

## The Five Wise and the Five Foolish Maidens

The Lord has recently drawn my attention again to Math. 25 (Jesus' parable on the five wise and the five foolish virgins). Note that ALL TEN, i.e. the faithful ones as well as the negligent ones, were fast asleep by the time the Bridegroom had suddenly (unexpectedly) made his appearance on the scene! Now, all the signs of Jesus' imminent return are already in place and isn't it ironical that this parable is so appropriate to the Gospel scene today? There was never a time in history – even considering the so-called first-century “golden age” gospel scene - where the message was so frantically brought as at these current times.

Now, considering this scenario well, it seems as if the interpretation of this specific parable of Jesus indeed has something to do with the deep spiritual sleep that has the believers neatly in its grip – whether we want to believe that we are asleep or not. What is important is to keep in mind that ALL TEN maidens were fast asleep. Not even one was awake at the crucial hour! Note that all ten maidens were expecting the return of the Bridegroom but, regardless of their good intentions and efforts, and even in their state of "committed alertness", they could not keep awake!

But what had kept the five wise maidens from loosing out, and regardless of their own drowsiness? Their bold effort to TIMELY have prepared! Filling up their lamps AND their vessels (containers) well in advance, had indeed caused them to have succeeded in reaching their goal – their eyes were fixed on their objective, namely to attend the wedding feast regardless of the long night watch that was still lying ahead, and although they too could not keep awake, they were thoroughly prepared and they therefore had enough resources at hand that would have helped them reaching the door of the Bridegroom's banquet hall TIMELY!

On the other hand, the five foolish maidens were also eager to attend the occasion and they therefore saw to it that their lamps were also filled up with oil, however, through their own negligence to take heed as to what was expected of them under the circumstances, i.e. to carry extra oil in their containers, and so that they too could succeed on their journey helping them to TIMELY arrive at the Bridegroom's door, they could not make it!

And the Book of Revelations' "merchants" will clearly not be of any help then! But who are those who have their affluent, trading ships out on the ocean, those merchants who were unable to help their “clients” in their darkest hour and when they were so desperately in need of the required spiritual help but who could not show them how to prepare properly and so that they too could have made the Bride? Aren't they the ones Jesus had assigned the maintenance of the "deposit" to - the preservation of the Gospel message and clearly pertaining to the oil - namely those very ones the Apostle James is referring to in his letter (3.1; Rev. 17.15)?

A prophecy went forth in the nineties, brought by a man of God who heard the voice of the Lord in his hearing since his baptism in the Holy Spirit (1926): "Jesus is coming again and a crowd will be resurrected but thousands will be disappointed (In Afrikaans: Jesus kom weer en `n skare sal opstaan maar duisende sal teleurgesteld wees). I can still hear the drawn out "thousands" ringing in my hearing.

May God help us to do something drastic to our own spiritual lives and our own relationship with the Master!

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