

In SPIRIT and TRUTH

“Behold, the Bridegroom Cometh!” Matthew 25:6

Is the Bride of Christ Making Herself Ready?

“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.” Matthew 25:1-6

My earliest memories of references to the Second Coming of Christ are probably related to “Watch Night” services that I attended as a young child, in our small Pentecostal church. Watch Night was held on New



Year’s Eve, starting around 9:00 or 10:00 PM, continuing until after midnight. As a child, I understood it to be a time of compelling sinners to come to Jesus, while believers gathered together for worship. We were all admonished to do some serious soul-searching, as we repented of our sins, for fear that the Lord might return by midnight, and find some of us not ready.

Now even though it is possible that Jesus could one day return during an end-of-the-year Watch Night service, in light of the Scriptures, I would say that it is *very unlikely*. Luke 12:40 and Matthew 24:44 concur stating that, as disciples of Jesus Christ, we should always *“be ready: for the Son of man, cometh at an hour when (we) think not”*. Though the culmination of a year of trials and tribulations may cause the people of God to anticipate His soon return (again) we are told that He will come at an hour when we think not. So what are we to do in the mean time, while we wait? According to Revelation 19:7, *this is the time that the Lamb’s wife (the church) is to make herself ready.*

“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. Revelation 19:7



The Parable of The Ten Virgins

In Matthew 24:3, Jesus’ disciples asked Him *what would be the signs of “the end of the world” and His second coming (24:3)*. In chapters 24 and 25, Jesus taught them privately, and used the *Parable of the Ten Virgins (Matthew 25)* to explain.

As we examine this parable, we must first note that all ten were “virgins”. The biblical definition of a virgin is a sexually pure woman who is *sanctified* (set apart) and *espoused* (engaged) to be married. In the Old Testament, Israel was set apart as virgins unto God, and commanded not to intermingle with those serving pagan gods. In the New Testament, the church is also set apart by the baptism of the Holy Ghost, and commanded to be holy and chaste; for we are espoused to Jesus Christ, who will one day return for us, His virgin bride.

“I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a CHASTE VIRGIN to Christ.”
2 Corinthians 11:2

From further study of The Parable of the Ten Virgins, we can conclude that there are Old and New Testament saints in the Kingdom of Heaven, but there will be a separation taking place among them. The Old Testament saints who were anointed to do a work for God will be separated from those who were not; and the New Testament saints in Covenant and walking

in the power of God, will be separated from those who have allowed the oil of the anointing of the Holy Ghost to burn out. When the bridegroom comes, He will receive those who have made themselves ready; then the door will be shut. *And to those who were not ready, He will say, “Verily I say unto you, I know you not” (Matthew 25:10-12).*

In times past, when I would read about The Parable of the Ten Virgins, I would sometimes think, “we have lots of time to prepare ourselves for the Lord’s return”; for the Book of Revelation spells out the many events that must take place before that great day. However, when I think about *the thousands of deaths* that have occurred just this past year related to *the Covid-19 Pandemic*, I now consider the reality that even the saints of God are succumbing to untimely deaths; therefore it is imperative that we all must **BE READY!** The Word of God declares that those who die in Christ will “sleep”, while awaiting His return (1 Thes. 4:13-18); but for those who face death with no oil in their lamps, the door to spending eternity with the Lord will be shut (Matthew 25:10-11), leaving them outside knocking.

In the Parable of the Wedding Feast (Matthew 22:2-14), we learn a little more about the Lord’s expectations for His bride. In this parable, many were called to the king’s wedding feast, but there was a man who was rejected and cast out because he did not have on his wedding garments (Matthew 22:11-13). *“And he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless.”(Matthew 22:12).* The Scriptures declare that such will result in much *“weeping and gnashing of teeth; for many are called, but few are chosen.”*

The Bride Makes Herself Ready

“I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels.” Isaiah 61:10

In the Book of Ephesians, we are given a description of the bride’s garments; chapter 5, verses 25-27 describes it as *“not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing”*. The bride is *“holy and without blemish”*.

The Lord will reveal the areas of our lives that we need to work on, if we ask, when we study His Word; these would include the **SPOTS**...sins that must be washed away by “the water of the Word” and obedience to baptism in the name of Jesus Christ (Ephesians 5:26; Acts 2:38), **WRINKLES**... areas in our lives that must be “pressed out” by heated fiery trials meant to perfect the saints (James 1:2-4; 1 Peter 4:12), and **BLEMISHES**, all of those tiny imperfections (flaws) that may not be obvious to others, but are seen by God (Matthew 5:48). These would include sins of the flesh, works of the flesh and all things that are offensive to the kingdom of God, causing His bride/church to be defiled.

“Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.” Ephesians 5:25-27

Probably one of the best ways to determine if we are ready for the Lord’s return is to allow Him to examine our hearts. For the Word of God states that only “the pure in heart”, will see Him at His return. However, because we have no way of judging our own heart, we must ask God to reveal it to us. Jeremiah 17:9-10 declares, *“The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it? I the Lord search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings.”*

***“Blessed are the pure in heart,
for they shall see God.” Matthew 5:8***



Matthew 15 and Mark 7 lists examples of all the “evil things” that can be found within a defiled heart. However, to maintain a walk of holiness before God, we must allow Him to transform and cleanse us with His Word, and to renew a right spirit within us (Romans 12:2; Psalms 51:10). For when we are willing to repent and change our ways, then God is able to perform (and complete) the good work He has begun in us (Philippians 1:6). And when He returns, not only will we see Him as He is, but we will be like Him (1 John 3:2), ***adorned in the beauty of holiness.***