

# Matthew 24 and 25



## SABBATH—MAY 12

**READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON:** Matthew 24:1-25; Revelation 13:11-17; Matthew 7:24-27; Luke 21:20.

**MEMORY VERSE:** “False Messiahs [Saviors] and false prophets [special messengers] will come and do great [very powerful] miracles and wonders [strange and surprising things], trying to fool [trick] the people God has chosen, if that is possible” (Matthew 24:24, ERV).

**IN MATTHEW 24 AND 25,** Jesus tells us important truths about the last days. He also tells us what we need to do to be ready for His Second Coming.

Jesus' words for His followers in His time also are for His followers in our time, too. Most of all, Jesus' words speak to the final group of people who will be alive on the earth when He comes back. Jesus does not “paint” a pretty picture of that time, either. There will be wars and unproved news about wars going on. There will be disease, false saviors, and attacks on God's people. It is easy to see how right Jesus was. Just look back over history at all the awful things that have happened since Jesus said these words. So, you see for yourself. Then you can trust Jesus' other words, too, about the things that have not happened.

But Jesus did not only warn us about what was coming. In Matthew 25, Jesus tells picture stories to help get His people ready to meet God. Yes, hard times will come. But Jesus will help His people to be ready to meet Him when He does come back again.



**Jesus warned us that there would be wars and disease in the last days.**

**POWERFUL PROOF THAT JESUS' WORDS ARE TRUE  
(Matthew 24:1–25)**

Jesus sat on the Mount of Olives and told His followers about the things that would happen in the last days. Picture in your mind that you are one of Jesus' followers there on the Mount of Olives. Then Jesus tells you that the temple in Jerusalem soon will be destroyed. Who knows the things that Jesus' followers thought when they heard this news. But the questions they ask Jesus later show that His followers connected the total ruin of the temple with the " 'end of time' " (Matthew 24:3, ERV).

**Read Matthew 24:1–25. As we see from these verses, what message did Jesus give to His followers about the last days of this earth's history?**

Matthew 24:1–25 makes it clear that Jesus does not want His people to be confused by the lies that will be told in the future. What lies is Jesus talking about? Jesus is talking about the lies that false messengers and false religious leaders will tell His people. Some false religious leaders will say they are Jesus Himself. Do you know what the most awful thing about these false leaders is? Many people will believe them.

We live in a time when we can look back over the long years of history. We can see just how true Jesus' words are. Even in our day, liars and false leaders have said they were the Savior. They say, " 'I am the Messiah [the Savior that God chose to take away our sins]' " (Matthew 24:5, ERV). Jesus said this very thing would happen. We should not be surprised if these same lies happen more and more in these last days as we get closer to the end of time.

Also, look at Jesus' words about how bad things would be on this earth before He came back. Jesus was right about that, too. Since Jesus' time on Earth ended, people have trusted in things they hoped would get rid of all the awful pain that humans suffer. At one time or another, people have hoped that government, science, and knowledge would bring in everlasting peace and a perfect life here on Earth. But history shows us again and again that these hopes have always failed. The world today is exactly as Jesus said it would be.

**Read Matthew 24:25. How does this verse help make our faith stronger and give us hope in what we believe?**



**Today the world is exactly as Jesus said it would be.**

## STAYING LOYAL TO GOD UNTIL THE END (Matthew 24:9)

**Read Matthew 24:9 and Revelation 13:11–17. What did Jesus say in these verses in Matthew that John also wrote about in these verses in Revelation?**

Jesus warns His people about the many lies the devil will use to trick people in the last days. One of these tricks is a worldwide lie that will cause countries to stand against the true faith and to force everyone on the earth to join in false worship. The people who stand strong against this false worship will experience hate and attacks. Some of these people will even be put to death.

**Read Matthew 24:13. What does Jesus say in this verse is the secret to being saved and staying loyal during the worldwide attacks against God’s people in the future?**



**“The people who make their minds strong with Bible truths are the only people who will stay loyal to God until the end of the big war between good and evil.”—Ellen G. White, *The Great [big] Controversy [war between God and Satan]*, pages 493, 494, adapted.**

“The people who make their minds strong with Bible truths are the only people who will stay loyal to God until the end of the big war between good and evil.”—*The Great [big] Controversy [war between God and Satan]*, page 593; adapted.

**Read Matthew 7:24–27. In these verses, what else does Jesus say is important for staying loyal to God?**

Yes, it is very important to know the Bible. But Jesus says that knowing the truth is not enough to help us stay loyal to God when the attacks on our faith come during the end times. We also must *do* the things we learn. We must obey the truth about Jesus too. In the picture story in Matthew 7:24–27, both builders hear Jesus’ sayings. The difference between the two men is that one builder obeys Jesus’ teachings. The other builder does not. That one thing makes a very big difference. It will make all the difference for us, too, in staying loyal to God by obeying Him until the end of time.

**Why does the obedient builder stay strong? Why does the other builder fail? What difference does obedience make in helping a person stay strong in the faith?**

**“THE HORRIBLE THING THAT DESTROYS’ ”**  
**(Matthew 24:15, ICB)**

In Matthew 24:15, Jesus talks about “ ‘the horrible thing that destroys’ ” (ICB). This word picture comes from the book of Daniel (Daniel 9:27; Daniel 11:31; Daniel 12:11). The NIV Bible names this horrible thing “ ‘the hated thing that destroys.’ ”

God announced that something was a “ ‘hated thing’ ” or a “ ‘horrible thing’ ” when it broke His law in a terrible way. Some of the sins that God said were terrible included bowing down to statues (Deuteronomy 27:15) and sins that dealt with having sex (Leviticus 18:22). So, the “ ‘horrible thing’ ” meant that in the future many of God’s people would fall away from the truth into false worship.

**Read Matthew 24:15 and Luke 21:20. How do these two verses help us understand better what Jesus means by “ ‘the horrible thing that destroys’ ” (Matthew 24:15, ICB)?**

These two verses make it clear that Jesus’ warning about the future includes the awful ruin that would happen to Jerusalem in A.D. 70. At that time, the Roman Kingdom would destroy the city of Jerusalem and the holy temple.

Jesus’ words are full of meaning for our time, too. The ruin of Jerusalem was real and happened in the past. But it also was a word picture for things that would happen in the future. “Jesus saw Jerusalem as a word picture for everyone on earth who did not believe in God and fought against Him.”—Ellen G. White, *The Great [big] Controversy [war between God and Satan]*, page 22; adapted.

Daniel 12:11 and Daniel 11:31 connect “ ‘the horrible thing that destroys’ ” (ICB) to the time when the Roman Church was in power from A.D. 538 to 1798. During this time, the Roman Church changed Bible truth to false teachings about how humans are saved and come to God. These false ideas covered up the truth about the things Jesus did for us and is doing now for us in heaven’s sanctuary. The sanctuary is the place in heaven where God is worshiped.

As we learned, the little horn is a word picture for the Roman Church. Daniel 8:9 shows us how the little horn’s power spreads fast over the old Roman Kingdom. Then in Daniel 8:10, the little horn attacks God’s people. But the Bible promises us that Jesus will save His people in the last days (Daniel 7:9, 10; Daniel 8:14; Matthew 24:29).



**The destruction of the city of Jerusalem and the holy temple was a word picture that showed the things that would happen in the last days.**

**“TEN GIRLS WHO WENT TO WAIT FOR THE BRIDEGROOM” (Matthew 25:1–13, ERV)**

In Matthew 24, Jesus talks about the things that will happen before He comes. Next, in Matthew 25, Jesus talks about how to get ready for His coming.

**Read Matthew 25:1–13. In these verses, Jesus tells the picture story about the “Ten Girls Who Went to Wait for the Bridegroom.” What is Jesus saying in these verses that should help us to get ready for His Second Coming?**

The wording “the ten girls who went to wait for the bridegroom” is a word picture. It means people who say they are Christians. These Christians do not join Satan’s side in the war between good and evil. Jesus also uses the wording the “ten girls who went to wait for the bridegroom” as a word picture to show the meaning of the kingdom of heaven (Matthew 25:1). But in the end time, all ten girls fell asleep (Matthew 25:5). Jesus already warned His followers about staying “awake” so they would be ready for Him when He came back at the Second Coming.

All ten girls had lamps. All ten girls went out to meet the bridegroom. That means all ten girls looked forward to His coming. But there was a delay. All these believers in His coming fell asleep. Then all of a sudden, at midnight, someone cried out that the bridegroom was coming. All the girls woke up (Matthew 25:1–6).

The foolish girls were surprised. They were not ready. Why? One Bible says the foolish girls were surprised because “the oil in our lamps is all gone” (Matthew 25:8, ERV). Other Bibles put this verse in different words that are truer to the Greek language that the verse was written in first. These Bibles say: ““our lamps are going out”” (NLV, NIV, ICB). The lamps of these girls still gave off a very small flame. But that very small flame was not enough to help them to be ready to meet Jesus.

What happened?

These five foolish girls are a word picture for Christians who are waiting for Jesus to come back. But they do not really know Jesus. They do not have a deep connection to Him. They have some oil. The oil is a word picture for the Holy Spirit. But these girls did not have enough oil. How sad that they were happy with only a little oil when they really needed a whole lot more.



**The oil in the lamps is a word picture for the Holy Spirit. How sad that the five foolish girls were happy with only a little oil when they really needed a whole lot more.**

## USING YOUR TALENTS (Matthew 25:13–30)

**Read about the gifts God gives us in Matthew 25:13–30. As these verses show us, what part does our using these gifts have in getting us ready for Jesus’ Second Coming?**

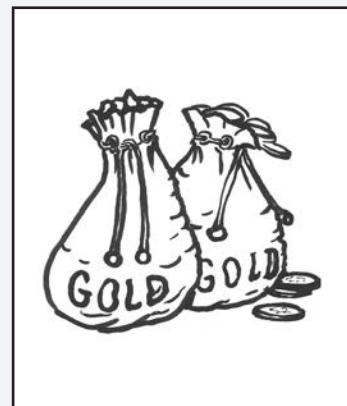
Jesus tells another picture story in Matthew 25:13–30. In many ways, it is the same as the picture story before it about the ten girls in Matthew 25:1–13. Both picture stories talk about how to get ready for Jesus to come back. Both picture stories also deal with Christians who are ready and Christians who are not ready. Both picture stories show us what will happen to Christians who do not take care of the things God gives them. They will lose their gift of eternal life.

The “ ‘bags of money’ ” (Matthew 25:15, ERV), or “ ‘bags of gold’ ” (NirV), are word pictures for talents. “The talents are word pictures for the special gifts the Holy Spirit gives to us. The talents also mean all our natural skills that God gave to us when we were born.”—*The SDA Bible Commentary [explanation]*, volume 5, page 510; adapted.

All the servants in the picture story about the talents got talents from their master. Do you see that the talents belonged to the master (Matthew 25:14)? The master gave these talents to his servants. But first the master “ ‘decided how much each servant would be able to care for’ ” (Matthew 25:15, ERV). The master trusted each of his servants with his gifts. These servants were managers of these things. They did not own these gifts. But they were responsible for them. That is why when the master came back, he “ ‘asked the servants what they did with his money’ ” (Matthew 25:19, ERV).

Spiritual gifts come from the Holy Spirit (read 1 Corinthians 12:1–11, 28–31; Ephesians 4:11). Even those believers who think they have a small gift or a gift that is not very important should remember something. When they get their gift, they are getting the One who gave them the gift—the Holy Spirit. He is the best gift of all.

We must surrender ourselves to the Holy Spirit. Then He will give us the gifts He has for us. We must not make the mistake of the lazy servant. The Holy Spirit gave him a gift. But he did not improve it. Jesus said he was “ ‘useless’ ” (Matthew 25:30, ICB) and “ ‘worthless’ ” (NirV). Let that be a lesson to all of us living in these last days.



**The “ ‘bags of money’ ” (Matthew 25:15, ERV), or “ ‘bags of gold’ ” (NirV), are word pictures for the special gifts the Holy Spirit gives to us.**

**ADDITIONAL THOUGHT:** “The servant with the smallest gift was the only servant who did not improve his talent. This part of the picture story is a warning to all Christians who feel that their gifts are too small to be used to serve Jesus. That is no excuse. These believers would be very happy to do some big task for God. But they feel they do not have to do anything at all because they can do only small things. They are wrong. The Lord gives us His gifts to test us. The man in the picture story who failed to improve his one talent showed that he was not a loyal servant. What if God had given him five talents instead? That man would have done the same thing with the five talents that he did with the one talent: he would have buried them all in the ground. His wrong use of the one talent showed that he did not think the gifts from heaven were important at all.

“ ‘Whoever can be trusted with small things can also be trusted with big things’ (Luke 16:10, ERV). Often, we do not think the little things are important because they are small. But the little things of life really give us much of the training we really need. Really, the small things of life are just as important and necessary to the Christian life as the bigger things are.”—Ellen G. White, *Christ’s Object Lessons*, pages 355, 356; adapted.



“The little things of life really give us much of the training we really need.”  
—Ellen G. White, *Christ’s Object Lessons*, page 356; adapted.

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- ① People often have believed in the idea that humans could make a true heaven on earth. What were some of those ideas? Why have they all failed?
- ② Why does obedience to God make our faith grow stronger? How does that answer help us understand that “faith that does nothing is dead!” (James 2:26, ERV)? Think about all the trouble ahead of God’s people who “obey God’s commands” (Revelation 14:12, ERV). Why is it so important for us now to be getting ready for the trouble ahead?
- ③ What warning does the picture story of the ten girls in Matthew 25:1–13 give us? All ten girls seemed the same on the outside. They looked and acted alike. So, how can we make sure that we are not lying to ourselves the same as the five foolish girls did?