

Five Philadelphian Virgins

The principles contained in the parable of the ten virgins in Matthew Chapter 25 are of fundamental importance in the Philadelphia Church's doctrinal belief. Most churches acknowledge the parable applies to the end of time. As such, today the parable is recounted in churches across the world. One lesson from the parable taught by the church today is that all the church, the entire church, is sleeping. They base this conclusion on 1) that the ten virgins, five wise and five foolish, in the parable represent the entire church. 2) Verse 5, which states: "*While the bridegroom tarried, they ALL slumbered and slept.*" The emphasis in the verse is on the word "*all.*" Hence, they conclude that today the whole church is asleep. Next, they apply this "established fact" to support another belief; that the "entire church" is also Laodicean (Rev..3:14-22). Hence, there are calls for revivals in the churches to awaken the churches out of their slumber and quicken the churches from their Laodicean condition.

The rest of this pamphlet will explore/study the validity of these beliefs. Our method of study is Miller's Rules of Interpretation. Toward this end consider Chapter 24:

Matt. 24:1 And Jesus went out, and departed from the temple: and his disciples came to him for to shew him the buildings of the temple...3 And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?

In Matt. 24:3, the disciples ask Jesus three

questions. Applying William Miller Rules of Interpretation, we conclude that the rest of Chapter 24 and all of chapter 25 refer to the same subject/topic, which is Jesus' answer to the disciples' questions in Matt. 24:3. We must consider the context of the verses in these chapters in forming our understanding of the parable. Now consider:

4 And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you. 25 Behold, I have told you before.

42. Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come. 43 But know this, that if the goodman of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up. 44 Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh.

45. Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season? 46 Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing. 47 Verily I say unto you, That he shall make him ruler over all his goods.

The prophetic foretelling in Matthew 24 is also in Mark 13 and Luke 21. Hence following the bible maxim in Isaiah 28:10-13, precept upon precept, we will also employ references from these chapters in our study. Consider:

Mark 13:23 But take ye heed: behold, I have foretold you all things.

13:32 But of that day and that hour knoweth no man ...but the Father. 33 Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is. 34 For the Son of Man is as a man taking a far journey, who

left his house, and gave authority to his servants, and to every man his work, and commanded the porter to watch. 35 Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cockcrowing, or in the morning: 36 **Lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping.** 37 **And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch.** (See Luke 21:34-36)

When we consider the gospel of Luke 17:20-37, 19:12-27 and 12:35-46, Matthew Chapter 24 and 25 was not the first time Jesus spoke on the subjects referenced in the chapters. Matthew 24 and 25 were an expansion of those principles. Matt. 24:36-39 use an analogy to Noah and Lot to foretell the spiritual state of the people before Jesus' second coming. Verses 40 and 41 condense the people down to two classes and foretell their future fate. Chapter 24 concludes with:

Matt:24:50 The lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of, 51 And ...appoint him his portion with the hypocrites: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

This is the context, which immediately proceeds the parable of the ten virgins, and which the parable of the ten virgins is a part. For further context, we quote from Christ's Object Lessons by Sister White:

In many parts of the East, wedding festivities are held in the evening. The bridegroom goes forth to meet his bride and bring her to his home. By torchlight the bridal party proceed from her father's house to his own, where a feast is provided for the invited guests. In the scene upon which Christ looks, a company are awaiting the appearance of the bridal

party, intending to join the procession. Linger near the bride's house are ten young women robed in white. Each carries a lighted lamp and a small flagon for oil. All are anxiously watching for the appearance of the bridegroom. But there is a delay. Hour after hour passes; the watchers become weary and fall asleep. COL 405

Now, consider the following scriptures:

Rev. 3:8 I know thy works: behold...**for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name.** 9 Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee. 10 Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth. 11 Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown. 12 Him that overcometh...

Rev. 3:16 So then because thou (Laodicea) art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth. 17 Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: 18 I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see.

If one were to interpret the parable of the ten virgins literally in the context presented above, the fact that the virgins were sleeping, would be sin. The verses referenced above

clearly warned that one should be watching, not sleeping, "*that the day not come upon you unawares.*" This condemnation would equally disqualify the professed five wise virgins from entering into the marriage. If we were to accept the prevailing interpretation/teaching that all the church slept, then this would not be in harmony with points presented. We know that the scriptures do not contradict themselves. Therefore, an error exists in our understanding. We must search and study for an understanding which will harmonize with the rest of the scriptures. Towards this end, consider:

Immediately following the parable of the ten virgins is the parables of the talents (verses 14-30) and the two gatherings and judgments when Jesus comes in glory (verses 31-46). These parables must also be considered in the interpretation of the parable of the ten virgins. Notice in verse 16, the two who received the talents (the five and two) *went and traded with the same.* The two were actively working, not sleeping.

In Matt. 25:31-46, we again see portrayed two classes of people, sheep and goats. Both professed to be in the true church, notice professed, but in the reality defined by Jesus, and judged by Jesus there was only one true class. This parable/prophesy is an expansion on the parable in Matt. 7:

7:21 Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. 22 Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many

wonderful works? 23 And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.

When we consider the verses above along with Rev. 7:9-17, 14:1-5, 12, 15:2, 18:1-8, 2 Peter 2:9, Isa. 60:1-3, parable of wheat and tares in Matt. 13, and many other scriptures, we may conclude the following regarding the parable of ten virgins and the related verses:

Jesus upon his ascension, went to receive a kingdom. He called unto him his servants and gave them a work to do, and said to the porter watch till I come (Mark 13:34). The time period of the parable of the ten virgins is immediately preceding Jesus' return (the end of time). The ten virgins represent the church at the end of time. The church is membered by two classes of people, wise and foolish. The wise virgins are represented in the book of Revelation as the church of Philadelphia, the foolish as the church of Laodicea. The wise virgins have followed Jesus' council. They are working for souls (presenting the three angels messages), watching, and praying. Most importantly they have purchased gold tried in the fire (faith), white raiment (Christ's righteousness), and have anointed their eyes with eyesalve (The Holy Spirit, which is most important). In summary, they were preparing and were prepared. They are overcomers. When the taring time came, though they physically fell asleep, they were prepared. When the bridegroom came, they were ready (had oil in their vessel), went forth to meet Him, and went in with Him to the marriage. May we be one of them. God be with you toward this end.