

"The OTHER Five Virgins"

Matthew 25 Presents a Wedding Scenario that has long been Understood in the Context of JUST our being Saved or Lost. Actually, there's More to this Message than meets the Casual Eye. What REAL Point is Jesus Making?

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Innumerable sermons over the centuries have been given that focused on the well-known passage beginning Matthew chapter 25, which relates the situation of ten virgins, five wise and five foolish, ALL anxiously awaiting the appearance of their beloved Bridegroom. Invariably, the take on its message is that of being accepted or rejected for salvation, based on ones' readiness.

It isn't entirely illogical, but when carefully noting the specifics of this parable's scene, an even more revealing message becomes apparent.

An Inter-related Set

It was given just two days before Christ's arrest, (Matt. 26:1) and is set into a **series** of parables that themselves present an overall context. Ending chapter 24 is the Parable of 'the Fig Tree', presenting the fact that the present generation would be the one to see the return of the Son of man in power, and that it is incumbent upon all to '**watch**', lest it find us **not** in a state of expectant readiness, as it surely will with most of humanity. Following that, the theme is developed that not only are we urged to be watchful, but that we, as servants of our Lord, are to also be faithfully performing our expected and profitable service. (Matt. 24:46)

The parable immediately following the one of the 'Ten Virgins', that of 'the Talents', specifically relates to all disciples, and repeats the matter of readiness but with productive gain, stressing the prospect of rejection should we be too reticent or too fearful in fulfilling our assigned enterprise.

This entire narrative was presented **privately** to His Disciples, not to the general public, (being part of what is called the Olivet Prophecy). So, we

should note that these 'Parables' were not given with the same purposeful vagueness¹ intended for the general public, but were aimed directly at, and intended to be clear to, His True Disciples. Notice, He doesn't need to re-explain it afterward.

All Nations to be Evaluated

The final Parable in this pre-Passover set, deals with the 'Judgment of all the Nations', completing the picture of that **vital** part of God's Plan under-explained previously, showing how those who were never afforded opportunity for salvation would be brought back and placed in a time-setting allowing them to be evaluated based on their spiritual character. As verse 32 explains, all will be gathered before Him. For that to happen, they would have to be in a conscious state, also affirmed by their verbal exchanges with their Lord, as we see in verses 37 to 45. But for them to be in a conscious state, their being gathered together (just and unjust **together**, please notice) must represent a period of time after a resurrection but prior to any sentencing to their just rewards. This passage is also known as 'the Sheep from the Goats' parable, which presents a distinct resurrection from those generally understood. The same one Christ also referred to in places like Matthew 12:41-42. (This fantastic resurrection is explained in detail in other articles such as, "*The Rejected Resurrection*".)

But, once we see more of the general idea being addressed in the greater context of this set of related situations, as posed in this private 'sermon', we can better appreciate the situation with regard

¹ Parables were intended to **obscure** certain things from those not being called at the time, as explained in Matthew 13:10-15, quoting Isaiah 6:9-10.

to these ‘Ten Virgins’. An ‘overlay’ in this set is the relationship between the disciple and his Lord. In these parables, we see these issues: 1) Readiness for the second coming, 2) Our need for faithful performance using the talents invested in us, 3) that not all will be successful in their quest, and 4) that initial non-attainment isn’t necessarily an automatic death sentence, but additionally, 5) that there **is** an appropriate time for each and every person who ever lived, each in his proper time-frame! Christ brings us from the individual Disciple thru the greater Church scene then to a future inclusion of the full number who have ever lived. His Full Plan encompasses **all** without exception, but each in his own order. (1st Cor. 15:23) That in itself is a hopeful message! It should also be ours’!

Considering the Ten Virgins

Perhaps it’s the added component of that special relationship between Christ and His Bride that sets this parable’s message apart. The matter was heavy on Christ’s mind, as he was about to propose marriage to His prospective Bride, about a day later during His last earthly Passover observance.² When reading the narrative, we should remain aware that these were a people **special** to Christ, a people committed to Him, not at all like the generation we read of in the latter verses of the chapter.

In Matthew 25, we find the following narrative:

1: *“Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto **ten virgins**, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. 2: And five of them were wise, and five were foolish. 3: They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them: 4: But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. 5: While the bridegroom tarried, **they all slumbered** and slept. 6: And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him. 7: Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps. 8: And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for **our lamps are gone out**. 9: But the wise answered, saying, Not so; lest there be not enough for us and you: but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for*

² Presenting the cup, Jesus borrowed a phrase from a formal Jewish marriage proposal. See my article “*Passover and the Bride of Christ*” for a more thorough explanation.

*yourselfes. 10: And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and **they that were ready** went in with him to the marriage: and **the door was shut**. 11: Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. 12: But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, **I know you not**. 13: Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh.”*

It is the common take on this parable that accounts for the general mis-understanding as to its greater point. With most, the issue of salvation or condemnation dominates their thinking. With that perceptual limitation, it wouldn’t occur to the average worshipper to consider more. But once we realize that there are different resurrections, (with one better than another³) and differing levels of relationship between God and man, the oft posed contrast here of merely being saved or lost misses the mark.

What Jesus’ marriage proposal, offered by the cup, reveals is that there’s a very special relationship between Christ and His Bride. The opportunity to enter that relationship is time-limited, the ‘betrothal period’ (like being engaged) is limited to the interval between the first offering of the cup to His chosen Disciples at that New Testament Passover and the ‘fulfillment’ of the opportunity period occurring when He formally accepts their consensual determination to become betrothed to Him, by partaking of that cup Himself with His resurrected disciples ‘in the Kingdom’.⁴

This explains the reason for His refusal to partake of that cup at its first presentation. It was to leave the opportunity period **open for others** throughout all the coming generations of the Christian Era. There’s a select echelon of ‘called out’ individuals who will comprise **the Bride of Christ. Those counted worthy to attain the first resurrection.** There is another echelon to be called after that door

³ A ‘better resurrection’ is referred to in Hebrews 11:35

⁴ Explaining why He deferred drinking at that time: Luke 22:18 “*For I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come.*” and Matthew 26:29, “*But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father’s kingdom.*” My article “*Passover and the Bride of Christ*” explains the cultural ceremony incorporated into the Passover in detail.

of opportunity is closed, just prior to the Marriage Supper, who will be called to conversion, but not in time for being part of the Bride! That awareness is the key to understanding the real intent of the Ten Virgins parable. (And I suppose this distinction is what qualifies this narrative as a parable, in that God's chosen Saints will come to see the point, while those not destined to be among His Bride might not at this time!) There will be a great number of individuals called AFTER the Marriage Supper of the Lamb, called jointly by Him **and** His Bride, as we can see in such places as Revelation 22:17, except these will be the children of that Union, awarded salvation, but not of the same station as those who were called and chosen earlier to be a part of the Bride! This understanding requires that we also understand the timing and purpose of the various resurrections, a doctrinal area largely set aside in the greater religious world!

Regarding the Evidence

In coming to a correct understanding of the 'Ten Virgins' parable, we should take into account all of the evidence contained within it.

First, the direct symbology. Lamp oil is here representative of the indwelling of God's Spirit. The Bridegroom is Christ, the Bride is the Church.

Indirectly, the message conveys that there is to be a lengthy and indeterminate waiting period and also that that waiting period has a definite cutoff date! The 'closed door' presents that reality. This compares to the interval between Christ's ascension and just after His second coming. Another subtlety is the fact that their oil is not transferable between individuals, just as God's Spirit is not.

What is usually disregarded is the clear fact that all ten **have** and come with oil. All ten fall asleep! They are not faulted for that. The primary distinction is that the supply among the second five is insufficient for readiness at the final hour. In the final moments of preparation, their lamps were obviously fading. They are told to go and resupply their oil, which they promptly did, knowing of the only source from which to acquire it.

When the second five virgins return, they **don't** say, 'we couldn't get more oil but let us in anyway.' What this tells us is that they **did** acquire

more oil, but just **not in time!** For that to have happened, they had to have acquired it from God alone. The issue here isn't the presence or absence of God's Spirit, they did have and once again have a sufficient supply of God's Spirit. The issue here is the timing and readiness **at that critical time!**

(An interesting cross comparison is the abrupt but anticipated announcement coming at midnight, the same hour as the original Passover.)

A Closed Door

But what the door represents is the distinct cutoff time after which the opportunity to be part of the Bride is closed. This does not automatically bar others from conversion. Why would God have resupplied their oil if they were destined to become consigned to eternal damnation? This is a key consideration.

What is said to them is also revealing. Their Lord says, "***I know you not.***" Often the comparison is made with Matthew 7:21-23, which says to an entirely different category of people, "*I never knew you, Depart from me, ye that work iniquity.*" Also, a mental association is often made with the separation-for-sentencing scene in the latter verses of Matthew 25. But what actually is said is revealing in its own right. Here He says, "*I don't know you*", which is a curious thing to say to people who He'd just resupplied with His Spirit! He had to have known them in the first place to have specifically called them to be a part of His Bride. We can't logically understand the word 'know' in a cognitive sense, because their exclusionary fault, as related, **wasn't sin** but simply the matter of readiness. At the moment the Bride contingent was admitted into the chamber and the door was closed they weren't in possession of a supply adequate for inclusion. But they were resupplied and came back with it, just not in time!

What we're drawn to conclude is that the word 'know' is to be understood in a conjugal sense, not a cognitive sense. He doesn't cast these into outer darkness, He merely excludes them from being in the marriage ceremony. These 'too late arrivers' though not accepted as part of the Bride, are **not excluded** from ultimate salvation. Another thing we don't see here is the statement about '*weeping and gnashing of teeth*' like is in Matthew 25:30. More evidence that this isn't that kind of situation.

It isn't a matter of saved versus lost, but rather being part of Christ's Bride versus not being. These 'other five' will not be among those with

whom Christ will engender uncountable numbers of additional children into His Eternal Family. Ω

Replies:

1). Revelation 3: 9 ~ Those of the Philadelphia-era -- who represent the five faithful and enduring virgins who has sufficiency of God's Holy Spirit -- will be worshipped by those of the synagogue of Satan (the WCG apostate leadership, for one group) -- and they also will be those qualified to be in the Marriage Party. Those other 5 virgins, though not part of the marriage party, some may have to go through the great tribulation, to cause their repentance; before they become part of the 1st resurrection group, or become part of the instantly-changed group; both groups thus considered "first-fruits" into the Kingdom.

2). Matthew 25: 14-30 ~ The five foolish virgins can be likened to the "slothful servant" in this parable; whereas they did not develop spiritually from all which God originally gave them.

3). Luke 16: 10-12 ~ The five foolish virgins can also be likened to those, in converse manner of spirituality, who were found not "faithful" and likened to those who were found to be "unjust."

4). Luke 15: 12-32 ~ The parable of the prodigal son: The 5 foolish virgins could also be likened spiritually to the "prodigal" [wasteful] son, who had placed no long-term value upon his inheritance portion of his father's estate; but rather foolishly squandered what was given him.

Conversely, the five faithful virgins are likened to the other son, who stayed loyal to his family and to his father; and who eventually inherited the entirety of his father's remaining estate. We are thus admonished to be like this faithful son (according to our works and Christian conduct); as well as admonished not to be like this same son (attitude-wise) -- but rather be overjoyed, compassionate, and hospitable (like the parents of these two sons) upon the repentance and return of all the wayward brethren who had departed the core membership of WCG, and then afterwards, when God granted them "light", and sufficient humility

was learned, they returned to God's spiritual family.