

Wise & Foolish Virgins

The parable of the ten virgins¹ refers, in part,² to those of the church—for virgin in Scripture refers to the church³—who watch and wait and are ready: *'the bridegroom came: and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut.'*⁴ This shutting of the door barring the foolish virgins⁵ only refers to an action after the election has entered the wedding feast of the Lamb. It is not 'dinner' in the purview here but the Greek, meaning 'early meal.'⁶ It is not the fullness of all that partakes of this, but only the 'elect,' comprising the first resurrection.

Chronologically, the first record of Jesus giving any indication of the time of day of the Second Coming 'in the air' is in Luke: *'Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning.'*⁷ *And if he⁸ shall come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find them so, blessed are those servants. Be ye therefore ready also; for the Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not.'*⁹ Peter then immediately queries, *'Lord, speakest thou this parable unto us, or even unto all?'*¹⁰ He was seeking to ascertain whether the statement refers to the disciples only, or to all. Jesus' answer makes it clear that it is directed to all, for it makes specific reference to the time of His return and conditions pertaining. But even more, it describes the actions and status of the then three classes of 'servant':

1. The faithful and wise steward;¹¹
2. The bad and completely rescidivist servant, who ultimately goes to perdition; and,
3. The slipshod and unprepared servant, who, depending upon his state, will receive more or less punishment.

¹ Mat 25:1-10

² Mat 25:5, '*slumbered and slept.*' Slumbered means, literally, '*nodded*,' a transient act, the initial state of slumber or sleep. Mat 25:6; the translation '*to meet him*' can hardly convey the meaning of the Greek phrase, which implies a custom or familiar ceremony, involving the 'elect' '*coming forth unto a meeting.*'

³ through chastity and purity.

⁴ Mat 25:10

⁵ the admonition in Mat 25:9c, '*but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves*' is better translated '*rather go and barter in the marketplace,*' a derisory comment, reinforcing the futility of their position: one cannot buy the Holy Spirit in the markets!

⁶ Edersheim, Alfred, *Jesus the Messiah*, p.769; Greek: apiton.

⁷ i.e., inside a house, and dressed and girded, ready; '*lights burning*' suggests a nocturnal return, with those waiting doing so indoors; '*loins girded*,' signifies being dressed and ready for that journey.

⁸ viz., the bridegroom, signifying Christ.

⁹ Luke 12:35-40; esp. vv.35,38,40

¹⁰ Luke 12: 41b

¹¹ or '*trusty and thoughtful*,' as Moffatt has it.

The responses to the Lord's command to '*stay awake with loins girt*' will be varied, and an essential cause of this variance is to be found in the detail of the individual's waiting and expectation of His return and in his associated actions. The 'elect' will be awake, ritually cleansed by washing—for he will, after all, be rising, immortal, to meet the Lord in His immortal, all-powerful state—and waiting, ready to go, for only the 'elect' can understand the significance of the Scriptures and discern the date and time of His return, and only the 'elect' will keep that appointment.¹² The 'intermediate peoples' will still be asleep or at work. Their removal to be with the Lord will not occur until later, after the time of Christ's alighting on the mount of Olives.¹³

Both Matthew and Luke speak of night '*watches*.' '*Blessed are those servants, whom the lord when he cometh shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them. And if he shall come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find them so, blessed are those servants.*'¹⁴ Mark speaks of the Parousia of being either, '*at even, or at midnight, or at the cockcrowing, or in the morning*'¹⁵—in other words, he mentions the same watch system. Whilst the earliest Greeks divided the night commonly into three parts, and, prior to the exile in Babylon, the Israelites had three watches in a night, after they became subject to the Romans they adopted the Roman custom of dividing the night into four watches. The second watch, therefore, ran from nine o'clock to midnight, and the third watch from midnight to three o'clock.

'*Behold, I come as a thief,*'¹⁶ *Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments,*¹⁷ *lest he walk naked, and they see his shame.*'¹⁸ There is, perhaps, more than a passing connection to the wedding feast '*in the air,*' where the lack of a wedding garment¹⁹ results in eviction, figuratively, from God's 'elect' people '*into outer darkness.*'²⁰

There is, certainly, a very close correlation with the Second Coming, in staying awake and watching for that blessed event, seen in the following by Edersheim: '[I]n the midst of some dry account²¹ of what went on in the Temple, we come upon the very words which....John has employed to describe heavenly realities.²² Perhaps one of the most striking instances of this kind is afforded by the words....'*Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments.*' They literally describe, as we learn from the Rabbis, the punishment awarded to the Temple guards if found asleep at their posts; and the Rabbinical account of it is curiously confirmed by the

¹² q.v. inf.

¹³ q.v. Luke 17:34-36, et. sup.

¹⁴ Luke 12:37,38

¹⁵ Mark 13:35b

¹⁶ Greek: kleptes, '*embezzler*' or '*pilferer*.'

¹⁷ Greek: himation, the outer '*cloak*,' the more expensive outer garment worn over the tunic.

¹⁸ Rev 16:15

¹⁹ Mat 22:12

²⁰ Mat 22:13c

²¹ by Josephus.

²² in Rev 16:15

somewhat naïve confession of one of their number,²³ that on a certain occasion his own maternal uncle had actually undergone the punishment of having his clothes set on fire by the captain of the Temple as he went his rounds at night.²⁴

Now *'Be ye therefore ready also, for the Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not'*²⁵ would fit midnight, at the changeover of watches, most admirably. That would be the precise point of the least level of watchfulness when the guards' attention would be diverted by the changeover. The twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew runs on from the preceding one—there being no chapter divisions in the original Greek—with the parable of the ten virgins,²⁶ which contains: *'And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bride-groom²⁷ cometh; go ye out to meet him.'*²⁸ *'Midnight'* is translated from two Greek words²⁹ meaning *'the middle of the night,'* or *'in the midst of the night.'* Midnight, therefore, the least watchful of night times, would be the least expected, and hence the soundest translation. But midnight is not quite so simple to determine. On the day in question³⁰ true midnight actually occurs at 00:39 I.D.S.T.³¹—owing to Cairo time being the time zone for Jerusalem,³² and therefore slightly 'out of phase' for the exact time coordinates for the longitude and latitude of the Holy City; there's also a one-hour adjustment necessary for I.D.S.T. —or 21:39 U.T.C.³³ on the day before, if using the Julian / Gregorian calendar.

In the middle of the night—Jerusalem time, for all things are taken relative to that pertaining at the Temple, or its site, in Jerusalem—Jesus Christ will come for His 'elect.'³⁴ The sheer physical impossibility of the 'elect' then alive maintaining a watch on a 24 / 7 basis implies that the actual date and time is both know-able and known in advance. Being found naked in the Temple as a result of having one's clothes burned off meant but one thing: a hasty flight out of the Temple precinct in shame. Similarly, those who sleep and slumber on the great day of the return of the Lord will have no place at the glorious wedding supper in the air.

²³ footnoted: Rabbi Elieser ben Jacob, q.v. Middoth, i, 2.

²⁴ Edersheim, Alfred, *The Temple, Its Ministry and Services as they were at the time of Jesus Christ*, pp.142,143 (with added comment and clarification in square brackets).

²⁵ Luke 12:40

²⁶ ten being the biblical number of God's divine order and also of completed course of time; five (here in two groupings) in biblical useage can indicate judgement or reward. In Mat 25:2-4, the five wise virgins represent the first two years of Christ's earthly ministry, which bore much fruit, and the church eras of Ephesus, Smyrna, and Philadelphia. The five foolish virgins represent the final year of His ministry, which bore little or nothing in terms of fruit, and the church eras of Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, and Laodicea, which fare similarly.

²⁷ signifying Christ.

²⁸ Mat 25:6

²⁹ Greek: mesos nux.

³⁰ Sunday, 13 June, 2027, q.v.

³¹ Israel Daylight Saving Time.

³² q.v.; an alternative to the location-specific adjusted, clock midnight method of calculation, based on the mid-point (midnight) between Jerusalem sunset on 12 June, 2027 and sunrise on 13 June, 2027 (19:45 and 05:33 I.D.S.T. respectively), gives the same result: 00:39 I.D.S.T.

³³ Coordinated Universal Time.

³⁴ thus while the era of the Judæo-Christian Church started on Pentecost 30AD (with the receipt of the Holy Spirit on those gathered in Jerusalem), Christ returns for His own, the firstfruits of the church, also on Pentecost, in 2027AD.

The position of the disciples on the issue of the timing of the Second Coming after the Resurrection of Jesus is interesting. It is seen in Acts: *'When they were therefore come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power.'*³⁵ The fact that they asked concerning the potential imminence of the kingdom is supportive of the exceptive nature of the Greek³⁶ in the context of the foundation verses in Matthew and Mark,³⁷ for if such knowledge had been wholly proscribed, then there would have been be no point in their asking, for they or their successors would only know when it had actually happened. The Greek used by Christ for *'times'*³⁸ designates a space of time rather than an identifiable point in time for a fixed or special occasion,³⁹ and thus points well into the future, whereas the word translated *'seasons'*⁴⁰ in context refers to specific events at the end of the period of time.⁴¹ Moffatt has, *'It is not for you to know the course and periods of time that the Father has fixed by his own authority.'*⁴² The 'sole' or exclusive element in all of this is the setting of the dates for the events surrounding the Second Coming, et al., *'which the Father hath set in his own power of choice.'*⁴³ While the knowledge of those dates is restricted to those to whom the Father chooses to reveal it, it would have been of no utility to the apostles—for they would all die in due course, well short of the period of time in question—and, in any event, the Holy Spirit had not yet been conferred.⁴⁴ Hence, possession of that knowledge is exceptive and not exclusive, all working through the operation of the Will or Power of God, the Holy Spirit.

If this additional inference is correct, then Christ's words, *'But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only,'*⁴⁵ were time specific, meeting the question when asked with a description of the then extant condition, but not referring to conditions extant when Paul wrote the Epistles, or John the book of Revelation, or eschatologically to near the time of the end.⁴⁶

Doubtless, there will be other means of anticipating the time of arrival of our Lord, as long-prophesied, dread events unfold, so then there should not be scope for any lingering dubiety or uncertainty.

³⁵ Acts 1:6,7

³⁶ Greek: ei me.

³⁷ Mat 24:36; Mark 13:32

³⁸ Greek: chromos.

³⁹ as opposed to Greek: kairos, which does refer to a specific occasion / point in time.

⁴⁰ Greek: kairos.

⁴¹ Greek: chromos.

⁴² Acts 1:7b

⁴³ corrected translation of Acts 1:7c; Greek: exousia, 'power of choice.'

⁴⁴ conferred later that same year, at Pentecost, 30AD.

⁴⁵ Mat 24:36

⁴⁶ Tanakh's Zech 14:7b, *'only the Lord knows when,'* does not agree with other translations, such as Moffatt's: *'The Eternal knows it.'*