

Study 21 The Midnight Cry

This study deals with the 1844 and the Millerite experience in the light of the Parable of the 10 Virgins

Two Classes of Believers in the Time of the End in Matt 24

1. **Matthew 24**---In this chapter, Jesus answers the questions of His disciples concerning the signs of His coming and the end of the world; He points out some of the most significant events in the history of the world and the church from His 1st coming to His 2nd coming:
 - a. The destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD (v. 15-20)
 - b. The great tribulation of the Dark Age under pagan Rome and Papal Rome (v. 21-28)
 - c. Darkening of the sun and the moon (v. 29)
 - d. Falling of the stars (v. 29)
 - e. Second coming (v. 30-42)
2. The rest of Matthew 24 describes 2 classes of people who will live on earth when Jesus comes
 - a. 2 groups of people during the flood—one group who were eating and drinking until the flood took them all away,, and Noah and his family who were safe in the ark (v. 37-39)
 - b. 2 men working in the field, one left and the other taken away (v. 40)
 - c. 2 women grinding at the wheel, one left, one taken (v. 41-42)
 - d. Faithful and unfaithful servants (v. 45-51)

The Parable of the 10 Virgins

3. In Matt 25, the 10 virgins represent 2 groups in the church who will live during the final days; the same 2 groups pointed out in Matt 24;
4. Notice then the following salient points in the parable:
 - a. **Coming of the bridegroom**—was understood by the Millerites in 1844 to be the second coming of Christ as announced by the 1st angel's message
 - b. **The going forth of the 10 virgins to meet the bridegroom (v. 1)**---represents the widespread reformation that took place under the proclamation of the first angels message until the 1st disappointment in the spring of 1844; sinners repented and Spirit of God poured out resulting in revival seen in the churches;
 - i. **Two class who went forth**—as in Matt 24, the wise virgins who took oil with their lamps

The wise virgins

The latter class had received the grace of God, the regenerating, enlightening power of the Holy Spirit, which renders His word a lamp to the feet and a light to the path. In the fear of God they had studied the Scriptures to learn the truth, and had earnestly sought for purity of heart and life. These had a personal experience, a faith in God and in His word, which could not be overthrown by disappointment and delay. **GC 394**

The foolish virgins:

Others "took their lamps, and took no oil with them." They had moved from impulse. Their fears had been excited by the solemn message, but they had depended upon the faith of their brethren, satisfied with the flickering light of good emotions, without a thorough understanding of the truth or a genuine work of grace in the heart. These had gone forth to meet the Lord, full

of hope in the prospect of immediate reward; but they were not prepared for delay and disappointment. When trials came, their faith failed, and their lights burned dim. **GC 394**

- c. **The tarrying of the bridegroom**—represented the passing of the time in the spring of 1844 (**March 21, 1844** date)
- d. **They all slumbered and slept**—result of the first disappointment; a period of waiting; one class in unconcern and abandonment of faith (foolish virgins) and the other class patiently waiting till clearer light should be given (wise virgins):

"They all slumbered and slept;" one class in unconcern and abandonment of their faith, the other class patiently waiting till clearer light should be given. Yet in the night of trial the latter seemed to lose, to some extent, their zeal and devotion. The halfhearted and superficial could no longer lean upon the faith of their brethren. Each must stand or fall for himself. **GC 395**

- e. **The midnight cry**—the proclamation of the belief that Jesus was coming in October 22, 1844; proclaimed during the summer of 1844 as a result of Samuel Snow's studies in the Jewish calendar (Seventh-month Movement); also fueled by the discovery that the decree of Artaxerxes to allow the Jews to return to Israel took effect in the Autumn of 457 BC, hence the termination of the 2300 days was believed to terminate in the fall of 1844;
 - i. The October 22 date seemed irresistible and was heralded by thousands of believers (**GC 400**)

Like a tidal wave the movement swept over the land. From city to city, from village to village, and into remote country places it went, until the waiting people of God were fully aroused. Fanaticism disappeared before this proclamation like early frost before the rising sun. Believers saw their doubt and perplexity removed, and hope and courage animated their hearts. The work was free from those extremes which are ever manifested when there is human excitement without the controlling influence of the word and Spirit of God. It was similar in character to those seasons of humiliation and returning unto the Lord which among ancient Israel followed messages of reproof from His servants. It bore the characteristics that mark the work of God in every age. There was little ecstatic joy, but rather deep searching of heart, confession of sin, and forsaking of the world. A preparation to meet the Lord was the burden of agonizing spirits. There was persevering prayer and unreserved consecration to God. **GC 400-401.**

- ii. Spirit of grace and supplication poured out

Another who participated in the movement testified: "It produced everywhere the most deep searching of heart and humiliation of soul before the God of high heaven. It caused a weaning of affections from the things of this world, a healing of controversies and animosities, a confession of wrongs, a breaking down before God, and penitent, brokenhearted supplications to Him for pardon and acceptance. It caused self-abasement and prostration of soul, such as we never before witnessed. As God by Joel commanded, when the great day of God should be at hand, it produced a rending of hearts and not of garments, and a turning unto the Lord with fasting, and weeping, and mourning. As God said by Zechariah, a spirit of grace and supplication was poured out upon His children; they looked to Him whom they had pierced, there was a great mourning in the land, . . . and those who were looking for the Lord afflicted their souls before Him." **GC 401**

- iii. Leaders of the movement last to join (**GC 402:1**) i.e. William Miller joined the movement on Oct 6, 1844, just two weeks before the Oct 22;
- iv. Babylon is fallen—applied to the churches who closed their doors to the message
- v. **Trimmed their lamps**—along with humbling of the soul before God and the wise virgins studied their bibles with an intense interest never before known (**GC 402:1**); similar to Daniel’s experience in Daniel 9:1-3;

Carefully and solemnly those who received the message came up to the time when they hoped to meet their Lord. Every morning they felt that it was their first duty to secure the evidence of their acceptance with God. Their hearts were closely united, and they prayed much with and for one another. They often met together in secluded places to commune with God, and the voice of intercession ascended to heaven from the fields and groves. The assurance of the Savior’s approval was more necessary to them than their daily food; and if a cloud darkened their minds, they did not rest until it was swept away. As they felt the witness of pardoning grace, they longed to behold Him whom their souls loved. **GC 403**

The Second Great Disappointment of 1844

5. Three different classes of people develop as a result of the great disappointment:
- a. **The wicked**---recovered from their fears as no tokens of God’s wrath were seen and resumed their ridicule and work of reproaching the Millerites (**GC 403:3**);
 - b. **The falsehearted and weak—(The foolish virgins)**---those who had based their faith on the opinion of others and did not study for themselves, those who moved out of fear and excitement all renounced their faith and joined the ranks of the scoffers who said the whole work was of the Devil (**GC 404**)
 - c. **The sincere believers (The wise virgins)**—discouraged and disappointed yet stood firm and testified that the work was of God;

The passing of the time in 1844 was followed by a period of great trial to those who still held the advent faith. Their only relief, so far as ascertaining their true position was concerned, was the light which directed their minds to the sanctuary above. Some renounced their faith in their former reckoning of the prophetic periods and ascribed to human or satanic agencies the powerful influence of the Holy Spirit which had attended the advent movement. Another class firmly held that the Lord had led them in their past experience; and as they waited and watched and prayed to know the will of God they saw that their great High Priest had entered upon another work of ministration, and, following Him by faith, they were led to see also the closing work of the church. They had a clearer understanding of the first and second angels' messages, and were prepared to receive and give to the world the solemn warning of the third angel of Revelation 14. **GC 431-432.**

6. Two reasons why God allowed the disappointment:
- a. To test hearts
 - b. That prophecy might be fulfilled

Five hundred years before, the Lord had declared by the prophet Zechariah: "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: He is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass." Zechariah 9:9.

Had the disciples realized that Christ was going to judgment and to death, they could not have fulfilled this prophecy. {GC 405.1}

In like manner Miller and his associates fulfilled prophecy and gave a message which Inspiration had foretold should be given to the world, but which they could not have given had they fully understood the prophecies pointing out their disappointment, and presenting another message to be preached to all nations before the Lord should come. The first and second angels' messages were given at the right time and accomplished the work which God designed to accomplish by them.

GC 405

The Correct and Final Application of the Parable of the 10 Virgins

7. Notice now the correct interpretation of the symbolism of the parable as it applies to the final generation of Adventists:

- a. **The coming of the bridegroom to the marriage**--represents the coming of Christ as our High Priest to the most holy place of the heavenly sanctuary to receive His bride or kingdom; this takes place before the marriage (**Dan 7:13-14; Rev 21:2; GC 426:2**)

The coming of Christ as our high priest to the most holy place, for the cleansing of the sanctuary, brought to view in Daniel 8:14; the coming of the Son of man to the Ancient of Days, as presented in Daniel 7:13; and the coming of the Lord to His temple, foretold by Malachi, are descriptions of the same event; and this is also represented by the coming of the bridegroom to the marriage, described by Christ in the parable of the ten virgins, of Matthew 25. **GC 426**

- b. **The marriage**—reception of Christ of His kingdom (**GC 426:2**); this takes place after the close of His priestly work and final atonement
- c. **The bride**---the Holy City, New Jerusalem (**Rev 21:9, 10; GC 426-427**)
- d. **The 10 virgins**—represent the church
- e. **The cry "Go ye out to meet Him"**—the call to prepare to go to meet Jesus in the Most Holy place (**EW 260**)
- f. **Going into the marriage**---entering into the most holy place by faith

The proclamation, "Behold, the Bridegroom cometh," in the summer of 1844, led thousands to expect the immediate advent of the Lord. At the appointed time the Bridegroom came, not to the earth, as the people expected, but to the Ancient of Days in heaven, to the marriage, the reception of His kingdom. "They that were ready went in with Him to the marriage: and the door was shut." They were not to be present in person at the marriage; for it takes place in heaven, while they are upon the earth. The followers of Christ are to "wait for their Lord, when He will return from the wedding." Luke 12:36. But they are to understand His work, and to follow Him by faith as He goes in before God. It is in this sense that they are said to go in to the marriage.

In the parable it was those that had oil in their vessels with their lamps that went in to the marriage. Those who, with a knowledge of the truth from the Scriptures, had also the Spirit and grace of God, and who, in the night of their bitter trial, had patiently waited, searching the Bible for clearer light--these saw the truth concerning the sanctuary in heaven and the Savior's change in ministration, and by faith they followed Him in His work in the sanctuary above. And all who through the testimony of the Scriptures accept the same truths, following Christ by faith as He enters in before God to perform the last work of mediation, and at its close to receive His kingdom--all these are represented as going in to the marriage. **GC 427-428.**

8. The light that launched the Advent Movement is deeply rooted in the parable of 10 virgins

While I was praying at the family altar, the Holy Ghost fell upon me, and I seemed to be rising higher and higher, far above the dark world. I turned to look for the Advent people in the world, but could not find them, when a voice said to me, "Look again, and look a little higher." At this I raised my eyes, and saw a straight and narrow path, cast up high above the world. On this path the Advent people were traveling to the city, which was at the farther end of the path. They had a bright light set up behind them at the beginning of the path, which an angel told me was the midnight cry. This light shone all along the path and gave light for their feet so that they might not stumble. If they kept their eyes fixed on Jesus, who was just before them, leading them to the city, they were safe. But soon some grew weary, and said the city was a great way off, and they expected to have entered it before. Then Jesus would encourage them by raising His glorious right arm, and from His arm came a light which waved over the Advent band, and they shouted, "Alleluia!" Others rashly denied the light behind them and said that it was not God that had led them out so far. The light behind them went out, leaving their feet in perfect darkness, and they stumbled and lost sight of the mark and of Jesus, and fell off the path down into the dark and wicked world below. **EW 14-15**

9. The disappointed ones went back to the Bible and studied the nature of the sanctuary, the meaning of the cleansing; they were also able to draw courage from texts like **Heb 10:35-39**
10. If the disappointed ones did not remain firm, if they did not search the Bible for more light, they would have had nothing to pass on to us.
- a. Adventism today is indebted to the small band of believers who were brought together to search for advanced light as a result of the bittersweet proclamation of the midnight cry message of the summer of 1844. . .