

# Parable of the Ten Virgins

## The Tragedy and Glory of the End Times Church

by  
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The majority of Christian believers today believe that the church they experience and their parents experienced is “normal,” meaning that it is carrying on the function that it has been assigned by the Lord in an acceptable and appropriate fashion.

Yet, in this parable, illustrating details of the prophetic outline he had just given Peter, James, Andrew and John on the Mount of Olives, the Lord identified the church of our present day as being “asleep.”

But at some point in the near future the entire born-again church is going to get a wake up call. This event will be universal and identifiable in scripture, and it will happen before the resurrection of the saints on the last day.

Two dramatic changes will take place in the course of events after this wake up call. The “foolish” virgins, in the midst of intense, worldwide persecution, tribulation, and extreme spiritual deception will become apostate (revolt from the faith), and the “wise” virgins, having repented of all that the Lord requires during that same time frame, will experience the fullness of the latter rains outpouring of the Spirit.

The haunting, deep, and, at the same time, thrilling prophetic parable of the ten virgins (Matthew 25:1-13) given by Jesus as a response to the question asked by the disciples in Matthew 24:3, Mark 13:3,4, and Luke 21: 7 has been problematical for Bible scholars, especially those of a dispensational persuasion, and, as a result, it is usually given a spiritualized general application related to maintaining our readiness for the return of Christ at any time.

However, we must remember that this parable was given with numerous specific details as part of the Lord’s lengthy answer the disciples’ question, ***When will this happen and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?***

As recorded in Matthew 24, Mark 13, and Luke 21, the Lord first gave His disciples (Peter, James, Andrew, and John) an outline of the major end times events, the prophetic future of these specific men, and the prophetic events that His future disciples will experience in the end times right up to, and including, the last day.

Following His straightforward prophetic outline in Matthew 24, Mark 13, and Luke 21, the Lord gave them two analogies and two parables to illustrate details and aspects of His prophetic answer to their original question.

All of the analogies and the parables shed light on the details of His prophetic response, but the parable of the ten virgins is the least understood and contains the most important details.

The parable of the ten virgins, like all parables, is a spiritual linguistic device impossible to understand using the intellect alone. The amazing amount of detail, though, tells us that this

parable reveals a great deal more than just a general application related to maintaining of our readiness for His return.

In order to clearly understand the literal meaning of the text we need to first establish the time frame in which this event takes place. After that we need to establish the identity of the bridegroom, the bride, the groomsman, the lamps and oil, and the virgins.

The time frame of the parable is at midnight immediately prior to the wedding banquet of the Lord, and, because the parable was given in response to the disciples' question, ***When will this happen and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?***, the parable must be concerned with the return of the Lord.

The succinct overview includes:

- 1) an initial expectation of the bridegroom's arrival by the early church (***Then the kingdom of heaven will be comparable to ten virgins, who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom.***);
- 2) a long, unexpected wait – i.e. 1900+ years – and the current condition of the virgins (***...Now while the bridegroom was delaying, they all got drowsy and began to sleep.***);
- 3) a time shortly before the resurrection (***...But at midnight there was a shout, 'Behold, the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.'***);
- 4) the time of the resurrection itself (***...And while they...the foolish virgins... were going away to make the purchase, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding feast; and the door was shut.***)  
and:
- 5) a time after the resurrection (***...Later the other virgins...the foolish virgins... also came, saying, 'Lord, lord, open up for us.'***<sup>12</sup> ***But he answered, 'Truly I say to you, I do not know you.'***)

The bridegroom is obviously the Lord. This is His identification in various other passages, and He identifies Himself as the “bridegroom”:

***How can the guests of the bridegroom mourn while he is with them? The time will come when the bridegroom will be taken from them; then they will fast.*** Matthew 9:15  
NIV (emphasis is the author's)

This passage also specifically identifies His disciples as “guests” or the unmarried kinsmen of the bridegroom who accompany Him to the marriage feast. Thus these “guests” or unmarried kinsmen of the groom are not the “bride.”

If the church, then, is the bride, who are these “guests,” these unmarried kinsmen of the groom?

In Revelation we learn that the church is included in the “bride” along with all the saints of all time from Adam to the last millennial saint, but the church is not the sole group of saints to be identified with the bride.

*Then came one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues and spoke to me, saying, “Come, I will show you the Bride, the wife of the Lamb.” And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great, high mountain, and showed me the holy city Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God...” Revelation 21:9,10 ESV*

Although dispensationalists have popularized the false doctrine that the church is the exclusive “bride of Christ,” (i.e. separate from Israel), the revelatory scriptural truth is that church is included in the “bride,” which is spiritual Israel, the “Israel of God,” whose eternal home is the New Jerusalem.

In this parable, though, the disciples of Christ are still “guests” and unmarried “virgin” kinsmen of the Bridegroom (i.e. adopted brothers and sisters). And it is not until the end of the millennial kingdom that the bride comes down from the Father’s house to take up new residence in the groom’s home, which is the earth.

Thus:

Heaven is the groom’s father’s house.

Earth is the bride’s house.

The new Jerusalem and the new Earth renovated by fire is the groom’s house with His bride.

The parable does not specifically identify the source of the announcement, ***Behold, the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.*** We do know that it is not the “virgins” themselves, because they have all fallen asleep. We may assume that the Holy Spirit is responsible for this announcement as the “groomsman,” but there is no direct scriptural evidence. Nor do we know what the nature of the announcement will be, but we can assume that it will be remarkable, universal, and recognizable in scripture to the entire believing church.

My assumption is that this event coincides with the 4<sup>th</sup> seal of Revelation, during the early part of the ride of the pale, green horseman (the Antichrist), immediately after the Gog-Magog war (Ezekiel 38 and 39) and prior to the worldwide persecution of the church, which begins with the opening of the 5<sup>th</sup> seal.

(See “**The Four Horsemen**”)

Inductively, we must conclude that the parable, given to the church, is about the church.

The oil is generally accepted to be the Holy Spirit and needs no exegetical expansion. The lamps represent our souls or our unique spirit-soul connection whereby we receive revelatory input (“light”), which is His word (His truth, promises, and commands) from the Holy Spirit in various ways.

A lamp with oil but without a neatly trimmed wick provides some light, but not the full light of a lamp with oil and a trimmed wick.

The “trimming” of the wick is the cutting away of personal sin that hinders our “hearing” and “seeing” and the specific cutting away of false doctrine, false practices, and false interpretations of scripture that have divided the “sleeping” body of Christ and hindered the manifestation of the fullness and glory of Christ through the church.

As we review the parable itself, keep in mind that this parable reveals what will happen to two distinct classes of virgins, or unmarried kinsmen of the bridegroom. It does not relate to

individual history. Individual history is relative only to whichever classification the believer falls into.

Nor is the designation “foolish” virgin a description of the nominal (not born again) church. If you are a “virgin” (an unmarried kinsman of the Lord) you are born again. Period. Being “foolish” or “wise” is an adjective describing two categories of “virgins” (unmarried kinsmen of the Lord) both of whom have the oil of the Holy Spirit at the time they are awakened.

***'Then the kingdom of heaven will be comparable to ten virgins, who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. ...***(All ten virgins went out to meet the bridegroom, which we must assume is the expectation that the entire church has had from the beginning, not just the present day.)

**Note:** Ten is the number of divine perfection as in the ten commandments. Ten is also the number of corporate completion. The number ten represents the whole church. Therefore, all ten are born-again Christians. This is, repeat, not a parable about five “nominal” Christians and five “born-again” Christians.

***Five of them were foolish, and five were prudent...***(the designation of “foolish” and “prudent” or “wise” applied to the entire believing church from the initial going out to meet Him, which includes the expectancy of His original disciples and the earliest days of church history.)

***For when the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them, ...***(This is the real point of division. At some point, early in church history, the entire believing church began to divide into these two classes. Here the indication is that they have oil in their lamps, but they did not take extra oil or make provision to keep oil in their lamps.)

***but the prudent took oil in flasks along with their lamps. ...***(The “prudent” or “wise” made sure that they would continue to have oil in their lamps by taking extra flasks of oil. This activity includes a diligent, continual pursuit of pure doctrine and active, obedient faith responses to the truth, promises, and commands of the Lord. This is the specific difference between the designation of “foolish” or “wise” virgins.)

***Now while the bridegroom was delaying, they all got drowsy and began to sleep. ...***(The “delay” represents roughly 1800 years of church history, and we should note that the entire born again believing church became drowsy and fell asleep. Sleep, in this case, does not indicate death, but a lack of alert, vigilant faith.)

***But at midnight there was a shout, 'Behold, the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.'*** ... (“Midnight” refers to a time immediately before the arrival of the bridegroom. It also prophetically refers to a time immediately before ***the last day***, which is also the day of the one and only resurrection-“rapture” of the righteous, and ***the day of the Lord***, the day of His return to Mount Olivet. The prophetic time frame for “immediately” could be a number of years, though, and it may apply to the entire “generation” of those who “see” the fig tree and all the trees putting on leaves.)

(See “**The Olivet Prophecy**”)

***Then all those virgins rose and trimmed their lamps.*** ... (“All”, again, means the entire born again church. It is impossible for those who have not been “born again” to “trim” the wicks of their lamps, because they do not have the “oil” of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, at the time of the midnight announcement, all of the virgins begin to trim the wicks of their lamps, and all of the “virgins” are born again believers. Trimming the wicks of the lamps is a response of preparation and specific repentance relative to the Lord’s instructions to the seven churches in Revelation 2 and 3. (See “**REVELATION: The Lord’s Letter to the END TIMES Church**”)

***The foolish said to the prudent, 'Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.'*** ... (The KJV says “are gone out” which suggests an entirely different meaning, but the verb transliterated as *sbinnymi* (Strong’s #4570) is in the passive voice, thus indicating “are being quenched” or “are going out.”) All translations of the Bible other than the KJV recognize the passive voice in their translations. Note that the foolish, who had long ago failed to prepare to keep oil in their lamps, are now looking to the “wise” to provide oil for them, and we should note that the foolish are aware of their predicament. They know that their lamps are going out, and that they will soon be depleted. This is a time of great conflict between the wise and the foolish virgins. This is also the beginning of the great apostasy or falling away from the faith during tribulation.)

***But the prudent answered, 'No, there will not be enough for us and you too; go instead to the dealers and buy some for yourselves.'*** ... (This is not an act of selfishness on the part of the wise. The “oil” is available only from God. The instruction by the wise virgins is also an instruction for the foolish virgins to get their doctrine and obedience straight, as instructed by the Lord in Revelation 2 and 3, which is a difficult message to take for the foolish virgins who have invested lives, ministries, and personal reputations in false doctrines, erroneous, “foolish” practices, and presumptuous, non-Spirit revealed interpretations of scripture. Their confusion and inability to appropriately respond to tribulation, persecution, and martyrdom ultimately leads them to deny and reject the faith. This “falling away” is also accompanied by the false signs and wonders of the false prophets of the whore of Babylon, which is the apostate church of the whore and her daughters.)

***And while they were going away to make the purchase, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding feast; and the door was shut.*** ... (This is the point of real separation between the foolish and the wise as the foolish fall into apostasy, and it is after this real separation that the Bridegroom arrives.)

***Later the other virgins also came, saying, 'Lord, lord, open up for us.'*** ... (“Later” does not indicate a specific time frame, but it does indicate that the wise virgins have already gone into the marriage feast. Therefore, we must assume that this is a time after the resurrection of both the dead and the living saints. This event, therefore, represents the foolish virgins response to the Lord at the white throne judgment of unbelievers after the millennium.)

***But he answered, 'Truly I say to you, I do not know you.'*** ... (This is a response to a class of men, the foolish virgins, who were “away”, having become apostate before the time of the bridegroom’s arrival. Note that He did not say, “I never knew you.” He said, “I do not know you.” He did, in fact, “know” them at one time, but He does not “know” them now.)

***Be on the alert then, for you do not know the day nor the hour.*** ... (This is the Lord's warning to the entire believing church from its beginning until the resurrection of the saints, and the key phrase is, "be on the alert.")

Thus the two great warnings that the Lord has given us for these times is, "***Be on the alert.***" and "***Do not be deceived,***" (or "misled led by deception").

The key to understanding the difference between "wise" and "foolish" virgins, is whether or not they have made provision, or planned and determined, to keep the oil of the Holy Spirit in their lamps (souls). An elaboration concerning what this might or might not entail would be exhaustive, but our assumption concerning what kinds of things could lead to the "foolish" classification would include the following:

1. Failure to keep and maintain the pure doctrine of the original apostles;
2. Allowing the introduction of false teaching, false doctrine and, even, the doctrines of demons, into accepted church practice;
3. Substitution of religious acts and works for genuine acts and works of faith;
4. A reliance on priests, prophets, and pastor-teachers to tell us what to believe instead of teaching believers how to receive and confirm truth for themselves;
5. The acceptance of division, controversy, and religious in-fighting as being "normal" for the church, and;
6. Both the failure to rely on and promote the guidance and power of the Holy Spirit, and the corruption and perversion of doctrines and practices related to the Holy Spirit.

It was obviously the Lord's intent that Paul and other early church leaders and members maintain their alertness in the Spirit in the expectation of the Lord's imminent return, and His intent has never changed in two thousand years.

That this alertness in the Spirit gradually waned for the reasons stated above as well as reasons not specifically mentioned, is historic fact, and the Lord prophesied to His disciples that this gradual loss of alertness in the Spirit would take place. (His foreknowledge that it would take place does not mean that it was His will.)

Matthew reported the parable as it was repeated to him by the disciples who were present, but it is unlikely that the Lord allowed him or the disciples who heard Him speak the parable to have Holy Spirit insight other than the general, but extremely important, command to maintain alertness.

The term and description, "asleep", used to describe the church at the time of the announcement is important, and we should note that the entire church is asleep at the time of the announcement. This term obviously does not refer to the entire church being dead in Christ at the time of the announcement, but the intuitive picture is one of the entire church not being spiritually alert, which is observable by us at this time and relative to the Lord's final warning in this parable.

Many who are reading this commentary are assuming that they are wide awake, and some are. But, as a general rule, the entire body of Christ will not be fully awake until we hear the announcement. Therefore, the entire church "hears" the announcement and wakes up, but, as we trim the wicks of our lamps and prepare to meet the bridegroom it somehow becomes apparent to the foolish virgins that they are running out of oil for their lamps.

The concept of apostasy is extremely difficult for the church to deal with, especially those, like the author, who were trained to believe the doctrine of the eternal, unconditional security of the believer, or “once saved, always saved.”

The reality of apostasy will be shockingly demonstrated during end times tribulation, but it is prudent (“wise”) to be aware of the reality and the cause of apostasy before we enter into that time.

It took me several years of intense study and prayerful meditation on scripture before I was fully convinced in my heart and soul that apostasy is possible, and I do not expect or want any other Berean who has adopted the doctrine of “once saved, always saved” from his/her denomination to be easily persuaded. But I will produce the evidence for “wise” virgins to examine because of the importance, not only of the doctrine itself, but the believer’s ability to receive and respond to the truth of end time prophecy.

The comfortable explanation, and the one some readers will be tempted to believe, is that the parable is dealing with religious traditions and denominations, not individual believers. However, the context of the parable indicates that these are individual “virgins.”

The approach for Bereans who want to know the truth is to thoroughly re-examine the issue even if a re-examination results in the confirmation of what we have already believed. And the process of a thorough re-examination of the issue begins with the determination of what the text in context is literally saying. Then, when the text in context is understood, allowing the Spirit of truth to confirm it in the believer’s heart and mind. That process, though, will not likely be completed through the reading of this commentary. What is presented here will only start the believer on a journey to discover the truth.

The roots of the word, “apostasy” (*apostasia* – Strong’s #646) are “*apo*” (away, apart) and “*stasis*” (standing). It means a falling away, revolt, or defection from a previous standing, and, in biblical usage it means to leave one’s right standing with God through the rejection of one’s faith. Clearly, a nominal Christian, who converts from Catholicism to Protestantism or who loses interest in the Christian belief system is not “apostate”, although those who hold to the doctrine of the eternal, unconditional security of the believer (“once saved, always saved”) will assume that this is a reference to nominal Christians who once adopted the Christian belief system but were never born-again.

However, you cannot “revolt” from something you were never a part of. You cannot “leave” something in which you never had a genuine “standing”.

***Let no one deceive you in any way. For that day...***(the day of the Lord) ... ***will not come, unless the rebellion ... (apostasy or falling away from the faith)... comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed.*** 2 Thessalonians 2:3 NASB (inserts are the author’s)

The apostasy is so shocking as an event that Paul gives it equal billing with the revealing of the Antichrist, which is the pivotal event of the entire tribulation.

In our day it is common for congregations to be filled with numerous “nominal” believers, those who profess to be “Christian” but have not been born again. We may assume, then, that the congregations of Paul’s day were similar, but we would be wrong.

In Paul’s day to claim the faith and then abandon it was unthinkable, and, because of the sensitivity to the Holy Spirit of apostles, prophets, pastors, and elders in the “awake” church of that day, it is unlikely that a believer who was not born-again could think he/she was a

“Christian” for any length of time in their presence, which is Spirit-grieving evidence of how far away the modern western church is from what God has intended.

***But the Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons...<sup>1</sup> Timothy 4:1 NASB***

The word for “faith” used in this passage is transliterated from the Greek as *pistis* (Strong’s #4105). This is the same word used in 2 Corinthians 13:5: ***Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith; examine yourselves! Or do you not recognize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you--unless indeed you fail the test?*** (emphasis is the author’s)

In 2 Corinthians 13:5 being “in the faith” means that Christ is in you, and you have been born again through the baptism of the Spirit. Those who “fall away” or “revolt” from the faith in later times are falling away from being born again.

A revolt, defection, or falling away from Christianity in this sense means the rejection of faith by those who once had faith (in Christ), and, secondarily, but importantly, the adoption of a contrary, opposing faith.

It does not, however, mean that those whose doctrinal beliefs are erroneous, are “apostate”. Apostasy is the very serious rejection of faith in Christ by those individuals who were once re-generated by their saving faith in Christ.

***For in the case of those who have once been enlightened and have tasted of the heavenly gift and have been made partakers of the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, and then have fallen away...(become apostate)..., it is impossible to renew them again to repentance...(unto salvation)..., since they again crucify to themselves the Son of God and put Him to open shame.***

***For ground that drinks the rain which often falls on it and brings forth vegetation useful to those for whose sake it is also tilled, receives a blessing from God; but if it yields thorns and thistles, it is worthless and close to being cursed, and it ends up being burned.*** Hebrews 6:4-8 NASB (inserts and emphasis are the author’s)

**Important:** From God’s covenant point of view and His promises, the born again believer will not be rejected by God, even for gross moral sins too horrible to describe, and no one can take us out of His hands.

Paul demonstrated that there are even times when God exhibits his mercy toward believers through extreme discipline in order to prevent them from ultimately rejecting their faith. In the name of Jesus, Paul ordered the church at Corinth to remove a man from their fellowship who was guilty of having an adulterous affair with his step-mother. The purpose of removing him from fellowship was to allow Satan to buffet the man so that he would come to his senses and repent.

***I have decided to deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of his flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.*** 1 Corinthians 5:5 NASB (emphasis is the author’s)

The unmistakable implication here is that unless the man repents he will ultimately reject his faith in Christ.

Our inclusion in the redemptive covenant in Christ does not negate our free will. We can choose to obey the revealed will of the Lord, or we can trample it underfoot. But the continuous trampling underfoot of the revealed will of the Lord leads to the development of a seared conscious, and with a seared conscious we no longer “hear” with spiritual ears or “see” with the eyes of our hearts.

At the same time, because we have lost our sensitivity to the Holy Spirit, we may be opening the doors to demonic influence.

At some point, then, when Jesus is no longer real to the one with a seared conscious, he is in danger of rejecting his faith. This would likely be accompanied by extreme forms of demonic deception and, ultimately, demonic possession once Christ was renounced.

***If anyone sees his brother committing a sin not leading to death, he shall ask and God will for him give life to those who commit sin not leading to death. There is a sin leading to death; I do not say that he should make request for this. 1 John 5:16 NASB*** (emphasis is the author's)

The sin “leading to” (ultimately resulting in) death is the chronic sin of continually rejecting the influence of the Holy Spirit so that one ultimately develops a “seared” conscience, a conscience that is no longer able to “hear” the voice of the Shepherd or “hear” the still small voice of the Spirit. Thus what we once believed in our hearts and confessed with our mouths is no longer real to us.

Eventually, then, under the influence of demonic spirits, we will renounce our faith in Jesus Christ.

Remember that “apostasy” in the Old Testament was not necessarily a permanent condition, because faith, too, brought only a temporary change. King Saul is a prime example of an Old Testament “believer” who sometimes acted in obedience to the direct, specific revealed will of God (i.e. believing in the heart) and sometimes rejected his “faith” and was specifically led and empowered by demons in a contrary “faith”.

Modern usage of the term “the faith” is a general reference to the body of beliefs of any religion or denomination, but the original use of the term by Paul only describes those who have believed in their hearts and confessed with their mouths that Jesus is the Christ. In this he is not talking about a body of beliefs, but of genuine faith.

***But the Spirit explicitly says that in later times...(when?)... some...(individuals)... will fall away from the faith...(revolt and leave their initial standing)..., paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons, by means of the hypocrisy of liars seared in their own conscience as with a branding iron... 1 Timothy 4:1 NASB*** (inserts and emphasis are the author's)

This shocking truth has been nullified by the presumptive doctrine of the unconditional, eternal security of the believer, and many will depart from the faith **because** they believed the lie and the tradition of “once saved, always saved” and were not prepared to endure tribulation.

I am not quick to call any doctrine “heretical,” but any doctrine that twists or denies the truth related to the unique nature and person of Christ and the covenant redemption in Him by grace through faith are, by nature, heretical.

Be very careful, then, not to reject the truth being presented here without a thorough, Spirit-guided examination of scripture.

Apostasy has not been common in the church up to this time, and I know of no New Testament example of apostasy. But examine the circumstances that Paul says born again Christians will face in the time of the great apostasy:

1. False prophets empowered by deceitful spirits will teach doctrines of demons (accompanied by false signs and wonders);
2. These false prophets will be hypocritical former believers with seared consciences who teach and advocate doctrines of demons.

False prophets will come from and infiltrate the true church in a time of intense persecution, tribulation, betrayal, and deception greater than at any other time in history, greater even than we can imagine, even though we have been warned.

The apostasy Paul refers to does characterize a part of the true church during end times, but it does not characterize the entire church.

A holy remnant of wise virgins will remain true to the Lord.

As we examine the parable we should note that the entire true church has not, yet, heard this announcement. I should not have to make a case for this conclusion. The awakening of the entire “wise” and “foolish” church will be an apparent departure from the current status quo.

Yet, we may assume that it is the Holy Spirit who will make the “announcement” as it corresponds with some event or series of events, such as the Gog-Magog war and its aftermath.

At the time of the announcement, even the foolish virgins, those who are a part of the true church but are participants in the “foolishness” stated previously, will have “heard” the announcement, but, because of “foolishness”, they will run out of oil as the church undergoes tribulation, trial, and persecution unlike anything we have, yet, experienced.

The specific words used to describe the announcement give us a clue concerning the nature of the announcement itself.

***But at midnight there was a shout, 'Behold, the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.'***

The “shout” or “cry” is the word transliterated as *krauge* (Strong's #2906). This is properly understood as an outcry or clamor like shouts from the guards on the watch tower or the screeching cry of a raven warning other ravens of danger.

And the word translated as “Behold” is not like an introduction but is more like, “Listen up! Pay attention!” which reminds this former Marine of the shout, “Attention!” as the D.I. walks through the door of the Quonset hut.

Whatever this event or series of events might be, it will wake up the entire church all over the world. It will be identifiable in scripture, and it will not need a lot of explaining. Like the sound of sirens in the street it will be universally recognizable, and it will get the entire church's attention.

It seems to me that this event, especially if it is accompanied by a prior world-wide economic crash, a middle eastern nuclear war that potentially includes the United States, famines and pandemic disease that wipe out twenty-five percent of the world's population, would definitely qualify as the announcement,

***“Behold, the Bridegroom! Come out to meet Him.”***

It is also the event that will cause those who have believed in a pre-tribulation resurrection-“rapture” of church only saints to cry out in confusion, doubt, and mis-trust of those who have misled them, “Where is the promise of His coming for the church before the tribulation?”

Dispensational theology views everything in the book of Revelation after chapter 3 as being irrelevant for the church, but they ignore the fact that the Revelation of Jesus Christ was given to John for the church, to be read in the Christian Bible by Christians, both then and now.

***"I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things for the churches ..."***

Revelation 22:16 NASB (emphasis is the author's)

The virgins without oil are reminiscent of the church of Sardis (Revelation 3:2,3) the church with a good reputation, but who are admonished to “wake up”, the church at Ephesus who were doing ministry but lost their passionate love for the Lord, and the church of Laodicea (Revelation 3:14-22) whose lukewarmness (correctly defined as mixing truth with error and not knowing the difference) causes the Lord to threaten to spew them out of His mouth, and who are admonished to buy gold (tested faith) from Him, white clothes (of true righteousness), and salve so they can “see” with the eyes of their hearts.

I will not comment further on this passage, but will allow the Lord to make application as He will.

(See ***“REVELATION: The Lord’s Letter to the END TIMES CHURCH”***)

What a shocking time of disappointment and discouragement for the foolish virgins who have been let down by the major evangelical denominations and ministries of the day.

All ten “hear” the announcement by the groomsman that the Bridegroom is coming, and this announcement takes place at midnight, just before the arrival of the Bridegroom. The indication here is that the timeframe between the announcement that causes all of the “virgins” to awaken and the actual arrival of the bridegroom is very short.

The “birth pains” described by the Lord in response to the original disciples’ question had absolutely nothing to do with them individually. They may have assumed that they would be present, but His message was to the generation of the church that would hear the announcement, ***“Behold the Bridegroom! Come out to meet Him!”***

There is no way to sugar coat this. The “foolish” as we have defined them, will fall away, and their fate will be worse than if they had never been born again. Endurance, even greater than the endurance required by the original disciples and their followers will be required by the “wise” virgins, but this endurance will be empowered by the fullness of the “latter rains” outpouring of the Spirit and will ultimately result in the sealing and redemption of the metaphorical 144,000, a.k.a. the Philadelphian church, a.k.a. the woman clothed with the sun, who will bring in the final wheat harvest of an uncountable number of tribulations saints from every nation, tribe, and tongue, beginning with the opening of the 7<sup>th</sup> seal of Revelation, which is also the beginning of “great tribulation.”

The apostasy or the great falling away takes place in the church during the tribulation (i.e. the 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, and 6<sup>th</sup> seals of Revelation), but prior to “great tribulation,” as a result of trials and persecution, including betrayal by those in the church, that all born again believers will universally experience.

The important instructions of the Lord, given to both the “foolish” virgins and the “wise” virgins after the wake up call, the response identified as the trimming of the wicks of our lamps, include:

1. Return to our first love, doing the works of faith we did in the beginning;
2. Be willing to suffer trials, tribulations, and persecutions, even unto death;
3. Reject false teaching, even if it is popular with those around us;
4. Do not tolerate false prophets and the doctrines of demons, even if that means leaving the denomination or the fellowship we are involved with;
5. Wake up from our slumber (and our religious works devoid of truth and genuine faith);
6. Buy gold (faith and obedience refined by fire) from Him;
7. Obtain white clothes of genuine righteousness by making obedient faith responses to His commands, and salve for our eyes so that we can “see” His truth by revelation.

Foolish virgins not prepared for this time of extreme tribulation, trial, and universal persecution will reject the faith and will not be received by Him. The cause of their apostasy is a result of the following:

1. Failure to keep and maintain the pure doctrine of the original apostles;
2. Allowing the introduction of false teaching, false doctrine and, even, the doctrines of demons, into accepted church practice;
3. Substitution of religious acts and works for genuine acts and works of faith;
4. A reliance on priests, prophets, pastors, and teachers to tell us what to believe instead of teaching believers how to receive and confirm truth for themselves;
5. The acceptance of division, controversy, and religious in-fighting as being “normal” for the church, and;
6. Both the failure to rely on and promote the guidance and power of the Holy Spirit, and the corruption and perversion of doctrines and practices related to the Holy Spirit.

As I prepared this commentary I read and meditated on the message to the seven churches (Revelation 2 and 3), and the seriousness of those messages struck me as it has never struck me before.

Therefore, I recommend that anyone impacted by this message do a similar in-depth study of Revelation 2 and 3 accompanied by much prayer and meditation.

The important indication here is that the “foolish” virgins will hear the announcement and begin trimming their wicks with the assumption that they are “wise”. The rapid and highly confrontational division between the “wise” and “foolish” virgins at this time will not save the foolish virgins who are deceived by false doctrine and erroneous interpretations of scripture. They will not “hear” what the wise virgins tell them, which is how to “get oil from the vendor” (God as the Spirit of Truth), and will, instead, continue to defend false doctrine and erroneous interpretations of scripture, ultimately leading to their complete yielding to doctrines of demons and a rejection of their faith in Christ.

Because the foolish virgins are not empowered by active faith during trials and temptations they will become bitter against God, not remembering, even, the early days of their faith when they eagerly followed the Lord as true disciples.

It is my assumption, then, that none of the revivals of the church, including the Charismatic renewal, would qualify as the trimming of wicks that takes place in the true church after the groomsman's announcement.

The act of trimming the lamps is the pruning process (trimming away the sinful parts and the doctrinal errors so that the glory may be revealed – i.e. our response to the Lord's message to the seven churches in Revelation 2 and 3) that takes place in the church after the announcement, and I believe this announcement will soon be heard by both wise and foolish virgins all around the world.

The church at large, though, has lost its sense of history. We think that the last hundred years of church history has established the norm for our times, as if being asleep and being lukewarm and divided by "winds of doctrine" will be our condition until kingdom come. In our arrogance we also think that whatever is happening in our church fellowship, our particular denomination, or in America is what is happening everywhere. But the history of the world and the history of the church are both dynamic, not static, and what is happening in our individual church fellowships, our denominations, and in America is only a part of what is happening in the body of Christ at large.

What is happening is change in accordance with prophecy and the purposes of God, and, for the wise virgins, this will be a time of intense persecution and trouble, but also a time in which ***we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ*** as we bring in the great last days harvest of souls and fulfill the commission given to the church in Matthew 28:18-20:

***And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."***

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