

# The Abrahamic Covenant and the Three Parables of Matthew 25

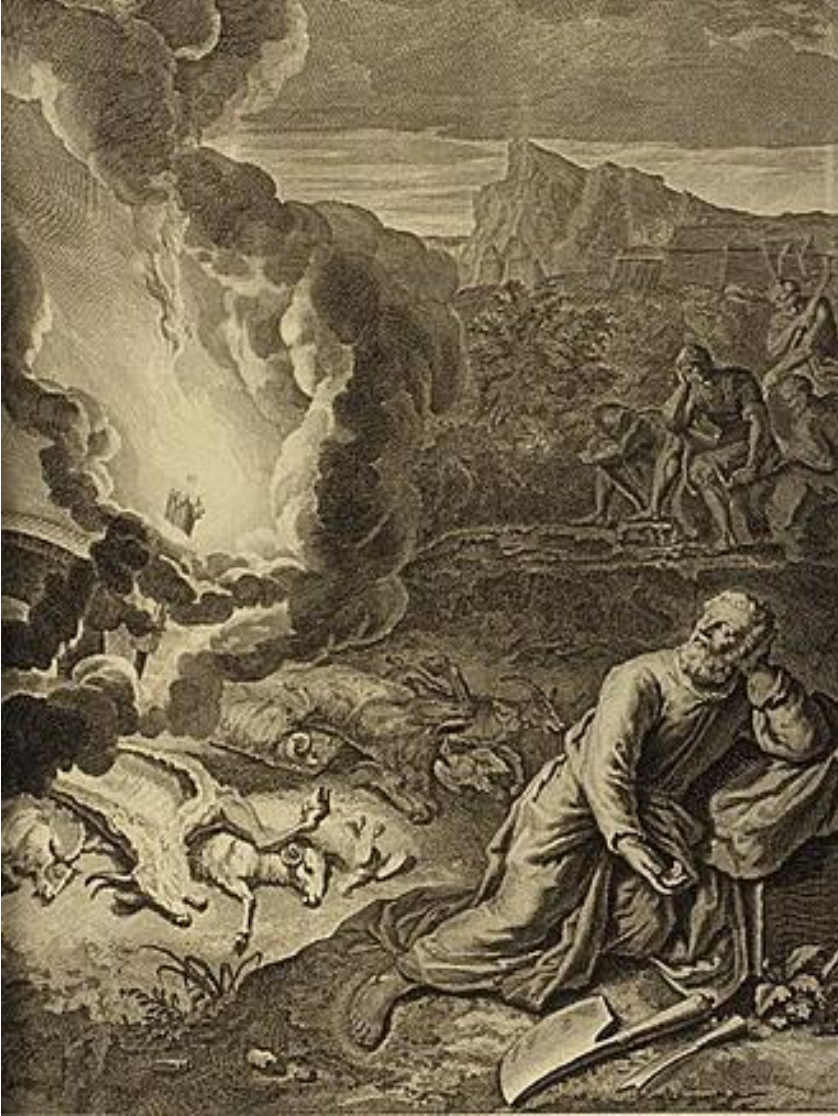
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PARABLE OF THE 10 VIRGINS

PARABLE OF THE TALENTS

PARABLE OF THE SHEEP AND THE GOATS





# Intro

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The story of Scripture is ultimately the story of God's covenant faithfulness. One of the most significant moments in that story occurs when God calls Abraham and establishes a covenant with him...

These promises become the foundation of God's redemptive plan and provide a framework for understanding the rest of the Bible.



# Intro

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When Yeshua delivers His final public teaching before His crucifixion in Matthew 24 and 25, He draws upon these covenant themes...

These parables are not merely moral lessons. Together, they reveal what covenant faithfulness looks like while God's people wait for the return of their King.



# Intro

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Throughout Matthew 25, Yeshua emphasizes three essential characteristics of God's covenant people: readiness, faithful stewardship, and practical righteousness...

Faith prepares God's people for His coming. Stewardship multiplies the blessings they have received. Justice and mercy reveal the transformation God has produced within them...

# Foundation: The Abrahamic Covenant

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...God calls Abraham out of his homeland and promises to make him into a great nation. He promises that Abraham's descendants will inherit the land of Canaan and that through him all the families of the earth will be blessed...

One of the most remarkable features of this covenant is its unconditional nature. In Genesis 15, God alone passes between the pieces of the covenant sacrifice, symbolizing that the fulfillment of the covenant depends upon His faithfulness rather than Abraham's ability...



# Foundation: The Abrahamic Covenant

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The covenant contains **3 major themes** that appear repeatedly throughout Scripture.

**1<sup>ST</sup>**, there is FAITH. Abraham becomes the model of one who trusts God's promises even when circumstances seem impossible. He believes God before he sees the fulfillment of those promises.

**2<sup>ND</sup>**, there is FRUITFULNESS. God blesses Abraham so that he can become a blessing to others. The covenant is never intended to stop with Abraham. The blessings he receives are meant to multiply and extend outward.

**3<sup>RD</sup>**, there is RIGHTEOUSNESS and JUSTICE. God explicitly states that Abraham's descendants are to keep the way of the Lord by practicing righteousness and justice. Covenant faithfulness is revealed not merely through religious identity but through transformed living...

# Matthew 24 and the Context of Matthew 25

...In Matthew 24, Jesus sits on the Mount of Olives and teaches His disciples about future events. He warns them about false messiahs, persecution, wars, famines, earthquakes, tribulation, and deception. He describes these events as birth pains leading toward the end of the age. He also teaches that His return will be sudden, visible, and impossible to miss...

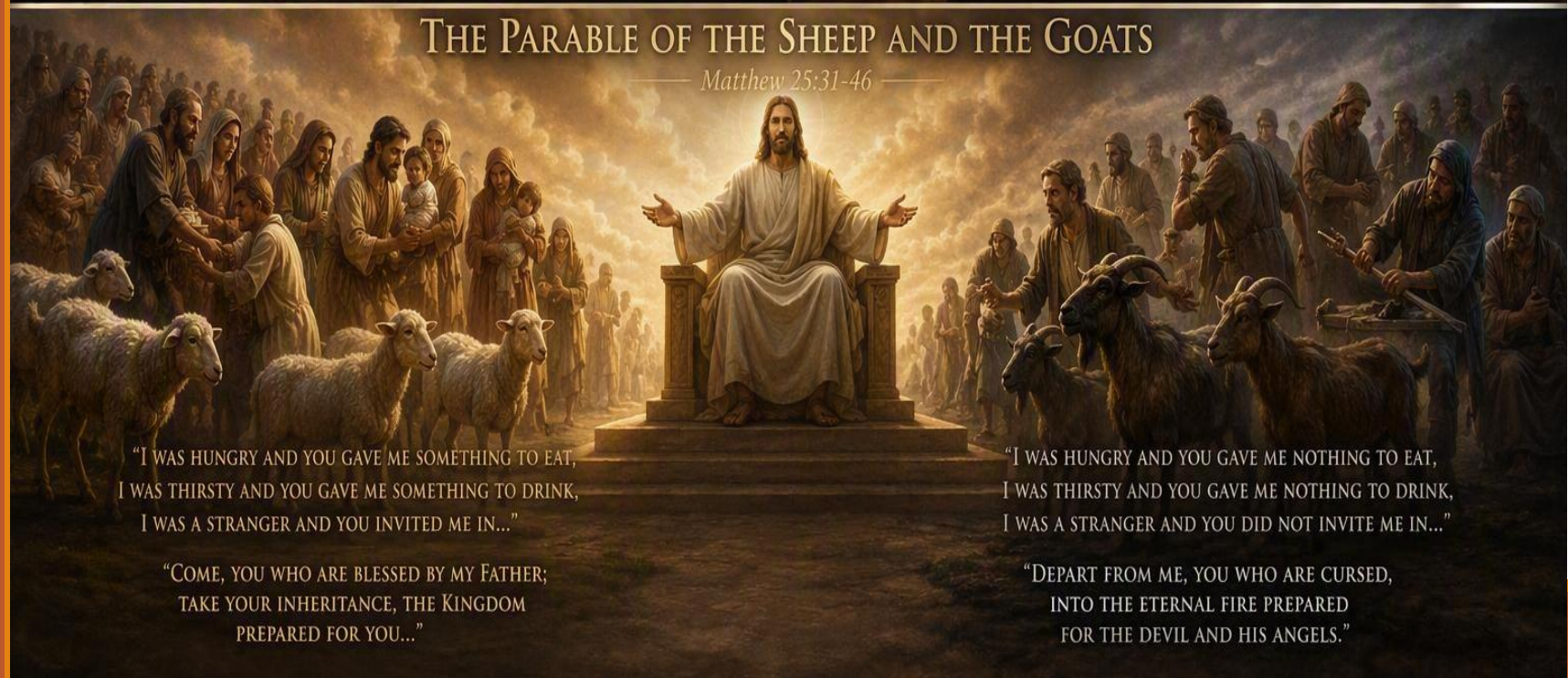
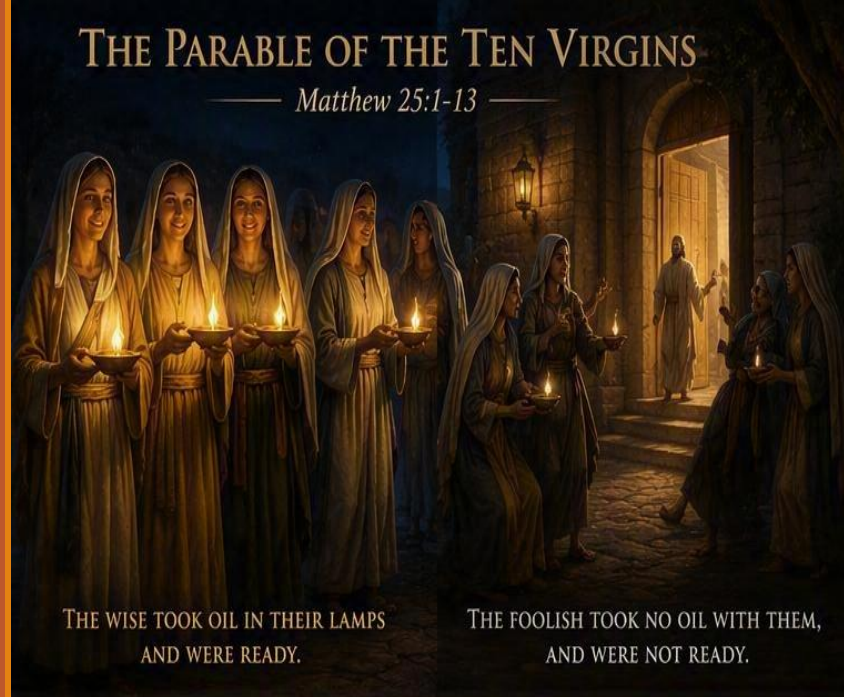


# Matthew 24 and the Context of Matthew 25

Matthew 25 answers the practical question that naturally follows:

**What should God's people do while they wait?**

Jesus answers with three parables. The Ten Virgins teach **readiness**. The Talents teach **faithful stewardship**. The Sheep and the Goats teach **righteousness and mercy**...



# The Parable of the Ten Virgins and the Command to Bring Oil

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## ...Key Scriptures

Leviticus 24:2

“Command the people of Israel to bring you pure oil from beaten olives for the lamp, that a light may be kept burning regularly. (ESV)

Matthew 25:13

**Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour.** (ESV)

The command to provide pure olive oil for the Tabernacle lampstand and Jesus' Parable of the Ten Virgins are separated by many centuries, yet they communicate a remarkably similar spiritual truth. Both emphasize the necessity of genuine spiritual readiness, continual faithfulness, and personal responsibility before God...



Indoor Lamp  
Too small for outside



Extra Oil  
Big and heavy



Outdoor Lamp  
Much bigger requiring more oil

# The Parable of the Ten Virgins

Yeshua tells the story of ten virgins waiting for the arrival of the bridegroom. Five are wise and five are foolish. At first glance, there seems to be little difference between them.

- ❖ All have lamps.
- ❖ All are invited to the wedding celebration.
- ❖ All are waiting for the same bridegroom.
- ❖ All appear outwardly prepared.

This similarity is intentional...





# The Meaning of the Number Ten

Throughout Scripture, the number ten often signifies completeness or fullness.

Some examples include:

- The Ten Commandments
- The Ten Plagues
- Ten generations from Adam to Noah
- Ten generations from Noah to Abraham

In Jewish tradition, ten people also represented the minimum number required for a covenant community gathered in worship...

# The Meaning of the Lamps

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The lamps symbolize outward profession and visible discipleship.

Every virgin possesses a lamp. Every virgin appears ready. Every virgin claims participation in the coming celebration.

The lamp is comparable to a believer's outward testimony and profession of faith.

Scripture frequently uses this imagery:

## **Psalms 119:105**

Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path. (ESV)

## **Proverbs 6:23**

For the commandment is a lamp and the teaching a light, and the reproofs of discipline are the way of life, (ESV)...

# The Meaning of the Oil

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The critical difference between the wise and foolish virgins is the oil.

Throughout Scripture, oil often symbolizes:

- The work of the Holy Spirit
- Genuine faith
- Spiritual vitality
- Consecration
- Personal devotion
- Inner transformation
- Obedient fellowship with God

Whatever specific emphasis is given, the central truth remains the same: the oil represents an inward spiritual reality rather than an outward appearance.

The wise virgins carried extra oil because they anticipated delay and prepared accordingly. The foolish virgins assumed their outward appearance of readiness would be sufficient.

When the bridegroom finally arrived, the difference became unmistakably visible.

# Pure Oil: A Willing and Obedient Heart

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God commanded Israel to bring pure oil for the lampstand.

This was more than a practical instruction. Every worshiper participated in maintaining the light in God's house. Spiritually, this points to hearts that willingly respond to God.

## **Isaiah 1:19**

If you are willing and obedient, you shall eat the good of the land; (ESV)

## **Philippians 2:13**

for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure. (ESV)

## **Matthew 25:4**

but the wise took flasks of oil with their lamps. (ESV)...

# Pressed Olives: Spiritual Maturity Through Testing

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The oil for the lampstand came from olives that had been crushed and pressed...

## **Romans 5:3**

we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance. (ESV)

## **James 1:3**

the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. (ESV)

## **Luke 22:42**

not my will, but yours, be done. (ESV)



# Light: God's Truth Revealed

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The oil's purpose was to produce light.

God's truth illuminates the path of those who follow Him and reveals His character, holiness, and will.

**Psalms 119:130**

The unfolding of your words gives light; it imparts understanding to the simple. (ESV)

**Matthew 5:14**

**You are the light of the world.** (ESV)

The wise virgins understood that their lamps must remain lit if they were to recognize and welcome the Bridegroom when He arrived...



# Burning Continually: Faithful Endurance

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God instructed that the lampstand burn continually before Him.

This continual flame represents spiritual vigilance, perseverance, and ongoing fellowship with God.

## **1 Thessalonians 5:17**

pray without ceasing, (ESV)

## **Revelation 2:10**

Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life.  
(ESV)...



# Why the Oil Cannot Be Shared

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One of the most sobering moments in the parable occurs when the foolish virgins ask the wise for oil.

The wise virgins refuse.

Yeshua is not teaching selfishness. He is teaching personal responsibility...

The foolish virgins waited until the last moment to obtain what should have been developed over time.

he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not."  
St Matthew XXI



# The Closed Door

The climax of the parable comes when the bridegroom arrives, enters the wedding feast, and the door is shut.

Then Yeshua delivers the part no one wants to hear, the door closes. It is not left partially open, not cracked for late comers, not waiting for the foolish virgins to return. It is shut. And the words spoken from behind the closed door are not delayed, not gentle, or understanding, they are final. **"I do not know you"**.

These women were invited guests. They expected entrance. They looked identical to the wise virgins. Yet they lacked the one thing that truly mattered: genuine preparedness.

The parable of the 10 Virgins is a message to the entire visible community of people who claim to be waiting for Christ...

# The Central Lesson

The wise virgins understood truths that the foolish virgins ignored:

- A lamp alone is not enough.
- Religious profession alone is not enough.
- Knowledge alone is not enough.
- Preparation must be personal.
- Spiritual readiness cannot be borrowed.
- Tribulation can produce maturity and perseverance.
- Faithfulness must continue until the Bridegroom comes.
- Genuine readiness is demonstrated through a living relationship with God...

# Summary of the Spiritual Picture

| Leviticus 24:2 Symbol | Spiritual Application                            | Supporting Scripture                |
|-----------------------|--------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Pure Oil              | Desire to obey God and work of the Spirit        | Isaiah 1:19, Philippians 2:13       |
| Pressed Olives        | Tribulations that produce spiritual maturity     | Romans 5:3-4, James 1:2-4           |
| Lamp                  | God's commandments and believer's witness        | Psalms 119:105, Proverbs 6:23       |
| Light                 | God's law and truth                              | Psalms 119:130, Proverbs 6:23       |
| Burning Continually   | Ongoing faithfulness and watchfulness            | 1 Thessalonians 5:17, Matthew 25:13 |
| Wise Virgins' Oil     | Personal spiritual readiness for Yeshua's return | Matthew 25:4, Matthew 25:10         |



# The Parable of the Talents

## Matthew 25: 14-30

### 1. The Master Entrusts Enormous Wealth

Jesus describes a master who prepares to leave on a long journey and entrusts his estate to three servants. He gives:

- Five talents to one,
- Two talents to another,
- One talent to the last.

A talent was not a coin but a massive sum—about 20 years of wages for a laborer. Even the servant with one talent received a fortune. This means the master is not stingy; he is extravagantly generous, trusting each servant “according to his ability.”



# The Parable of the Talents

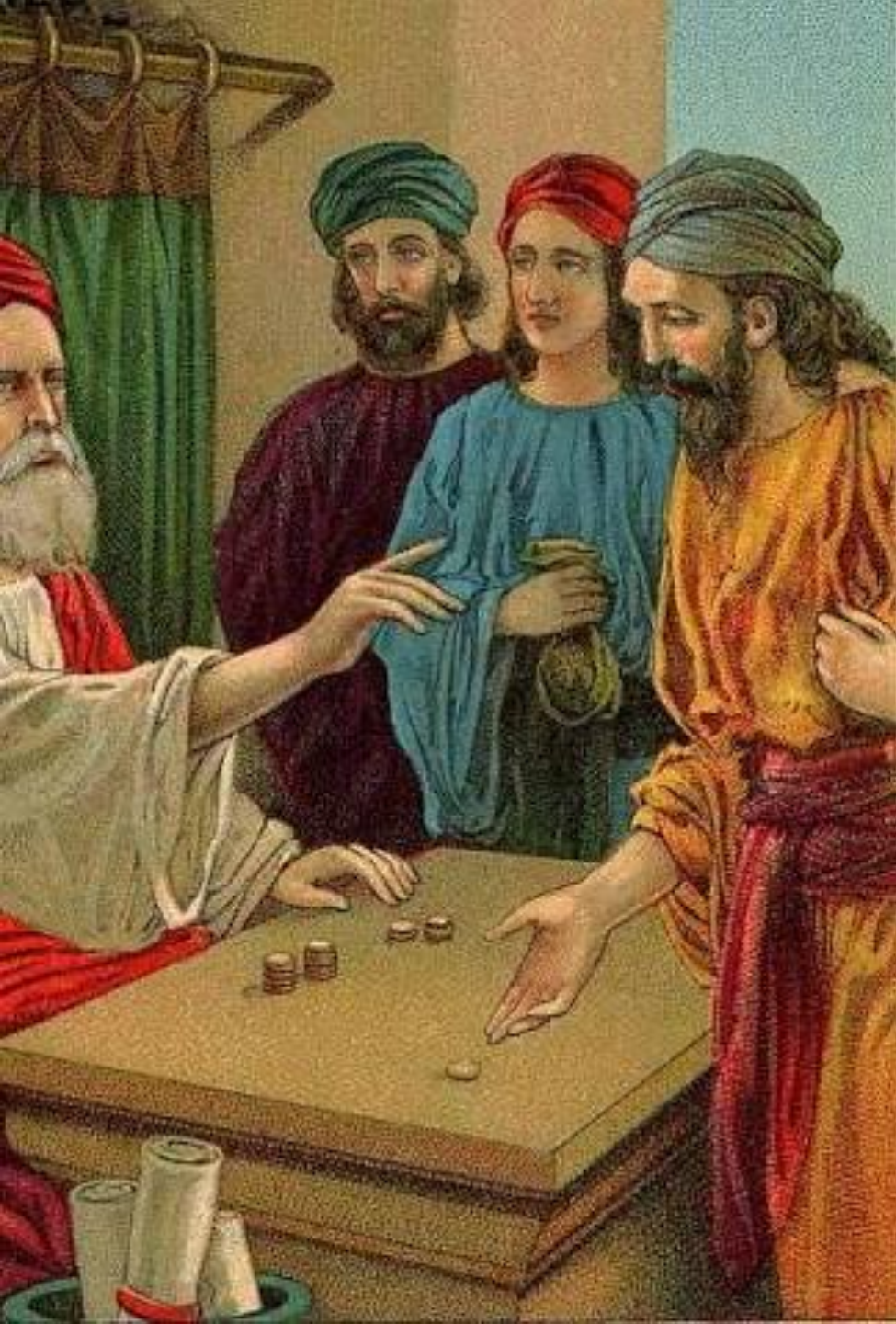
## Matthew 25: 14-30

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### 2. Two Servants Work; One Servant Hides

The servants with five and two talents immediately put the money to work and double what they were given. Their results differ, but their faithfulness is identical, and the master praises them with the same words: **“Well done, good and faithful servant... enter into the joy of your master.”**

The third servant does not steal, squander, or misuse the money. He simply buries it—choosing safety over obedience, fear over faithfulness. He blames the master’s character, calling him “a hard man,” but the master rejects this excuse.



# The Parable of the Talents

## Matthew 25: 14-30

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### 3. The Master Returns and Settles Accounts

After “a long time,” the master returns—echoing Jesus’ delayed return in the Ten Virgins. He evaluates each servant not by how much they produced, but by what they did with what they were given. Faithfulness, not comparison, is the measure.

The third servant is condemned not for failing to produce profit, but for failing to act at all. His caution masquerades as prudence, but Jesus calls it what it is: “Wicked and slothful.”



# The Parable of the Talents

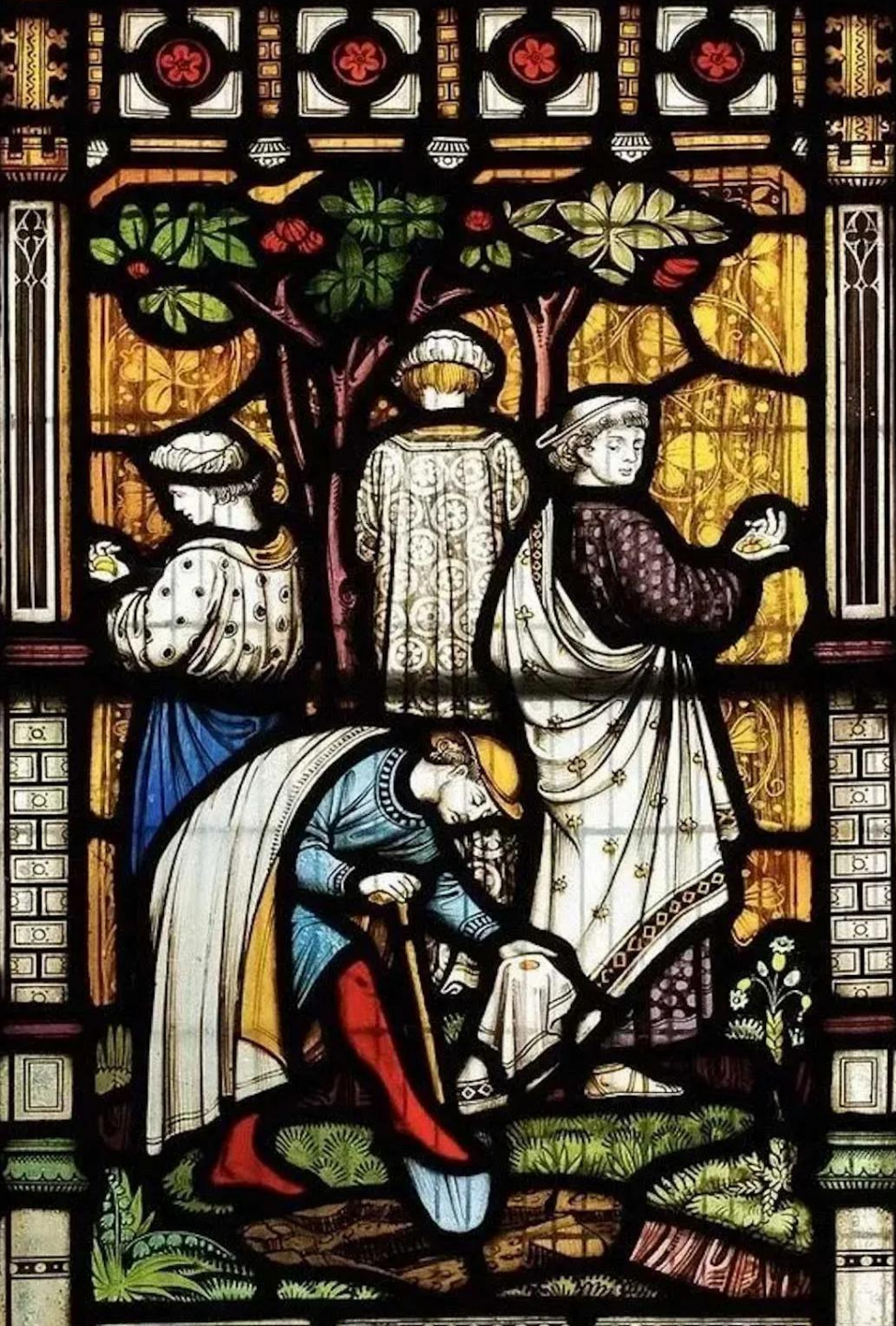
## Matthew 25: 14-30

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### 4. The Talent Is Taken and Given to Another

The master takes the one talent from the unfaithful servant and gives it to the one who has ten. Jesus concludes with the principle: “To everyone who has, more will be given... but from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away.”

This is not economic commentary—it is **covenant** commentary. Faithfulness leads to greater trust; refusal leads to loss.



# The Parable of the Talents

## Matthew 25: 14-30

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### 5. The Parable's Meaning

The Parable of the Talents teaches that:

God entrusts every believer with something valuable—time, opportunities, gifts, influence, resources.

God expects these to be used, not preserved in fear.

Faithfulness is measured by action, not intention.

The delay of Christ's return is the time for work, not passivity.

Judgment will reveal what each person has done with what God entrusted.

This parable is not about prosperity or financial gain. It is about kingdom responsibility. The call to actively invest one's life in obedience to Christ while He is away.

# The Parable of the Talents

《Matthew 25:14–30》



A master gives 5, 2, and 1 talent to three servants.

Two invest and multiply theirs. One hides his talent.

The master rewards faithfulness and rebukes laziness.

## ◆◆ Key Lessons ◆◆

1.  God Has Given Everyone Something Valuable
2.  Use Your Gifts — Don't Hide Them
3.  Faithfulness Leads to Increase
4.  Fear Prevents Growth
5.  God Expects Productivity and Accountability

## ◆◆ Life Application ◆◆

-  Develop your gifts
-  Serve others
-  Be diligent
-  Trust God, not fear
-  Be fruitful in every area of life

“Be faithful with what God has given you.”

— Matthew 25:21 —

# The Parable of the Talents Matthew 25: 14-30

The Parable of the Talents is Yeshua’s second warning in Matthew 25, following the Ten Virgins and preceding the Sheep and Goats. Together, these three parables form a single discourse about readiness, faithfulness, and accountability when the Lord returns.

In the Parable of the Talents, Jesus shifts from the imagery of **waiting** (Ten Virgins) to the imagery of **working**—showing that readiness is not passive but active stewardship of what God entrusts.

# The Parable of the Sheep and the Goats Matthew 25:31-46

The Parable of the Sheep and the Goats is the final movement in Jesus' three part discourse in Matthew 25. After teaching about readiness (Ten Virgins) and faithful stewardship (Talents), Jesus ends with the parable that reveals the final evaluation of all nations when the Son of Man returns in glory.





# The Parable of the Sheep and the Goats

## Matthew 25:31-46

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### 1. The Setting: The King on His Throne

Jesus describes His return in unmistakably royal terms:

- The Son of Man comes in His glory
- All the angels accompany Him
- He sits on His glorious throne
- All nations are gathered before Him

This is not a private judgment of individuals but a universal, public sorting of humanity.



# The Parable of the Sheep and the Goats

## Matthew 25:31-46

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### 2. The Separation: Sheep and Goats

Jesus uses familiar pastoral imagery:

- Sheep → placed at the right hand (honor, acceptance)
- Goats → placed at the left hand (rejection, judgment)

The separation is based on what each group did or did not do for “the least of these.”



# The Basis of Separation

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## 3. The Criteria: Love Expressed in Action

The King identifies Himself with the vulnerable:

- Hungry
- Thirsty
- Stranger
- Naked
- Sick
- Imprisoned

To the sheep He says: “Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.”

To the goats He says the opposite: “Whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me.”...



# The Parable of the Sheep and the Goats

## Matthew 25:31-46

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### **4. The Surprise: Neither Group Recognized Jesus**

Both groups respond with the same question:

“Lord, when did we see you...?”

This shows that the sheep did not perform acts of mercy to earn reward; they acted out of habitual righteousness, unaware they were serving Christ Himself. The goats likewise did not realize their neglect was neglect of Christ.



# The Parable of the Sheep and the Goats

## Matthew 25:31-46

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### 5. The Verdict: Eternal Life or Eternal Punishment

The King's final words are stark:

- The sheep enter the kingdom prepared... since the creation of the world
- The goats go into eternal punishment

This is the only parable where Jesus explicitly uses the language of eternal destiny.

# Mercy as Evidence

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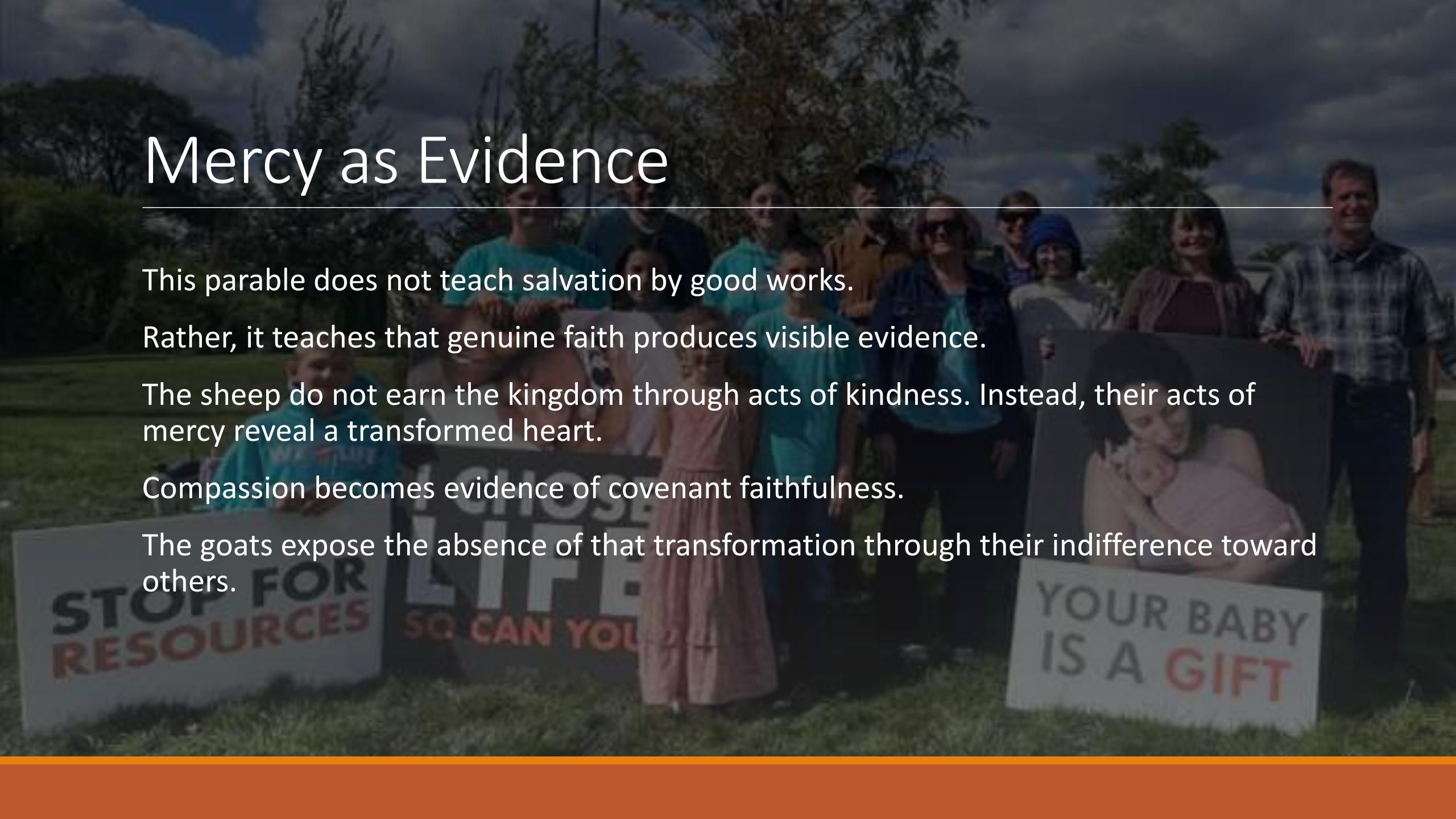
This parable does not teach salvation by good works.

Rather, it teaches that genuine faith produces visible evidence.

The sheep do not earn the kingdom through acts of kindness. Instead, their acts of mercy reveal a transformed heart.

Compassion becomes evidence of covenant faithfulness.

The goats expose the absence of that transformation through their indifference toward others.





# Righteousness and Justice

This parable mirrors God's words concerning Abraham.

God chose Abraham so that his descendants would practice righteousness and justice.

Yeshua now defines what that looks like.

Righteousness is not merely correct belief. Justice is not merely legal fairness.

Both are expressed through compassionate action toward people in need.

The sheep demonstrate Abrahamic covenant faithfulness. The goats reveal covenant failure.

# How the Three Parables Reflect the Abrahamic Covenant

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The Abrahamic covenant (Genesis 12–22) is God’s everlasting promise to form a people marked by faith, fruitfulness, and righteousness/justice, who will inherit His Kingdom and bless the nations. Matthew 25 is Yeshua’s final covenant discourse before the cross, and each parable corresponds directly to one of the covenant’s pillars.

## 1. Ten Virgins — Covenant Readiness (Faith)

**Abrahamic Covenant Theme:** Abraham is the model of faithful readiness—waiting for God’s appearing, trusting His promise, living in expectation.

**Parable Connection:** The ten virgins represent the whole visible covenant community (the number ten = fullness, minyan). The dividing line is not appearance but readiness of the heart—the invisible “oil” of faith cultivated over time.

- Abraham waited in faith → wise virgins wait with oil.
- Israel often failed to stay awake → foolish virgins sleep without preparation.
- Covenant readiness is personal, not transferable → oil cannot be shared.

**Covenant Outcome:** Those who embody Abraham’s readiness enter the wedding feast—the covenant inheritance.

# How the Three Parables Reflect the Abrahamic Covenant

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## 2. Talents — Covenant Fruitfulness (Blessing and Multiplication)

**Abrahamic Covenant Theme:** God blesses Abraham so he will multiply blessing to the nations. Fruitfulness is the covenant's lifeblood.

**Parable Connection:** The master entrusts enormous wealth to his servants—just as God entrusted Abraham with promises, mission, and responsibility.

- Faithful servants multiply what they are given → Abraham multiplies blessing.
- The unfaithful servant buries his trust → Israel often buried its calling.
- Fruitfulness is not measured by size but by faithful action.

**Covenant Outcome:** Faithful servants enter “the joy of the master”—the expanded inheritance promised to Abraham.

# How the Three Parables Reflect the Abrahamic Covenant

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## 3. Sheep and Goats — Covenant Righteousness and Justice

**Abrahamic Covenant Theme:** God explicitly states Abraham was chosen so his descendants would “do righteousness and justice” (Genesis 18:19).

**Parable Connection:** Yeshua evaluates the nations by how they treat “the least of these”—the vulnerable, the stranger, the suffering.

- Sheep embody Abrahamic righteousness → mercy, compassion, justice.
- Goats violate the covenant → neglect of the vulnerable.
- Love for God is proven by love for the least.

**Covenant Outcome:** Sheep inherit “the Kingdom prepared from the foundation of the world”—the covenant land promise expanded into the eternal Kingdom.

# “Thief in the night” Through Hebrew Eyes in Matthew 24:42-44

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Matthew 24:42-44

[42] Therefore, stay awake, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming. [43] But know this, that if the master of the house had known in what part of the night the thief was coming, he would have stayed awake and would not have let his house be broken into. [44] Therefore you also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect. (ESV)

In Hebrew hermeneutics..., Yeshua is warning that His coming will be “like a thief in the night” It’s not about a criminal sneaking into a house—it’s about the High Priest walking the Temple courts in the dark hours before dawn. According to ancient Temple practice, the High Priest would move silently through the courts, inspecting the Levites assigned to keep watch over the holy precincts. If he found a priest awake, alert, guarding the sacred fire, he blessed him.



## “Thief in the night” Through Hebrew Eyes in Matthew 24:42-44

But if he found a priest asleep, neglecting his duty, he did not merely rebuke him—he would set fire to the priest’s garments, forcing him to leap awake in shame, exposed before the others. This was not cruelty; it was covenant discipline. The Temple was holy, and those who slept in the presence of God were unfit to serve.

# Do You See the Connection?

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There is a deep connection between the sleeping virgins in Matthew 25 and the Temple watchmen who were caught asleep and had their garments set on fire by the High Priest. Yeshua is deliberately drawing on the same imagery of priestly negligence, covenant shame, and unexpected inspection.

Yeshua takes this vivid Temple image and applies it to His return. He is not a burglar, He is the High Priest of Heaven, walking His Father's house in the night of this age. His coming will be sudden, searching, and exposing. Those who keep watch—whose lamps burn, whose hearts stay awake—will be honored. Those who slumber in complacency will be awakened in the fire of judgment, their spiritual nakedness revealed.

This is exactly the warning echoed in **Revelation 16:15**, where Yeshua says:

[15] **“Behold, I am coming like a thief! Blessed is the one who stays awake, keeping his garments on, that he may not go about naked and be seen exposed!”** (ESV)

The same imagery: vigilance, garments, exposure, covenant accountability.

# This is Not a New Idea

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It is the continuation of the everlasting Abrahamic covenant. God chose Abraham so that his descendants would “**keep the way of the Lord by doing righteousness and justice**” (Genesis 18:19). Covenant life was always meant to be awake, watchful, faithful, tending the flame of devotion. Abraham’s covenant required readiness, obedience, and a life that stayed alert to God’s appearing. Yeshua now applies that same covenant expectation to His disciples: stay awake, keep your garments, guard the holy things entrusted to you.



# This is Not a New Idea

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The sleeping priests, the sleeping virgins, and the warning in Revelation all point to the same covenant truth: readiness is the mark of those who truly belong to the God of Abraham.

The High Priest walks in the night, and His footsteps are near. Those who keep their garments—those who remain awake in covenant faithfulness—will stand unashamed when He appears. Those who sleep will find that the very garments meant to cover them have been burned away, revealing that their covenant life was only outward, never inward...

# Conclusion

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Matthew 25 is far more than a collection of disconnected parables. It is a covenant message rooted in the promises God made to Abraham.

The Parable of the Ten Virgins teaches **readiness**.

The Parable of the Talents teaches **stewardship**.

The Parable of the Sheep and the Goats teaches **righteousness expressed through mercy**.

Together, these parables reveal the character of those who belong to the Kingdom of God. True covenant faithfulness is not demonstrated by outward appearance alone. It is revealed through an inward relationship with God that produces readiness, faithful service, and compassionate action.

# Conclusion

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Yeshua's message remains as relevant today as it was on the Mount of Olives. The King will return. His people must remain watchful. They must faithfully steward what He has given them. They must practice mercy, justice, and love.

Those who do so walk in the footsteps of Abraham and demonstrate the kind of covenant faithfulness that has characterized God's people throughout Scripture. They will be found ready when the Bridegroom arrives, faithful when the Master returns, and welcomed by the King into the Kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world.

# QUESTIONS?

