



## Lesson 9

### Chapter 25: Be Ready for Jesus' Return

Chapter 25 tells us about the judgement at the return of Jesus. It contains two parables and a picture of what will happen when he comes. The whole chapter gives us a clear warning that we must be ready and waiting for Jesus to come back and shows us how we can prepare to meet him.

The Bible teaches us that when the Lord comes, everybody who has heard the Gospel message and understood it will have to account for the way they have lived and behaved. Those who have died will be resurrected and taken to be with those who are still alive – they will be together at the Judgement Seat when Christ returns. Faithful disciples will be given the reward of immortal life in the Kingdom of God. Unfaithful people will be sent away by the Lord; they will die and remain in the grave forever.

#### The Parable of the Wise and Foolish Maidens (25:1-13)

The ten virgins, or maidens, represent Christian believers. They all took lamps with them but only five had spare oil for light. Psalm 119:105 says: *"Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path"*. Oil represents the Word of God which helps us prepare for the coming of the Lord Jesus. Reading it and acting on what we read is essential in our lives.

All the maidens fell asleep while waiting for the bridegroom. This represents the death of disciples before Jesus returns.

When the bridegroom came, all the maidens woke up but only the wise ones had oil for their lamps. The foolish ones tried to get oil but had no time to do this before the call came to go to the wedding. The wise ones went in and the door was shut leaving the foolish outside.

It is very important for us to learn the lesson of the maidens from this parable. Now is the time to put our lives right with the Lord, when Jesus returns it will be too late.

**The Wise Maidens** Represent people who have made a commitment to be disciples of the Lord Jesus. They live their lives following his example as he commanded. Their faith lasts to the very end of their lives so that when Jesus returns and they are resurrected from the dead, they are ready answer the call and they go immediately to meet him. Because of this, they are invited into his kingdom.

**The Foolish Maidens** Represent people who made a commitment to be disciples of the Lord Jesus. However they do not follow his example in their lives. When they are resurrected from the dead they realise that they are not ready to answer the call to go to be with the Lord. Later they try to go but find it is too late and they are rejected and not allowed into the kingdom.

Notice that the maidens only had **one** opportunity to respond to the call to go to be with the bridegroom. This tells us of the urgency of our response to the Gospel now for we never know when our lives may end.

We must all use God's Word to help us grow spiritually now; otherwise the Lord may say to us that he never knew us. This is the same judgement as in Matthew 7:21-23, which was given to people who thought they were serving the Lord Jesus by their deeds.

#### The Parable of the Talents (25:14-30)

A talent was a very large sum of money. This parable teaches us that the blessings we have been given – our different abilities, opportunities and above all, the blessing of the Gospel – are to be used to serve God. Two of the servants in the parable understood this and they set to work. Both doubled the number of talents they were given. Although the third did not have as much ability as the others, he hid the one talent that he did have – he let it remain idle. He made excuses for his laziness and was severely punished. We are not equal in ability, but should make full use of what we have in service to our Master.





### Lord, Lord!

Three times the Gospels tell us of people rejected by Jesus but who protest to him calling him 'Lord, Lord.

"On that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?'

And then will I declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.'

(Matthew 7:21-23)

"Afterward the other virgins came also, saying, 'Lord, lord, open to us.

But he answered, 'Truly, I say to you, I do not know you.'

(Matthew 25:11-12)

"Why do you call me 'Lord, Lord,' and not do what I tell you?" (Luke 6:46)

Those who do not build their lives on the foundation of Jesus Christ will be totally rejected by him at his return. To some this will come as an awful shock. They will protest that the things they have done should save them saying '*Lord, Lord!*' but Jesus will tell them that he never knew them!

### Separating the Sheep from the Goats (25:31- 46)

Verse 31 refers to the return of the Lord Jesus to the earth in great glory. Jews and Gentiles will be brought to judgement before him. In this section we are shown that we should help others who are in need, especially those who are brothers or sisters of the Lord Jesus. It is a privilege to help them because the Lord Jesus considers that we have helped him by what we have done to others.



## Chapter 26: Betrayed and Arrested

### Just before the Passover (26:1-16)

The opening of chapter 26 reveals Jesus' great courage. He knew exactly what was going to happen to him, and yet would be obedient unto his Father, even though this would take him to the cross.

The priests and elders in verses 3-5 were cowardly in comparison. They knew that Jerusalem would be crowded at Passover time so they wanted to arrest and kill Jesus without starting a riot. They plotted secretly to take him.

The woman in verses 6-13 who showed her loving care was Mary of Bethany (see John 12:1-3), whose brother, Lazarus, had been raised from death by Jesus. In her action she was, in a way, preparing for Jesus' burial.

There is a contrast between the willingness of Mary to spend her money on Jesus and Judas Iscariot who accepted money to betray him.

### BACKGROUND INFORMATION: THE PASSOVER

The Passover was a Jewish feast held every year about Easter time. It reminded the Jews how God brought them out of Egypt where they had been slaves. They killed and ate a lamb at the Feast (see Exodus 12).

Jesus died at the time the Jews were killing their lambs. The night before he died, Jesus ate the Last Supper with his Apostles. This was a special Passover arranged by Jesus himself, not the normal Passover celebrated by the Jews, and no lamb is mentioned.

The Passover Lamb	Jesus
Male	Male
Without blemish	Sinless
Kept for 3 ½ years	Taught for 3 ½ years
Killed so that its blood could save the Israelites from the plague of death (Exodus 12).	Gave his life so that others (Jew & Gentile) can live.  "Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us" (1Corinthians 5:7).

The Jewish Passover looked forward to the death of Christ. Our Breaking of Bread (Communion Service) looks back to the same event.

### The Last Supper (26:17-29)

At the meal in verses 20-29, Jesus carried out the usual duty of the head of a household by giving thanks for the bread. It was then shared among those round the table together with the cup of wine. But Jesus gave this meal, often called the Last Supper, a special meaning. He commanded his disciples to share the bread and wine as symbols – reminders – of his body and his blood. For almost two thousand years, Christian believers have shared bread and wine together in this simple act of remembrance.

### Gethsemane (26:30-56)

After the meal Jesus went to the Mount of Olives with the eleven remaining disciples, knowing that all of them would leave him before the night was over.





They reached the olive garden of Gethsemane, and Jesus spoke to his Father in prayer. His words showed the battle he had within himself. Luke (who was a doctor) tells us of the physical impact on the Lord Jesus that his temptations caused and the Letter to the Hebrews tells us of the turmoil within his mind.

“And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat became like great drops of blood falling to the ground” (Luke 22:44)

“Consider him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself, so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted. In your struggle against sin you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood.” (Hebrews 12:3-4)

It would have been much easier to avoid the shame and suffering but he knew this was not right. He was determined to do his Father's will.

It was not long before Judas led a heavily armed group to the garden. Their swords and clubs were unnecessary. John's Gospel tells us that Peter cut off someone's ear and Luke tells us that Jesus healed the man. Again we are reminded that all these things were happening to fulfil the Scriptures.



### Judas Iscariot

Judas Iscariot had left the others during the Last Supper (John 13:30). He knew where Jesus would go later that night and since it would be dark and away from the crowds it would be a good time to arrange his arrest.

Luke 22:3 says that satan entered into Judas – ideas of betraying Jesus developed in the mind of Judas. (The word 'satan' means 'adversary' or 'opposer' and is used in a similar way in Acts 5:3, 4.) Our sinful thoughts are our greatest adversary!

We do not know why Judas betrayed Jesus but John 12:6 tells us he was a thief. A few days earlier the crowd had shouted, “*Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord*” (Luke 19:38). Perhaps Judas had been looking forward to being an important leader in the kingdom that he expected Jesus to set up at that time, and so he may have been bitterly disappointed that Jesus did not fight against the Romans, but instead talked about dying.

Much earlier, after the 5,000 were fed, Jesus told the disciples that one of them was a devil (John 6:70) and the Gospel writer adds that it was Judas of whom Jesus spoke. Notice the word 'devil' is an ordinary word that can be used about a person. The word 'devil' means 'slanderer' or 'false accuser' and is often used to describe man's wickedness. Judas Iscariot had wrong thoughts and ideas which led him to betray Jesus. Imagine living and working with someone you know will hand you over to a dreadful death! But Jesus treated him with the same love that he showed to all his disciples.

### Jesus before the Jewish Council (26:57-75)

Jesus was put on trial before the high priest and the Sanhedrin (the council of leading Jews). By arranging for false evidence to be brought, they broke the ninth commandment (see Exodus 20:16). By remaining silent Jesus fulfilled yet another Scriptural prophecy. Look at Isaiah 53:5-7 – part of a chapter which predicted the sufferings of Jesus.

“But he was wounded for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his stripes we are healed.

All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so he opened not his mouth.” (Isaiah 53:5-7)



John 2:19-21 shows us that when Jesus said, *"Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up"*, he was speaking of his body and not the Temple building. The prophecy Jesus made about his death and resurrection was used to condemn him at his trial!

At last the high priest challenged him in God's name, and Jesus, unafraid, agreed that he was indeed the Messiah, the Son of God. The high priest accused him of blasphemy and Jesus was tortured.

Then Peter denied he knew his Lord, as Jesus had said he would. Peter went out and cried bitterly.

## Chapter 27: The Crucifixion

### Judas realised he had sinned (27:3-10)

Roman law did not allow the Jews to put a person to death, so they took Jesus to the Roman governor, Pontius Pilate, to ask permission to execute him. It was important for them that Jesus was crucified as the Law of Moses taught that this was such a shameful death that anyone who died like this was cursed by God.

Judas realised he had betrayed an innocent man and returned the thirty silver coins to the priests and elders. They showed no kindness or concern in their reply to him, and Judas left and later committed suicide.

When the chief priests decided to buy the Potter's Field for a burial place with these thirty pieces of silver they were fulfilling a prophecy made by Jeremiah about 600 years earlier.

### Jesus before Pilate (27:15-26)

Jesus remained silent before Pilate who was puzzled by his behaviour. Surely a prisoner would try to defend himself if he thought he was going to be put to death? Pilate realised Jesus was innocent. There was a custom of releasing a prisoner at the Passover feast and Pilate saw a chance to set Jesus free. But the people, urged on by their leaders, demanded that Barabbas, a convicted terrorist, be freed instead and Pilate, too weak or too afraid to act in the right way, gave in to the crowd.

Pilate tried to show his innocence by washing his hands, but the Jews were ready to take responsibility for the death of Jesus. The words of verse 25 are amongst the most terrible ever spoken, and the Jewish people did indeed suffer following their rejection of God's Son. This does not mean that the death of Jesus gives people an excuse for persecuting the Jews.

Luke's Gospel tells us that Pilate sent Jesus to Herod. It also adds,

"And Herod and Pilate became friends with each other that very day, for before this they had been at enmity with each other." (Luke 23:12)

We see a picture of a nation united in its rejection of the Son of God and in a desire to see him put to death - even the religious leaders who were usually opposed to each other were united in trying to kill Jesus! We should not get involved with people who may encourage us to join with their evil ways.

Scourging was very cruel. Prisoners were whipped with a lash containing metal or other hard pieces so their backs bled. The shame associated with the various trials and with hanging on a cross was great. Yet Jesus did not protest at any time. He knew that was essential for the salvation of men and women.

"For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. For one will scarcely die for a righteous person- though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die; but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us." (Romans 5:6-8)

### Mocking and Crucifixion (27:27-56)

Jesus was mocked by both Jews and Romans, it continued even as he hung on the cross. But, despite the dreadful pain, Jesus thought about the needs of others - he asked John to look after his mother, and even asked his Father to forgive those who were putting him to death. What an example! Whilst on the cross Jesus saw Scripture fulfilled as the soldiers cast lots for his clothes (Psalm 22:18).





As death drew near Jesus spoke the opening words of Psalm 22, they are recorded in Matt: 27:46. This Psalm helps us to understand a little of how Jesus felt when he was crucified. The Psalm starts with a cry of loneliness and distress, but ends with a cry of triumph. *"It shall be told of the Lord to the coming generation; they shall come and proclaim his righteousness to a people yet unborn, that he has done it"*.

### **The Sinless Son of God**

Three times in Luke's Gospel Pilate says that he could find no fault in Jesus (Luke 23:4,14,22); neither could Herod find Jesus guilty of the charges brought against him (Luke 23:15). Even Pilate's wife described Jesus as righteous. The thief on the cross and the centurion both knew that Jesus was innocent.

If the evil leaders of the Jews could have found Jesus guilty of any sin then they would have done so. We are left in no doubt that Jesus was completely without sin – a truly wonderful achievement! His death was the end of a life long struggle to obey God and not give in to the desires of his human nature.

We die because death is the punishment for our sins (Romans 6:23). But we have seen that Jesus was sinless so why did he die?

We find the answer in Paul's letter to the Philippians.

The Apostle Paul tells us about Jesus:

"...who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men.

And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross."

(Philippians 2:6-8)

This lovely, perfect man who was always obedient to his Father and who never sinned had been asked by God for one last great act of faith, to die on the cross believing that God would raise him from the dead.

As Jesus died he knew he had done God's will perfectly; he gave a great cry, *"It is finished!"* He had completely conquered sin. The greatest battle of all time had been fought and won. The curtain of the temple, a symbol of the separation of people from God due to sin, was torn in two. The way for people to approach their Creator was now open.

### **Burial (27:57-66)**

Jesus died about 3pm and the Passover Feast started at 6pm. It was important that the body was taken and buried before the start of the feast as it was a holiday on which Jews did not work.

A wealthy disciple, called Joseph of Arimathea, went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus so he could give it a proper burial in the tomb he had been keeping for his own death. The prophecy of Isaiah 53 was fulfilled as the body of Jesus was placed in a rich man's grave.

Although Joseph was helped by Nicodemus, the anointing of the body with ointment and spices according to Jewish custom was not completed before the feast started. Some of the women who had followed Jesus watched as he was buried. How sad they must have felt. Then they went home to prepare spices and ointments to return and finish the job after the feast was over.

The chief priests and Pharisees arranged for the tomb to be guarded, with a seal attached to the large stone which blocked the entrance – but no guard on earth was prepared for what took place next.



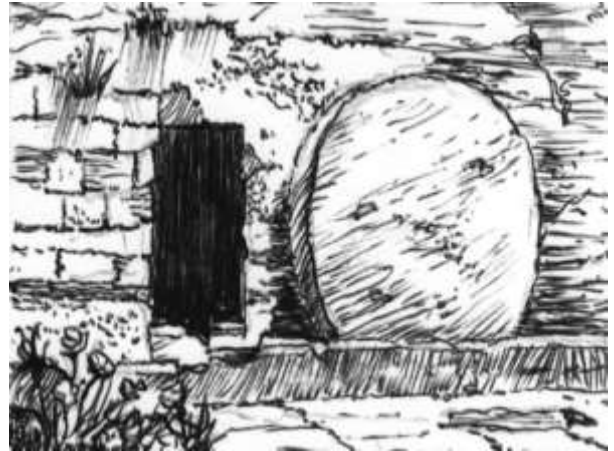
## Chapter 28: He is Risen!

### The Women visit the Grave (28:1-10)

Jesus' body was laid in the tomb just before the Passover Feast began. The women had been unable to complete the anointing of his body with spices and ointments, according to Jewish custom.

They returned to the tomb on Sunday morning intending to complete the anointing of the body. How shocked they must have been to find the tomb empty and the stone rolled away.

Matthew describes the angel at the tomb differently to the other Gospel writers. He tells us it was *'the angel of the Lord'* with a dazzling appearance came with the glory of God. He came down from heaven to roll away the stone that closed off the tomb and bring the message of Jesus' resurrection; his presence had terrified the men guarding it.



The angel spoke gently to the women. He told them that Jesus had been raised to life – as he had foretold. The women *'with fear and great joy'* went to give the news to the other disciples. Then the Lord Jesus himself met them. Calming their fears, he told them to tell his disciples to meet him in Galilee.

These women were the first to know about the most wonderful event in the history of the world – the resurrection to immortal life of God's own Son. The Lord God Himself, Creator of the universe, provided His only Son to save mankind from sin and death. He loved His Son but watched him die a most painful and shameful death so that we can have the hope of eternal life. If we are truly thankful for what has been done for us then we will want to praise and give glory to God in the way in which we live our lives.

We need to look at the other Gospels to understand some of the details of this great day. We can put them like this.

- All of the women go to the tomb together and learn about the resurrection of Jesus.
- The women then appear to split up; Mary Magdalene goes to find Peter and John and takes them to the tomb. They see that the body of Jesus is not there, John understands that Jesus has been raised from the dead.
- The two disciples depart to their own homes leaving Mary in the garden.
- Jesus appears to Mary – the first of the resurrection appearances.
- Jesus then appears to the other women on their way to find the other disciples.
- When the women tell the disciples about the resurrection they do not believe them.

Later that same day, in the evening, Jesus appears to all the disciples together. He said to them,

“Why are you troubled, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? See my hands and my feet, that it is I myself. Touch me, and see. For a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have.” (Luke 24:38-39)

To prove he really was alive in a bodily form the Lord Jesus showed the marks of crucifixion in his hands and feet. He even ate food to convince them they were not seeing a spirit.

When they believed he told them *'Peace be unto you'*. This is what he promised them before his death (John 14:27).

Jesus did not promise peace in the way the world understands peace. One of the consequences of sin is that it makes us enemies of God (Romans 5:10). The death of Jesus brings forgiveness of our sins and so we can have peace with God if we really believe these things.



### Other Appearances of the Lord Jesus

We know from Luke 24 and Acts 1 that the Lord Jesus did not ascend to the right hand of his Father until forty days after his resurrection.

After he ascended, the apostles would be responsible for preaching the Gospel, but they were not yet ready for the work. So the Lord Jesus spent time with them teaching them from the Old Testament the details about himself and the kingdom that they should so they could pass it on to others.

“Then he said to them, “These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that *everything written about me* in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.”

Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, and said to them, “Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, and that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem.” (Luke 24:44-47)

“He presented himself alive to them after his suffering by many proofs, appearing to them during forty days and speaking about *the kingdom of God*” (Acts 1:3)

Finally their eyes were opened and they fully understood all about him.

There are important lessons for us from this. Firstly we see that the Old Testament is important, we cannot learn all we need to know about God's purpose just from the New Testament. Secondly we learn that **what** we believe is also important. The disciples were not ready to preach until they had a clear understanding of God's purpose from the Bible.

Later, in the book of Acts we find that people were only baptized when they understood these things.

“But when they believed Philip as he preached good news about *the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ*, they were baptized, both men and women.” (Acts 8:12)

Notice that their beliefs were exactly the same as the things that the Lord Jesus taught after his resurrection – about himself and about the kingdom. These beliefs about ‘*the Kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ*’ are described in Acts 2 as ‘the Apostles teaching’ and only those who accepted this were baptized by them.

In 1 Corinthians 15:3-7, the Apostle Paul tells us that Jesus Christ appeared to many other people too. The Gospel writers each record only a few of the events of this period.

### The Command to Preach (28:16-20)

Matthew closes his Gospel with a final command from the Lord Jesus that his disciples should go and preach to all nations, baptizing them and teaching them to obey his commandments. The Lord Jesus promised that, although they would not see him with their eyes, he would always be with those who serve and follow him, ‘*Behold I am with you always, to the end of the age*’. Throughout the ages, many Christians have been aware that he has kept this promise.

Some weeks later the Lord Jesus ascended to his Father in heaven. As the disciples watched him leave angels said:

“Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven.” (Acts 1:11)

How much this world needs the Lord Jesus Christ! May he return very soon, and find us ready and waiting for him.

**Even so come Lord Jesus!**





Name	
Address	
Reference Number	
Tutor	

Answers to most questions can be found in the lessons or Bible passages given. Please write your answers on this question paper and return them in the envelope provided:

**Questions on Chapter 25**

1a In what way were five of the maidens foolish?

1b What is the lesson for us in this parable?

2a Why were some given more talents than others?

2b What lessons can we learn from this parable?

3 Verse 31 says that Christ Jesus will sit on his throne in glory. Where will this throne be? (See Matthew 5:35 and Jeremiah 3:17).

**Questions on Chapter 26**

1a Why were the disciples annoyed?

1b Why didn't Jesus agree with them?

1c Which disciple most wanted the perfume to be sold (see John 12:1-8)?

Read Matthew 26:17-35 again and also 1 Corinthians 11:23-29.

2a What does the bread represent?

2b What does the wine represent, and what does it say about this in Matthew 26:28?

2c Who took part in this simple feast – the crowds, or only Jesus' disciples?

2d What feast were the Jews keeping about this time?

3a How did Peter deny Jesus?

3b In what ways do we deny Jesus?

4 To whom did Jesus turn for help at this difficult time?

**Questions on Chapter 27**

1 Why did Judas Iscariot kill himself?

2 What are we told about Barabbas? (See also Luke 23:19).

3 Which people said: "His blood be on us and on our children!"?

4a What was written on the cross above Jesus' head (verse 37)?

4b Give another verse in Matthew 27 where Jesus is called a king

4c What crown was he given to wear during his trial?

4d When will Jesus reign in glory?

5 What unusual events happened as Jesus died?

6 Why did the chief priests and Pharisees decide that the tomb of Jesus should be guarded?

**Questions on Chapter 28**

1 Why was the tomb empty?

The chief priests told the soldiers to tell a lie.

2a What was the lie?

2b Why did they want the people to believe this lie?

3 The Lord Jesus commanded his disciples to baptize people. Why is baptism important?

4 Where is the Lord Jesus Christ now?