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THE BRIDEGROOM COMETH!

NO MALE AND FEMALE IN CHRIST- To understand the parables of Jesus, and much of the Bible too, we must keep in mind that the characters and situations are mostly symbols. The apostle Paul tells us that in Christ, there are neither male nor female, yet God is Himself, male and female. *"So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. (Gen.1:27)* With this, God reveals that His own nature is both of the life giving male and the nurturing female, yet God is neither a man nor a woman. Paul told the Galatians that *"There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus."* (Gal.3:28) Obviously what Paul was saying is that, in Christ we lose our flesh identity, and we take on our new spirit identity. Our natural minds are not programmed to understand that when we are in Christ, women can be sons of God, and men can be brides of the Lamb, and that the Lamb is not a four-footed animal, but is the submissive nature that lays down its life willingly. All this can really be confusing. *"For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God."* (I Cor.2:11-12) *"For who has known the mind of the Lord that he may instruct Him? But we have the mind of Christ."* (Vs.16)

GOD'S KINGDOM AS TEN VIRGINS- Israel rejected Jesus as their Messiah. Although He implored them, they stood firmly against Him and their covenant relationship with God was severed. *"In that He said a new covenant, He has made the first obsolete. Now what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away."* (Heb.8:13) With a heavy heart, Jesus told them, *"Your house is left unto you desolate. For I say to you, you shall see Me no more till you say, Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord."* (Matt.23:38-39). The only way for Israel to be reconciled to God, is to receive Jesus as their Messiah.

Then Jesus went about preaching the kingdom of God. Matthew writes of a day when *"...He sat on the Mount of Olives, that His disciples came to Him privately saying, 'Tell us, when will these things be? And what will be the sign of your coming, and of the end of the age?'"* (Matt.24:3) So Jesus explained that at the end of the age, there would be terrible warfare and natural disasters that would cause chaos in the world, and many false Christs and false prophets would arise and deceive many. Jesus continues saying, *"Then, (at that time), the kingdom of heaven shall be likened to ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. Now, five of them were wise and five were foolish. Those who were foolish took their lamps and took no oil with them. But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. But while the bridegroom was delayed, they all slumbered and slept. And at midnight a cry was heard: Behold, the bridegroom is coming. Go out and meet him! Then all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said unto the wise, give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out. But the wise answered, saying, No, lest there should not be enough for us and you, but go rather to those who sell, and buy for yourselves. And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding, and the door was shut."* (Matt.25:1-10) This links the times of great tribulations in the world, with the time of the Bridegroom's wedding.

The kingdom of God has already come within and amid God's called out people, but it has not been made visible to the world. *"Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."* (Jn.3:3) Jesus clearly said that until one is born again, one cannot see the kingdom, and furthermore,

one must be born of the Spirit to enter into the kingdom. And so the kingdom of God is not known to the world. In the parable, ten virgins represent a certain company of people who are born again, and have seen the kingdom of God. They are "virgins" which means their minds are cleansed of the world's opinions, teachings and attractions. They are no longer guided or influenced by man's wisdom.

THESE VIRGINS ARE WOMEN- These ten virgins were women because they were waiting for their bridegroom. Women, in the symbolic language of the Bible, speak of cities, societies, clubs, groups, assemblies or churches. Mystery Babylon is portrayed as a woman called a "harlot." She represents the worldly religious systems that began at Rome and made affinity with the kings and rulers of the world. She became very powerful and exercised dominance over the souls of the people. John writes, *"I saw the woman, drunk with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus..."* (Rev.17:6). True saints may still be joined to these systems physically, even though their hearts are not part of it. Nevertheless we hear the Spirit calling with a loud voice, *"Come out of her my people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues."* (Rev.18:4) The true church is also portrayed as a "woman," a company, a city called Jerusalem from above, the Holy City and the Bride. These virgins were saints ready and waiting for their time of becoming as Christ is.

THEY WERE TEN- Symbolically, the number ten speaks of trials and testing. Daniel and his companions were tested TEN days when they refused to eat the dainties of the king. Jesus encourages the saints at Smyrna, *"Do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer. Indeed the devil is about to throw some of you into prison that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation TEN days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life."* (Rev.2:10) These ten virgins had been through the fires of testing; they were of those whose hearts and souls had been washed and made pure in the water of the Word, and who had passed through the fire of His love; they had been made free from the strong attraction to other "lovers." The human soul is the seat of our emotions; it seeks thrills of all kinds, and some of these thrills captivate and separate her from her true love. Such thrills or lovers may be found in religious and political activities, in sports and entertainment, or even studies of many kinds. In moderation these things are harmless to the soul, but they can increase and become strong attachments, and take over the minds and hearts of many. Religious and political activities in particular, can fill one with excessive pride and vanity, which gives them a sense of superiority and self-gratification. But these were virgins, they were free from loving or desiring any of these things; their focus was their Bridegroom. These virgins were as the hundred and forty-four thousand who have their Father's name written in their foreheads, their thoughts were as His thoughts. *"These are the ones who were not defiled with women, for they are virgins. These are the ones who follow the Lamb wherever He goes. These were redeemed from among men, being firstfruits to God and to the Lamb."* (Rev.14:4).

IT WAS MIDNIGHT- It is in the gross darkness of the world that the virgin company, whose minds and hearts are fixed on their King, waits with anticipation, to be caught up into their bridegroom. They are waiting by the light of their lamps, (the Holy Spirit), watching and praying. They have been tested through the fire in their daily lives. They are devoted to the King and are obedient to His command; they would not want it any other way. They are now waiting for their full redemption, their transformation. Their desire is that they might reveal His glory, and display His power to the world. *"For the kingdom of God is not in words but in power"* (I Cor.4:20) From the time that we answered the Lord's call, our spirit and soul have been in training, being disciplined and made citizens of God's kingdom. The kingdom of God in us, is the power to overcome all the lies and wiles of the devil. But the day is at hand when the power which worked within us, will arise and will be displayed in the world. Its power will bring down the enemies of mankind, and will deliver the world from corruption, sin and death.

Jesus displayed that power while He walked this earth and soon He will do even greater works through His body of sons who will be empowered to bring in the kingdom throughout the world. *"The kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit."* (Rom.14:17) By the Spirit, Peter preached to the crowds gathered in Jerusalem, *"...those things which God foretold by the mouth of all His prophets, that the Christ would suffer, He has thus fulfilled."* Then Peter speaks of the coming times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord, and of Jesus Christ, *"whom heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began."* (Acts 3:18,21) This time of restoration, or restitution of all things are the times we are coming to now.

The kingdom of God which has been working in us, will then be spread over the whole earth. The prophet Daniel saw that day in the dream of Nebuchadnezzar and said, *"Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver and the gold were crushed together, and became like chaff from the summer threshing floors; the wind carried them away so that no trace of them was found. And the stone that struck the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth."* (Dan.2:34-35) Can we not see this happening in our day? The stone which is the kingdom of God rising through the Christ sons, will soon cover the whole earth. All the kingdoms or nations of the world are becoming as chaff to the wind, and no trace of them shall be found. It could not be clearer. *"The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof: the world and they that dwell therein."* (Ps.24:1) The kingdom of God will fill the whole earth, and everyone therein. Something to shout about!

THE HOLY SPIRIT AND THE FOOLISH VIRGINS- God's Holy Spirit is our husband. He is our Helper and our Comforter. He is our forever-gift; He is our new life, *"And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever--The Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you."* (Jn.14:16-17) *"However, when He the Spirit of truth has come, He will guide you into all truth...He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you"* (Jn.16:13-15) The Holy Spirit is the One who has been revealing Christ to us. It is the Holy Spirit who has implanted truths within our spirit and soul. He has the role of the husband in our daily lives. The Holy Spirit has brought us through many storms of life, and He has provided us with the anointing or ability to understand the ways of God.

The more we have yielded ourselves to Him, the more understanding we've accumulated for our lamps. *"The lamp of the body is the eye. If therefore your eye is good, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eye is bad your whole body will be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in you is darkness, how great is that darkness. No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon."* (Matt.6:22-24) The foolish virgins did not have enough oil to take them all the way to the bridegroom. They were short of understanding God's purpose for them. They were still attached to the things of this world and some of these can be very hard to deal with. Jesus said, *"He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me."* (Matt.10:37-38). This does not mean that we should not dearly love our children, our parents, our family, and give them respect due to them; it means that our love for them should not hinder our calling in Christ. This could have been a problem with the foolish virgins; they were still attached to the things of this world, they were trying to serve two masters. They needed more training and testing in that area. They were not rejected, but they missed the time of the firstfruits. And we will see that something else might also contribute to the shortage of oil.

WHO IS THE BRIDEGROOM? Let us again be reminded that the parables are made up of symbols for our understanding of spiritual realities. The Holy Spirit is our Husband, He is not a man, He is the Spirit of

truth who enlightens our soul, (our minds and understanding). But the Bridegroom is Christ Jesus. When we see Him as He is, we will be like Him; He will raise us up into a complete new being. Christ is the finished product of God's creation man. He is the beginning and He is the end; He is the Alpha and Omega. First came the Adam man, then comes the Christ man. Paul explains, *"And so it is written, the first man Adam became a living being, (soul), the last Adam became a life-giving spirit. However the spiritual is not first but the natural, and afterward the spiritual."* (I Cor.15:45-46) We are all born in Adam. The Adam man is the man of dust, and he had to appear first. *"The first man was of the earth, made of dust; the second Man is the Lord from heaven."* (Vs.47) Little Dusty had to come first; he is the necessary transition to the Man from Heaven. When the Christ Man, the spiritual man appears, He will no longer be "spirit" only; He will be "spirit, soul and body" because He will have taken the soul man within Himself. (This is the union, the marriage). Jesus became that Man first; He is the Christ Man in the heavens and on the earth too. What a wonderful creation this is!

Jesus Christ is the Bridegroom in whom we enter. Then we will no longer be in Adam, the image of the soul man Adam; we will be in Christ, the image of the Son of God. We are being gathered into Christ Jesus, whose name, (nature), is above all names. Then, we will have eaten all of His flesh, and drunk all of His blood. We will have become the new Adam man, the Christ Man. *"As was the man of dust so also are those who are made of dust; and as is the heavenly Man, so also are those who are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly Man."* (Vs.48-49) This is resurrection! This is who we were born to become, and who we are in the Christ. Good Bye Adam. Hello Jesus Christ! The new Man Jesus Christ is our Bridegroom. The first five virgins, represent the firstfruits who enter into this Christ creation. Jesus was the first to become that Man! Oh joy unspeakable and full of glory! No more lies, no more sin, no more suffering, no more death! This is our inheritance in Christ.

A DREAM AND A WORD TO THE FOOLISH VIRGINS- This dream is an admonition to the five foolish virgins. *"I was walking alone on a long long lonely journey. At one point I realized that someone had been holding my hand and never let go. I could feel the love of that man for me and although I kept walking, I stood very still within. Then the time came when we stopped walking and He brought me face to face with Him and intensely looked at me as He tenderly said, 'I love you!' My heart pounded and I was flooded with love for that man so I told him without hesitation, 'I am free'." Indeed, I was free to marry Him. I had left all my attachments to organized religious systems. I thought He would quickly answer, "Marry Me," and I waited expectantly, but He did not reply. Instead He held me there and waited for me to talk, and to tell Him what He longed to hear. Then after a time, from the depth of my heart, I said, "And I love you too!" Oh yes! I love you too."* This oil is our love for Him, which means for one another, and for His entire creation. It is what He desires from us. *"Behold how good and how pleasant it is , for brethren to dwell in unity! It is like the precious oil upon the head..."* (Ps.133:1-2) This is the oil that the foolish virgins needed! Let us be filled with that oil!

The Christ Man rising from within, is the one we have been seeking all along. He is the one who has been formed within us. *"My little children, for whom I labor in birth, until Christ is formed in you"* (Gal.4:19) As the little Shulamite we have sought Him, *"By night on my bed, I sought him whom my soul loveth, I sought him but I found him not. I will arise now, and go about the city in the street and in the broad ways I will seek him whom my soul loveth. I sought him but I found him not."* (S.of S.3:1-2) But now He is revealing His nearness, and we are beginning to see Him as He is. *"My beloved is mine, and I am His."* (S.of S.2:16)

Because He is love, *Angèle Caporaso (Jackie)*