

The Parable of the 5 Wise and the 5 Foolish Young Women – Matthew 25:1 – 13
Matthew presents the imminent coming of Christ's kingdom and the glorious renewal of all things as the main emphasis of Jesus' preaching and messianic-mission. For example:

- In Matthew 3:1-2 John the Baptist introduces Jesus and his earthly ministry by announcing, "*Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near!*"
 - Jesus begins his preaching ministry by describing the attitudes and actions of those who will be called, 'Blessed' in the coming kingdom of heaven (5:1 – 12)
 - In this same sermon, Jesus teaches his disciples to pray, "*Your kingdom come...*" (6:9-10)
 - Matthew 13 is dedicated to a series of Jesus' parables that describe his kingdom.
 - Matthew 16 is sprinkled with allusions to Christ's resurrection, ascension and second coming,
 - Chapter 17 begins with a brief peek at Christ's future glory as Matthew paints a brilliant picture of Jesus' momentary transfiguration on the mountain.
 - Matthew dedicates chapter 24 of his gospel to Jesus' teaching about the signs of the end of this age and his kingdom's final appearing.
 - In chapter 25 Matthew records three more of Jesus' parables, each warning us to be prepared for his imminent return. The Parable of the Wise and Foolish Virgins is the first of these parables. Read this parable and answer the following questions.
1. This parable begins with the words, "*At that time...*" At which time is Jesus talking about? (25:1)
 2. Why are the images of 10 virgins (bridesmaids or wedding attendants) and the bridegroom appropriate symbols of Christ's kingdom? (25:1)
 3. On what basis are these 10 girls described as being either foolish or wise? (25:2 – 4)
 4. Given that all 10 girls fell asleep (since it was midnight and the bridegroom '*was a long time in coming*') what was the key difference between the responses of the five wise and the five foolish girls when they were suddenly awakened with news that the bridegroom was on his way? (25:5 – 10)
 5. What is being symbolised in Jesus' parable by the finality of the shut door and the bridegroom's response, "*I tell you the truth, I don't know you!*" (25:10 – 12)
 6. According to verse 25:13, what is the main point of Jesus' parable?
 7. What does Jesus have in mind as he reminds us to 'keep watch' (See 24:42 – 51). What is Christ challenging you to do through this warning/encouragement?