

The DAILY JESUS NEWS #273

Tuesday of Passion Week... Day of Testing and Teaching Jesus' Private Teaching to His Disciples: The "Olivet Discourse"

Part VIII: Jesus Commands Readiness For His Coming: the Parable of "The Ten Virgins"

MT 25.1-13

1 "At that time the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. 2 Five of them were foolish and five were wise. 3 The foolish ones took their lamps but did not take any oil with them. 4 The wise ones, however, took oil in jars along with their lamps. 5 The bridegroom was a long time in coming, and they all became drowsy and fell asleep.

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

7 "Then all the virgins woke up and trimmed their lamps. 8 The foolish ones said to the wise, 'Give us some of your oil; our lamps are going out.'

9 "No way,' they replied, 'because there may not be enough for both us and you. Instead, go to those who sell oil and buy some for yourselves.'

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.

11 "Later the others also came. 'Lord, Lord,' they said, 'open the door for us!'

12 "But he replied, 'Truly I tell you, I don't know you.'

13 "Therefore I command you to remain on guard, because you do not know the day or the hour."

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NOTE: We use superscript identification of the source gospel in "blended texts" as follows: Matthew = ^{MT}, Mark = ^M, Luke = ^L, John = ^J, Acts = ^A. This "superscript ID" is inserted at the beginning of the quoted text, identifying that Bible book until a different superscript appears. In addition, *red italics identify the words of Jesus*. Old Testament quotations are CAPITALIZED.

CONTEXT DIGEST	
Location	On Mount Olivet, Just Outside Jerusalem
Timeline	Early April (Month 39)
Jesus' Life Context	Stage VIII: Passion Week
	C. Tuesday: Day of Testing and Teaching
	Jesus' Private Teaching to His Disciples: "The Olivet Discourse"
Title	Part VII: Jesus Commands Readiness For His Coming: Parable of "The 10 Virgins"

COMMENT:

In today's reading Jesus delivered his third parable in a row emphasizing the importance of keeping close guard in readiness for his coming. This one added the dimension of faithfulness to prepare in advance.

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Five of the virgins were foolish, for they didn't take the opportunity to prepare in advance. Five were wise, for they did what they could to prepare in advance. This is the lesson.

The idea of advance preparation was not new to Passion Week. Remember that the final evening before Passion Week began, Mary the brother of Lazarus had anointed Jesus with her own burial nard as an expression of her love and devotion to him. Jesus elevated her gift to something that will always be remembered as part of the gospel story.

Mary had anointed Jesus' body *"in advance."* There was very little time to properly prepare Jesus' body after he died. The entire process was rushed and incomplete. Several women went to the empty on Easter morning to complete the task, but it was too late--Jesus was already risen! Mary's advance anointing meant so much to Jesus because she did it thoroughly, beforehand. What does this have to do with us, and the parable?

There are certain expressions of obedience that are only available to us in this life. In the kingdom age, everything will be done in accordance with God's will. Nothing will ever deviate from His perfect plans. However, in this age we have a choice whether we will obey or not. This age is characterized by disobedience and sin, not obedience and faithfulness. This makes our faithful obedience in this life--in advance of when it will become the universal norm--so much more valuable.

In addition, the need for some aspects of God's will end at the end of this age. For example, we can only engage in evangelism and missions--the major tasks that the Lord has given us in this age--in this life. We have to do it *"in advance"* of the coming of the kingdom, for the need for this ministry will end at Jesus' final coming, and it will cease to exist in the kingdom.

In order to stay *"on guard"* for Jesus' final coming, we have to prepare our good works *"in advance,"* for once he arrives it will be too late for some kinds of obedience. The door of opportunity will have closed forever.

The wise virgins in the parable purchased their oil in advance, so they were ready to greet and accompany the bridegroom when he appeared. They had nothing to add to their *"advance work"* because they did what they could while they still had the opportunity. The *"foolish virgins"* did no advance preparation, and therefore met the bridegroom in a state of unfulfilled readiness.

We only have this lifetime in which to serve God in such tasks as witnessing, missions, discipleship, service, and sacrifice. The choices we can make to become more like Jesus on this earth by obeying him now, will not be available to us any longer once he comes.

This lifetime is a narrow window of opportunity to love God through our sacrificial obedience in ways we will never be able to do so again--forever.

APPLICATION:

Are you missing chances for sacrificial obedience to the Lord?

Staying on guard to be ready for his coming means seizing your opportunities in advance of his coming.

How much more "advance" obedience can you add to your daily-lifestyle today? This week?

What will you do?