’s people, but actually defective. They think that the preparation of others in the company will suffice for them. And in the end they are cast out.

**Spurgeon** - There was, however, a vital and essential difference between them: “Five of them were wise, and five were foolish.” Let us faintly hope that we are not to gather from our Lord’s words that one half of the professing Church is composed of those whom

he calls "foolish." Yet our Savior would not have spoken of so great a proportion if there were not really a very large admixture of foolish professors with the wise possessors of the grace of God. (Matthew Commentary)

While we cannot arrive at a percentage of those saved and lost from the 5 prudent and 5 foolish, in some ways Jesus gives an even worse (in my opinion) quantitation in Matthew 7 where twice He warns that many will enter the broad road of destruction and will be forced to depart from Him (see adjective "MANY" which means a large number as in Mt 7:13-14+, Mt 7:21-23+).

**Donald Hagner** - The difference between the **foolish** and the wise is that the latter do all within their power to be ready for the parousia. They will join the Son of Man in the eschatological reward of the messianic banquet while the foolish will find themselves excluded and without recourse. The bottom line of the eschatological discourse is the importance of preparedness, which looms larger and larger toward the end of the discourse. ([Word Biblical Commentary](#))

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**Foolish** (3474) **moros** conveys the root meaning of one who is mentally dull, sluggish in understanding, foolish, morally worthless, useless, silly or stupid (English = "moron"). Absurd (ridiculously unreasonable, unsound, or incongruous) Compare the derivative **moria** = Folly, foolishness, absurdity (1Cor. 1:18, 21, 23; 2:14; 3:19).

There are a number of synonyms including blockhead, bonehead, dimwit, dork, numbskull, and the list goes on and on. Jesus seems to characterize calling someone a **fool** as a more serious reproach than a **'good for nothing'**.

**MacArthur** - **Mōros** (foolish) has the root meaning of being mentally dull, silly, or stupid, and is the word from which we get "moron."

**Webster** on **fool, foolish** - lacking in sense, judgment, or discretion. Foolish implies the character of being or seeming unable to use judgment, discretion, or good sense. Unwise; imprudent; acting without judgment or discretion in particular things.

**Vine** - **Moros** primarily denotes "dull, sluggish" (from a root muh---, "to be silly"); hence, "stupid, foolish;" it is used (a) of persons, Matthew 5:22, "Thou fool;" here the word means morally worthless, a scoundrel, a more serious reproach than "Raca;" the latter scorns a man's mind and calls him stupid; moros scorns his heart and character; hence the Lord's more severe condemnation; in Matthew 7:26, "a foolish man;" Matthew 23:17,19, "fools;" Matthew 25:2,3,8, "foolish;" in 1 Corinthians 3:18, "a fool;" the Apostle Paul uses it of himself and his fellow-workers, in 1 Corinthians 4:10, "fools" (i.e., in the eyes of opponents); (b) of things, 2 Timothy 2:23, "foolish and ignorant questionings;" so Titus 3:9; in 1 Corinthians 1:25, "the foolishness of God," not moria, "foolishness" as a personal quality (see C, No. 1), but adjectivally, that which is considered by the ignorant as a "foolish" policy or mode of dealing, lit., "the foolish (thing);" so in ver. 1 Corinthians 1:27, "the foolish (things) of the world." ([Vine's Expository Dictionary of Old Testament and New Testament Words](#))

**William Barclay** - **Moros** also means fool, but the man who is **moros** is the man who is a moral fool. He is the man who is playing the fool... To call a man **moros** was not to criticise his mental ability; it was to cast aspersions on his moral character; it was to take his name and reputation from him, and to brand him as a loose-living and immoral person. ([Matthew 5 - William Barclay's Daily Study Bible](#))

**Prudent** (wise, shrewd) (5429) **phronimos** from **phroneo** = think, have a mindset related to **phren** = diaphragm, regarded by ancients as seat of mental and spiritual activity, came to mean mind or understanding) is an adjective which describes one who is thoughtful, sagacious or discreet. It describes the quality of one's thinking which is the result of insight and stands in opposition to moros which means foolish. The idea is that there is understanding combined with wisdom and insight. **Phronimos** implies a cautious, sensible, prudent character and in Mt 10:16+ refers to one as "shrewd" as a serpent. One who is shrewd has clever discerning awareness, acute perception and sharp powers of judgment. Phronimos also includes the ideas of one who is prudent, sensible and practically wise in relationships with others. There is a type of phronimos that is desirable (eg, here in Mt 7:24, 10:16, et al) and a type that is not desirable (Ro 11:26, 12:16) this latter describing the person who relies on their own innate wisdom.

**Phronimos** - 14x/14v - more shrewd(1), prudent(5), sensible(2), shrewd(1), wise(4), wise men(1). Matt. 7:24; Matt. 10:16; Matt. 24:45; Matt. 25:2; Matt. 25:4; Matt. 25:8; Matt. 25:9; Lk. 12:42; Lk. 16:8; Rom. 11:25; Rom. 12:16; 1 Co. 4:10; 1 Co. 10:15; 2 Co. 11:19

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**Matthew 25:3 "For when the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them,**

KJV Matthew 25:3 They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them:



NKJ Matthew 25:3 "Those who were foolish took their lamps and took no oil with them,

NET Matthew 25:3 When the foolish ones took their lamps, they did not take extra olive oil with them.

BGT Matthew 25:3 α γ ρ μωρα λαβοσαι τς λαμπ δας α τ ν ο κ λαβον μεθ αυτ ν λαιον.

CSB Matthew 25:3 When the foolish took their lamps, they didn't take olive oil with them.

ESV Matthew 25:3 For when the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them,

NIV Matthew 25:3 The foolish ones took their lamps but did not take any oil with them.

NLT Matthew 25:3 The five who were foolish didn't take enough olive oil for their lamps,

YLT Matthew 25:3 they who were foolish having taken their lamps, did not take with themselves oil;

MIT Matthew 25:3 The happy-go-lucky ones took along their lamps, but they did not take a supply of olive oil with them.

NJB Matthew 25:3 the foolish ones, though they took their lamps, took no oil with them,

NRS Matthew 25:3 When the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them;

RSV Matthew 25:3 For when the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them;

NAB Matthew 25:3 The foolish ones, when taking their lamps, brought no oil with them,

GWN Matthew 25:3 The foolish bridesmaids took their lamps, but they didn't take any extra oil.

BBE Matthew 25:3 For the foolish, when they took their lights, took no oil with them.

- **foolish:** Mt 23:25,26 Isa 48:1,2 58:2 Eze 33:3 2Ti 3:5 Heb 12:15 Rev 3:1,15,16

## A FOOLISH MOVE - TAKING LAMPS WITHOUT OIL

**For** ([gar](#)) - Term of explanation. Learn to practice the discipline of pausing to ask the simple question, "What is the writer explaining?" This discipline will force you to observe the preceding context. I would submit that in effect when you practice this discipline, you are carry out what I would refer to as a "mini-meditation" and we know God always blesses meditation on His Word (Joshua 1:8+, Ps 1:2-3+). In this case the answer is straightforward, as Jesus explains why these fiver virgins were called **foolish** in Mt 25:2.

**When the foolish** ([moros](#)) **took their lamps** ([lampas](#)), **they took no** ([ou](#) - absolutely no) **oil** ([elaion](#)) **with them** - While the lamps of the foolish virgins looked identical to the prudent virgins, they had a costly difference. As the parable unfolds the description of foolish or prudent is based on whether one had oil for their lamps, in preparation for an unknown length of delay until return the bridegroom comes. These foolish virgins depict professing believers who have never been born again. Thus in context of no oil for their lamps, they were in "spiritual darkness" so to speak.

**John MacArthur** comments that the 5 foolish virgins "had a form of godliness but had no spiritual life or power because they did not belong to God (cf. 2Ti 3:5+). They were committed to Jesus Christ religiously, intellectually, socially, and no doubt emotionally. But they were not committed to Him in their hearts because their hearts had not been regenerated by His saving grace. They had the appearance of faith, but it was dead (cf. James 2:17+). They were in darkness, not light." The warning Jesus gave in this parable is repeated over and over in the gospels, a continually recurring theme of His teaching. He warns that professed believers are like **wheat and tares**; some are genuine and some are false (Mt 13:24-30+). They are compared to **various kinds of soils**, some of which give initial evidence of productivity but only one of which genuinely receives the seed of the gospel and allows it to take root and grow (cf Mt 13:4-9+, Mt 13:18-23+). It was not a popular message in Jesus' day and is not a popular message today even in many evangelical churches. (See [Matthew Commentary - Page 87](#))

**Spurgeon** - They may have thought that, if they had lamps that were similar to those carried by others, it would be sufficient. Perhaps they judged that the secret store of oil, being unseen, was unnecessary. They were willing to carry a lamp in one hand; but to devote the other hand to the care of an oil-flask, was more than they were willing to do. It is the want of the oil of grace that is the fatal flaw in many a professor's lamp. Many have a name to live, but have not the life of God within their souls. They make a profession of attachment to Christ, but they have not the inward supply of the Spirit of grace to keep it up. There is a glitter or a flash, but there is no permanent light, and there cannot be any, for although they have "lamps ", they have "no oil with them." (Matthew Commentary)



**J C Ryle** - The visible Church of Christ is just in the same condition. All its members are baptized in the name of Christ, but not all really hear His voice and follow Him. All are called Christians, and profess to be of the Christian religion, but not all have the grace of the Spirit in their hearts, and really are what they profess to be. Our own eyes tell us that it is so now. The Lord Jesus tells us that it will be so, when He comes again. Let us mark well this description. It is a humbling picture. After all our preachings and prayings--after all our visiting and teaching--after all our missionary exertions abroad, and means of grace at home, many will be found at last "dead in trespasses and sins!" The wickedness and unbelief of human nature, is a subject about which we have all much to learn.

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**Oil** (1637) elaion "olive oil," is mentioned over 200 times in the Bible. Different kinds were known in Palestine. The "pure," RV (AV, "beaten"), mentioned in Ex 27:20; Ex 29:40; Lev 24:2; Nu 28:5 (now known as virgin oil), extracted by pressure, without heat, is called "golden" in Zech. 4:12. There were also inferior kinds. In the NT the uses mentioned were (a) for lamps, in which the "oil" is a symbol of the Holy Spirit, Matt. 25:3, 4, 8; (b) as a medicinal agent, for healing, Luke 10:34; (c) for anointing at feasts, Luke 7:46; (d) on festive occasions, Heb. 1:9, where the reference is probably to the consecration of kings; (e) as an accompaniment of miraculous power, Mark 6:13, or of the prayer of faith, Jas. 5:14. For its general use in commerce, see Luke 16:6; Rev. 6:6; Rev. 18:13. ([Vine's Expository Dictionary](#))

**Gilbrant** - Elaion is the common distinction for the oil of the olive, the most common form of oil in the ancient Mediterranean. Oil served as a dietary supplement and a cosmetic, as well as a fuel for lamps. Oil was also used for medicinal purposes and was a major trade item. The kinds and quality of olive oil varied greatly. "Pure" oil was made from olives that were pressed cold. The finest oil came from fresh, green olives that were beaten in a mortar (cf. Exodus 29:40).

**Septuagint Usage** - The centrality of oil in the life of Israel is evident in the Septuagint. Usually the Hebrew shemen ([olive] "oil") is translated by elaion. Oil was a medicine (e.g., Isaiah 1:6; Jeremiah 8:22); a dietary staple (e.g., Ezekiel 16:13; cf. the formula "grain, wine, and oil," Deuteronomy 7:13; 11:14; 12:17; Joel 2:19); an export item (Ezekiel 27:17); a fuel (Exodus 27:20; Leviticus 24:2); and a vital part of sacrificial and religious, national ceremony (e.g., Leviticus 2:4; 6:15). This latter aspect is vital for understanding the symbolism of oil throughout the Bible (cf. Schlier, "elaion," Kittel, 2:470ff.).

The use of oil in the religious life of the Hebrews is recorded very early in the Old Testament (see Genesis 28:18; 35:14). Later when the tabernacle was erected an anointing oil, which was made of fine ingredients including olive oil (see Exodus 30:22-25), was used to dedicate the ark, the candlestick, the altars, and the various utensils and vessels used by the priests. Oil was also an ingredient in many offerings (Exodus 29:23,40). In addition, Aaron and his sons, as well as the priests who followed them, were anointed with this special oil before entering into the priestly service (Exodus 30:25). Kings too were dedicated for their high office by a similar anointing (1 Samuel 10:1 [LXX 1 Kings 10:1]; 1 Kings 19:16 [3 Kings 19:16]).

In the case of priests, kings, and prophets, anointing with oil (see chrioō [5383]) was symbolic of authority. This is especially seen in the prophecies related to the Messiah, whose very title means "the Anointed One." According to the Scriptures (see Isaiah 61:1), He would be "anointed" with the Spirit of God himself. He would also have all authority.

**New Testament Usage** - The practical use of oil continued through the New Testament period. Lamps did not burn without oil (Matthew 25:3,4,8). Elaion does not seem to be a symbol for the Holy Spirit here, since the point is not the absence of oil but the failure of the foolish virgins to be prepared. We note in verses 10 and 11 that they apparently returned to the wedding with oil, but it was too late.

Mark's single usage (6:13) probably reflects an early church practice of anointing with oil to heal the sick. The same practice is found in James 5:14. These are not the same as a medicinal purpose shown in Luke 10:34 (the story of the Good Samaritan).

Hebrews 1:9, a citation of Psalm 45:7, declares that the Son has been anointed (chriō) with the "oil of gladness." France detects an allusion to the messianic task of Jesus similar to Luke 4:18, Acts 4:27, and 10:38 ("Oil," Colin Brown, 2:710ff.).

The two instances of elaion in Revelation (6:6 and 18:13) are symbolic of oil as a staple of the economy of the land and as a source of revenue (cf. the Old Testament refrain, "grain, wine, oil"). ([Complete Biblical Library](#))

**Zodhiates** - elaion noun from elaia <1636>, olive tree. Olive oil. Used for lamps (Matt. 25:3, 4, 8). As oil is used to give light, so the Holy Spirit enlightens men's hearts concerning their need of God, namely Jesus Christ. In Mark 6:13 and Luke 7:46, the word is used with the verb [aleipho](#), the mundane verb meaning to rub or besmear with oil, in contrast to the sacred word [chrio](#), to anoint. The same verb [aleipho](#) is used in James

5:14 in the aor. part. indicating that medical treatment, in those days equivalent to rubbing with olive oil, was to precede the prayer offered by the elders of the church. In Luke 10:34 the verb used is epichēō <2022>, to pour upon, which does not involve touching by the hand. In Heb. 1:9, élaion is used with the verb chrīō indicating the exhilarating influence of the Holy Spirit typified by oil. Oil was also an article of commerce (Luke 16:6; Rev. 18:13; Sept.: Gen. 28:18; 1 Sam. 16:1, 13). By metonymy and general use, oil is used for the fruit of the tree (Rev. 6:6 [cf. Jer. 40:10; Hag. 1:11]). Élaion should be distinguished from [muron](#), ointment. Ointment has oil as its base, to which spice or scent or other aromatic ingredients are added. There is evidence that, in ancient times, men were rubbed with oil while women were rubbed with ointment. This distinction clarifies Luke 7:45, 46 in which our Lord is found in the house of the Pharisee telling him, "My head with oil [élaion] thou didst not anoint: but this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment [[muron](#)]." Oil represented the common courtesy that would be extended to a man. It was as if our Lord said to the Pharisee, "You withheld from me a cheap and ordinary courtesy [represented by oil], while this woman bestowed upon me costly and rare homage [represented by [muron](#)] which she did not put on my head, but on my feet," intimating that even the least honored part, the feet, received the highest honor, anointing with [muron](#). (Borrow [The Complete Word Study Dictionary – New Testament](#))

**ELAION - 11V** - Matt. 25:3; Matt. 25:4; Matt. 25:8; Mk. 6:13; Lk. 7:46; Lk. 10:34; Lk. 16:6; Heb. 1:9; Jas. 5:14; Rev. 6:6; Rev. 18:13

ELAION in the SEPTUAGINT - Gen. 28:18; Gen. 35:14; Exod. 27:20; Exod. 29:2; Exod. 29:7; Exod. 29:20; Exod. 29:23; Exod. 29:40; Exod. 30:24; Exod. 30:25; Exod. 30:31; Exod. 31:11; Exod. 35:12; Exod. 35:19; Exod. 35:28; Exod. 37:29; Exod. 39:37; Exod. 39:38; Exod. 40:9; Lev. 2:1; Lev. 2:2; Lev. 2:4; Lev. 2:5; Lev. 2:6; Lev. 2:7; Lev. 2:15; Lev. 2:16; Lev. 5:11; Lev. 6:15; Lev. 6:21; Lev. 7:10; Lev. 7:12; Lev. 8:2; Lev. 8:10; Lev. 8:12; Lev. 8:26; Lev. 8:30; Lev. 9:4; Lev. 10:7; Lev. 14:10; Lev. 14:12; Lev. 14:15; Lev. 14:16; Lev. 14:17; Lev. 14:18; Lev. 14:21; Lev. 14:24; Lev. 14:26; Lev. 14:27; Lev. 14:28; Lev. 14:29; Lev. 21:10; Lev. 21:12; Lev. 23:13; Lev. 24:2; Num. 4:9; Num. 4:16; Num. 5:15; Num. 6:15; Num. 7:13; Num. 7:19; Num. 7:25; Num. 7:31; Num. 7:37; Num. 7:43; Num. 7:49; Num. 7:55; Num. 7:61; Num. 7:67; Num. 7:73; Num. 7:79; Num. 8:8; Num. 11:8; Num. 15:4; Num. 15:6; Num. 15:9; Num. 18:12; Num. 28:5; Num. 28:9; Num. 28:12; Num. 28:13; Num. 28:20; Num. 28:28; Num. 29:3; Num. 29:9; Num. 29:14; Num. 35:25; Deut. 7:13; Deut. 8:8; Deut. 11:14; Deut. 12:17; Deut. 14:23; Deut. 18:4; Deut. 28:40; Deut. 28:51; Deut. 32:13; Deut. 33:24; 1 Sam. 10:1; 1 Sam. 16:1; 1 Sam. 16:13; 2 Sam. 1:21; 2 Sam. 14:2; 1 Ki. 1:39; 1 Ki. 5:11; 1 Ki. 17:12; 1 Ki. 17:14; 1 Ki. 17:16; 2 Ki. 4:2; 2 Ki. 4:6; 2 Ki. 4:7; 2 Ki. 9:1; 2 Ki. 9:3; 2 Ki. 9:6; 2 Ki. 18:32; 2 Ki. 20:13; 1 Chr. 9:29; 1 Chr. 12:40; 1 Chr. 27:28; 2 Chr. 2:10; 2 Chr. 2:15; 2 Chr. 11:11; 2 Chr. 31:5; 2 Chr. 32:28; Ezr. 3:7; Ezr. 6:9; Ezr. 7:22; Neh. 5:11; Neh. 10:37; Neh. 10:39; Neh. 13:5; Neh. 13:12; Est. 2:12; Ps. 4:7; Ps. 23:5; Ps. 45:7; Ps. 55:21; Ps. 89:20; Ps. 92:10; Ps. 104:15; Ps. 109:18; Ps. 109:24; Ps. 141:5; Prov. 21:17; Eccl. 7:1; Eccl. 9:8; Eccl. 10:1; Isa. 1:6; Jer. 40:10; Jer. 40:12; Jer. 41:8; Ezek. 16:9; Ezek. 16:13; Ezek. 16:18; Ezek. 16:19; Ezek. 23:41; Ezek. 27:17; Ezek. 32:14; Ezek. 45:14; Ezek. 45:24; Ezek. 45:25; Ezek. 46:5; Ezek. 46:7; Ezek. 46:11; Ezek. 46:14; Ezek. 46:15; Dan. 10:3; Hos. 2:5; Hos. 2:8; Hos. 2:22; Hos. 12:1; Joel 1:10; Joel 2:19; Joel 2:24; Mic. 6:15; Hag. 1:11; Hag. 2:12;

#### Matthew 25:4 but the prudent took oil in flasks along with their lamps.

KJV Matthew 25:4 But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps.

NKJ Matthew 25:4 "but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps.

NET Matthew 25:4 But the wise ones took flasks of olive oil with their lamps.

BGT Matthew 25:4 α ὁ φρ νιμοι λαβον λαιον ν το ς γγε οισ μετ τ ν λαμπ δων αυτ ν.

CSB Matthew 25:4 But the sensible ones took oil in their flasks with their lamps.

ESV Matthew 25:4 but the wise took flasks of oil with their lamps.

NIV Matthew 25:4 The wise, however, took oil in jars along with their lamps.

NLT Matthew 25:4 but the other five were wise enough to take along extra oil.

YLT Matthew 25:4 and the prudent took oil in their vessels, with their lamps.

MIT Matthew 25:4 But the smart young women took with their lamps oil in flasks.

NJB Matthew 25:4 whereas the sensible ones took flasks of oil as well as their lamps.

NRS Matthew 25:4 but the wise took flasks of oil with their lamps.

RSV Matthew 25:4 but the wise took flasks of oil with their lamps.

NAB Matthew 25:4 but the wise brought flasks of oil with their lamps.

GWN Matthew 25:4 The wise bridesmaids, however, took along extra oil for their lamps.

BBE Matthew 25:4 But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lights.

- oil: Ps 45:7 Zec 4:2,3 Jn 1:15,16 3:34 Ro 8:9 2Co 1:22 Ga 5:22,23 1Jn 2:20,27 Jude 1:19

**But** - This is an important term of contrast because it changed the outcome for these 5 virgins. Keep your eagle eye on the lookout for "but's" in the Bible (including the greatest one "But God") as these always indicate a change of direction, a 180 degree reversal,

and always cause you to pause and ponder "What's the change of direction?" "What difference does this change make?" etc, etc. As as an aside, you will have ample opportunity to practice the discipline of observing and interrogating the Spirit inspired word "but" because there are over 4000 in the OT and NT!

**The prudent** ([phronimos](#)) **took oil in flasks along with their lamps**([lampas](#)) - In the parable this identifies these virgins as genuine believers. Some say the oil represents the Holy Spirit, but that is probably taking the parable too far. To be sure oil can symbolize the Spirit, but in this case the virgins placed oil in or on their lamps, that is by a work they did. The oil of the Holy Spirit is not received by any work we do but only as the result of faith in Christ.

**Spurgeon** - They had oil in their lamps, and oil with their lamps. Lamps are of no use without oil; yet the oil needs the lamp, or it will not be used. Grace should reveal its presence, faith in Christ should be avowed; but it is worse than useless to make a profession of love to Christ, unless there is a secret store of grace by which the external part of religion may be maintained even before the allsearching eye of the King himself. Unless the Spirit of God be in us, indeed, and of a truth, we may for a while make a fair show in the flesh, but the end will be the blackness of darkness for ever. (Matthew Commentary)

#### Matthew 25:5 "Now while the bridegroom was delaying, they all got drowsy and began to sleep."

KJV Matthew 25:5 While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept.

NKJ Matthew 25:5 "But while the bridegroom was delayed, they all slumbered and slept.

NET Matthew 25:5 When the bridegroom was delayed a long time, they all became drowsy and fell asleep.

BGT Matthew 25:5 χρον̣ ζοντος̣ ὁ το̣ νυμφ̣ ου̣ ν̣ σταξαν̣ π̣σαι̣ κα̣ κ̣ θευδον̣.

CSB Matthew 25:5 Since the groom was delayed, they all became drowsy and fell asleep.

ESV Matthew 25:5 As the bridegroom was delayed, they all became drowsy and slept.

NIV Matthew 25:5 The bridegroom was a long time in coming, and they all became drowsy and fell asleep.

NLT Matthew 25:5 When the bridegroom was delayed, they all became drowsy and fell asleep.

YLT Matthew 25:5 'And the bridegroom tarrying, they all nodded and were sleeping,

MIT Matthew 25:5 Because the bridegroom's procession was delayed, they all nodded off and were sleeping.

NJB Matthew 25:5 The bridegroom was late, and they all grew drowsy and fell asleep.

NRS Matthew 25:5 As the bridegroom was delayed, all of them became drowsy and slept.

RSV Matthew 25:5 As the bridegroom was delayed, they all slumbered and slept.

NAB Matthew 25:5 Since the bridegroom was long delayed, they all became drowsy and fell asleep.

GWN Matthew 25:5 Since the groom was late, all the bridesmaids became drowsy and fell asleep.

BBE Matthew 25:5 Now the husband was a long time in coming, and they all went to sleep.

- **Now while the bridegroom was delaying:** Mt 25:19 24:48 Hab 2:3 Lu 12:45 20:9 Heb 10:36,37 2Pe 3:4-9 Rev 2:25
- **they all got drowsy:** Mt 26:40,43 Song 3:1 5:2 Jon 1:5,6 Mk 14:37,38 Lu 18:8 Ro 13:11 Eph 5:14 1Th 5:6-8 1Pe 5:8

**Now while the bridegroom** ([numphios](#)) **was delaying** - Always be on the alert for [expressions of time](#) and here we see two. Do you see them? **While** is an [expression of time](#) as of course is **delaying**. Applying this parable to the Second Coming, the point is that there is an unknown period of time until Jesus returns. There is no clue as to how long this delay will be, and the clear implication is that one must always be prepared for His return.

**they all got drowsy and began to sleep** ([katheudo](#)) - Note the adjective **all**, signifying this description applies to **all** 10 virgins, so there was nothing to differentiate the foolish from the prudent. **Drowsy** is *nustazo* which pictures them nodding off or dosing on the edge of sleep, which is the usual end for one who is dozing off. **Sleep** ([katheudo](#)) is in the imperfect tense picturing all 10 falling asleep, one after another.

**William Arnot** wrote ""There is not a more grand or a more beautiful spectacle on earth than a great assembly reverently worshipping God together. No line visible to human eye divides into two parts the goodly company; yet the goodly company is divided into two parts. The Lord reads our character and marks our place. The Lord knows them that are his, and them that are not

his, in every assembly of worshippers" (See [The parables of Our Lord page 288](#)) So while such a gathering is externally "grand" and "beautiful," I would submit it is also a tragic picture, for the professors are mixed with the possessors (genuine believers), which makes the former group think that they too are saved. This is the ultimate and worst deception humanly possible!

*In the case of even true believers, the delay in Christ's coming causes disappointment, weariness, and lethargy; and his Church falls fast asleep when she ought to be watching for her Lord.*

**Spurgeon** - How sadly true it is, that, in the history of Christ's Church, genuine saints and mere professors have often "slumbered and slept " side by side! Those who have the oil of grace are not always wide awake to serve their Master, and watch for His appearing. In the case of even true believers, the delay in Christ's coming causes disappointment, weariness, and lethargy; and his Church falls fast asleep, when she ought to be watching for her Lord. As for the "foolish ", whether self-deceived or hypocrites, there being no true life of God in the soul, after a while their apparent earnestness disappears, and Satan drugs them into a fatal slumber. (Matthew Commentary)

**Matthew 25:6 "But at midnight there was a shout, Behold, the bridegroom! Come out to meet him."**

KJV Matthew 25:6 And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him.

NKJ Matthew 25:6 "And at midnight a cry was heard: 'Behold, the bridegroom is coming; go out to meet him!'

NET Matthew 25:6 But at midnight there was a shout, 'Look, the bridegroom is here! Come out to meet him.'

BGT Matthew 25:6 μ σης ὁ νυκτ ς κρᾱυ γ γονεν· ὁ νυμφ ος, ξ ρχεσθε ε ς π ντησιν [α το ].

CSB Matthew 25:6 "In the middle of the night there was a shout: 'Here's the groom! Come out to meet him.'

ESV Matthew 25:6 But at midnight there was a cry, 'Here is the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.'

NIV Matthew 25:6 "At midnight the cry rang out: 'Here's the bridegroom! Come out to meet him!'

NLT Matthew 25:6 "At midnight they were roused by the shout, 'Look, the bridegroom is coming! Come out and meet him!'

YLT Matthew 25:6 and in the middle of the night a cry was made, Lo, the bridegroom doth come; go ye forth to meet him.

MIT Matthew 25:6 At midnight a stentorian call was made: "Behold the bridegroom! Proceed to meet him."

NJB Matthew 25:6 But at midnight there was a cry, "Look! The bridegroom! Go out and meet him."

NRS Matthew 25:6 But at midnight there was a shout, 'Look! Here is the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.'

RSV Matthew 25:6 But at midnight there was a cry, 'Behold, the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.'

NAB Matthew 25:6 At midnight, there was a cry, 'Behold, the bridegroom! Come out to meet him!'

GWN Matthew 25:6 "At midnight someone shouted, 'The groom is here! Come to meet him!'

BBE Matthew 25:6 But in the middle of the night there is a cry, The husband comes! Go out to him.

- **But at midnight** : Mt 24:44 Mk 13:33-37 Lu 12:20,38-40,46 1Th 5:1-3 Rev 16:15
- **there was a shout**: Mt 24:31 Jn 5:28,29 1Th 4:16 2Pe 3:10
- **Behold**: Mt 25:31 Ps 50:3-6 96:13 98:9 2Th 1:7-10 Jude 1:14,15
- **Come out to meet him**: Mt 25:1 Isa 25:9 Am 4:12 Mal 3:1,2 Rev 19:7-9

## THE CLOCK STRIKES MIDNIGHT

**But** - Term of contrast. What is the contrast in this context?

**At midnight there was a shout** ([krauge](#)), **Behold** ([idou](#)), **the bridegroom** ([numphios](#))! - The expression **midnight** is indefinite but is usually when most people are asleep. The picture is of all 10 virgins awakened from sound sleep, which is another clue that the Bridegroom's coming was not expected and would take men by surprise. It does not provide a clue as to when the clock will strike,

but when it does, as they say on television game shows "Time's up!" Jesus says the divine [denouement](#) is identified by a shout and use of the interjection **Behold** ([idou](#)), which is calculated to arrest the hearer's attention! "Time's up!" Jesus' point is that all 10 virgins would be awakened by this **shout** and would know it was time for action (to come out and meet).

That all 10 were asleep and therefore surprised by the shout would suggest that even believers will be apathetic rather than expectant regarding the Bridegroom's return. I fear [J C Ryle](#) is correct when he says "He will find the bulk of His believing people in a sleepy and indolent state of soul....Well might a dying minister say, "we are none of us more than half-awake."

It is interesting that the exodus of Israel from the spiritual darkness and bondage in Egypt occurred at **midnight**, Moses writing "Now it came about at **midnight** that the LORD struck all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh who sat on his throne to the firstborn of the captive who was in the dungeon, and all the firstborn of cattle." (Ex 12:29+). The rabbim actually taught that Messiah would come at midnight.

**Come out** ([exerchomai](#)) to **meet** ([apantesis](#)) *Him* - **Come out** is a command ([present imperative](#)) which only the virgins with oil could obey. The noun **meet** is [apantesis](#), which is interesting in that this is the same word used by Paul in 1 Thessalonians 4:17+ describing "Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with ([sun](#)) them in the clouds to **meet** ([apantesis](#)) the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with ([sun](#) ~ intimacy) the Lord."

**Spurgeon** - That midnight cry, "Behold, the bridegroom cometh, " startled all the sleepers. It should be well if we all thought more of the great truth of our Lord's Second Advent. The oftener it is preached, in due proportion with other revealed doctrines, the more likely will it be to arouse both slumbering possessors and sleeping professors of love to Christ. As the midnight of this present evil age approaches, there is increasing need for all to be bidden to listen for the clarion cry, "**Go ye out to meet him.** " (Matthew Commentary)

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**Behold** (2400) [idou](#) is the second person singular aorist middle imperative of [eidon](#) which means to see, perceive, look at. In the NT **idou** is used as a demonstrative particle that draws attention to what follows. **Idou** in the [middle voice](#) means "you yourself look, see, perceive!" The [aorist imperative](#) is a command emphasizing "Do it now! Don't delay!"

**Spurgeon** reminds us that "**Behold** is a word of wonder; it is intended to excite admiration. Wherever you see it hung out in Scripture, it is like an ancient sign-board, signifying that there are rich wares within, or like the hands which solid readers have observed in the margin of the older Puritanic books, drawing attention to something particularly worthy of observation." I would add, **behold** is like a divine highlighter, a divine underlining of an especially striking or important text. It says in effect "Listen up, all ye who would be wise in the ways of Jehovah!"

**Idou** is used by the Biblical writers to (1) prompt or arouse the reader's attention (introducing something new or unusual), (2) to mark a strong emphasis ("Indeed!" Lk 13:16) and (3) to call the reader to pay close attention (very similar to #1) so that one will listen, remember or consider

**THOUGHT** - Dear reader, have you experienced this "**Behold**" in your life, the **behold** that you are now a new creation in Christ (2Co 5:17+)? If not, then read Acts 4:12, Acts 16:31, Romans 10:9, 10, John 1:12, 13, and Ephesians 2:8,9,10 so that you too might have oil in your lamp and be able to "**Behold**" the glory of the risen Son and abundant life in Christ (Jn 10:10+).

**Shout** (cry) (2906) [krauge](#) from [krazo](#) = clamor or cry = a word like "croak" ~ suggests a rough and guttural sound = croaking of ravens = croak or cry out with a loud, raucous voice like donkey in Job 6:5, childbirth Is 26:17, war cry in Josh 6:16) can refer to a chorus of voices (one voice in Lk 1:42) speaking loudly at the same time (outcry, shout, clamor). A third meaning the loud sound accompanying weeping, crying or wailing. (cp Heb 5:7 = What a picture **krauge** presents of the pathos and agony the Creator incarnate had to endure on His way to the Cross! Also used this way in Rev 21:4 but here of sinners who were traumatized to see their evil world system passing away!)

**KRAUGE** - 6V - clamor(1), crying(2), shout(1), uproar(1), voice(1). Matt. 25:6; Lk. 1:42; Acts 23:9; Eph. 4:31; Heb. 5:7; Rev. 21:4

**Meet** (529) ([apantesis](#) from [apantáo](#) from [apó](#) = from + [antáo](#) = to come opposite to, to meet especially to meet face to face) describes a meeting especially a meeting of two who are coming from different directions. In Greek culture the word had a technical meaning to describe the visits of dignitaries to cities where the visitor would be formally met by the citizens, or a deputation of them, who had gone out from the city for this purpose and would then be ceremonially escorted back into the city. **Apantesis** was often used to suggest the meeting of a dignitary or king, a famous person, describing people rushing to meet the one who was coming. In other words in secular Greek it had become a kind of technical term denoting "a ceremonial meeting with a person of

position. Almost invariably the word suggests that those who go out to meet him intend to return to their starting place with the person met."

**APANTESIS** - 4V - Matt. 25:1; Matt. 25:6; Acts 28:15; 1 Thess. 4:17

#### Matthew 25:7 "Then all those virgins rose and trimmed their lamps.

KJV Matthew 25:7 Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps.

NKJ Matthew 25:7 "Then all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps.

NET Matthew 25:7 Then all the virgins woke up and trimmed their lamps.

BGT Matthew 25:7 τ τε γ ρησαν π σαι α παρθ νοι κε ναι κα κ σμησαν τ ς λαμπ δας αυ τ ν.

CSB Matthew 25:7 "Then all those virgins got up and trimmed their lamps.

ESV Matthew 25:7 Then all those virgins rose and trimmed their lamps.

NIV Matthew 25:7 "Then all the virgins woke up and trimmed their lamps.

NLT Matthew 25:7 "All the bridesmaids got up and prepared their lamps.

YLT Matthew 25:7 'Then rose all those virgins, and trimmed their lamps,

MIT Matthew 25:7 Then all those young women got up and fiddled with their lamps to trim them.

NJB Matthew 25:7 Then all those wedding attendants woke up and trimmed their lamps,

NRS Matthew 25:7 Then all those bridesmaids got up and trimmed their lamps.

RSV Matthew 25:7 Then all those maidens rose and trimmed their lamps.

NAB Matthew 25:7 Then all those virgins got up and trimmed their lamps.

GWN Matthew 25:7 Then all the bridesmaids woke up and got their lamps ready.

BBE Matthew 25:7 Then all those virgins got up, and made ready their lights.

- Lu 12:35 2Pe 3:14 Rev 2:4,5 3:2,19,20

#### Related Passages:

Proverbs 20:27 "The spirit of a man is the lamp of the Lord, searching all the innermost parts of his being."

Five Virgins with oil in their TORCHES

### CRUNCH TIME - LIGHT 'EM UP!

**Crunch time** is an idiom that describes the "critical moment or period (as near the end of a game) when decisive action is needed." Indeed, this is "near the end" of the "game of life!"

**Then** ([tote](#)) (See discussion of this expression of time) Marks progression in the narrative.

**All those virgins** ([parthenos](#)) **rose** ([egeiro](#)) **and trimmed** ([kosmeo](#)) **their lamps** ([lampas](#)) - **All** again identifies a proper response of all ten. **Rose** ([egeiro](#)) is an interesting verb choice here as it is used elsewhere of resurrection (Acts 5:30, Mt 10:8, Jn 5:21, Acts 26:8, 2Co 1:9). All will trim their lamps. So far there is not distinguishing feature among the ten virgins. Note that the verb [kosmeo](#) is not the usual word for "trim" (which is usually [ekkopto](#) = to cut off) as used with cutting off the burnt portion of wicks in oil lamps. Here Jesus uses the verb [kosmeo](#) which means to adorn, arrange or put in order. Note that the ancient **lamps** ([lampas](#)) were more like rag-topped torches which they would soaked in oil, allowing the torches to burn for a while,, but still in need of re-soaking to keep burning. Trimming of the torches was done to prepare them to burn. Such trimming could involve rewinding or retying the cloth, reapplying oil, shaking off ash or char or reigniting a dimming torch. Clearly, in the context of this parable, trimming their lamps describes the general readiness which was not only a physical action but a symbolic one speaking of their spiritual watchfulness. Yes, even the believing five were drowsy and somnolent, but at least they had prepared by taking oil.



**THOUGHT** - The ten virgins each had [lampas](#) (torches), symbolizing their outward readiness, but only five had enough oil to keep the torch lit until (key time phrase - something must happen until something else happens) the bridegroom came. The act of “trimming” or preparing their torches speaks to us keeping watch over our hearts, so that they are responsive to our Master, on high alert spiritually (Spiritually "[Defcom 1](#)"! See scale above), all of which necessitates ongoing preparation (reading His Word, confessing our sins, repenting of our sins, praying to Him).

**Spurgeon** - The suddenness of the alarm made them all start to their feet, and begin to examine and trim their lamps. They could not go to meet the bridegroom without carrying a light; that was an essential part of their preparation for joining the King's marriage procession. Those virgins who had “oil in their vessels with their lamps” soon finished their trimming, and were ready to start; but those who had “lamps” but “no oil” were unable to perform the necessary trimming. It is a pity that any should have to be trimming their lamps when they come to die, or when the sign of the Son of man appears in the heaven; but if that work is attempted without the Spirit or the grace of God, it will be an eternal failure. (Matthew Commentary)

This verse recalls Jesus' words in Luke 12:35+ “**Be** ([present imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) dressed in readiness, and keep your lamps ([luchnos/lychnos](#) - small oil lamps, not torches) lit.” Literally Jesus says “Let your loins **be continually** girded,” an idiom referring to the practice of tucking the ends of the long cloak (outer garment) into the belt to shorten it in preparation for activities like running, etc (click image below). Trimming a lamp ([luchnos/lychnos](#)) refers to the fact that ancient lamps used wicks soaked in oil. Over time, the tip of the wick would become charred, leading to a smoky or dim flame, uneven or flickering light or inefficient burning of the oil (**THOUGHT** - Application - “How's your flame beloved? Does your wick need trimming?”) So, trimming the lamp involved removing the burnt portion of the wick, repositioning the wick for steady burning and sometimes refilling the lamp with oil.



**Matthew 25:8** “The foolish said to the prudent, ‘**Give** us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.’

KJV Matthew 25:8 And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out.

NKJ Matthew 25:8 "And the foolish said to the wise, 'Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.'

NET Matthew 25:8 The foolish ones said to the wise, 'Give us some of your oil, because our lamps are going out.'

BGT Matthew 25:8 α δ μωρα τα ς φρον μοι ς επαν· δε μ ν κ το λα ου μ ν, π ι α λαμπ δε ς μ ν σβ ννυνται.

CSB Matthew 25:8 But the foolish ones said to the sensible ones, 'Give us some of your oil, because our lamps are going out.'

ESV Matthew 25:8 And the foolish said to the wise, 'Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.'

NIV Matthew 25:8 The foolish ones said to the wise, 'Give us some of your oil; our lamps are going out.'

NLT Matthew 25:8 Then the five foolish ones asked the others, 'Please give us some of your oil because our lamps are going out.'

YLT Matthew 25:8 and the foolish said to the prudent, Give us of your oil, because our lamps are going out;

MIT Matthew 25:8 The shortsighted ones said to those who were foresighted, "Give us some of your oil because our lamps have burned out."

NJB Matthew 25:8 and the foolish ones said to the sensible ones, "Give us some of your oil: our lamps are going out."

NRS Matthew 25:8 The foolish said to the wise, 'Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.'

RSV Matthew 25:8 And the foolish said to the wise, 'Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.'

NAB Matthew 25:8 The foolish ones said to the wise, 'Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.'

GWN Matthew 25:8 "The foolish ones said to the wise ones, 'Give us some of your oil. Our lamps are going out.'

BBE Matthew 25:8 And the foolish said to the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lights are going out.

- **Give:** Mt 3:9 Lu 16:24 Ac 8:24 Rev 3:9
- **for:** Mt 13:20,21 Job 8:13,14 18:5 21:17 Pr 4:18,19 13:9 20:20 Lu 8:18 Lu 12:35
- **going out,** Heb 4:1

#### Related Passages:

Hebrews 4:1 Therefore, let us fear if, while a promise remains of entering His rest, any one of you may seem to have come short of it.

### OUR LAMPS ARE GOING OUT!

**The foolish said to the prudent, 'Give us some of your oil, for** (term of explanation) **our lamps (lampas) are going out** - The foolish five recognize that they are in a dire strait and seek help from the prudent five. **Lamps are going out** indicates initially the lamps seemed to work, but they ceased when the oil went out.

*May no reader of this page  
ever have to utter this bitter lament!*

**Spurgeon** - They now began to value what they had aforetime despised; they had been so foolish as to think that oil was unnecessary, now they saw that it was the one thing needful. Hence their request to their wiser companions: "Give us of your oil." They gave a dreadful reason for their request: "**for our lamps are gone out,**" or, going out; the dry wick flickered a while, and then died out in darkness, like the snuff of a candle. Those are terrible words, "**our lamps are gone out.**" It is worse to have a lamp that has gone out than never to have had a lamp at all. "**Our lamps are gone out.**" The foolish virgins seemed to say, "We thought everything was ready for tonight, we even gloried in our lamps, we promised ourselves a bright future, we thought all was well for our share in the marriage-supper; but our lamps are gone out, and we have no oil with which to supply them." May no reader of this page ever have to utter this bitter lament! Those who are putting off their repentance till their dying hour are like these foolish virgins; their folly has reached its utmost height. When the death-sweat lies cold on the brow, the neglected oil of grace will be valued. Then will come the despairing cry "Send for a minister to pray for me, get in some Christian people to see what they can do for me." (Matthew Commentary)

**Matthew 25:9 "But the prudent answered, 'No, there will not be enough for us and you too; go instead to the dealers and buy some for yourselves.'**

KJV Matthew 25:9 But the wise answered, saying, Not so; lest there be not enough for us and you: but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves.

NKJ Matthew 25:9 "But the wise answered, saying, 'No, lest there should not be enough for us and you; but go rather to those who sell, and buy for yourselves.'

NET Matthew 25:9 'No,' they replied. 'There won't be enough for you and for us. Go instead to those who sell oil and buy some for yourselves.'

BGT Matthew 25:9 περὶ θῆσαν δ' αὖ φρονιμοὶ λήγουσαι· μὴ ποτε ὁ μὲρ σὺν καμνὸς πορῇ εἴθε μᾶλλον πρὸς τοὺς πωλοῦντας καὶ γορσάτε αὐτάς.

CSB Matthew 25:9 "The sensible ones answered, 'No, there won't be enough for us and for you. Go instead to those who sell, and buy oil for yourselves.'

ESV Matthew 25:9 But the wise answered, saying, 'Since there will not be enough for us and for you, go rather to the dealers and buy for yourselves.'

NIV Matthew 25:9 " 'No,' they replied, 'there may not be enough for both us and you. Instead, go to those who

sell oil and buy some for yourselves.'

NLT Matthew 25:9 "But the others replied, 'We don't have enough for all of us. Go to a shop and buy some for yourselves.'

YLT Matthew 25:9 and the prudent answered, saying -- Lest there may not be sufficient for us and you, go ye rather unto those selling, and buy for yourselves.

MIT Matthew 25:9 But the thoughtful young women said, "Most certainly there is not enough for us and for you. Go instead to the merchants and buy some for yourselves."

NJB Matthew 25:9 But they replied, "There may not be enough for us and for you; you had better go to those who sell it and buy some for yourselves."

NRS Matthew 25:9 But the wise replied, 'No! there will not be enough for you and for us; you had better go to the dealers and buy some for yourselves.'

RSV Matthew 25:9 But the wise replied, 'Perhaps there will not be enough for us and for you; go rather to the dealers and buy for yourselves.'

NAB Matthew 25:9 But the wise ones replied, 'No, for there may not be enough for us and you. Go instead to the merchants and buy some for yourselves.'

GWN Matthew 25:9 "But the wise bridesmaids replied, 'We can't do that. There won't be enough for both of us. Go! Find someone to sell you some oil.'

BBE Matthew 25:9 But the wise made answer, saying, There may not be enough for us and you; it would be better for you to go to the traders and get oil for yourselves.

- lest: Ps 49:7-9 Jer 15:1 Eze 14:14-16,20
- **but**: Isa 55:1-3,6,7 Ac 8:22 Rev 3:17,18

**But** - A term of contrast. This contrast would mark a separation of the ten virgins, with five going one way and five going the right way.

**The prudent** ([phronimos](#)) **answered, 'No, there will not be enough for us and you too-** They prove themselves doubly prudent. This was not selfishness, but reality. No one can give another person salvation.

**Go** ([present imperative](#)) **instead to the dealers and buy some for yourselves-** The empathetic five virgins thoughtfully recommended purchasing more oil.

**Spurgeon** - No believer has more grace than he needs: "the wise" virgins had no oil to give away. They gave the best advice they could under the circumstances, although it was of no avail: "Go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves." There is a proper place where the oil can be bought at the right time: we are bidden to "buy the truth," grace is sold in God's market on gospel terms, "without money, and without price," but when the midnight cry is heard, the day of grace has closed, and buying and selling are over forever. (Matthew Commentary)

Isaiah 55:1 "Ho! Every one who thirsts, come to the waters; And you who have no money come, buy and eat. Come, buy wine and milk Without money and without cost.

**Matthew 25:10 "And while they were going away to make the purchase, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding feast; and the door was shut.**

KJV Matthew 25:10 And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut.

NKJ Matthew 25:10 "And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding; and the door was shut.

NET Matthew 25:10 But while they had gone to buy it, the bridegroom arrived, and those who were ready went inside with him to the wedding banquet. Then the door was shut.

BGT Matthew 25:10 περχομ νων ὁ α τ ν γορσαι λθεν νυμφος, κα α τοιμοι ε σ λθον μετ α το ε ς το ς γ μους κα κλε σθη θ ρα.

CSB Matthew 25:10 "When they had gone to buy some, the groom arrived. Then those who were ready went in with him to the wedding banquet, and the door was shut.

ESV Matthew 25:10 And while they were going to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the marriage feast, and the door was shut.

NIV Matthew 25:10 "But while they were on their way to buy the oil, the bridegroom arrived. The virgins who were ready went in with him to the wedding banquet. And the door was shut.

NLT Matthew 25:10 "But while they were gone to buy oil, the bridegroom came. Then those who were ready went in with him to the marriage feast, and the door was locked.

YLT Matthew 25:10 'And while they are going away to buy, the bridegroom came, and those ready went in with him to the marriage-feasts, and the door was shut;

MIT Matthew 25:10 While they were away to buy oil, the bridegroom arrived. Those who were ready entered with him to the marriage feast, and the door was bolted.

NJB Matthew 25:10 They had gone off to buy it when the bridegroom arrived. Those who were ready went in with him to the wedding hall and the door was closed.

NRS Matthew 25:10 And while they went to buy it, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went with him into the wedding banquet; and the door was shut.

RSV Matthew 25:10 And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the marriage feast; and the door was shut.

NAB Matthew 25:10 While they went off to buy it, the bridegroom came and those who were ready went into the wedding feast with him. Then the door was locked.

GWN Matthew 25:10 "While they were buying oil, the groom arrived. The bridesmaids who were ready went with him into the wedding hall, and the door was shut.

BBE Matthew 25:10 And while they went to get oil, the master came; and those who were ready went in with him to the feast: and the door was shut.

- **the bridegroom:** Mt 25:6 Rev 1:7 22:12,20
- **they:** Mt 25:20-23 Am 8:12,13 Lu 12:36,37 Col 1:12 2Ti 4:8 1Pe 1:13
- **and the door was shut :** Ge 7:16 Nu 14:28-34 Ps 95:11 Lu 13:25 Heb 3:18,19 Rev 22:11



Wedding Feast

## TOO LITTLE TOO LATE

**And while they were going away to make the purchase** - Notice the expression of time, **while**, indicating at the same time the five were going, the Bridegroom was coming! To their credit, the five foolish virgins heeded the advice of the five prudent, but as the old saying goes it was "[Too little, too late](#)!"

**The bridegroom** ([numphios](#)) **came**, and **those who were ready** ([hetoimos](#)) **went in** ([eiserchomai](#)) **with him to the wedding feast** ([gamos](#)); and **the door** ([thura](#)) **was shut** ([kleio](#)) - Notice the verbs, **came**, **were ready**, **went in** and **shut**, four verbs that describe an immutable (and ultimately eternal) division in the group of 10 virgins. The closing of the door to the feast recalls the closing of the door to those drowning in the global flood, Moses recording "Those that entered, male and female of all flesh, entered as God had commanded him; and **the LORD closed** (Lxx - [kleio](#)) it behind him." (Ge 7:16+) Two doors in Genesis 7 and Matthew 25 separating all humanity into those who would forever be separated from their Creator and those who would forever be privileged to worship their Creator.

**Spurgeon** - Undoubtedly, there are death-bed repentances; but it is to be feared that, in the great majority of cases, people who

wake up so late to a true conviction of their condition will find that, while they go to buy the long despised grace, “the bridegroom” will come. The poor head may be so distracted with pain that the mind may not be able to catch the idea of what faith in Christ is; mental capacity may wholly fail in that dread hour. The risk is so great that none but the fatally foolish will postpone till then the preparation for the King’s coming. “They that were ready went in with him to the marriage:” their readiness consisted in having lighted lamps, or flaming torches; our preparation for death or Christ’s coming, is the possession of grace in the heart. “And the door was shut:” when that door is once shut, it will never be opened. There are some who dote and dream about an opening of that door, after death, for those who have died impenitent; but there is nothing in the Scriptures to warrant such an expectation. Any “larger hope” than that revealed in the Word of God, is a delusion and a snare. (Matthew Commentary)

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**Raleigh** - The door of mercy has hinges, and it may be shut, and then locked with the adamant key of justice.

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### **Locked Out!**

Those who were ready went in with him to the wedding; and the door was shut. — Matthew 25:10

Today's Scripture : Matthew 25:1-13

I can still remember the night I locked myself out of my house. My wife and son had just left for the evening, and I had gone outside to close up the garage. When I went back to the house, I discovered that the door had blown shut. Everything was tightly secured. I had no choice but to remain out in the chilly air until my family returned.

As I sat there for several hours, I thought about how dreadful it will be for all who are “locked out” of heaven for eternity. Having waited too long and having never received Christ, they will suddenly face the terrifying reality that the door of salvation is closed to them forever!

In the parable of the ten virgins, Jesus told of five who had prepared for the coming of the bridegroom. When he came, they “went in with him to the wedding” (Mt. 25:10). Later, however, when the five foolish virgins tried to go in, the door was shut! In response to their pleas, they heard him answer, “I do not know you” (v.12).

If Christ should return right now, millions would share a similar fate. What about you? Jesus said, “I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved” (Jn. 10:9). Have you accepted forgiveness through faith in the Savior? Don’t risk being “locked out”! By: Richard DeHaan (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

The day of life is passing by,  
Soon night your soul will hide;  
And then "too late" will be your cry  
If you are just outside!  
—Rowe

It's never too early to receive Christ, but at any moment it could be too late!

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### **Doors: Open And Shut**

I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved. —John 10:9

Today's Scripture : Matthew 25:1-13

George Morrison, one of Scotland's most popular preachers in the early 20th century, was known for a sermon titled, “The Ever-Open Door.” And on his deathbed he exclaimed, “It’s open for me now, and I’m going through.” As a believer, he surely did go through the door into glory.

That door won’t always be open, however. Someday the door of grace will close and unbelievers will be shut out of God’s presence forever.

The eloquent English evangelist George Whitefield (1714-1770) once preached on the text, “. . . and the door was shut” (Mt. 25:10). One man in the audience was overheard saying to another, “So what? Another door will open.” But as Whitefield continued preaching, he said, “There may be someone here who is careless and self-satisfied, and who thinks, ‘What does it matter if the door is shut? Another will open.’ Yes, it will—the door to the bottomless pit, the door to hell!”

When time runs out, and God shuts the door of salvation, the door to doom, darkness, and despair will open. But today, if you trust in

Jesus Christ, you enter the still wide-open door into eternal life.

Have you walked through that door? By: Vernon Grounds (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

The time has come for me to choose—  
It's Jesus Christ or heaven lose;  
But if what heaven loves, I hate,  
Then closed to me is heaven's gate.  
—Anon.

Christ is the only way to heaven; all other ways lead to doom.

**Matthew 25:11 “Later the other virgins also came, saying, ‘Lord, lord, **open** up for us.’”**

KJV Matthew 25:11 Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us.

NKJ Matthew 25:11 "Afterward the other virgins came also, saying, 'Lord, Lord, open to us!'

NET Matthew 25:11 Later, the other virgins came too, saying, 'Lord, lord! Let us in!'

BGT Matthew 25:11 στερον ὁ ρχονται κα α λοιπα παρθ νοι λ γουσαι· κ ριε κ ριε, νοιξον μ ν.

CSB Matthew 25:11 "Later the rest of the virgins also came and said, 'Master, master, open up for us!'

ESV Matthew 25:11 Afterward the other virgins came also, saying, 'Lord, lord, open to us.'

NIV Matthew 25:11 "Later the others also came. 'Sir! Sir!' they said. 'Open the door for us!'

NLT Matthew 25:11 Later, when the other five bridesmaids returned, they stood outside, calling, 'Lord! Lord! Open the door for us!'

YLT Matthew 25:11 and afterwards come also do the rest of the virgins, saying, Sir, sir, open to us;

MIT Matthew 25:11 Later, the rest of the young women arrived saying, "Sir, sir, open up for us!"

NJB Matthew 25:11 The other attendants arrived later. "Lord, Lord," they said, "open the door for us."

NRS Matthew 25:11 Later the other bridesmaids came also, saying, 'Lord, lord, open to us.'

RSV Matthew 25:11 Afterward the other maidens came also, saying, 'Lord, lord, open to us.'

NAB Matthew 25:11 Afterwards the other virgins came and said, 'Lord, Lord, open the door for us!'

GWN Matthew 25:11 "Later the other bridesmaids arrived and said, 'Sir, sir, open the door for us!'

BBE Matthew 25:11 After that the other virgins came, saying, Lord, Lord, let us in.

- **saying:** Mt 7:21-23 Heb 12:16-17

**Later** - This time phrase refers to after the door was shut. The idea is **afterwards** as with Esau's tragic situation in Heb 12:16-17.

**The other virgins** ([parthenos](#)) **also came, saying, ‘Lord** ([kurios](#)), **lord** ([kurios](#)), **open** ([anoigo](#)) **up for us - Open** ([anoigo](#)) **up** is a command in the [aorist imperative](#) which speaks of a sense of urgency -**Do it now!** Sadly, since they did not open the door when He knocked (Rev 3:20+), He could not open the door when they knocked!

**THOUGHT** - Dear reader, if you have never opened the door to Jesus Christ, today could be the day of salvation for you. Let Jesus' warning drive you to Him and by faith through grace receive His gracious gift of eternal life and you will never be locked out from His glorious presence.

**J C Ryle** says "All these expressions are striking emblems of things to come. Let us take heed that we do not find them true by experience, to our own eternal ruin."

As **Spurgeon** said "When that door is once shut, it will never be opened. There are some who dote and dream about an opening of that door, after death, for those who have died impenitent; but there is nothing in the Scriptures to warrant such an expectation. Any



'larger hope' than that revealed in the Word of God is a delusion and a snare." (See [Will there be a second chance for salvation after death?](#))

These words of the 5 virgins in the parable crying **Lord, lord** will sadly be repeated by many souls with no oil in them lamps to whom Jesus will be forced to declare...

"Not everyone who says to Me, **Lord (kurios)**, **lord (kurios)**,' will enter the kingdom of heaven (**ED**: REMEMBER THE PARABLES IN MATTHEW 25 ARE ABOUT THE "KINGDOM OF HEAVEN"), but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven will enter. 22 "Many will say to Me on that day, '**Lord (kurios)**, **lord (kurios)**, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?' 23 "And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; **DEPART (present imperative)** FROM ME (A SAD COMMAND CALLING FOR SEPARATION OF THOSE CREATED IN THE IMAGE OF GOD TO FOREVER BE SEPARATED FROM THEIR CREATOR), YOU WHO PRACTICE (present tense - as the habit of your life) LAWLESSNESS.' (Matthew 7:21-23+)

**Spurgeon** - "The other virgins " were not "ready" when the bridegroom came; and there is no hint in the parable that they were any more ready when they came and clamored at his closed door, "Lord, lord, open to us." "We came to meet thee, we carried lamps, we were with the other virgins; Lord, Lord, open to us!" (Matthew Commentary)

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**Lord (2962) (kurios/kyrios)** from **kuros** = might or power, related to **kuroo** = to give authority) primarily means the possessor, owner, master, the supreme one, one who is sovereign (e.g., Roman emperors - Acts 25:26+) and possesses absolute authority, absolute ownership rights and uncontested power. Originally kurios was an adjective which meant "to have power, authority." The term also functioned as a noun, and in that case it meant "lord, master, ruler." It could be an address reserved for those with a superior status ("sir"). **Kurios** is used of the one to whom a person or thing belonged, over which he has the power of deciding, the one who is the master or disposer of a thing (Mk 7:28) **Kurios** has a variety of meanings/uses in the NT and therefore one must carefully examine the context in order to discern which sense is intended by the NT author. For example, some passages use kurios only as a common form of polite address with no religious/spiritual meaning.

**Friberg on kurios** - (1) in a nonreligious sense; (a) one controlling his own property owner, lord, master (Mk 12:9); (b) one having authority over persons lord, master (Lu 12:43); (2) as a form of address showing respect sir, lord (Jn 4.11); (3) in religious usage, as a designation and personal title for God (Mt 1.20) and Jesus Christ (Jn 20.18) (the) Lord; translation of the Hebrew *adonai*, which in the public reading of Scripture replaced the tetragrammaton *yhwh*

See in depth 10 page discussion of **kyrios** in [The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology](#) (NIDNTT)

#### Matthew 25:12 "But he answered, 'Truly I say to you, I do not know you.'

KJV Matthew 25:12 But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not.

NKJ Matthew 25:12 "But he answered and said, 'Assuredly, I say to you, I do not know you.'

NET Matthew 25:12 But he replied, 'I tell you the truth, I do not know you!'

BGT Matthew 25:12 ὁ αποκρίθη εἰπὼν· μὴ λέγω μὴν, οὐκ ὄξαμι.

CSB Matthew 25:12 "But he replied, 'I assure you: I do not know you!'

ESV Matthew 25:12 But he answered, 'Truly, I say to you, I do not know you.'

NIV Matthew 25:12 "But he replied, 'I tell you the truth, I don't know you.'

NLT Matthew 25:12 "But he called back, 'Believe me, I don't know you!'

YLT Matthew 25:12 and he answering said, Verily I say to you, I have not known you.

MIT Matthew 25:12 But his answer came: "Indeed, I declare to you that I do not recognize you."

NJB Matthew 25:12 But he replied, "In truth I tell you, I do not know you."

NRS Matthew 25:12 But he replied, 'Truly I tell you, I do not know you.'

RSV Matthew 25:12 But he replied, 'Truly, I say to you, I do not know you.'

NAB Matthew 25:12 But he said in reply, 'Amen, I say to you, I do not know you.'

GWN Matthew 25:12 "But he answered them, 'I don't even know who you are!'

BBE Matthew 25:12 But he made answer and said, Truly I say to you, I have no knowledge of you.

■ **know:** Ps 1:6 5:5 Hab 1:13 Lu 13:26-30 Jn 9:31 Jn 10:27 1Co 8:3 Ga 4:9 2Ti 2:19

#### Related Passages:

Galatians 4:9+ But now that you have come to know God, or rather **to be known by God**, how is it that you turn back again to the weak and worthless elemental things, to which you desire to be enslaved all over again?

Psalm 1:6+ For the LORD **knows** the way of the righteous, But the way of the wicked will perish.

John 10:27+ "My sheep hear My voice, and I **know** them, and they follow Me;

1 Corinthians 8:3+ but if anyone loves God, he is **known** by Him.

### THE BELL TOLLS THEIR DEATH KNELL

**But** - Term of contrast. This contrast marks a dramatic change of direction for the foolish virgins.

**He answered, 'Truly ([amen](#)) I say to you, I do ([ou](#) - absolutely do) not know ([eido](#)) you** - Only Jesus uses "**Amen**" at the beginning of sentences and these uses always signify the absolute veracity of what follows. In this case the "**Amen**" signified that Jesus never at any point in time knew them, which is to say that He never had a personal relationship with them. This is a sad verse because there are many people who know ABOUT Jesus and even think they actually know Him. Tragically they are deceived and are still dead in their trespasses and sins (Eph 2:1+). As Jesus clearly stated using a double "amen" "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he ([ou](#) = absolutely) cannot see the kingdom of God." (John 3:3+)

As Paul explained to Timothy in the face of those upsetting the faith of some (2Ti 2:18+) "Nevertheless, the firm foundation of God stands, having this seal, "The Lord **knows** those who are His," and, "Everyone who names the name of the Lord is to abstain from wickedness." (2Ti 2:19+)

*May none of us ever hear from the blessed lips of the heavenly Bridegroom that terrible death-sentence, "I know you not"!*

**Spurgeon** - His answer tolled the [knell](#) of any vain hope of admission that they might have cherished: "Verily, I say unto you, I know you not." "If any man loveth God, the same is known of him." (1Co 8:3+) The Good Shepherd says, "I know mine own, and mine own know me." (John 10:14+) Those whom Jesus Christ knows in this sense, he loves; and they love him because he has first loved them. The foolish virgins had professed to be the bridegroom's friends, yet they were proved to be not even his acquaintances. May none of us ever hear from the blessed lips of the heavenly Bridegroom that terrible death-sentence, "I know you not"! (Matthew Commentary)

**John MacArthur** on "I do not know you" - It will be a moment of sheer terror when unbelievers face a holy God and realize with absolute certainty that they are eternally lost. That must have been the feeling of the people of Noah's day when they saw the flood waters rise above their heads and knew the door to the ark was unalterably shut. Although the parable of the ten virgins illustrates the time of Christ's second coming, its truths apply to an unbeliever's facing God at death in any age. At that moment the opportunity for salvation will be past and all hope gone forever. (See [Matthew Commentary - Page 92](#))

**Craig Blomberg** - The three points of the passage may now be summarized: "(1) Like the bridegroom, God may delay his coming longer than people expect. (2) Like the wise bridesmaids, his followers must be prepared for such a delay—discipleship may be more arduous than the novice suspects. (3) Like the foolish bridesmaids, those who do not prepare adequately may discover a point beyond which there is no return—when the end comes it will be too late to undo the damage of neglect." (Borrow [Matthew](#))

**Matthew 25:13 "Be on the alert then, for you do not know the day nor the hour.**

KJV Matthew 25:13 Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh.

NKJ Matthew 25:13 "Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man is coming.

NET Matthew 25:13 Therefore stay alert, because you do not know the day or the hour.

BGT Matthew 25:13 γρηγορετε ο ν, τι ο κ ο δατε τ ν μ παν ο δ τ ν παν.

CSB Matthew 25:13 "Therefore be alert, because you don't know either the day or the hour.

ESV Matthew 25:13 Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour.

NIV Matthew 25:13 "Therefore keep watch, because you do not know the day or the hour.

NLT Matthew 25:13 "So you, too, must keep watch! For you do not know the day or hour of my return.

YLT Matthew 25:13 'Watch therefore, for ye have not known the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man doth come.

MIT Matthew 25:13 Keep alert, therefore, because you know neither his arrival day nor the hour!

NJB Matthew 25:13 So stay awake, because you do not know either the day or the hour.

NRS Matthew 25:13 Keep awake therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour.

RSV Matthew 25:13 Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour.

NAB Matthew 25:13 Therefore, stay awake, for you know neither the day nor the hour.

GWN Matthew 25:13 "So stay awake, because you don't know the day or the hour.

BBE Matthew 25:13 Keep watch, then, because you are not certain of the day or of the hour.

- Mt 24:42-44 Mk 13:33-37 Lu 21:36 Ac 20:31 1Co 16:13 1Th 5:6 2Ti 4:5 1Pe 4:7 5:8 Rev 16:15

#### Related Passages:

Matthew 24:42-44 "Therefore **be on the alert** ([gregoreuo](#) - [present imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)), for (term of explanation = explains why we need to be alert!) you do not know which day your Lord is coming. 43 "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. 44 "For this reason you also must **be** ([present imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) ready; for the Son of Man is coming at an hour when you do not think He will.

Mark 13:33-37 "**Take heed** ([blepo](#) in [present imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)), **keep on the alert** ([agrupneo](#) in [present imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)); for (term of explanation = explains why we need to take heed!) you do not know ([eido](#)) when the appointed time will come. 34 "It is like a man away on a journey, who upon leaving his house and putting his slaves in charge, assigning to each one his task, also commanded the doorkeeper to stay on the alert. 35 "Therefore, **be on the alert** ([gregoreuo](#) - [present imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#))—for (term of explanation = explains why we need to be alert!) you do not know when the master of the house is coming, whether in the evening, at midnight, or when the rooster crows, or in the morning— 36 in case he should come suddenly and find you asleep. 37 "What I say to you I say to all, '**Be on the alert** ([gregoreuo](#) - [present imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#))!'"

Luke 21:36 "But **keep on the alert** ([agrupneo](#) in [present imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) **AT ALL TIMES**, praying that you may have strength to escape all these things that are about to take place, and to stand before the Son of Man."

Acts 20:31 (WARNING TO ELDERS AT EPHESUS!) "Therefore **be on the alert** ([gregoreuo](#) - [present imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)), remembering that night and day for a period of three years I did not cease to admonish each one with tears.

1 Corinthians 16:13 **Be on the alert** ([gregoreuo](#) - [present imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)), **stand firm** ([present imperative](#)) in the faith, **act like men** ([present imperative](#)), **be strong** ([present imperative](#)). 14 Let all that you do **be done** ([present imperative](#)), in love.



Buster Keaton looking expectantly  
"The Navigator" 1924

## REMAIN ON HIGH ALERT!

**Be on the alert** ([gregoreuo](#)) **then** - Why **then**? Clearly because of the imminency of His return which will occur without warning. **Be on the alert** ([gregoreuo](#)) is in the [present imperative](#) calling for this to be our lifestyle. The only way to obey this command is by daily [depending on the Holy Spirit](#) to give us the desire (the "want to" because our fallen flesh does not "want to!") and the power to obey (Php 2:13NLT+). As an aside it is interesting that the verb Jesus chose to use ([gregoreuo](#)) is derived from [egeiro](#) which can mean to awaken or arouse from sleep, which is exactly what all 10 of the virgins had been doing in Mt 25:5+!

I often think the passage in 1Jn 2:28+ where John exhorts his readers "Now, little children, **abide** ([present imperative](#)) = as your lifestyle -- see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#) in Him, so that (term of purpose) when He appears, we may have confidence ([parrhesia](#)) and not shrink away from Him in shame at His coming."

**Spurgeon** - Our Lord again enjoins upon his followers the duty of watchfulness, as in Mt 24:42+; and repeats, in a slightly-altered form, the reason previously given: "**For ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh**" It is idle to say that we may find out the year, if not the day and hour, of Christ's coming. The time of the end is hidden, and shall not be known until suddenly, he shall appear "in the clouds of heaven in power and great glory." (Mt 24:30+) It should be our one great concern to be sure that we shall be ready to meet him whenever he may come. (Matthew Commentary)

**For** (term of explanation) - Explains our ongoing need for a sense of urgency and imminency. Below is the picture of a plague which was on the desk of Dr DeHaan, the one who established Our Daily Bread ministries. May his tribe increase! Amen!



**You do not know** ([eido](#)) **the day nor the hour** (cf Mt 24:36 Mt 24:42 Mk 13:33 Ac 1:6-7 Rev 3:3 Rev 16:15) - In other words the time for His return is anytime and of that time we have no forewarning, so we must be ready all the time. We all need to put this sign on our mirror so we will see it each morning. Jesus' words remind me of a game I played as child called "Hide and Seek," and how the seeker would count down and then cry out "Ready or not here I come!"

**John MacArthur** quoted the "epic poem *Idylls of the King*, (where) Alfred Lord Tennyson used figures from the parable of the ten virgins in a song directed to the wicked Queen Guinevere, who learned too late the cost of sin:

Late, late, so late, and dark the night and chill!  
Late, late, so late, but we can enter still.  
Too late, too late, ye cannot enter now.

No light had we, for that we do repent;  
And, learning this, the Bridegroom will relent.  
Too late, too late, ye cannot enter now.

No light, so late, and dark and chill the night!

O let us in, that we may find the light.  
Too late, too late, ye cannot enter now.

Have we not heard the Bridegroom is so sweet?  
O let us in, tho' late, to kiss His feet!  
No, no, too late! Ye cannot enter now.

See [Matthew Commentary](#)

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#### James Smith - BEHOLD HE COMETH Matthew 25:13

- I. The Fact. "The Son of Man cometh."
- II. An Uncertainty. "Ye know neither the day nor the hour."
- III. An Exhortation. "Watch, therefore" (Rev. 21:15).

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**Be on the alert** (Keep watch) ([1127](#)) [gregoreuo](#) from **egeiro** = to arise, arouse) means to be watchful or to refrain from physical sleep. Later **gregoreuo** came to be used in the moral and religious sphere and was used to call for one **to be on the alert**, in a **constant state of readiness** and **vigilant** (alertly watchful especially to avoid danger this word suggesting intense, unrelenting, wary watchfulness; keenly alert to or heedful of trouble or danger as others are sleeping or unsuspecting). We are to be watchful and ready to respond to external influences, focused, alert for the winds of temptation or overt attacks of evil. We are to remain alert lest we be deceived by the devil the deceiver or sin which is deceitful ([Heb 3:13](#)).

**GREGOREUO - 22V - alert(10), awake(1), keep(1), keep watch(4), keep watching(1), keeping alert(1), stay on the alert(1), stays awake(1), wake(2).** Matt. 24:42; Matt. 24:43; Matt. 25:13; Matt. 26:38; Matt. 26:40; Matt. 26:41; Mk. 13:34; Mk. 13:35; Mk. 13:37; Mk. 14:34; Mk. 14:37; Mk. 14:38; Lk. 12:37; Acts 20:31; 1 Co. 16:13; Col. 4:2; 1 Thess. 5:6; 1 Thess. 5:10; 1 Pet. 5:8; Rev. 3:2; Rev. 3:3; Rev. 16:15

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#### G Campbell Morgan - Watch therefore, for ye know not the day nor the hour. Matt. 25:13

This is our Lord's word to His own as to their attitude toward the fact of His Second Coming. That He is coming again He most plainly declared, and all the New Testament writers affirmed the truth. The light and glory of that certainty falls upon all the darkness of the processes through which the victory of the Kingdom of God is to be won. Nothing will be completed until He come; but everything is working under His mediatorial reign to that consummation. Nothing is more explicit in His references to that glorious end, than the declaration that the day and hour are not revealed. The hiding of that time is part of the Divine counsel. To seek to discover it is to attempt to be wiser than our Lord, in His infinite wisdom, intends that we should be. Our attitude is to be that of those who watch. To know the day or the hour would be to make watching largely unnecessary; and this would rob us of that alertness which is of the very essence of true discipleship both in life and service. Concerning the times and seasons we need have no care. They are within the Father's authority, and there can be no failure with Him. Knowing beforehand both the strangeness of the period of our waiting, and the certainty of His coming, it is ours to have our lamps burning, our loins girt about, and to be so occupied about His business that when He comes we shall be neither surprised nor ashamed. That is patient waiting for Christ, and it is far removed from the fussy impatience that seeks to know what He has chosen to hide, and in such seeking spends time and strength which should be devoted to His service.

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Matthew 25:13

**BE READY!** - As a teenager, Jim Tait wanted to make maple syrup, so he purchased some catch buckets and a boiling pan. Then he tapped the trees and collected the sap. His father told him what to watch for after he began boiling the sap. But instead of keeping his eye on the steaming liquid, Jim left it for a few moments to consult with his father. While he was gone, the sap became milky and began to bubble. Moments later Jim returned, but it was too late. The sap had turned to syrup, and the syrup had crystallized and burned.

In the parable of the 10 virgins, Jesus was instructing His followers to be ready at all times to meet the bridegroom, whose coming represented Christ's any-moment return to this earth. They were to live so that the Lord would find them as ready as if they had known the exact moment of His appearing.

The fact of Christ's imminent return to this earth benefits us as Christians in many ways. It helps us to be ready and watching for the Lord, to be obedient, to be faithful, and to bear spiritual fruit. It is also a purifying truth that gives us hope (1 John 3:3).

Are you watching for Jesus' return? If you knew it would be today, would you be ready? -D C Egner  
Blessed are those whom the Lord finds watching,  
In His glory they shall share;  
If He shall come at the dawn or midnight,  
Will He find us watching there?--Crosby  
Since Jesus may come at any time, we must be ready all the time.

**Matthew 25:14 "For *it is* just like a man about to go on a journey, who called his own slaves and entrusted his possessions to them.**

KJV Matthew 25:14 For the kingdom of heaven is as a man travelling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods.

NKJ Matthew 25:14 "For the kingdom of heaven is like a man traveling to a far country, who called his own servants and delivered his goods to them.

NET Matthew 25:14 "For it is like a man going on a journey, who summoned his slaves and entrusted his property to them.

BGT Matthew 25:14 σπερ γρ νθρωπος ποδημν κλεσεν το ς δουρ δο λους κα παρ δωκεν ατο ς τ π ρχοντα ατο ,

CSB Matthew 25:14 "For it is just like a man going on a journey. He called his own slaves and turned over his possessions to them.

ESV Matthew 25:14 "For it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted to them his property.

NIV Matthew 25:14 "Again, it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted his property to them.

NLT Matthew 25:14 "Again, the Kingdom of Heaven can be illustrated by the story of a man going on a long trip. He called together his servants and entrusted his money to them while he was gone.

YLT Matthew 25:14 'For -- as a man going abroad did call his own servants, and did deliver to them his substance,

MIT Matthew 25:14 Here is another analogy: A man about to go abroad called his servants and put his assets under their control.

NJB Matthew 25:14 'It is like a man about to go abroad who summoned his servants and entrusted his property to them.

NRS Matthew 25:14 "For it is as if a man, going on a journey, summoned his slaves and entrusted his property to them;

RSV Matthew 25:14 "For it will be as when a man going on a journey called his servants and entrusted to them his property;

NAB Matthew 25:14 "It will be as when a man who was going on a journey called in his servants and entrusted his possessions to them.

GWN Matthew 25:14 "The kingdom of heaven is like a man going on a trip. He called his servants and entrusted some money to them.

BBE Matthew 25:14 For it is as when a man, about to take a journey, got his servants together, and gave them his property.

- **just like:** Mt 21:33 Mk 13:34 Lu 19:12,13 20:9
- **entrusted** Lu 16:1-12 Ro 12:6-8 1Co 3:5 4:1,2 12:4,7-29 Eph 4:11 1Pe 4:9-11

## THE PARABLE



## OF THE TALENTS

**For** ([gar](#)) - This is a term of explanation so the question is what is Jesus explaining? Although the nearest context was a command calling for the hearers to be alert, the wider context was that Jesus was using these parables to explain the Kingdom of Heaven (cf Mt 25:1). In fact several versions (KJV, NKJV, NLT, GWN) add "*Kingdom of Heaven*" to their translation to emphasize this point. While I think this is the most likely meaning of the **for** ([gar](#)) , **Robert Gundry** feels that "**For** makes the following parable a further basis for the exhortation to stay awake in Mt 25:13." Given the close context, it is difficult to definitely refute Gundry's idea, but I think it is less likely given that context of both alludes to the Second Coming, the return of the king.

I agree with **Sean Douglas O'Donnell** who asks "What is **"IT"**? The answer is easily found in the preceding parable. "It" is "the kingdom of heaven" (Mt 25:1). "The kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins" (Mt 25:1), and the kingdom of heaven will also be like "a man going on a journey" (Mt 25:14). (See [Matthew: All Authority in Heaven and on Earth - Page 738](#))

*It is just like* ([term of comparison](#)/[simile](#)) **a man about to go on a journey, who called his own**([ideos](#)) **slaves** ([doulos](#)) **and entrusted** ([paradidomi](#)) **his possessions** ([huparcho](#)) **to them** - In short, the man going on the journey gave his slave the responsibility of stewardship of his possessions, a steward being one who manages and looks after the care of another's property. The **man** surely represents Jesus and is referred to as [kurios](#) 10x in this parable, which is the title commonly used in Matthew for Jesus.

*The parable of the virgins (Mt 25:1–13) focuses on readiness manifested in waiting, whereas the parable of the talents focuses on readiness manifested in working*

**John MacArthur** has a nice alliterative outline of this parable - the **responsibility** we receive (Mt 25:14-15), the **reaction** we have (Mt 25:16-18), the **reckoning** we face (Mt 25:19-27), and the **reward** we gain (Mt 25:28-30)....The tragedy of wasted opportunity is the theme of Jesus' **parable of the talents**, the second of two parables relating to the kingdom of heaven and, in particular, to men's readiness for Jesus' coming to establish the kingdom at His second coming (see Matt. 25:1). The parable of the virgins (Mt 25:1–13) focuses on readiness manifested in waiting, whereas the parable of the talents focuses on readiness manifested in working. The five virgins who had oil for their lamps represent believers who possess saving grace; the two faithful servants who invested their talents represent believers who exhibit the serving life. Together the two parables depict the balance of believers' looking forward to His coming with anticipation while living in preparedness for His coming through faithful service....**Saving faith is serving faith** ....In each account, both genuine and counterfeit believers are depicted. (See [Matthew Commentary - Page 97](#))

*The story of the virgins calls on the Church to watch, the story of the talents calls on the Church to work.*

**J C Ryle** - THE **parable of the talents** which we have now read is near akin to that of the **ten virgins**. Both direct our minds to the same important event, the second advent of Jesus Christ. Both bring before us the same persons, the members of the professing Church of Christ. The virgins and the servants are one and the same people,—but the same people regarded from a different point, and viewed on different sides. The practical lesson of each parable is the main point of difference. **Vigilance** is the key note of the first parable, **diligence** that of the second. The story of the virgins calls on the Church to watch, the story of the talents calls on the Church to work. We learn, in the first place, from this parable, that all professing Christians have received something from God. We are all God's "servants." We have all "talents" entrusted to our charge....Anything whereby we may glorify God is a talent, Our gifts, our influence, our money, our knowledge, our health, our strength, our time, our senses, our reason, our intellect, our memory, our affections, our privileges as members of Christ's Church, our advantages as possessors of the Bible,—all, all are talents. Whence came these things? What hand bestowed them? Why are we what we are? Why are we not the worms that crawl on the earth? There is only one answer to these questions. All that we have is a loan from God. We are God's stewards. We are God's debtors. Let this thought sink deeply into our hearts.

**C H Spurgeon commentary** - Our Savior had been speaking of himself as the heavenly Bridegroom; now he compares himself to "a man traveling into a far country. " The word "traveling" suggests that our Lord has only gone away for a season and that he will return when his purpose in going into the "far country" is accomplished. When he went back from earth to heaven, it was a long journey; but he did not leave his servants without needful supplies during his absence. He "called his own servants ", his bondservants, his household servants; "and delivered unto them his goods. " The servants were his, and the goods also were his; his slaves could not claim as their own either their persons or their possessions; all belonged to their lord, and were to be used for him.

**Alfred Plummer** explains why the Parable of the Talents is not likely the same parable as the one in Luke 19:11-27 (Pounds) - "The lesson of the Pounds is that men endowed with the same gifts may make a very different use of them and be very differently requited. The lesson of the Talents is, that men with different gifts may make an equally good (or bad) use of them, and be proportionately requited." (Online [Matthew - go to page 397](#))

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**Entrusted** (commit, hand over) (3860) **paradidomi** is an authoritative commitment of something to someone = entrust, commit, give or hand over, deliver. **Paradidomi** (from **para** = alongside, beside, to the side of, over to + **didomi** = to give) conveys the basic meaning of to give over from one's hand to someone or something, especially to give over to the power of another. **Paradidomi** is used in legal parlance to describe handing someone into the custody of the police, authorities, etc. To deliver up one to custody, to be judged, condemned, punished, scourged, tormented, put to death. **Paradidomi** can describe the "illegal", treacherous or unjustified handing of someone over to someone as in a **betrayal**. **Paradidomi** is used in the context of dying, meaning to give up one's life, to give up one's spirit, i.e. to expire. **Paradidomi** was used as a military term to describe surrender. Paul uses **paradidomi** in describe delivering over rebellious, God and truth rejecting individuals to suffer the consequences of their sins (Ro 1:24+)

**PARADIDOMI IN MATTHEW** - Matt. 4:12; Matt. 5:25; Matt. 10:4; Matt. 10:17; Matt. 10:19; Matt. 10:21; Matt. 11:27; Matt. 17:22; Matt. 18:34; Matt. 20:18; Matt. 20:19; Matt. 24:9; Matt. 24:10; Matt. 25:14; Matt. 25:20; Matt. 25:22; Matt. 26:2; Matt. 26:15; Matt. 26:16; Matt. 26:21; Matt. 26:23; Matt. 26:24; Matt. 26:25; Matt. 26:45; Matt. 26:46; Matt. 26:48; Matt. 27:2; Matt. 27:3; Matt. 27:4; Matt. 27:18; Matt. 27:26

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#### QUESTION - [What is the meaning of the Parable of the Talents?](#)

**ANSWER** - Matthew, in chapters 24-25, records the Lord's heart of compassion and love mingled with unwavering holiness. This section of Scripture, including the Parable of the Talents, constitutes final warnings, prophecies, and encouragements to His people Israel prior to His departure. He, who is their Lord, is leaving for an undisclosed period of time. He is delegating to them the responsibility, as stewards, to care for His kingdom. The Parable of the Talents, Matthew 25:14-30, impresses on them the weight of that responsibility and the serious consequences of neglecting to understand and apply His instructions. There is also a message to all mankind.

If the talents are talents of gold, the value of what the master entrusted to the stewards would be immensely high, in the millions of dollars. Since the Lord uses only the term "talents" we must make some assumptions, but it seems reasonable to assume that the owner of the talents, the man traveling into a far country, was a wealthy man. He is entrusting his wealth to three men who become stewards of his money. One receives five talents. Another receives two talents. A third steward receives one talent. Each is given a significant amount of money. These are stewards entrusted with the care of the money. The stewards must know the personality and character of their Lord. He expects them to know Him well enough to apply the spirit as well as the letter of His instructions. Those that do are richly rewarded. The others receive severe judgment. The amount given is based on each steward's ability. The first two understand the spirit and letter of instructions and the character of their Lord. They both use the resources by "trading" to gain a profit. Each of them makes a 100 percent profit. Fear and mistrust of his Lord motivate the third steward. He buries the money in the earth and returns the original amount. The profitable stewards are praised, given increased responsibilities and invited to enter into the joy of their Lord. The untrusting steward is scolded, rejected, and punished.

The application of this parable must be understood within the context of the message of Matthew 24-25. It is first a message to the people of Israel that will live in the last days before the Lord returns. The statement, in Matthew 24:13, "But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved," is a key statement. This is the believing remnant that will receive the promise of the kingdom. In Matthew 24:32-34, the Lord states, "Now learn a parable of the fig tree; When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh: So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors. Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled." These will be alive when He returns and will have understood and believed their Lord. The application to the people of Israel is graphic and relevant. Those that believe Him will be rewarded in His kingdom. The basis of the reward will be their stewardship of His resources entrusted to them. Those who fear and do not believe will be rejected and judged.

There is also a universal application to all mankind. From the time of the creation of mankind, each individual has been entrusted with resources of time and material wealth. Everything we have comes from God and belongs to Him. We are responsible for using those resources so that they increase in value. As Christians, we have additionally the most valuable resource of all – the Word of God. If we believe and understand Him, and apply His Word as good stewards, we are a blessing to others and the value of what we do multiplies. We are accountable to the Lord for the use of His resources.

#### Related Resources:

- [What is the meaning of the Parable of the Ten Minas?](#)

Jesus teaches the importance of being faithful. Much of His teaching concerned stewardship. God has placed man in this world to do His work. What we have really belongs to Him. We are just taking care of it for Him.

1. THE PARTICULARS—vv. 14–18
2. THE PAY—vv. 19–23
3. THE PUNISHMENT—vv. 24–27

God gives all men talent and ability. Some may sing, teach, pray, etc. However, all can witness for the Lord. Often it is the “little jobs” in the church that must be done. Be faithful where God has placed you.

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### **James Smith - THE TALENTS Matthew 25:14–30**

In the parable of the “virgins” we are taught the great necessity of individual readiness when Christ comes. This parable teaches the need of trading with His gifts till He comes. In both we are shown the twofold attitude of waiting and working. The man who hid his talent in the earth was also waiting, and may have been longing for his Lord’s coming, but, like the foolish virgins, found himself unprepared. In gathering up the truth taught here, observe the—

I. Calling of the Servants. “He called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods” (v. 14). Those called to this more honoured service were His own servants—those who had previously given themselves to Him. They were the disciples of Jesus Christ, whom He called and delivered unto them His goods ere He took His journey into the far country of the Father’s presence. His servants are not sent a warfare on their own charges. In John 17 we see what these goods were, the “words,” the “joy,” and the “glory.” With these they were to occupy His place on the earth till He came. “As My Father hath sent Me, even so send I you” (John 20:21). The power to trade with His goods was given at Pentecost.

II. Measure of the Gifts. “To every man according to his several ability.” All have not the same ability, because all have not the same faith. Great faith is great ability. If the man who got only one talent had got the ten he doubtless would have misused them all. It is the Lord Himself who divides to every man. He knows how much our faith is able to receive and use for His own glory. “Unto him that hath shall be given.” Even one talent is a great gift. Every gift of God is precious. “According to your faith, so shall it be unto you.”

III. Using of the Talents. All who receive the gift of God are compelled to do something with it—either to trade with it or bury it. He that received the five and he that received the two used them, and in the using they were doubled. Think of the two great talents God hath given us—His Son and His Spirit. What spiritual wealth and power are here! The more we use them in our life and testimony the more will their preciousness and blessing be multiplied in our personal experience. But one “hid his Lord’s money.” Was it pride or shame that made him bury it in the earth? Are there not many still who bury the gift of the Spirit in the earth of a worldly life—those who deliberately hide their spiritual gift from the eyes of men, who trade with their own natural talents, and so cover up their Lord’s money.

IV. Coming of the Lord. “After a long time the Lord of these servants cometh, and reckoneth with them.” The Lord will come again. Nineteen hundred years may seem a long time, but it is a time of grace and opportunity. The Lord’s money is enough for His servants to trade with till He does come. When He comes it is first to reckon with His servants, not to judge the ungodly (2 Cor. 5:10). Those who are always trading with the Master’s gifts are always ready for His appearing. If we would succeed in the Master’s business we must see that we trade with the Master’s money. His grace is sufficient.

V. Rewarding of the Diligent. “Well done, good and faithful servant.” Eternal life is the gift of God to all who believe, but rewards are only for the servants who have been “good and faithful.” The promise is not to the successful, but the good and faithful servant will in God’s sight always be successful. This reward was threefold—

1. COMMENDATION. “Well done.” An abundant entrance.
2. EXALTATION. “I will make thee ruler.” A place of distinction and honour.
3. COMMUNION. “Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.” A condition of fulness of blessing. Happy fellowship.

VI. Doom of the Unprofitable. “Cast the unprofitable servant into outer darkness.” He was a servant, but as such his life and work were failures, because he used not the gift bestowed upon him by his gracious Lord. This is the secret of every servant’s unprofitableness to God—neglecting the gift of the Spirit. There are seven steps in the downward career of this man. Look at the privilege he enjoyed. Numbered with His servants, and the possessor of a special gift from his Lord. The steps are—

1. WILFUL NEGLECT. He hid his Lord’s money.
2. HARD THOUGHTS ABOUT HIS LORD. “I know thee an hard man.”
3. SLAVISH FEAR. “I was afraid.”
4. SLOTHFULNESS.
5. WICKEDNESS.

6. HIS TALENT TAKEN FROM HIM.

7. CAST OUT. As a fruitless branch he was cut off. Like the foolish virgins, he did not enter into the joy of his Lord.

We then, as workers together with Him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain.

**Matthew 25:15 "To one he gave five talents, to another, two, and to another, one, each according to his own ability; and he went on his journey.**

KJV Matthew 25:15 And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability; and straightway took his journey.

NKJ Matthew 25:15 "And to one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one, to each according to his own ability; and immediately he went on a journey.

NET Matthew 25:15 To one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one, each according to his ability. Then he went on his journey. 16 The one who had received five talents went off right away and put his money to work and gained five more.

BGT Matthew 25:15 κα μ ν δωκεν π ντε τ λαντα, δ δ ο, δ ν, κ στ κατ τ ν δ αν δ ναμιν, κα π εδ μησεν. ε θ ως

CSB Matthew 25:15 To one he gave five talents; to another, two; and to another, one-- to each according to his own ability. Then he went on a journey. Immediately

ESV Matthew 25:15 To one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away. 16 He who had received the five talents went at once and traded with them, and he made five talents more.

NIV Matthew 25:15 To one he gave five talents of money, to another two talents, and to another one talent, each according to his ability. Then he went on his journey.

NLT Matthew 25:15 He gave five bags of silver to one, two bags of silver to another, and one bag of silver to the last-- dividing it in proportion to their abilities. He then left on his trip.

YLT Matthew 25:15 and to one he gave five talents, and to another two, and to another one, to each according to his several ability, went abroad immediately.

MIT Matthew 25:15 Into the hands of one of them he put five large bars of silver; another received two bars of silver; and another received one bar. The amount entrusted to each one was determined by his ability. The man began his trip right away.

NJB Matthew 25:15 To one he gave five talents, to another two, to a third one, each in proportion to his ability. Then he set out on his journey. 16 The man who had received the five talents promptly went and traded with them and made five more.

NRS Matthew 25:15 to one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away. 16 The one who had received the five talents went off at once and traded with them, and made five more talents.

RSV Matthew 25:15 to one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away. 16 He who had received the five talents went at once and traded with them; and he made five talents more.

NAB Matthew 25:15 To one he gave five talents; to another, two; to a third, one-- to each according to his ability. Then he went away. Immediately

GWN Matthew 25:15 He gave one man ten thousand dollars, another four thousand dollars, and another two thousand dollars. Each was given money based on his ability. Then the man went on his trip. 16 "The one who received ten thousand dollars invested the money at once and doubled his money.

BBE Matthew 25:15 And to one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one; to everyone as he was able; and he went on his journey. 16 Straight away he who had been given the five talents went and did trade with them, and made five more.

### Related Passages:

Luke 12:48+ but the one who did not know it, and committed deeds worthy of a flogging, will receive but few.  
From everyone who has been given much, much will be required; and to whom they entrusted much, of him they will ask all the more.

**To one he gave five talents ([talanton](#)) to another, two, and to another, one, each according to his own ([idios](#)) ability ([dunamis](#))**  
- **Talents** is the word [talanton](#) which was a unit of weight and not a specific monetary value, so it is uncertain how much money the master gave each slave. What we can be sure of is the fact that the giving of these talents symbolizes the profound responsibility of stewardship because the amount of money was considerable. Whether in finances, gifts, time, or opportunities, God calls His followers to use and multiply what He has entrusted to them for His glory and the benefit of others. Note that the distribution was not based on the slave's merit but upon their **ability** ([dunamis](#)) (which would have been a gift from God) to effectively utilize the gift. In other words each slave was given all that he was capable of handling. The master's desire was not that each slave have an equal return on the talents, but that each would exert an effort to get a return in keeping with their ability. As the parable unfolds the master gives rewards based on the effort each displayed. This recalls Paul's words assuring us that each slave "will receive his own reward according to his own labor" (1 Cor. 3:8+).

*The talents represent opportunities  
and responsibilities for serving the Lord*

**David Turner** on **talents** - As a monetary term, its value varied, but it always connoted a very large sum, evidently around six thousand silver denarii (BDAG 988). This would be as much money as a day laborer could expect to earn over the span of nineteen years! Thus, the amount of money involved here is very high, perhaps to "imply the greatness of God's gifts to his people" (Davies and Allison 1997:405). (See [Matthew, Mark - Page 326](#))

*This parable, like that of the ten virgins,  
has to do with real and nominal Christians*

[C H Spurgeon commentary](#) - He did not entrust to all the same quantity of goods: **'Unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability.'** He was the judge of the ability of each of his servants, and he made no mistake in his allotment of the talents to them. We may rest assured, if we are the Lord's servants, that he has bestowed upon us as many talents as we can rightly use, and quite as many as we shall be able to account for when he returns. The all-important matter for us is to be faithful to the trust committed to us. **"And straightway took his journey:** "our Lord knew all that was to happen before he left the earth, — his passion, crucifixion, and resurrection; but he calmly talked of it as a man might speak of his preparations for traveling into a foreign country. He has gone, and his servants are left behind to make the best use they can of his ascension-gifts while he is absent. This parable, like that of the ten virgins, has to do with real and nominal Christians, with all who are or who profess to be the servants of Christ. The **"talents"** are anything and everything that our Lord has given to us for use here as his stewards.

**David Abernathy** summarizes multiple commentaries answering the question - **What do the talents represent in this parable?** The **talents** represent opportunities and responsibilities for serving the Lord [David Turner = BECNT, Davies and Allison = ICC, R C H Lenski = Lns, R T France = NICNT, W. Hendriksen = NTC, Leon Morris = PNTC], as well as abilities he has given for doing so [BECNT, Lns]. They represent resources God puts at our disposal, and which must be used and developed [D. A. Carson = EBC]. They represent the time, abilities, and resources that God gives people to enable them to serve him [Craig Blomberg = NAC]. Faithful serving will be rewarded with more opportunity for faithful serving [PNTC]. ([An Exegetical Summary of Matthew 17-28](#))

**Craig Blomberg** comments on **according to his own ability** - F. D. Bruner (borrow [Churchbook - Matthew](#)) comments, "In the kingdom of Christ not all are created equal." (Churchbook, 902) Nor is everyone expected to perform at the same level of competence, but all are expected to do their best as faithful stewards. (Borrow [Matthew: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition](#))

**John MacArthur** adds "It is significant, however, that the responsibilities were given to each according to his own ability. The owner knew his slaves intimately, and he entrusted each one only with the responsibility he reasonably could be expected to handle....He was emphasizing common accountability for differing levels of responsibility based on individual ability." (See [Matthew Commentary - Page 99](#))

**And he went on his journey** - His act of leaving indicated that he had placed in trust in the men to steward his possessions. Clearly this reference can be interpreted as the Lord leaving after His first advent and the subsequent time until He returns at His

Second Coming. In a similar way, the slaves are those (like the 10 virgins) who are those who have professed to believe in the Lord Jesus.

While Luke 19:11–27 is a similar parable, most writers agree that they are not the same parable. In Luke's mina parable which occurred several days earlier, Jesus was en route from Jericho to Bethany, and here in Matthew, He is on the Mount of Olives.

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**Talents** (5007) **talanton** means a balance, hence that which is weighed, i.e. a talent (about 3000 shekels in weight, cf. 3603) Over time, it came to represent a **unit of currency** in the ancient world, denoting a very large sum of money or material wealth. (1) as a measure of weight varying in size from 28 to 36 kilograms, or 60 to 80 sixteen-ounce pounds, equivalent to 3,000 Hebrew shekels; When used for precious metals, it represented a significant amount of monetary value. (2) as a large unit of money varying in value with the metal involved, whether gold, silver, or copper, it is possible to translate variously as millions, thousands, or hundreds (of dollars, francs, pesos, etc.) A talent was a huge sum of money, equal to 6,000 denarii. One denarius was the usual day's wage for a worker. Louw Nida states, "a Greek monetary unit (also a unit of weight) with a value which fluctuated, depending upon the particular monetary system which prevailed at a particular period of time (a silver talent was worth approximately six thousand denarii with gold talents worth at least thirty times that much)." In a broader sense, **talanton** took on a metaphorical meaning of **resources, gifts, or abilities** entrusted to someone for stewardship.

**Sean Douglas O'Donnell** on the amount of money in a talent - In Jesus' context, we know that a denarius (a low unit of currency) was a day's wages for a common laborer (cf. 20:2) and that a talent (a high unit of currency) was worth six thousand denarii. Thus D. A. Carson equates one talent with "perhaps three hundred thousand dollars." Grant Osborne, however, claims that one talent, due to the fluctuation in the value of silver or gold, is "worth \$800,000 in today's money (\$960,000 when gold is worth \$600 an ounce)." I'll let those two Trinity scholars duke it out. Either way, one talent is an enormous amount of money. (See [Matthew: All Authority in Heaven and on Earth - Page 738](#))

**TALANTON - 8V** - Matt. 18:24; Matt. 25:15; Matt. 25:16; Matt. 25:20; Matt. 25:22; Matt. 25:24; Matt. 25:25; Matt. 25:28

**TALENT** - tal'-ent (kikkar; talanton): A weight composed of 60 manehs (English Versions of the Bible "pounds") equal to about 120 pounds troy and 96 pounds avoirdupois, or 672,500 grains, of the Phoenician standard. See WEIGHTS AND MEASURES. When used in the monetary sense the talent might be either of silver or gold, and the value varied according to the standard, but is probably to be taken on the Phoenician, which would give about 410 British pounds, or \$2,050 (in 1915), for the silver talent and 6,150 British pounds or \$30,750 (in 1915), for the gold.

**Matthew 25:16 "Immediately the one who had received the five talents went and traded with them, and gained five more talents."**

KJV Matthew 25:16 Then he that had received the five talents went and traded with the same, and made them other five talents.

NKJ Matthew 25:16 "Then he who had received the five talents went and traded with them, and made another five talents.

NET Matthew 25:16 The one who had received five talents went off right away and put his money to work and gained five more.

BGT Matthew 25:16 πορευθε ς τ π ντε τ λαντα λαβ ν ργ σατο ν α το ς κα κ ρθησεν λλα π ντε·

CSB Matthew 25:16 the man who had received five talents went, put them to work, and earned five more.

ESV Matthew 25:16 He who had received the five talents went at once and traded with them, and he made five talents more.

NIV Matthew 25:16 The man who had received the five talents went at once and put his money to work and gained five more.

NLT Matthew 25:16 "The servant who received the five bags of silver began to invest the money and earned five more.

YLT Matthew 25:16 'And he who did receive the five talents, having gone, wrought with them, and made other



five talents;

MIT Matthew 25:16 As soon as the owner left, the servant receiving the five units of silver put them to work in the community, and by doing so he gained five more units.

NJB Matthew 25:16 The man who had received the five talents promptly went and traded with them and made five more.

NRS Matthew 25:16 The one who had received the five talents went off at once and traded with them, and made five more talents.

RSV Matthew 25:16 He who had received the five talents went at once and traded with them; and he made five talents more.

NAB Matthew 25:16 the one who received five talents went and traded with them, and made another five.

GWN Matthew 25:16 "The one who received ten thousand dollars invested the money at once and doubled his money.

BBE Matthew 25:16 Straight away he who had been given the five talents went and did trade with them, and made five more.

- **went:** 2Sa 7:1-3 1Ch 13:1-3 22:1-26:32 28:2-21 29:1-17 2Ch 1:9,10 2Ch 15:8-15 17:3-9 19:4-10 31:20,21 33:15,16 34:1-35:27 Ne 5:14-19 Isa 23:18 49:23 60:5-16 Ac 13:36 Ro 15:18,19 1Co 9:16-23 15:10 1Ti 6:17,18 2Ti 2:6 4:5-8 Phm 1:6,7 3Jn 1:5-8

#### Related Passages:

James 2:17+ Even so faith, if it has no works, is dead, being by itself.

Proverbs 10:4 Poor is he who works with a negligent hand, But the hand of the diligent makes rich.

John 15:8+ "My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples.

Colossians 3:23-24+ Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men, 24 knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance. It is the Lord Christ whom you serve.

### FAITH THAT ACTS IMMEDIATELY

**Immediately** ([eutheos](#) - at once, without delay) **the one who had received the five talents** ([talanton](#)) **went and traded with them, and gained** ([kerdaino](#)) **five more talents** ([talanton](#)) - Don't miss the adverb **immediately**! This slave lost no time and took action as emphasized by the 3 verbs - went, traded, gained, giving him a 100% yield.

It is interesting that after giving the talents, the master never gave specific instructions for the handling of the money. The present verse clearly implies that he did give them instructions.

**Vincent on traded with them** - Lit., *wrought* with them. The virgins *wait*, the servants *work*.

**Gained** ([2770](#)) [kerdaino](#) from [kerdos](#) = gain) means literally to procure an advantage or profit, to acquire by effort or investment (as in the parable of the talents Mt 25:16,17, 20, 22; James 4:13 = "make a profit"). 1. to gain lit. Mt 16:26; 25:16f, 20, 22; Mk 8:36; Lk 9:25; make a profit Jas 4:13. Fig. Mt 18:15; 1 Cor 9:19-22; Phil 3:8; pass. 1Pt 3:1.

**Matthew 25:17 "In the same manner the one who *had received* the two *talents* gained two more.**

KJV Matthew 25:17 And likewise he that had received two, he also gained other two.

NKJ Matthew 25:17 "And likewise he who had received two gained two more also.

NET Matthew 25:17 In the same way, the one who had two gained two more.

BGT Matthew 25:17 σατως τ ὁ κ ρῆσεν ἄλ᾽ ὁ.

CSB Matthew 25:17 In the same way the man with two earned two more.

ESV Matthew 25:17 So also he who had the two talents made two talents more.

NIV Matthew 25:17 So also, the one with the two talents gained two more.

NLT Matthew 25:17 The servant with two bags of silver also went to work and earned two more.

YLT Matthew 25:17 in like manner also he who received the two, he gained, also he, other two;

MIT Matthew 25:17 In a similar fashion the servant with two units doubled their value.

NJB Matthew 25:17 The man who had received two made two more in the same way.

NRS Matthew 25:17 In the same way, the one who had the two talents made two more talents.

RSV Matthew 25:17 So also, he who had the two talents made two talents more.

NAB Matthew 25:17 Likewise, the one who received two made another two.

GWN Matthew 25:17 The one who had four thousand dollars did the same and also doubled his money.

BBE Matthew 25:17 In the same way he who had been given the two got two more.

- he also: Ge 18:19 2Sa 19:32 1Ki 18:3,4 2Ki 4:8-10 Job 29:11-17 31:16-22 Pr 3:9,10 Ec 11:1-6 Mk 14:3-8 Ac 9:36-39 10:2 11:29,30 2Co 8:12 9:11-14 Ga 6:9,10 Eph 5:16 Col 4:17 1Ti 5:10 2Ti 1:16-18 Heb 6:10,11 1Pe 4:10

**In the same manner** - The **same manner** was not to delay, but to immediately go, trade and gain.

**The one who had received the two talents gained ([kerdaino](#)) two more** - This slave also earned a 100% yield, also doubling his master's money.

*The Talents show that unequal gifts,  
if used with equal faithfulness, will be equally rewarded.*

**John MacArthur** writes that "Both men demonstrated supreme commitment to their master by making the most of what they had, by maximizing their opportunities." (See [Matthew Commentary - Page 101](#))

**Matthew 25:18 But he who received the one talent went away, and dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money.**

KJV Matthew 25:18 But he that had received one went and digged in the earth, and hid his lord's money.

NKJ Matthew 25:18 "But he who had received one went and dug in the ground, and hid his lord's money.

NET Matthew 25:18 But the one who had received one talent went out and dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money in it.

BGT Matthew 25:18 ὁ τὸν λαβὼν πελὸν ῥύξεν καὶ κρύπτει τὸργήριον τοῦ κυρίου αὐτοῦ.

CSB Matthew 25:18 But the man who had received one talent went off, dug a hole in the ground, and hid his master's money.

ESV Matthew 25:18 But he who had received the one talent went and dug in the ground and hid his master's money.

NIV Matthew 25:18 But the man who had received the one talent went off, dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money.

NLT Matthew 25:18 But the servant who received the one bag of silver dug a hole in the ground and hid the master's money.

YLT Matthew 25:18 and he who did receive the one, having gone away, digged in the earth, and hid his lord's money.

MIT Matthew 25:18 But the servant who received one unit went out and dug a hole in the ground where he cached away his master's silver.

NJB Matthew 25:18 But the man who had received one went off and dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money.

NRS Matthew 25:18 But the one who had received the one talent went off and dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money.

RSV Matthew 25:18 But he who had received the one talent went and dug in the ground and hid his master's money.

NAB Matthew 25:18 But the man who received one went off and dug a hole in the ground and buried his master's money.

GWN Matthew 25:18 But the one who received two thousand dollars went off, dug a hole in the ground, and hid his master's money.

BBE Matthew 25:18 But he who was given the one went away and put it in a hole in the earth, and kept his lord's money in a secret place.

- and hid: Pr 18:9 26:13-16 Hag 1:2-4 Mal 1:10 Lu 19:20 Heb 6:12 2Pe 1:8

### Related Passages:

Matthew 22:11+ "But when the king came in to look over the dinner guests, he saw a man there who was not dressed in wedding clothes,

**But** - Here this term of contrast marks a 180 degree change in direction of this slave when contrasted with the first 2 slaves.

**He who received the one talent went away** ([aperchomai](#)) - There is no "immediately" in this description as in the previous description.

**And dug a hole in the ground and hid** ([krupto](#)) **his master's** ([kurios](#)) **money** ([argurion](#)) - Instead of trading and gaining a yield, he digs and hides the talent. As an aside, since there were no banks, it was a common practice to hid valuables in the ground (cf Mt 13:44+). As we might say today "No risk, no gain." However as the story unfolds this would be shown to be "No risk, big loss."

**A B Bruce on in the ground** - Not dishonest—the master had not misjudged as to that—but indolent, unenterprising, timid. What he did was often done for safety. The master might have done it himself, but he wanted increase as well as safety. In Luke's parable the same type of man buries his pound *in a napkin*. A talent was too large to be put up that way. ([Matthew 25 Commentary](#))

**J C Ryle** - many make a bad use of the privileges and mercies they receive from God....To hide our talent is to neglect opportunities of glorifying God, when we have them

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**Money** (silver)([694](#)) [argurion](#) strictly refers to silver, and by metonymy always speaks of money (probably because silver was the most ancient form of money) except 1 Cor 3:12. Of silver money generally Ac 3:6; 7:16. Of particular silver coins silver shekel (worth about 4 drachmas) Mt 26:15; silver drachmas Ac 19:19 . Of money in general Mt 25:18, 27; Lk 9:3. Of a bribe Mt 28:15. It is notable that argurion is used 7 times in the Synoptic gospels in the context of Judas' betrayal of Jesus for 30 "silver coins" (Mt 26:15; 27:3-9; Mk 14:11; Lk 22:5). The high priests also exchanged a large amount of silver coins for the cooperation of the guards at the tomb of Jesus, the guards agreeing to lie about His body being stolen (Mt 28:12-15).

**Matthew 25:19 "Now after a long time the master of those slaves \*came and \*settled accounts with them.**

KJV Matthew 25:19 After a long time the lord of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them.

NKJ Matthew 25:19 "After a long time the lord of those servants came and settled accounts with them.

NET Matthew 25:19 After a long time, the master of those slaves came and settled his accounts with them.

BGT Matthew 25:19 μετ ὃ πολὺν χρόνον ῥηται κύριος τὸ δοῶν κεῶν καὶ συναρῇ λόγον μετ αὐτοῦ.

CSB Matthew 25:19 "After a long time the master of those slaves came and settled accounts with them.

ESV Matthew 25:19 Now after a long time the master of those servants came and settled accounts with them.

NIV Matthew 25:19 "After a long time the master of those servants returned and settled accounts with them.

NLT Matthew 25:19 "After a long time their master returned from his trip and called them to give an account of how they had used his money.

YLT Matthew 25:19 'And after a long time cometh the lord of those servants, and taketh reckoning with them;

MIT Matthew 25:19 After a very long time had elapsed, the master of those servants returned, and he had an accounting with them.

NJB Matthew 25:19 Now a long time afterwards, the master of those servants came back and went through his accounts with them.

NRS Matthew 25:19 After a long time the master of those slaves came and settled accounts with them.

RSV Matthew 25:19 Now after a long time the master of those servants came and settled accounts with them.

NAB Matthew 25:19 After a long time the master of those servants came back and settled accounts with them.

GWN Matthew 25:19 "After a long time the master of those servants returned and settled accounts with them.

BBE Matthew 25:19 Now after a long time the lord of those servants comes, and makes up his account with them.

- **a long:** Mt 25:5 Mt 24:48
- **settled accounts:** Mt 18:23-24 Lu 16:1,2,19-31 Ro 14:7-12 1Co 3:12-15 2Co 5:10 Jas 3:1

#### Related Passages:

Matthew 25:5+ "Now while the bridegroom was **delaying**, they all got drowsy and began to sleep.

Matthew 24:48+ "But if that evil slave says in his heart, 'My master is not coming for a **long time**,'

Matthew 18:23-24+ For this reason the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves. 24 "When he had begun to settle them, one who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him.

Revelation 22:12+ "**Behold**, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to **render to every man according to what he has done**.

Proverbs 10:4 Poor is he who works with a negligent hand, But the hand of the diligent makes rich.

Colossians 3:23-24+ Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men, 24 knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance. It is the Lord Christ whom you serve.

## TIME TO SETTLE ACCOUNTS

**Now after a long time** - This expression of time **long time** recalls the similar time phrases in the previous 2 parables -- Mt 25:5 "while the bridegroom was **delaying**" and Mt 24:48 "my master is not coming for a **long time**."

**The master (*kurios*) of those slaves \*came and \*settled accounts with them** - While not definitely stated, the implication is that the master's return was unexpected. Now it was time to settle accounts.

*We must be prepared at any moment for him to come and reckon with us as to the talents with which he has endowed each of his servants*

**Spurgeon commentary** - There is a reckoning-day coming, even though "a long time" may elapse before "the lord of those servants cometh." Jesus is coming back from the far country whither he has gone; his own word is, "**Behold**, I come quickly." (Rev 22:12+) We must not leave this great fact out of our reckoning; and as his stewards, we must be prepared at any moment for him to come and reckon with us as to the talents with which he has endowed each of his servants.

**J C Ryle** - all professing Christians must one day have a reckoning with God....There is a judgment before us all. Words have no meaning in the Bible, if there is none. It is mere trifling with Scripture to deny it. There is a judgment before us according to our works, certain, strict, and unavoidable....true Christians will receive an abundant reward in the great day of reckoning. These words are full of comfort to all believers, and may well fill us with wonder and surprise. The best of Christians is a poor frail creature, and **needs the blood of atonement every day that he lives** (1Jn 1:7+ - "*cleanses*" = present tense). But the least and lowest of believers will find that he is counted among Christ's servants, and that his labour has not been in vain **IN** (THIS PREPOSITION IS

THE KEY! IT IS SYNONYMOUS WITH "ABIDE" IN THE VINE IN Jn 15:5+) the Lord (SEE 1Co 15:58+). He will discover to his amazement, that his Master's eye saw more beauty in his efforts to please Him, than he ever saw himself. He will find that every hour spent in Christ's service, and every word spoken on Christ's behalf, has been written in a book of remembrance. Let believers remember these things and take courage.—The cross may be heavy now, but the glorious reward shall make amends for all. Well says Leighton, "*Here some drops of joy enter into us, but there we shall enter into joy*".

*"Attempt great things for God,  
expect great things from God."*

There will be an accounting for both believers (Bema Seat) and unbelievers (Great White Throne)...

2Cor 5:10+ (BELIEVERS) - For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed **for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done**, whether good or bad.

Rev 20:12+ (ALL UNBELIEVERS) And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were **judged** from the things which were written in the books, **according to their deeds**.

**Matthew 25:20 "The one who had received the five talents came up and brought five more talents, saying, 'Master, you entrusted five talents to me. See, I have gained five more talents.'**

KJV Matthew 25:20 And so he that had received five talents came and brought other five talents, saying, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me five talents: behold, I have gained beside them five talents more.

NKJ Matthew 25:20 "So he who had received five talents came and brought five other talents, saying, 'Lord, you delivered to me five talents; look, I have gained five more talents besides them.'

NET Matthew 25:20 The one who had received the five talents came and brought five more, saying, 'Sir, you entrusted me with five talents. See, I have gained five more.'

BGT Matthew 25:20 κα προσελθὼν τὸ πέντε τάλαντα λαβὼν προσνεγκεν· ἅλα πέντε τάλαντα λῶγων· κριε, πέντε τάλαντ μοι παρῶκα· δε ἅλα πέντε τάλαντα κέρησα.

CSB Matthew 25:20 The man who had received five talents approached, presented five more talents, and said, 'Master, you gave me five talents. Look, I've earned five more talents.'

ESV Matthew 25:20 And he who had received the five talents came forward, bringing five talents more, saying, 'Master, you delivered to me five talents; here I have made five talents more.'

NIV Matthew 25:20 The man who had received the five talents brought the other five. 'Master,' he said, 'you entrusted me with five talents. See, I have gained five more.'

NLT Matthew 25:20 The servant to whom he had entrusted the five bags of silver came forward with five more and said, 'Master, you gave me five bags of silver to invest, and I have earned five more.'

YLT Matthew 25:20 and he who did receive the five talents having come, brought other five talents, saying, 'Sir, five talents thou didst deliver to me; lo, other five talents did I gain besides them.

MIT Matthew 25:20 The servant came who received five units of silver. He brought with him five more, saying, "Master, you entrusted me with five units. Look! I have gained an additional five."

NJB Matthew 25:20 The man who had received the five talents came forward bringing five more. "Sir," he said, "you entrusted me with five talents; here are five more that I have made."

NRS Matthew 25:20 Then the one who had received the five talents came forward, bringing five more talents, saying, 'Master, you handed over to me five talents; see, I have made five more talents.'

RSV Matthew 25:20 And he who had received the five talents came forward, bringing five talents more, saying, 'Master, you delivered to me five talents; here I have made five talents more.'

NAB Matthew 25:20 The one who had received five talents came forward bringing the additional five. He said, 'Master, you gave me five talents. See, I have made five more.'

GWN Matthew 25:20 The one who received ten thousand dollars brought the additional ten thousand. He said, 'Sir, you gave me ten thousand dollars. I've doubled the amount.'

BBE Matthew 25:20 And he who had the five talents came with his other five talents, saying, Lord, you gave into my care five talents: see, I have got five more.

- behold: Lu 19:16,17 Ac 20:24 1Co 15:10 Col 1:29 2Ti 4:1-8 Jas 2:18

## THE FIVE TALENT SLAVE'S GAIN

The one who had received the five talents ([talanton](#)) came up and brought five more talents([talanton](#)), saying, 'Master ([kurios](#)), you entrusted ([paradidomi](#)) five talents([talanton](#)) to me. See, I have gained ([kerdaino](#)) five more talents ([talanton](#)) - This slave was faithful (trustworthy) putting the master's talents to work for the master.

**John MacArthur** on this man's stewardship - He exhibited the attitude Jesus said every obedient disciple should have: "When you do all the things which are commanded you, say, 'We are unworthy slaves; we have done only that which we ought to have done' " (Luke 17:10). (See [Matthew Commentary - Page 103](#))

**Matthew 25:21 "His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful slave. You were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.'**

many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.

NKJ Matthew 25:21 "His lord said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.'

NET Matthew 25:21 His master answered, 'Well done, good and faithful slave! You have been faithful in a few things. I will put you in charge of many things. Enter into the joy of your master.'

BGT Matthew 25:21 φη α τ κ ρ ι ο ς α τ ο · ε , δ ο λ ε γ α θ κ α π ι σ τ , π λ γ α ς π ι σ τ ς , π π ο λ λ ν σ ε κ α τ α σ τ σ ω · ε σ ε λ θ ε ε ς τ ν χ α ρ ν τ ο κ υ ρ ο υ σ ο υ .

CSB Matthew 25:21 "His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful slave! You were faithful over a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Share your master's joy! '

ESV Matthew 25:21 His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.'

NIV Matthew 25:21 "His master replied, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!'

NLT Matthew 25:21 "The master was full of praise. 'Well done, my good and faithful servant. You have been faithful in handling this small amount, so now I will give you many more responsibilities. Let's celebrate together! '

YLT Matthew 25:21 'And his lord said to him, Well done, servant, good and faithful, over a few things thou wast faithful, over many things I will set thee; enter into the joy of thy lord.

MIT Matthew 25:21 His boss said to him, "Fine work, conscientious and dependable servant. You were faithful with a little; I will position you to handle much. Enjoy the good graces of your master!"

NJB Matthew 25:21 His master said to him, "Well done, good and trustworthy servant; you have shown you are trustworthy in small things; I will trust you with greater; come and join in your master's happiness."

NRS Matthew 25:21 His master said to him, 'Well done, good and trustworthy slave; you have been trustworthy in a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.'

RSV Matthew 25:21 His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a little, I will set you over much; enter into the joy of your master.'

NAB Matthew 25:21 His master said to him, 'Well done, my good and faithful servant. Since you were faithful in small matters, I will give you great responsibilities. Come, share your master's joy.'

GWN Matthew 25:21 "His master replied, 'Good job! You're a good and faithful servant! You proved that you could be trusted with a small amount. I will put you in charge of a large amount. Come and share your master's



happiness.'

BBE Matthew 25:21 His lord said to him, Well done, good and true servant: you have been true in a small thing, I will give you control over great things: take your part in the joy of your lord.

- **Well done:** 2Ch 31:20,21 Lu 16:10 Ro 2:29 1Co 4:5 2Co 5:9 10:18 1Pe 1:7
- **I will put you in charge:** Mt 25:34-40,46 10:40-42 24:47 Lu 12:44 22:28-30 Rev 2:10,26-28 3:21 Rev 21:7
- **enter:** Mt 25:23 Ps 16:10,11 Jn 12:26 14:3 17:24 Php 1:23 2Ti 2:12 Heb 12:2 1Pe 1:8 Rev 7:17

## WELL DONE GOOD AND FAITHFUL SLAVE

His master ([kurios](#)) said to him, 'Well done, good ([agathos](#)) and faithful slave ([doulos](#)). You were faithful ([pistos](#) - trustworthy) with a few things, I will put you in charge ([kathistemi](#)) of many things; **enter** ([eiserchomai](#) a command in [aorist imperative](#) - Do it now!) into the joy ([chara](#)) of your master ([kurios](#)) - Don't miss the master's three "rewards"!

The first being the master's praise. **Well done!** Excellent! This slave is commended. Notice also the repeated emphasis by the repetition of the word **faithful**. His actions of investing the master's money gave evidence that he was trustworthy.

Secondly, the master rewards him with more work! Thanks a lot! Of course I am being facetious. More work from the master is a privilege to be prized. Notice also the pay back from the master -- He gave him "**few**" but would reward him with "**many**." We call that amazing grace!

Thirdly, and in my opinion the best of all is the prophetic promise in the form of a command to **enter into the joy of your master**. I love that phrase. It does not say enter into **joy**, but into **the joy of your master**. The definitive article "the" is in the Greek that speaks of a unique (and I would submit), one of a kind **joy**! When Jesus gives us His **joy**, it will be perfect, complete and enduring forever.

*The master's approval  
is the servant's best wages.*  
-- Alexander McLaren

**THOUGHT** - What an incredible future faithful slaves have to look forward to! This truth should be chewed upon and digested so that it serves to motivate day to day faithful service to our Lord! Listen to Steve Green's beautiful vocal [Find Us Faithful](#). Let it be so Lord, for our good and your glory. In Jesus' Name. Amen.

Notice that at this point Jesus leaves the parable and describes eternal realities. The prophetic promise **I will** includes future rewards and future joy. One is reminded of David's words in Psalm 16:11 "You will make known to me the path of life; **In Your presence is fullness of joy**; In Your right hand there are pleasures forever."

*Not the measure of the gifts we have in this life decides our station above  
but the measure of our faithfulness in using whatever gifts we have*  
-- R C H Lenski

I like **R C H Lenski's** comment - This significant praise outranks all the flattery and the honor the world may bestow (**ED**: AMEN!). Jesus holds up this commendation to us in advance in order that we may ever keep it before our eyes and allow it to make us always faithful.... What, then, will the "many things" be? They are here veiled by their multitude and their richness, partly because the imagery of the parable is so restricted, and partly also because our poor earthly minds cannot reach up to these coming heavenly glories. But here all the Lord's goodness and his grace appear: his one thought is our elevation and our joy. He places us first over few things, then over many things, and both of these phrases are placed forward for the sake of emphasis. Note *ni* in the sense of "over" (R. 604). The future, "I will station thee," is volitive; it voices the power and the authority of this master. Think of what these words that are addressed to us by Christ imply! (Borrow [Interpretation of St. Matthew's gospel](#))

**Sean Douglas O'Donnell** has an interesting note on the believer's work, now and then (in eternity) - You see, the people ("servants" Jesus calls them—people who serve God and others) of the kingdom of heaven, on earth now and in Heaven later, are not passive. To enter into the kingdom through faith in Christ is to enter into his workforce, and it is to return in some sense to Eden, to pre-fall holiness, where work was given to man as a divine gift, not a curse. I'll put it this way: do your kingdom work well now, and you'll be rewarded with more work now and especially then. As one commentator put it, "Heavenly rewards are not beds of rest; they are posts of duty." Or as another one put it, "Christ knows no idle life, not even in the kingdom of heaven." ([Matthew: All Authority in](#)

**QUESTION** - [What do I need to do to hear, "Well done, good and faithful servant" when I arrive in heaven?](#) (ED: BETTER = "WHY WOULD I WANT TO HEAR...?")

**ANSWER** - In Jesus' [parable of the talents](#), the Lord tells of two faithful servants who used what they had been given to increase the master's wealth. When the master returned from a long absence, he rewarded his two faithful servants and said to each of them, "Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!" (Matthew 25:21, 23). Every Christian longs to hear those words from Jesus' lips someday in heaven.

We are saved by grace through faith (Ephesians 2:8–9), but we are saved "to do good works" (Ephesians 2:10). Jesus spoke of laying up treasures in heaven (Matthew 6:20), and His parable of the talents hints at various rewards for those who faithfully serve Him in this world.

To hear those words, "Well done, good and faithful servant," from Jesus, first make sure you are saved. The unbelieving will never hear those words, for "without faith it is impossible to please God" (Hebrews 11:6). And recognize that Jesus is not only your Savior; He is also your Lord (see Luke 6:46). "Serve the LORD with gladness!" (Psalm 100:2, ESV).

Here are some ideas on ways you can [serve the Lord](#):

1. Share the [gospel](#). The Lord Jesus desires us to make disciples, teaching others of the nature and character of God and sharing the meaning of His death and resurrection (Matthew 28:18–20). (ED: SEE [Praying for People from Every Tribe, Tongue, People and Nation](#) IF YOU DO THIS DAILY, YOU WILL STORE UP FOR YOURSELF AN INCREDIBLE ETERNAL TREASURE!)
2. Help the disadvantaged. In the story of [the rich man and Lazarus](#) in Luke 16:19–31, the rich man is condemned because he doesn't help Lazarus and because he trusts in his wealth too much. Don't put self-gratification before the needs of others. 1 John 3:17 says, "If anyone has material possessions and sees a brother or sister in need but has no pity on them, how can the love of God be in that person?"
3. Forgive others of their offenses. This isn't the same as reconciliation or trust, but it means you renounce vengeance. The Lord Jesus modeled forgiveness: "When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to [the Father] who judges justly" (1 Peter 2:23).
4. View your position of authority as an opportunity to help the people under you, and view your position of subservience as an opportunity to submit to your authority, just as Jesus submitted to the Father's authority. Either way, you can be Christlike, because Jesus was both master and servant to different people. "Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ" (Galatians 6:2).
5. Seek to know the character of God better through [church fellowship](#), listening to sermons, studying the Bible, praying, and chronicling how He seems to have been involved in your life.
6. Recognize that every advantageous position you're in is because of God, the Source of every blessing: "Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights" (James 1:17).
7. Be willing to be unpopular, displaying rare courage like [the Good Samaritan](#) in Jesus' parable (Luke 10:30–37). Do what the Bible says is right, always. "We must obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29, ESV).
8. In introspective moral judgment (evaluating your own character), look at the character of Jesus as a measure rather than rationalize your questionable actions and attitudes. Show [humility](#).

It all comes down to this: love God more than anything, and love others sincerely (Mark 12:30–31). At the judgment seat of Christ, those who are faithful to the Lord who saved them will hear those words, "Well done, good and faithful servant." No true servant of the Lord could ask for more.

#### **Related Resources:**

- [What is the judgment seat of Christ?](#)
- [How can we store up treasures in heaven?](#) (SEE ALSO COMMENTARY ON 2Cor 5:10)
- [What happens at the final judgment?](#)

- [What is the verse about casting our crowns before the feet of Jesus?](#)
  - [What are the five heavenly crowns that believers can receive in Heaven?](#)
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### **Robert Morgan - Well Done - Borrow [From This Verse](#)**

During a bitterly cold January in 1875, Rev. Richard S. Storrs of Brooklyn warmed the minds of the ministerial students of Union Theological Seminary as guest lecturer on the subject Preaching Without Notes. Storrs had originally prepared for the bar. He had seen America's greatest lawyers sway stubborn juries and judges by looking them in the eye and speaking persuasively without notes.

I could not see, therefore, why a minister should not do before his congregation [that] which lawyers do all the time in the courts; and when my plans of life changed under the impulse of God's Spirit and I devoted myself to the ministry, I determined to preach without manuscript.

For three weeks, Storrs stirred the students, telling them why and how to preach without notes; then on January 27, 1875, he ended his lectures, saying:

Your success may not come at the precise time when you expect it, or in the way which you anticipate. It may not come so that you yourselves shall see it on earth. The Master seemed to have but small success: twelve apostles, and one of them a traitor. Paul, the greatest preacher, did not appear to achieve large success: a few scattered congregations, error and dissension among them. But success is certain in the end. Out of the work come consequences of good—immense if unseen. In all your life remember this! Expect the time when the Son of Man, no more invisible, shall be revealed; and when by Him shall be opened to you that grand and bright expanse of heaven in which he may say to all of us: "On earth ye have been the rulers over a few things; a few facilities, a few knowledges, a few opportunities: Lo, I will make you rulers over many things, in this kingdom of my Father."

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### **Rewards Of Faithfulness**

John 7:1-27

A faithful man will abound with blessings. — Proverbs 28:20

Today's Scripture : Matthew 25:14-23

Missionary Jack Shiflett was speaking to one of his supporting churches. Having spent 11 years in Spain, Shiflett talked about the frustrations of presenting Jesus to people who don't think they need the gospel.

In the past couple of years, though, Jack and his wife Cheryl have seen their ministry begin to bear fruit. At least 17 people have accepted Jesus as Savior. Yet that was after many years with few results. To emphasize his appreciation for the faithfulness of this church, Shiflett said, "After 8 years, we came to you and reported that we had led one person to Jesus Christ. And you sent us back."

The people at the church had recognized that the hallmark of servanthood is faithfulness, not results. Results, they knew, rested in God's hands through the work of the Holy Spirit.

The Shifletts were faithful to the task and are now seeing the harvest. Their example is encouraging, for we often go without results for even longer periods of time. And the example of the church in sticking with them is just as vital.

Perhaps you've been faithful at a task for a long time—seemingly without results. Stick with it, and leave the results with God. He'll send the rewards. By: Dave Branon (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

Press on in your service for Jesus,  
Spurred on by your love for the Lord;  
He promised that if you are faithful,  
One day you'll receive your reward.  
—Fasick

God is more concerned with reliability than results.

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**David Jeremiah - FAITHFUL OVER FEW, RULER OVER MANY**- MATTHEW 25:21 [David Jeremiah Morning and Evening Devotions](#)

God owns everything and has decided to put some of it into our hands to manage. When the Lord looks down and sees an individual doing a good job administering a few things, He decides to put that individual in charge of a few more things. God evaluates our stewardship on the basis of how well we administer it, keeping His priorities in mind rather than our own. When He sees someone serving faithfully, He expands the responsibility, giving something else to be managed. But when He sees someone who manages God's resources based on a personal agenda, or who forgets to reflect the Spirit of God in his management, the Lord can choose to withhold any further responsibility.

That's why Jesus, in explaining the parable of the talents in Matthew 25:21, said, "Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things."

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Well done, good and faithful servant! - Matthew 25:21

#### TODAY IN THE WORD

The poet Alfred, Lord Tennyson wrote these lines inspired by today's passage: "No light had we: for that we do repent: / And, learning this, the bridegroom will relent. / "'Too late, too late! Ye cannot enter now.' / No light, so late! And dark and chill the night! / Oh let us in, that we may find the light! / "'Too late, too late! Ye cannot enter now'."

Today's reading is a continuation of Jesus' instruction to His disciples that we began yesterday in Matthew 24. The Parable of the Ten Virgins illustrates the command to keep watch. All ten of the women expected the bridegroom to come. But only five were prepared for the experience of waiting. When the bridegroom appeared, the foolish women were unprepared and unable to enter the wedding banquet.

The Parable of the Talents further develops what it means to be engaged in watchful waiting. It doesn't mean sitting around, staring at the sky, doing nothing. Instead, it means using what God has given us for His glory. Like the servants in the parable, we don't know how long we have to be profitable with our gifts from God. We do know that He expects us to be busy about His work.

This parable also reveals something about the nature of God. A talent was a large sum of money, easily a year's wage. Our God dispenses gifts generously and trusts us with great resources. Yet there is no question about who truly owns these talents. We should not think that the gifts from God become our possessions, or that the glory should be directed anywhere other than God.

The final section of this chapter provides more insight into the content and consequences of watchful waiting. As the King separates the righteous from the unrighteous, He comments on whether their lives exemplify humility and mercy. Those who claim to know Him but have no evidence of His kingdom in their lives receive everlasting punishment. The righteous will have the joy of the wedding banquet, a share in the master's happiness, and eternal life (vv. 10, 23, 46).

#### TODAY ALONG THE WAY

Throughout this Gospel, Jesus has identified righteousness with lives of humility, mercy, and justice. It is not simply doing good deeds—the Pharisees gave alms to the poor. True righteousness is only possible through a desire to love and serve God, to seek His kingdom at the expense of our own glory. As we wait for Christ to return, what "talent" has God given you to use for Him? Are you engaged in watchful waiting, preparing to hear, "Well done, good and faithful servant!"?

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Well done, good and faithful servant! . . . Come and share your master's happiness! - Matthew 25:21

#### TODAY IN THE WORD

Are You Counting Stones? - What pursuits do you consider worthy of your time? A British physics professor spent thirty-five years counting pebbles.

Dr. Malcolm Cornwall of the University of Sussex, along with some of his students, spent that long counting the stones on Brighton beach. They didn't count each one, but used a mathematical theory called the "order of magnitude" to reach the final total: 100 billion. The professor said it would take one person about 2,500 years to count them all by hand.

He now intends to count how many gallons of water are in the English Channel.

We'll leave it up to God to decide the worth of these projects! Ultimately, God will decide the worth of everything we do—including how we spend our time, money, and energy.

The well-known parable of the talents is another of the servant parables we read yesterday. The truths of accountability and reward are emphasized again, though the unexpected return of the master is not.

Each of three servants is given money according to his demonstrated ability. Understanding that they are only stewards, and that the resources still belong to the master, what do they do with what they're given? Two of them go out and put the money to work. Perhaps they invest it or go into business—at any rate, they do something, and multiply their capital. But one servant does nothing at all.

When the master returns, he rewards the first two servants with even more authority and responsibility. But the third servant is severely punished and thrown out of the house. Why had he done nothing? He claims he was afraid, but the master calls him wicked and lazy.

We, too, are stewards, and will one day give God an account of what we've been doing with His resources. Are we making use of His gifts for His glory? If yes, we'll hear the same as the first two servants: "Enter into the joy of your master!" (Mt 25:21, 23, NASB).

#### TODAY ALONG THE WAY

In light of the principle of accountability found in today's parable, begin a one-week project to track your use of time. Don't make extensive notes, just jot down activities briefly, such as "Job," "Household tasks," "Watching TV," or "Church service." At the end of the week, total up the time spent in different categories. Do any of your findings surprise you?

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#### Matthew 25:21

WELL DONE - Speaking in Edinburgh, missionary John Williams held his audience spellbound with thrilling accounts of God's work among the tribes-people of the New Hebrides Islands. A soft-spoken missionary followed Williams with a brief report of his work. In a low and trembling voice he said, "My friends, I have no remarkable success to relate like Mr. Williams. I've labored for Christ in a far-off land for many years and have seen only small results. But I have this comfort: when the Master comes to reckon with His servants, He will not say, 'Well done, thou good and successful servant,' but 'well done, thou good and faithful servant.' I have tried to be faithful!"

From Jesus' story in Matthew 25 we learn that unequal gifts exercised with equal diligence will receive equal reward. In the parable, talents represent God-given abilities to carry out God-assigned responsibilities. What's important is not how much we accomplish, but our motives and the quality of our labors. Alexander MacLaren wrote, "Christ rewards not action, but the graces that are made visible in the action; and these can be seen in the tiniest as in the largest deeds. A light that streams through a pinprick is the same that pours through the widest windows."

We need not feel inadequate if we have been diligent in serving Christ. Although it's rewarding to see large results, in God's eyes faithfulness that produces even small results is a job well done.—D. J. De Haan

Work done well for Christ will receive a "well done" from Christ.

**Matthew 25:22 "Also the one who had received the two talents came up and said, 'Master, you entrusted two talents to me. See, I have gained two more talents.'**

KJV Matthew 25:22 He also that had received two talents came and said, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me two talents: behold, I have gained two other talents beside them.

NKJ Matthew 25:22 "He also who had received two talents came and said, 'Lord, you delivered to me two talents; look, I have gained two more talents besides them.'

NET Matthew 25:22 The one with the two talents also came and said, 'Sir, you entrusted two talents to me. See, I have gained two more.'

BGT Matthew 25:22 προσελθὼν [ὁ] καὶ τὸ ἑξάταλντον ἐπέκρινε, ὁ ἑξάταλντον μοι παρῶκα· ὅτε ἄλλα ὁ ἑξάταλντον κέρησα.

CSB Matthew 25:22 "Then the man with two talents also approached. He said, 'Master, you gave me two talents. Look, I've earned two more talents.'

ESV Matthew 25:22 And he also who had the two talents came forward, saying, 'Master, you delivered to me two talents; here I have made two talents more.'

NIV Matthew 25:22 "The man with the two talents also came. 'Master,' he said, 'you entrusted me with two talents; see, I have gained two more.'

NLT Matthew 25:22 "The servant who had received the two bags of silver came forward and said, 'Master, you gave me two bags of silver to invest, and I have earned two more.'

YLT Matthew 25:22 'And he who also did receive the two talents having come, said, Sir, two talents thou didst deliver to me; lo, other two talents I did gain besides them.

MIT Matthew 25:22 Then the one who had received two units of silver approached and reported, "Master, you entrusted me with two units of silver. Look! I have gained an additional two units."

NJB Matthew 25:22 Next the man with the two talents came forward. "Sir," he said, "you entrusted me with two talents; here are two more that I have made."

NRS Matthew 25:22 And the one with the two talents also came forward, saying, 'Master, you handed over to me two talents; see, I have made two more talents.'

RSV Matthew 25:22 And he also who had the two talents came forward, saying, 'Master, you delivered to me two talents; here I have made two talents more.'

NAB Matthew 25:22 (Then) the one who had received two talents also came forward and said, 'Master, you gave me two talents. See, I have made two more.'

GWN Matthew 25:22 "The one who received four thousand dollars came and said, 'Sir, you gave me four thousand dollars. I've doubled the amount.'

BBE Matthew 25:22 And he who had the two talents came and said, Lord, you gave into my care two talents: see, I have got two more.

- **I have:** Lu 19:18,19 Ro 12:6-8 2Co 8:1-3,7,8,12

## ANOTHER FAITHFUL SLAVE

**Also the one who had received the two talents ([talanton](#)) came up and said, 'Master ([kurios](#)), you entrusted ([paradidomi](#)) two talents ([talanton](#)) to me. See, I have gained ([kerdaino](#)) two more talents ([talanton](#))** - The second slave also proved worthy of the master's trust, also doubling the initial investment.

**[C H Spurgeon commentary](#)** - This servant's commendation and reward are exactly the same as those given to his more highly privileged brother; as if our Savior would teach us that it is not the number of our talents, but the use we make of them, that is the essential matter. He does not expect as much from the man with two talents as from the one to whom he has given five; what he does expect is that they should both be faithful over the few things he has committed to their care. It was so with the two servants mentioned in the parable. The second had doubled the capital received from his lord, even as the first had done with his larger amount of trust-money; therefore they were equally praised and blessed.

**Matthew 25:23 "His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful slave. You were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.'**

KJV Matthew 25:23 His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.

NKJ Matthew 25:23 "His lord said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.'

NET Matthew 25:23 His master answered, 'Well done, good and faithful slave! You have been faithful with a few things. I will put you in charge of many things. Enter into the joy of your master.'

BGT Matthew 25:23 φη ατ κριος ατο· ε, δολε γαθ κα πιστ, π λγα ς πιστ ς, π πολλ ν σε καταστ σω· ε σελθε ε ς τ ν χαρ ν το κυρ ου σου.

CSB Matthew 25:23 "His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful slave! You were faithful over a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Share your master's joy!'

ESV Matthew 25:23 His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.'

NIV Matthew 25:23 "His master replied, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!'

NLT Matthew 25:23 "The master said, 'Well done, my good and faithful servant. You have been faithful in handling this small amount, so now I will give you many more responsibilities. Let's celebrate together!'



YLT Matthew 25:23 'His lord said to him, Well done, servant, good and faithful, over a few things thou wast faithful, over many things I will set thee; enter into the joy of thy lord.

MIT Matthew 25:23 His boss said to him, "Fine work, conscientious and dependable servant. You were faithful with a little; I will position you to handle much. Enjoy the good graces of your master!"

NJB Matthew 25:23 His master said to him, "Well done, good and trustworthy servant; you have shown you are trustworthy in small things; I will trust you with greater; come and join in your master's happiness."

NRS Matthew 25:23 His master said to him, 'Well done, good and trustworthy slave; you have been trustworthy in a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.'

RSV Matthew 25:23 His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a little, I will set you over much; enter into the joy of your master.'

NAB Matthew 25:23 His master said to him, 'Well done, my good and faithful servant. Since you were faithful in small matters, I will give you great responsibilities. Come, share your master's joy.'

GWN Matthew 25:23 "His master replied, 'Good job! You're a good and faithful servant! You proved that you could be trusted with a small amount. I will put you in charge of a large amount. Come and share your master's happiness.'

BBE Matthew 25:23 His lord said to him, Well done, good and true servant: you have been true in a small thing, I will give you control over great things: take your part in the joy of your lord.

- Well: Mt 25:21 Mk 12:41-44 Mk 14:8-9

#### Related Passages:

John 15:10-11+ "If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love; just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love. 11 "These things I have spoken to you so that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full.

### WELL DONE GOOD AND FAITHFUL SLAVE

His master said to him, 'Well done, good ([agathos](#)) and faithful ([pistos](#)) slave ([doulos](#)). You were faithful ([pistos](#)) with a few things, I will put you in charge ([kathistemi](#)) of many things; enter into the joy ([chara](#)) of your master ([kurios](#)) - Notice that despite the fact that this slave had fewer talents, it was what he did with the talents given to him that was significant to the master. In other words, Jesus makes no distinction between the faithfulness of the 10 talent and 5 talent men. They are equally faithful with what had been allotted to them to use and they were rewarded equally.

**THOUGHT** - Beloved, the truth in this passage should erase envy from a believer's mind. How often we look at so and so, thinking that all their talent will assure they would receive a greater reward from the Master. With this parable, Jesus in effect says "Perish that thought!" The real question to ponder is "Am I being faithful with what He has given me?" I would submit this applies to spiritual gifts (of which every saint has at least one). Am I using my spiritual gift (or gifts)? Do I even know what my gift is? (See [Spiritual Gifts](#)) Beloved, we will be held accountable for use or nonuse of our spiritual gifts.

*It was not the portion but the proportion that made the difference.*

*They started as servants, but their Lord promoted them to rulers.*

**Warren Wiersbe** sums up the two faithful slaves - The two men who put their money to work each received the same commendation (Matt. 25:21, 23). It was not the *portion* but the *proportion* that made the difference. They started as servants, but their Lord promoted them to rulers. They were faithful with a few things, so the Lord trusted them with many things. They had worked and toiled, and now they entered into joy. Their faithfulness gave each of them a capacity for greater service and responsibility. ([Bible Exposition Commentary](#))

*The difference will be in opportunities  
and levels of service.*

**John MacArthur** has some interesting comments on how this parable applies to our future time in heaven writing that "Of the many things heaven will be, it will not be boring. Our heavenly perfection, for example, will not be a matter simply of never making a mistake. Nor will it be always making a hole in one or a home run, as it were. Rather it will be a time of ever-expanding and increasingly joyous service, and the saints who then will serve the most and rejoice the most will be those who have served the Lord most steadfastly while on earth. Every soul in heaven will equally possess eternal life and will be equally righteous, equally Christlike, and equally glorious. Everyone will be equally perfect, because perfection has no degrees. The difference will be in opportunities and levels of service. Just as the angels serve God in ranks, so will redeemed men and women, and the degree of their heavenly service will have been determined by the devotedness of their earthly service. Heaven will not involve differing qualities of service, because everything heavenly is perfect. Everything done for the Lord will be perfectly right and perfectly satisfying. There will be no distinctions of superiority or inferiority, and there will be no envy, jealousy, or any other remnant of sinful human nature. Whatever one's rank or responsibility or opportunity, those will be God's perfect will for that individual and therefore will be perfectly enjoyed. In a way that is beyond our present comprehension, believers will be both equal and unequal in the Millennium and in the eternal state. (See [Matthew Commentary - Page 104](#))

*This will be the consummation of all heavenly delights;  
not so much that we shall have a joy of our own  
as that we shall enter into the joy of our Lord*

**C H Spurgeon commentary** - Have all of us, who "received five talents " from our Lord, "gained beside them five talents more "? I trow not. Have we double the grace we had at first? Twice the tact with which we began our service for God? Twofold adaptation to the work he has given us to do? It was so with this servant; and therefore, his lord commended and rewarded him. There was no proportion between his service and its reward: "Thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things. " He who is faithful to his Lord shall have greater opportunities of proving his loyalty and devotion in a higher sphere; and in addition, he shall share the bliss of his Lord's return: "Enter thou into the joy of thy lord. " This is not the servant's portion, but the Master's portion shared with his faithful servants. This will be the consummation of all heavenly delights; not so much that we shall have a joy of our own as that we shall enter into the joy of our Lord.

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Matthew 25:14-30

#### TODAY IN THE WORD

""Atheism turns out to be too simple,"" wrote C. S. Lewis in Mere Christianity. ""If the whole universe has no meaning, we should never have found out that it has no meaning: Just as, if there were no light in the universe and therefore no creatures with eyes, we should never know it was dark. 'Dark' would be without meaning.""

Lewis makes a great point. It takes the light of heaven to make sense of the darkness of hell. At the end of Jesus' parable of the three servants, the master of the worthless slave commands him to be thrown ""outside, into the darkness"" (Mt 25:30).

Jesus used the image of darkness (""outer darkness,"" KJV) for hell three times in the Gospel of Matthew (see also Matt. 8:12 and Mt 22:13). Since, as we have already seen, hell is also pictured in Scripture as a burning lake of fire, some assume that darkness is a metaphor for the utter isolation and loneliness of hell.

Whether metaphor or literal reality, the use of darkness to describe hell conveys a powerful truth. If you have ever been in a large cavern when the guide turned off the lights, you have a sense of the total isolation that complete darkness brings.

A person who is utterly alone needs companionship more than anything else. Mental health professionals call this sense of abandonment ""cosmic loneliness"" and give it serious attention.

Jesus' picture of hell suggests that part of its suffering is total, eternal isolation from God and man--a sense of utter hopelessness that will cause great ""weeping and gnashing of teeth"" (Mt 25:30).

#### TODAY ALONG THE WAY

If it has been a while since you thanked the Lord for shining the light of the gospel into your heart, a lesson like today's should correct that oversight!

Think of what God did for us in salvation. Through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross, God has transferred us from the kingdom of darkness into His glorious kingdom of light, where He has a wonderful inheritance reserved for us (Col. 1:12-13).

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Matthew 25:14-21 Still Working By Dave Branon

"Well done, good and faithful servant." —Matthew 25:23

Vivian and Don are in their mid-90s and have been married more than 70 years. Recently Vivian suffered a setback when she broke

her hip. This has been additionally difficult because for several years both Don and Vivian have been saddened by the realization that they are no longer strong enough to be active in the life and work of their church.

However, Vivian and Don are still hard at work for the Lord: They are prayer warriors. While they may not always be physically present and visible in the life of their church, they are faithful “behind the scenes” in their service for Him.

The parable of the talents in Matthew 25 reminds us that we must use the “talents” God has given us wisely. All of us have God-given skills and abilities at various levels—and we must not bury, unused, what God has given us.

It is not only in our years of strength that God will use us, but also in our youth and age, as well as in our sickness and weakness. Vivian and Don continue to serve by praying. And like them, we honor our Savior by using our skills—“each according to his own ability” (v.15) to serve Him who is worthy.

Lord, You have done so much for me. Please show me what I can do to serve You—to honor You with the abilities You have provided. May my life be a living sacrifice of love and action for Your honor. God can use you at any age—if you are willing.

Insight - The parable of the talents contains a profound and enduring message to the believer. It drives home the point that we will be justly compensated for the use of our Spirit-filled talents. Both motive and faithfulness will be key factors in how we are evaluated at the judgment (Bema) seat of Christ (2 Cor. 5:10). “Good works” performed in the energy of the flesh or for the wrong motives will be burned up. But faithful, Spirit-filled service will be rewarded (1 Cor. 3:12-15). (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

**Matthew 25:24 “And the one also who had received the one talent came up and said, ‘Master, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you did not sow and gathering where you scattered no seed.**

KJV Matthew 25:24 Then he which had received the one talent came and said, Lord, I knew thee that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed:

NKJ Matthew 25:24 "Then he who had received the one talent came and said, 'Lord, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you have not sown, and gathering where you have not scattered seed.

NET Matthew 25:24 Then the one who had received the one talent came and said, 'Sir, I knew that you were a hard man, harvesting where you did not sow, and gathering where you did not scatter seed,

BGT Matthew 25:24 προσελθὼν ὁ κατὰ τὸν ταλάντον ἐληφς ἐπεν· κριε, γνων σε τι σκληρς εἰ νῆρωπος, θερζων που οκ σπειρας κα συνγων θεν ο διεσκριπιας,

CSB Matthew 25:24 "Then the man who had received one talent also approached and said, 'Master, I know you. You're a difficult man, reaping where you haven't sown and gathering where you haven't scattered seed.

ESV Matthew 25:24 He also who had received the one talent came forward, saying, 'Master, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you scattered no seed,

NIV Matthew 25:24 "Then the man who had received the one talent came. 'Master,' he said, 'I knew that you are a hard man, harvesting where you have not sown and gathering where you have not scattered seed.

NLT Matthew 25:24 "Then the servant with the one bag of silver came and said, 'Master, I knew you were a harsh man, harvesting crops you didn't plant and gathering crops you didn't cultivate.

YLT Matthew 25:24 'And he also who hath received the one talent having come, said, Sir, I knew thee, that thou art a hard man, reaping where thou didst not sow, and gathering from whence thou didst not scatter;

MIT Matthew 25:24 Also the one who had received one unit of silver approached him and said, "Master, I knew that you are hard to satisfy, harvesting where you have not planted, and gathering where you have not scattered seed.

NJB Matthew 25:24 Last came forward the man who had the single talent. "Sir," said he, "I had heard you were a hard man, reaping where you had not sown and gathering where you had not scattered;

NRS Matthew 25:24 Then the one who had received the one talent also came forward, saying, 'Master, I knew that you were a harsh man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you did not scatter seed;

RSV Matthew 25:24 He also who had received the one talent came forward, saying, 'Master, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you did not winnow;

NAB Matthew 25:24 Then the one who had received the one talent came forward and said, 'Master, I knew you were a demanding person, harvesting where you did not plant and gathering where you did not scatter;

GWN Matthew 25:24 "Then the one who received two thousand dollars came and said, 'Sir, I knew that you are a hard person to please. You harvest where you haven't planted and gather where you haven't scattered any seeds.

BBE Matthew 25:24 And he who had had the one talent came and said, Lord, I had knowledge that you are a hard man, getting in grain where you have not put seed, and making profits for which you have done no work:

- **Master:** Mt 7:21 Lu 6:46
- **I knew:** Mt 20:12 Job 21:14,15 Isa 58:3 Jer 2:31 44:16-18 Eze 18:25-29 Mal 1:12,13 3:14,15 Lu 15:29 19:20-22 Ro 8:7 9:20

## THE ACCUSATORY SELF-SERVING EXCUSE

**And - Lenski** says this **and** "adds him to the rest with whom he ought to belong but with whom he in reality does not belong."

**The one also who had received the one talent ([talanton](#)) came up and said, 'Master ([kurios](#) - lord)- Received** is perfect tense pointing to the fact that he still had what he had received from the master. Note that he does call the master [kurios](#) which means "lord" and which reminds me of "Lord, Lord" in Mt 25:11+ and Mt 7:22+. His address of [kurios](#) also recalls Jesus' question in Lk 6:46+ "why do you call Me, 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say?"

**I knew ([ginosko](#)) you to be a hard ([skleros](#)) man** - Excuses! Excuses! This man seeks to shift the blame from himself to the master. He claims he **knew**, the verb [ginosko](#) usually signifying to know experientially, and not just intellectually. This was his false perception of the master. He is projecting his own attitude as there is nothing in the parable to support the idea that the master is truly **a hard man**. This slave forgot to look in the mirror to see his real problem. He begins by accusing the master of being **a hard man**, ([Skleros](#) English - sclerosis as in arteriosclerosis ~ hardening of the arteries) presumably one who is difficult to please, unyielding, strict, unmerciful, and demanding. Had he looked in the mirror, this slave would have seen that "I" is the middle letter of sln! He was pointing his finger at the master, forgetting that 4 fingers were pointing back at him! He was attempting to excuse the fact that he had made a willful, conscious chose to disregard the stewardship that had been entrusted to him.

**Leon Morris** points out that "If he **knew** that his master was a **hard man**, he **knew** also that he had been expected to do something profitable with the money entrusted to him." (See [The Gospel According To Matthew](#))

**A B Bruce** on **hard man** - "Grasping, ungenerous, taking all to himself, offering no inducements to his servants." ([Matthew 25 Commentary](#))

**Reaping ([therizo](#)) where you did not sow ([speiro](#)) and gathering ([sunago](#)) where you scattered ([diaskorpizo](#)) no seed** - The NLT paraphrases it "harvesting crops you didn't plant and gathering crops you didn't cultivate." This is an illustration or explanation by the slave of the master's hardness. The slave is saying in effect he feared that he would get no return for his investment, but all the profit would be taken by the master. He in effect accuses his master of being greedy and self-seeking.

**A T Robertson** on **scattered** - this scattering was the chaff from which wheat was winnowed, not the scattering of seed.

**J C Ryle** - Like the murmuring Israelites in the wilderness, he finds fault with God's appointments and dealings, and charges Him with hardness and injustice. Hard thoughts of God are a common mark of all unconverted people. They first misrepresent Him, and then try to excuse themselves for not loving and serving Him.

**R C H Lenski** explains **reaping** - He calls his lord "**a hard man**," [skleros](#), one who is like a dried stick that will no longer bend, he is hard in a moral sense, is set absolutely on obtaining his own advantage. As proof of the hardness he mentions the fact that this lord is "**reaping where thou didst not sow, and gathering from where thou didst not scatter** The two present participles (**reaping...and gathering**) express usual and thus characteristic actions. The sense is: "*Thou makest thy slaves sow in order that thou mayest get a fine harvest through their labor; and thou makest thy slaves thresh in order that thou mayest fill thy barns with the grain they have cleaned.*"...What this slave says is true in a manner (**Reaping where you did not sow**): we do all the work for the Lord. Did not the first two slaves bring their entire gain to the master? **The trouble is that half a truth may be the very worst kind of a lie; so it is here.** We are the slaves of Jesus Christ, and that may sound as though he profited by our labor; but think what it cost him to elevate us to the position of being his slaves: the price of his own blood! If we labored for him a million years we could never repay him. Secondly, all our gifts are his, freely, generously bestowed upon us; and these were given us in order that with joy we may serve and honor our rightful Master—or shall we serve the tyrant Satan? (Borrow [Interpretation of St. Matthew's gospel](#))

**Leon Morris** points out that "If he knew that his master was a **hard man**, he knew also that he had been expected to do something profitable with the money entrusted to him." He explains something of what hardness means in this case. "**Reaping where you did not sow**" means that the master had the habit of enjoying a crop on which he had expended no labor. '**Gathering where you did not scatter**' probably has much the same meaning; it refers to the winnowing process at the end of harvest (as it does in Mt 3:12), plying the winnowing shovel to scatter the mingled chaff and grain and thus separate the two. The sowing and the scattering refer to the processes that began and completed the getting of a crop. The master, this man says, profited from sowing and winnowing where he had not gone through the hard work of using the plough and plying the winnowing shovel. The picture this servant draws is of a man with an eye to business; he picked up profits in all sorts of places and not only those that resulted from his own hard work. (See [The Gospel According To Matthew](#))

**John MacArthur** applies this third slave to the modern church - In much the same way, unbelieving church members live in the environment of God's redeemed community and enjoy exposure to the teaching of His word and the fellowship of His people. But in spite of their spiritual privilege, they make no positive response to the gospel and therefore can render no fruitful service....His erroneous estimation of his master's character was sufficient proof that this slave had no intimate or reliable knowledge of him. That slave portrays the unregenerate church member who has no spiritual fruit in his life and no spiritual worship in his heart. He is blind to the Lord's kindness, grace, compassion, mercy, honor, majesty, and glory because he has never surrendered himself to the Lord's sovereignty and grace. (See [Matthew Commentary - Page 105](#))

**C H Spurgeon** applies this text to our life - "Remember, my hearer, that in the day of judgment thy account must be personal; God will not ask you what your church did – he will ask you what you did yourself."

[C H Spurgeon commentary](#) - At the day of reckoning, the unfaithful as well as the faithful have to give account of their stewardship. This man's words were self-contradictory, and his excuse was self-condemnatory. He said that he knew that his lord was a **hard man, reaping where he had not sown, and gathering where he had not scattered**, yet he confessed that the talent he brought back had been given to him by this master whom he represented as severe and unreasonable. He also admitted that it was his lord's money that he had hidden in the earth: "thy talent. " It was entrusted to him, and yet even the servant owned that it did not belong to him: "Lo, there thou hast that is thine. " "I have not made any addition to thy talent; but I have not lost it, nor given it away; I have brought it back, lo, there it is."

Between the great things we cannot do and the small things we will not do,  
the danger is that we shall do nothing.

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**THOUGHT** - Monod's quote begs the question "What are you doing for the King and His Kingdom?" He is returning soon to take an account of what you did with the gifts He has given you. Time is flying by beloved! It is later than you think! Redeem the time. Today is the day to begin your Spirit enabled, Word centered, God glorifying labor for the Lord. But be careful, for I fear much "doing" in churches today is self-initiated and self-energized labor (which yields no eternal fruit) rather than Spirit initiated, Spirit empowered labor (the fruit of which will endure or remain - Jn 15:16+). Remember the pattern is first "**being**" and then "**doing**"! By that I mean first "**abide**" in the Vine (by being filled with His Spirit Eph 5:18+, walking in His Spirit Gal 5:16+) and then as you are "doing," the result will be much fruit to His glory (Jn 15:5,8+, Mt 5:16+). Paul would say to you "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, **always abounding in the work of the Lord**, knowing that your toil is not in vain **IN** the Lord (NB: "IN" the Lord, not "in" your flesh because "IN" is a locative of sphere)." (1Cor 15:58+)

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**Hard** (harsh, difficult) ([4642](#)) [skleros](#) rom **skéllo** = to harden, dry up; English = sclerosis) literally means hard, stiff, dried up, dry, severe. When referring to voices or sounds it means hoarse or harsh (Jn 6:60). When referring to things it means hard or tough. When referring to people, it conveys an inhuman character. "The word always conveys a grave reproach; it indicates a character harshly inhumane and uncivil" (Trench). For more background on the word group see [Skleros - Hard as Rock](#)

**Friberg** - (1) of things, literally hard, dry, rough; figuratively in the NT; (a) of words harsh, unpleasant, hard to take, intolerable (Jn 6.60 ); neuter as a substantive harsh talk (Jude 1:15); (b) of winds fierce, powerful (Jas 3.4); (2) of persons strict, unmerciful, demanding (Mt 25.24); (3) impersonally, neuter with an infinitive - it is hard for you (Ac 26.14)

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**F B Meyer - Matthew 25:24** He also that had received the one talent came.(R.V.)

It is remarkable that the man who had one talent should hide it. If we had been told that he who had five had hidden one we should not have been surprised; but for the man who had only one to hide it!—this is startling; but it is true to life.

The people whose talents and opportunities are very slight and slender are they who are tempted to do nothing at all. "I can do so very little; it will not make much difference if I do nothing: I shall not be missed; my tiny push is not needed to turn the scale." That is the way they talk. They forget that an ounce-weight may turn the scales where hundred-weights are balanced. They do not realize that the last flake of white snow just oversets the gathering avalanche, and sends it into the vales beneath.

Are you one of these slenderly-endowed ones? And are you doing all you can? Are you doing anything? Even though you cannot do much in your isolation, you might join with others and do much. You might invest your little all in the bank of the Church, and trade as part of that heavenly corporation. Oh, disinter your one talent! Be sure you have one; ask the Master where and what it is; place yourself at his disposal. If it is only to carry refreshment to the harvesters—do that. Be thou faithful in thy very little.

We need not wait for the great future, to obtain this multiplication or withdrawal of our talents. They are already waxing or waning in our hands. There are many among us who, as life has progressed, have come into the use of powers of which at first they were perfectly ignorant; whilst others are losing, through misuse, the little they had.

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### Limited But Useful

I was with you in weakness, in fear, and in much trembling. — 1 Corinthians 2:3

Today's Scripture : Matthew 25:24-28

Suzanne Bloch, an immigrant from Germany, often played chamber music with Albert Einstein and other prominent scientists. She said that Einstein, though an accomplished violinist, irritated his fellow musicians by not coming in on the beat. "You see," Bloch explained, "he couldn't count." Einstein could project revolutionary theories about the cosmos, but he had difficulty with rhythmic counting. Despite his limitation, he remained an enthusiastic musician.

Do we sometimes lament our limitations? We all have abilities, but we are also afflicted with inabilities. We may be tempted to use our limitations as an excuse for not doing the things God has enabled us to do. Just because we may not be gifted to speak in public or to sing in a choir doesn't mean that we can sit on the spiritual sidelines doing nothing.

When we realize that all of us have limitations, we can move forward by seeking God's guidance in using our gifts. Surely we can pray. Surely we can show kindness to others. We can visit the lonely, the sick, the elderly. We can tell with effective simplicity what Jesus means to us. Paul said, "Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them" (Rom. 12:6). By: Vernon Grounds (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

Lord God, I humbly ask of You  
The strength to do Your will;  
I give to You my talents now  
Your purpose to fulfill.  
—Cetas

Too many people make a mistake by burying their talents.

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### QUESTION - [What does "reaping where you have not sown" mean \(Matthew 25:24\)? GOTQUESTIONS.ORG](#)

**ANSWER** - Jesus presents the concept of "reaping where you have not sown" in the [Parable of the Talents](#) (Matthew 25:14–30). Through this story, Jesus prepares His disciples for future events after His death. He gives them practical guidance to help them live in continual readiness for the day of His return.

In the parable, the master (who represents Jesus) is arranging to leave on a trip for an extended but unknown length of time. The master entrusts his great wealth to three of his servants. These servants are responsible to use what the master gives them wisely. The master divides his talents (units of money) among the three according to their abilities. The servants were expected to be wise stewards, carefully handling the master's resources.

The first two servants, who received larger portions of the master's money, invested wisely and brought in a good return. They doubled the amount entrusted to them. These faithful servants obeyed and pleased their master and, in the end, were greatly rewarded (see Matthew 25: 20–23). However, the third servant, who received only a tiny portion of the master's money, "dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money" (Matthew 25:18). Instead of investing his resources, he hid them.

When the master called the third servant to give an account of how he had managed his one talent, the servant said, "Lord, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you have not sown and gathering where you have not scattered seed. And I was afraid, and



went and hid your talent in the ground. Look, there you have what is yours” (Matthew 25:24–25, NKJV).

Fear of failure and lack of faith kept the third servant from obeying his master with the gifts, talents, and responsibilities under his care. These verses reveal that the unfaithful, lazy servant did not truly know His master’s heart. He saw him as a hard and shrewd taskmaster. His description of his master as “reaping where you have not sown and gathering where you have not scattered seed” paints a picture of one who expects a return where no investment has been made. In other words, the servant felt his master expected too much from him.

The lazy servant feared harsh punishment if he lost the master’s talent. So, rather than take even a tiny risk and invest the talent he had been given to advance his master’s estate, he buried his treasure in the ground. Because he played it safe, he became an unprofitable servant. Jesus’ point is that readiness for [His return](#) involves being active, responsible, and obedient. It means doing good works that produce fruit and please Him (see Matthew 5:14–16; James 2:14–26).

When the master in the parable returned, the two faithful servants were invited to celebrate and share in the master’s joy (Matthew 25:21, 23), but the unfaithful servant was not. The master said to him, “You wicked and slothful servant! You knew that I reap where I have not sown and gather where I scattered no seed? Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and at my coming I should have received what was my own with interest” (Matthew 25:26–27, ESV).

Jesus wanted His disciples to understand this truth: One day, the unfaithful will stand before Jesus to give an account of their lives. The unbelieving will hear their Master say, “If you knew I expected you to use the talent I entrusted you to further My kingdom, why did you do nothing? Why did you hide it? At the very least, you could have chosen a minimally risky option (e.g., putting the money in a bank and earning interest). No, even in that, you failed.”

One valuable message in the Parable of the Talents is that [living in readiness](#) for Christ’s return involves wisely investing our lives—giving of our time, talents, and resources—in God’s kingdom. It is our privilege and honor to make the most of every opportunity to serve the Lord and work for the advancement of His kingdom. We cannot expect to be reaping a harvest where we have not sown seed. We should not look for returns where we have not invested. We must stay busy doing the Lord’s work until He returns (see [John 9:4–5](#)).

**Matthew 25:25 ‘And I was afraid, and went away and hid your talent in the ground. See, you have what is yours.’**

KJV Matthew 25:25 And I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth: lo, there thou hast that is thine.

NKJ Matthew 25:25 ‘And I was afraid, and went and hid your talent in the ground. Look, there you have what is yours.’

NET Matthew 25:25 so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. See, you have what is yours.’

BGT Matthew 25:25 κα φοβηθε ς πελθ ν κρυψατ τ λαντ ν σου ν τ γ · δε χεις τ σ ν.

CSB Matthew 25:25 So I was afraid and went off and hid your talent in the ground. Look, you have what is yours.’

ESV Matthew 25:25 so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here you have what is yours.’

NIV Matthew 25:25 So I was afraid and went out and hid your talent in the ground. See, here is what belongs to you.’

NLT Matthew 25:25 I was afraid I would lose your money, so I hid it in the earth. Look, here is your money back.’

YLT Matthew 25:25 and having been afraid, having gone away, I hid thy talent in the earth; lo, thou hast thine own!

MIT Matthew 25:25 So being afraid, I went and hid your unit of silver in the ground. Look! You have here what is yours.

NJB Matthew 25:25 so I was afraid, and I went off and hid your talent in the ground. Here it is; it was yours, you have it back.”

NRS Matthew 25:25 so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here you have what is

yours.'

RSV Matthew 25:25 so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here you have what is yours.'

NAB Matthew 25:25 so out of fear I went off and buried your talent in the ground. Here it is back.'

GWN Matthew 25:25 I was afraid. So I hid your two thousand dollars in the ground. Here's your money!'

BBE Matthew 25:25 And I was in fear, and went away, and put your talent in the earth: here is what is yours.

- 2Sa 6:9-10 Pr 26:13 Isa 57:11 Ro 8:15 2Ti 1:6,7 Rev 21:8

#### Related Passages:

2 Samuel 6:9-10+ So David was afraid of the LORD that day; and he said, "How can the ark of the LORD come to me?" 10 And David was unwilling to move the ark of the LORD into the city of David with him; but David took it aside to the house of Obed-edom the Gittite.

Proverbs 26:13 The sluggard says, "There is a lion in the road! A lion is in the open square!"

Luke 19:21+ for I was afraid of you, because you are an exacting man; you take up what you did not lay down and reap what you did not sow.'

Hebrews 11:6+ And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.

### LACKING FAITH PARALYZED BY FEAR

**And I was afraid** ([phobeo](#)) - Here we see a contrast with the other 2 slaves. They had faith expressed by their willingness to invest the master's money. This slave had fear instead of faith! It would have been good if he had had a healthy, reverential fear, but that is not what his fear was in this case. The servant assumes the master is hard, unreasonable and unforgiving, and thus acts out of fear, not trust. This fear led him to bury the talent, playing it safe rather than risking failure. As an aside, he may have been **afraid**, but he was not afraid to slander his master, calling him a hard man!

This slave represents people who misunderstand the character of God, seeing Him only as stern Judge and not as generous Giver. They respond to grace with fear instead of faith. They fail to act in faith because of their view of God as untrustworthy. In contrast, the first two slaves acted in faith, knowing that the master's trust was an opportunity, not a threat.

**and went away** ([aperchomai](#)) **and hid your talent** ([talanton](#)) **in the ground. See, you have what is yours** - Note that the verbs used for the first two slaves were "went and traded" whereas the verb describing this slave is he just "**went away**." One might call this the "safe sin of inaction," brought about by fear in place of faith. In due time he will find out that there is no "safe sin!"

**John MacArthur** says that "This slave represents a professed Christian whose view of God is corrupt because his unredeemed heart is still corrupt. He views God through the lens of his own depraved convictions." (See [Matthew Commentary - Page 106](#))

**D A Carson** - What this servant overlooks is his responsibility to his master and his obligation to discharge his assigned duties. His failure betrays his lack of love for his master, which he masks by blaming his master and excusing himself. Only the wicked servant blames his master. "The foolish virgins failed from thinking their part too easy; the wicked servant fails from thinking his too hard" (Alf). Grace never condones irresponsibility; even those given less are obligated to use and develop what they have. (Borrow [Expositor's Bible Commentary](#))

[C H Spurgeon commentary](#) - He seemed to speak as though this was all that could be rightly expected of him; yet he was evidently not satisfied with himself, for he said, "I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth. " See how fear may become the mother of presumption. Faith in God begets holy fear; but servile fear is the parent of doubt, which in its turn has a family of unbelieving rebels.

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**Afraid** (5399) ([phobeo](#) from [phobos](#) = fear source of our English "phobia") means to be in an apprehensive state that can range from mild uneasiness to stark terror as when one is frightened, terrified or alarmed. **Phobeo** can refer to a shaking, quaking type of fear as is the case of this slave, but can also confer a positive sense of reverential awe (cf Lk 1:50, 23:40). One of the most common uses

of phobeo is Jesus comforting words "do not fear" (Mt 10:26, 28, 31, 14:27, 17:7, 28:10, Mk 5:36, 6:50, Lk 5:10, 8:50, 12:4, 7, 32, Jn 6:20, 12:15, Acts 18:9, 27:24, cf angels - Mt 28:5, Lk 1:13, 30, 2:10. Gentiles were referred to those who had a fear of God ( Acts 10:35 Acts 13:16, 26).

**Wayne Detzler** notes that "the root word [phobos](#) - In ancient Greek the word phobos came from the word **phobomai** meaning to flee, or to be startled. Thus phobos meant flight or terror, and was connected with fear of the unknown, fear of the future, and fear of authorities." (New Testament Words in Today's Language)

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#### **D L Moody - Matthew 25:25.**

I READ of a man who had a thousand dollars. He hid it away, thinking he would in that way take care of it, and that when he was an old man he would have something to fall back upon. After keeping the deposit receipt for twenty years he took it to a bank and got just one thousand dollars for it. If he had put the money at interest in the usual way, he might have had three times the amount.

He made the mistake that a great many people are making to-day throughout Christendom, of not trading with his talents. My experience has been as I have gone about in the world and mingled with professing Christians, that those who find most fault with others are those who themselves do nothing. If a person is busy improving the talents that God has given him he will have too much to do to find fault and complain about others.

**Matthew 25:26 "But his master answered and said to him, 'You wicked, lazy slave, you knew that I reap where I did not sow and gather where I scattered no seed.**

KJV Matthew 25:26 His lord answered and said unto him, Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strawed:

NKJ Matthew 25:26 "But his lord answered and said to him, 'You wicked and lazy servant, you knew that I reap where I have not sown, and gather where I have not scattered seed.

NET Matthew 25:26 But his master answered, 'Evil and lazy slave! So you knew that I harvest where I didn't sow and gather where I didn't scatter?

BGT Matthew 25:26 ποκριθε ς δ κ ριος α το ε πεν α τ · πονηρ δο λε κα κνηρ , δεις τι θερ ζω που ο κ σπειρα κα συν γω θεν ο διεσ κ ρπισα;

CSB Matthew 25:26 "But his master replied to him, 'You evil, lazy slave! If you knew that I reap where I haven't sown and gather where I haven't scattered,

ESV Matthew 25:26 But his master answered him, 'You wicked and slothful servant! You knew that I reap where I have not sown and gather where I scattered no seed?

NIV Matthew 25:26 "His master replied, 'You wicked, lazy servant! So you knew that I harvest where I have not sown and gather where I have not scattered seed?

NLT Matthew 25:26 "But the master replied, 'You wicked and lazy servant! If you knew I harvested crops I didn't plant and gathered crops I didn't cultivate,

YLT Matthew 25:26 'And his lord answering said to him, Evil servant, and slothful, thou hadst known that I reap where I did not sow, and I gather whence I did not scatter!

MIT Matthew 25:26 But his master replied, "You good-for-nothing, lazy servant; you knew, did you, that 'I harvest where I did not plant and gather where I did not scatter seed'?

NJB Matthew 25:26 But his master answered him, "You wicked and lazy servant! So you knew that I reap where I have not sown and gather where I have not scattered?

NRS Matthew 25:26 But his master replied, 'You wicked and lazy slave! You knew, did you, that I reap where I did not sow, and gather where I did not scatter?

RSV Matthew 25:26 But his master answered him, 'You wicked and slothful servant! You knew that I reap where I have not sowed, and gather where I have not winnowed?

NAB Matthew 25:26 His master said to him in reply, 'You wicked, lazy servant! So you knew that I harvest where I did not plant and gather where I did not scatter?

GWN Matthew 25:26 "His master responded, 'You evil and lazy servant! If you knew that I harvest where I haven't planted and gather where I haven't scattered,

BBE Matthew 25:26 But his lord in answer said to him, You are a bad and unready servant; if you had knowledge that I get in grain where I did not put seed, and make profits for which I have done no work,

- Mt 18:32 Job 15:5,6

#### Related Passages:

Proverbs 6:6 Go to the ant, O sluggard, Observe her ways and be wise,

Proverbs 6:9 How long will you lie down, O sluggard? When will you arise from your sleep?

## UNFAITHFUL AND UNREWARDED

**But his master ([kurios](#)) answered and said to him, 'You wicked ([poneros](#)), lazy ([okneros](#)) slave - Lazy** means idle, as when one shrinks from or hesitates to engage in something worthwhile, in this case investing the master's money.

*Inaction is not  
prudence but sloth.*

**David Turner** comments that "Hiding the master's resources in the ground is as senseless and useless as hiding one's lamp under a basket (Matt. 5:15). Inaction is not prudence but sloth." (See [Matthew Baker Exegetical Commentary](#))

**You knew ([eido](#)) that I reap ([therizo](#)) where I did not sow ([speiro](#)) and gather ([sunago](#)) where I scattered ([diaskorpizo](#)) no seed -** Some see this as a sarcastic statement (Sean Douglas O'Donnell) But I think in a sense, this can be understood as a true statement. Notice that he does not include the previous phrase "you are a hard man." Look at it this way as saying that what we do for Christ, God receives the glory ("reaps and gathers" so to speak), not us. And yet (enabled by His Spirit) we are privileged to be able to let our "light shine before men in such a way that they may see our good works, and **glorify** our Father Who is in heaven." (Mt 5:16+). Jesus adds in John 15:8+ "My Father is **glorified** by this, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples." So, yes, God reaps the "profits" from our labors for Him, which is as it should be. However, lest we forget, in addition for our labors we are rewarded out of proportion to our labor reflecting his amazing grace and generosity!

**J C Ryle** on **you knew** -- "Those words of our Lord, "thou knewest," are words that ought to ring loudly in many a man's ears, and prick him to the heart. Thousands are living at this day without Christ and without conversion, and yet pretending that they cannot help it. **And all this time they know in their own conscience that they are guilty.**"

**C H Spurgeon commentary** - "His " took the "wicked And slothful servant " on his own ground, and condemned him out of his own mouth. The master did not mean to admit that he was such a one as he had been called by the "malicious and lazy slave", as the original might be literally rendered; but supposing the servant's words had been true, what ought he to have done? If he was afraid to trade with his lord's talent on his own responsibility, he might have taken it to the bankers, who would at least have kept it secure, and added interest to it while it was deposited with them.

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**Wicked** (evil, worthless, bad) ([4190](#))([poneros](#) from **poneo** = work or toil, Robertson says the idea is that labor is an annoyance, bad, evil; Noun [poneria](#) derived from **poneros**) means evil including evil, malignant character, pernicious, that which is morally or socially worthless, wicked, base, bad, degenerate. **Poneros** speaks of evil in active opposition to good. It means actively harmful, hurtful, evil in effect or influence. **Poneros** denotes determined, aggressive, and fervent evil that actively opposes what is good. **Poneros** is not just bad in character, but bad in effect (injurious)! This is a very strong adjective!

**Lazy** ([3636](#)) [okneros](#) is from **okneo** = to shrink, to hesitate, to delay) means that which causes reluctance or is tedious or bothersome (upsets a person's composure or which annoys and suggests interference with one's comfort or peace of mind). It describes being afraid to act, hesitating, shrinking or lazy. Like **oknos**, which means "hesitation" through weariness, sloth, fear, bashfulness, or reserve, **okneros** is used a. of persons in the sense of "*showing oknos*," "hesitating," "anxious," "negligent," "slothful." It thus denotes one who for various reasons or difficulties does not have the resolution to act.

**Vincent** writes that **okneros** is found here and in "[Matt. 25:26](#); [Ro 12:11-note](#), in both (these latter) instances rendered **slothful**. (**Ed note**: thus conveying more the idea of lazy, idle, not active) From **okneo** to delay.

Hence, in classical Greek, shrinking, backward, unready. The idea of delay underlies the secondary sense, burdensome, troublesome. It is the vexation arising from weary waiting, and which appears in the middle English irken to tire or to become tired, cognate with the Latin urgere to press, and English irk, irksome, work.

**Matthew 25:27 'Then you ought to have put my money in the bank, and on my arrival I would have received my money back with interest.'**

KJV Matthew 25:27 Thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and then at my coming I should have received mine own with usury.

NKJ Matthew 25:27 `So you ought to have deposited my money with the bankers, and at my coming I would have received back my own with interest.

NET Matthew 25:27 Then you should have deposited my money with the bankers, and on my return I would have received my money back with interest!

BGT Matthew 25:27 δει σε ο ν βαλε ν τ ργ ρι μου το ς τραπεζ ταις, κα λθ ν γ κομισ μην ν τ μ ν σ ν τ κ .

CSB Matthew 25:27 then you should have deposited my money with the bankers. And when I returned I would have received my money back with interest.

ESV Matthew 25:27 Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and at my coming I should have received what was my own with interest.

NIV Matthew 25:27 Well then, you should have put my money on deposit with the bankers, so that when I returned I would have received it back with interest.

NLT Matthew 25:27 why didn't you deposit my money in the bank? At least I could have gotten some interest on it.'

YLT Matthew 25:27 it behoved thee then to put my money to the money-lenders, and having come I had received mine own with increase.

MIT Matthew 25:27 You ought, therefore, to have invested my silver with the financiers. Then when I returned I would have recovered my principal with interest."

NJB Matthew 25:27 Well then, you should have deposited my money with the bankers, and on my return I would have got my money back with interest.

NRS Matthew 25:27 Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and on my return I would have received what was my own with interest.

RSV Matthew 25:27 Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and at my coming I should have received what was my own with interest.

NAB Matthew 25:27 Should you not then have put my money in the bank so that I could have got it back with interest on my return?

GWN Matthew 25:27 then you should have invested my money with the bankers. When I returned, I would have received my money back with interest.

BBE Matthew 25:27 Why, then, did you not put my money in the bank, and at my coming I would have got back what is mine with interest?

- **ought:** Lu 19:22,23 Ro 3:19 Jude 1:15
- **with:** De 23:19,20

#### Related Passages:

James 2:17+ Even so faith, if it has no works, is dead, being by itself.

Proverbs 10:4 Poor is he who works with a negligent hand, But the hand of the diligent makes rich.

**Then you ought** ([dei](#) - speaks of obligation) **to have put my money** ([argurion](#)) **in the bank, and on my arrival I would have received my money back with interest** - Paraphrased "If you really feared me you should have done a minimum to get what I

asked for." Whose **money**? He says "**My money**," the master's money. It's potential was wasted. **Money** in the ground yielded no interest! The truth is that the wicked, lazy slave had no relationship with the master and did not care about him or his interests.

**A T Robertson on the bank** - "The bankers (tois trapezeitais). The benchers, money-changers, brokers, who exchanged money for a fee and who paid interest on money. Word common in late Greek."

**C H Spurgeon commentary** - If we cannot trade directly and personally on our Lord's account, if we have not the skill or the tact to manage a society or an enterprise for him, we may at least contribute to what others are doing, and join our capital to theirs, so that, by some means, our Master may have the interest to which he is entitled. His talent must not be buried in the earth; but must be invested wherever it will bring to him the best return at his coming.

**Ray Pritchard** comments on Luke 19:23 are apropos to the master's words - These words speak for themselves. The master's anger centers around one unassailable point—the servant had not even bothered to put the money in the bank where it could gain interest. "You didn't even care enough to do that." Listen carefully. The master is not angry because the servant failed to make ten minas. That is not the issue. Profit (or the lack of it) is not the point. After all, he's got all the money he needs. He'll never spend the money he has. Then why is the master angry? BECAUSE THIS SERVANT DIDN'T EVEN TRY TO USE HIS MONEY FOR THE MASTER'S ADVANTAGE. It's not the amount. That's not the issue. But this man was first unbelieving, then disobedient, then overly-cautious, and finally just plain thumb-sucking lazy. HE DIDN'T TRY BECAUSE HE DIDN'T CARE. That's why the master is angry.

**Vincent** on the rare word for **interest** (only other use Lk 19:23) **tokos** (a bring forth, birth, figuratively - interest, usury) - A very graphic word, meaning first *child-birth*, and then *offspring*. Hence of interest, which is the *produce* or *offspring* of capital. Originally it was only what was paid for the *use* of money; hence *usury*; but it became synonymous with *extortionate* interest. Rev., better, *with interest*. The Jewish law distinguished between *interest* and *increase*. In Rome very high interest seems to have been charged in early times. Practically usury was unlimited. It soon became the custom to charge monthly interest at one per cent a month. During the early empire legal interest stood at eight per cent., but in usurious transactions it was lent at twelve, twenty-four, and even forty-eight. The Jewish bankers of Palestine and elsewhere were engaged in the same undertakings. The law of Moses denounced usury in the transactions of Hebrews with Hebrews, but permitted it in dealing with strangers (Deuteronomy 23:19, 20; Psalms 15:5).

**Matthew 25:28 'Therefore take away the talent from him, and give it to the one who has the ten talents.'**

KJV Matthew 25:28 Take therefore the talent from him, and give it unto him which hath ten talents.

NKJ Matthew 25:28 `Therefore take the talent from him, and give it to him who has ten talents.

NET Matthew 25:28 Therefore take the talent from him and give it to the one who has ten.

BGT Matthew 25:28 ρατε ο ν π α το τ τ λαντον κα δ τε τ χοντι τ δ κα τ λαντα·

CSB Matthew 25:28 " 'So take the talent from him and give it to the one who has 10 talents.

ESV Matthew 25:28 So take the talent from him and give it to him who has the ten talents.

NIV Matthew 25:28 " 'Take the talent from him and give it to the one who has the ten talents.

NLT Matthew 25:28 "Then he ordered, 'Take the money from this servant, and give it to the one with the ten bags of silver.

YLT Matthew 25:28 'Take therefore from him the talent, and give to him having the ten talents,

MIT Matthew 25:28 To his servants he said, "Therefore, take away the unit of silver from him and give it to the one now having ten units.

NJB Matthew 25:28 So now, take the talent from him and give it to the man who has the ten talents.

NRS Matthew 25:28 So take the talent from him, and give it to the one with the ten talents.

RSV Matthew 25:28 So take the talent from him, and give it to him who has the ten talents.

NAB Matthew 25:28 Now then! Take the talent from him and give it to the one with ten.

GWN Matthew 25:28 Take the two thousand dollars away from him! Give it to the one who has the ten thousand!

BBE Matthew 25:28 Take away, then, his talent and give it to him who has the ten talents.



### Related Passages:

Luke 19:24+ "Then he said to the bystanders, 'Take the mina away from him and give it to the one who has the ten minas.'

## USE IT OR LOSE IT!

**Therefore** - Term of conclusion. What is Jesus concluding in this parable? First note that contrary to the accusation, the master is not being a **hard man** acting arbitrarily and unfairly, but is acting based upon the fact that this slave had made no use of the one talent. After all, if the master had done nothing, the talent would have remained in a hole in the ground, useless to the master!

**Take away** ([airo](#) a command in [aorist imperative](#) - Don't delay!) **the talent** ([talanton](#)) **from him, and give** ([aorist imperative](#) - Don't delay!) **it to the one who has** (present tense) **the ten talents** ([talanton](#)) - While this may seem unfair, this third slave never truly made the talent his. In that sense it was a "talent" in name only (and in a hole at that) and for that reason now it would be taken away. The most capable man was selected as the most likely to be able to beneficially use the one talent.

[C H Spurgeon commentary](#) The servant who had gained five talents to his lord's five was allowed to keep them all, for his master spoke of "him which has ten talents." The unused talent of the slothful servant was also given to him, for he who uses well that which is entrusted to him shall receive more.

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### David Jeremiah - USE IT OR LOSE IT MATTHEW 25:28 [Sanctuary: Finding Moments of Refuge in the Presence of God](#)

Each believer has talents, given by God, that we are to use for His glory. We can't claim that we have no gifts or that we have been given no opportunity. The fact is, what we do with what we have will be the basis of our judgment. I won't be judged on my inability to sing or play the piano, but I will have to give an account of the gifts that I have.

If we don't use our talent for God, we will lose it. It doesn't remain dormant. It won't remain hidden. We will end up not having the opportunity we had at the beginning. On the other hand, if we are faithful in the use of our abilities, God will multiply our opportunities for service. The way to grow in influence and service is to use what we already have—then the Lord will reward us with more opportunity.

Remember, someday we will have to give an account at the judgment seat of Christ. As Christians, we won't be judged for our sins—they have already been forgiven. But we will be judged for the stewardship of those things God has given us. We'll be judged on quality, not quantity. We have been given incredible potential for serving God. How are we putting ours to use?

**Matthew 25:29 "For to everyone who has, more shall be given, and he will have an abundance; but from the one who does not have, even what he does have shall be taken away."**

KJV Matthew 25:29 For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath.

NKJ Matthew 25:29 `For to everyone who has, more will be given, and he will have abundance; but from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away.

NET Matthew 25:29 For the one who has will be given more, and he will have more than enough. But the one who does not have, even what he has will be taken from him.

BGT Matthew 25:29 τ γ ρ χοντι παντ δοθ σεται κα περισσευ σεται, το δ μ χοντος κα χει ρθ σεται π α το .

CSB Matthew 25:29 For to everyone who has, more will be given, and he will have more than enough. But from the one who does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him.

ESV Matthew 25:29 For to everyone who has will more be given, and he will have an abundance. But from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away.

NIV Matthew 25:29 For everyone who has will be given more, and he will have an abundance. Whoever does

not have, even what he has will be taken from him.

NLT Matthew 25:29 To those who use well what they are given, even more will be given, and they will have an abundance. But from those who do nothing, even what little they have will be taken away.

YLT Matthew 25:29 for to every one having shall be given, and he shall have overabundance, and from him who is not having, even that which he hath shall be taken from him;

MIT Matthew 25:29 For to everyone having gains, more will be given, and his capital will be increased.

NJB Matthew 25:29 For to everyone who has will be given more, and he will have more than enough; but anyone who has not, will be deprived even of what he has.

NRS Matthew 25:29 For to all those who have, more will be given, and they will have an abundance; but from those who have nothing, even what they have will be taken away.

RSV Matthew 25:29 For to every one who has will more be given, and he will have abundance; but from him who has not, even what he has will be taken away.

NAB Matthew 25:29 For to everyone who has, more will be given and he will grow rich; but from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away.

GWN Matthew 25:29 To all who have, more will be given, and they will have more than enough. But everything will be taken away from those who don't have much.

BBE Matthew 25:29 For to everyone who has will be given, and he will have more: but from him who has not, even what he has will be taken away.

- **For to everyone who has** Mt 13:12 Mk 4:25 Lu 8:18 Lk 16:9-12 Lk 19:25-26 Jn 15:2
- **shall be taken:** Mt 21:41 La 2:6 Ho 2:9 Lu 10:42 12:19-21 16:1-3,20-25 Jn 11:48 Rev 2:5

#### Related Passages:

Matthew 13:12+ "For whoever has, to him more shall be given, and he will have an abundance; but whoever does not have, even what he has shall be taken away from him.

Mark 4:25+ "For whoever has, to him more shall be given; and whoever does not have, even what he has shall be taken away from him."

Luke 8:18+ "So take care how you listen; for whoever has, to him more shall be given; and whoever does not have, even what he thinks he has shall be taken away from him."

Luke 19:25-26+ "And they said to him, 'Master, he has ten minas already.' 26 "I tell you that to everyone who has, more shall be given, but from the one who does not have, even what he does have shall be taken away.

## THE LAW OF SPIRITUAL INVESTMENT

**For** ([gar](#)) This is a term of explanation so the question is what is Jesus explaining?

**To everyone who has** (present tense), *more shall be given and he will have an abundance*([perisseuo](#)) - Faithfulness will be generously rewarded (Mt 13:12+; Mk 4:25+; Lk 8:18+, Lk 19:26+). When will he be **given** more and when will he have an **abundance**? While this surely speaks of the future reward in eternity, I think it does not exclude reception of **more** in time, in this present life. This thought of more in time and eternity is supported by Paul's exhortation to Timothy to "**discipline** ([present imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) yourself for the purpose of godliness; for bodily discipline is only of little profit, but godliness is **profitable** for all things, since it holds **promise for the present life** and **also for the life to come**." (1Ti 4:7-8+)

**But** (term of contrast) **from the one who does not have** (present tense), **even what he does have** (present tense) **shall be taken away** ([airo](#)) - As I said earlier, the idea is use it or lose it. **Shall be taken away** is in effect a prophetic warning which will be enforced against those who are not in Christ. They will not only lose their "talent" but they will forfeit their soul.

**John MacArthur** - The divine principle is that those who trust in Christ will gain everything, and those who do not trust in Him will lose everything. (See [Matthew Commentary - Page 108](#))

**MacArthur** goes on to apply this principle to believers - A true Christian who wastes his abilities, spiritual gifts, and opportunities will

have his work "burned up, [and] he shall suffer loss; but he himself shall be saved, yet so as through fire" (1 Cor. 3:15+). The person represented by this slave, however, has no faith at all and therefore no saving relationship to God. No matter how much he may appear to have been blessed by God and to have served Him, one day he will hear from the Lord's own lips the devastating words, "I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness" (Matt. 7:23+). (See [Matthew Commentary - Page 108](#))

**Craig Blomberg** - Principles to be learned from both the faithful and faithless servants are then rehearsed. Good stewardship of little things brings greater privilege and responsibility. Poor stewardship leads to losing even what one has. "Has" or "does not have" in the context of v. 29 refers to what a given servant has or has not accomplished with the original loans. The principle applies in a preliminary fashion already in this life, though fortunately God displays great grace and gives most people many second chances. The principle will be applied more consistently in a once-for-all fashion on Judgment Day. (Borrow [Matthew Commentary](#))

*"When Christ returns, he will not ask if one had the date right  
but 'What have you been doing?'"*  
-- David Garland

**C H Spurgeon commentary** He who has faith shall have more faith. He who has a taste for divine things shall develop a greater appetite for them He who has some understanding of the mysteries of the kingdom shall understand them more fully: "For unto every one that hath shall be given and he shall have abundance. "

**NET NOTE** - The one who has nothing has even what he seems to have taken from him, ending up with no reward at all (see also Luke 8:18). The exact force of this is left ambiguous, but there is no comfort here for those who are pictured by the third slave as being totally unmoved by the master. Though not an outright enemy, there is no relationship to the master either.

**THOUGHT** - This passage teaches that failure to use what we have been given will result in us losing what we have been given. If you are reading this note and you have yet to use the spiritual time, treasure and talents (and spiritual gift or gifts) that God has granted you, then your reward at the Bema seat will be proportional (2Co 5:10+)! Please do not waste your life with passing worldly pleasures and trinkets, because in some way I cannot fully grasp, your time in eternity (forever) will be less that it could have been (forever)! **Redeem the short time (in depth discussion)** you have left on earth to store up for yourself treasure in heaven that will endure throughout eternity!

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**Abundance** (surpassing, overflowing, lavish, in surplus, excelling, exceeding) (4052) **perisseuo** from **perissos** = abundant, exceeding some number, measure, rank or need, over and above) means to cause to superabound, to be superfluous, to overflow, to be in affluence, to excel or to be in abundance with the implication of being considerably more than what would be expected. **Perisseuo** carries the idea of exceeding the requirements, of overflowing or overdoing. It means to exceed a fixed number of measure, to be left over and above a certain number or measure. It means to have or to be more than enough, to be extremely rich or abundant. To exceed or remain over (as used in loaves left over after feeding the 5000 [Mt 14:20]! When Jesus supplies there is more than enough so that some is even left over! How quick we are to forget this basic principle!) The idea is to overflow like a river out of its banks! **Perisseuo** is used intransitively from the time of Hesiod in the sense of to be over and above, go beyond, outflank, be more than enough, remain over, abound.

**PERISSEUO - 35V** - Matt. 5:20; Matt. 13:12; Matt. 14:20; Matt. 15:37; Matt. 25:29; Mk. 12:44; Lk. 9:17; Lk. 12:15; Lk. 15:17; Lk. 21:4; Jn. 6:12; Jn. 6:13; Acts 16:5; Rom. 3:7; Rom. 5:15; Rom. 15:13; 1 Co. 8:8; 1 Co. 14:12; 1 Co. 15:58; 2 Co. 1:5; 2 Co. 3:9; 2 Co. 4:15; 2 Co. 8:2; 2 Co. 8:7; 2 Co. 9:8; 2 Co. 9:12; Eph. 1:8; Phil. 1:9; Phil. 1:26; Phil. 4:12; Phil. 4:18; Col. 2:7; 1 Thess. 3:12; 1 Thess. 4:1; 1 Thess. 4:10

**Matthew 25:30** **"Throw out the worthless slave into the outer darkness; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.**

- **Throw out** : Mt 3:10 5:13 Jer 15:1,2 Eze 15:2-5 Lu 14:34,35 Jn 15:6 Titus 3:14 Heb 6:7,8 Rev 3:15,16
- **outer darkness**: Mt 8:11-12 Mt 13:42,50 Mt 22:13 Mt 24:51 Lu 13:28 2Pe 2:17 Jude 1:13 Rev 21:8

#### Related Passages:

Matthew 8:11-12+ "I say to you that many will come from east and west, and recline at the table with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven; 12 but the sons of the kingdom will be cast out into the **outer darkness** ([skotos](#)); in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

Matthew 13:41-42+ "The Son of Man will send forth His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all stumbling blocks, and those who commit lawlessness, and **will throw them into the furnace of fire; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.**

Matthew 13:49-50+ So it will be at the end of the age; the angels will come forth and take out the wicked from among the righteous, 50 and **will throw them into the furnace of fire; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.**

Matthew 22:13+ "Then the king said to the servants, **Bind him hand and foot, and throw him into the outer darkness** ([skotos](#)); **in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.**'

Matthew 24:48-51+ But if that evil slave says in his heart, 'My master is not coming for a long time,' 49 and begins to beat his fellow slaves and eat and drink with drunkards; 50 the master of that slave will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour which he does not know, 51 and **will cut him in pieces and assign him a place with the hypocrites; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.**

Luke 13:26-28+ "Then you will begin to say, 'We ate and drank in Your presence, and You taught in our streets'; 27 and He will say, 'I tell you, I do not know where you are from; **DEPART** ([aorist imperative](#)) FROM ME, ALL YOU EVILDOERS.' 28 **"In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, but yourselves being thrown out.**



**Throw out** (cast - [ekbállō](#) - [aorist imperative](#)) **the worthless** ([achreios](#)) **slave** ([doulos](#)) - This is a command to cast him out immediately, without delay. He is deemed **worthless** because he gained no profit for his master and thus was essentially useless to his master. Robertson says "Doing nothing is doing harm."

**Into the** (definitive article "to" = "the") **outer** ([exoteros](#)) **darkness** ([skotos](#)) - Personally, this is one of the most frightening statements ever uttered by our Savior! If one compares the parallel passages ([see above](#)) that use the same phrase, one can deduce that this place of **outer darkness** is "a place with the hypocrites" (Mt 24:51+) and a "furnace of fire" (Mt 13:42+, Mt 13:50+). The thought of darkness and fire is incomprehensible (as fire usually brings light), but far worse it is frightening combination! Little wonder that Jesus goes on in the next phrase to prophetically describe the future participants' reactions to this horrible place. As a caveat, one of my favorite authors Warren Wiersbe does not believe this verse refers to eternal punishment.

The frightening phrase **OUTER DARKNESS** occurs three times in the Bible (Mt 8:12; Mt 22:13; Mt 25:30) and is always preceded by the definite article ("**the**") in Greek, which serves to identify it as a specific, real, literal entity! It seems to have denoted an area outside a well-illuminated banquet hall where there was **darkness** (cf parable of the wedding feast in Mt 22:1-14+). In Jesus' parable, the one who managed to sneak into the banquet hall without the proper garment was cast into **outer darkness**, separated from the feast. In the first two uses, **outer darkness** refers to the place of suffering for the unbelievers and is in contrast to the light where the believers dwell (1 Jn 1:5-7+, cf Ps 56:13, Ps 89:15). Ps 104:1-2 says "Bless the LORD, O my soul! O LORD my God, You are very great; You are clothed with splendor and majesty, **Covering Yourself with LIGHT** as with a cloak, Stretching out heaven like a tent curtain." Ps 44:3 speaks of "the **LIGHT** of Thy presence." Jesus Himself says "'I am the **LIGHT** of the world; he who follows Me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the **LIGHT** of life (IN CONTRAST TO THE "DARKNESS" OF DEATH!).'" (Jn 8:12+) In Psalm 49:19 we read "He (DESCRIBING A RICH UNBELIEVER) shall go to the generation of his fathers; **They will never see the LIGHT.**" This truth accords with what Paul wrote regarding the tragic fate of all who reject the

Gospel stating that "These (DESCRIBED IN 2 Th 1:8+) will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power (WHICH INCLUDES HIS **LIGHT** see Rev 22:5+) " (2 Th 1:9+). Unbelievers will be thrown into the furnace of fire, whereas believers will shine as the sun in the kingdom of the Father (Mt 13:42, 43+ Da 12:3+). The **outer darkness** in Mt 8:12 and Mt 22:13 is obviously a description of **Géhenna** ([geenna](#)), the "place of burning" (Mt 5:22, 29, 30+; Mt 10:28+; Mt 18:9+).

**OUTER DARKNESS** - 3X - Matt. 8:12; Matt. 22:13; Matt. 25:30

**Trapp** on **outer darkness**: "Into a darkness beyond a darkness; into a dungeon beyond and beneath the prison."

**In that place** (of outer darkness) **there will be weeping** ([klauthmos](#)) **and gnashing** ([brugmos](#)) **of teeth** - This description hardly needs any commentary. I interpret the Bible literally and thus the horrors of hell are literally unspeakable, as depicted in this verse by the reaction of the inhabitants! Notice that this is not a [term of comparison](#). In other words Jesus does not say it will be **LIKE** ([A SIMILE](#)) "weeping and gnashing of teeth." Notice also that the verb **will be** (estai) is in the future tense and [middle voice](#), a voice which is reflexive and could be rendered "they themselves!" In other words, they will begin to weep themselves (FOREVER!) And as best I can discern these descriptions apply to their eternal state! In other words a literal reading of Jesus' somber words would strongly suggest that their **eternal place of doom** would be accompanied by eternal torment to the point that they are continually weeping!

**D A Carson** agrees that "The definite articles with '**weeping**' and '**gnashing**' (cf. Greek) emphasize the horror of the scene: *the* weeping and *the* gnashing...**Weeping** suggests suffering and **gnashing** of teeth despair." ([Matthew](#))

**David Guzik** - Because he was wicked and lazy, the third servant demonstrated that he was not a true servant of his master at all. It is fitting that he (and those who show the same heart) was cast forever out of the master's presence.

**Spurgeon** - "What is it that the lost are doing? They are '**weeping** and **gnashing their teeth**.' Do you gnash your teeth now? You would not do it except you were in pain and agony. Well, in hell there is *always* **gnashing of teeth**." (WHAT A HORRIBLE THOUGHT!!! MAY THIS TRUTH MOTIVATE US TO SHARE THE GOSPEL WITH A SENSE OF URGENCY!!!)

[C H Spurgeon commentary](#) To lose the talent that had remained idle, was only a small part of the doom of "the unprofitable servant. " His lord ordered him to be "cast into outer darkness ", and his punishment is indicated by that oft-repeated refrain of our Savior's revelation of the horrors that await lost souls: "there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. " If we give any description of the world to come which is at all terrible, we are supposed to have borrowed it from Dante or Milton; but the most awful and harrowing descriptions of hell that ever fell from human lips do not exceed the language of the loving Christ himself. He is the true lover of men who faithfully warns them concerning the eternal woe that awaits the impenitent; while he who paints the miseries of hell as though they were but trifling is seeking to murder men's souls under the pretense of friendship.

See study of eternal punishment. The [Free Dictionary](#) describes gnashing of teeth as a very vocal display of anger, irritation, contempt, complaint.

**Robert Morey** commenting on Jesus' description **weeping and gnashing of teeth** writes that "The rabbinic picture used by Christ of people "**weeping and gnashing their teeth**" in the excruciating pain caused by the fires of [Gehenna](#) cannot be ignored or downplayed (Mt13:42, 50). In Re 14:10+, Re 14:11+, we are explicitly told that they will be tormented by sulfuric fire...for all eternity...without rest day or night. The words of the Apostle could not be clearer or plainer. The text says "*tormented*," not annihilated. (Morey, R. A. BORROW [Death and the Afterlife](#). Minneapolis, Minn.: [Bethany House](#))

**THOUGHT** - Let us not debate Jesus' clear words about the horror of Hell! Instead, may the eternal horror **motivate** us, enabled by the Spirit, to be bold in our witness (cf Acts 4:31b+) to all in our sphere of influence who do not know Jesus as their Savior and Lord. Today is the acceptable time for us to do this (in Heaven it will be too late) (2Co 6:2+). Today could be the day of salvation for someone with whom you boldly, lovingly, winsomely (cf Col 4:5-6+) share the Good News that Jesus died in time for them on a Cross so that they do not have to die eternally in torment. Lord by Thy Spirit and Word make us all bold witnesses while today is still called today for the night cometh when no man can work (Jn 9:4+). In Jesus' mighty saving Name. Amen.

[J C Ryle](#) - All unfruitful members of Christ's Church will be condemned and cast away in the day of judgment. The parable tells us that the servant who buried his master's money, was condemned as "wicked," "slothful," and "unprofitable," and cast into "outer darkness." And our Lord adds the solemn words, "there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." There will be no excuse for an unconverted Christian at the last day. The reasons with which he now pretends to satisfy himself will prove useless and vain. The Judge of all the earth will be found to have done right. The ruin of the lost soul will be found to be his own fault. Those words of our Lord, "thou knewest," are words that ought to ring loudly in many a man's ears, and prick him to the heart. Thousands are living at this day without Christ and without conversion, and yet pretending that they cannot help it. And all this time they know in their own



conscience that they are guilty. They are burying their talent. They are not doing what they can. Happy are they who find this out in time. It will all come out at the last day.

**THOUGHT (FROM RYLE)** - Let us leave this parable with a solemn determination, by God's grace, never to be content with a profession of Christianity without practice. Let us not only talk about religion, but act. Let us not only feel the importance of religion, but do something too. We are not told that the unprofitable servant was a murderer, or a thief, or even a waster of his Lord's money. But he did nothing,—and this was his ruin. Let us beware of a do-nothing Christianity. Such Christianity does not come from the Spirit of God. "To do no harm," says Baxter, "is the praise of a stone, not of a man."

**Matthew Henry** - Those who know not the day of their visitation, shall have the things that belong to their peace hid from their eyes. His doom is, to be cast into outer darkness. It is a usual way of expressing the miseries of the damned in hell. Here, as in what was said to the faithful servants, our Saviour goes out of the parable into the thing intended by it, and this serves as a key to the whole. Let us not envy sinners, or covet any of their perishing possessions.

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**Cast out** (throw, drive) (1544) ([ekballō](#) from **ek** = out + **bállō** = to cast, throw, drive) means to cast, throw out often with the idea of force (Mt. 8:12; 15:17; 25:30; Acts 16:37, 27:38; Lxx - Lev. 14:40). To throw out of an area or object, throw out, jettison (Mt 21:39 Acts 27:18). Frequently used of casting out demons (Mt 7:22, Mt 8:16, 31,9:34, 10:1, etc). In the present context ekballo describes the casting of unbelievers into the outer darkness! O horrible day! Let our hearts be broken by the things that break the heart of God, for He does not wish "for **ANY** to perish ([apollumi](#) - NOT [ANNIHILATION](#) BUT ETERNAL LOSS OF PURPOSE FOR WHICH ONE WAS CREATED!) but for all to come to repentance." (2 Pe 3:9+), for God our Savior (1 T 2:3) "desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth." (1 Ti 2:4)

**Worthless** (888) **achreios** (from **a** = negates + **chreios** = useful) means literally of no use, useless, good for nothing, unserviceable, unfit for war (Herodotus - the unserviceable part of an army). In Homer giving a helpless look (looking foolish). Of persons describes those who are unprofitable, unworthy or not deserving praise. It means being of no use or profit, especially from an economic perspective. In Lk 17:10 used as a hyperbole of pious modesty where the servant calls himself achreios, because, although he has done all, yet he has done nothing except what he ought to have done. Accordingly he possesses no merit, and could only claim to be called 'profitable,' should he do more than what he is bound to do.

**Gilbrant - Classical Greek and Septuagint Usage** - In classical Greek achreios is an adjective with the basic meaning of "useless, unprofitable, worthless." In the literature it is used to modify, among other nouns, "man," "law," and "wisdom." In addition, it is often used to specifically refer to someone who is unfit for war or the unserviceable part of an army. When achreios is neuter it can also refer to someone who has a helpless or foolish look. In the Septuagint it occurs in 2 Samuel 6:22 (LXX 2 Kings 6:22) with the general meaning of "unworthy" or "lowly."

**New Testament Usage** - In the New Testament **achreios** is found in two places. It occurs in Matthew 25:30 where it refers to the servant who hid in the ground the one talent which was entrusted to him by his master. Its basic meaning of "unprofitable" is seen here. Elsewhere it is found in Luke 17:10, where Jesus said that the disciples should see themselves as "unprofitable servants." Few will have a problem with this admission. But here in Luke, achreios also may incorporate the meaning of "unworthy," as in the Septuagint. ([Complete Biblical Library](#))

**Outer** (1857) **exoteros** is an adjectival comparative of **exo** (outside). In Hellenistic Greek the comparative has largely replaced the superlative, often retaining the superlative meaning which means farthest out, extreme and pertaining to an area outside a particular boundary.

**Gilbrant** - Although some lexicons treat exōteros as a unique word, it is actually the comparative form of the term exō (1838), "outside." Bauer states that the idea of "outside" is seen with respect to something which is "inside" and that exōteros is used in a superlative sense in the New Testament to mean "farthest" or "extreme" (cf. a Septuagint occurrence at Exodus 26:4 which describes the "utmost edge" of a curtain). In its New Testament occurrences the unbelieving Jew (Matthew 8:12), the person who made light of the king's gracious invitation (Matthew 22:13), and the unfaithful servant (Matthew 25:30) were thrown outside (exōteros) into the darkness (NIV). They were excluded from the blessings of God's kingdom. ([Complete Biblical Library](#))

**EXOTEROS - 3x** - Matt. 8:12; Matt. 22:13; Matt. 25:30

**EXOTEROS IN THE SEPTUAGINT** - Ex. 26:4; 1 Ki. 6:29; 1 Ki. 6:30; Job 18:17; Ezek. 10:5; Ezek. 40:19; Ezek. 40:20; Ezek. 40:31; Ezek. 40:37; Ezek. 41:15; Ezek. 41:17; Ezek. 42:1; Ezek. 42:3; Ezek. 42:6; Ezek. 42:7; Ezek. 42:8; Ezek. 42:9; Ezek. 42:14; Ezek. 44:1; Ezek. 44:19; Ezek. 46:20; Ezek. 46:21



**Darkness** (4655) **skotos** from **skia** = shadow thrown by an object. Skia it can assume the meaning of skotos and indicate the sphere of darkness) is literally that sphere in which light is absent. The phrase "*the outer darkness*" refers to the place of punishment or exclusion from God Who is light! **Friberg** - darkness; (1) literally, as an enveloping sphere where light (phos) is absent darkness, gloom, obscurity ([Mt 27.45](#)); in relation to the world, as the primitive chaos before light was created (2Co 4.6); idiomatically - literally the outer darkness, i.e. the place of punishment, as the region of future exclusion from the kingdom of God (Mt 8.12); (2) figuratively, as an absence of moral and spiritual renewal ignorance, lack of understanding (Acts 26.18); metaphorically, as the domain under the authority of the devil and demons realm of evil, evil world (Lk 22.53; Eph 6.12) (Borrow [Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament](#) )

**NIDNTT** explains that "In classic Gk. **darkness** applies primarily to the state characterized by the absence of light (phos) without any special metaphysical overtones. The thought is chiefly of the effect of darkness upon man. In the dark man gropes around uncertainly (Plato, *Phaedo*, 99b), since his ability to see is severely limited. Thus the man who can see may become blind in the darkness, and no longer know which way to turn. Hence darkness appears as the "sphere of objective peril and of subjective anxiety" (H. Conzelmann, *TDNT* VII 424). Since all anxiety ultimately derives from the fear of death, the ominous character of darkness culminates in the darkness of death which no man can escape (cf. Homer, *Il.*, 4, 461). Darkness is therefore Hades, the world of the dead, which already reaches out into our world in the mythical figures of the Eumenides, the children of Skotos and Gaia (Soph., *Oedipus Coloneus*, 40). Freed from their proper, temporal sense, the words of this group can be used in a metaphorical sense to describe human ways of life and behaviour. Thus they can describe a man's seclusion or obscurity. They can also indicate the secrecy, furtiveness or deceitfulness of his activity, the abstruseness of his speech, lack of enlightenment, insight and knowledge. "The word does not attain to high conceptual rank in philosophy. Mention of darkness serves to set off light; it has no philosophical content of its own" (*TDNT* VII 425 f.). (See online discussion in the [New International Dictionary of NT Theology](#))

**Weeping** (2805) **klauthmos** from **klaio** = to weep or bewail) is a noun which describes a strong inner emotion which is evoked in weeping, crying, lamentation (cries of grief, the act of bewailing as an expression of sorrow). Hell is a place of conscious sorrow for the unconscious would not weep. In most of these NT uses the tears are genuine, but their effect on the wrath of God is nil, as it is too late for those who shed them. The image is of utter hopelessness and is intended as a **warning** to those who read or hear these difficult to accept sayings!

**Klauthmos** - 9x in 9v - Matt. 2:18; Matt. 8:12; Matt. 13:42; Matt. 13:50; Matt. 22:13; Matt. 24:51; Matt. 25:30; Lk. 13:28; Acts 20:37

**Gnashing** (1030) **brugmos** from **brucho** = grind, make sounds striking teeth together)(see [gnashing teeth](#) below) describes striking, grinding or biting of teeth together. The picture is of one making a grating sound by rubbing one's teeth together as an expression of anger, pain, suffering. In the context of the NT uses **brugmos** is a manifestation or picture of the extreme anguish and utter despair of those consigned to eternal torment in hell. **Webster** says gnash means to strike the teeth together as in anger or pain, both emotions probably in play in the fires of hell. The root verb **brucho** is used in [Acts 7:54+](#) to describe the Jews who were "cut to the quick" by Stephen's sermon and began "**gnashing** their teeth at him", clearly a manifestation of intense anger (and guilt). **TDNT** says the root **brucho** was used "of the cry of pain of a stag mortally wounded by snake-bite."

**Brugmos** - 7x in 7v in the **NAS** - Matt. 8:12; Matt. 13:42; Matt. 13:50; Matt. 22:13; Matt. 24:51; Matt. 25:30; Lk. 13:28 (see these passages above under the discussion of weeping) The only OT use is in the **Septuagint** translation of Pr 19:12.= "King's wrath is like the **roaring** (growling; Lxx = brugmos) of a lion."

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#### QUESTION - [What is the outer darkness in Matthew 22:13?](#) | [GotQuestions.org](#)

**ANSWER** - In the [Parable of the Wedding Feast](#), Jesus tells of a "wedding crasher" of sorts: a man in the wedding hall was discovered to have entered the feast without authorization. Jesus says that the king, the master of the feast, issued a dire command concerning the interloper: "Bind him hand and foot and cast him into the **outer darkness**" (ESV).

Jesus uses the term "**outer darkness**" in the parable to describe a condition of great sorrow, loss and woe. It stands in vivid contrast to the brightly lit and joyous celebration attended by those who accepted the king's invitation. Interpreting the wedding feast as heaven, the "outer darkness" must be the place of eternal punishment. Most Bible scholars agree that the phrase "outer darkness" refers to hell or, more properly, the lake of fire (Matthew 8:12; 13:42; 13:50; and Mt 25:30,41).

The outer darkness of Jesus' parable is called "blackest darkness" in Jude 1:13. Again, a place of judgment is the obvious meaning, since it is reserved for "godless men" (verse 4).

Perhaps the place of judgment is pictured as “dark” because of the absence of God’s cheering presence. “When you hide your face, they are terrified” (Psalm 104:29). God is called “light” in 1 John 1:5, and if He withdraws His blessing, only darkness is left. Throughout the Scriptures light symbolizes God’s purity, holiness, and glory. Darkness is used as a symbol of moral depravity (Psalm 82:5; Proverbs 2:13; Romans 3:12). Darkness can also refer to trouble and affliction (Job 5:12; Proverbs 20:20; Isaiah 9:2) and to death and nothingness (1 Samuel 2:9; Ecclesiastes 11:8; Job 3:4-6).

The outer darkness of judgment is accompanied by “weeping and gnashing of teeth.” The “weeping” describes an inner pain of the heart, mind, and soul. The word in the original denotes a bewailing or lamentation by beating the breast in an expression of immense sorrow. The “gnashing of teeth” describes an outward pain of the body. Taken together, the weeping and gnashing of teeth says hell is a place of indescribable spiritual agony and unending physical pain (see Luke 16:23-28). The outer darkness is a place of anguish, heartache, grief, and unspeakable suffering. Such will be the lot of all who reject Christ (John 3:18, 36).

Christ is the Light of the World (John 8:12). When one rejects the Light, he will be cast into eternal darkness. Just like the man in the parable, the one who rejects Christ will lose his chance for joy, blessing and fellowship and will be left with nothing but darkness and eternal regret.

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**Norman Geisler - [When Critics Ask](#)**

**MATTHEW 8:12, 22:13, 25:30—Is hell a place of darkness, or is there light there?**

**PROBLEM:** Jesus described hell as a place of “outer darkness” (Matt. 8:12; cf. 22:13 and 25:30). By contrast, the Bible says hell is a place of “fire” (Rev. 20:14) and “unquenchable flames” (Mark 9:48). But, fire and flames give off light. How can hell be utterly dark when there is light there?

**SOLUTION:** Both “fire” and “darkness” are powerful figures of speech which appropriately describe the unthinkable reality of hell. It is like fire because it is a place of destruction and torment. Yet, it is like outer darkness because people are lost there forever. While hell is a literal place, not every description of it should be taken literally. Some powerful figures of speech are used to portray this literal place. Its horrible reality, wherein body and soul will suffer forever, goes far beyond any mere figure of speech that may be used to describe it. But, it is a serious mistake to take a figure of speech literally. By doing so, one can conclude that God has feathers, since He is described as having wings (Ps. 91:4)! There are other figures of speech used to describe the eternal destiny of the lost that, if taken literally, contradict each other. For example, hell is depicted as an eternal garbage dump (Mark 9:43–48), which has a bottom. But, it is also portrayed as a bottomless pit (Rev. 20:3). Each is a vivid depiction of a place of everlasting punishment.

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**Teeth Provided!** - An old-fashioned, hell-and damnation preacher was scolding his congregation for their terrible misdeeds. “Remember what it says in the Bible,” he thundered. “Jesus told us that for those who do evil there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” [Matthew 22:13] At this point the preacher saw a very old parishioner grinning up at him, unconcerned, toothless. He accepted the challenge and pointed at the grinning gums, “Don’t worry, James Lippincott. Teeth will be provided!” (Streiker, L. D. - Nelson's Big Book of Laughter)

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**Spurgeon** - There are some ministers who never mention anything about hell. I heard of a minister who once said to his congregation – ‘*If you do not love the Lord Jesus Christ you will be sent to that place which it is not polite to mention*’ He ought not to have been allowed to preach again, I am sure, if he could not use plain words!”

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**C H Spurgeon - [Unprofitable servants](#)**

These texts are graven on my heart, as with an iron pen, by a merciless wound, inflicted when I was too feeble to bear it. When I was exceedingly ill in the South of France, and deeply depressed in spirit, so deeply depressed and so sick and ill that I scarce knew how to live, one of those malicious persons who commonly haunt all public men, and especially ministers, sent me anonymously a letter, openly directed to ‘That unprofitable servant C. H. Spurgeon.’ This letter contained tracts directed to the enemies of the Lord Jesus, with passages marked and underlined, with notes applying them to myself. How many Rabshakehs have in their day written to me! Ordinarily I read them with the patience which comes of use, and they go to light the fire. I do not look for exemption from this annoyance, nor do I usually feel it hard to bear, but in the hour when my spirits were depressed, and I was in terrible pain, this reviling letter cut me to the quick. I turned upon my bed and asked, ‘Am I, then, an unprofitable servant?’ I grieved exceedingly, and could not lift up my head or find rest. I reviewed my life, and saw its infirmities and imperfections, but knew not how to put my case till this second text came to my relief, and answered as the verdict of my bruised heart. I said to myself, ‘I hope I am not an unprofitable servant in the sense in which this person intends to call me so; but I am assuredly so in the other sense.’ I cast myself upon my Lord and Master once again with a deeper sense of the meaning of the text than I had felt before: his atoning sacrifice revived me, and in humble faith I found rest.

**Matthew 25:31 "But when the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him, then He will sit on His glorious throne.**

KJV Matthew 25:31 When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory:

NKJ Matthew 25:31 "When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory.

NET Matthew 25:31 "When the Son of Man comes in his glory and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne.

BGT Matthew 25:31 τὸν ὁ ἄθροιστοὺς τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ ὁ ξατοκάπτης ὁ ἄγγελοι μετὰ τοῦ, τότε καθίσει πρὸς τοῦ ὁ ξηξατο.

CSB Matthew 25:31 "When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory.

ESV Matthew 25:31 "When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne.

NIV Matthew 25:31 "When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his throne in heavenly glory.

NLT Matthew 25:31 "But when the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit upon his glorious throne.

YLT Matthew 25:31 'And whenever the Son of Man may come in his glory, and all the holy messengers with him, then he shall sit upon a throne of his glory;

MIT Matthew 25:31 When the human one accompanied by all the angels comes in his glory, he will sit at that time on his glorious throne.

NJB Matthew 25:31 'When the Son of man comes in his glory, escorted by all the angels, then he will take his seat on his throne of glory.

NRS Matthew 25:31 "When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory.

RSV Matthew 25:31 "When the Son of man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne.

NAB Matthew 25:31 "When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit upon his glorious throne,

GWN Matthew 25:31 "When the Son of Man comes in his glory and all his angels are with him, he will sit on his glorious throne.

BBE Matthew 25:31 But when the Son of man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then will he be seated in his glory:

ASV Matthew 25:31 But when the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the angels with him, then shall he sit on the throne of his glory:

- **the Son of Man:** Mt 25:6 16:27 19:28 26:64 Da 7:13,14 Zec 14:5 Mk 8:38 14:62 Lu 9:26 Lu 22:69 Jn 1:51 5:27-29 Ac 1:11 1Th 4:16 2Th 1:7,8 Heb 1:8 Jude 1:14 Rev 1:7
- **then:** Ps 9:7 Rev 3:21 20:11

#### Related Passages:

Matthew 24:30+ "And then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the SON OF MAN COMING ON THE CLOUDS OF THE SKY with power and great glory.

Revelation 19:11-16+ And I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse, and He who sat on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and wages war. 12 His eyes are a flame of fire, and on His

head are many diadems; and He has a name written on Him which no one knows except Himself. 13 He is clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God. 14 And the armies which are in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, were following Him on white horses. 15 From His mouth comes a sharp sword, so that with it He may strike down the nations, and He will rule them with a rod of iron; and He treads the wine press of the fierce wrath of God, the Almighty. 16 And on His robe and on His thigh He has a name written, "KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS."

Zechariah 14:5+ You (ISRAEL) will flee by the valley of My mountains, for the valley of the mountains will reach to Azel; yes, you will flee just as you fled before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah. Then the LORD, my God, will come, and **all the holy ones with Him!** (SAINTS AND ANGELS)

Revelation 1:7+ **BEHOLD, HE IS COMING WITH THE CLOUDS**, and every eye will see Him, even those who pierced Him; and all the tribes of the earth will mourn over Him. So it is to be. Amen.

2 Thessalonians 1:6-10+ For after all it is only just for God to repay with affliction those who afflict you, 7 and to give relief to you who are afflicted and to us as well **when the Lord Jesus will be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire**, 8 dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus (THE **GOATS** IN MATTHEW 25). 9 These will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power, 10 when He comes to be glorified in His saints on that day, and to be marveled at among all who have believed—for our testimony to you was believed.

Daniel 7:13-14+ "I kept looking in the night visions, And behold, with the clouds of heaven One like a **Son of Man** was coming, And He came up to the Ancient of Days And was presented before Him. 14 "And to Him was given dominion, Glory and a kingdom, That all the peoples, nations and men of every language Might serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion Which will not pass away; And His kingdom is one Which will not be destroyed.

Isaiah 2:2-4+ (**ISAIAH'S PROPHECY OF THE MESSIANIC KINGDOM, THE MILLENNIUM**) Now it will come about that In the last days The mountain of the house of the LORD Will be established as the chief of the mountains, And will be raised above the hills; And all the nations will stream to it. 3 And many peoples will come and say, "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, To the house of the God of Jacob; That He may teach us concerning His ways And that we may walk in His paths." **For the law will go forth from Zion And the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.** (THE CITY OF THE GREAT KING) 4 And He will judge between the nations (THE FIRST JUDGMENT IS Mt 25:31-46), And will render decisions for many peoples; And they will hammer their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not lift up sword against nation, And never again will they learn war.

Zechariah 14:4, 9+ In that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which is in front of **Jerusalem** on the east; and the Mount of Olives will be split in its middle from east to west by a very large valley, so that half of the mountain will move toward the north and the other half toward the south.....14:9 And **the LORD will be king over all the earth**; in that day the LORD will be the only one, and His name the only one.

□

## **JESUS' GLORIOUS SECOND COMING**

**But when the Son ([huios](#)) of Man ([note](#)) comes in His glory ([doxa](#))** - First, note that most translations do not translate the (de) as "but," but leave it untranslated. It is difficult to see what contrast is being alluded to (if any). Second, note the word is **when** not "if." In other words this event will come to pass, but we just do not know "when." Third, note that **Son of Man** is used 84x in 80v and is most often used in the Gospel of Matthew (31x/29v) and only 4 other times outside of the Gospels. All 31 uses in Matthew are uttered by Jesus and 80 of the 84 uses in the Gospels are also spoken by Jesus. This was clearly Jesus' favorite Name for Himself and rightly so for it was full of rich theological meaning. **Son of Man** is a "shorthand" way to describe Jesus as the **God Man**, because **Son** speaks of Him being fully God by virtue of His divine Sonship and **Man** of course speaks of His full humanity (See [Gotquestions](#)). **Son of Man** says "**Fully God, Fully Man!**" It is also notable that **Son of Man** is not just in the New Testament but was first mentioned by Daniel in the great prophetic chapter 7 (Da 7:13-14+)

Matt. 8:20; Matt. 9:6; Matt. 10:23; Matt. 11:19; Matt. 12:8; Matt. 12:32; Matt. 12:40; Matt. 13:37; Matt. 13:41; Matt. 16:13; Matt. 16:27; Matt. 16:28; Matt. 17:9; Matt. 17:12; Matt. 17:22; Matt. 18:11; Matt. 19:28; Matt. 20:18; Matt. 20:28; Matt. 24:27; Matt. 24:30; Matt. 24:37; Matt. 24:39; Matt. 24:44; Matt. 25:31; Matt. 26:2;

**And all the angels** ([aggelos/angelos](#)) **with Him** - What a glorious sight this will be. And if we parallel this passage with the description in Revelation 19:14+ we can see we will have a "first-row seat" to this glorious event, for with the angelic escort will be the redeemed saints riding on white horses. You might ask "Why are those following Him on white horses not angels?" Glad you asked! If we compare the parallel passages in Rev 17:14+, we see that those coming "with Him" are the **called** and **chosen** and **faithful**." This triple description could hardly describe angels and serves to substantiate that riding behind the Son of Man will be the saints, those who are "the called and chosen and faithful." Most interpreters including those in conservative, reformed, dispensational, and evangelical traditions understand this as a reference to redeemed sinners not sinless angels. While 1Ti 5:21+ does have the phrase "chosen angels," there are no passages that refer to angels as **called** or **faithful**, both terms that are repeatedly applied to believers in Jesus Christ.

**Then** ([tote](#)) is an expression of time, which usually marks progression in a narrative. In this case it marks Christ's return in the air followed by His "landing" (so to speak) on planet earth.

**He will sit** ([kathizo](#)) **on His glorious** ([doxa](#)) **throne** ([thronos](#)) - In Revelation 16:10+ there is another **throne** described, "the throne of the beast" upon which the angel will pour out the fifth bowl of wrath destroying his throne. The **beast** is the interloper, the counterfeit Christ who will be ruling the world during the preceding 3.5 years of this present age, the 1260 day period known as the **Great Tribulation**. Jesus' return in glory will destroy the [Antichrist](#) (Rev 19:20+) and He will set up His Messianic Kingdom and His throne in Jerusalem (Isa 2:3+; Zech 14:4, 9+). As best I can determine, the sheep and the goat judgment is His first official act as King of kings and Lord of lords (Revelation 19:16+).

**Matthew Henry** says "This is a description of the last judgment." I think Matthew Henry is incorrect. Revelation 20:11-20+ is John's description of the last judgment of all unbelieving humanity, all of those who have not been born again (Jn 3:3+) and therefore are not in Christ by grace through faith (Eph 2:8-9+). Presumably like many (if not most) of the commentaries written from 1700-1900 Matthew Henry did not believe in the millenium and did that see this coming of the King in glory as occurring at the end of the **Great Tribulation** (Rev 19:11-21+). It follows that he did not understand that this judgment, the Sheep and Goat judgment, as one which would determine who which of he survivors of the **Great Tribulation**, would enter into the Messianic Kingdom.

**THOUGHT** - As an aside, it is interesting that some of the study Bibles that do not hold to a strictly literal approach to the Bible (e.g., Reformation Study Bible) avoid discussion of what it means to **inherit the kingdom prepared for you** (Mt 25:34). A respected writer Robert Gundry says this Mt 25:31-46 describes the judgment of all humanity, which is not a correct interpretation. As a reader you must always be an Acts 17:11+ Berean (even being discerning in the commentary which you are reading!), lest you be influenced by the authoritative air of the so-called expert, sometimes pious pontifications! They may be experts, but that does not mean they are always correct and this warning is especially apropos when reading anything having to do with [eschatology](#) (prophecy of future events), as there is unfortunately much non-literal interpretation of the prophetic passages (See [Read Literally](#)). Little wonder that there is so much confusion and disagreement over Biblical prophecies. The dictum I live by and continually teach my students is the simple principle that if the plain sense makes good **sense** in context, then seek to make no other **sense** out of it (especially by allegorizing or spiritualizing), lest you end up with an interpretation that is essentially **nonsense**!

**Believer's Study Bible** - (Mt 25:31-46) The sheep and goat judgment **should not be confused with other judgments** (cf. Rev. 20:11-15+), e.g., the judgment seat of Christ (bema, Gk.) for believers only, which occurs immediately following the departure of the church at the revelation of Christ (cf. 1 Cor. 3:13+) (**ED**: I THINK A BETTER REFERENCE IS 2Co 5:10+); or the Great White Throne judgment for unbelievers, which occurs at the conclusion of the millennial age (Rev. 20:11-15+). This judgment of sheep and goats is at the conclusion of the Great Tribulation to determine who may enter the millennial or kingdom age. The basis of the judgment is the relationship of men to Christ, as demonstrated by their treatment of Israel during the Great Tribulation (Mt 25:34-46). Those who are saved (the "sheep") enter the kingdom prepared for them (Mt 25:34), while the lost (the "goats") are turned away into eternal punishment (Mt 25:46). The kingdom consists only of the saved at the outset of that final age.

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**Glory, glorious** ([1391](#)) [doxa](#) from [dokeo](#) = to think) in simple terms means to give a proper opinion or estimate of something. Glory is something that is a source of honor, fame, or admiration. It describes renown, a thing that is beautiful, impressive, or worthy of praise. It follows that the **glory** of God expresses all that He is in His Being and in His nature, character, power and acts. He is glorified when He is allowed to be seen as He really is. To be where God is will be glory. To be what God intended will be glory. To do what God purposed will be glory. **Glory (doxa)** speaks of a manifestation of God's true nature, presence, or likeness. The basic idea in the word doxa is that of manifestation. The glory of God is the manifestation of His Being, His character and His acts. The glory of God is what He is essentially. Glory, therefore, is the true apprehension of God or things. The glory of God must mean His unchanging essence.



**Charles Ryrie** says that the **glory of God** "is the manifestation of any or all of His attributes. In other words, it is the displaying of God to the world. Thus, things which glorify God are things which show the characteristics of His being to the world.

I like the way Puritan writer **Thomas Watson** described God's glory - Glory is the sparkling of the Deity... We may see God's glory blazing in the sun and twinkling in the stars (Ps 19:1)... A sight of God's glory humbles. The stars vanish when the sun appears.

**Doxa** has a long history and originally meant opinion or estimation. In the [Septuagint](#) **doxa** took on a meaning of brightness or splendor, a sense not found in classical Greek. Kittel adds that...

While **doxa** can denote "reputation" or "power," its main use in the NT is shaped by the OT; it thus becomes a biblical term rather than a Greek one. While individual nuances may embrace divine honor, splendor, power, or radiance, what is always expressed is the divine mode of being, although with varying stress on the element of visible manifestation (cf. Lk. 2:9; 9:31-32; Acts 22:11; Rev 15:8; 21:23). In the NT again, giving God glory means acknowledging (Acts 12:23) or extolling (Lk. 2:14) what is already a reality. ([Kittel, G., Friedrich, G., & Bromiley, G. W. Theological Dictionary of the New Testament. Eerdmans](#)) (See [doxa in the "Little Kittel"](#))

**Son of Man** - **W. E. Vine** - In the NT this is a designation of Christ, almost entirely confined to the Gospels. Elsewhere it is found in [Acts 7:56](#), the only occasion where a disciple applied it to the Lord and in Rev. 1:13; Rev. 14:14 (see below).

"Son of Man" is the title Christ used of Himself; John 12:34 is not an exception, for the quotation by the multitude was from His own statement. The title is found especially in the Synoptic Gospels. The occurrences in John's Gospel, John 1:51; John 3:13, 14; John 5:27; John 6:27, 53, 62; John 8:28 (John 9:35 in some texts); John 12:23, 34 (twice); John 13:31, are not parallel to those in the Synoptic Gospels. In the latter the use of the title falls into two groups, (a) those in which it refers to Christ's humanity, His earthly work, sufferings and death, e.g., Matt. 8:20; Matt. 11:19; Matt. 12:40; Matt. 26:2, 24; (b) those which refer to His glory in resurrection and to that of His future advent, e.g., Matt. 10:23; Matt. 13:41; Matt. 16:27, 28; Matt. 17:9; Matt. 24:27, 30 (twice), 37, 39, 44.

While it is a Messianic title it is evident that the Lord applied it to Himself in a distinctive way, for it indicates more than Messiahship, even universal headship on the part of One who is Man. It therefore stresses His manhood, manhood of a unique order in comparison with all other men, for He is declared to be of heaven, 1 Cor. 15:47, and even while here below, was "the Son of Man, which is in Heaven," John 3:13. As the "Son of Man" He must be appropriated spiritually as a condition of possessing eternal life, John 6:53. In His death, as in His life, the glory of His Manhood was displayed in the absolute obedience and submission to the will of the Father (John 12:23; John 13:31), and, in view of this, all judgment has been committed to Him, who will judge in full understanding experimentally of human conditions, sin apart, and will exercise the judgment as sharing the nature of those judged, John 5:22, 27.

Not only is He man, but He is "Son of Man," not by human generation but, according to the Semitic usage of the expression, partaking of the characteristics (sin apart) of manhood belonging to the category of mankind. Twice in the Apocalypse, Rev. 1:13; Rev. 14:14, He is described as "One like unto a Son of man," RV (AV, "... the Son of Man"), cp. Dan. 7:13. He who was thus seen was indeed the "Son of Man," but the absence of the article in the original serves to stress what morally characterizes Him as such. Accordingly in these passages He is revealed, not as the Person known by the title, but as the One who is qualified to act as the Judge of all men. He is the same Person as in the days of His flesh, still continuing His humanity with His Deity. The phrase "like unto" serves to distinguish Him as there seen in His glory and majesty in contrast to the days of His humiliation. (Online [Vine's Expository Dictionary](#))

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#### QUESTIONS - [What does it mean that Jesus is the Son of Man? QUESTIONS.ORGSEE](#)

**ANSWER - Son of Man is a title of humanity.** Other titles for Christ, such as [Son of God](#), are overt in their focus on His deity. *Son of Man*, in contrast, focuses on the humanity of Christ. God called the prophet Ezekiel "son of man" 93 times. In this way, God was simply calling Ezekiel a human being. *Son of man* is simply a periphrastic term for "human." Jesus Christ was truly a human being. He came "in the flesh" (1 John 4:2).

**Son of Man is a title of humility.** The Second Person of [the Trinity](#), eternal in nature, left heaven's glory and took on human flesh, becoming the Son of Man, born in a manger and "despised and rejected by mankind" (Isaiah 53:3). The Son of Man had "no place to lay his head" (Luke 9:58). The Son of Man ate and drank with sinners (Matthew 11:19). The Son of Man suffered at the hands of men (Matthew 17:12). This intentional lowering of His status from King of Heaven to Son of Man is the epitome of humility (see Philippians 2:6-8).



**Son of Man is a title of deity.** Ezekiel may have been a son of man, but Jesus is *the* Son of Man. As such, Jesus is the supreme example of all that God intended mankind to be, the embodiment of truth and grace (John 1:14). In Him “all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form” (Colossians 2:9). For this reason, the Son of Man was able to forgive sins (Matthew 9:6). The Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath (Mark 2:28). The Son of Man came to save lives (Luke 9:56; 19:10), rise from the dead (Mark 9:9), and execute judgment (John 5:27). At His trial before the high priest, Jesus said, “I say to all of you: From now on you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven” (Matthew 26:64). This statement immediately ended the trial, as the court accused the Lord of blasphemy and condemned Him to death (verses 65–66).

**Son of Man is a fulfillment of prophecy.** Jesus’ claim before the high priest to be the Son of Man was a reference to the prophecy of Daniel 7:13–14, “I was watching in the night visions, And behold, One like the Son of Man, Coming with the clouds of heaven! He came to the Ancient of Days, And they brought Him near before Him. Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, That all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, Which shall not pass away, And His kingdom the one Which shall not be destroyed” (NKJV). Daniel saw glory, worship, and an everlasting kingdom given to the Messiah—here called the “Son of Man”—and Jesus applied this prophecy to Himself. Jesus also spoke of [His coming kingdom](#) on other occasions (Matthew 13:41; 16:28). The author of Hebrews used a reference to the “son of man” in the Psalms to teach that Jesus, the true Son of Man, will be the ruler of all things (Hebrews 2:5–9; cf. Psalm 8:4–6). The Son of Man, in fulfillment of [Old Testament prophecy](#), will be the King.

Jesus was fully God (John 1:1), but He was also fully human (John 1:14). As the Son of God and the Son of Man, He is deserving of both titles.

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#### QUESTION - [What is the meaning of the Parable of the Sheep and Goats?](#)

**ANSWER** - The Parable of the Sheep and Goats is part of the [Olivet Discourse](#). It is found in Matthew 25:31-46. A parable is a short, simple story of comparison. Jesus used parables to teach spiritual truths by means of earthly situations.

Jesus begins the parable by saying it concerns His return in glory to set up His kingdom (Matthew 25:31). Therefore, the setting of this event is at the beginning of the [millennium](#), after the tribulation. All those on earth at that time will be brought before the Lord, and He will separate them “as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left” (verses 32–33). The sheep are those who were saved during the tribulation; the goats are the unsaved who survived the tribulation.

The sheep on Jesus’ right hand are blessed by God the Father and given an inheritance. The reason is stated: “For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me” (verses 35-36). The righteous will not understand: when did they see Jesus in such a pitiful condition and help Him? “The King will reply, ‘I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me’” (verses 39-40).

The goats on Jesus’ left hand are cursed with eternal hell-fire, “prepared for the devil and his angels” (verse 41). The reason is given: they had opportunity to minister to the Lord, but they did nothing (verses 42-43). The damned ask, “Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or needing clothes or sick or in prison, and did not help you?” (verse 44). Jesus replies, “I tell you the truth, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me” (verse 45).

Jesus then ends the discourse with a contrast: “They will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life” (Mt 25:46).

In the Parable of the Sheep and the Goats, we are looking at man redeemed and saved, and man condemned and lost. A casual reading seems to suggest that salvation is the result of good works. The “sheep” acted charitably, giving food, drink, and clothing to the needy. The “goats” showed no charity. This seems to result in salvation for the sheep and damnation for the goats.

However, Scripture does not contradict itself, and the Bible clearly and repeatedly teaches that salvation is by faith through the grace of God and not by our good works (see John 1:12; Acts 15:11; Romans 3:22-24; Romans 4:4-8; Romans 7:24-25; Romans 8:12; Galatians 3:6-9; and Ephesians 2:8-10). In fact, Jesus Himself makes it clear in the parable that the salvation of the “sheep” is not based on their works—their inheritance was theirs “since the creation of the world” (Matthew 25:34), long before they could ever do any good works!

The good works mentioned in the parable are not the *cause* of salvation but the *effect* of salvation. As Christians we become like Christ (see Romans 8:29; 2 Corinthians 3:18; and Colossians 2:6-7). Galatians 5:22 tells us that the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, faithfulness, and self-control. Good works in a Christian’s life are the direct overflow of these traits, and are only acceptable to God because of the relationship that exists between servant and Master, the saved and their Savior, the sheep and their Shepherd (see Ephesians 2:10).

The core message of the Parable of the Sheep and Goats is that God's people will love others. Good works will result from our relationship to the Shepherd. Followers of Christ will treat others with kindness, serving them as if they were serving Christ Himself. The unregenerate live in the opposite manner. While "goats" can indeed perform acts of kindness and charity, their hearts are not right with God, and their actions are not for the right purpose – to honor and worship God.

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#### Related Resources:

- [What does the Bible say about giving to the poor?](#)
- 

#### Treated Like A King

I was a stranger and you took Me in. — Matthew 25:35

Today's Scripture : Matthew 25:31-46

King Abdullah, the ruler of Jordan since 1999, has been known to disguise himself and go out into public places. His purpose is to talk with ordinary people and find out what they are thinking, and to check up on civil servants to see how they are treating his people. He has visited hospitals and government offices to learn what kind of service they are giving.

The king got the idea while in New York. He couldn't leave his hotel without being mobbed, so he slipped out in disguise. It worked, so he tried it at home. He reported that once this practice was begun, civil servants and hospital employees started to treat everyone like kings.

When Jesus comes as King, He will judge the nations (Matthew 25:31-46). He said the basis for that judgment will be how people treated Him when He was hungry, thirsty, a stranger, naked, sick, or imprisoned. Those being judged will ask when they saw Him in these situations, and Jesus will say, "Inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me" (v.40).

Because all people are created in God's image, and because Jesus by His words and example taught us that He cares deeply how we treat others, we should treat all people with kindness and compassion. Let's treat them like kings. By: David C. Egner (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

#### Reflect & Pray

Every kindness done to others  
Is a kindness done to Thee;  
Christlike love for all my brothers  
May the world observe in me.  
—Brandt

Our love for Christ is only as real as our love for our neighbor.

**Matthew 25:32 "All the nations will be gathered before Him; and He will separate them from one another, as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats;**

- **All the nations will be gathered before Him** Ps 96:13 98:9 Ac 17:30,31 Ro 2:12,16 14:10-12 2Co 5:10 Rev 20:11-15
- **He will separate** Mt 3:12 13:42,43,49 Ps 1:5 50:3-5 Eze 20:38 34:17-22 Mal 3:18 1Co 4:5
- **as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats** Ps 78:52 Jn 10:14,27

### THE SHEEP AND GOATS SEPARATION

**All the nations** ([ethnos](#)) **will be gathered** ([sunago](#)) **before** ([emprosthen](#)) **Him** - This prophecy is yet to be fulfilled. Note that **all the nations** (**all** means no exceptions) implies a worldwide gathering on earth and does not picture a heavenly scene. Revelation 19:15+ in the context of His Second Coming says "from His mouth comes a sharp sword, so that with it **He may strike down the nations**, and **He will rule them with a rod of iron**, and He treads the wine press of the fierce wrath of God, the Almighty." Notice that after He strikes the nations, He will rule the nations. Who are **all the nations** that **will be gathered before Him**? When we

compare this text with Revelation 19:15+, it is clear that while King Jesus will strike down the **nations**, there are still **nations** over which He will rule. It is all those who survived His striking, those who are now gathered before Him from around the world. In short, every surviving man and woman alive on planet earth at this time after the destruction of the Antichrist and armies of the world (Rev 19:19-21+) will be gathered before the King, the Good Shepherd (Jn 10:11, 14+), Who knows His Own sheep!

Note some refer to this as the Judgment of the Nations, but that is not accurate because the judgment is specifically of individuals, not of nations.

**And He will separate (aphorizo) them from one another, as (term of comparison/simile) the shepherd (poimen) separates (aphorizo) the sheep (probaton) from the goats (eriphos)** - The individuals from the nations will include an intermingling of sheep and goats who will need to be separated by the Shepherd-King. Note that the Greek word for judgment is **krisis** which conveys the primary idea of to separate, distinguish or discriminate. Clearly **will separate** describes a judgment in the future. The Judge is Jesus seated on His throne. The judgment (separation) is between sheep and goats. The comparison with a **shepherd** describes the well-known practice of shepherds standing at the door of the sheepfold and allowing only their sheep into the fold.

As an aside, the [DICTIONARY OF BIBLICAL IMAGERY](#) notes "Sheep are the most frequently mentioned animal in the Bible, with nearly four hundred references if we include references to flocks."

**THOUGHT-** The judgment in Mt 25:31-46 is often erroneously interpreted as the "*final judgment*" (e.g., Be aware that the Reformation Study Bible frequently interprets the literal text in a non-literal manner!) but a careful observation of the absolutely last and therefore final judgment in the Bible as found in Revelation 20:11-15 clearly shows that there is only one group being judged. There are no believers ("sheep") even implied in Revelation 20:11-15! The point is that, for the most accurate interpretation of the Bible, one needs to observe the text and not the commentaries. John writes that the only ones who are judged are those whose names were not in the Book of life. As I like to say, it is amazing how much light careful observation of the Biblical text can shed on the commentaries!

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**Guthrie** - It is a remarkable fact, that while the baser metals are diffused through the body of the rocks, gold and silver usually lie in veins; collected together in distinct metallic masses. They are in the rocks but not of them.... And as by some power in nature God has separated them from the base and common earths, even so by the power of His grace will He separate His chosen from a reprobate and rejected world.

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**Sheep** (4263) **probaton** from **probaino** = to go before, walk ahead) is literally something that walks forward (a quadruped) and in context refers to a **sheep**. **Probaton** denotes the domestic sheep used for religious sacrifice, food, and clothing. In classical Greek it is used generally to refer to four-footed domesticated animals such as horses and oxen, to smaller animals like sheep and goats, and especially for sheep in Attic Greek. Epictetus used **probaton** figuratively of men who needed guidance (Discourses 1.23.7). One of the most famous uses of **probaton** in the **Septuagint** is in Isaiah 53:6-7+ "All of us like **sheep** have gone astray, Each of us has turned to his own way; But the LORD has caused the iniquity of us all To fall on Him. He was oppressed and He was afflicted, Yet He did not open His mouth; Like a lamb that is led to slaughter, And like a **sheep** that is silent before its shearers, So He did not open His mouth. "

**PROBATON - 35V** - Matt. 7:15; Matt. 9:36; Matt. 10:6; Matt. 10:16; Matt. 12:11; Matt. 12:12; Matt. 15:24; Matt. 18:12; Matt. 25:32; Matt. 25:33; Matt. 26:31; Mk. 6:34; Mk. 14:27; Lk. 15:4; Lk. 15:6; Jn. 2:14; Jn. 2:15; Jn. 10:1; Jn. 10:2; Jn. 10:3; Jn. 10:4; Jn. 10:7; Jn. 10:8; Jn. 10:11; Jn. 10:12; Jn. 10:13; Jn. 10:15; Jn. 10:16; Jn. 10:26; Jn. 10:27; Acts 8:32; Rom. 8:36; Heb. 13:20; 1 Pet. 2:25; Rev. 18:13

**SHEEP IN [DICTIONARY OF BIBLICAL IMAGERY](#)** - Sheep are the most frequently mentioned animal in the Bible, with nearly four hundred references if we include references to flocks. Additionally, the figure of the shepherd receives approximately one hundred references. This prominence grows out of two phenomena—the importance of sheep to the nomadic and agricultural life of the Hebrews, and the qualities of sheep and shepherds that made them particularly apt sources of metaphor for spiritual realities. Sheep were a central part of the Israelite economy from the earliest days (Gen 4:2). Abraham, Isaac, Moses, David and Amos were all shepherds (Gen 12:16; 26:14; Ex 3:1; 2 Sam 7:8; Amos 1:1). Shepherds were not always men; shepherdesses include Rebekah (Gen 29:9) and the daughters of Jethro (Ex 2:16). Raised for both food (milk and meat) and wool, sheep were a natural part of life in the arid eastern Mediterranean because they can survive with a minimum of water and grass and can be moved to new grazing and watering areas during dry times (see PASTURE). Sheep also figured prominently in the OT sacrificial system. Conditions of shepherding in ancient Palestine provide the foundation for figurative references. These conditions were very different from most modern practices. Sheep were not fenced in and left to fend for themselves. Instead they were totally

dependent on shepherds for protection, grazing, watering, shelter and tending to injuries. In fact, sheep would not survive long without a shepherd. Sheep are not only dependent creatures; they are also singularly unintelligent, prone to wandering and unable to find their way to a sheepfold even when it is within sight. ([CLICK HERE FOR THE FULL ARTICLE ON SHEEP](#)).

**Goats** (2056) (eriphos) means he-goat, kid, young goat; plural goats, including male and female. Used only in Mt 25:32 and Lk 15:29.

**Spiros Zodhiates** - ériphos; gen. eríphou, masc. noun. A kid, young goat (Luke 15:29; Sept.: Gen. 27:9; 37:31; 38:17; Ex. 12:5). Used as the emblem of wicked men because of their inferior value (Matt. 25:32 [cf. Lev. 16:5-26]). The kid formed the ordinary dish at an eastern feast, since lambs were preserved for the sake of wool and were, as a rule, slain only in sacrifice. The fattened calf (móschos <G3448>, calf; siteutós <G4618>, grain fed) appears only in the Parable of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15:23, 27, 30) and indicates a unique feast made to celebrate an unusual joy. The fattened calf is contrasted with a kid, the customary meal or meat, which oriental hospitality provides even to this day. There is no other direct mention of the goat in the gospels, though wine bottles (askoí <G779>, skin bags used as bottles) referred to in Matt. 9:17; Mark 2:22; Luke 5:37f. were doubtless made of goat skin. These bottles were made by cutting off the head and legs and drawing the carcass out through the neck, and then tying the neck and legs and tanning the skin with the hairy side out. (Borrow [The Complete Word Study Dictionary – New Testament](#) page 654)

**ERIPHOS IN THE SEPTUAGINT** - Gen. 27:9; Gen. 27:16; Gen. 37:31; Gen. 38:17; Gen. 38:20; Gen. 38:23; Exod. 12:5; Lev. 1:10; Jdg. 6:19; Jdg. 13:15; Jdg. 13:19; Jdg. 14:6; Jdg. 15:1; 1 Sam. 16:20; 2 Chr. 35:7; 2 Chr. 35:8; Cant. 1:8; Isa. 11:6; Jer. 51:40; Ezek. 43:22; Ezek. 43:25; Ezek. 45:23; Amos 6:4

**Eriphion** (2055) is the diminutive of eriphos and is used only in Mt 25:33, Lk 15:29 (no uses in Septuagint)

**GOAT IN [DICTIONARY OF BIBLICAL IMAGERY](#)** - The primary mention of goats in Scripture relates to their part in the OT sacrificial system. Bulls, rams, goats, lambs, doves and pigeons were all used, some of them interchangeably, to burn in sacrifice to God for the purpose of atonement and worship. Goats, however, played a distinct symbolic role in the ceremonies required by God for the annual Day of Atonement (Lev 16:29–34). In those ceremonies, and in several other scriptural passages, **goats primarily give us a picture of sin**, its consequences and the need for atonement and forgiveness. ([CLICK HERE FOR THE FULL ARTICLE ON GOAT](#)).

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#### **[C H Spurgeon - The final separation](#)** Matthew 25:32

There are in this world nowhere any other sort of people beside those who are dead in sin and those who are alive unto God. There is no state between. A man either lives or is dead; you cannot find a neutral condition. A man may be in a swoon or asleep, but he is alive; no state is there that is not within the boundary of either life or death. Is this not clear enough? There is no state between converted and unconverted, between being quickened and being dead in sin. There is no condition between being pardoned and having our sins upon us. There is no state between dwelling in darkness and being brought into marvellous light. One or the other must always be our condition; and this is the great folly of mankind in all times—they will dream of a middle state and try to loiter in it. It was for this cause that Elijah, standing on Carmel's brow, said, 'How long halt ye between two opinions? if the LORD be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him.' It is for this reason that we have constantly to call the attention of mankind to the great declaration of the gospel—'He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.' Be not deceived about it; you are either in the way to heaven or on the road to hell. There is no purgatory or middle condition in the next world. Purgatory is an invention of the Pope for the filling of his cellar and his larder; and no more profitable speculation has ever been set agoing than the saying of masses and the robbing of dupes, under the pretence of altering that state which is fixed for ever. Purgatory Pickpurse was the name the first reformers gave it. You will go to heaven or to hell, and you will remain in one place or the other.

**Matthew 25:32 and He will put the sheep on His right, and the goats on the left.**

- **the sheep:** Ps 79:13 95:7 100:3 Jn 10:26-28 21:15-17
- **His right:** Ge 48:13,14,17-19 Ps 45:9 110:1 Mk 16:19 Ac 2:34,35 Eph 1:20 Heb 1:3

**Related Passages:**

John 10:26-28+ "But you do not believe because you are not of My sheep. 27 **My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me;** 28 and I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand.

## SHEEP ON RIGHT GOATS ON LEFT

and He will put (set, place, station) the sheep ([probaton](#)) on His right ([dexios](#)), and the goats on the left ([euonumos](#)) - Matthew writes that King Jesus "will put the sheep" but I submit that He may have just spoken to them and they moved to His right side because they recognized His voice. The right hand is usually regarded as the side of favor, as emphasized by Jesus Himself is seated at the right hand of the throne of God (e.g., 12:2, Heb 1:13, Heb 10:12, Heb 12:2, Mt 22:44). It is notable that the King's use of the word **right** speaks of a person of high rank who puts someone on his right hand gives him equal honor with himself and recognizes him as of equal dignity

**THOUGHT** - Do you understand the lofty rank you have received because you are in Christ the King? Are you living as a "royal saint" or are you living an "ain't" (bad English but you get the point!), like a spiritual pauper? Remember that we have been blessed with "every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ." (Eph 1:3+). In addition, He has "granted ([doreomai](#) in the perfect tense = enduring gift) to us **everything** pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence. For by these He has granted ([doreomai](#) in the perfect tense = enduring gift) to us His precious and magnificent promises, so that by them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust. (2Pe 1:3-4+).

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**Right (1188)** [dexios](#) from root **dek** - right) means right as opposed to left (Mt 5:30; Ac 3:7; Rev 10:2), the right side (Jn 21:6), the right hand (Mt 6:3; Rev 1:17, 20), the right eye (Mt 5:29), give the right hand as a pledge of mutual trust or agreement (Gal 2:9), on the right side (Mt 20:21, 23), weapons for the right side, for offense (metaphorically) (2Co 6:7), idiom = sit on the right side = high position or honored position (Mt 20:21, Eph 1:20). A person of high rank who puts someone on his right hand gives him equal honor with himself and recognizes him as of equal dignity (Matt. 20:21, 23; 22:44; 26:64; 27:38; Mark 12:36; 14:62; 16:19; Luke 20:42; 22:69; Acts 2:33, 34; 5:31; 7:55, 56; Rom. 8:34; Eph. 1:20; Col. 3:1; Heb. 1:3, 13; 8:1; 10:12; 12:2; 1 Pet. 3:22; 1 Kings 2:19; Ps. 45:9).

**DEXIOS IN MATTHEW** - Matt. 5:29; Matt. 5:30; Matt. 5:39; Matt. 6:3; Matt. 20:21; Matt. 20:23; Matt. 22:44; Matt. 25:33; Matt. 25:34; Matt. 26:64; Matt. 27:29; Matt. 27:38; Mk. 10:37

**Left (2176)** [euonumos](#) from **eu** - well, good + **onoma** - name, literally speaks of good name, honorable, of good omen; usually substantivally in both feminine singular and neuter plural, used by the Greeks as a euphemism for left, the left hand, the left side, as a replacement for *avristero*, (left) in opposition to the right, since omens on the left were regarded as unfortunate ( MT 20.21) Liddell-Scott and Thayer say it speaks of good omen, prosperous, fortunate, in the latter sense used in taking auguries; but those omens were euphemistically called *euonuma* which in fact were regarded as unlucky, i. e. which came from the left, sinister omens (for which a good name was desired). In an inscription from Ephesus dealing with augury (divination from auspices or omens), where it is laid down that if a bird flying from right to left concealed its wing, it was a good omen (*dexios*) but if it raised its left wing, then, whether it raised or concealed the wing, it was of ill omen (*euonumos*).

**EUONUMOS - 9v** - Matt. 20:21; Matt. 20:23; Matt. 25:33; Matt. 25:41; Matt. 27:38; Mk. 10:40; Mk. 15:27; Acts 21:3; Rev. 10:2

**Matthew 25:34** "Then the King will say to those on His right, 'Come, you who are blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.'

- **the King:** Mt 21:5 22:11-13 27:37 Ps 2:6 24:7-10 Isa 9:7 32:1,2 33:22 Jer 23:5,6 Eze 37:24,25 Da 9:25 Zep 3:15 Zec 9:9,10 Lu 1:31-33 Lu 19:38 Jn 1:49 12:13 19:15,19-22 Rev 19:16
- **Come:** Mt 25:21,23,41 5:3-12 Ge 12:2,3 De 11:23-28 Ps 115:13-15 Lu 11:28 Ac 3:26 Ga 3:13,14 Eph 1:3 1Th 2:12 1Pe 1:3
- **inherit:** Lu 12:32 Ro 8:17 1Co 6:9 Ga 5:21 Eph 5:5 2Ti 2:12 4:8 Jas 2:5 1Pe 1:4,5,9 3:9 Rev 5:10 21:7
- **prepared:** Mt 20:23 Mk 10:40 Jn 14:2,3 1Co 2:9 Heb 11:16
- **from:** Ac 15:18 Eph 1:4-6 1Pe 1:19,20 Rev 13:8

## THE KING COMMANDS



## COME TO MY KINGDOM

Then ([tote](#)) - Marks progression in the judgment. The "court is in session!"

The King ([basileus](#)) will say to those on His right ([dexios](#)), 'Come ([deute](#) - an urgent invitation) you who are blessed ([eulogeo](#)) of My Father ([pater](#)) - The invitation is a command to come without delay. Blessed of My Father speaks of the fact the Father had predetermined to sovereignly bless the sheep. Peter states it this way that the sheep were "chosen ([eklektos](#)) according to the foreknowledge ([prognosis](#)) of God the Father, by the sanctifying ([hagiasmos](#)) work of the Spirit, to obey Jesus Christ and be sprinkled ([rhantismos](#)) with His blood." (1Pe 1:1-2+) The blessing of course is salvation from eternal death which is the wages of sin for in the exercise of His foreknowledge, the "Father of our Lord Jesus Christ...according to His great mercy... caused us to be born again ([anagennao](#)) to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." (1Pe 1:3+) The Father took unrighteous, sinful "goats" and made them into righteous, justified "sheep."

Inherit ([kleronomeo](#)) the kingdom ([basileia](#)) - Inherit is an a, a command meaning essentially He is calling the sheep to "Do it now!" ("Just do it!"). Do not delay is the idea. What is the implication of that command? It would seem that the King (and remember a king always has a "kingdom" or he would not be designated a "king") is saying to the sheep to receive their share of the kingdom and that the kingdom is actually present at that moment. That interpretation would make sense if one interprets Jesus' coming to earth as the moment of inception of His Messianic Kingdom. The King has a kingdom and they are being commanded to come into that kingdom at that very moment. Can you see how this strongly refutes the interpretation that this is the "final judgment" of Revelation 20:11-15? Go read that passage and the following passages in Revelation 21:1ff and you will find two reasons that the King is not calling them to inherit the kingdom in the Revelation passages - (1) Rev 20:11 clearly states that the "earth and heaven fled away, and no place was found for them." Where would the sheep go when commanded? (2) Rev 21:1 says "Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away..." John does not say "then inherit the new heaven and new earth." The earth that Jesus returned to in Mt 25:31 was an existing earth, and was not described as a new heaven and new earth. To substantiate that the King is not referring to the kingdom in Revelation 21-22 note that the word "kingdom" is not used in either of the last 2 chapters of the Bible.

Would you like to know what part of your inheritance will be in that day? The short answer is that you will reign with the King as kings! John writes...

"You (GOD) have made them (SAINTS) to be a kingdom and priests to our God; and they (SAINTS) will reign upon the earth." (Revelation 5:10+, Rev 1:6KJV+, Rev 3:21+)

Prepared ([hetoimazo](#)) for you from the foundation ([katabole](#)) of the world ([kosmos](#)) - What is the clear time phrase? From the foundation of the world. What is King Jesus saying? He is telling the sheep that before they were created and before creation was created, they had been granted a share of the inheritance in His kingdom! The implication is that the omniscient God knew these sheep would be saved by grace through faith and gave them their share of the inheritance before they were even born. Talk about amazing grace! The verb **prepared** is in the perfect tense signifying that their inheritance was caused to be ready for them from before creation and has been in a state of being ready! I call that more amazing grace! This verse should overwhelm every saint with humility, gratitude and awe for great God Who loved us as a Father even before we were born sinners.

This amazing, transcendent truth brings to mind the great benediction of Paul, glorious words we would all do well to memorize...

Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways! For WHO HAS KNOWN THE MIND OF THE LORD, OR WHO BECAME HIS COUNSELOR? Or WHO HAS FIRST GIVEN TO HIM THAT IT MIGHT BE PAID BACK TO HIM AGAIN? For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever. Amen. (Romans 11:33-36+)

**Matthew 25:35 For I was hungry, and you gave Me something to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me something to drink; I was a stranger, and you invited Me in;**

- **I was:** Mt 25:40 10:40-42 26:11 De 15:7-11 Job 29:13-16 31:16-21 Ps 112:5-10 Pr 3:9,10 11:24,25 14:21,31 19:17 22:9 Ec 11:1,2 Isa 58:7-11 Eze 18:7,16 Da 4:27 Mic 6:8 Mk 14:7 Lu 11:41 14:12-14 Jn 13:29 Ac 4:32 9:36-39 10:31 11:29 2Co 8:1-4,7-9 9:7-14 Eph 4:28 1Ti 6:17-19 Philemon 1:7 Heb 6:10 13:16 Jas 1:27 1Pe 4:9,10 1Jn 3:16-19
- **thirsty:** Mt 25:42 Pr 25:21 Ro 12:20
- **I was a stranger,** Mt 25:43 Ge 18:2-8 19:1-3 Ac 16:15 Ro 12:13 16:23 1Ti 5:10 Heb 13:1-3 1Pe 4:9 3Jn 1:5-8

**Related Passages:**



Titus 2:14+ (THE SHEEP WERE ZEALOUS) who gave Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed, and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession, **zealous for good deeds**.

1 Peter 4:9 Be hospitable to one another without complaint.

Hebrews 13:2+ **Do not neglect** ([present imperative with a negative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) to show hospitality to strangers, for by this some have entertained angels without knowing it.

Mark 9:41+ "For whoever gives you a cup of water to drink because of your name as followers of Christ, truly I say to you, he will not lose his reward.

## JESUS DESCRIPTION OF THE SHEEP

**For (gar)** - Term of explanation. "What is the King explaining?" In the next two verse Jesus will explain why they were being given an inheritance in His kingdom. Note that some writers (especially dispensationalists) seem to restrict this passage to Gentiles coming to the aid of Jews. I think that is too restrictive. To be sure the Great Tribulation will be the most dangerous time in history for Israel and the Jews will find themselves in dire straits (hungry, thirsty, etc). However it seem reasonable to expand the help of the sheep to believers, whether Jewish or Gentile, for both groups will experience adverse circumstances during the reign of the Antichrist.

**I was hungry (peinao), and you gave Me something to eat (esthio); I was thirsty (dipsao), and you gave Me something to drink** (Mk 9:41+); **I was a stranger (xenos), and you invited (sunago) Me in** - Jesus now lists 7 actions (continuing into the next verse) of compassion and kindness that were performed by the "sheep." To be hungry was a sign for being needy and poor and the sheep responded. These actions were evidence that they were new creations in Christ, for old things had passed away and new things (including these good works) had come (2Co 5:17+). But how could the sheep do these things to Jesus if Jesus was in Heaven? Is Jesus any place other than Heaven? Of course He is omnipresent, but where else is He? Paul explained to the saints at Colossae that Christ the hope of glory was in them (Col 1:28+). Writing to the Corinthians he explained that their bodies were now and forever "a temple of the Holy Spirit"(the Spirit of Christ), Who was in them (1Co 6:19+). In Galatians Paul explained he had been "crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but **Christ lives in me**; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, Who loved me and gave Himself up for me.(Gal 2:20+) It follows that when the sheep demonstrated compassion and kindness to believers (who had Christ in them), in so doing they were (1) demonstrating they were genuine believers and (2) were serving the King Himself by serving His children.

### SERVING IS THE FRUIT NOT THE ROOT

Of course, one misinterpretation of Jesus' words is to say that the sheep earned the inheritance in the kingdom by their works. But Scripture is crystal clear that no one becomes a "sheep" of Jesus by works but only by grace through faith (Eph 2:8-9+). And of course since their inheritance was determined before the foundation of the world, the sheep could have done nothing to earn salvation for they did not yet been born. And even our good works were preordained before the foundation of the world Paul writing that "we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them." (Eph 2:10+)

Let me repeat the explanation from Gotquestions.org..."The good works mentioned in the parable are not the *cause* of salvation but the *effect* of salvation. As Christians we become like Christ (see Romans 8:29; 2 Corinthians 3:18; and Colossians 2:6-7). Galatians 5:22 tells us that the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, faithfulness, and self-control. Good works in a Christian's life are the direct overflow of these traits, and are only acceptable to God because of the relationship that exists between servant and Master, the saved and their Savior, the sheep and their Shepherd."

In Hebrews the writer reminds the saints that "God is not unjust so as to forget your work and the love which you have shown toward His name, in **having ministered and in still ministering to the saints**." (Heb 6:10+)

**THOUGHT** - Dear saint you may not feel like you are being recompensed yet for your [good deeds](#), but you can rest assured that God will not forget and that your payday is coming in the future!

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### A Loan To The Lord

He who has pity on the poor lends to the Lord, and He will pay back what he has given. —Proverbs 19:17

Today's Scripture : Matthew 25:34-46

A father gave his little boy 50 cents and told him he could use it any way he wanted. Later when Dad asked about it, the boy told him

that he had lent it to someone.

"Who did you lend it to?" he asked. The boy answered, "I gave it to a poor man on the street because he looked hungry."

"Oh, that was foolish. You'll never get it back," replied the father. "But Daddy, the Bible says that people who give to the poor lend to the Lord."

The father was so pleased with the son's reply that he gave the boy another 50 cents. "See," said the son. "I told you I would get it back—only I didn't think it would be so soon!"

Has the Lord ever asked you for a loan? Have you ever recognized in the needs of others a direct request from heaven for some of what you have? The Bible warns against the sin of passing by the needy with pious words while keeping a tight grip on our wallets (James 2:14-17). And Galatians 6:10 says that we are to "do good to all."

We aren't promised that we'll get rewarded immediately. But in Jesus' teaching to His followers about His return, He says we will be rewarded for giving of ourselves to others in His name (Matthew 25:34-46). By: Henry G. Bosch (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

Give as you would to the Master  
If you met His searching look;  
Give as you would of your substance  
If His hand your offering took!  
—Anon.

You may give without loving but you can't love without giving.

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## Change The World?

I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink. — Matthew 25:35

Today's Scripture : Matthew 25:34-40

When my son Steve came home from a concert recently, he had with him a free T-shirt and a brochure for an organization that helps needy children in a far-off continent. Apparently, one of the singers had issued a challenge.

"We wanted to change the world with our music," he said, "but often all we do is sing. We decided that we were going to take action to change some lives, so we started supporting some needy kids." Then he set forth the challenge, which Steve accepted. He then talked with his Bible-study group at church about supporting a child each month.

Most of us want to change the world for the better, but the job seems too big. So what if we decided to do at least one thing to change just one person's life? In the name of Jesus, who said that providing physical help would be the same as helping our Savior Himself (Matthew 25:35-36), what if we reached out to one person with food, or clothing, or transportation? And what if that person, wondering about our motive, asks why we helped? We could then help change that person's life for eternity by introducing him or her to the Savior.

Change the world? Let's start with changing one person in Jesus' name. By: Dave Branon (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

Do a deed of simple kindness,  
Though its end you may not see;  
It may reach, like widening ripples,  
Down a long eternity.  
—Norris

Wherever a human being exists, there is an opportunity to do a kindness. —Seneca

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## Treated Like A King

I was a stranger and you took Me in. — Matthew 25:35

Today's Scripture : Matthew 25:31-46

King Abdullah, the ruler of Jordan since 1999, has been known to disguise himself and go out into public places. His purpose is to

talk with ordinary people and find out what they are thinking, and to check up on civil servants to see how they are treating his people. He has visited hospitals and government offices to learn what kind of service they are giving.

The king got the idea while in New York. He couldn't leave his hotel without being mobbed, so he slipped out in disguise. It worked, so he tried it at home. He reported that once this practice was begun, civil servants and hospital employees started to treat everyone like kings.

When Jesus comes as King, He will judge the nations (Matthew 25:31-46). He said the basis for that judgment will be how people treated Him when He was hungry, thirsty, a stranger, naked, sick, or imprisoned. Those being judged will ask when they saw Him in these situations, and Jesus will say, "Inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me" (v.40).

Because all people are created in God's image, and because Jesus by His words and example taught us that He cares deeply how we treat others, we should treat all people with kindness and compassion. Let's treat them like kings. By: David C. Egner (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

Every kindness done to others  
Is a kindness done to Thee;  
Christlike love for all my brothers  
May the world observe in me.  
—Brandt

Our love for Christ is only as real as our love for our neighbor.

**Matthew 25:36 naked, and you clothed Me; I was sick, and you visited Me; I was in prison, and you came to Me.'**

- **Naked:** Job 31:19,20 Lu 3:11 Jas 2:14-16
- **sick:** Mt 25:43 Eze 34:4 Ac 20:35 28:8,9 Jas 1:27 5:14,15
- **prison:** Php 4:10-14 2Ti 1:16-18 Heb 10:34 Heb 13:2-3

#### **Related Passages:**

Philippians 4:10 - Nevertheless, you have done well to share with me in my affliction.

2 Timothy 1:16-18 The Lord grant mercy to the house of Onesiphorus, for he often refreshed me and was not ashamed of my chains; 17 but when he was in Rome, he eagerly searched for me and found me— 18 the Lord grant to him to find mercy from the Lord on that day—and you know very well what services he rendered at Ephesus.

Hebrews 10:32-34 But remember the former days, when, after being enlightened, you endured a great conflict of sufferings, 33 partly by being made a public spectacle through reproaches and tribulations, and partly by becoming sharers with those who were so treated. 34 For you showed sympathy to the prisoners and accepted joyfully the seizure of your property, knowing that you have for yourselves a better possession and a lasting one.

Hebrews 13:3 Remember the prisoners, as though in prison with them, and those who are ill-treated, since you yourselves also are in the body.

### **DIFFICULT TIMES FOR JESUS' SHEEP**

**Naked** ([gumnos](#)), and you clothed ([periballos](#)) Me; I was sick ([astheneo](#)), and you visited ([episkeptomai](#)) Me; I was in prison ([phulake](#)), and you came ([erchomai](#)) to Me - In ancient times, sickness often left people isolated, vulnerable, and even shamed. The righteous sheep visited and cared for the sick not to be noticed, but because Christ-like compassion compelled them. Prisoners were some of the most neglected and despised people in society. Visiting someone in prison meant risking your own reputation and involved personal sacrifice, but the sheep did not shrink from this, but went to the imprisoned. Notice they did not just send a "care package" but they personally showed up. Their acts, often unseen by the world, were seen and honored by the King.

Note the descriptions **naked...sick...prison** describe hard times for these people, who were also sheep, some of which could have been experiencing the trials and afflictions of believers during the previous 7 years, and especially the precious 3.5 years of the **Great Tribulation**, during which time the believers will be greatly persecuted as recorded by John...

Then I saw another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb and he spoke as a dragon. 12 He exercises all the authority of the first beast in his presence. And he makes the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first beast, whose fatal wound was healed. 13 He performs great signs, so that he even makes fire come down out of heaven to the earth in the presence of men. 14 And he deceives those who dwell on the earth because of the signs which it was given him to perform in the presence of the beast, telling those who dwell on the earth to make an image to the beast who \*had the wound of the sword and has come to life. 15 And it was given to him to give breath to the image of the beast, so that the image of the beast would even speak and **cause as many as do not worship the image of the beast to be killed**. 16 And he causes all, the small and the great, and the rich and the poor, and the free men and the slaves, to be given a mark on their right hand or on their forehead, 17 and he provides that **no one will be able to buy or to sell, except the one who has the mark, either the name of the beast or the number of his name**. (Revelation 13:11-17+)

**Matthew 25:37 "Then the righteous will answer Him, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry, and feed You, or thirsty, and give You something to drink?"**

- **when:** Mt 6:3 1Ch 29:14 Pr 15:33 Isa 64:6 1Co 15:10 1Pe 5:5-6

#### **Related Passages:**

Matthew 10:42+ "And whoever in the name of a disciple gives to one of these little ones even a cup of cold water to drink, truly I say to you, he shall not lose his reward."

Galatians 6:10+ So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith.

### **SHEEP HUMBLLED & SURPRISED BY KING'S DESCRIPTION**

**Then** ([tote](#)) is an expression of time, which usually marks progression in a narrative, in this case showing that the sheep were unaware of their good deeds, so that their did not let their "left hand know what your right hand is doing." (Mt 6:3+).

**The righteous** ([dikaios](#)) **will answer Him**, 'Lord' ([kurios](#)), **when did we see You hungry** ([peinao](#)), **and feed You, or thirsty** ([dipsao](#)), **and give You something to drink** - Note they call Him **Lord** and mean it, contra the same address by the goats in Mt 25:44! Here we see the sheep are designated as **righteous**, which in simple terms means they are forever in "right standing" with perfectly righteous God. When they were born again by the Spirit (Jn 3:3-8+), they were justified (declared righteous - a one time act and not that they were made righteous which is incorrect) and clothed with the righteousness of Christ (Ro 3:24,28+, Isa 53:11+, 2Co 5:21+, Ps 132:9). In this description (which continues to the next passage), it is important to understand that the sheep were not doing the charitable acts of kindness to earn salvation, because (1) they were not even aware they had done them and (2) they were chosen for their inheritance (and salvation) before the foundation of the world, before they could have done anything to "earn" salvation! True Christian compassion doesn't serve to be seen but serves because serves to fulfill the law of Christ. (Gal 6:2+)

**Matthew 25:38 'And when did we see You a stranger, and invite You in, or naked, and clothe You?**

#### **Related Passages:**

Isaiah 58:7 "Is it not to divide your bread with the hungry And bring the homeless poor into the house; When you see the naked, to cover him; And not to hide yourself from your own flesh?"

James 2:15-16+ If a brother or sister is without clothing and in need of daily food, 16 and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and be filled," and yet you do not give them what is necessary for their body, what use is that?

1 John 3:17+ But whoever has the world's goods, and sees his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him?

## THE SHEEP'S HUMBLE QUESTION

And when did we see You a stranger([xenos](#)), and invite ([sunago](#)) You in, or naked([gumnos](#)), and clothe ([periballo](#)) You - A stranger in the ancient world meant someone without family, home, or protection and hospitality was a sacred duty in biblical culture (Ge 18:1–8; Heb 13:2). There was often a general mistrust of strangers and they were in need of hospitality. It is almost as if the sheep are disputing with Jesus that they deserve the inheritance. The idea of **invite** was to show hospitality and is the same word the King used in Mt 25:31 of the nations being gathered before Him. From their question, it is clear that these righteous sheep did not serve for reward, status, or religious show but served because it was natural to them, it was the good works that proceeded from their great salvation!

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**Stranger** ([3581](#)) [xenos](#) means a foreigner . There are two distinct usages of this term. First, when used as an adjective it describes something or someone as “foreign, unacquainted, or unusual.” Second, when used substantively (as a noun) it refers generally to a “stranger.” Xenos describes that which is unfamiliar because it is unknown (strange doctrine, Heb 13:9, a strange deity Acts 17:18). Xenos can mean strange in the sense of unheard of or surprising (1Pe 4:12). Xenos refers to Gentiles who are unacquainted with God as strangers or estranged or without interest in God (Ep 3:12). The idea is “To reside abroad carried with it a certain stigma” (Moffatt) Words that use the **xen-** stem most often convey the sense of foreign or strange but can also convey the sense of guest whereas **xenophobia** is a fear of strangers.

**Invite** (gather, assemble, gather together, invite)([4863](#)) [sunago](#) from **sun** = with + **ago** = to lead, ) means literally to lead together and then to gather together persons or things for any of several reasons. To gather (in) or gather (up) (Mt 13:47; 25:24, 26; Lk 3:17; 15:13; Jn 6:12f; 15:6). To bring or call together, gather (Mt 22:10; 25:32; Mk 2:2; 7:1; Jn 11:47; 18:2; Acts 13:44; 14:27; 1 Cor 5:4). To invite or receive as a guest (Mt 25:35, 38, 43). This verb gives us our English word synagogue a place where Jews pray and worship. We see a gathering for judgment similar to Lk 3:17 in Joel 3:11+ where God is commanding a gathering of unholy Gentiles, not for the purpose of worship, but for wrath! In the [Valley of Jehoshaphat](#), the Valley of Decision, for it is judgment time for the nations of the world is "ripe!"

**Friberg's** summary of **sunago** - (1) of things; (a) gather in, gather up, collect (Mt 13.47), opposite *skorpizo* (scatter) and *merizo* (distribute, divide out); (b) store, keep safe (Lk 12.17); (c) turn into cash, convert into money (Lk 15.13);(2) of persons; (a) bring or call together, assemble (Mt 22.10); (b) as showing hospitality take in, invite in (Mt 25.35); (c) passive assemble, come together, be gathered together (Mt 18.20) (Borrow "[Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament](#)")

**SUNAGO - 59V NOTE 6 USES IN MATTHEW 25** - Matt. 2:4; Matt. 3:12; Matt. 6:26; Matt. 12:30; Matt. 13:2; Matt. 13:30; Matt. 13:47; Matt. 18:20; Matt. 22:10; Matt. 22:34; Matt. 22:41; Matt. 24:28; Matt. 25:24; Matt. 25:26; Matt. 25:32; Matt. 25:35; Matt. 25:38; Matt. 25:43; Matt. 26:3; Matt. 26:57; Matt. 27:17; Matt. 27:27; Matt. 27:62; Matt. 28:12; Mk. 2:2; Mk. 4:1; Mk. 5:21; Mk. 6:30; Mk. 7:1; Lk. 3:17; Lk. 11:23; Lk. 12:17; Lk. 12:18; Lk. 15:13; Lk. 22:66; Jn. 4:36; Jn. 6:12; Jn. 6:13; Jn. 11:47; Jn. 11:52; Jn. 15:6; Jn. 18:2; Acts 4:5; Acts 4:26; Acts 4:27; Acts 4:31; Acts 11:26; Acts 13:44; Acts 14:27; Acts 15:6; Acts 15:30; Acts 20:7; Acts 20:8; 1 Co. 5:4; Rev. 16:14; Rev. 16:16; Rev. 19:17; Rev. 19:19; Rev. 20:

Matthew 25:39 'When did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?'

## SHEEP NOT DENYING DEEDS BUT SURPRISED AT RECOGNITION

When did we see You sick([astheneo](#)), or in prison ([phulake](#)), and come to You - Again the sheep are unaware of their kindnesses. They were unaware that by serving other believers, they were actually ministering to Christ Himself. Humility is best seen when you do not think you are humble. These sheep were humble. Prisons were generally places of temporary confinement until the trial took place. To visit someone in prison was not without some risks and could even be a dangerous undertaking.

**John MacArthur** - Whatever believers do for each other they also do for their Lord Jesus Christ, and the person who genuinely receives (Matthew 10:40+) and serves Christians in Christ's name proves he himself is a Christian. The self-giving service of Christians to each other in Christ's name is a key external mark that identifies them as God's people. Jesus said, "By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another" (John 13:35+). It is to the practical manifestations of such love that Christ the King will call attention as he ushers the Tribulation saints into His millennial kingdom. Believers during those seven years,

especially during the devastating last three and one-half years, will have great need for the basics Jesus has just mentioned. Because of their identity with Christ, they will often be hungry, thirsty, without decent shelter or clothing, sick, imprisoned, and alienated from the mainstream of society. Those who will have met the needs of fellow believers will themselves have suffered great need. Few, if any, believers during the frightful days of the Tribulation will be able to give out of abundance. Most of them will have resources hardly sufficient to meet their own needs. (See [Matthew Commentary - Page 124](#))

**Matthew 25:40** “The King will answer and say to them, ‘Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of Mine, even the least of them, you did it to Me.’

- **the King:** Mt 25:34 Pr 25:6,7
- **to the extent:** Mt 10:42 2Sa 9:1,7 Pr 14:31 19:17 Mk 9:41 Jn 19:26,27 21:15-17 1Co 16:21,22 2Co 4:5 5:14,15 8:7-9 Ga 5:6,13,22 1Th 4:9,10 1Pe 1:22 1Jn 3:14-19 4:7-12,20,21 5:1,2
- **the least:** Mt 12:49,50 18:5,6,10 28:10 Mk 3:34,35 Jn 20:17 Heb 2:11-15 6:10
- **did it to Me:** Ac 9:4,5 Eph 5:30

#### Related Passages:

Proverbs 14:31 He who oppresses the poor taunts his Maker, But he who is gracious to the needy honors Him.

Proverbs 19:17 One who is gracious to a poor man lends to the LORD, And He will repay him for his good deed.

2 Samuel 9:1; 7+ Then David said, “Is there yet anyone left of the house of Saul, that I may show him kindness for Jonathan’s sake?”....(9:7) David said to him, “Do not fear, for I will surely show kindness to you for the sake of your father Jonathan, and will restore to you all the land of your grandfather Saul; and you shall eat at my table regularly.”

Mark 9:41+ “For whoever gives you a cup of water to drink because of your name as followers of Christ, truly I say to you, he will not lose his reward.

### SERVICE TO THE LEAST IS SERVICE TO THE KING

**The King will answer and say to them, ‘Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did([poieo](#)) it to one of these brothers ([adelphos](#)) of Mine, even the least ([elachistos](#)) of them, you did it to Me - Truly is [amen](#)** emphasizing the veracity of what follows, this phrase truly I say to you occurring 76x in the Gospels (30x in Matthew). Notice that Jesus refers to the destitute believers aided by the sheep as His **brothers**. The King explains to the sheep that because of His identification with those they aided, their acts were the equivalent of doing it to Jesus Himself. This speaks to me of the oneness of covenant, for when we are born again, we enter into an unbreakable covenant with Jesus and what happens to us is felt by Him because of His union and communion with us. We see this truth in the life of Paul in Acts 9 when he was struck down on the Damascus Road. Luke records the exchange between Saul (not yet called Paul) and Jesus...

As he was traveling, it happened that he was approaching Damascus, and suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him; 4 and he fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, “Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?” 5 And he said, “Who are You, Lord?” And He said, “I am Jesus whom you are persecuting, 6 but get up and enter the city, and it will be told you what you must do.” (Acts 9:3-6+)

So clearly when Saul was persecuting the believers in covenant with the Lord Jesus, he was in effect persecuting Jesus, their Lord.

For more on this beautiful truth see studies on [Covenant: The Oneness of Covenant](#) and [Covenant: Oneness Notes](#).

**David Guzik** makes a good point noting that "This is another clear distinction between this judgment of the nations and the final judgment (Rev 20:11-15). The Great White Throne judgment of Revelation 20 is based on what is written in the Book of Life; the Judgment of the Nations in Matthew 25 is based on the humane treatment of others, **especially Christians and the Jewish people** (who will be particularly hated and persecuted the last half of the Great Tribulation).

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**MY BROTHERS** - The question Mt 25:40 raises is who are those that Jesus describes as **'My brothers?'** Dispensationalists (John Walvoord, et al) say these are Jews and explain they are called Jesus' **brothers** because of their physical relationship (i.e., Jesus



was Jewish). That is what I had always been taught but I now question that interpretation, and favor that **brothers** are those who are spiritual brothers, those in the new covenant with Christ. I defend this premise with Jesus' own words in Mt 12:46-50+ where He made a clear distinction between **physical** and **spiritual** relationships, concluding that His mother and His brothers were "whoever does the will of My Father Who is in heaven, he is my **brother**...." So allowing Scripture to comment on Scripture, brothers here in Matthew 25 could definitely be spiritual brothers. Also compare Jesus' words to Saul, where Saul's (a Jewish man) persecution of believers (mostly Jewish at this time in church history) is tantamount to persecution of Jesus. (Acts 9:4-5+) I would certainly see those Jewish believers as His brothers, but would also include Gentile believers as His brothers. To dogmatically conclude that "**My brothers**" is only Jews (most of whom would be unsaved during the Great Tribulation) is difficult to defend in my opinion.

**Gotquestions** seems to agree that **brothers** refers to believers writing that "The needy are called Christ's "brothers"; thus, the reference is to the righteous helping fellow disciples. Jesus said that those who cared for such individuals were not merely serving other people. They were serving Him." Note their phrase "the reference is to the righteous helping fellow disciples." In other words the righteous are in effect helping the righteous!

Does that mean that the righteous sheep do not help the Jews? I think that is very unlikely. If the Great Tribulation occurred today (very hypothetical premise), I can 100% assure you that I would risk my life to help my Jewish friends if they were in need. I have been praying from one of my Jewish partners in our pathology practice for almost 40 years! Of course I would help him! So while my comments are somewhat suppositional, I think the sheep will help their believing brethren, but they will also help their non-believing Jewish friends. I just think to say that sheep would help only Jews is much too narrow of an interpretation.

It appears **Dr John MacArthur** shares a relatively similar belief because he paraphrases the passages as follows "Come into My kingdom, because you are the chosen children of My Father, and **your relationship to Him is made evident by the service you have rendered to Me by ministering to your fellow believers, who, like you, are My brothers**" (v. 40)." (Bold added for emphasis). (See [Matthew Commentary - Page 123](#))

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**Least** (1646) ([elachistos](#) = superlative of **mikrós** = small) means...

- (1) the lowest in status (not so in Mt 2:6, 1Co 15:9 ~ Ep 3:8, Mt 5:19, Mt 25:40, 45, Lxx = Ge 25:23, 2Ki 18:24 = "**least** of my master's servants", Da 2:39 = "another kingdom **inferior** to you"),
- (2) the smallest in a class (eg, bodily "organs" - one of the smallest very fittingly compared to a rudder of a large vessel = Jas 3:4, Ge 1:16 = the moon, "**lesser** light", Lxx = Josh 6:26 = "**youngest**", Job 30:1 = "**younger** than I"),
- (3) and finally as a description of something deemed trivial or of little significance (1Co 6:2, Lk 12:26, 16:10, 19:17, 1Co 4:3).
- (4) smallest in amount or size (Lxx = Ex 16:17, 18, Nu 26:54, 33:54, 35:8, 1Sa 9:21 = "**smallest** of Israel's tribes", Pr 30:24 - see the "smallest" in Pr 30:25, 26 27, 28, Job 16:6 = "pain...not **lessened**", Job 18:7 = "stride is **shortened**", Isa 60:22 = "the least one a mighty nation", Jer 30:14 = "**little** ones of the flock")

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#### QUESTION - [Who are the "least of these" in the Bible?](#)

**ANSWER** - The "**least of these**" is a phrase that originates from Matthew 25:31–46, where Jesus speaks of those in need....The "**least of these**" refers to those in a variety of needy situations. They include the hungry, thirsty, impoverished, sick, and imprisoned. In this context, Jesus is speaking to those on His right, that is, the righteous. The needy are called Christ's "brothers"; thus, the reference is to the righteous helping fellow disciples. Jesus said that those who cared for such individuals were not merely serving other people. They were serving Him.

In the same passage, the opposite is also noted. The narrative concludes with Jesus condemning those who saw believers in need and yet did not help. He says,

"For I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink, I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not clothe me, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.' Then they also will answer, saying, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to you?' Then he will answer them, saying, 'Truly, I say to you, as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.'"

Jesus connected service to the needy with eternal rewards and punishments. Though salvation is by faith alone apart from good deeds (Ephesians 2:8–9), the redeemed will be "eager to do what is good" (Titus 2:14), including extending charity to fellow believers in difficult situations. Those whose lives are marked by apathy toward the needy show they have not been transformed by

the grace of Jesus Christ.

God has always shown a special concern for the poor and needy (Psalm 35:10). It should come as no surprise that He expects His followers to do the same, especially toward those of the family of God (Galatians 6:10). What is surprising about the “least of these” is that our service is ultimately not to the poor, but to Christ Himself.

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### Love God by Loving Others

Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.  
Matthew 25:40

Today's Scripture & Insight : Matthew 25:31–40

The Alba family experienced the rare occurrence of birthing two sets of identical twins just thirteen months apart. How did they juggle their parental responsibilities as well as their jobs? Their community of friends and family stepped in. Grandparents on both sides took a set of twins during the day so the parents could work and pay for health insurance. One company gave a year's supply of diapers. The couple's coworkers donated their personal sick days. “We couldn't have done it without our community,” they agreed. In fact, during a live interview, the cohost removed her mic and ran after one renegade toddler, continuing the communal investment!

In Matthew 25:31–46, Jesus tells a parable to make the point that when we serve others, we serve God. After listing acts of service, including providing food to the hungry, drink to the thirsty, lodging for the homeless, clothes for the naked, and healing for the sick (vv. 35–36), Jesus concludes, “Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me” (v. 40).

Imagining Jesus as the ultimate recipient of our kindness is true motivation to serve in our neighborhoods, families, churches, and world. When He prompts us to sacrificially invest in the needs of others, we serve Him. When we love others, we love God. By: Elisa Morgan (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

Reflect & Pray

How might you serve Jesus in your community today? How can you love God by loving others in your path?

Loving God, please open my eyes to the needs of others around me so I can help meet them and love You better.

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### Serving the Least

The King will reply, “Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.” Matthew 25:40

Today's Scripture & Insight : Matthew 25:31–40

His name is Spencer. But everybody calls him “Spence.” He was a state track champion in high school; then he went on to attend a prestigious university on a full academic scholarship. He lives now in one of America's largest cities and is highly respected in the field of chemical engineering. But if you were to ask Spence his greatest achievements to date, he wouldn't mention any of those things. He would excitedly tell you about the trips he makes to Nicaragua every few months to check in on the kids and teachers in the tutoring program he helped establish in one of the poorest areas of the country. And he'd tell you how enriched his life has been by serving them.

“The least of these.” It's a phrase people use in a variety of ways, yet Jesus used it to describe those who, according to the world's standards, have little or nothing to offer us in return for our service. They are the men and women and children the world often overlooks—if not forgets completely. Yet it's exactly those people Jesus elevates to such a beautiful status by saying, “Whatever you did [for them], you did for me” (Matthew 25:40). You don't have to have a degree from a prestigious university to understand Christ's meaning: serving “the least” is the same as serving Him. All it really takes is a willing heart. By: John Blase (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

Reflect & Pray

Who comes to mind when you hear the phrase “the least of these”? What's something you could do for them?

King Jesus, I'm afraid I make serving You harder than it is. Your words are clear—You call me to the least and the littlest, perhaps in Nicaragua or maybe in my neighborhood. Give me courage to serve.

---

## The Spirit of Christmas

Whatever you did for one of the least of these . . . you did for me. Matthew 25:40

Today's Scripture & Insight : Matthew 25:34-40

At a Christmas dinner held at our church to celebrate the cultures of the international guests, I joyfully clapped along to the sound of the darbuka (a type of drum) and the oud (a guitar-like instrument) as a band played the traditional Middle Eastern carol, "Laylat Al-Milad." The band's singer explained the title means "Nativity Night." The lyrics remind hearers that the spirit of Christmas is found in serving others, in ways like offering a thirsty person water or comforting someone weeping.

This carol likely draws from a parable where Jesus commends His followers for deeds they'd done for Him: providing food when He was hungry, drink when He was thirsty, and companionship and care when He was sick and alone (Matthew 25:34-36). Instead of simply accepting Jesus' commendation, the people in the parable are surprised—thinking they hadn't actually done these things for Christ. He responded, "Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me" (v. 40).

During the holiday season, the encouragement to get in the Christmas spirit is often a nudge toward expressing a festive attitude. "Laylat Al-Milad" reminds us that we can put into practice the true Christmas spirit by caring for others. And amazingly, when we do, we not only serve others but Jesus too. By: Lisa M. Samra (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

### Reflect & Pray

How have you understood the Christmas spirit? How might you serve others this season?

Dear Jesus, please help me reflect the spirit of Christmas You modeled by coming to earth not to be served but to serve.

---

## Help Them One By One

Inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me. —Matthew 25:40

Today's Scripture : Luke 8:40-56

A young man strolling along a beach at dawn stopped to watch an older man pick up starfish and toss them back into the sea. The older man said he was rescuing the starfish before the hot summer sun could bake them. Sarcastically, the young man said, "There must be hundreds of starfish here. How can you make any difference?" The old gentleman looked at the starfish in his hand before throwing it into the waves. "It makes a big difference to this one," he replied.

Jesus never let the vast crowds discourage Him from helping individuals. In Luke 8 we read that a multitude pressed about Him (v.40), yet He took time to minister to one man and one woman in need (vv.41-56). Jesus calls us to do the same. But looking on today's multitudes we may say, "How can I make a difference among so many?"

Henri Nouwen wrote, "Those who want to be for 'everyone' find themselves often unable to be close to anyone." Many of us have this problem. Yet we must recognize the importance of ministering to the individual, for Jesus said, "Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me" (Mt. 25:40). It's better to help one than none! By: Joanie Yoder (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

### Putting It Into Practice

Are you overwhelmed by all the pain and suffering in the world? In your city? In your neighborhood? What can you do to help one person today?

Do what you can to help one at a time, and prayerfully leave the rest to God.

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## In His Name

Inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me. —Matthew 25:40

Today's Scripture : Matthew 25:31-46

According to a legend, Francis of Assisi (1182-1226) was riding his horse one day when he saw a leper by the roadside, begging for money. He dismounted, gave him a coin, and kissed him on the cheek. As Francis rode away, he looked back and thought for a

moment that he saw Christ Himself standing where the beggar had stood.

This story illustrates a wonderful biblical truth: We serve the Lord when we serve a needy person. Jesus made this clear when He said that any kindness shown to the hungry, the thirsty, the homeless, the sick, the destitute, and the imprisoned will be judged as having been done directly to Him (Mt. 25:40,45). He identifies so closely with the oppressed that serving them in His name is the same as serving Him.

We tend to limit our own service to Christ by thinking that ministers and missionaries are the best able to do it. But whenever we extend help in the name of Jesus through acts of caring, Jesus Himself is there even though we cannot see Him. And someday when we stand before Him, He will recall our deeds of love performed in His name and say, "Well done!"

Let's keep on serving Him by serving others. By: Dennis J. DeHaan (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

God's service is more than mere preaching;  
Whatever we do, here's the key:  
Of that which is done for His glory,  
Christ says, "You have done it for Me!"  
—HGB

We serve Christ when we serve people in need.

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## None So Blind

Inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me. —Matthew 25:40

Today's Scripture : Psalm 82

Singer Ray Stevens is generally given credit for writing the phrase "There is none so blind as he who will not see," a line from the song "Everything Is Beautiful." But preacher Matthew Henry used the phrase 250 years ago when commenting on the lyrics of another songwriter, Asaph.

Asaph's lyrics were not as upbeat as those of Stevens. His song was a rebuke to the Israelites for failing to fulfill their God-given purpose. God had chosen them to show the world how to live right and judge justly, but they were failing miserably. Instead of defending the weak and fatherless, they were defending the unjust and showing partiality to the wicked (Ps. 82:2-3).

In his commentary on Psalm 82, Henry wrote: "A gift in secret blinds their eyes. They know not because they will not understand. None so blind as those that will not see. They have baffled their own consciences, and so they walk on in darkness."

Jesus confirmed God's interest in the weak and helpless. He explained that whatever is done for the "least of these" is done for Him (see Matt. 25:34-40). And He chided His disciples for keeping children away from Him (Luke 18:16).

Those who have eyes that see what God sees find ways to help the helpless. By: Julie Ackerman Link (Reprinted by permission from [Our Daily Bread Ministries](#). Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

**Matthew 25:41 "Then He will also say to those on His left, Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels;**

KJV Matthew 25:41 Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels:

NKJ Matthew 25:41 "Then He will also say to those on the left hand, 'Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels:

NET Matthew 25:41 "Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you accursed, into the eternal fire that has been prepared for the devil and his angels!

BGT Matthew 25:41 τ τε ρε κα το ς ξ ε ω ν μ ω ν· πορε εσθε π μο [ο ] κατηραμ νοι ε ς τ π ρ τ α νιον τ τοιμασμον τ διαβ λ κα το ς γ γ λοι ς α το .

CSB Matthew 25:41 Then He will also say to those on the left, 'Depart from Me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the Devil and his angels!

ESV Matthew 25:41 "Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.

NIV Matthew 25:41 "Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.

NLT Matthew 25:41 "Then the King will turn to those on the left and say, 'Away with you, you cursed ones, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his demons.

YLT Matthew 25:41 Then shall he say also to those on the left hand, Go ye from me, the cursed, to the fire, the age-during, that hath been prepared for the Devil and his messengers;

MIT Matthew 25:41 Then he will say to those on his left, "Move away from me, you who are under the curse of inextinguishable fire prepared for the devil and his agents.

NJB Matthew 25:41 Then he will say to those on his left hand, "Go away from me, with your curse upon you, to the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.

NRS Matthew 25:41 Then he will say to those at his left hand, 'You that are accursed, depart from me into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels;

RSV Matthew 25:41 Then he will say to those at his left hand, `Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels;

NAB Matthew 25:41 Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you accursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.

GWN Matthew 25:41 "Then the king will say to those on his left, 'Get away from me! God has cursed you! Go into everlasting fire that was prepared for the devil and his angels!

BBE Matthew 25:41 Then will he say to those on the left, Go from me, you cursed ones, into the eternal fire which is ready for the Evil One and his angels:

- **those on His left:** Mt 25:33
- **Depart:** Mt 7:23 Ps 6:8 119:115 139:19 Lu 13:27
- **accursed:** De 27:15-26 28:16-68 Ps 119:21 Jer 17:5 Ga 3:10-13 Heb 6:8
- **eternal fire:** Mt 25:46 3:12 13:40,42,50 Mk 9:43-48 2Th 1:9 Rev 14:10,11 20:10-15
- **prepared:** Jn 8:44 Ro 9:22-23 2Pe 2:4 1Jn 3:10 Jude 1:6 Rev 12:7-9

#### Related Passages:

Matthew 7:23+ "And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you;**DEPART** FROM ME, YOU WHO PRACTICE LAWLESSNESS.'

Galatians 3:10+ For **as many as are of the works of the Law are under a curse**(ED: THIS WOULD SPEAK OF JEWS AND GENTILES WHO THINK KEEPING OF THE LAW CAN RESULT IN SALVATION) ; for it is written, "CURSED IS EVERYONE WHO DOES NOT ABIDE BY ALL THINGS WRITTEN IN THE BOOK OF THE LAW, TO PERFORM THEM."

### THE JUDGMENT OF THE KING ON THE GOATS

**Then** ([tote](#)) is an expression of time, which marks progression in this narrative as the King shifts from right to left.

**He will also say to those on His left** ([euonumos](#)) - These are the goats, unsaved people, some of who may even have professed to believe in Jesus (SEE BELOW where they call Him "Lord"), but whose absence of good works proved they had never been born again.

**Depart** ([aorist imperative](#)) **from Me** - This has to be one of the most frightening words Jesus ever spoke, for when He says it there is no second chance. This command calls for departure from His glorious presence.

This command to depart from the King's presence recalls Paul's warning in 2Th 1:9-10+ "These (IN MATTHEW 25 = THE GOATS) will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, **away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power**,<sup>10</sup> when He comes to be glorified in His saints on that day, and to be marveled at among all who have believed—for our testimony to you was

believed."

**Accursed ones** ([kataraoimai](#)), into the eternal ([aionios](#)) fire which has been prepared ([hetoimazo](#)) for the devil and his angels - **Accursed** ([kataraoimai](#)) is in the perfect tense signifying past completed action, continuing result (cursed forever). They are cursed because they refuse to believe in the One Who became a curse in our place. Paul writes "Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, **having become a curse for** ([huper](#) = speaks of substitution = on our behalf, in our place) **us**—for it is written, "CURSED IS EVERYONE WHO HANGS ON A TREE"" (Gal 3:13+) And in the context of this section, these goats were unable to do righteous and good deeds for they lacked the supernatural power of the Spirit given to all who have been born again (Ro 8:9+).

**MacArthur on eternal fire** - Jesus is speaking of eternal **separation** from God and from His goodness, righteousness, truth, joy peace, and every other good thing. He is speaking of eternal **association** with **the devil and his angels** in the place of torment God **prepared** for them. He is speaking of eternal **isolation**, where there will be no fellowship, no consolation, and no encouragement. He is speaking of eternal **duration** and of eternal **affliction**, from which there will be no relief or respite. (See [Matthew Commentary](#))

Note that **prepared** is in the perfect tense signifying past completed action, continuing result or effect. In other words it is still prepared. As I write this note in May, 2025 there is no one in this **prepared** place of judgment. It strikes me as significant that Jesus did not say this place was prepare from men but for the fallen angels.

**Gotquestions on What is a sin of omission?** - The goats, those who are sent away by Christ, are those who saw others hungry and thirsty, but did not provide food and water. They are those who saw others in need of clothing, who were sick or in jail but did nothing to clothe or comfort them. These are all examples of sins of omission. There was no sin committed against these needy people—they were not intentionally starved or deprived of their clothing. But the sin of omission was committed when those who could have provided for them chose not to.

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**Accursed** (2672) [kataraoimai](#) from **katara** = a curse from **kata** = down + **ara** = a prayer, a curse) literally is to curse down and so to call a curse down upon someone. The idea is to imprecate (= to invoke) evil on someone saying that a supernatural power will cause harm to someone or something. To pray or wish evil or ruin toward someone or some thing. To call down curses upon someone. To doom or give judgment against. To utter a prayer or invocation for harm or injury to come upon one. To utter a wish of evil against one; to imprecate evil upon; to call for mischief or injury to fall upon; to execrate. A solemn appeal to a supernatural power to inflict harm on someone or something. In the passive voice the idea is to be doomed or accursed (Mt 25:41 = the forever fate of all Christ rejecters!). The antithesis of eulogeo!

**KATARAOMAI** - 5V - Matt. 25:41; Mk. 11:21; Lk. 6:28; Rom. 12:14; Jas. 3:9

[Curse, Accursed - Baker's Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology](#)

**Eternal** (166) [aionios](#) from [aion](#)) means existing at all times, perpetual, pertaining to an unlimited duration of time (Ro 1:20 - God's power, Mt 18:8 - God's place of judgment, Ro 16:26<sup>±</sup> - God's attribute). [Aionios](#) (eternal) is the exact antithesis of [proskairos](#) (temporal).

See [additional discussion of aionios](#) in study of eternal punishment, specifically the importance of an [accurate understanding of aionios as a refutation of the false teaching of universalism](#) (everyone will be saved).

**AIONIOS IN GOSPELS** - Matt. 18:8; Matt. 19:16; Matt. 19:29; Matt. 25:41; Matt. 25:46; Mk. 3:29; Mk. 10:17; Mk. 10:30; Lk. 10:25; Lk. 16:9; Lk. 18:18; Lk. 18:30; Jn. 3:15; Jn. 3:16; Jn. 3:36; Jn. 4:14; Jn. 4:36; Jn. 5:24; Jn. 5:39; Jn. 6:27; Jn. 6:40; Jn. 6:47; Jn. 6:54; Jn. 6:68; Jn. 10:28; Jn. 12:25; Jn. 12:50; Jn. 17:2; Jn. 17:3

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## QUESTION - [Who will go to hell? WATCH VIDEO](#)

**ANSWER** - [Hell](#) has become a controversial subject in recent years, even among Christians. However, the controversy is entirely man-made. The rejection of the reality of hell stems from a human inability to reconcile the love of God with eternal punishment or from an outright rejection of God's Word. Even some professing Christians have come to unbiblical conclusions. Some have tried to redefine hell, create an intermediate state not found in Scripture, or deny hell altogether. In doing so, they are ignoring Jesus' warning in Revelation 22:19, "If anyone takes words away from this scroll of prophecy, God will take away from that person any share in the tree of life and in the Holy City, which are described in this scroll."

Hell is mentioned 167 times in the Bible, sometimes called Gehenna, Hades, the pit, the Abyss, or everlasting punishment (Proverbs 7:27; Luke 8:31; 10:15; 2 Thessalonians 1:9). Jesus spoke of heaven and hell as real places (Matthew 13:41–42; 23:33; Mark 9:43–47; Luke 12:5). The story Jesus told about the rich man and Lazarus was an actual event that demonstrated the reality of the two eternal destinations (Luke 16:19–31). Heaven is the dwelling place of God (2 Chronicles 30:27) where Jesus has gone to "prepare a



place” for those who love Him (John 14:2). Hell was created for “the devil and his angels” (Matthew 25:41). But because every human being is a sinner, every person past the age of accountability has already been condemned to hell (Romans 3:10; 5:12; John 3:18). We all deserve hell as the just punishment for our rebellion against God (Romans 6:23).

Jesus was clear that “no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again” (John 3:3). He was also clear that hell is an eternal punishment for those who do not obey Him (Matthew 25:46). Second Thessalonians 1:8–9 says that in the end God “will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might.” John the Baptist said about Jesus, “His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor, gathering his wheat into the barn and burning up the chaff with unquenchable fire” (Matthew 3:12).

John 3:18 explains in the simplest terms who will go to heaven and who will go to hell: “Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because they have not believed in the name of God’s one and only Son.” So, those who go to hell are specifically those who do not believe in Jesus’ name. To “believe” goes beyond a mental recognition of the truth. To believe in Christ for salvation requires a transfer of allegiance. We stop worshiping ourselves, we forsake our sin, and we begin to worship God with our heart, soul, mind, and strength (Matthew 22:36–37; Mark 12:30).

God desires that every person spend eternity with Him (Matthew 18:14; 2 Peter 3:9), but He honors our decision to accept or reject Him (John 4:14). Anyone who so desires can go to heaven (John 1:12). Jesus already paid the price for our salvation, but we must accept that gift and transfer ownership of our lives to Him (Luke 9:23). Heaven is perfect, and God cannot take anyone there who insists on holding on to his or her sin. We must allow Him to cleanse us of our sin and make us righteous in His sight (2 Corinthians 5:21). John 1:10–12 shows us the problem and the solution: “He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God.”

We can choose to trust in Jesus’ payment for our sin, or we can choose to pay for our sins ourselves—but we must remember that the payment for our sin is eternity in hell. C. S. Lewis said it this way: “There are only two kinds of people in the end: those who say to God, ‘Thy will be done,’ and those to whom God says in the end, ‘Thy will be done.’”

#### **Related Resources:**

- Eternal Punishment
- [Who will go to heaven?](#)
- [How can I not go to hell?](#)
- [How is eternity in hell a fair punishment for sin?](#)
- [What does it mean that hell is eternal separation from God?](#)
- [Where is hell? What is the location of hell?](#)
- [Is hell literally a place of fire and brimstone?](#)
- [Is hell real? Is hell eternal?](#)
- [What does it mean that hell is referred to as a lake of fire?](#)
- [What was Jesus’ teaching on hell?](#)
- [Why does God send people to hell?](#)
- [What happens at the final judgment?](#)
- [What is the great white throne judgment?](#)
- [Who will occupy the Millennial Kingdom?](#)

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**A W Tozer - MAN’S WASTED POTENTIAL** [Mornings with Tozer: Daily Devotional Readings - Page 17](#)

Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels. Matthew 25:41

God has made it plain that hell is a real place—a final abode for people who do not want to love God and serve Him!

The sadness and the tragedy of this fact are that these are human beings, all dear to God because He created them in His own image. Of nothing else in the Creation is it said that it was created in the likeness of God!

Because fallen and perishing man is still nearer to God’s likeness than any other creature on earth, God offers him conversion, regeneration and forgiveness. It was surely because of this great potential in the human personality that the eternal Word could become flesh and dwell among us.

We are assured in many ways in the Scriptures that God the Creator does not waste human personality, but it is surely one of the

stark tragedies of life that human personality can waste itself!

A man by his own sin may waste himself, which is to waste and lose that which on earth is most like God. The man who dies out of Christ is said to be lost, and hardly a word in our language expresses his condition with greater accuracy!

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In a children's story popular during the middle 1800s, a small boy disobeyed his mother by taking a piece of cake when she wasn't looking. The book referred to him as "mean," "contemptible," and "with-out one particle of honorable or generous feeling." It asked, "And can anyone love or esteem a child who has become so degraded?" A description of "the deceitful child" at the judgment of the great white throne followed, and we learn of his harsh sentence, "Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels" (Matt. 25:41).

Unwise Christians get like that. They emphasize God's wrath so much that they lose sight of His mercy. On the other hand, some put so much stress on God's love that they lose sight of His holiness. Neither extreme is healthy. Wisdom keeps truth and love in proper balance.

The story disturbs me because it gives a distorted view of God. It was right in warning against disobedience, but it said nothing about forgiveness. How unlike 1 Corinthians 6:1-11. There we see the solemn warning about unrighteousness and immorality followed by the words, "And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified" (v. 11).

We must take seriously God's holiness and wrath against sin. But we must not forget His love and grace. We will live right and guide others correctly only as we gain wisdom and learn to hold the truth in balance. —H.V.L.

We must be careful not to teach the wrath of God apart from the grace of God.

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Literal Fire? Is the fire spoken of literal fire? It is an accepted law of language that a figure of speech is less intense than the reality. If "fire" is merely a figurative expression, it must stand for some great reality, and if the reality is more intense than the figure, what an awful thing the punishment symbolized by fire must be. Wm E. Evans, The Great Doctrines of the Bible

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**Bertrand Russell** -- "I do not myself feel that any person who is really profoundly human can believe in everlasting punishment....I must say that I think all this doctrine, that hellfire is a punishment for sin, is a doctrine of cruelty." (**ED: I THINK HE BELIEVES IN THIS DOCTRINE TODAY, BUT TOO LITTLE, TOO LATE!**) -- Why I Am Not a Christian.

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### **James Smith - Your case is sad — very sad!**

"Then the King will turn to those on the left and say: Away with you, you cursed ones, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his demons!"..."And they will go away into eternal punishment!" Matthew 25:41, 46

Lost sinner, your case is sad — very sad! You are an enemy to God, in open and avowed rebellion against Him! You are forcing your passage to blackness, darkness, and eternal woe, through a thousand obstacles which are thrown in your way! And, O how fearful will your end be! What, O what a dreadful end, must yours be!

In Hell, you will be forever deprived of the glorious presence of God!

You will never see light — but be in perpetual darkness!

Your abode will be a prison, where there is . . .

no comfort — but horror;

no voice — but of blasphemers cursing God;

no sounds — but the howling of the tortured;

no society — but devils and damned people. And these being tormented themselves, will eternally torment you!

You must experience . . .

punishment, without pity;

misery, without mercy;

sorrow, without support;

crying, without comfort;

mischievous, without measure;

torment, without ease;

where the worm never dies, and the fire is never quenched!

The wrath of God will seize upon your soul and body, like fire! And in the flame, you will be . . .

forever burning — but never consumed;

ever dying — but never dead;

ever roaring with pain — but know no end of these pains.

Your torments will be always, beginning.

Your reflections will be, "All this, I procured by my sin! This I chose — in preference to Heaven! I myself am to blame for my destruction — and God is just!"

Great God, awaken, awaken the sinner! Open, O open his eyes! Snatch, O snatch him as a brand from the burning — and save him through Jesus' blood!! If this is not the case, lost sinner, you may look forward, and exclaim:

Infinite years in torments shall I spend,

And never, never, never end!

Ah! I must live in torturing despair,

As many years — as atoms in the air!

When all these doleful years are spent in pain,

And multiplied by myriads again,

Til numbers drown thought; could I suppose

That then my wretched years were at a close.

This would afford some ease; but, ah, I shiver —

To think upon the dreadful word, FOREVER!

The burning gulf, where I blaspheming lie,

Is time no more — but vast eternity!

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**The Abode of Satan** -- The abode of Satan and his angels (Matt. 25:41), described in the Bible with the imagery of eternal fire, outer darkness, being lost, perishing, and the like. It is impossible to envisage a state that can be described in so many different ways. Clearly it is horrible and is to be avoided at all costs (Mark 9:43).-- The Shaw Pocket Bible Handbook p. 351

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**John Butler - JUDGMENT FOR SINNERS** Matthew 25:41 - [Sermon Starters](#)

Our text speaks of a special judgment that will occur in the end times, but our text, in principle, also expresses the judgement that will come upon every unrepentant sinner. This is what we will look at in our study of this text. We note six aspects of this judgment. It is not a pretty picture for the unrepentant sinner.

#### FIRST—THE PROSPECT OF SINNERS

"Then shall he say unto them." The last words the sinner will hear from God will be his sentence of condemnation. How much better had it been for the sinner if he had listened to the Word of God in his lifetime and heeded the Word. Then there would be no last words of condemnation. Many are not listening to the Word of God today, but when eternity comes they will have to listen to the Word of God which will be a sentence of condemnation.

#### SECOND—THE PSEUDONYM OF SINNERS

"Ye cursed." This is the name that heaven gives to the sinner. The righteous are called "blessed" (Matthew 25:34), for they have a glorious future and will indeed be blessed. But reject Jesus Christ and you will be cursed in the worst way.

#### THIRD—THE PARTING FOR THE SINNER

"Depart from me." The worst thing about eternal hell will be no God. Men do not want God around as our courts and the ACLU evidence. And the day will come when they will get their wish and be separated from God forever. The first death is separation of soul from the body, the second death is separation of the soul from God and to live in hell forever (Revelation 21:8).

#### FOURTH—THE PAIN FOR SINNERS

"Fire." "Fire" says pain. The worst experience for the redeemed is this earthly life, but for the unsaved sinner the best experience he will ever know is this earthly life. Luke 16:19–31 describes some of the physical and mental torment the sinner will experience in this fire. Judgment for rejecting Christ is severe to say the least. Hell is no joke.

#### FIFTH —THE PERMANENCE FOR SINNERS

"Everlasting." The sentence is forever. We hear about life sentences today and shudder. But the lost sinner will suffer forever. That is much worse than just an earthly life sentence.

#### SIXTH—THE PLACE FOR SINNERS

“Prepared for the devils and his angels.” Revelation 20:10 and 21:8 amplify the terrible conditions of the place prepared for Satan and his cohorts. That is the place the unrepentant sinner will be sentenced to dwell for eternity. “Fire and brimstone” future is not exciting. Not only will the heat be terrible but so will the smell (brimstone is sulphur). The eternal abode of the damned is a terrible place.

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### **No Hope to Lost Souls.—Matthew 25:46.**

Concerning the duration of future punishment, Dr. Adam Clarke remarks,—“No appeal, no remedy—to all eternity! No end to the punishment of those whose final impenitence manifests in them an eternal evil, and desire to sin. By dying in a settled opposition to God, they cast themselves into a necessity of continuing in an eternal aversion from him.

“But some are of opinion that this punishment shall have an end. This is as likely as that the glory of the righteous shall have an end; for the same word is used to express the duration of the punishment, as is used to express the duration of the state of glory. I have seen the best things that have been written in favor of the final redemption of damned spirits, but I never saw an answer to the argument against that doctrine, drawn from this verse, but what sound learning and criticism should be ashamed to acknowledge. The original word is certainly to be taken here in its proper grammatical sense, continual being, never ending. Some have gone a middle way, and think that the wicked shall be annihilated. This, I think, is contrary to the text. If they go into punishment, they continue to exist; for that which ceases to be, ceases to suffer.” See the note on Gen. 21:33. Thus writes the “calm and learned” Dr. Clarke.

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There once was an Englishman named Charles Peace—an ironic name, because Peace was not a peaceful man but a contentious one. Violent, thieving, brawling, he was a career criminal who respected the laws of neither God nor man. Eventually the authorities caught up with him, and he was tried and condemned to death by hanging at Armley Jail in Leeds.

On the morning of his execution, a contingent of prison officials met at Peace’s cell to take him on his final walk to the gallows. Among them was a sleepy prison chaplain whose job it was to prepare the condemned man’s soul (such as it was) for the hereafter. As the group began its solemn death march, this parson began mumbling and yawning his way through a series of unintelligible recitals.

Suddenly he felt a tap on his shoulder. “What are you reading?” someone was asking. He turned to find it was Mr. Peace.

“The Consolations of Religion,” he replied.

“Do you believe what you are reading?” inquired the prisoner.

“Well, yes, I guess I do.”

Peace stared at the chaplain, stunned. Here he was, going to his death, knowing that his earthly deeds utterly condemned him before the ultimate Judge, and this clergyman was mouthing words about heaven and hell as if it were a boring chore. He said to the parson, “Sir, I do not share your faith. But if I did—if I believed what you say you believe—then although England were covered with broken glass from coast to coast, I would crawl the length and breadth of it on hand and knee and think the pain worthwhile, just to save a single soul from this eternal hell of which you speak.”

—Howard G. Hendricks

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One who is interested in proving that there is no hell generally has a personal reason for doing so.

When H. A. Ironside was a little boy, his mother would draw him to her knee and talk to him of the importance of trusting the Lord as his Savior. Once he said, “Well, Mamma, I would like to do it, but the boys will all laugh at me.”

“Harry,” she replied, “remember they may laugh you into hell, but they can never laugh you out of it.”

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A group of troop soldiers on a ship once asked the chaplain, “Do you believe in hell?”

“No, why?”

“Well, then will you please resign? For if there is no hell, then we do not need you; and if there is, we do not wish to be led astray.”

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A church that needed a pastor invited several candidates to come and preach. One minister spoke on Psalm 9:17, “The wicked shall be turned into hell.” The chairman of the board was not in favor of him. A few weeks later, another preacher came and used the same verse for his sermon. This time the man said, “He’s good. Let’s call him.”

The other board members were surprised, and one of them asked, “Why did you like him? He used the same text as the other minister.” “True,” replied the chairman, “but when the second man emphasized that the lost will be turned into hell, he said it with tears in his eyes and with concern in his voice. The first preacher almost seemed to gloat over it.”

—Our Daily Bread

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The doctrine of hell is based on the premise that the punishment must fit the crime. Men refuse to give themselves to God—God refuses to give Himself to them eternally. They spurn fellowship with God—they are given separation from God. They cast Christ out of their lives—they are cast out of His life. They reject—they are rejected.

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I remember my graduation from middle school near Philadelphia. The school provided each one of us with an autograph book which we passed among our fellow students for them to sign and write a few words as a memento of our years together. One of my fellow students wrote the following words: "If in heaven we don't meet, I hope we both can stand the heat! Ha! Ha!" What that boy didn't realize is that hell is no laughing matter. If he really realized where he was heading, he should have been deeply troubled. We do the unsaved a great disfavor to let them think otherwise.

—George Murray

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Voltaire, the French infidel, was more honest than some modern "Christian" preachers. When he received a letter from a man who said he had "succeeded in getting rid of the idea of hell," Voltaire replied, "Congratulations—I wish I could."

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A warden at a large prison was concerned about a longtime inmate because no one ever came to see him. Knowing that visitors boost morale, he called the man into his office one day. "Lefty," he asked, "do you have any close relatives or personal friends?" "Sure," Lefty answered. "But no one has visited you since the day you arrived. May I contact somebody for you?" "It wouldn't do no good," Lefty replied with a shrug. "They're all here."

—Our Daily Bread

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Walter Hooper, C. S. Lewis's secretary, chuckled when he read this grave inscription: "Here lies an atheist, All dressed up with no place to go." When he told C. S. Lewis about this, Lewis didn't chuckle. He responded, "That atheist probably wishes now that were true."

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A young man in Switzerland had been brought up in a home where God and the Bible were revered. Although the Gospel was often presented to him with loving urgency, he refused to believe and became increasingly rebellious. Finally he said, "I'm sick and tired of Christians. I'm going to look for a place where I can avoid them." His mother wept as he packed his suitcase and left home. He boarded a train, only to find that two passengers seated behind him were discussing the Scriptures. "I'm not going to stay here," he muttered. At the next stop he left the coach and entered a restaurant. To his dismay, some elderly women were talking about the return of the Lord. Knowing a ship was docked nearby, he decided it might be a way to escape the "religious chatter" he encountered at every turn. But when the steamer embarked, he discovered that it was filled with happy young students from a Bible academy.

Thoroughly disgusted, he made his way downstairs to find the bar. Approaching the captain, he exclaimed, "Say, can you tell a man where he can get away from all these cursed fanatics?" The skipper looked up and said with a grin, "Yes, just go to hell. You won't find any Christians there." These startling words caused him to realize his eternal peril and when he returned home, he received the Savior.

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No man should preach on hell who can do so with dry eyes.

—Charles H. Spurgeon

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After discussing the difference of the eternal state of man after death with a returned soldier from World War II, he just denounced the brutality of war and concluded with a rare bitterness in his accusation against Hitler and what he called "his gang." This gave me an opportunity. Since he had previously vehemently denied all difference in the eternal state and strongly argued that all will enter heaven, my comment was, "You better change your mind about Hitler and 'his gang.' Since you insist that all go to the same place, what if the first man you meet in heaven is Hitler?"

"Oh!" he cried out. "That could never be!"

"But where will he be?"

"To hell with him," was the soldier's bitter reply.

"But there is no hell, according to your opinion."

"There must be one for that kind of people" was my friend's emphatic word.

—George W. Peters

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A minister preached a sermon on the subject of eternal punishment. The next day a young man came to see him to dispute what he

heard preached. He said to the minister, "I believe that there is a difference between what you and I believe about eternal punishment. I came here in order to settle this difference."

The minister thought for a while and then turned to the young man and said, "There is no dispute between you and me. If you turn to Matthew 25:46 you will find the dispute is between you and the Lord Jesus Christ, and I advise you to go immediately and settle it with Him."

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## Robert Neighbour - The Wages of Sin

- "For the wages of sin is death: but the gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. 6:23).
- "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." The word "death" here, as in our key verse, does not refer merely to physical death. It includes eternal separation from God. "Sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death" (James 1:15). This death is the absence of life, and it means just what Christ said, when He cried on the Cross, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" Christ tasted death for every man; and that death was realized in the cry of Calvary. John wrote (17:13): "This is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only True God, and Jesus Christ." But death, eternal death, means eternal existence apart from God. An existence with no Christ, no Saviour, no home, no hope! It means the endless, shoreless sea of eternity, apart from God.
- Over every sinner's head are written God's words of condemnation, "Mene, Mene, Tekel, Upharsin." If the sinner could open his eyes, he would see his condemnation plainly inscribed. Let us bring out a few passages which shew the sinner's fate, and describe therein the wages of sin.
- "Lost." What an awful word, and yet we read, "Jesus Christ came to seek and to save the lost."
- "Perish." Another word full of terror, but God sent His Son, that "Whosoever believeth in Him should not perish."
- "Condemned already." Another word which startles. It is the sentence passed, the judgment hanging over the soul! "He that believeth not is condemned already" (John 3:18). Of the believer is written: "But there is now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 8:1).
- The three words above show the present lot of the sinner; but, thank God, it is a lot from which a sinner may be saved if he will turn to Christ. Let us give a few additional words which set forth the eternal condemnation of the one who rejects Christ and who will not come unto Him that he might have life.
- "Punishment." "And these shall go away into everlasting punishment" (Matt. 25:46).
- "Everlasting fire." "Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels" (Matt. 25:41).
- "Torment." "And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torment" (Luke 16:23).
- "Hell." "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God" (Ps. 9:17).
- "Smoke of torment." "And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever" (Rev. 14:11).
- "No rest." "And they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image" (Rev. 14:11).
- "The lake of fire." "And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire" (Rev. 20:14).
- "Fire and brimstone." "But the fearful, and unbelieving, \* \* have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death" (Rev. 21:8).
- The words above describe something of what awaits those who reject Christ. Surely upon the wicked God will rain snares and a horrible tempest (see Ps. 11:6). They will be cast into eternal burnings. Such are the wages of sin.

## Robert Neighbour - The Punishment of the Wicked As Set Forth in the Gospels

"The wrath of God abideth on him" (John 3:36)

We now come to the part of the message which is all-important. We are living in an age when people seem to desire to excuse sin on the one hand, and deny its punishment on the other. We are going to give you the teachings of the Gospels first; because they will include the words of our own precious Lord, Who loved sinners and Who came to seek and to save them.

1. Our first passage — Matthew 3:7: "But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?" John the Baptist believed in the punishment of the wicked, because he urged men to flee from the wrath to come. Why seek to save the sinner, if there is nothing to save him from? Why preach the grace which will carry us into Heaven, if there is no hell?

2. Our second passage — Matthew 11:22 and 24: "But I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment, than for you. But I say unto you, That it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for thee."

The Lord Jesus here positively teaches that there is a day of judgment in which punishment shall be meted out. He goes so far as to say that Chorazin and Bethsaida shall have a heavier punishment than Tyre and Sidon, and that Capernaum shall suffer more than even Sodom. The same thing is taught in chapter 12:41,



where the men of Nineveh will rise up in the day of judgment against the generation who had refused the Lord.

3. Our third passage — Matthew 26:24: "It had been good for that man if he had not been born."

Such words as these are meaningless unless there is punishment for the wicked. Certainly it would not have been good for Judas not to have been born if he merely went out into eternal oblivion when he died. But Judas went out with Christ's eternal woe written over him.

4. Our fourth passage — Matthew 13:40 and 42: "As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world. And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.

These words mean something. Jesus Christ speaks of the children of the wicked one as being the tares: they are to be burned, cast into a furnace of fire, where there is wailing and gnashing of teeth.

5. Our fifth passage — Matthew 18:8 and 9: "Wherefore if thy hand or thy foot offend thee, cut them off, and cast them from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life halt or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet to be cast into everlasting fire. And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire."

The expression "everlasting fire" and "hell fire" are not written to scare people. They were spoken by the Lord Jesus Christ Who loved men enough to die for them. They carry with them only a touch of the awful woes that await the wicked.

6. Our sixth passage — Matthew 25:41 and 46: "Then shall He say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal."

Here we have certain ones who are to enter into everlasting fire and everlasting punishment. In contrast to this the righteous are to enter into everlasting life.

7. Our seventh passage — Mark 9:44: "Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched."

Three times did Christ utter these same words: once in verse 44; then in verse 46; and then in verse 48. He describes hell as a place where "their worm dieth not." And then He adds that the "fire is not quenched." The literalness of this picture may not be doubted. Did not the rich man lift up his eyes "being in torments"? Did not he say, "I am tormented in this flame"? Did not Abraham say: "Son, remember"?

8. Our eighth passage — Mark 3:29: "But he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation."

The literal translation is: "He is guilty of an eternal judgment." Men may try to belittle the "wrath to come" and decry the "judgment of the great white throne," but the Word of God never shields them.

9. Our ninth passage — John 3:16: "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

We are closing our Scriptures from the Gospels with this love verse. It has been called "the Gospel in a nutshell," but in the heart of this verse is an expression which needs to make us stop and think. Consider the words "should not perish." Oh, what depths of meaning are wrapped up in that word "perish"! In the 39th verse the full meaning of "perish" is expressed by the words — "the wrath of God abideth on him."

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Matthew 25:31-46

TODAY IN THE WORD Are Baby Boomers in denial?

The leading edge of the post-World War II ""Baby Boom"" generation turned 50 last year, but they're not about to acknowledge it. Boomers battle aging with body lotions, hair coloring, cosmetics and vitamins. They flock to health clubs and follow ""miracle diets."" They read self-help books by the tens of millions. Meanwhile, many have experienced their first serious illnesses, including high blood pressure and heart disease.

Whether Boomers want to acknowledge it or not, they are aging. Mortality is a reality of human experience that simply won't go away. Like it or not, so is the question of eternal destiny. When it comes to the topic of heaven and hell, many would simply rather not think about hell.

Although the world doesn't want to face it, and as uncomfortable as it makes many believers, the existence of hell is part of the revelation of God. We need to know the truth concerning hell as part of our commitment to the ""whole will of God"" (Acts 20:27).

Most of the objections to hell center around the argument that a good and loving God would not create a place as horrible as hell or send people there for eternity. The unstated part of this argument is that most people are ""ordinary folks"" trying to do their best and

don't really deserve eternal judgment.

We will deal with these objections and ideas over the next few days, then finish up the month by returning to the topic of heaven and our future there.

Today's text describes a judgment that we believe will occur at the end of the Tribulation. In the middle of this discourse, Jesus reveals the fact of the existence of hell: "the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels" (Matt. 25:41).

#### TODAY ALONG THE WAY

The gospel has to be bad news--sin--before it can be good news--salvation. This is certainly true when it comes to the subject of hell. Some gospel presentations skirt the issue because people don't like to hear that they are judged and condemned to hell unless they turn to Christ.

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Matthew 25:31-46

Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me. - Matthew 25:40

#### TODAY IN THE WORD

The "Nourishing" Ministry - About once a week, Jane Pigue of Greenwood, Missouri, swings into high gear and bakes 25 to 30 loaves of fresh, homemade bread. The next day, she delivers it to needy people in the Kansas City area--people suffering from cancer or other health problems, or people going through a crisis or down time in their lives. She sometimes takes the bread to a local mission or church food pantry.

Jane bakes bread as a way of expressing Jesus' love to others. "How can I do anything less, when Jesus gave His all for us?" she said. "I just let Him work through me." Her goal: "Do all the good I can, for all the people I can, for as long as I can."

Jane's bread ministry pleases Christ, as we know from today's reading. While we are not certain whether this passage describes a specific future judgment or is a parable of sorts, the lesson remains the same: We must show brotherly love and kindness, especially to those in God's family. The parable of the talents that opens Matthew 25 teaches us to work for God's glory, and these verses give extra motivation!

What makes the difference between the favored sheep and the condemned goats? Their actions. While we know salvation is not earned by merit, these verses highlight the key truth that trees are known by their fruit (Matt. 7:15-27). Specific acts of compassion are mentioned, including providing food and clothing, showing hospitality, and visiting prisoners and sick people (cf. Isa. 58:6-9). Jesus' many healing miracles are a good place to see His own compassion in action.

#### TODAY ALONG THE WAY

Were you convicted by anything on Jesus' list in today's reading? Then act on it! These verses contain their own applications: giving food and clothes to the poor, visiting prisoners, and other ministries of compassion.

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Matthew 25:31-46

The Son of Man is going to come in his Father's glory . . . and then he will reward each person according to what he has done. - Matthew 16:27

#### TODAY IN THE WORD

In the town of Nuevo Laredo, Mexico, just across the U.S. border from Laredo, Texas, the murder rate has skyrocketed recently. Nearly all the murders are drug-related. Townspeople feel powerless to do anything because many officials are either controlled by drug lords or are too fearful to execute justice. Even where officials try to render justice, there is only one Person who will render judgment with perfect justice, and that is Jesus Christ at the final judgment.

As we conclude looking at Jesus' teaching on the kingdom, it's fitting to consider what He said about the final events at the end of history. Today's parable likens groups of people to sheep and goats. Both groups are evaluated according to their response to Jesus.

The parable opens with a vision of Jesus in exalted glory. As the nations gather before Him, He renders judgment. This affirms that Jesus is God, because the role of final judgment belongs to God alone.

There's much debate about whether this parable refers to treatment of the poor and needy in general or messengers of the gospel in particular. Although Jesus was deeply concerned about the disadvantaged, the connection between the least of these brothers and Jesus Himself (Mt 25:40) suggests that He has in mind servants of the kingdom. We clearly know from the book of Acts that sharing the gospel led to physical deprivation and imprisonment. Later church history confirms the suffering that accompanied those who brought the gospel to the ends of the earth or even to their own people.

This parable teaches several important truths about the kingdom: first, physical hardship is part of our calling as gospel messengers. Second, people's response to the gospel has eternal consequences. Those who receive the gospel and its messengers enjoy a

heavenly inheritance; those who reject the gospel and its messengers receive eternal damnation.

#### TODAY ALONG THE WAY

The Bible's teaching on the final judgment isn't popular in a time that condones just about any belief or behavior. This passage forces us to reconsider our commitment to the gospel and willingness to suffer for it. If you do not yet know Jesus as your Savior, this passage shows that there are eternal consequences for rejecting Him.

**Matthew 25:42 for I was hungry, and you gave Me nothing to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me nothing to drink;**

- Mt 25:35 10:37,38 12:30 Am 6:6 Jn 5:23 8:42-44 14:21 1Co 16:22 2Th 1:8 Jas 2:15-24 1Jn 3:14-17 4:20

### THE KING EXPLAINS THE FATE OF THE GOATS

**For** ([gar](#)) - Term of explanation.

**I was hungry** ([peinao](#)), **and you gave Me nothing to eat** ([esthio](#)); **I was thirsty** ([dipsao](#)), **and you gave Me nothing to drink** - Note the repeat phrase **you gave Me nothing**, which means as explained earlier, that the goats did absolutely nothing kind and beneficial for the followers of Christ and for the Jews (see [note](#)). And when they rejected, ignored or persecuted these believers, they did in effect the same to Christ Who indwells each believer. Note how derelict these goats were, that they refused even a simple act of kindness like giving a drink of water. The corollary is these small acts of kindness are not "small" in the eyes of the King!

Presumably the goats knew the right thing to do for the suffering Christ followers and Jews and did not do it. "Therefore, to one who knows the right thing to do and does not do it, to him it is sin." (James 4:17+)

**Matthew 25:43 I was a stranger, and you did not invite Me in; naked, and you did not clothe Me; sick, and in prison, and you did not visit Me.'**

#### Related Passages:

Hebrews 13:3+ **Remember** ([present imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) the prisoners, as though in prison with them, and those who are ill-treated, since you yourselves also are in the body.

### THE KING SUMS UP GOATS' FAILURE TO SHOW COMPASSION

**I was a stranger** ([xenos](#)), **and you did not invite** ([sunago](#)) **Me in; naked** ([gumnos](#)), **and you did not clothe** ([periballo](#)) **Me; sick** ([astheneo](#)), **and in prison** ([phulake](#)), **and you did not visit** ([episkeptomai](#)) **Me.'** - Did you see the repeated pronoun? **ME!** They ignored the King! Note that the failure to minister to the followers of Christ in each of these 6 areas was not a sin of commission, an overt evil action, but was a sin of omission. In other words the King's rebuke was not for evil done, but for good left undone. The takeaway is that sins of omission are just as damning as sins of commission.

*What we do or don't do for the "least of these",  
the King counts as done to Him*

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#### QUESTION - [What is a sin of omission? GOTQUESTIONS.ORG](#)

**ANSWER** - James 4:17 declares, "Anyone, then, who knows the good he ought to do and doesn't do it, sins." A sin of omission is a sin that is the result of not doing something God's Word teaches that we should do. It is generally used in contrast with the corresponding phrase "[the sin of commission](#)," or sins that a person actively commits. Paul juxtaposes the two concepts in Romans 7:14-20. He decries his tendency toward both types of sin. He does what he doesn't want to do and knows is wrong—the sin of commission—and he doesn't do what he knows he should do and really wants to do—the sin of omission. Here is a picture of the new nature in conflict with the flesh in which it dwells.

In the New Testament, the classic example given by Jesus is the account of the Good Samaritan. After a man had been beaten and

left in need of help, the first two men to pass by—a priest and a Levite, both of whom knew better—failed to act. The third man, a Samaritan, stopped to show compassion to the man in need (Luke 10:30-37). Jesus used this example to teach that we are to likewise help those in need. By doing so, he clearly communicated that it is sinful to avoid doing good, just as it is sinful to pursue what is evil.

Jesus further describes the sins of omission in Matthew 25:31-46. The goats, those who are sent away by Christ, are those who saw others hungry and thirsty, but did not provide food and water. They are those who saw others in need of clothing, who were sick or in jail but did nothing to clothe or comfort them. These are all examples of sins of omission. There was no sin committed against these needy people—they were not intentionally starved or deprived of their clothing. But the sin of omission was committed when those who could have provided for them chose not to.

Finally, the apostle Paul provides a summary statement that explains why we should do what is right and refrain from sins of omission: “Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up” (Galatians 6:9). When we do the will of our heavenly Father (Matthew 12:50), we avoid sins of omission and live productive, fruitful lives pleasing to God (Romans 12:1-2; John 15:1-11).

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#### QUESTION - [What is a sin of commission? GOTQUESTIONS.ORG](http://GOTQUESTIONS.ORG)

**ANSWER** - There are two basic ways we sin: either by omission or commission. [Sins of omission](#) are those in which we knew we should have done something good, but refused (James 4:17). A sin of *commission* is a sin we take action to commit, whether in thought, word, or deed. A sin of commission can be intentional or unintentional. Foreknowledge is not the issue. If you visit another country in which traffic drives in the left lane, and you drive in the right lane, you are still breaking the law whether you know it or not. The Old Testament Law prescribed special sacrifices for sins that were unintentional but were nevertheless sins (Numbers 15:22-24; cf. Hebrews 9:7).

Humanity's first sin was a sin of commission. God forbade the eating of a certain fruit (Genesis 2:16-17). Adam and Eve knew God's command and disobeyed anyway (Genesis 3:6). They took action to commit a sinful act. When King David committed adultery and then had Uriah killed to cover it up, both were sins of commission (2 Samuel 11). The Bible does not hide the often sordid details of the lives of people He loved and used anyway. Its pages are peppered with sins of commission by great leaders such as Abraham (Genesis 20:2), Moses (Exodus 2:11-12), David (2 Samuel 12:13), Solomon (Nehemiah 13:26), Peter (Matthew 26:74-75), and Paul (Galatians 1:13).

We are all guilty of sins of commission. We all commit intentional sin by acting in ways God has forbidden. We also commit unintentional sin in our ignorance of God's standards (Acts 3:17; 1 Peter 1:14; Leviticus 4:13-14). Our sin nature keeps us from fellowship with God. We may be able to limit the number of sins we openly commit, but we cannot cleanse our hearts. Jesus said that “what comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart, and this defiles a person. For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false witness, slander” (Matthew 15:18-19).

That's why we need Jesus. We cannot stop ourselves from sinning, and by sinning we eliminate any hope of connecting with a holy God. Only when we allow Christ's death and resurrection to be our substitute can our sin be expunged (Colossians 2:14; Romans 6:6). 2 Corinthians 5:21 says, “He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.” Jesus took upon Himself all our sins of commission and omission and [paid the debt](#) we owe God.

Psalms 51 is the prayer David wrote after he had been confronted with his own sin of commission. He had sinned greatly, and there would be consequences (2 Samuel 12:14-15). But he knew how to repent. And he had enough confidence in the mercy of God to cry out, “Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me. [Restore to me the joy of your salvation](#) and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me” (Psalm 51:10-12). David models for us the right way to deal with our sins of commission. When we recognize our sin against God, we can turn to Him, acknowledge that sin, and ask for His cleansing. We can trust in the power of Jesus' shed blood to [wipe away our sin](#). God promises to restore us to fellowship and strengthen us to live in a way that pleases Him (Philippians 4:13).

**Matthew 25:44** “Then they themselves also will answer, ‘Lord, when did we see You hungry, or thirsty, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not take care of You?’

- **when:** Mt 25:24-27 Mt 7:22 1Sa 15:13-15,20,21 Jer 2:23,35 Mal 1:6 2:17 3:13 Lu 10:29

**Related Passages:**

Matthew 7:22+ "Many will say to Me on that day, **Lord, Lord**, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?"

Matthew 10:40+ "He who receives you receives Me, and he who receives Me receives Him who sent Me.

## THE EXCUSE OF THE GOATS

**Then** ([tote](#)) is an expression of time, which usually marks progression in a narrative. In this case the King gives the goats a chance to rebut the charges.

**They themselves also will answer, 'Lord** ([kurios](#)) **- They themselves** is interesting as it indicates they were speaking in their own defense. Notice they address King Jesus as "**Lord**," the right title acknowledging His authority but their words were hollow and hypocritical. One is reminded of Jesus' words in Luke 6:46+ "Why do you call Me, **Lord, Lord**,' and do not do what I say?" The goats did not do what He said!

One is also reminded of Paul's warning to all who reject Jesus as Savior...

For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, 10 so that (term of purpose/result) at the name of Jesus EVERY KNEE WILL BOW, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, 11 and that **every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord** ([kurios](#)), to the glory of God the Father. (Php 2:9-11+)

**When did we see You hungry** ([peinao](#)), **or thirsty** ([dipsao](#)), **or a stranger** ([xenos](#)), **or naked** ([gumnos](#)), **or sick** ([astheneo](#)), **or in prison** ([phulake](#)), **and did not take care of** ([diakoneo](#) - minister to) **You?** - Notice how they claim innocence and/or ignorance but the way Jesus phrased it in the previous passages indicates they saw the needs, but they just did not respond. The implication of their words is something like "Had we seen it, we would have responded." Liar, liar, pants on fire! The goats' refusal to attend to the needs of the King's **brothers** (see [note](#)) is a reflection of their lost, unsaved state.

**Did not take care of** ([diakoneo](#) - minister to) **You?** As noted above, their question implies that had they known, they would have acted to take care of the King. Their defense is not denial of action, but denial of recognition -- "We did not know it was You!"

**Matthew 25:45 "Then He will answer them, 'Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me.'**

- **to the extent:** Mt 25:40 Ge 12:3 Nu 24:9 Ps 105:15 Pr 14:31 17:5 21:13 Zec 2:8 Jn 15:18,19 Ac 9:5 1Jn 3:12-20 5:1-3

## THE KING RESPONDS WITH ANOTHER "AMEN" DECLARATION

**Then** ([tote](#)) is an expression of time, which usually marks progression, in this case the King condescending to even give them an explanation for His verdict (Mt 25:41+). Even this is a reflection of His grace, for He did not have to explain His decision to them!

**He will answer them, 'Truly** ([amen](#)) **I say to you** - His [amen](#) underscores the solemn and authoritative nature of His declaration. He is speaking the absolute truth to them.

**To the extent that you did** ([poieo](#)) **not do it to one of the least** ([elachistos](#)) **of these** - The King's standard by which the goats were judges is **what** they failed to do, not just what they actively did wrong. They committed **asin of omission** failing to act when love and mercy were called for to **the least of these**. The least refers to Christ's disciples, those who were without status, power, or recognition and thus who were easily overlooked. Not only were they easily overlooked but in the Great Tribulation they were even killed! (Rev 13:15+)

**You did** ([poieo](#)) **not do it to Me** - The King identified with the "commoners," those who were His brethren by virtue of having entered into the new covenant by grace through faith (see [Oneness of Covenant](#)). In neglecting **the least of these** they were neglecting Christ.

Many people imagine they would serve Christ if He stood before them. But in this verse, Jesus exposes the heart. Those who truly love Him will serve even **the least**, without expecting reward or recognition. The goats failed not just in charity, but in love. They missed Christ because they never looked for Him in the lowly.

- **eternal punishment:** Mt 25:41 Da 12:2 Mk 9:44,46,48,49 Lu 16:26 Jn 5:29 2Th 1:9 Rev 14:10,11 20:10,15 21:8
- **the righteous:** Mt 13:43 Ps 16:10,11 Jn 3:15,16,36 10:27,28 Ro 2:7-16 5:21 6:23 1Jn 2:25 5:11,12 Jude 1:21

## ALL SOULS WILL SPEND ETERNITY IN ONE PLACE OR THE OTHER

**These will go away** ([aperchomai](#)) into eternal ([aionios](#)) **punishment** ([kolasis](#)) - These refers to the goats, those who had no works to show they had been born again.

**But** - Term of contrast. This is without a doubt one of the most significant contrasts in all the Bible. It marks the separation, the chasm if you will, between, eternal death and eternal life.

**The righteous** ([dikaiois](#)) - In context, this refers to the sheep, but by extension refers to every person who has placed their faith in Christ and been justified or declared righteous as the gift of God. This would of course include all OT believers, Abraham being the prototype, Moses writing "Then he believed in the LORD; and He reckoned it to him as righteousness." (Ge 15:6+, cf Gal 3:8+) In short, Abraham was declared righteous and accounted righteous in the same way as NT believer -- by faith. His faith was in what he knew about Christ. He looked forward to the Cross. We today look back to the Cross.

**Into eternal** ([aionios](#)) **life** ([zoe](#)) - Notice the repetition of the crucial time word **eternal** ([aionios](#)). Can you see what Jesus is teaching about the length of separation in hell? Clearly, if **eternal life** is forever in the presence of the Lord, **eternal punishment** is forever in the absence of the Lord. You can argue all you want about the horrors of hell (and I will agree that the teaching is painful to contemplate as I have dear relatives who are likely in hell) and how surely it must have an end, but a simple, literal interpretation of Jesus' words does not allow one to come to that conclusion.

**ETERNAL LIFE** - SURPRISINGLY THIS PHRASE IS FOUND ONLY 26X - Matt. 19:16; Mk. 10:17; Mk. 10:30; Lk. 10:25; Lk. 18:18; Jn. 3:15; Jn. 5:39; Jn. 6:54; Jn. 6:68; Jn. 10:28; Jn. 17:2; Acts 13:48; Rom. 2:7; Rom. 5:21; Rom. 6:23; 1 Tim. 6:12; 1 Tim. 6:19; Tit. 1:2; Tit. 3:7; 1 Jn. 1:2; 1 Jn. 2:25; 1 Jn. 3:15; 1 Jn. 5:11; 1 Jn. 5:13; 1 Jn. 5:20; Jude 1:21

**John MacArthur** points out that "Jesus uses the same word ([aionios](#), eternal) to describe salvation and condemnation. If believers will be in heaven with God **forever**, the lost will be in hell with the devil **forever**." (Bolding added) (See [Matthew Commentary - Page 126](#))

Note MacArthur's phrase "*with the devil*" might lead some to believe that they will be with the devil in hell and this will surely result in a big party! **WRONG!** Au contraire, all occupants could possibly well experience everlasting solitary confinement! While there is not a specific passage describing solitary confinement, there is also no passage describing community or communion with other occupants. By default that at least suggest the horrible possibility of solitary confinement!

I tend to agree with **Randy Alcorn's** statement "I don't believe hell is a place where demons take delight in punishing people and where people commiserate over their fate. More likely, each person is in solitary confinement." (See [We Shall See God: Charles Spurgeon's Classic Devotional](#))

Sadly some writers like **Francis Chan** in Erasing Hell gives a somewhat wishy-washy answer to the length of hell writing "While I lean heavily on the side that says it is everlasting, I am not ready to claim that with complete certainty." It seems that Jesus was ready to claim hell was as everlasting as eternal life! While I do not like to think about everlasting torment, I choose to side with Jesus on the length of hell -- everlasting.

[Gotquestions.org](#) is much more dogmatic than Chan - The punishment of the wicked in hell is as never-ending as the bliss of the righteous in heaven. Jesus Himself indicates that punishment in hell is just as everlasting as life in heaven (Matthew 25:46). The wicked are forever subject to the fury and the wrath of God. Those in hell will acknowledge the perfect justice of God and the lordship of Jesus Christ, the [Savior](#) they rejected (Psalm 76:10; Philippians 2:10-11). Yes, hell is real. Yes, hell is a place of torment and punishment that lasts forever and ever, with no end. Praise God that, through Jesus, we can escape this eternal fate (John 3:16, 18, 36).

- See study on Eternal Punishment



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**Punishment** (2851) [kolasis](#) from [kolazo](#) = to punish) means correction, punishment, penalty, torment, retribution (everlasting punishment in Mt 25:46, punishment in general in 1Jn 4:18) "Painful disquietude" (Mounce). Jesus when He returns and dictates the fate of unbelievers states "These will go away into eternal **punishment**, but the righteous into eternal life." (Mt 25:46+) Timōria has only the idea of penalty, kolasis has also that of discipline, while paideia has that of chastisement (Heb. 12:7).

**Marvin Vincent** on **punishment** - *Torment* (KJV) is a faulty translation. The word ([kolasis](#)) means punishment, penalty. It occurs in the NT only here and Mt. 25:46. The kindred verb, kolazo to punish, is found Acts 4:21; 2Pe 2:9+.

**BDAG** summarized - 1. infliction of suffering or pain in chastisement, punishment so literally undergo punishment; long-continued torture *ibid.* Of the martyrdom of Jesus. The smelling of the odor arising from sacrifices by polytheists ironically described as punishment, injury (2) Transcendent retribution. Eternal punishment. (Borrow [A Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament, and other early Christian literature](#))

**TDNT** - This word, meaning "punishment," is used for divine punishment in 2 Macc. 4:38; 4 Macc. 8:9. In the NT it occurs in Mt. 25:46: Those who fail the practical ethical task will go away to eternal punishment. The only other instance is in 1 Jn. 4:18, which says that fear is its own punishment (cf. 3:18). This fear is driven out by love, which is free from every fear. (Borrow [Kittel's Theological Dictionary of the New Testament](#))

**Vine** - Kolasis (κόλασις akin to kolazō (PUNISH), punishment, is used in [Mt. 25:46](#), "(eternal) punishment," and [1 John 4:18](#), "(fear hath) punishment," R.V. (A.V., "torment"), which there describes a process, not merely an effect; this kind of fear is expelled by perfect love; where God's love is being perfected in us, it gives no room for the fear of meeting with His reprobation; the punishment referred to is the immediate consequence of the sense of sin, not a holy awe but a slavish fear, the negation of the enjoyment of love. ([Vine's Expository Dictionary](#))

**Abbott-Smith** - Synonym - **timoria**, requital. Aristotle distinguishes between **kolasis** as that which, being disciplinary, has reference to the sufferer, and timoria as that which, being penal, has reference to the satisfaction of him who inflicts.

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**J C Ryle** - Who shall describe the blessedness of eternal life? It passes the power of man to conceive. It can only be measured by contrast and comparison. An eternal rest, after warfare and conflict,—the eternal company of saints, after buffeting with an evil world,—an eternally glorious and painless body, after struggling with weakness and infirmity,—an eternal sight of Jesus face to face, after only hearing and believing,—all this is blessedness indeed. And yet the half of it remains untold.

*And yet this picture is nothing,  
compared to the reality.*

Who shall describe the misery of eternal punishment? It is something utterly indescribable and inconceivable. The eternal pain of body,—the eternal sting of an accusing conscience—the eternal society of none but the wicked, the devil and his angels (**ED: AND MAYBE NONE AT ALL - SOLITARY CONFINEMENT**)—the eternal remembrance of opportunities neglected and Christ despised—the eternal prospect of a weary, hopeless future—all this is misery indeed. It is enough to make our ears tingle, and our blood run cold. And yet this picture is nothing, compared to the reality.

Let us close these verses with serious self-inquiry. Let us ask ourselves on which side of Christ we are likely to be at the last day. Shall we be on the right hand, or shall we be on the left? Happy is he who never rests till he can give a satisfactory answer to this question.

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**QUESTION** - [What was the Old Testament way of salvation? GOTQUESTIONS.ORG](#)

**ANSWER** - How people were saved during the time of the Old Testament is a confusing question to some. We know that, in the New Testament era, [salvation](#) comes by grace through faith in Jesus Christ (John 1:12; Ephesians 2:8-9). Jesus is [the Way](#) (John 14:6). But, before Christ, what was the way?

*A common misconception about the Old Testament way of salvation  
is that Jews were saved by keeping the Law.*

A common misconception about the Old Testament way of salvation is that Jews were saved by keeping the Law. But we know from Scripture that that is not true. Galatians 3:11 says, "Now it is evident that no one is justified before God by the law, for 'The righteous shall live by faith.'" Some might want to dismiss this passage as only applying to the New Testament, but Paul is quoting Habakkuk

2:4—salvation by faith, apart from the Law was an *Old Testament* principle. Paul taught that the purpose of the Law was to serve as a “tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith” (Galatians 3:24). Also, in Romans 3:20 Paul makes the point that keeping the Law did not save either Old or New Testament Jews because “no one will be declared righteous in his sight by observing the law.” The Law was never intended to save anyone; the purpose of the Law was to make us “conscious of sin.”

*If the Old Testament way of salvation was not keeping the Law,  
then how were people saved?*

If the Old Testament way of salvation was not keeping the Law, then how were people saved? Fortunately, the answer to that question is easily found in Scripture, so there can be no doubt as to what was the Old Testament way of salvation. In Romans 4 the [apostle Paul](#) makes it very clear that the Old Testament way of salvation was the same as the New Testament way, which is by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone. To prove this, Paul points us to Abraham, who was saved by faith: “Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness” (Romans 4:3). Again, Paul quotes the Old Testament to prove his point—Genesis 15:6, this time. Abraham could not have been saved by keeping the Law, because he lived over 400 years before the Law was given!

Paul then shows that David was also saved by faith (Romans 4:6-8, quoting Psalm 32:1-2). Paul continues to establish that the Old Testament way of salvation was through faith alone. In Romans 4:23-24 he writes, “The words ‘it was credited to him’ were written not for him alone, but also for us, to whom God will credit righteousness—for us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead.” In other words, righteousness is “credited” or given to those who have faith in God—Abraham, David, and we all share the same way of salvation.

Much of [Romans](#) and [Galatians](#) addresses the fact that there is only one way of salvation and only one gospel message. Throughout history people have tried to pervert the gospel by adding human works to it, requiring certain things to be done to “earn” salvation. But the Bible’s clear message is that the way of salvation has always been through faith. In the Old Testament, it was faith in the promise that God would send a Savior someday. Those who lived in the time of the Old Testament looked forward to the Messiah and believed God’s promise of the coming Servant of the Lord (Isaiah 53). Those who exercised such faith were saved. Today we look back on the life, death, and resurrection of the Savior and are saved by faith in Jesus Christ’s atonement for our sins (Romans 10:9-10).

The gospel is not an exclusively New Testament message. The Old Testament contained it as well: “The Scripture foresaw that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, and announced the gospel in advance to Abraham: ‘All nations will be blessed through you.’ So those who have faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith” (Galatians 3:8-9, quoting Genesis 12:3).

As early as Genesis 3:15, we see the promise of a coming Savior, and throughout the Old Testament there are hundreds of promises that the Messiah would “save His people from their sins” (Matthew 1:21; cf. Isaiah 53:5-6). [Job’s](#) faith was in the fact that he knew that his “Redeemer lives, and that in the end he will stand upon the earth” (Job 19:25). Clearly, Old Testament saints were aware of the promised Redeemer, and they were saved by faith in that Savior, the same way people are saved today. There is no other way. Jesus is “‘the stone you builders rejected, which has become the capstone.’ Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved” (Acts 4:11-12, quoting Psalm 118:22). [How were people saved before Jesus died for our sins?](#)

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**Norman Geisler - MATTHEW 25:46—Does this verse indicate that there is no eternal conscious punishment for the wicked?**  
- [When Cultists Ask](#)

**MISINTERPRETATION:** Jehovah’s Witnesses believe the Greek words for “eternal punishment” in this phrase are better translated “everlasting cutting-off” (The Greatest Man Who Ever Lived, 1991, section 111). They believe this indicates that there is no eternal conscious punishment for the wicked.

**CORRECTING THE MISINTERPRETATION:** While the stem of kolasis (kolazō) originally meant “pruning,” there is no justification for translating it “cutting-off” in Matthew 25:46. Greek authorities agree that the meaning here is “punishment.” And the punishment is conscious and eternal in nature.

Several lines of evidence support the everlasting consciousness of those who are punished:

First, the rich man who died and went to hell was in conscious torment (Luke 16:22–28), and there is absolutely no indication in the text that it was ever going to cease.

Second, Jesus spoke repeatedly of the people in hell as “weeping and gnashing their teeth” (Matt. 8:12; 22:13; 24:51; 25:30), which indicates they were conscious.

Third, hell is said to be of the same duration as heaven, “everlasting” (Matt. 25:41).

Fourth, the fact that their punishment is everlasting indicates that the damned too must be everlasting. One cannot suffer punishment, unless he exists to be punished (2 Thess. 1:9). It makes virtually no sense to say that the wicked will suffer “endless annihilation.” Rather, the wicked will suffer a ruin which is everlasting—and this punishment will never end.

Fifth, the Beast and the False Prophet were thrown “alive” into the lake of fire at the beginning of the thousand years (Rev. 19:20), and they were still there, conscious and alive, after the thousand years passed (Rev. 20:10).

Sixth, the Scriptures affirm that the devil, the Beast, and the False Prophet “will be tormented day and night for ever and ever” (Rev. 20:10). But there is no way to experience torment forever and ever without being conscious forever and ever.

Seventh, Jesus repeatedly called hell a place of “unquenchable flames” (Mark 9:43–48) where the very bodies of the wicked will never die (cf. Luke 12:4–5). But it would make no sense to have everlasting flames and bodies without any souls in them to experience the torment.

Eighth, there are no degrees of annihilation, but Scripture reveals there will be degrees of suffering among the lost (see Matt. 10:15; 11:21–24; 16:27; Luke 12:47–48; Heb. 10:29; Rev. 20:11–15; 22:12)

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### James Packer - Sheep and Goats

We are told in the parable of the sheep and goats (Matt. 25:31–46) that those whom the judge rejects go away into Kolasis (punishment) aionios (a final state). The phrase is balanced by the reference to zoe aionios (eternal life) which is also a fixed and final state. Even if this word aionios is believed to mean only “belonging to the coming aion,” and not to imply endlessness in the sense of perpetual continuity, the thought of endlessness is certainly bound up in the phrase “eternal life,” and can hardly therefore be excluded from the corresponding and balancing phrase “eternal punishment.” The idea that in this text aionios as applied to kolasis must imply everlastingness seems to be unbreakable.

The New testament always conceives of this eternal punishment as consisting of an agonizing knowledge of one’s own ill desert, of God’s displeasure, of the good that one has lost, and of the irrevocable fixed state in which one now finds oneself. The doctrine of eternal punishment was taught in the synagogue even before our Lord took it up and enforced it in the Gospels. All the language that strikes terror into our hearts—weeping and gnashing of teeth, outer darkness, the worm, the fire, gehenna, the great gulf fixed—is all directly taken from our Lord’s teaching. It is from Jesus Christ that we learn the doctrine of eternal punishment.

Study the following Bible passages and any other relevant ones on this topic, and reach your own conclusions, prayerfully: Luke 16:26; John 3:18–19, 36; 5:29; 12:32; Acts 3:21, 23; Rom. 1:16, 5:18–21; 1 Cor. 15:25–28; 2 Cor. 5:10, 19; 6:2; Gal. 1:4; Eph. 5:25; Phil. 2:9–11; 1 Tim. 2:4; Titus 2:11; Heb. 2:9; 9:27; 1 Pet. 3:19; 2 Pet 3:9; 1 John 1:5; 2:2; 4:8. (Borrow [Your Father Loves You](#) by James Packer)

### Related Resource:

- Borrow [Immortality : the other side of death](#) - by Gary Habermas and J P Moreland

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### God the Judge - J I Packer Borrow [Your Father Loves You](#)

Why do men shy away from the thought of God as a judge? Why do they feel unworthy of him? The truth is that part of God’s moral perfection is his perfection in judgment. Would a God who did not care about the difference between right and wrong be a good and admirable being? Would a God who put no distinction between the beasts of history, the Hitlers and Stalins (if we dare use names), and his own saints be morally praiseworthy and perfect? Moral indifference would be an imperfection in God, not a perfection. And not to judge the world would be to show moral indifference. The final proof that God is a perfect moral being, not indifferent to questions of right and wrong, is the fact that he has committed himself to judge the world.

It is clear that the reality of divine judgment must have a direct effect on our view of life. If we know that retributive judgment faces us at the end of the road, we shall not live as otherwise we would. But it must be emphasized that the doctrine of divine judgment, and particularly of the final judgment, is not to be thought of primarily as a bogeyman, with which to frighten men into an outward form of conventional righteousness. It has its frightening implications for godless men, it is true; but its main thrust is as a revelation of the moral character of God, and an imparting of moral significance to human life

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Too Late for Repentance - The most dreadful torment of the lost, in fact that which constitutes their state of torment, will be this coming to themselves, when too late for repentance. -- Henry Alford

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## Pondering Perpetual Needs

- Before British actor Robert Morley died two weeks ago, he asked that his credit cards be buried with him. Since his funeral, the London Times' letters pages have been filled with the thoughts of readers pondering their perpetual needs.
- Wrote M. L. Evans of Chester "In the unfortunate event of the miscarriage of justice and several thousand years ensuing before my sentence is quashed, I will take a fire extinguisher."
- Heather Tanner of Woodbridge specified a good map. "I have immense trouble finding my way in this life," she said, "so am extremely worried about the next."
- A pair of earplugs would accompany Sir David Wilcocks of Cambridge "in case the heavenly choirs, singing everlastingly, are not in tune."
- Maurice Godbold of Hindhead would take a crowbar, "in case the affair proved premature."
- Even in the hereafter, there will always be an England.

U. S. News & World Report, June 22, 1992, p. 26

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R.W. Dale, in his day Britain's leading Congregationalist minister, did not believe in eternal punishment. Yet, before he died, Dale sighed and said, "No one fears God nowadays." The Wycliffe Handbook of Preaching & Preachers

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Charles Spurgeon

"Those who choose evil shall have their choice. Men who hate divine mercy shall not have it forced upon them, but (unless sovereign grace interpose) shall be left to themselves to aggravate their guilt and ensure their doom.

"They have loved darkness rather than light, and in darkness they shall abide. Eyes which see no beauty in the Lord Jesus, but flash wrath upon Him, may well grow yet more dim, till death which is spiritual leads to death which is eternal.

"What can be too severe a penalty for those who reject the incarnate God, and refuse to obey the commands of His mercy? They deserve to be flooded with wrath, and they shall be; for upon all who rebel against the Savior, 'wrath has come upon them to the uttermost' (1 Thessalonians 2:16).

God's indignation is no trifle. The anger of a holy, just, omnipotent, and infinite Being is above all things to be dreaded; even a drop of it consumes, but to have it poured upon us is inconceivably dreadful."

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"Fire!"

"Fire is evidently the only word in human language which can suggest the anguish of perdition. It is the only word in the parable of the wheat and the tares which our Lord did not interpret (Matt. 13:36-43)...The only reasonable explanation is that fire is not a symbol. It perfectly describes the reality of the eternal burnings.

As we paid nothing for God's eternal love and nothing for the Son of His love, and nothing for His Spirit and our grace and faith, and nothing for our eternal rest...What an astonishing thought it will be to think of the unmeasurable difference between our deservings and our receivings.

O, how free was all this love, and how free is this enjoyed glory...So then let "Deserved" be written on the floor of hell but on the door of heaven and life, "The Free Gift" - Richard Baxter

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## Accidental Deaths

Many accidental deaths result from taking risks. That's the conclusion of an organization in Canada that is seeking to decrease accidents between cars and trains. Roger Cyr, national director of Operation Lifesaver, puts most of the blame for fatalities on drivers who are risk-takers. "Studies have shown that when people hear a train whistle their minds tell them to accelerate their speed," says Cyr. About 43 percent of the accidents occur at crossings equipped with flashing lights and bells or gates. Cyr also said that many drivers "even have the audacity to drive around or under gates." They take the risk, thinking they can beat the train and somehow miss the collision—but with tragic consequences! Our Daily Bread,

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## The Gate of Hell

I am the way into the city of woe.

I am the way to a forsaken people.

I am the way to eternal sorrow.

Sacred justice moved my architect.

I was raised here by divine omnipotence,

Primordial love and ultimate intelligence.

Only those elements time cannot wear

Were made before me, and beyond time I stand.

Abandon all hope ye who enter here.

--The Gate of Hell, from The Inferno by Dante

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67% of American adults believe in a hell. But less than 25% believe they will go there, while 25% believe their friends will be there. USA Today poll, 12–86.

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Hell is...

- Bottomless pit—no physical, solid surroundings, total isolation.
  - Utter darkness—a person is isolated, restricted, totally and forever to himself/herself.
- 

Several years ago a book was published entitled “Looking Out for Number One.” On the dedication page the author wrote, “Dedicated to the hope that somewhere in our universe there exists a civilization where the inhabitants possess sole dominion over their own lives.” There is such a place. It’s called Hell.

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Hell is Necessary

Non-Christians often ask the Christian, “But how can the God of love allow any of his creatures to suffer unending misery?” The question is, how can he not? The fact that God is love makes hell necessary.

“Hell,” as E. L. Mascall once said, “is not compatible with God’s love; it is a direct consequence of it.” That was his way of stressing the fact that the very God who loves us is the one who respects our decisions. He loves us, but he does not force his love on us. To force love is to commit assault. He allows us to decide. He loves us, he encourages our response, he woos us, he pursues us, he urges us, but he does not force us, because he respects us.

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If you in any way abate the doctrine of hell, it will abate your zeal. - R. A. Torrey

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The vague and tenuous hope that God is too kind to punish the ungodly has become a deadly opiate for the consciences of millions. - A.W. Tozer

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What hell is, we know not; only this we know, that there is such a sure and certain place. - Martin Luther

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The safest road to hell is the gradual one—the gentle slope, soft underfoot, without sudden turnings, without milestones, without signposts. - C. S. Lewis

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Hell is the greatest compliment God has ever paid to the dignity of human freedom. - G. K. Chesterton

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No one who is ever in hell will be able to say to God, “You put me here,” and no one who is in heaven will ever be able to say, “I put myself here.” - John Hannah

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Ask Jonah!

A new believer was on a plane with an intellectual (a man educated beyond his intelligence). He sneered at her reading the Bible. Asked if she believed it?

“Yes.”

“Jonah and the whale story?”

“Yes.”

“How did it happen?”

“Don’t know, but I’ll find out when I get to heaven.”

“What if Jonah isn’t there?”

“Then I guess you’ll have to ask him for me.”

Source unknown

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President Coolidge - One day, when Vice President Calvin Coolidge was presiding over the Senate, one Senator angrily told another to go "straight to hell." The offended Senator complained to Coolidge as presiding officer, and Cal looked up from the book he had been leafing through while listening to the debate. "I've been looking through the rule book," he said. "you don't have to go." (Crossroads, Issue No. 7, p. 16)

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### Something to Avoid

Many things we don't know about hell. But Jesus and the new Testament writers used every image in their power to tell us that hell is real, it's terrible, it's something to be feared, and something to avoid. In his description of the last judgment, Jesus taught that some would go to eternal punishment, some to eternal life (Matt. 25:46). In other words, hell will be as real and as lasting as heaven. The horror of hell is not physical pain. After all, the Bible tells us hell was "prepared for the devil and his angels" (Matt. 25:41), and they're not physical beings. Rather the fire and outer darkness and the thirst depict spiritual separation from God, moral remorse, the consciousness that one deserves what he's getting.

Hell is disintegration—the eternal loss of being a real person. In hell the mathematician who lived for his science can't add two and two. The concert pianist who worshiped himself through his art can't play a simple scale. The man who lived for sex goes on in eternal lust, with no body to exploit. The woman who made a god out of fashion has a thousand dresses but no mirror! Hell is eternal desire—eternally unfulfilled.

But there's another side. G. K. Chesterton once remarked, "Hell is God's great compliment to the reality of human freedom and the dignity of human personality." Hell, a compliment? Yes, because God is saying to us, "You are significant. I take you seriously. Choose to reject me—choose hell if you will. I will let you go." (Lieghton Ford, Good News is for Sharing)

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**J C Ryle** - A flood of false doctrine has lately broken in upon us. Men are beginning to tell us "that God is too merciful to punish souls for ever...that all mankind, however wicked and ungodly...will sooner or later be saved." We are to embrace what is called "kinder theology," and treat hell as a pagan fable...This question lies at the very foundation of the whole Gospel. The moral attributes of God, His justice, His holiness, His purity, are all involved in it. The Scripture has spoken plainly and fully on the subject of hell... If words mean anything, there is such a place as hell. If texts are to be interpreted fairly, there are those who will be cast into it...The same Bible which teaches that God in mercy and compassion sent Christ to die for sinners, does also teach that God hates sin, and must from His very nature punish all who cleave to sin or refuse the salvation He has provided.

God knows that I never speak of hell without pain and sorrow. I would gladly offer the salvation of the Gospel to the very chief of sinners. I would willingly say to the vilest and most profligate of mankind on his deathbed, "Repent, and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be save." But God forbid that I should ever keep back from mortal man that scripture reveals a hell as well as heaven...that men may be lost as well as saved

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**Blind Leaders of the Blind** - On one occasion Col. Robert G. Ingersoll, the agnostic lecturer of the last century, was announced to give an address on hell. He declared he would prove conclusively that hell was a wild dream of some scheming theologians who invented it to terrify credulous people. As he was launching into his subject, a half-drunken man arose in the audience and exclaimed, "Make it strong, Bob. There's a lot of us poor fellows depending on you. If you are wrong, we are all lost. So be sure you prove it clear and plain." No amount of reasoning can nullify God's sure Word. He has spoken as plainly of a hell for the finally impenitent as of a heaven for those who are saved. (Borrow [Illustrations of Bible Truth](#) by H.A. Ironside)

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### The Mason Jar

The old mountaineer had lived a full but not exactly saintly life and now was on his deathbed. He summoned his weeping wife. "Sara," he said, "go to the fireplace and take out the third stone from the top."

She did as instructed.

"Reach in there," said her husband, "and bring out what you find." Her fingers touched a large Mason jar, and with some effort she pulled it up. The jar was full of cash.

"Sara," said the old man, "when I go, I'm going to take all that money with me. I want you to put that jar up in the attic by the window. I'll get it as I go by on my way to heaven."

His wife followed his instructions. That night the old mountaineer died. After the funeral his wife remembered the Mason jar and went to the attic. There was the jar still full of money and by the window.

"Oh," the widow sighed. "I knew I should have put it in the basement."

Source unknown



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## Down Under

A politician awoke after an operation and found the curtains in his hospital room drawn. "Why are the curtains closed?" he asked the nurse. "Is it night time already?"

"No," the nurse replied, "But there's a fire across the street, and we didn't want you to wake and think the operation was unsuccessful."

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How deeply has the tendency to deny hell penetrated evangelicalism? One survey of evangelical seminary students revealed that:

- Nearly half—46 percent—felt preaching about hell to unbelievers is in "poor taste."
- Worse yet, three out of every ten self-professed "born again" people surveyed believe "good" people will go to heaven when they die—even if they've never trusted Christ.
- One in every ten evangelicals say they believe the concept of sin is outmoded.

Ashamed of the Gospel, John F. MacArthur, Jr., 1993, Crossway Books,

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## Jonathan Edwards -- THE ETERNITY OF HELL TORMENTS

Matthew 25:46 These shall go away into everlasting punishment.

IN this chapter we have the most particular description of the day of judgment, of any in the whole Bible. Christ here declares, that when he shall hereafter sit on the throne of his glory, the righteous and the wicked shall be set before him, and separated one from the other, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats. Then we have an account how both will be judged according to their works; how the good works of the one and the evil works of the other will be rehearsed, and how the sentence shall be pronounced accordingly. We are told what the sentence will be on each, and then we have an account of the execution of the sentence on both. In the words of the text is the account of the execution of the sentence on the wicked or the ungodly: concerning which, it is to my purpose to observe two things.

1. The duration of the punishment on which they are here said to enter: it is called everlasting punishment.
2. The time of their entrance on this everlasting punishment; viz. after the day of judgment, when all these things that are of a temporary continuance shall have come to an end, and even those of them that are most lasting,—the frame of the world itself; the earth which is said to abide for ever; the ancient mountains and everlasting hills; the sun, moon, and stars. When the heavens shall have waxed old like a garment, and as a vesture shall be changed, then shall be the time when the wicked shall enter on their punishment.

Doctrine.—The misery of the wicked in hell will be absolutely eternal.

There are two opinions which I mean to oppose in this doctrine. One is, That the eternal death with which wicked men are threatened in Scripture, signifies no more than eternal annihilation; that God will punish their wickedness by eternally abolishing their being.

The other opinion which I mean to oppose is, That though the punishment of the wicked shall consist in sensible misery, yet it shall not be absolutely eternal; but only of a very long continuance.

Therefore to establish the doctrine in opposition to these different opinions, I shall undertake to show,

- I. That it is not contrary to the divine perfections to inflict on wicked men a punishment that is absolutely eternal.
- II. That the eternal death which God threatens, is not annihilation, but an abiding sensible punishment or misery.
- III. That this misery will not only continue for a very long time, but will be absolutely without end.
- IV. That various good ends will be obtained by the eternal punishment of the wicked.

I. I am to show that it is not contrary to the divine perfections to inflict on wicked men a punishment that is absolutely eternal.

This is the sum of the objections usually made against this doctrine, That it is inconsistent with the justice, and especially with the mercy, of God. And some say, If it be strictly just, yet how, can we suppose that a merciful God can bear eternally to torment his creatures.

1. I shall briefly show, That it is not inconsistent with the justice of God to inflict an eternal punishment. To evince this, I shall use only one argument, viz. that sin is heinous enough to deserve such a punishment, and such a punishment is no more than proportionable to the evil or demerit of sin. If the evil of sin be infinite, as the punishment is, then it is manifest that the punishment is no more than proportionable to the sin punished, and is no more than sin deserves. And if the obligation to love, honour, and obey God be infinite, then sin which is the violation of this obligation, is a violation of infinite obligation, and so is an infinite evil. Again, if God be infinitely worthy of love, honour, and obedience, then our obligation to love, and honour, and obey him is infinitely great.—So that God being infinitely glorious, or infinitely worthy of our love, honour, and obedience; our obligation to love, honour, and obey him, and so to avoid all sin, is infinitely great. Again, our obligation to love, honour, and obey God being infinitely great, sin is the violation of infinite obligation, and so is an infinite evil. Once more, sin being an infinite evil, deserves an infinite punishment, an infinite punishment is

no more than it deserves: therefore such punishment is just; which was the thing to be proved. There is no evading the force of this reasoning, but by denying that God, the sovereign of the universe, is infinitely glorious; which I presume none of my hearers will venture to do.

2. I am to show, That it is not inconsistent with the mercy of God, to inflict an eternal punishment on wicked men. It is an unreasonable and unscriptural notion of the mercy of God, that he is merciful in such a sense that he cannot bear that penal justice should be executed. This is to conceive of the mercy of God as a passion to which his nature is so subject that God is liable to be moved, and affected, and overcome by seeing a creature in misery, so that he cannot bear to see justice executed: which is a most unworthy and absurd notion of the mercy of God, and would, if true, argue great weakness.—It would be a great defect, and not a perfection, in the sovereign and supreme Judge of the world, to be merciful in such a sense that he could not bear to have penal justice executed. It is a very unscriptural notion of the mercy of God. The Scriptures every where represent the mercy of God as free and sovereign, and not that the exercises of it are necessary, so that God cannot bear justice should take place. The Scriptures abundantly speak of it as the glory of the divine attribute of mercy, that it is free and sovereign in its exercises; and not that God cannot but deliver sinners from misery. This is a mean and most unworthy idea of the divine mercy.

It is most absurd also as it is contrary to plain fact. For if there be any meaning in the objection, this is supposed in it, that all misery of the creature, whether just or unjust, is in itself contrary to the nature of God. For if his mercy be of such a nature, that a very great degree of misery, though just, is contrary to his nature; then it is only to add to the mercy, and then a less degree of misery is contrary to his nature; again to add further to it, and a still less degree of misery is contrary to his nature. And so the mercy of God being infinite, all misery must be contrary to his nature; which we see to be contrary to fact: for we see that God in his providence, doth indeed inflict very great calamities on mankind even in this life.

However strong such kind of objections against the eternal misery of the wicked, may seem to the carnal, senseless hearts of men, as though it were against God's justice and mercy; yet their seeming strength arises from a want of sense of the infinite evil, odiousness, and provocation there is in sin. Hence it seems to us not suitable that any poor creature should be the subject of such misery, because we have no sense of any thing abominable and provoking in any creature answerable to it. If we had, then this infinite calamity would not seem unsuitable. For one thing would but appear answerable and proportionable to another, and so the mind would rest in it as fit and suitable, and no more than what is proper to be ordered by the just, holy, and good Governor of the world.

That this is so, we may be convinced by this consideration, viz. that when we hear or read of some horrid instances of cruelty, it may be to some poor innocent child, or some holy martyr—and their cruel persecutors, having no regard to their shrieks and cries, only sported themselves with their misery, and would not vouchsafe even to put an end to their lives—we have a sense of the evil of them, and they make a deep impression on our minds. Hence it seems just, every way fit and suitable, that God should inflict a very terrible punishment on persons who have perpetrated such wickedness. It seems no way disagreeable to any perfection of the Judge of the world; we can think of it without being at all shocked. The reason is, that we have a sense of the evil of their conduct, and a sense of the proportion there is between the evil or demerit and the punishment.

Just so, if we saw a proportion between the evil of sin and eternal punishment, if we saw something in wicked men that should appear as hateful to us, as eternal misery appears dreadful; something that should as much stir up indignation and detestation, as eternal misery does terror; all objections against this doctrine would vanish at once. Though now it seem incredible; though when we hear of it and are so often told of it, we know not how to realize it; though when we hear of such a degree and duration of torments as are held forth in this doctrine, and think what eternity is, it is ready to seem impossible, that such torments should be inflicted on poor feeble creatures by a Creator of infinite mercy; yet this arises principally from these two causes: (1.) It is so contrary to the depraved inclinations of mankind, that they hate to believe it, and cannot bear it should be true. (2.) They see not the suitability of eternal punishment to the evil of sin; they see not that it is no more than proportionable to the demerit of sin.

Having thus shown that the eternal punishment of the wicked is not inconsistent with the divine perfections, I shall now proceed to show, that it is so far from being inconsistent with the divine perfections, that those perfections evidently require it; i.e. they require that sin should have so great a punishment, either in the person who has committed it, or in a surety; and therefore with respect to those who believe not in a surety, and have no interest in him, the divine perfections require that this punishment should be inflicted on them.

This appears, as it is not only not unsuitable that sin should be thus punished; but it is positively suitable, decent, and proper.—If this be made to appear, that it is positively suitable that sin should be thus punished, then it will follow, that the perfections of God require it; for certainly the perfections of God require what is proper to be done. The perfection and excellency of God require that to take place which is perfect, excellent, and proper in its own nature. But that sin should be punished eternally is such a thing; which appears by the following considerations.

1. It is suitable that God should infinitely hate sin, and be an infinite enemy to it. Sin, as I have before shown, is an infinite evil, and therefore is infinitely odious and detestable. It is proper that God should hate every evil, and hate it according to its odious and detestable nature. And sin being infinitely evil and odious, it is proper that God should hate it infinitely.

2. If infinite hatred of sin be suitable to the divine character, then the expressions of such hatred are also suitable to his character. Because that which is suitable to be, is suitable to be expressed; that which is lovely in itself, is lovely when it appears. If it be suitable that God should be an infinite enemy to sin, or that he should hate it infinitely, then it is suitable that he should act as such

an enemy. If it be suitable that he should hate and have enmity against sin, then it is suitable for him to express that hatred and enmity in that to which hatred and enmity by its own nature tends. But certainly hatred in its own nature tends to opposition, and to set itself against that which is hatred, and to procure its evil and not its good: and that in proportion to the hatred. Great hatred naturally tends to the great evil, and infinite hatred to the infinite evil, of its object.

Whence it follows, that if it be suitable that there should be infinite hatred of sin in God, as I have shown it is, it is suitable that he should execute an infinite punishment on it; and so the perfections of God require that he should punish sin with an infinite, or which is the same thing, with an eternal, punishment.

Thus we see not only the great objection against this doctrine answered, but the truth of the doctrine established by reason. I now proceed further to establish it by considering the remaining particulars under the doctrine.

II. That eternal death or punishment which God threatens to the wicked, is not annihilation, but an abiding sensible punishment or misery.—The truth of this proposition will appear by the following particulars.

1. The Scripture every where represents the punishment of the wicked, as implying very extreme pains and sufferings; but a state of annihilation is no state of suffering at all. Persons annihilated have no sense or feeling of pain or pleasure, and much less do they feel that punishment which carries in it an extreme pain or suffering. They no more suffer to eternity than they did suffer from eternity.

2. It is agreeable both to Scripture and reason to suppose, that the wicked will be punished in such a manner, that they shall be sensible of the punishment they are under; that they should be sensible that now God has executed and fulfilled what he threatened, what they disregarded, and would not believe. They should know themselves that justice takes place upon them; that God vindicates that majesty which they despised; that God is not so despicable a being as they thought him to be. They should be sensible for what they are punished, while they are under the threatened punishment. It is reasonable that they should be sensible of their own guilt, and should remember their former opportunities and obligations, and should see their own folly and God's justice.—If the punishment threatened be eternal annihilation, they will never know that it is inflicted; they will never know that God is just in their punishment, or that they have their deserts. And how is this agreeable to the Scriptures, in which God threatens, that he will repay the wicked to his face, Deut. 7:10. And to that in Job 21:19, 20. "God rewardeth him, and he shall know it; his eyes shall see his destruction, and he shall drink of the wrath of the Almighty." And to that in Ezek. 22:21, 22. "Yea, I will gather you, and blow upon you in the fire of my wrath, and ye shall be melted in the midst thereof. As silver is melted in the midst of the furnace, so shall ye be melted in the midst thereof; and ye shall know that I the Lord have poured out my fury upon you."—And how is it agreeable to that expression so often annexed to the threatenings of God's wrath against wicked men, And ye shall know that I am the Lord?

3. The Scripture teaches, that the wicked will suffer different degrees of torment, according to the different aggravations of their sins. Matt. 5:22. "Whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause, shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell-fire." Here Christ teaches us, that the torments of wicked men will be different in different persons, according to the different degrees of their guilt.—It shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah, for Tyre and Sidon, than for the cities where most of Christ's mighty works were wrought.—Again, our Lord assures us, That he that knoweth his Lord's will, and prepareth not himself, nor doth according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that knoweth not, and committeth things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes.—These several passages of Scripture infallibly prove, that there will be different degrees of punishment in hell; which is utterly inconsistent with the supposition, that the punishment consists in annihilation, in which there can be no degrees.

4. The Scriptures are very express and abundant in this matter, That the eternal punishment of the wicked will consist in sensible misery and torment, and not in annihilation.—What is said of Judas is worthy to be observed here, "It had been good for that man if he had not been born," Matt. 26:24.—This seems plainly to teach us, that the punishment of the wicked is such that their existence, upon the whole, is worse than non-existence. But if their punishment consists merely in annihilation, this is not true.—The wicked, in their punishment, are said to weep, and wail, and gnash their teeth; which implies not only real existence, but life, knowledge, and activity, and that they are in a very sensible and exquisite manner affected with their punishment.—Isa. 33:14. Sinners in the state of their punishment are represented to dwell with everlasting burnings. But if they are only turned into nothing, where is the foundation for this representation? It is absurd to say, that sinners will dwell with annihilation; for there is no dwelling in the case. It is also absurd to call annihilation a burning, which implies a state of existence, sensibility, and extreme pain; whereas in annihilation there is neither.

It is said, that they shall be cast into a lake of fire and brimstone. How can this expression with any propriety be understood to mean a state of annihilation? Yea, they are expressly said to have no rest day nor night, but to be tormented with fire and brimstone for ever and ever, Rev. 20:10. But annihilation is a state of rest, a state in which not the least torment can possibly be suffered. The rich man in hell lifted up his eyes being in torment, and saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom, and entered into a particular conversation with Abraham; all which proves that he was not annihilated.

The spirits of ungodly men before the resurrection are not in a state of annihilation, but in a state of misery; they are spirits in prison, as the apostle saith of them that were drowned in the flood, 1 Pet. 3:19.—And this appears very plainly from the instance of the rich man before mentioned, if we consider him as representing the wicked in their separate state between death and the resurrection. But if the wicked even then, are in a state of torment, much more will they be, when they shall come to suffer that which is the

proper punishment of their sins.

Annihilation is not so great a calamity but that some men have undoubtedly chosen it, rather than a state of suffering even in this life. This was the case of Job, a good man. But if a good man in this world may suffer that which is worse than annihilation, doubtless the proper punishment of the wicked, in which God means to manifest his peculiar abhorrence of their wickedness, will be a calamity vastly greater still; and therefore cannot be annihilation. That must be a very mean and contemptible testimony of God's wrath towards those who have rebelled against his crown and dignity—broken his laws, and despised both his vengeance and his grace—which is not so great a calamity as some of his true children have suffered in life.

The eternal punishment of the wicked is said to be the second death, as Rev. 20:14. and 21:8. It is doubtless called the second death in reference to the death of the body; and as the death of the body is ordinarily attended with great pain and distress, so the like, or something vastly greater, is implied in calling the eternal punishment of the wicked the second death; and there would be no propriety in calling it so, if it consisted merely in annihilation. And this second death wicked men will suffer; for it cannot be called the second death with respect to any other than men; it cannot be called so with respect to devils, as they die no temporal death, which is the first death. In Rev. 2:11. it is said, "He that overcometh, shall not be hurt of the second death;" implying that all who do not overcome their lusts, but live in sin, shall suffer the second death.

Again, wicked men will suffer the same kind of death with the devils; as in verse 25th of the context, "Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." Now the punishment of the devil is not annihilation, but torment: he therefore trembles for fear of it; not for fear of being annihilated,—he would be glad of that. What he is afraid of is torment, as appears by Luke 8:28. where he cries out, and beseeches Christ, that he would not torment him before the time. And it is said, Rev. 20:10. "The devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night, for ever and ever."

It is strange how men will go directly against so plain and full revelations of Scripture, as to suppose, notwithstanding all these things, that the eternal punishment threatened against the wicked signifies no more than annihilation.

III. As the future punishment of the wicked consists in sensible misery; so it shall not only continue for a very long time, but shall be absolutely without end.

Of those who have held that the torments of hell are not absolutely eternal, there have been two sorts. Some suppose, that in the threatenings of everlasting punishment, the terms used do not necessarily import a proper eternity, but only a very long duration. Others suppose, that if they do import a proper eternity, yet we cannot necessarily conclude thence, that God will fulfil his threatenings.—Therefore I shall,

First, Show that the threatenings of eternal punishment do very plainly and fully import a proper, absolute eternity, and not merely a long duration.—This appears,

1. Because when the Scripture speaks of the wicked being sentenced to their punishment at the time when all temporal things are come to an end, it then speaks of it as everlasting, as in the text, and elsewhere. It is true, that the term for ever is not always in Scripture used to signify eternity. Sometimes it means, as long as a man liveth. In this sense it is said, that the Hebrew servant, who chose to abide with his master, should have his ear bored, and should serve his master for ever. Sometimes it means, during the continuance of the state and church of the Jews. In this sense, several laws, which were peculiar to that church, and were to continue in force no longer than that church should last, are called statutes for ever. See Exodus 27:21. chap. 28:43, &c. Sometimes it means as long as the world stands. So in Eccles. 1:4. "One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh; but the earth abideth for ever."

And this last is the longest temporal duration that such a term is ever used to signify. For the duration of the world is the longest of things temporal, as its beginning was the earliest. Therefore when the Scripture speaks of things as being before the foundation of the world, it means that they existed before the beginning of time. So those things which continue after the end of the world, are eternal things. When heaven and earth are shaken and removed, those things that remain will be what cannot be shaken, but will remain for ever, Heb. 12:26, 27.

But the punishment of the wicked will not only remain after the end of the world, but is called everlasting, as in the text, "These shall go away into everlasting punishment." So in 2 Thess. 1:9, 10. "Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power; when he shall come to be glorified in his saints," &c.—Now, what can be meant by a thing being everlasting, after all temporal things are come to an end, but that it is absolutely without end?

2. Such expressions are used to set forth the duration of the punishment of the wicked, as are never used in the scriptures of the New Testament to signify any thing but a proper eternity. It is said, not only that the punishment shall be for ever, but for ever and ever. Rev. 14:11. "The smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever."—Rev. 20:10. "Shall be tormented day and night, for ever and ever."—Doubtless the New Testament has some expression to signify a proper eternity, of which it has so often occasion to speak. But it has no higher expression than this: if this do not signify an absolute eternity, there is none that does.

3. The Scripture uses the same way of speaking to set forth the eternity of punishment and the eternity of happiness, yea, the eternity of God himself. Matt. 25:46. "These shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal." The words everlasting and eternal, in the original, are the very same. Rev. 22:5. "And they (the saints) shall reign for ever and ever." And the Scripture has no higher expression to signify the eternity of God himself, than that of his being for ever and ever; as Rev. 4:9. "To

him who sat on the throne, who liveth for ever and ever;" and in the 10th verse, and in chap. 5:14. and chap. 10:6. and chap. 15:7. Again, the Scripture expresses God's eternity by this, that it shall be for ever, after the world is come to an end; Psalm 102:26, 27. "They shall perish, but thou shalt endure: yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment; as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed. But thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end."

4. The Scripture says, that wicked men shall not be delivered, till they have paid the uttermost farthing of their debt; Matt. 5:26. The last mite; Luke 12:59. i.e. the utmost that is deserved; and all mercy is excluded by this expression. But we have shown that they deserve an infinite, an endless punishment.

5. The Scripture says absolutely, that their punishment shall not have an end; Mark 9:44. "Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched." Now, it will not do to say, that the meaning is, Their worm shall live a great while, or that it shall be a great while before their fire is quenched. If ever the time comes that their worm shall die; if ever there shall be a quenching of the fire at all, then it is not true that their worm dieth not, and that the fire is not quenched. For if there be a dying of the worm, and a quenching of the fire, let it be at what time it will, nearer or further off, it is equally contrary to such a negation—it dieth not, it is not quenched.

Secondly, There are others who allow, that the expressions of the threatenings do denote a proper eternity; but then, they say, it doth not certainly follow, that the punishment will really be eternal; because, God may threaten, and yet not fulfil his threatenings. Though they allow that the threatenings are positive and peremptory, without any reserve, yet they say, God is not obliged to fulfil absolute positive threatenings, as he is absolute promises. Because in promises a right is conveyed that the creature to whom the promises are made will claim; but there is no danger of the creature's claiming any right by a threatening. Therefore I am now to show, that what God has positively declared in this matter, does indeed make it certain, that it shall be as he has declared. To this end, I shall mention two things:

1. It is evidently contrary to the divine truth, positively to declare any thing to be real, whether past, present, or to come, which God at the same time knows is not so. Absolutely threatening that any thing shall be, is the same as absolutely declaring that it is to be. For any to suppose, that God absolutely declares that any thing will be, which he at the same time knows will not be, is blasphemy, if there be any such thing as blasphemy.

Indeed, it is very true, that there is no obligation on God, arising from the claim of the creature, as there is in promises. They seem to reckon the wrong way, who suppose the necessity of the execution of the threatening to arise from a proper obligation on God to the creature to execute consequent on his threatening. For indeed the certainty of the execution arises the other way, viz. on the obligation there was on the omniscient God, in threatening, to conform his threatening to what he knew would be future in execution. Though, strictly speaking, God is not properly obliged to the creature to execute because he has threatened, yet he was obliged not absolutely to threaten, if at the same time he knew that he should not or would not fulfil: because this would not have been consistent with his truth. So that from the truth of God there is an inviolable connexion between positive threatenings and execution. They who suppose that God positively declared, that he would do contrary to what he knew would come to pass, do therein suppose, that he absolutely threatened contrary to what he knew to be truth. And how any one can speak contrary to what he knows to be truth, in declaring, promising, or threatening, or any other way, consistently with inviolable truth, is inconceivable.

Threatenings are significations of something; and if they are made consistently with truth, they are true significations, or significations of truth, that which shall be. If absolute threatenings are significations of any thing, they are significations of the futurity of the things threatened. But if the futurity of the things threatened be not true and real, then how can the threatening be a true signification? And if God, in them, speaks contrary to what he knows, and contrary to what he intends, how he can speak true is inconceivable.

Absolute threatenings are a kind of predictions; and though God is not properly obliged by any claim of ours to fulfil predictions, unless they are of the nature of promises; yet it certainly would be contrary to truth, to predict that such a thing would come to pass, which he knew at the same time would not come to pass. Threatenings are declarations of something future, and they must be declarations of future truth, if they are true declarations. Its being future alters not the case any more than if it were present. It is equally contrary to truth, to declare contrary to what at the same time is known to be truth, whether it be of things past, present, or to come; for all are alike to God.

Beside, we have often declarations in Scripture of the future eternal punishment of the wicked, in the proper form of predictions, and not in the form of threatenings. So in the text, "These shall go away into everlasting punishment." So in those frequent assertions of eternal punishment in the Revelation, some of which I have already quoted. The Revelation is a prophecy, and is so called in the book itself; so are those declarations of eternal punishment.—The like declarations we have also in many other places of Scripture.

2. The doctrine of those who teach, that it is not certain that God will fulfil those absolute threatenings, is blasphemous another way; and that is, as God, according to their supposition, was obliged to make use of a fallacy to govern the world. They own, that it is needful that men should apprehend themselves liable to an eternal punishment, that they might thereby be restrained from sin, and that God has threatened such a punishment, for the very end that they might believe themselves exposed to it. But what an unworthy opinion does this convey of God and his government, of his infinite majesty, and wisdom, and all-sufficiency!—Beside, they suppose, that though God has made use of such a fallacy, yet it is not such an one but that they have detected him in it. Though God intended men should believe it to be certain, that sinners are liable to an eternal punishment; yet they suppose, that they have been so cunning as to find out that it is not certain: and so that God had not laid his design so deep, but that such cunning men as they can discern the cheat, and defeat the design: because they have found out, that there is no necessary connexion between the

threatening of eternal punishment, and the execution of that threatening.

Considering these things, is it not greatly to be wondered at, that Archbishop Tillotson, who has made so great a figure among the new-fashioned divines, should advance such an opinion as this?

Before I conclude this head, it may be proper for me to answer an objection or two, that may arise in the minds of some.

1. It may be here said, We have instances wherein God hath not fulfilled his threatenings; as his threatening to Adam, and in him to mankind, that they should surely die, if they should eat the forbidden fruit. I answer, it is not true that God did not fulfil that threatening: he fulfilled it, and will fulfil it in every jot and tittle. When God said, "Thou shalt surely die," if we respect spiritual death, it was fulfilled in Adam's person in the day that he ate. For immediately his image, his holy spirit, and original righteousness, which was the highest and best life of our first parents, were lost; and they were immediately in a doleful state of spiritual death.

If we respect temporal death, that was also fulfilled: he brought death upon himself and all his posterity, and he virtually suffered that death on that very day on which he ate. His body was brought into a corruptible, mortal, and dying condition, and so it continued till it was dissolved. If we look at all that death which was comprehended in the threatening, it was, properly speaking, fulfilled in Christ. When God said to Adam, If thou eatest, thou shalt die, he spake not only to him, and of him personally; but the words respected mankind, Adam and his race, and doubtless were so understood by him. His offspring were to be looked upon as sinning in him, and so should die with him. The words do as justly allow of an imputation of death as of sin; they are as well consistent with dying in a surety, as with sinning in one. Therefore, the threatening is fulfilled in the death of Christ, the surety.

2. Another objection may arise from God's threatening to Nineveh. He threatened, that in forty days Nineveh should be destroyed, which yet he did not fulfil.—I answer, that threatening could justly be looked upon no otherwise than as conditional. It was of the nature of a warning, and not of an absolute denunciation. Why was Jonah sent to the Ninevites, but to give them warning, that they might have opportunity to repent, reform, and avert the approaching destruction? God had no other design or end in sending the prophet to them, but that they might be warned and tried by him, as God warned the Israelites, Judah and Jerusalem, before their destruction. Therefore the prophets, together with their prophecies of approaching destruction, joined earnest exhortations to repent and reform, that it might be averted.

No more could justly be understood to be certainly threatened, than that Nineveh should be destroyed in forty days, continuing as it was. For it was for their wickedness that that destruction was threatened, and so the Ninevites took it. Therefore, when the cause was removed, the effect ceased. It was contrary to God's known manner, to threaten punishment and destruction for sin in this world absolutely, so that it should come upon the persons threatened unavoidably, let them repent and reform and do what they would: Jer. 18:7, 8. "At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, and to pull down, and to destroy it; if that nation against whom I have pronounced turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them." So that all threatenings of this nature had a condition implied in them, according to the known and declared manner of God's dealing. And the Ninevites did not take it as an absolute sentence of denunciation: if they had, they would have despaired of any benefit by fasting and reformation.

But the threatenings of eternal wrath are positive and absolute. There is nothing in the word of God from which we can gather any condition. The only opportunity of escaping is in this world; this is the only state of trial, wherein we have any offers of mercy, or place for repentance.

IV. I shall mention several good and important ends, which will be obtained by the eternal punishment of the wicked.

1. Hereby God vindicates his injured majesty. Wherein sinners cast contempt upon it, and trample it in the dust, God vindicates and honours it, and makes it appear, as it is indeed, infinite, by showing that it is infinitely dreadful to contemn or offend it.

2. God glorifies his justice.—The glory of God is the greatest good; it is that which is the chief end of the creation; it is of greater importance than any thing else. But this is one way wherein God will glorify himself, as in the eternal destruction of ungodly men he will glorify his justice. Therein he will appear as a just governor of the world. The vindictive justice of God will appear strict, exact, awful, and terrible, and therefore glorious.

3. God hereby indirectly glorifies his grace on the vessels of mercy.—The saints in heaven will behold the torments of the damned: "the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever." Isaiah 66:24. "And they shall go forth and look upon the carcasses of the men that have transgressed against me: for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched, and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh." And in Rev. 14:10. it is said, that they shall be tormented in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb. So they will be tormented in the presence also of the glorified saints.

Hereby the saints will be made the more sensible how great their salvation is. When they shall see how great the misery is from which God hath saved them, and how great a difference he hath made between their state, and the state of others, who were by nature, and perhaps for a time by practice, no more sinful and ill-deserving than any, it will give them a greater sense of the wonderfulness of God's grace to them. Every time they look upon the damned, it will excite in them a lively and admiring sense of the grace of God, in making them so to differ. This the apostle informs us is one end of the damnation of ungodly men; Rom. 9:22, 23. "What if God willing to show his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction: and that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory?" The view of the misery of the damned will double the ardour of the love and gratitude of the saints in heaven.

4. The sight of hell torments will exalt the happiness of the saints for ever. It will not only make them more sensible of the greatness



and freeness of the grace of God in their happiness; but it will really make their happiness the greater, as it will make them more sensible of their own happiness; it will give them a more lively relish of it; it will make them prize it more. When they see others, who were of the same nature, and born under the same circumstances, plunged in such misery, and they so distinguished, O it will make them sensible how happy they are. A sense of the opposite misery, in all cases, greatly increases the relish of any joy or pleasure. The sight of the wonderful power, the great and dreadful majesty, and awful justice and holiness of God, manifested in the eternal punishment of ungodly men, will make them prize his favour and love vastly the more; and they will be so much the more happy in the enjoyment of it.

## APPLICATION

1. From what hath been said, we may learn the folly and madness of the greater part of mankind, in that for the sake of present momentary gratification, they run the venture of enduring all these eternal torments. They prefer a small pleasure, or a little wealth, or a little earthly honour and greatness, which can last but for a moment, to an escape from this punishment. If it be true that the torments of hell are eternal, what will it profit a man, if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul; or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? What is there in this world, which is not a trifle, and lighter than vanity, in comparison with these eternal things?

How mad are men, who so often hear of these things and pretend to believe them; who can live but a little while, a few years; who do not even expect to live here longer than others of their species ordinarily do; and who yet are careless about what becomes of themselves in another world, where there is no change and no end! How mad are they, when they hear that if they go on in sin, they shall be eternally miserable, that they are not moved by it, but hear it with as much carelessness and coldness as if they were no way concerned in the matter; when they know not but that it may be their case, that they may be suffering these torments before a week is at an end!

How can men be so careless of such a matter as their own eternal and desperate destruction and torment! What a strange stupor and senselessness possesses the hearts of men! How common a thing is it to see men, who are told from sabbath to sabbath of eternal misery, and who are as mortal as other men, so careless about it, that they seem not to be at all restrained by it from whatever their souls lust after! It is not half so much their care to escape eternal misery, as it is to get money and land, and to be considerable in the world, and to gratify their senses. Their thoughts are much more exercised about these things, and much more of their care and concern is about them. Eternal misery, though they lie every day exposed to it, is a thing neglected, it is but now and then thought of, and then with a great deal of stupidity, and not with concern enough to stir them up to do any thing considerable in order to escape it. They are not sensible that it is worth their while to take any considerable pains in order to it. And if they do lake pains for a little while, they soon leave off, and something else takes up their thoughts and concern.

Thus you see it among young and old. Multitudes of youth lead a careless life, taking little care about their salvation. So you may see it among persons of middle age; and with many advanced in years, and when they certainly draw near to the grave.—Yet these same persons will seem to acknowledge, that the greater part of men go to hell and suffer eternal misery, and this through carelessness about it. However, they will do the same. How strange is it that men can enjoy themselves and be at rest, when they are thus hanging over eternal burnings; at the same time, having no lease of their lives, and not knowing how soon the thread by which they hang will break, nor indeed do they pretend to know; and if it breaks, they are gone, they are lost for ever, and there is no remedy! yet they trouble not themselves much about it; nor will they hearken to those who cry to them, and entreat them to take care for themselves, and labour to get out of that dangerous condition: they are not willing to take so much pains: they choose not to be diverted from amusing themselves with toys and vanities. Thus, well might the wise man say, Eccles. 9:3. “The heart of the sons of men is full of evil. Madness is in their heart while they live; and after that they go to the dead.”—How much wiser are those few, who make it their main business to lay a foundation for eternity, to secure their salvation!

2. I shall improve this subject in a use of exhortation to sinners, to take care to escape these eternal torments. If they be eternal, one would think that would be enough to awaken your concern, and excite your diligence. If the punishment be eternal, it is infinite, as we said before; and therefore no other evil, no death, no temporary torment that ever you heard of, or that you can imagine, is any thing in comparison with it, but is as much less and less considerable, not only as a grain of sand is less than the whole universe, but as it is less than the boundless space which encompasses the universe.—Therefore here,

(1.) Be entreated to consider attentively how great and awful a thing eternity is. Although you cannot comprehend it the more by considering, yet you may be made more sensible that it is not a thing to be disregarded.—Do but consider what it is to suffer extreme torment for ever and ever; to suffer it day and night, from one year to another, from one age to another, and from one thousand ages to another, and so adding age to age, and thousands to thousands, in pain, in wailing and lamenting, groaning and shrieking, and gnashing your teeth; with your souls full of dreadful grief and amazement, with your bodies and every member full of racking torture, without any possibility of getting ease; without any possibility of moving God to pity by your cries; without any possibility of hiding yourselves from him; without any possibility of diverting your thoughts from your pain; without any possibility of obtaining any manner of mitigation, or help, or change for the better.

(2.) Do but consider how dreadful despair will be in such torment. How dismal will it be, when you are under these racking torments,

to know assuredly that you never, never shall be delivered from them; to have no hope: when you shall wish that you might be turned into nothing, but shall have no hope of it; when you shall wish that you might be turned into a toad or a serpent, but shall have no hope of it; when you would rejoice, if you might but have any relief, after you shall have endured these torments millions of ages, but shall have no hope of it. After you shall have worn out the age of the sun, moon, and stars, in your dolorous groans and lamentations, without rest day and night, or one minute's ease, yet you shall have no hope of ever being delivered; after you shall have worn a thousand more such ages, you shall have no hope, but shall know that you are not one whit nearer to the end of your torments; but that still there are the same groans, the same shrieks, the same doleful cries, incessantly to be made by you, and that the smoke of your torment shall still ascend up for ever and ever. Your souls, which shall have been agitated with the wrath of God all this while, will still exist to bear more wrath; your bodies, which shall have been burning all this while in these glowing flames, shall not have been consumed, but will remain to roast through eternity, which will not have been at all shortened by what shall have been past.

You may by considering make yourselves more sensible than you ordinarily are; but it is a little you can conceive of what it is to have no hope in such torments. How sinking would it be to you, to endure such pain as you have felt in this world, without any hopes, and to know that you never should be delivered from it, nor have one minute's rest! You can now scarcely conceive how doleful that would be. How much more to endure the vast weight of the wrath of God without hope! The more the damned in hell think of the eternity of their torments, the more amazing will it appear to them; and alas! they will not be able to keep it out of their minds. Their tortures will not divert them from it, but will fix their attention to it. O how dreadful will eternity appear to them after they shall have been thinking on it for ages together, and shall have so long an experience of their torments! The damned in hell will have two infinites perpetually to amaze them, and swallow them up: one is an infinite God, whose wrath they will bear, and in whom they will behold their perfect and irreconcilable enemy. The other is the infinite duration of their torment.

If it were possible for the damned in hell to have a comprehensive knowledge of eternity, their sorrow and grief would be infinite in degree. The comprehensive view of so much sorrow, which they must endure, would cause infinite grief for the present. Though they will not have a comprehensive knowledge of it, yet they will doubtless have a vastly more lively and strong apprehension of it than we can have in this world. Their torments will give them an impression of it.—A man in his present state, without any enlargement of his capacity, would have a vastly more lively impression of eternity than he has, if he were only under some pretty sharp pain in some member of his body, and were at the same time assured, that he must endure that pain for ever. His pain would give him a greater sense of eternity than other men have. How much more will those excruciating torments, which the damned will suffer, have this effect!

Besides, their capacity will probably be enlarged, their understandings will be quicker and stronger in a future state; and God can give them as great a sense and as strong an impression of eternity, as he pleases, to increase their grief and torment.—O be entreated, ye that are in a Christless stale, and are going on in a way to hell, that are daily exposed to damnation, to consider these things. If you do not, it will surely be but a little while before you will experience them, and then you will know how dreadful it is to despair in hell; and it may be before this year, or this month, or this week, is at an end; before another sabbath, or ever you shall have opportunity to hear another sermon.

(3.) That you may effectually escape these dreadful and eternal torments, be entreated to flee and embrace him who came into the world for the very end of saving sinners from these torments, who has paid the whole debt due to the divine law, and exhausted eternal in temporal sufferings. What great encouragement is it to those of you who are sensible that you are exposed to eternal punishment, that there is a Saviour provided, who is able and who freely offers to save you from that punishment, and that in a way which is perfectly consistent with the glory of God, yea, which is more to the glory of God than it would be if you should suffer the eternal punishment of hell. For if you should suffer that punishment you would never pay the whole of the debt. Those who are sent to hell never will have paid the whole of the debt which they owe to God, nor indeed a part which bears any proportion to the whole. They never will have paid a part which bears so great a proportion to the whole, as one mite to ten thousand talents. Justice therefore never can be actually satisfied in your damnation; but it is actually satisfied in Christ. Therefore he is accepted of the Father, and therefore all who believe are accepted and justified in him. Therefore believe in him, come to him, commit your souls to him to be saved by him. In him you shall be safe from the eternal torments of hell. Nor is that all: but through him you shall inherit inconceivable blessedness and glory, which will be of equal duration with the torments of hell. For, as at the last day the wicked shall go away into everlasting punishment, so shall the righteous, or those who trust in Christ, go into life eternal.