

Yahweh, the Almighty God of Israel, is with us

"Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet,
and shew my people their transgressions,
and the house of Jacob their sins." Isaiah 58:1

Our Sabbath Lesson Ethaniam (Tishri) 24th, 6006 October 22nd, 2011

Could It Be?

Reading:
Matthew Chapter 26: 30-45

Introduction

Matthew 25: 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 yourselves.*
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."*

1. Virgins

What/Who is a virgin?

I should imagine that in these days almost everyone above the age of 13 knows what a virgin is. But this parable about '**virgins**' is not about the **physical virginity** of young girls. It is about *spiritual purity* and the *faithfulness of believers*. So we ask the question again:

What/Who is a spiritual virgin?

One answer would be: A **spiritual virgin** is a true believer who will remain faithful to the Most High when all others become immoral: a holy believer who has not spiritually '**slept around**' with pagan Gods and their forms of worship: one who will have nothing to do with error in any form whatsoever. This parable is not highlighting a potential weakness in the fallen church. No, it is for the **True Church of God**; whose members in the last days face the seductions of Satan.

2. The Bridegroom Tarried

Every Christian knows that **Jesus Christ** is the bridegroom. But few, by comparison, know who the bride is, or who the wise and foolish virgins represent. Before the Saviour ascended to heaven, he promised:

John 14: 3: *“And if I go and prepare a place for you, **I will come again**, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.”*

That promise was made nearly 2000 years ago and he still hasn't come. Millions of Christians have died in the **blessed hope** that they would be alive (without seeing death) when the Saviour returns. But the **bridegroom has tarried**. He has tarried so long that unbelievers today scoff at the very idea of him ever returning: that is, even presupposing that he is alive!

2 Peter 3: 3: *“Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, 4: And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? **for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.**”*

3. They all Slumbered and Slept

The Saviour's unexpected delay - if it was a delay - has wearied the church. Centuries have rolled by and still the bridegroom hasn't come. Has the wedding been called off? The parable states that all ten virgins fell asleep! It wasn't simply a case of some exceptionally holy believers keeping awake and the majority dozing off. Oh no! **The whole church fell asleep!**

4. At Midnight there was a Cry

The bridegroom's delay was unexpected; but his arrival will be infinitely more surprising. Have you ever attended a wedding where the bridegroom arrived at midnight? I haven't. When eventually the bridegroom's arrival was announced there was blind panic. All ten virgins awoke together, and all their lamps needed attention. Frantically they put on their shoes, arranged their clothes and hair and attempted to trim their lamps. Pandemonium reigned! Five of the ten virgins discovered that their lamps had **gone out** and - to add to the disaster - they had no spare oil.

5. Oil in their Vessels

Notice how the parable states that the '**wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps.**' In other words they had allowed for the possibility of a delay and not only had they filled their lamps with oil, but also '**took oil in their vessels with their lamps.**' This means that they would have a good supply of the Holy Spirit to last till the bridegroom arrived.

6. Our Lamps have Gone Out!

Imagine the shock that overtook the foolish virgins when they discovered that their lamps had **gone out**. Sleepy eyes, unkempt hair, ruffled dresses, all these things paled into insignificance when compared to the tragedy that their **lamps had gone out and they had no oil**. In a frantic effort to re-light their lamps they rushed off to buy oil. Whether they succeeded to obtain oil or not we are not told. But the fact was, the wise could no more

share their oil with the foolish, than a believer could give the Holy Spirit to someone else. The lesson here is that we must ask and receive of the Holy Spirit **now!** before the midnight cry sounds throughout the world. Tomorrow will be too late. We must be ready today!

The Door Was Shut

What does this phrase mean? Does it mean that the foolish virgins will lose eternal life? That, for all their dedication, purity and faith, they would be shut out of the Kingdom of Heaven? I doubt it. The Bible teaches in (John 3:15-16) and elsewhere that:

'For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.'

This includes the *five foolish virgins*. To be sure they were **foolish**; because they had failed to take into account that the bridegroom would tarry so long. But remember, they were **spiritual virgins - true believers!** This means that though they were not allowed to get past that shut door, they will not lose everlasting life. After all, in the wedding parable of (Matthew 22:8-10) even the **bad** gained entrance.

*Then saith he to his servants, The wedding is ready, but they which were bidden were not worthy.
Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage.
So those servants went out into the highways, and gathered together all as many as they found,
both bad and good: and the wedding was furnished with guests.*

What then did the foolish virgins lose when **'the door was shut?'** In my opinion, this parable is introducing the **virgin church** who is to become the **Messiah's wife:** the morally pure, obedient and dedicated believers who are filled with an abundant supply of the Holy Spirit.

The door that was shut isn't the door to the **banqueting hall**. Why even the **'bad'** were allowed to enter through that door. Methinks that in this parable the **door that was shut is the door to the bridal chamber!** This is the door that is open only to the bridegroom and his bride. To all others this door is shut.

The Bible tells us that millions of believers will enter the Kingdom of God. Their number will be greater than the stars in heaven and the sands on the sea shore. But not all believers will become the **Lamb's bride**. That privilege is reserved for the **wise virgins:** those believers who are deemed to be absolutely true, stainless, chaste, humble and holy. They will become **Yeshua the Messiah's Bride**, the *virgin daughter of Zion* whose beauty and character will astonish the entire universe.

7. Be Filled with the Spirit

The Scriptures make many urgent appeals to believers to *'awake out of sleep,'* to *'hold fast,'* to *'be filled with the Spirit,'* to *'cast off the works of darkness'* and to *'put on the armour of light.'* Are you doing these things? I can assure you that if you want to be allowed into the **bridal chamber as the BRIDE!** you will need to be much more than just a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ. His bride, remember, is not just an ordinary **virgin:** she is a **wise virgin** and *she is filled with the Holy Spirit*. The apostle Paul writes:

Ephesians 5: 14: *"Wherefore he saith, **Awake thou that sleepest,** and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.
15: See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise,
16: Redeeming the time, because the days are evil.
17: Wherefore **be ye not unwise,** but understanding what the will of the Lord is.
18: And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but **be filled with the Spirit.**"*

8. The Wedding Canopy... (Chupah)

Many of us have heard about Jewish wedding couples taking their marriage vows under a canopy called the **chupah**. (pronounced khapah) The **chupah** symbolizes the Almighty's presence in the **open field** or

wilderness: because no manmade building, however large, can contain Him. The **chupah** is made of cloth - often of several **prayer shawls**. It is held aloft by four poles. It has no walls, symbolizing the Almighty's heavenly dwelling which stretches from one end of the universe to the other. The **chupah** is used at marriage ceremonies even inside the largest synagogue. A Jewish wedding is a highly symbolic ceremony and the parable of the ten virgins is taken from it.

In view of this, could it be?

Yes, could it be that this ancient Hebrew ceremony under a canopy prefigures the time when the heavenly bridegroom, **Yeshua the Messiah**, comes to earth to take His virgin bride; and that the marriage vows will be taken during the **Feast of Tabernacles** when the true church of God is out in the open fields in temporary shelters (khupahs)? **Could it be?** If my assumption is right that the marriage of the heavenly bridegroom will follow the ancient Hebrew pattern, then the possibility is very strong that **the wise virgins will, in fact, turn out to be the Messiah's Bride!** Pause dear reader and try to appreciate what you have just read.

The **Feast of Tabernacles** for this year (**2011**) has now come and gone. We look forward to next year, bringing this **great feast**, closer and closer, to its fulfillment.

9. Summary

I will briefly summarize the lessons we have learned this Sabbath.

- A **spiritual virgin** is a faithful and obedient believer who remains chaste and holy when all others engage in immoral worship: a believer who does not spiritually **'sleep around with pagan Gods'** or embrace unclean doctrines or forms of worship.
- The bridegroom is **Yeshua the Messiah** who promised to return to earth, but tarried. Meanwhile the true church of God has fallen asleep.
- Only faithful and obedient believers with a good supply of the Holy Spirit will enter the nuptial chamber as the **Messiah's Bride!** To all others the door will be shut. They may enter the marriage banqueting hall along with the **good** and the **bad**, but they will not enter the nuptial room.
- It is more than likely that the Hebrew marriage ceremony under a canopy (**chupah**) pictures the wedding of **Yeshua the Messiah** and his virgin bride: and that the marriage vows will be exchanged during a coming **Feast of Tabernacles** under the canopy of heaven itself - in the open fields!
- Will you be there? Or does the very thought of keeping the **Feast of Tabernacles** ruffle your nerves? Remember the midnight cry was: **Go ye out to meet him!** Would you go?

AMEN!

**In the Son's Name - For the Father's glory.
Elder: Max W. Mader**

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