



Scripture assures us that Jesus is coming again, but are we living in expectation of His coming? How many of us live as the servants He has called us to be? How many of us will be ready when he comes? As you study this section of Scripture, may you be challenged to live in ready expectation of His arrival, which could occur at any time.

THE FAITHFUL SERVANT AND THE EVIL SERVANT

Read Matthew 24:45–51.

1. Look back to Matthew 24:3. Where was Jesus and to whom was He speaking?
 - a. What was the topic of conversation?

2. Jesus told this story in response to the disciples' question, "And what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?" (Matthew 24:3). Read a portion of His answer in verses 36–44. Who knows the "day and hour"?
 - a. What will the days before "the coming of the Son of Man" be like?

ONCE *Upon a Time*

- b. Read Genesis 6:5 and describe the state of mankind during the days of Noah.

3. What instructions did Jesus give in Matthew 24:42, 44?
 - a. What is revealed about the timing of Jesus' return?

4. According to Matthew 24:45, what responsibilities did the master give his servant?
 - a. Write Jesus' response to the servant's obedience (verse 46).

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- 1 Peter 5:2–4

- Revelation 2:10

6. This story is also about a servant who was not obedient. Using Matthew 24:48, describe his attitude.

a. Thinking he would not have to answer for his actions, in what two behaviors did the evil servant engage?

PERSONAL: *This servant was so occupied with doing evil that he was not doing what the master had called him to do. Although we may not be beating our fellow servants and eating and drinking with the drunkards, what are some things that distract us or prevent us from doing our Master's will?*

7. Looking at verse 50, how did Jesus describe the return of this servant's master?

8. Read 1 Thessalonians 5:2–3 and record Paul's warning.

- a. Now record the comforting words of the next two verses, 1 Thessalonians 5:4–5.

PERSONAL: 1 Thessalonians 5:6 reiterates what Jesus said in Matthew 24:42, 44 regarding watching and being ready for Christ's return. What do you want Jesus to find you doing when He returns? What would you need to be ready should He return today? If there is anything on your list, please do it now!

THE WISE AND FOOLISH VIRGINS

Read Matthew 25:1–13.

11. Read Matthew 9:15. In light of this verse, whom would you say the bridegroom represents in this parable?

12. Jesus said the kingdom of heaven would be like ten virgins who did two things. What are those two things?
 - a. In this story of the wise and foolish virgins, what was it that determined which were wise and which were foolish?

 - b. Who do you think each set of virgins represents?

13. How many of the virgins fell asleep while waiting for the bridegroom?

a. When and how were they awakened?

b. What were they told to do?

14. What action did the virgins take to prepare for the arrival of the bridegroom?

ONCE *Upon a Time*

a. What did the foolish virgins realize, and how did they try to fix the problem?

b. What was the response of the wise virgins?

15. In this story, all ten virgins had lamps, but only the wise had oil. Oil, in Scripture, is a symbol of the Holy Spirit. How important is it to have the Holy Spirit? (Hint: Romans 8:9)

16. What three things happened while the foolish virgins went to buy oil?

a. What did the foolish bridesmaids do when they returned and found the door shut?

b. What was the bridegroom's response?

17. How do Jesus' words in Matthew 7:21–23 mirror this parable?

18. What are Jesus' instructions in Matthew 25:13?

19. According to the following verses, how does Jesus know those who belong to Him?

- John 8:31

- John 8:47

- John 10:27

- John 14:21, 23–24

- 1 John 2:4–5

a. What wonderful assurance do those who belong to Jesus find in John 10:28?

PERSONAL: Both of these parables stress the importance of waiting and watching for the Lord's second coming, which is going to happen suddenly and at a time we do not know. We can tell by the signs that the time is near, but no one knows the day or the hour. Another similarity in these parables is the picture they present of believers versus unbelievers. The faithful servant and the wise virgins represent believers... serving the Master faithfully until His coming and being prepared and watching for His coming. The evil servant and the foolish virgins are distracted and disobedient...not faithfully serving and not prepared for Jesus' return. In which category do you fall...prepared and waiting? Unbeliever? Not sure? If you are an unbeliever or aren't sure where you stand with the Lord, please talk to your group leader and make your salvation sure.

