

< Especially for biblical scholars >

I have a very deep and serious concern for those of you that consider yourselves as biblical scholars, because we must know that Jesus chose the lowly fishermen to work with instead of the biblical scholars of His day. I can only assume it was because He needed fresh minds that would be more willing to listen and learn.

But in your defense, it's been my own experience not to spend any time in the many books that people would recommend to me as I was involved in my own writing endeavors. Point being, if there was ever a time to invest your time away from your daily routine, it's now! You may discover something of great value in checking out my rendition of what Jesus couldn't tell us until now. (John 16:12)

This concern began after the reaction I received in a meeting with a long time biblical scholar. The next morning, as I was showering, it came to me that I should check out one of the parables that Jesus told. I couldn't remember exactly where it was but as I open my Bible, I was amazed that I didn't have to flip a page, for there it was jumping off the page at me – **The Parable of the Ten Virgins**. (Matt. 25)

Discover why this parable is meant for every teacher / preacher on the planet.

The theme within this parable represents a very significant question, "Are We Sure We Know God?" We may think we do, but this story describes many that were diligently into the study of their Bibles that met with heartbreaking disappointment as they were turned away at the door when the Gate Keeper said He didn't know them. (Also see John 5:39)

The word VIRGINS represents PURITY – 5 of the 10 were wise and 5 were foolish.

The ten virgins represent Bridesmaids or teachers and preachers or the

maidens that are to prepare the bride to meet the bridegroom.

The bride represents the masses of people that have chosen good over evil. The bridegroom, of course, represents our Heavenly Father.

The important thing to catch is that the ten virgins are bridesmaids – simply think about it – we all should know that in most weddings there is someone helping the bride get ready to meet the groom. So on the spiritual side of this coin, it's the biblical scholars or the teachers and preachers that are to help the people get ready to meet the King or in this case the bridegroom.

The parable says the ten virgins took their lamps - which represents their Bibles.

All 10 had been very much into the study of their special doctrines, they knew their Bibles very well. The only problem was that much time was spent dwelling on how to make sure they were pleasing, their concept of God, with their good behavior – trying to figure out what that might be. So consequently, this took them down many different roads of belief, resulting in them arguing with one another over their supposed, superior ways to Heaven.

Each one was so comfortable and sure of themselves in having the one superior saving 'TRUTH' – that they all went to sleep – but what made the difference when they awoke, what made 5 of them wise over the others?

It also says that 5 of them took their lamps / Bibles, but were foolish for not taking any oil with them. Of course, it's obvious that the oil represents the Holy Spirit that guides and leads us into more light – more light about God, that is.

You see, if we think we already have the light / truth – what's the need for any more, we may even think ourselves to be rich and in need of nothing.

Next, it says that the other 5 were wise for filling containers (the vessels of

their minds) with oil that fueled more light to come through their lamps.

Could this mean, in preparation for the journey to meet the Bridegroom that 5 of them were open to listen as a still small voice revealed more awesome good news about the bridegroom? (See John 17:4-6)

Trimming their lamps – Imagine their lamps to be a three to four foot pole with a large amount of rags, wrapped tightly around the end, and soaked with oil that fueled the flames of light. Of course, in this case they had snuffed out the flame when it became daylight. But later, when midnight came (a very dark spiritual time) they were told that the Bridegroom was coming, go out to meet him.

So in the dark of night, when they were awakened, they trimmed their lamps in preparation to relight them. Although there was some oil still in the rags, it wasn't enough for them to stay lit.

Within this parable, the trimming away of the charred or used up ends could be a very significant part to understand, because we're talking about our Bibles.

We know that the prior oil had lighted their way up to this point – as all ten were classified to be pure. So spiritually speaking, what could it mean to need more oil?

Maybe a shocking realization could be that trimming away the charred ends of our lamp / Bibles could be one of the toughest things to accept, for after all, our Bibles, rightfully so, have become very precious to us. But one thing to think about, maybe we should guard against worshipping our Bibles, instead of the ONE the Bible is about. (Again, see John 5:39)

So again, what could it mean to need more oil – what could it mean to trim away the charred ends of our Bibles? Could it possibly mean that God had to use very harsh methods or scare tactics in order to turn some away from evil? Has the time come for God to reveal that some of us would have

never come away from evil any other way?

Remember the story of Jonah, he was given a message of doom – ‘turn away from your wicked ways or God is going to destroy you!’

We must know that the Bible is full of such stories – turn from your wicked ways or you’ll be destroyed! But maybe we should notice that the scare tactics were only *short lived*.

During the time of Noah, the wicked were totally destroyed with a great flood, but within a very short time, wickedness again prevailed. The last twelve books of the Old Testament – filled with horror stories – turn from your wicked ways or... One of which is the story of Jonah that packs the real punch that every biblical scholar on the planet should be aware of.

Jonah being a prophet, knew God well enough to think that He wouldn’t carry through with this threat. And because he didn’t want his own reputation, as a prophet, to be ruined, he ran from giving such a message. He also may have thought that the people of Nineveh deserved to be destroyed for their outrageous wickedness.

But the bottom-line of it all is when God scolded Jonah for not caring about the many that were saved because of the scare tactics. In fact, it made Jonah so angry he wanted to die because of the humiliation of being wrong.

Think about it, you may have been teaching, what you thought to be biblical, the message of a forever burning Hell, but don’t get angry as Jonah did, as you discover the concept to be nothing more than a scare tactic.

Yes, I know that we like to say that God is loving – BUT – He is also just! But just because we humans have put a legal twist of retribution on the word, doesn’t necessarily mean this is a correct use of the word in this context.

As for God being just – we simply need to understand that God will always be found doing the just or righteous thing - for God is truly the author of

righteousness. (Justice / Righteousness = same meaning)

It may be shocking to many, but how would a torture chamber or this Hell thing to keep us alive in a forever state of torture make any sense on any level - except as one of God's methods in reaching the scoundrels of the world. For everyone on earth are God's children, we are all precious to Him, good or bad.

(If one of your children turned out to be a scoundrel, could you really ever disown them?)

Somewhere along the way, biblical scholars picked up on the concept that we humans are eternal beings – that we can't do anything about it – we only have to choose where we want to spend eternity – in Heaven or Hell.

But what I see in 1 Timothy 6:16 is that God alone is immortal. And to go along with that, all should read the mystery in 1 Corinthians 15:51-54.

So this may be shocking, but who are we to say it's wrong for God to use scare tactics, emergency measures, or do whatever it takes to wake us up? And if we were to really think about it, we should find this info to be GREAT GOOD NEWS!

Just maybe we should consider it time for us to trim away the charred ends of what it took to turn some of us around – but like I said, let's not be angry as Jonah – but let us find joy in being used by God in order to save some!

In moving on, keep in mind that God is in control with methods of training that may totally shock some of us, because trimming away the charred ends may have something to do with trimming away our traditional beliefs, or old land marks.

As the story goes, those that took no oil asked if they could have some oil from those that had. But in the reality of this parable, there simply was no way that the 5 wise could give them any of what they had, because, on the spiritual side of this coin, no one can be spiritually nourished for another,

the same as no one can eat physical food for another.

So could trimming away the charred ends have something to do with trimming away anything that would take our attention away from the Heavenly issue of God's character?

So what do you suppose would keep us away from getting to know our Heavenly Father? Could it possibly be because we are spending the majority of our time learning how not to break the rules?

Maybe if we were to spend the majority of our time dwelling on God's character, instead of our own perfection, we may even - not only like what we see, but could actually, love what we see. And if I understand properly, we will become like the One we most worship and admire.

For you see, the main issue and the bottom line of this parable has everything to do with the **King knowing us**. So a sobering thought could be - have we listened to Jesus saying, "If you have seen me, you have seen the Father?"

As awesome as Jesus is, have we left out the Father? We may think we know Jesus, but what about the Father, what are we saying about Him? Could we be found defending the Father's character from the accusations of the enemy?

So the ultimate question, "Are We Sure We Know God the Father?" We may think we do, we may even be walking two feet off the ground in our pure holiness – but remember all 10 were called virgins because of their purity – But the 5 foolish heard the Gate Keeper saying that He didn't know them.

So as bridesmaids, what message are we giving to help prepare the bride to meet groom? Are we still into using scare tactics (love me, or you will burn in Hell) or is it about time for Romans 2:4 – "Don't you know it's the kindness of God that leads to repentance?"

There are now hundreds of different spiritual groups with many mixed messages, all claiming to have superior biblical truth over another.

So in order to cut the confusion, would it make sense to trim our lamps of all the mixed messages on how to be saved – and dig like digging for hidden treasure to learn more about the Father. Hasn't the enemy been saying that the Father's way is too hard – that He is not only arbitrary but is also exacting, vengeful, unforgiving and severe?

Could it really be possible that because God had to allow the enemy to roam the earth from the beginning, that the enemy just may have turned our attention away from the issue of God the Father's character? For just in case you didn't know, the issue within the entire universe has been over the character of God.

Could the story about Jesus saving us from the Father's 'alleged' wrath be inaccurate? Could it really be possible to believe Jesus, when He said, that if you have seen me, you have seen the Father?

Is it possible we have been detoured or deceived as part of our training for what's ahead?

Maybe we should notice that the main mission for Jesus was to reveal the true character of God the Father to us. (See John 17: 4-6)

Could it be time to really think deep about what it would mean to be among the 5 foolish virgins? Think about it, in order to have the proper amount of oil – they needed to have invested their time (filling the vessels of their mind) by digging for the hidden treasure – the kind of person 'God the Father' really is. And because they refused to do the digging, they never became at-one with the Father to the point of Him knowing them. Consequently, when they came to the door hoping to get in – well, need I say anymore?

Ending comment: In preparation to present “The Rest of the Story Series” at the last minute, the eleventh hour – this parable of the ‘Ten Virgins’ simply jumped out to block my way.

We may all want to say, “I’m simply too busy to look at your stuff.” But may I say, if you were to take a short ‘time-out’ to climb a certain mountain, and look out over the trees to see the forest. The view is simply breathtaking as we consider the timing to be *now* for what Jesus couldn’t tell us way back then. (John 16:12)

It simply wouldn’t be fair to expose more than a small ‘sneak-peek’ other than to say that the rest of the story that Jesus held back (my rendition) is astonishingly breathtaking from a mountain peak view. Possibly, the same view the thief had when hanging from a cross next to Jesus on mount Calvary. What he saw had to be very significant, don’t you agree, to cause him to think,

“Wow! If this is what God is like, then count me in!”

By the way, in book 4 of - “What’s This World All About Anyway?”

Chapter 13 is devoted to the question

“Is There Life After Death?”

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