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Matthew 25  
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Jews, Christians, and Muslims are waiting for the coming of the Messiah. These three religions have different expectations of the Messiah, and they prepare for his coming differently. Christians and Jewish Zionists firmly believe that they must destroy the Muslim Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem and build the third Jewish Temple to ensure the coming of Messiah. It does not matter for them how many people are suffering on a daily basis because of this teaching.

Muslims, in particular, ISIS wants to establish the Islamic state to fulfill the prophecy of the coming of their messianic figure. They are waiting for their Messiah, whose name is the Mahdi. Mahdi will impose sharia law,<sup>1</sup> and lead the Muslims to victory before the end of the world.<sup>2</sup>

They also believe that Jesus will come back to join the Mahdi and "force non-Muslims to convert or die."<sup>3</sup> ISIS is watching for the second coming of Christ. ISIS wants to hasten his arrival by engaging in enslaving, raping, and torturing innocents who are infidels in ISIS perspective.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.nationalreview.com/article/423852/islamic-extremists-are-trying-hasten-coming-mahdi-joel-c-rosenberg>

<sup>2</sup> Ibid

<sup>3</sup> Ibid

What about us? How to prepare ourselves for the second coming of Jesus? What does Jesus expect from us? Building the third temple or killing innocent people?

In Matthew's time, Christians got frustrated as they were waiting for Christ's return. They became anxious. So, Matthew shared with them Jesus' parable of the ten bridesmaids or ten virgins to teach early Christians and us how to get ready for the second coming of Christ without losing hope.

Jesus describes his kingdom as ten virgins waiting for the bridegroom.

Marriage in first-century Palestine is similar to modern day Palestine. Wedding "began after sunset when the groom went to the home of his bride and led her in a celebratory procession to a great banquet being prepared at the couple's new home."<sup>4</sup> Virgins or unmarried women had to lead the procession by carrying torches.

In the parable, the stupid five bridesmaids did not bring extra flasks of oil with them, but the five intelligent bridesmaids did. The bridegroom delayed and the ten bridesmaids became drowsy and fell asleep. At midnight the bridegroom arrived. The smart bridesmaids got up and trimmed their lamps. The stupid

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<sup>4</sup> Mitch, Curtis. *The Gospel of Matthew, The (Catholic Commentary on Sacred Scripture)* (p. 319). Baker Academic. Kindle Edition.

bridesmaids realized that they did not bring enough oil. As a result, the smart bridesmaids entered the banquet with the bridegroom, and the door was shut. The stupid bridesmaids could not join the wedding feast.

The parable is summed up in verse 13. "Keep awake, therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour." Keep awake or "be vigilant." The bridegroom is representative of Christ, and the ten bridesmaids are representative of the church. Jesus is encouraging us to be vigilant because we do not know when he is going to come back. How to live in constant vigilance? Jesus does not ask us to use violence to hasten his return as ISIS does. Jesus does not ask us to hurry up in building the third Temple in Jerusalem to accelerate his return as Christian Zionists do. So, how to prepare for his second coming and be vigilant?

Jesus advises us to be smart like the ten virgins. To be intelligent and wise means to have oil all the time. Having oil prepares you to meet Jesus Christ. Oil in the gospel of Matthew "corresponds to the performance of good work."<sup>5</sup> For example, in the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus compares good deeds to the light of a lamp that must "shine before others" (5:16). Unlike ISIS that requires violence to prepare oneself for the coming of the Mahdi and Jesus Christ, Jesus needs us to be vigilant and on guard in doing the works of righteousness. He

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<sup>5</sup> Mitch, Curtis. Gospel of Matthew, The (Catholic Commentary on Sacred Scripture) (p. 321). Baker Academic. Kindle Edition.

encourages us to let our light shine before others. Jesus encourages us not grow tired of doing good work but continues to show God's love with excitement.

"Every disciple is offered the grace and opportunity to continue in good works, to acquire the oil that he or she will need when the Lord returns. Only those who do so will be recognized by the bridegroom and welcomed into the nuptial celebration of the kingdom."<sup>6</sup>

Do not lose hope but keep the vision of Christ's return and wait faithfully his second coming even though he delays. Keep on bearing witness to Jesus by welcoming the stranger, feeding the hungry, visiting the sick and imprisoned (25:31-46), and making disciples in all the world (28:19-20).

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<sup>6</sup> Mitch, Curtis. Gospel of Matthew, The (Catholic Commentary on Sacred Scripture) (p. 321). Baker Academic. Kindle Edition.