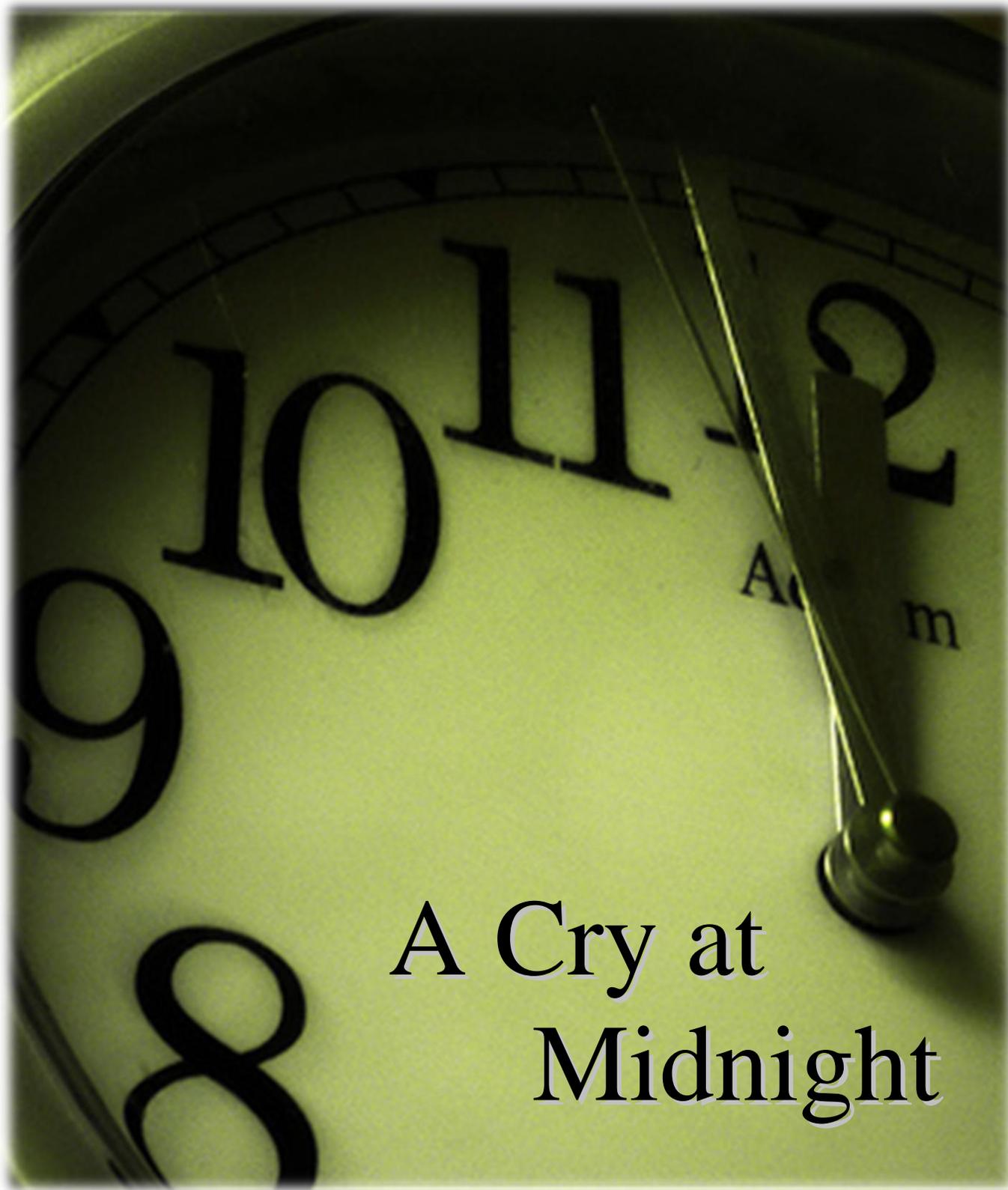


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# The Bible Guys

of Yesterday and Today

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A Cry at  
Midnight

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**The People of Truth**  
A Holy Nation

## The engrafted word

By David M. McNabb

The Bible is the most important compilation of literature among all of the books available to mankind. Its pages hold the very words of God. If, as Jesus said, "out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh" (Matt. 12:34), then the Holy Scriptures reveal to humanity the heart of God.

In God's word can be found every key to life and the universe. It explains all of life's mysteries and lays down the rules of human conduct. Where do we come from? Why are we here? What happens after we die? The answers to these questions and many more are ours to claim, if we will only become students of Scripture.

Modern science continually proves the Bible correct, despite its fervent desire to do just the opposite. When scientists and Scripture disagree, it is because their science is flawed. It is "science falsely so called," as Paul names it in 1 Tim. 6:20, that opposes the Word of God.

We are encouraged to read the Bible daily. One could easily read the entire Bible through in a year, reading only 4 chapters a day! There is nothing that will benefit you more in this life, or in the life to come, than developing a love for the Good Book.

But reading the words in the Bible is not enough. Many "scholars" and students of comparative religion classes have read the Bible. Unfortunately, as Paul wrote in Hebrews 4:2, "But the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it."

Recently, I awoke with the phrase "engrafted word" on my heart. Of course, I remembered the Scripture which is the source of that phrase in James 1:21, "Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls."

At first, I tied the phrase to the idea of "grafting" as presented by Paul to the Romans. As he illustrates in that epistle, a branch is cut off and joined to a tree. It becomes a part of the tree, and flourishes and is fruitful while being nourished by its new "host."

While that seems to paint a pleasant picture for the passage in James, I decided to make sure that I understood the word "engrafted" properly. After looking it up, I found that I had erroneously assumed that "engrafted" and "grafted" were the same. The word James used – engrafted – comes from a Greek word meaning "implanted." This paints an entirely different picture: the Word of God is not something attached, or added on to your life; rather, it is something that is planted into your life.

James is very likely referring to the same thing Jesus illustrated in His parable of the sower. "Hearken; Behold, there went out a sower to sow..."

In Mark 4:3-13, Jesus gives us this very important, and well-known parable. Later, when His disciples asked Him about this parable, He told them that they would be able to know the mysteries of the kingdom, and that this parable was a key to understanding all parables.

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# What does Jesus know, and when did He know it?

By C. Elden McNabb

“What did Jesus know when He was a new-born? How much did He know when He was about 12 years old? What did He know during His ministry? What does He know now?” Jesus was a normal manifestation of the Human Species: as a baby, coddled by his mother until he was about five years of age; as a youth, under the tutelage of his father; but as a man, also inspired by the “Spirit of the Lord” and the rest of the four spirits of the heavens (Isa. 11:1-2; Zech. 6:4-5).

Jesus spent His life demonstrating for us how a human can overcome the world: the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and of the pride of life. In His last three and a half years here, He organized a dedicated group of ministers into “the foundation of the Lords House:” The Church of God (Eph 2:19-22). And then, He submitted to the agonies of “death on the cross” to purchase our redemption from slavery to “The Prince of this World.” He accomplished His commission and returned to His father.

The only thing we are told about Jesus, from His birth until the beginning of His ministry, occurred when He was about 12 years of age. His parents took him with them to Jerusalem for the Feast of Passover, and when His parents started home, and had gone a day’s journey, they noticed that he was not with them. They went back to Jerusalem, and searched the city for three days before they found him in the temple “sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them and asking them questions. And all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers.” Apparently Jesus’ knowledge and understanding had grown rapidly in those first twelve years.

Jesus’ parents were amazed at what he had done and were also perplexed: and his mother asked him why he had dealt with them as he had. He said something like, Why were you even looking for me? Did you not know that I must be about my Father’s business? Although he was lacking some understanding, *Jesus knew that the time had changed*, and that the general timeframe for his ministry had recently begun. The fifth millennium was His, and He was indeed about his father’s business in that episode, and accomplished what God wanted done. One result of the five days of his efforts there was that *now we know* to count the fifth and sixth millennium from when he was about 12 years of age instead of from the time of his birth.

Jesus went back home, and waited about eighteen years, until the prophetic time for the actual beginning of his ministry had come. “And *Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man*” (Luke 2:40-52).

**What was it Jesus knew** about the fact that the general time of His ministry had arrived? He obviously knew that the fifth millennium from Adam had recently begun, and the time had changed. **Jesus knew** that His ministry had to be accomplished early in the fifth thousand-years-day from the creation of Adam, which is great for us, because it gives us a close approximation of the time of the return of our Bridegroom and King. That bit of information helps us to know about when to prepare for His coming, and it seems that God caused that incident to happen for that very purpose (Eph. 4:24; Esther 2:12).

By the time Jesus began His ministry, He had reached a level of knowledge, wisdom and understanding which almost defies imagination. **He knew** that, under Moses, God had set the age at which a Levite would enter the Priesthood at thirty years of age. So when Jesus “began to be about thirty years of age,” He went to be baptized by

John (Luke 3:21-23; Num. 4:1-4:47). No one else had any idea who John was until much later. Not even the Apostles of Jesus Christ, who themselves were formerly John’s disciples (Matt. 17:10-12).

God had set Jesus a prophetic timetable. He had to die at the end of the 69<sup>th</sup> week of Daniel 9:27, and He had to be born about 33 and a half years before His death, and begin His ministry at about 30 years of age in order to fulfill those prophecies. **Oh yes, Jesus knew exactly what to do, and when to do it.** Remember that when Jesus was warned that He was in danger from Herod, He told those Pharisee messengers to “Go ye, and tell that fox, Behold, I cast out devils, and I do cures today and tomorrow, and *the third day I shall be perfected*” (Luke 13:32). **Yes, Jesus knew exactly, to the day,** when He would be arrested and killed. He knew it when He began his ministry, and when the time was upon them, He told it openly to those Pharisees, in the presence of His apostles.

John the Baptist had begun his ministry at the beginning of the 69<sup>th</sup> week of the seventy weeks: 490 years of Daniel’s prophecy, and Jesus began His ministry in the middle of it. Thus did God use that 69<sup>th</sup> week of Daniel to launch the Grace Age (Dan. 9:27; Matt. 11:7-15). A few days before His ascension, Jesus appointed Peter to build the Church, and to spend that seventieth week bringing the Jewish church to its fullness, and to perfection. (John 21:14-22; Matt. 24:45-47; Eph. 4:9-16; Acts 4:23-5:16; Prov. 9:12; Acts 6:1-7). Peter did, and great miracles and healings were manifested. God’s presence was so great that Ananias and Sapphira fell dead at Peter’s feet, because they had laid an unclean offering at the Apostles feet (Heb. 13:10).

During every phase of His ministry, **God revealed to Jesus what to do, what to say, and when to do and to say it.** Not only did Jesus ride an ass into Jerusalem, but He

did it at the right time (Zech 9:9; Matt 21:5).

One day Jesus told His disciples, “Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you... I have called you friends; *for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you.* After his resurrection Jesus stood before His father, and was given the book of “The Vision of All” (Isa. 29:11-12). *Since that time Jesus has known everything* concerning His work on earth, from His birth to the end of the judgment of the last day. What He did not know in Matthew 24:35-36, when He was here before, He is revealing to His “friends” today.

Just before His crucifixion, Jesus gave His disciples a list of the sequence of events which will immediately precede the end of the Grace Age and the marriage of the Lamb. In verse 29, Jesus told them of a time of tribulation, which would be followed immediately by the light of the Gospel going out. Next, *the sign of the Son of Man* would appear, followed by a great mourning among all of the tribes of the earth, and then they would see *the Son of Man himself* coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. After that, the Son of Man would send His messengers to gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other. Jesus gave His disciples this sequence of six events so that we could “See the day approaching” (Matt 24:29-31, Heb. 10:25), if indeed we are “watching.”

Then He gave them the parable of the fig tree, and admonished them, saying, “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. 24:29-31). “Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away. **But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my father only.**” Jesus wrapped up the matter with this interjection,

admitting that there was at least one thing about God’s plan which He had not revealed to Jesus, the time of a great terrestrial meltdown. But He had made the point well, that there would be adequate signs for us to know when the time is near for the return of our Savior, and Bridegroom, and King.

Jesus concluded by saying that all of those signs would occur during the lifetime of the people who were living when they began. Apparently there will be a very rapid succession of those events. Did not the Lord say that He would “Do a quick work and cut it short in righteousness”? Jesus knew the events which would immediately precede His coming, but He did not yet know that distant time when God will renovate the earth (Heb. 10:25).

Let us consider how God deals with critical times. God gave a prophecy to Abraham which was fulfilled in the exodus from Egypt. He told Abraham that “his seed would be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, (and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them) four hundred years” (Gen. 15). Paul added the thirty years from the call of Abram until Isaac’s weaning, saying that the covenant was confirmed four hundred and thirty years later (Gal. 3:17). Moses’ record shows that the four hundred thirty years was fulfilled *the selfsame day* that Israel marched out of Egypt (Exod. 12:41). God’s word was sure, and His timing precise.

The Apostle Paul told us that God would “render to every man according to his deeds: to them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life: but unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile; but glory, honor, and peace to every man that worketh good to the Jew first, and also to the

Gentile: for there is no respect of persons with God” (Rom. 2:3-11).

After about 2000 years, working with the Jews, Jesus appeared on the scene and changed the whole program. The righteous remnant which believed on Jesus, and were born again, received the glory, honor, and eternal life. But the rest reaped the indignation and wrath of God in A.D. 70. And for approximately 1,900 years, Israel ceased to be a nation. That would not have happened to them if they would have believed the prophecy in Daniel 9:24-27. “Know ye therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks and threescore and two weeks... And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for Himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined.” Exactly 483 years from the going forth of that commandment, Jesus died. It was about A.D. 21, in the 21<sup>st</sup> year of Tiberius Caesar’s tenure in office: seven years after the beginning of John the Baptist’s ministry. (See Luke 3:1 and Encyclopedia Britannica, 1959, Volume 22, pages 175-177.)

About seven years later, exactly at the end of 490 years, Peter had brought the Church to perfection, the seven had been ordained, and God had taken the religious authority away from the Levites. Very near that same time, Jesus appeared to Saul to save him, and anoint him “The Apostle to the Gentiles.” And in A.D. 70, God poured out His wrath upon those who did not obey the truth.

Moses and Jesus gave us also a prophetic time frame: the last 120 years, or so, of the Grace Age. Jesus said, “As it was in *the days of Noe*, so shall it be also in *the days of the Son of Man*” (Luke 17:26).

Nahum also said that when the messenger makes the preparations for Jesus' coming, "The chariots shall rage in the streets, they shall seem like torches, they shall run like the lightnings" (Nahum 2:1-4). Charles Duryea began the sale of those Chariots in Springfield, MA in 1893. The end of the 120 years is almost upon us.

It is these days which reveal the time of the end. I will not deal with all of them now, but we must accept the fact that God will forewarn us, and he will do it partly in the timeframe of the "days" of the time of the flood (Gen 6 - 9). They were in the ark for 7 days, 40 days, 150 days twice, etc. When that time of destruction drew near, God spoke again to Noah and told him to get in the ark, "**For yet seven days**, and I will cause it to rain upon the earth forty days and forty nights; and every living substance that I have made will I destroy from off the face of the earth" (Gen. 7:1-4).

Just before "The enemy shall come in like a flood" (Isa. 59:19), God will tell someone to make a cry to call the faithful and wise of His children together to go in to the wedding and escape "the wrath to come." He gave Noah a last, seven-day warning. He will surely give us such a warning today, lest we perish with the ungodly, for God said, "For I am the Lord, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed" (Mal 3:6).

The *secret things* belong unto the LORD our God: but those *things which are revealed* belong unto us and to our children for ever, that *we* may do all the words of ... the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus (Deut 29:29; Matt. 5:17-18; Rom. 8:2).



## The engrafted word

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In verses 14-20, we are given Jesus' interpretation of the parable of the sower and the seed. "The sower soweth the word. And these are they by the way side, where the word is

sown; but when they have heard, Satan cometh immediately, and taketh away the word that was sown in their hearts. And these are they likewise which are sown on stony ground; who, when they have heard the word, immediately receive it with gladness; And have no root in themselves, and so endure but for a time: afterward, when affliction or persecution ariseth for the word's sake, immediately they are offended. And these are they which are sown among thorns; such as hear the word, And the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful. And these are they which are sown on good ground; such as hear the word, and receive it, and bring forth fruit, some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some an hundred."

As is written in James, Jesus said that the hearers of the word must "receive it" to bring forth fruit. Paul said that the word had to be mixed with faith. David said that the word should be "hidden in one's heart" (Psalm 119:11).

While some, as in Jesus' parable, receive the word gladly at first, still they do not allow that "seed" to take root. Without a root, the plant withers and dies, so also is the person in whom the Word of God has not taken root. The spiritual man withers and dies, and is often worse off than one who has never heard the Gospel. Jesus describes several conditions of man that encounter the word: those that hear, but have the word quickly snatched away by the adversary; those whose rock-hard hearts prevent the word from rooting itself and are soon shaken by outside pressure; and those whose cluttered lives prevent the word from flourishing and bearing fruit.

But there is another condition of the heart: a meek and humble heart that receives the seed of the Word. Like good soil, this heart receives the word, and provides an environment for it to germinate, put forth roots, sprout, blossom, bloom and be fruitful. A fruitful plant does not come from the ground. It comes from a seed. However, a seed cannot produce a fruitful plant, if it does not have good ground.

So, too, is the Word of God. God has sent forth His word with every intention of it accomplishing His great will. Yet, it cannot bear fruit without willing hearts and minds to provide for it an environment to produce. God's word requires good soil, if it is going to be fruitful and productive.

Have you merely applied the word of God to your life like a topical ointment? Do you reach for the word only when you have a problem or need, as though it were a spiritual first-aid kit? Have you attached the word to your life, as something that you consider in addition to all of the other factors in your life?

Or have you received the "engrafted word," that is "implanted," the word of God? Has it rooted itself in your life, and permeated every aspect of it: your conduct, speech, relationships, work ethic? Does the Word of God dictate how you will act in every situation? Do you consider its wisdom before each important decision?

God has preserved His word through the ages unto this end: that we would hear it, receive it, and allow it to bear fruit in us.

Paul said, "For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God" (Col. 1:9-10).

Jesus said, "Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples" (John 15:8). Jesus was doubtless the most fruitful servant of God and His word to ever walk the face of the Earth. He called us to be His disciples: His followers. He was the word made flesh. We should also live in such a way that displays God's love and His word in the midst of the darkness of this world. If we allow the word of God to consume our lives - to grow, and flourish, and be fruitful - God will be glorified, and we will be proven true disciples of our Lord.

As He prepared for His moment of sacrifice on the cross, Jesus reflect-

ed on His life. He said, "I have glorified thee on the earth. I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do" (John 17:4). Jesus knew that He had glorified the Father by bearing much fruit, as He walked in the ways of God's word.

Today, that work is ours. Let us commit our hearts to be true disciples of Jesus, having the word of God rooted and healthy in our hearts, so that what others see is no more us, but Christ in us the hope of glory. Then we, too, can be confident that our lives will serve to glorify the One that sent His only begotten Son, to deliver us from the power of darkness, and redeem us by His blood. Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb forever and ever! Amen. 

## A cry made at midnight

By Joel McNabb

"At midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him" (Matt. 25:6). In my life time, I have heard the parable of the Midnight Cry preached and talked about many times. From time to time I heard it said that we were in the day of the Midnight Cry. Like in the story of the boy who cried wolf, we seem to pass it off as just another cry and go about our business as usual, saying, "We have heard it said, remember 2000?" It came, went and life went on. But as in the story of the boy and the wolf, the wolf finally came. The outcome was not very good to those that had gotten complacent; neither will it be if we remain complacent about the coming of the Bridegroom, our Lord. Many have taught that Jesus can come before morning and we cannot know the time of his appearing; I wonder how Matt. 25 fits into this belief. Jesus spoke in parables many times to the people that came to hear Him; His disciples questioned why. His response was, "Because it is given un-

to you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given" (Matt. 13:10-17). The parables were not just stories so that we, or even children, might understand a simple moral philosophy. He spoke these parables to hide God's work from the beginning, because he set the world in their hearts, that they would not understand the kingdom of God (Eccl. 3:11). Those that followed him, He took aside and gave the explanation, so they would know what his Father was doing in the kingdom. Matt. 25:1-13 is just that, a parable of what shall happen in the kingdom of heaven.

The kingdom of heaven, in this parable, is not the kingdom *in* heaven, but the kingdom that starts with repentance, the message that John the Baptist, Jesus, and His disciples all preached. "Repent for the kingdom of God is at hand." The first step in seeing the kingdom of God is repentance, which allows you to come out of the world. "Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3:3). Each step of faith leads us closer to seeing the plan of God for man, from the beginning of creation to our day. The Pharisees demanded of Jesus when the kingdom of God would come, He answered them and said, "The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you" (Luke 17:20). He was not speaking to born again saints, but to those Jews of his day who were steeped in the law mingled with their own doctrines, of which Jesus warned his disciples to beware (Matt. 16:6). They were the kingdom of God till Jesus died, whose death annulled the covenant God had

with them (Rom. 7:1-4; Heb. 9:15-17). Now, by the blood of Jesus, God is able to marry those that bring forth the fruits of the kingdom (Matt. 21:43). Most believers talk about the bride and the marriage of the Lamb, but are they the bride or are they like the ten virgins that Jesus used in this parable? Jesus is coming back. There will be a marriage, and not all will be the bride. There will be bridesmaids, guests and His bride, His undefiled one!

In the parable, the ten *virgins* had gotten the born again experience and were in the way of holiness to meet the bridegroom. They took with them lamps, "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path" (Psa. 119:105). All of the virgins had taken the word of God with them: wise and foolish. Jesus tells us that the foolish did not take oil in their lamps; the implication is the wise did. Why would oil make a difference? Some have called the oil the Holy Ghost, which gives me a little difficulty with the way that Paul described the Holy Ghost, and the experience the folk had on the day of Pentecost: "And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit; ... for these are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day" (Eph. 5:18, Acts 2:15). The oil has to be something else. What is the purpose of putting oil in a lamp? Is it not to cause the lamp to give light, to make us see and understand? Light reveals what is in darkness, and what is hidden. It is the revelation of knowledge in God's word. "For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (2 Cor. 4:6). When someone comes up with an idea, we say, "A light

came on in our head". We envision a cartoon person with a light bulb on top of his head. Of someone who finally understands something, we say, "They saw the light." The oil is the revelation of God's word, which gives us light from faith to faith.

All ten virgins were on their way to meet the Lord, but as the parable says, "the bridegroom tarried." It has been 2000 years since our Lord ascended to the right hand of the throne of God, and still we are waiting. It is hard to imagine that believers would be sleeping when it is time for Jesus to come back, but this parable reveals they are asleep. The time has been long; we go about our lives, as Jesus said we would be like in the days of Noah. We have been told that Jesus is coming back ever since He left; some have gone on to their reward, while others have seen their children's children have children. Still we wait. The year 2000 came and went. There was great awareness that this might be the day of His return, but it also passed; He did not return. I hear the words of Peter, "Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of his coming?" (2 Pet. 3:4-4), and still we wait. When Noah preached, he had scoffers too. Lot's sons-in-law thought he was crazy as well, when he warned them of Sodom's destruction. In both cases these men were warned of coming doom, and knowing it was coming, they made the cry to save as many as they could. In Noah's day, there were those who were disobedient to the word of God sent to them by His messenger. All thought it was too crazy to happen. They may have seen, as we see in cities around the world, people carrying signs saying, "The End Is Near." We see

these people and think to ourselves, "These are just kooks, someone with too much time on their hands". We pass it off, and go on about living our lives, going to church thinking it is just another day, and all is the same.

We are told by the prophet Habakkuk, the vision is coming, not right away, but at the end it will come. It will speak and not lie: it would take some time, but we should wait for it to come to pass; because without a doubt it would come, and when it does it will not take long (Hab. 2:3). When Jesus said, "the harvest is the end of the world," He was not saying that the world was going to be destroyed. The earth has to remain if Jesus is to rule and reign on the throne of David in the form of man, which is the promise to David. When heaven and earth shall pass away, *this* is the day and hour that only the Father knows. "But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be" (Matt. 24:34-39). Christians are carelessly going about saying no one knows or can know when Jesus is coming back, are in their churches sleeping. It is as if there is a law being preached today that if anyone says they know when Jesus is coming, they are condemned. The same way the Jews of Jesus' day condemned Him with the law they made: "The Jews answered him, We have a law, and by our law He ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God" (John 19:7). So when Jesus came saying that He was the Son of God, they put him to death, because they had a law.

In this parable, there is a cry made at midnight, "Behold the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him!" Evidently the one that is making the cry knew that the bridegroom was really coming this time. (This was not the boy

crying wolf.) Like Noah and Lot, who were prepared and knew from God when the trouble was coming, their candle had not gone out. The virtuous woman, "perceiveth that her merchandise is good: her candle goeth not out by night" (Prov. 31:18). Knowing the times and the seasons, that day would not come on them as a thief. Jesus said, "Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come. But know this, that if the goodman of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have suffered his house to be broken up" (Matt. 24:42-51). This cry at midnight, like John the Baptist who was the voice in the wilderness preparing the way of our Lord's first coming, will be made to wake up those believers that have become complacent to the coming of the Lord, lulled to sleep by thinking that we do not have to know the times, just be saved and you will make it in.

The Cry caused the wise and foolish to wake from their sleep; both began to search the Bible and trim their lamps. The foolish realized that their lamps had no light, and they had no oil to cause them to burn. They went to the wise and asked them to share their oil; the wise had just enough oil (revelation) for themselves, but not enough to share with the foolish. The foolish were told, "Go to them that sell." This means there was someone out there from whom they could buy the truth (Prov. 23:23). On their return from finding oil, they found the door shut; their lack of oil and foresight had left them behind and in the outer darkness. The Bridegroom came while they were chasing around to catch up on what they thought they did not have to know.

The same happened to those who were comfortable with the way life was in Noah's day. The rains came as God said; those that were near the ark could not get in, for God had closed the door. In Matthew 25, the foolish came to the door, saying, "Lord, Lord, open to us," and the Lord replied, "Verily I say unto you, I know you not." We did not hear him say, "Sorry I never knew you," only "I know you not." We are known of God by how we know Him, and have searched His word. He is writing it all down, keeping a record (Mal. 3:16-18).

Paul tells us, "to them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation" (Heb. 9:28). Jesus is not coming to save sinners this time; He is coming for a wedding. His bride kept her light burning throughout the night. The salvation message has been preached for 2000 years; now it is time to open our eyes and hear the Cry. "Blow ye the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in my holy mountain: let all the inhabitants of the land tremble: for the day of the LORD cometh, for it is nigh at hand; A day of darkness and of gloominess, a day of clouds and of thick darkness, as the morning

spread upon the mountains: a great people and a strong; there hath not been ever the like, neither shall be any more after it, even to the years of many generations" (Joel 2:1-2). The believers of today are like when Israel was in captivity and God sent Isaiah to wake them, saying, "Awake, awake; put on thy strength, O Zion; put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city: for henceforth there shall no more come into thee the uncircumcised and the unclean. Shake thyself from the dust; arise, and sit down, O Jerusalem: loose thyself from the bands of thy neck, O captive daughter of Zion" (Isa. 52:1-6).

I admonish you today to open your eyes, "anoint thine eyes with eyeslave that thou mayest see" (Rev. 3:18). Wipe the sleep from your eyes and have a look around you; are you truly ready for the bridegroom to come? Are your lamps trimmed? There is still time, if you are wise and have oil in your lamps, to open your Bibles and learn. You may not feel the urgency and that you are living right before the Lord, but take this parable and apply it to yourself. Whether or not you believe we are living in the midnight hour, it is good to watch and pray,

so we do not miss anything the Lord is doing. The Jews in Jesus day did not know the day of their visitation and were caught sleeping, at his birth and during his ministry. As the wise men knew the sign at the time of his birth, we should know the sign of his return. The Bible is filled with pages of what the Lord has done and is going to do. It is not just about getting souls saved. If it were, we would not need such a large book. It all leads up to the event of Jesus' coming back to earth and His Kingdom being established here. God gave us his word and preserved it, so that we could learn and be ready for that glorious day. If we do not use what God has given and are not ready, we will be on the outside looking in. "And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed" (Rom. 13:11). May we find grace in the eyes of the Lord, and be found faithful to the word of God. The Lord bless you and give you the spirit of wisdom and revelation, in the blessed name of our Lord Jesus Christ of Nazareth. Amen 

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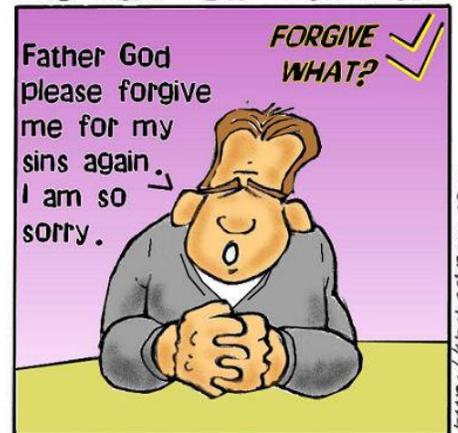
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The Back Pew - Jeff Larson



**GOD IS NOT FORGETFUL, BUT...**  
 if we confess our sins, he will forgive us...  
**1 John 1:9**, will remember our sins no more.  
**Is 43:25**, and as far as the east is from the west, God has removed these sins. **Ps 103:12**