



"Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him; for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready." Rev. 19:7.

"Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb." Rev. 19:9.

"Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. And five of them were wise, and five were foolish. They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them: But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept. And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him. Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out. 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 yourselves. 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. Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not. Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh."

The Second Coming of Christ is one of the most prominent themes of the Word of God. Jesus gave many parables and illustrations of how it will be on the earth when He returns. In Matthew alone, chapters 13,24, and 25 are given over entirely to the teaching of the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus. Jesus is pictured in the Gospels as a nobleman who has gone away to receive a kingdom and who will return to reign, as a householder who has distributed his money to servants to use until His return when they must give an account, and as a landowner who sowed wheat in His field but whose enemy (the Devil) sowed the tares.

And in Matthew 25:1-13 Jesus pictures Himself as the true Bridegroom who will return to this earth with His Bride, to receive the wedding guests, the saved, for a glorious honeymoon in the air. In I Thessalonians we read: "But I would

not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words." (I Thess. 4:13-18). These texts show to us that there will be a catching up of the saints into the air. Jesus is "The King of Saints". He comes down from God out of heaven as far as the clouds. Jesus sits on the clouds and with a loud cry, "The Bridegroom cometh", opens the doors of the city to let the wedding guests (the five wise virgins) in. The other saints from the grave are also brought in. The saints get ready for the Wedding of the Lamb. The Lamb

of God is Jesus, the Bridegroom. He has one crown on His head, and he reaps the wheat and tares. (Matt. 13:36-43; Rev. 14:14-20; I Cor. 15:51,52). Remember that the Bride of Jesus is the Glorious City, Abraham looked for it, the saints of all ages looked for it, for "its builder and maker is God." (Heb. 11:10). This City is described by the Apostle Paul as the "Mother of all saints." (Gal. 4:26) Surely then she will be the most appropriate Bride for our Lord Jesus.

Here is what we read about the Bride of Christ in Hebrews 12: "But ye are come unto mount "Sion", and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, To the general assembly and the church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect." (v. 22-24)

The parable of the return of the Bridegroom pictures only one phase of the Lord's coming. It does not discuss the fact that Jesus will return literally, bodily to the earth with the saints with Him after the wedding in the clouds of the sky, to reign on the earth for a thousand years. Such matters as the battle of Armageddon

which will then occur, the restoration of the Children of Israel's kingdom, with David as their prince, and the Reign of Christ Jesus as King of kings over all the earth, are left out of this article. They all come later after the Wedding Supper of the Lamb. But this article comes from the simple and beautiful clear language, the Lord pictures the time when He comes to reap the Harvest of the earth and be the host to the saints of all ages at His wedding banquet. Jesus will return only as far as the clouds in the sky in this phase of His second coming. (Rev. 14:14-18)

Read the Scripture Reading again at the beginning of this article. It has marvellous thoughts for us to consider. The subject of this parable is the time just before the coming of the Bridegroom. This is the obvious meaning when Jesus said in the last sentence, with admonition, "Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of Man cometh." Jesus is the Bridegroom and by this term is called several times in the Bible. John the Baptist said: "Ye yourselves bear witness, that I said, I am not the Christ, but that I am sent before Him. He that hath the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom which standeth and

heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because because of the bridegroom's voice; this my joy therefore is fulfilled." John 3:28,29

Again Jesus told the Pharisees that His disciples did not fast because He, the Bridegroom was with them (Mark 2:19). The bride of Jesus is the City that Jesus was building and is building. (John 14:1-3; Rev. 21:9,10). The saints make up the bridal party. The hundred forty and four thousand are Christ's "Best Man." The saints are the adornment of the bride of Christ. The time of the wedding is when the Bridegroom comes, that is, when Jesus comes to catch up the saints into the air and meet the Bridegroom as foretold in I Thess. 4:13 to 18 and I Cor. 15:51,52.

The book of Matthew is the only one in the Bible that uses the term "The Kingdom of Heaven." In the first part of the Gospel, John the Baptist and Jesus preached, "Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Matt. 3:2; 4:17 and the twelve Apostles preached likewise, "The kingdom of heaven is at hand." (Matt. 10:7) Jesus meant for this Kingdom to begin within the hearts of the believers. They were to accept Him as the Saviour of the world. They were to light their lamps for him, for the

kingdom of God began inside of them. (Luke 17:21) But the nation of Israel would not repent and accept Jesus Christ. The leaders soon set about to crucify Jesus and the kingdom of heaven was far from them. Through the rest of the Bible the Kingdom message was for every person on the face of the earth to press into it. (Luke 16:16)

Jesus spoke in the 13th chapter of Matthew a number of parables concerning the Kingdom. Each one begins with the statement, "The kingdom of heaven is like," etc. In these parables Jesus simply meant, I will illustrate some facts concerning my return and setting up a Kingdom that shall never be destroyed. He spoke of the parable of the sower, of the grain of mustard seed, of the pearl of great price, of the leaven, etc. All depict a form of the soon coming Bridegroom. Then let us look more closely at the parable of Matthew 25. Jesus said, "Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps and went forth to meet the bridegroom." Jesus said, "I will illustrate one step toward the kingdom by the story of some bridesmaids who went out to meet the bridegroom. This is actually a true illustration and in many particular

cases we have no doubt the details will happen just as Jesus tells us here.

Jesus is describing an oriental wedding. Bridesmaids did take their lamps with a wick of twisted flax through a disc of earthen ware. They also had an extra and separate vessel, looking like a gravy boat in which they carried oil. The wick, or lamp part was put over the vessel of oil with the wick going down into the oil. The wick would burn a little while by itself as long as it had combustible material to burn, which was above the disc but it would soon die out unless this lamp was placed over the pot of oil and the wick could absorb the oil. The lamp could even have been like a torch. A torch of flax would not burn until it was set over a pot containing oil. The oil then absorbed into the wick would not be of any danger of explosion. It burned brightly and that was the customary light in those days. When the cry was heard, "The Bridegroom cometh!" the tarrying bridesmaids went into the marriage supper of the Bridegroom. This would always last a few days.

In the marriage which Jesus describes here, ten single girls, virgins, were selected to be part of the Bride's party and went out to wait for the Bridegroom. These young women

represent a cross section of all those that call themselves commandment keepers. They are free from the confusions of Babylon. They are trying to do what the Bible says. They are in two classes. Wise and foolish. Is not this a tragic thought that half of those who think they are right will not be caught up to meet the Lord in the air? "But if the righteous scarcely be saved where is the chance for the sinner?" (I Peter 4:18) Five of the virgins were wise and proved it by taking oil with them, as well as their lamps. Five ladies were foolish and while they took the wick which would burn for a little time of itself, they took no oil. Jesus did not mean that these foolish ones had oil in their lamps and the oil burned out and that they should have an extra supply in their vessels. No, Jesus said, "They took no oil." In other words they were totally devoid of the Holy Spirit. They were working out their salvation by their own way, and not the way of Jesus Christ. The virgins had their wicks but no oil at all. The wise ones had not only the wicks to burn, but they had the inner supply of fuel that would keep the lamps burning brightly. The wick of the foolish virgins would burn for a little while and then burn itself out. That is the dif-

ference.

THE BRIDE'S PARTY

Oil many times in the Scriptures is pictured as the Holy Spirit. A person that is Baptized in the name of Jesus, one who ceases sin, one who is sanctified and justified by the power of Jesus, one who is a new creature in Christ, is a wise virgin. A foolish virgin, is one who keeps the commandments of God in his own power, one who is ever so nice and friendly, one who is fine outwardly and filled with his own righteousness. When one becomes a wise Child of God, he trusts Jesus for salvation and guidance of the Holy Spirit. He makes sure that His body is the temple of God, wherein the power of God resides. It is the Spirit of God that regenerates the sinner, and thus the sinner becomes part of the Family of God. It is the members of the Family of God that will go in to the marriage supper of the Lamb. They have the oil of salvation. They have "Christ in you the hope of glory." Col. 1:27; Rom. 6:1-5. The bridesmaids usually help the Bride to get ready for the wedding. The wise bridesmaids also help the Bride of the Lamb get ready for the ceremony. They adorn the Holy City, the Sea of Glass

with their presence and the garment of righteousness received from the Bridegroom. "Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him; for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. And to her (The City of God) was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white; for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints." (Rev. 19:7,8; 21:9,10).

THE BRIDEGROOM'S PARTY

Just as the Bride of Jesus Christ has an entourage, made up of the Family of God, so does the Bridegroom have an entourage. It is made up of the 144,000. These are an honor guard of Jesus. These go with Jesus whithersoever He goes. Just as the bridegroom has on his side a group of personal friends to stand up on his side a group of personal friends to stand up with him at the wedding so will the "Elect of God" stand up with Jesus at his wedding. When John looked, a Lamb stood on Mount "Sion" and with Him were 144,000 having His Father's name written in their forehead. These are also virgins. They were also redeemed from the earth from among men being the First-fruits unto God and to the Bride-

groom. (Rev. 14:1-5) They are twelve thousand from each tribe of Israel. They were the ones that accepted the gospel and then the rest of the Children of Israel were blinded. So the group that will be standing up for the Bridegroom are "a remnant according to the election of grace." The elect have obtained eternal life and the rest were blinded. (Rom. 11:6,7,25,26)

You might say, that one half of the commandment keeping people, being lost, is a great number. But that is what Jesus said. A greater percent of the Children of Israel will be lost when Jesus returns and removes the blindness from their eyes. They still will be obstinate and will not want to accept their Messiah. So when the armies of the nations come down the Valley of Megiddo, "For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle and the city shall be taken and the houses rifled and women ravished." "And it shall come to pass in that day that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem. And I will pour out upon the house of David, (Israel) the spirit of grace, and they shall look upon me." Here is where Israel will lose their blindness that was placed upon them in the Apostle's time. This will be the end of the Gentile time. "And I will bring

the THIRD PART through the fire...It is my people, and they shall say, The Lord is my God." (Zech. 14:2; 12:9-14; 13:9) This is only one third of Israel that will be saved. It will be even less than half of the virgins that will enter into the Wedding of the Lamb of God.

I used this about Israel as an example showing that only a remnant is going to be saved. The majority will not be at the wedding supper. Did not the Lord say to the foolish virgins: "I never knew you?" Did not many say, in that day, "Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils?...Then will I profess unto them, I never knew you; depart from me ye that work iniquity." This is exactly what Jesus said to the foolish virgins (Matt. 7:22-24; 25:12). What an awesome indictment. Who is there that would want to be left behind when the Children of God of all ages are going to be caught up to be with Jesus? When the cry goes forth, "The Bridegroom cometh." It will be a loud cry. Everyone will be able to hear it. The shout, the voice of Christ, and the arch angel will not be in secret. The cry will be around the globe, the trumpet of God will be heard throughout the universe. Who is there then

who would want to be left in a world that is turned over to the man of sin and Satan? All want to miss that fearful time, coming upon the earth. The indignation of God will be dreadful. It is no wonder than that there will be weeping and wailing, when your friends are bidden to the wedding supper and you yourself thrust out. (Luke 13:28) Everyone who once confessed their sins and wept, long for a glimpse of that Holy City, the Bride of Christ, where God shall wipe away all tears. (Rev. 21:9,10 19:7-9) Yes, even you who read this, who have once been enlightened to the truths of the Bible then go back to the weak and beggarly elements of the law, you that want to work out your own salvation with your own ideas, you that say it does not make any difference, you that say, fellowship is of more value than doctrine, yes, you all want to be at that marriage supper. But I warn you as solemnly as I know how that you will be left behind if you do not have the Oil of the Holy Spirit in your body. I beg you today, make your calling and election sure that you will be with the saints at the marriage of the Lamb. Put on the righteousness of Jesus Christ. That is the wedding garment. (Matt. 22;11-13; 19:8; Is. 64:6).

"And He saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he said unto me, These are the true sayings of God." (Rev. 19:9) Do you see now that the Church of God is NOT the Bride of the Lamb? Every wise virgin, every one of the 144,000, every saint of all ages will be caught up to meet the Lord in the air and will be CALLED UNTO THE MARRIAGE OF THE LAMB.

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