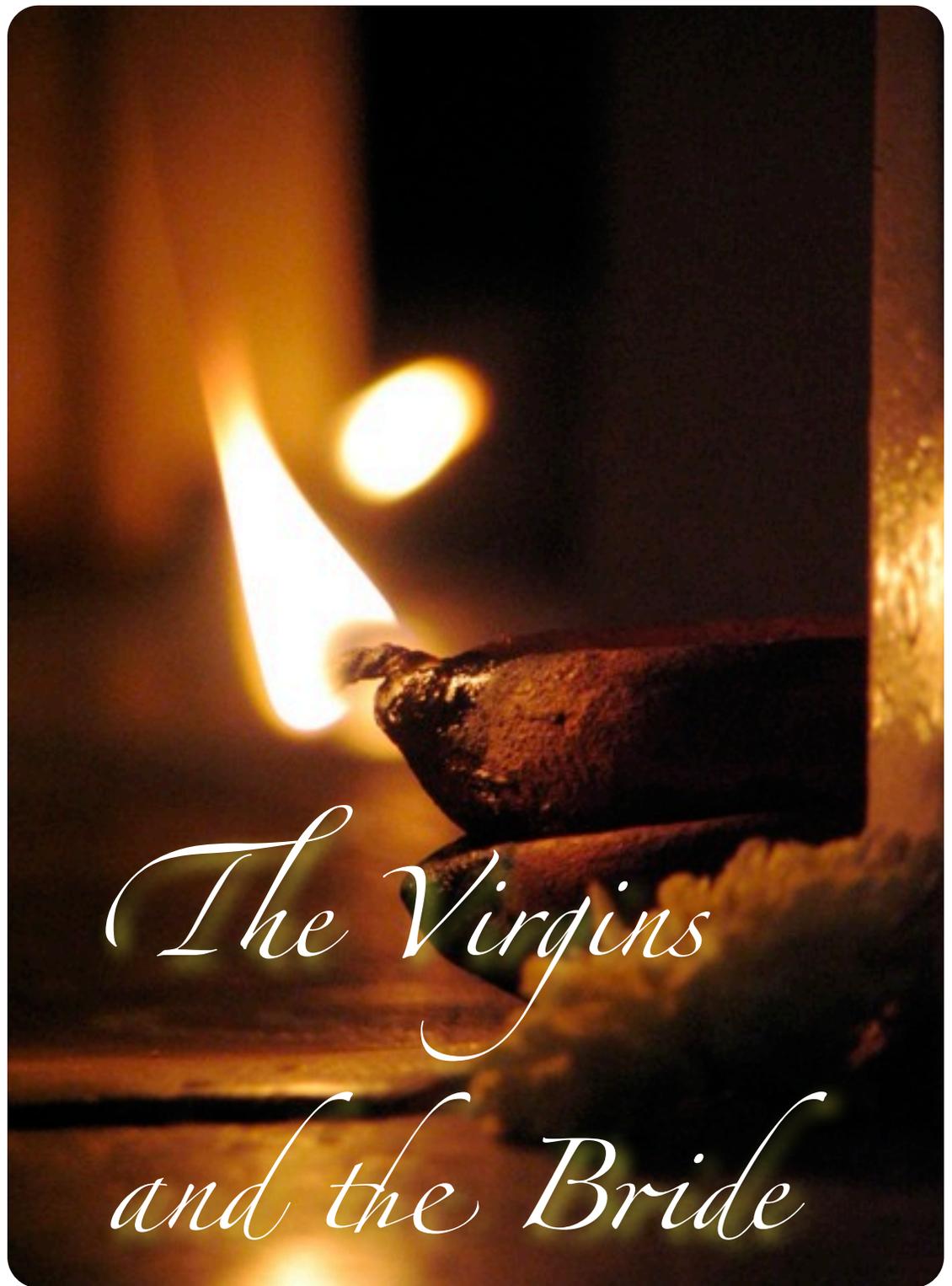


Jan./Feb. 2011

# The Bible Guys

of Yesterday and Today



## *The Virgins and the Bride*

### **THE VIRGINS AND THE BRIDE**

More than mere moral stories, the Lord's parables contain "the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven." And so it is with the parable of the ten virgins.

### **JESUS IS COMING (PT. 2)**

Many believe that no one can know about the return of our Lord. But the Scriptures declare that God always reveals His plan to His prophets, and tells everything to His friends.

### **THE VOICE**

John was a man sent from God – the Voice in the Wilderness, preparing the way for Messiah. God never changes, and He will send another messenger before Messiah's second coming.

# The Bible Guys

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# The Virgins and the Bride

by David M. McNabb

We are told that the parables of Jesus are little more than moral stories, something akin to Aesop's fables. It is taught that the purpose of these stories was mostly to tell us how to treat one another, and that even though we sometimes fail, God is ready to receive us to Himself again with open arms. While the moral element can obviously be perceived in the Lord's parables, and shared with the younger generation in the Sunday School class, is that the primary purpose of these messages? A prominent television and radio minister was once heard saying that Jesus spake in parables "so that even the children could understand."

Perhaps, however, it is best to let Jesus' own words in the Holy Scripture declare the purpose of Jesus' parables. The disciples were curious as to the Messiah's reason behind the parables. Matthew records the moment they finally confronted the Lord about them. "And the disciples came, and said unto him, Why speakest thou unto them in parables? He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given. For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more

abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath. Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand. And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive: For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them. But blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear. For verily I say unto you, That many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them" (Matt. 13:10-17).

So, according to Jesus Himself, He spoke in parables to confound them to whom it was not given to understand the mysteries of God. In so doing, He fulfilled that which was written by the prophet Isaiah. Therefore, while a moral theme may be found in the parables, their true intent is to speak about the mysteries of

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# Jesus is Coming *as it is written (part 2)* by C. Elden McNabb

Until the passing of the year 2000, many Christians were anticipating the coming of Jesus, the Bridegroom, with the coming of that year. They knew that the end of the sixth millennium would usher in His coming, but when was its true end? The juggling of the Roman calendar by the Church of Rome confused the truth of the time. So as the year approached, the preaching waned, the year came and went and silence began to settle in. Jesus did not come as they expected, so they fulfilled that part of the parable of the ten virgins in Matthew 25:1-5, "While the bridegroom tarried they all slumbered and slept." We must now manage to rightly divide the truth of the time.

Jesus was not late. The ministry had simply miscalculated the time of Jesus' coming, and they went out too early. The time came and went, and a new "convenient" doctrine occupies the pulpits. They now say, "No one can know when

Jesus is coming." And any person preaching otherwise is summarily condemned, denounced and shunned.

Doesn't it strike you as odd that churches and ministers all over the world are in relative agreement on this subject? Yet they agree on hardly anything else. Is it possible that it is the result of the fact that God has sent a strong delusion into the world, so that those who hate knowledge will be deceived? For the truth's sake, and ours, Wisdom is crying from without, saying, "How long ye simple ones, will you love simplicity? and the scorners delight in their scorning, and fools hate knowledge?" (2 Thess. 2:1-12; Prov. 1:20-33).

Jesus said, "When ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors. Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled?" (Matt. 24:29-24). Jesus made no suggestion whatsoever

that no one would ever know when He was coming, although admitting that He yet had some things to learn, Himself.

"When He [God] bringeth in the first begotten into the world He saith, And let all the angels of God worship Him" (Heb. 1:6). That was a major step in His maturing process from the time He was begotten of God (Rev. 5:1-10; Isa. 29:9-18). Luke described the first 12 years of Jesus' life, saying, when "they had performed all things according to the law of the Lord, *the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him*" (Luke 2:39-40). And again he said that from the time that Jesus was about twelve years of age, "*Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man*" (Luke 2:41-52).

Jesus was born at the time of the Autumnal equinox at point AD/BC, and at 12 years of age, in AD 12, He knew the fifth millennium had begun. He thought it

**Continued on next page**

"I can see how it might be possible for a man to look down upon the earth and be an atheist, but I cannot conceive how a man could look up into the heavens and say there is no God."

*Abraham Lincoln (b. Feb. 12, 1809), 16th President of the United States.*

"I have not changed my beliefs. I am not starting a new church as some have accused me, but my faith is rooted and grounded in the very same church that I have always preached. And if there is any so-called separation it is by those who are not sticking to the vision as revealed to A. J. Tomlinson and the very same vision that God has revealed in me in its complete form. It was and always has been destined to go to perfection..."

*Bishop Grady R. Kent in reference to his Feb. 13, 1957, stand for the Revelation and resignation from the Church of God of Prophecy.*

## "QUOTABLE"

"To be a Christian without prayer is no more possible than to be alive without breathing."

*Martin Luther King, Jr. (b. Jan. 15, 1929), clergyman, activist, and civil rights leader.*

I am sure that never was a people, who had more reason to acknowledge a Divine interposition in their affairs, than those of the United States; and I should be pained to believe that they have forgotten that agency, which was so often manifested during our Revolution, or that they failed to consider the omnipotence of that God who is alone able to protect them."

*George Washington (b. Feb. 22, 1732), 1st President of the United States.*

*Continued from previous page*

was time for Him to begin His ministry, and went to Jerusalem with His parents, and to the temple, at the next Passover to do just that. But with Mary's help, He realized that He was moving a little too early.

**When Jesus returned to Heaven,** He received the "Revelation of Jesus Christ [Himself], which God gave unto Him, to show unto His servants things which must shortly come to pass" (Rev. 1:1-10, Rev. 5). Therefore, now we also can know, because we are His friends (John 15:14-17). "Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but He revealeth His secret unto His servants the prophets. The lion hath roared, who will not fear? the Lord God hath spoken, who can but prophesy?" ( Amos 3:7-8). **Jesus is coming back, and He knows when, and will most certainly reveal it to His prophets. We have the option of believing it at their word, or not.**

What will God do in 2011? He will do what he said He would do. God is on an unchangeable schedule in certain things. He has given us six thousand years, from the creation of Adam to the transition to the seventh millennium, our millennium of rest. God's schedule puts that at about the time of the Autumnal Equinox in 2011.

A judgment will soon be executed upon Christianity for their unbelief and their waywardness, and their false doctrines. They promote doctrines which are not even mentioned in the Bible, but the "Doctrine of Christ," the "Oracles of God" (Heb. 5:12 - 6:3), is commonly unheard of, or is simply rejected. Where are our Bible advocates that should be preaching Isaiah 33:6, "Wisdom and knowledge shall be the stability of thy times and strength of salvation: the fear of the Lord is his treasure?"

In 2 John 1:7-11, John revealed its importance in our relationship with God. He explained to us that being born again, but not having the Doctrine of Christ, we have only the blessing of Jesus Christ, but "He that abideth in the Doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son." And He admonished us, saying, "Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things that we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward."

God has patiently endured the waywardness of His children for a long time, but has now set a time of testing us to see if we will put those things behind us and trust Him. The LORD has spoken, saying, "The great day of the LORD is near,

it is near, and hasteth greatly, even the voice of the "Day of the LORD" (Zeph. 1:14). That Day of the Lord is about God punishing Christianity. He is obviously describing Christians, using Israel and Judah as allegories (Zeph. 1:2-8). In that day, the conclusion of the sixth millennium, "sudden destruction" shall come upon God's disobedient, and faithless, and idolatrous children, "and they shall not escape" (1 Thess. 4:13 - 5:6).

The Lord said, "Hear the word of the LORD, ye children of Israel [Christianity, Rom. 2:4-11]: for the LORD hath a controversy with the inhabitants of the land, because there is no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land. By swearing, and lying, and killing, and stealing, and committing adultery, they break out, and blood toucheth blood. Therefore shall the land mourn, and every one that dwelleth therein shall languish, with the beasts of the field, and with the fowls of heaven; yea, the fishes of the sea also shall be taken away" (Hosea 4:1-3).

From Dec. 13, 2010 - Jan. 14, 2011 , a strange phenomenon occurred which quickly spread around the world. In one month's time, millions of birds have fallen dead from the sky around the world, in Chile, China, U.S.A. (at least 4 states), Korea, and S. Africa, to name a few. Huge numbers of sea creatures have also been found, 2 million of them in Chesapeake Bay, Maryland alone. And on Jan. 14, 2011, two hundred head of cattle were found dead in Wisconsin.

The prophecy was made by both Hosea and Zephaniah as well as others, and now the sign, and warning, has been given to those of us who are professing to be the children of God. I urge you to seek God with all diligence to find the truth of this knowledge, and wisdom necessary to escape the trouble that is coming (Isa. 33:6). The wrath of God upon the children of God will doubtless follow soon. 



## **THE VIRGINS *Cont. from page 2***

the Kingdom of Heaven. The subject matter of the parables is spiritually discerned, being thereby hidden from the wise and foolish and revealed unto babes.

One such parable is found in Matthew 25. In chapter 24, the disciples asked Jesus to tell them about the time of the overthrow of Jerusalem, the sign of His coming, and of the end of the world. As He is completing His prophecy of the end, Jesus continues, giving us some parables. The first parable about the end speaks of ten virgins.

“Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. And five of them were wise, and five were foolish. They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them: But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept. And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh, go ye out to meet him. Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out. 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. 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. Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not. Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh” (Matt. 25:1-13).

Now, while we see here a general story of preparedness and vigilance, the Lord uses specific imagery that must not be overlooked. It is in the details that Christ has given us the keys to

understanding. What are these elements? And where might we find their meaning?

The elements of this parable are these: the kingdom of heaven, 5 wise and 5 foolish virgins, lamps, oil, the bridegroom, a midnight cry, and some sellers of oil.

First and foremost, the kingdom of heaven is likened unto 10 virgins. The kingdom of heaven is a reference to Christianity, of this there is little doubt. No stretch of the imagination, however, could possibly relate 10 virgins – or even 5 – to the one element conspicuously absent from the story: the Bride. While the Bridegroom is undoubtedly a reference to Jesus, and the ten virgins to Christianity as a whole. Where is the Bride? We will look at that in a moment.

Now, even though 5 were foolish, they were still a part of the kingdom of heaven. False religions and idolatry are likened to harlots, not virgins (Jer. 3; Ezek. 16; Rev. 17:1-6). So, the virgins describe Christians, both wise and foolish.

These ALL slumbered and slept. They all took lamps, but while the wise took oil, the foolish did not. What does the scripture say is the lamp for the believer? “Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path” (Psa. 119:105). So the Word of God is the lamp which they all took. But not all had oil. So what does the oil represent?

This is where Pentecostals will rejoice over other Christian brethren, claiming that the oil is the Holy Ghost, and therefore the wise were Holy Ghost-baptized believers. While I have no doubt that some Pentecostals are represented among the wise, oil does not represent the Holy Ghost baptism – wine does. The symbolism of oil is found in Leviticus 24:2, “Command the children of Israel, that they bring unto thee pure oil olive beaten for the light, to cause the lamps to burn continually.” Oil is for light, and while light is knowledge, oil is understanding.

The Psalmist said, “The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple” (Psa. 119:130). Again, of Daniel the king declared, “I have even heard of thee, that the spirit of the gods is in thee, and that light and understanding and excellent wisdom is found in thee” (Dan. 5:13-14). Particularly with Daniel, light, understanding and wisdom are connected, helping us to better see the condition of the WISE virgins, who had lamps with oil, and therefore had light.

When asked to share their oil, the wise virgins said that they could not do so, because they had only enough for themselves. How is that possible? Have you ever been asked a question, perhaps by a teacher in a classroom, and, while you knew the answer sufficiently for yourself, you did not know it well enough to explain it to others? That is the condition of these wise virgins. They had enough understanding for themselves, yet not enough to help the others.

So they told them to go to them that sell. This statement alone makes a great argument against the oil symbolizing the Holy Ghost baptism, since Paul told us specifically that the gift of the Holy Ghost cannot be purchased (Acts 8:9-24). Yet, there are some things that we are told to purchase: “Buy the truth, and sell it not; also wisdom, and instruction, and understanding” (Prov. 23:23).

And what about the sellers of oil to whom the wise virgins sent the foolish? They can be seen in 2 Kings 4:1-7. A certain woman’s husband died, leaving her and her two sons in deep debt. The prophet of God told her to get as many vessels as she could, and that her pot of oil would fill them all. Then she and her two sons were told to sell the oil, both to pay off the debt and to provide for the household. When examined together with the prophecy in Zechariah 4, we see

**THE VIRGINS *Cont. on page 7***

# The Voice

by Joel McNabb

"The great day of the LORD is near, it is near, and hasteth greatly, even the voice of the day of the LORD: the mighty man shall cry there bitterly. That day is a day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress, a day of wasteness and desolation, a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness, A day of the trumpet and alarm against the fenced cities, and against the high towers" (Zeph. 1:14).

It is easy for us to believe that John the Baptist was the "voice of one crying in the wilderness," as the scriptures say. Jesus told us, "all the law and the prophets prophesied until John" (Matt. 11:13). This is one of the main scriptures in understanding the "key of knowledge" spoken of in Luke 11:52. This shows that all of the Old Testament is prophetic, and when John came on the scene, prophecy began to be fulfilled. John was that voice, preparing the way for Jesus, the Lamb of God (Isa. 40:3). We must take note of what preparations he made, as he turned the hearts of the children to the fathers. The disciples of John were prepared; and when Jesus came and called them, they followed Him.

If John, being a man, could be "the voice of one crying in the wilderness", could not "the voice of the day of the Lord" be a man as well? Consider Heb. 10:1, "The Law having a shadow of good things to come and not the very image of those things." When the passage in 1 Thess. 4:16 is read: "The Lord will descend with a shout, and with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God." Many think it is an angelic voice from heaven and a real trumpet blasting, which all believers will hear at once. Where is the preparation that must be made, according to the scriptures? God has a way He works, and does not change, "For I am the LORD, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed" (Mal. 3:6). Jesus came the

first time as the Lamb to take away the sins of the world, and God sent John to prepare the way. Why would God not send someone to prepare the way for His Son's second coming as King?

Let us look at the term "the trump of God" in 1 Thess. 4:16, and also known as the "last trump" in 1 Cor. 15:52. When we hear the word "last trump" a question should arise in our minds: "How many trumps are there, if it is the last one that sounds when Jesus comes?" John, on the Isle of Patmos, caught up to the third heaven, saw the seven angels which stood before God; and to them were given seven trumpets. Although everything John saw was done by angels, they were acting out what God was going to do here on earth. The seven angels, who had the seven trumpets and prepared themselves to sound, will be seven men with messages, each one making their voice heard when it is their time.

If we look at Rev. 10 and 11, we see the 7th angel begin to sound in chapter 10; and then in 11, when the 7th angel sounded, there were great voices in heaven saying, "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever." It sounds as if the 7th angel is the last, when Jesus comes and takes over the kingdoms of this world. Would you agree?

I want you to hear that the sound, the voice and the last trump are the same. We see there will be someone to make the sound that Jesus is coming as in Matt. 25, "And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him." This cry has to be made by someone, to get Christians to realize that Jesus is coming, and soon the door will be shut. Remember as it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be when the Son of man comes.

The Exodus from Egypt is another prophecy of us going out to meet the Lord. "Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself" (Ex. 19:4). Who is God calling eagles' wings? That would be Moses and Aaron, the two men that God used to bring the plagues on Egypt until Pharaoh let the Israelites go. Notice these two men brought them out to meet the Lord, as in Matt. 25 "go ye out to meet him."

In Exodus 19, God tells Moses to get the people ready, as He was going to come down the third day. Moses was to sanctify the people, and the people were to wash their own clothes. Verse 16 says, "And it came to pass on the third day in the morning, that there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud; so that all the people that was in the camp trembled."

"How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth! Thy watchmen shall lift up the voice; with the voice together shall they sing: for they shall see eye to eye, when the LORD shall bring again Zion. Break forth into joy, sing together, ye waste places of Jerusalem: for the LORD hath comforted his people, he hath redeemed Jerusalem. The LORD hath made bare his holy arm in the eyes of all the nations; and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God. Depart ye, depart ye, go ye out from thence, touch no unclean thing; go ye out of the midst of her; be ye clean, that bear the vessels of the LORD. For ye shall not go out with haste, nor go by flight: for the LORD will go before you; and the God of Israel will be your reward" (Isa. 52:7-12).

Together with the voice, there will be watchmen who will share in this message,

as John the Baptist had his own disciples that helped him. The voice is a man with a message, to make the cry that Jesus is coming, but there will be men with him that will also take up the cry to gather the people unto the Lord.

One might ask why would God need a man to do this work? The same people will also quote, "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, today and forever." God has shown by revelation, knowledge, and signs, what time we are living in. Scripture requires a man, like John the Baptist, who has a message of His coming. We can call it the Voice, or the Last Trump, but it is a message for God's people to wake up and trim their lamps. Many will not believe. Many did not believe Noah, the preacher of righteousness (2 Peter 2:5). The flood came and those that were disobedient perished in it.

### **THE VIRGINS Continued from page 5**

another prominent pair like the widow's sons. Zechariah sees a vision of "the two anointed ones," as read in the King James Version. "Sons of oil" is perhaps a better translation of the Hebrew (בני היצהר *bene hayits-har*), making the connection with the widow's story even more definite.

These, together with the prophecy of the two witnesses in Revelation 11, reveal the promise of the ministry of two special servants of God who are endowed with the oil of understanding to distribute to the end-time believers who are earnestly seeking the truth.

So, all of the virgins had lamps (the Word of God), but only some of them had oil (understanding). All of their lamps had gone out, and they all slept. Solomon said, "There are threescore queens, and fourscore concubines, and virgins without number. My dove, my undefiled is but one; she is the only one of her mother, she is the choice one of her that bare her. The daughters saw her, and blessed her; yea,

We do not want to be like those five foolish virgins who did not have oil in their lamps, and were left standing outside because the door was shut. The day of the Lord is coming! Take some time to consider these scriptures, and who it is that God is talking to when He said, "Woe unto you that desire the day of the LORD! to what end is it for you? the day of the LORD is darkness, and not light" (Amos 5:8). May we always be soft to hear the voice of God, whether in the wind, the earthquake, the fire, or the still small voice. We must hear and be found faithful. When Jesus was asked, "What must we do to do the works of God?" His answer was, "This is the work of God, That ye believe on him whom He hath sent" (John 6:29). Will you hear and believe or will you scorn? His sheep will hear His voice. Blessings on all those that have ears to hear. 

the queens and the concubines, and they praised her" (S. of S. 6:8-9). Here, Solomon acknowledged two categories: a group of several acceptable ones, but another who is chosen above the rest. What might set this Elect lady apart from the rest, in light of Matt. 25? Solomon tells us the difference, when speaking of the virtuous Woman in Prov. 31:18, "Her candle goeth not out by night."

Am I saying that such a distinction exists within Christianity today? The words of Christ indicated that it would. And the immutable God has set the precedent as well.

Long before the rebellion of Jereboam against the House of David, God made a difference between Judah and Israel, as we see in Psalm 114:1-2. "When Israel went out of Egypt, the house of Jacob from a people of strange language; Judah was his sanctuary, and Israel his dominion."

### **THE VIRGINS Continued on page 8**

## **OUR FORERUNNER & HIS**

*by C. Elden McNabb*

For most of my life I thought of John the Baptist when I thought of "the forerunner." And indeed John was the forerunner to prepare the way of Jesus our Savior, our Redeemer, although Jesus is the only person in the Bible who is actually referred to with that term (Heb. 6:17-20). John called himself "The Voice of One Crying in the Wilderness, make straight the way of the Lord." And he cried out for about three and a half years, preparing at least twelve men for Jesus to ordain into His work, and several if not all of "The Seventy" (Matt. 3:3; Acts 1:21; Isa. 40:3).

Jesus came to die on a cross for our sakes, and God sent John the Baptist to prepare the way before Him. John spent about three-and-a-half years making that preparation in fulfillment of Malachi 3:1. That was as close as Jesus would get to someone "rolling out the red carpet" for Him. And He provided His own red blood for our sins, for our healing and to purchase His bride (Isa. 53:4-5; Acts 20:28).

In Malachi 3:1-6, we are told of a characteristic of God's ways which is of particular importance to Christians today. The prophet finished this note about the messenger, saying, "For I am the LORD, I change not." (See also Eccl. 3:14-15.)

It is clear that John did not do some of the things which are mentioned in Malachi 3:1-5, nor will Jesus do them when He comes. Look closely, there is more than one messenger spoken of here. When the next messenger comes he will prepare God's people for the coming of the the King, the Bridegroom. And together they shall give Jesus the royal reception He deserves (Zech. 4:7).

God never changes, and every time God sends Jesus to Earth, He will have someone there with preparations made for His arrival. The forerunner for Jesus, for this imminent visit, is called "The Voice of the Day of the Lord," (Zeph 1:14). It is he which shall bring forth the King of all the earth with shoutings, crying, Grace, grace unto Him (Zech. 4:7).

The day of the Lord is upon us and "the Voice of the Day of the Lord" is already making his cry. 

## THE VIRGINS *Cont. from page 7*

Thus, from the Exodus, they were divided, only being manifested when God gave Jereboam dominion of the northern Kingdom of Israel. The Kingdom of Judah was made up of two tribes (Judah and Benjamin), plus the Levites, as the Temple was in the territory of Judah (1 Kings 11:29-38). Israel was the 10 northern tribes. Therefore, Judah (the sanctuary) represents the Bride, while the ten tribes of Israel “the kingdom (dominion) of heaven shall be likened unto 10 virgins.”

How does the 5 wise and 5 foolish fit in with this? In 2 Chronicles 30, Hezekiah called the tribes of Israel to come and celebrate the Passover according to the word of God (since, although they were separate political entities, God still required the northern tribes to worship at Jerusalem). Verse 10 says that posts went to Ephraim and Manasseh even unto Zebulun, but were mocked and laughed to scorn (an element often found in the parables of our Lord).

But verse 11 says, “Nevertheless divers of ASHER and MANASSEH and of ZEBULUN humbled themselves, and came to Jerusalem.” Then, in verses 18-19, we read, “For a multitude of the people, even many of EPHRAIM, and MANASSEH, ISSACHAR, and ZEBULUN, had not cleansed themselves, yet did they eat the passover otherwise than it was written. But Hezekiah prayed for them, saying, The good LORD pardon every one That prepareth his heart to seek God, the LORD God of his fathers, though he be not

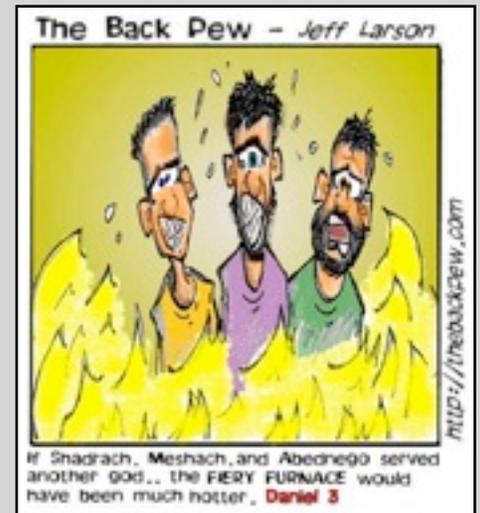
cleansed according to the purification of the sanctuary.”

Count them: ASHER, MANASSEH, ZEBULUN, EPHRAIM, and ISSACHAR – FIVE! Five out of the 10 northern tribes, rebellious regarding the worship of God, humbled themselves and came and worshiped at God’s holy house. Hereby can we see that, as we come to the end and the time of our visitation, not all Christians will be wise with understanding to hear the word of the Lord and act, but some most certainly will.

1 Samuel 25 gives us a story of the virtuous woman named Abigail. She proved to David her virtue, and after the death of her husband, David desired to make her his wife. In verse 42, God’s word says, “And Abigail hasted, and arose, and rode upon an ass, with five damsels of hers that went after her; and she went after the messengers of David, and became his wife.” The bride had how many damsels? That’s right – FIVE.

The ten virgins and the northern 10 tribes represent Christians – the sleeping kingdom of heaven. Judah represents the Bride, the very elect. While all ten virgins of the kingdom of heaven had their lamps go out, the virtuous woman (a reference to the sanctuary – the tribe of Judah), had a lit candle all night. It is to her, and not the wayward children of slumbering Christianity, that we can apply the passage in 1 Thess. 5: Christians who are “not of darkness, but of the light.”

The Bride, seemingly absent in the Lord’s parable, can in fact be found there.



She, whose “candle goeth not out by night,” is seen in Matt. 25:6. Being the only one awake among them, it is she who, with the Holy Ghost, calls the 10 virgins to the wedding. As it is written “the Spirit and the Bride say, Come” (Rev. 22:17).

The Lord’s return is near, even at the door. While the doctrines of men and messages of peace and prosperity have lulled unwitting congregations to sleep, it is imperative that we hear the cry of the Bride and of the Spirit, saying to believers everywhere, “Arise, shine; for your light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon you. For behold, the darkness covers the earth and gross darkness the people: but the Lord shall arise upon you, and his glory shall be seen upon you. And the Gentiles shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your rising. Awake sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give you light.” 