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"The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him; and He will shew them His covenant." Psalm 25:14

The Shut Door Explained

"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." —Matthew 25: 10.

This text is the concluding part of one of the most important parables ever given by the Messiah, while acting in the capacity of a prophet. Its importance will be evident, when we consider the circumstances under which it was given, and the time of the fulfilment of those events it is designed to represent. The time of their fulfilment may be clearly known by the events which precede, and those that immediately follow.

This parable is a part of that memorable and last conversation that Christ had with his disciples, before the night of His betrayal, in which He portrayed to them the destruction of Jerusalem and the signs and events which should immediately precede His coming and the end of the world. Let us, therefore, waive every other consideration of minor importance, and candidly, and thoroughly investigate this all-important subject.

The text, according to its natural division, contains five parts:

1. The buying of oil.
2. The coming of the bridegroom.
3. The going in with Him.
4. The marriage.
5. The shut door.

Part 1: The Buying of the Oil

The buying of oil is designed to represent a fruitless effort, on the part of the foolish virgins, to obtain that which would produce light upon the subject of the

coming of the bridegroom. It also appears that they had previously a stinted share of oil, which for a short time produced a little light, barely enough to lead them to go forth at the first cry to meet the bridegroom. But while they were in the tarrying time, their light became darkness; and when the second cry was made at midnight, "Behold the bridegroom cometh, go ye out to meet Him," they (excited more by fear than love) made an effort to obtain light; but not being ready, could not go in, and "the door was shut."

Part 2: The Coming of the Bridegroom

The definition of bridegroom is one newly married, or about to be united in marriage to a bride. Now if the term bridegroom in this parable applies to Christ (which all will admit), then all the scenes represented by this parable are to have their fulfilment in close connection with the marriage, or the giving of the bride to Christ. Here, two questions arise; first, what is represented by the bride, and second, where is she to be given to Christ, or where is the marriage to be solemnized?

First, what does the bride represent? The angel said to St. John, while in holy vision, "Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife."

Here John was shown "that Great City, the Holy Jerusalem." See Revelation 21:9, 10. St. Paul, in his letter to the Galatians, says, "But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all." Galatians 4:26. From these quotations we learn that the Holy City, the New Jerusalem, which John saw "coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband," is what is represented as the bride; and its being given to Christ is compared to a marriage. Second, where is the marriage to take place? Said Jesus, "Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning; and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their Lord, when he shall return from the wedding."—Luke 12:35-36.

"He said therefore, A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return." Luke 19: 12. Daniel also, in the night visions, saw one like unto the Son of Man come to the Ancient of Days, and He was brought "near before Him; and there was given Him dominion, and glory, and a

kingdom." See Daniel 7:13, 14. From these passages, it is plain that the receiving of the kingdom (which includes capital, territory and subjects) is what is compared to a marriage, or receiving a bride; and that it takes place near before Him (the Ancient of Days,) a little previous to His "return from the wedding," in the "far country." If the above is the correct position in reference to the bridegroom, the bride, and the marriage, then it follows of necessity that the coming of the bridegroom is not to the earth; but "near before" the Ancient of Days, to receive the bride, or New Jerusalem, the capital of the kingdom, in connection with the territory and subjects, previous to His second advent; and also, that the coming of the bridegroom, and Christ's second appearing, are two distinct and separate events.

Part 3: The Going in with Him

There is, evidently, at this point in the parable, a change in the position of the bridegroom, and also in the relation He sustains to the church and world. Now, in order that we may arrive at a correct understanding of this important change, let us examine what inspiration has taught us of the priesthood of Christ in the heavenly sanctuary, which plainly shows this change. St. Paul, in his letter to the Hebrews, written A. D. 64, says, "Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum: We have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens; a minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man."—Hebrews 8:1, 2. By reading the eighth and ninth chapters of Hebrews, you will readily discover that Paul, in order to lead us to a correct understanding of all things pertaining to Christ, while occupying the position and relation of priest, points us back to the Aaronic priesthood, the worldly sanctuary, with its apartments, furniture and services as figures, or true representations of the heavenly priesthood, sanctuary, furniture and services. O! How little is known of Christ and His work in the heavenly sanctuary through a neglect to compare type with antitype, and shadow with substance; and how ready are such neglectors to brand any one with fanaticism who presumes to follow inspiration in this matter.

I would here state that we have the best authority for referring to Moses and the prophets. Christ, after His resurrection, said to his disciples—"These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning Me."—Luke 24:44. Also Paul, while a prisoner at Rome, when they had appointed him a day, and many came to him, into his lodging, expounded and testified to them "the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus, both out of the law of Moses and out of the prophets, from morning till evening."—See Acts 28:23. "Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day; witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come."—Acts 26:22.

The prophet Malachi, while describing the burning day, and addressing those to whom the prophet Elijah should be sent before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord, says, "Remember ye the law of Moses my servant, which I commanded unto him in Horeb for all Israel..." —See Malachi 4:1-4. From these scriptures we see that we are not only directed to the law of Moses, but a positive injunction is laid upon us to remember it. Not to keep it; for its ordinances were nailed to the cross; but its types and shadows, as St. Paul has taught, were figures of the true. They were a true representation of the "good things to come" connected with the ministration of Christ in the heavenly sanctuary. Therefore, they are our positive, and only sure guide, contained in the oracles of truth, to lead us to a correct understanding of the work of Christ in "the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man."

The Apostle Paul clearly shows that Christ, while fulfilling his priesthood, occupies a sanctuary containing two apartments; the Holy, or first tabernacle, and the Holiest of all, or second tabernacle, within the second vail. In the Holy is the candlestick, the table of shew bread, and the golden altar.—See Hebrews 9:2; Exodus 40:24-26. In the Holiest of all, is the ark of the covenant, the mercy-seat, and the two cherubims overshadowing the mercy-seat, above which is seen the most excellent glory, or Ancient of Days.— See Hebrews 9:3-5; Exodus 26:33, 34.

I am now prepared to explain the third division of the text, that is, "they that were ready went in with him to the marriage." In order to make the matter perfectly plain to your understanding, let us go back, and see in what way they went in, under the typical services.

Under the Mosaic economy, a cycle of one year embraced all the ordinances and services of the tabernacle, and typified all the services of Christ, while acting in the capacity of a priest. Under the type there was a daily ministration for the sins of the people, for three hundred and sixty-four days, then that ministration ceased. Then on the last day of this cycle of three hundred and sixty-five days, or the tenth day of the seventh month, the high priest, having washed himself in pure water, puts on the holy garments, made expressly for the services of this day. Thus prepared, he passes from the Holy into the Holiest of all, bearing on the breastplate of judgement the names of all the tribes of Israel. In this manner, all the true Israel went in with him.

Thus Christ, in the antitype, in the true tabernacle in heaven, closes the antitypical daily ministration in the Holy Place, clothes himself in the holy garments, having on the breast-plate of judgement, on which is inscribed the names of the true Israel of God, who are described by the following words in the text, "they that were ready." Thus arrayed, He is prepared to perform all the services of the antitypical tenth day, and passes into the Holiest of all before the mercy-seat, and is brought near before the Ancient of Days. Thus, they that were ready went in with him to the marriage as he went in to receive his bride, "and the door was shut."

The cleansing of the sanctuary, blotting out the sins of all Israel, and sending them away upon the head of the scape-goat and so forth in the type, were performed by the high priest on the memorable tenth day of the seventh month, all of which were shadows of the services of Christ in the heavenly tabernacle after His ministration in the Holy Place closes; some of which I may notice hereafter.

Part 4: The Marriage

I think there are but three portions of Scripture in the New Testament that speak of marriage, which refer to Christ. The parable of the king's son, Matthew 22:2-14; the parable of the ten virgins, Matthew 25:1-12, and Revelation 19:7-9; in all these it is used as a figure, to represent something that is not real marriage; but that which bears a close resemblance to it. Therefore, the only reasonable conclusion that I can arrive at is, that marriage, when used in reference to Christ, represents the receiving into close connection and perpetual union, the Kingdom, or some component part of the Kingdom.

When the prophet says, "thy land shall be married,"—see Isaiah 62: 4—he means that the territory or locality of the Kingdom is to be brought into close connection with the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. When the New Jerusalem is adorned as a bride for her husband, and is given to Christ, and the saints or virgins go in with Him as guests to the marriage, then it is that He receives the capital of His promised and long looked-for Kingdom.

And when, as described to John in vision—see Revelation 19:1-9—God shall have judged her that did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and shall have "avenged the blood of his servants at her hand;" and when the voice as "of a great multitude," and "as the voice of mighty thunderings" shall proclaim "Alleluia, for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth, let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to him; for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready;" and when to her is "granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white," which "is the righteousness of saints," then the subjects of the Kingdom become the bride; and in joint-heirship with the bridegroom possess "the Kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the Kingdom under the whole heaven."

Part 5: The Shut Door

A door supposes a change of scenery, or a change from one apartment to another. There are several things to which the term door is applied, such as "door of utterance," and "door of faith." "I am the door," said Jesus. But the door mentioned in the text represents not only a change in the position of the bridegroom, (Christ,) but it also shows a change in His relation to the world, from

that which He previously held. Here, again, let us examine the services of the typical priesthood, that we may understand the services of Christ in the antitype. After the priests had performed the daily, services, ordained especially for the Holy Place, or first apartment, and the memorable tenth day of the seventh month had arrived, then there was an entire change in the services of the sanctuary to be performed on that day.

By reading the sixteenth chapter of Leviticus, you will find that the high priest here washes his flesh in water, puts on the holy garments, and enters upon an entire new work. The offering up of the daily sin-offerings has ceased, and the high priest, on this day, atones for or blots out the sins of Israel, and removes them from the altar, where they have been imputed or laid during the year, through the blood of the victims daily offered. On this day of atonement, or of cleansing the sanctuary, the high priest (as above stated) passes into the Most Holy Place, bearing on the breast-plate of judgement the names of all such as, through obedience to the typical ordinances, have applied for a remission of sins, through the blood of their victims there offered; and the door of the first apartment is shut. "And there shall be no man in the tabernacle of the congregation when he goeth in to make an atonement in the holy place, until he come out, .and have made an atonement for himself, and for his household, and for all the congregation of Israel.—Leviticus 16:17. On this day of atonement, he is a high priest for those only whose names are inscribed on the breast-plate of judgement. Now just so sure as the Aaronic priesthood was a type of the priesthood of Christ, then the sanctuary, with its apartments and appendages, were figures of the true sanctuary in heaven; and the services and ordinances of the earthly tabernacle were shadows of Christ's ministration, which is the substance. With this view of the subject, it is plain that a time in Christ's ministration must come, (before He puts on the kingly robes, and girds His sword upon His thigh, and comes to execute judgement,) that He will cease to be a priest in the first apartment of the true tabernacle for the sins of the whole world, and put on the holy garments, and, with the true Israel of God inscribed on His breastplate of judgement, go in with them before the mercy-seat, where John saw one having a golden censor offering the prayers of all saints (wise virgins) before

the throne; and be a merciful high priest over the household of faith, cleanse the sanctuary and place all the sins of the true Israel upon the scape-goat, which is the devil. Then, he will lay off the priestly garments, and clothe himself with the garments of wrath, and come to gather his elect from the four winds, under heaven, and destroy the wicked, and burn up their city.

Having thus explained the text, I will now examine some ideas suggested in the foregoing exposition. And first, the time of the fulfilment of the events, contained in the text, may be known by those which precede and those that follow. Christ, after giving the signs of his coming, and a description of what should take place at his coming, proceeds to give a history of some of the scenes which should be transacted previous to that event. It appears that just before his coming, his wise and faithful servants, seeing the signs fulfilling, and some of the events which were to precede his coming actually transpiring, would raise the soul-thrilling cry—"THE LORD IS COMING," and thus wake up others to an examination of this all-important subject by this "cry in due season." Then this cry would excite those professed servants who were unfaithful in their Master's cause, and who loved the things of this present world; to raise an opposite cry—"My Lord delayeth his coming." While these opposite cries are being given, THEN commences the fulfilment of the parable of the ten virgins. Here some, by examining the arguments of the faithful servants, and seeing good evidence that the signs were fulfilling, were led thereby to go forth to meet the bridegroom. We here plainly see that the cry of the faithful servants is the cause of their going forth, and that their going forth is the effect produced by this cause; therefore, the fulfilment of the parable could never commence without the cry, "The Lord is Coming," being first raised by the faithful servants.

Having shown how this important parable must commence, let us examine the different steps of its progression. First, the virgins go forth to meet the bridegroom; second, they meet with a disappointment; third, they wait or tarry, still believing that his coming is near, yet, by waiting, they become drowsy, and slumber and sleep; fourth, a cry is heard, "BEHOLD THE BRIDEGROOM COMETH, GO YE OUT TO MEET HIM;" fifth, a trimming of lamps, and an effort, on the part of the foolish virgins, to procure oil; and sixth, the scenes described in the text take

place. Now has there been a succession of events, within our second advent experience, which bears an exact resemblance to the above-named events in the parable? If there, has, then we have, at least, some good reasons for believing that the door is shut. When Bro. Miller, and those who became acquainted with him, and adhered to his expositions of the prophecies, went forth faithfully showing to the world that, according to the best light they could obtain from the prophecies, the prophetic periods and the signs, that Christ would come by the end of the Jewish year 1843, then the faithful servants gave "meat in due season." And while giving this cry, the hireling priest, the infidel, and the drunkard, united in raising the cry, "My Lord delayeth his coming" — "These are fanatics who say he is coming;" and thus they smote their fellow-servants. Here were two events, perfectly fulfilling in all their features, the acts of the faithful and wise servants, giving meat in due season," and the evil servants, uniting with the drunkard, in opposing the truth, who will reap their reward with hypocrites in bitter weeping, and gnashing of teeth.

While these two cries were going throughout the width and breadth of the land, the specified time came, and the virgins, with the word of God, (their lamps) went forth fully expecting to meet the bridegroom at that point of time. Now for a disappointment, and tarrying time. Were these the next events that actually transpired in our experience after we went forth in the spring of 1844 to meet the bridegroom? Thousands, thousands can answer this question in the affirmative; and the evil servants have not yet forgotten to reproach and taunt us with this disappointment. Next in this series of events is a cry at midnight, or about the middle of the slumbering and sleeping time, "Behold the bridegroom cometh, go ye out to meet him." This also, was fulfilled in exact order as to time and event. It was calculated that the Jewish year, 1843, would end the twenty-first of March, 1844; and this was the time of the first going forth. The second going forth was on the tenth day of the seventh month, 1844. The tarrying time, or time of slumbering and sleeping, was the space between these two points; and at the centre point, or midnight, the second cry began to be heard, which increased in power and effect as it went throughout the land, waxing louder and louder, until the virgins were fully awake.

Thus we had in our experience, previous to the tenth day of the seventh month, 1844, a perfect fulfilment of all the events in the parable, as stepping stones to the SHUT DOOR; and since that time, the event (knocking at the shut door) that was to take place after the shutting of the door, has not failed to fill up the concluding scene in the drama. We are thus brought to a clear and perfect fulfilment of every feature of this important parable, and also to a clear fulfilment of those Scriptures connected with and relating to the shut door; such as the parable of the great supper, Luke 14:16-24; the proclamation of the "mighty angel," "that there should be TIME NO LONGER," Revelation 10:1-8; the flying angel, proclaiming the hour of judgement come, Revelation 14:6, 7; and the cleansing of the sanctuary, &c. Therefore, we are brought, by the force of circumstances, and the fulfilment of events, to the irresistible conclusion that, on the tenth day of the seventh month, (Jewish time,) in the autumn of 1844, Christ did close his daily, or continual ministration or mediation in the first apartment of the heavenly sanctuary, and SHUT THE DOOR, which no man can open; and opened a door in the second apartment, or Holiest of all, which no man can shut, (see Revelation 3:7, 8) and passed within the second vail, bearing before the Father, on the breast-plate of judgement, all for whom he is now acting as intercessor. If this is the position that Christ now occupies, then there is no intercessor in the first apartment; and in vain do misguided souls knock at that door, saying "Lord, Lord, open unto us." The words of the prophet apply to the fulfilment of this point in the parable.

"They shall go with their flocks and with their herds to seek the Lord; but THEY SHALL NOT FIND HIM--HE HATH WITHDRAWN HIMSELF FROM THEM.

"They have dealt treacherously against the Lord, for they have begotten STRANGE CHILDREN; now shall a month devour them with their portion."—Hosea 5:6, 7.

But, says the objector, does not this leave the present generation, who have passed the line of accountability, since that time without an intercessor or mediator, and leave them destitute of the means of salvation? In reply to this objection, I would remark, that as they were then in a state of INNOCENCY, they were entitled to a record upon the breast-plate of judgement as much as those

who had sinned and received pardon; and are therefore subjects of the present intercession of our great high priest. The professed conversions, through the instrumentality of the different sects, are also urged as positive proof that the door is not shut. I cannot give up the clear fulfilment of prophecy, in our experience, which shows the shut door in the past, for the opinions, fancies and feelings of men, based upon human sympathy and a superstitious reverence for early imbibed views. God's word is true, though it prove all men liars. As a stream is of the same character as the fountain that sends it forth (see James 3:11) and does not rise higher than the fountain, so these professed converts will not rise to a better state than the low standard of the fallen sects; therefore, they are converted to the religion of the various sects, but not to God, and the high and holy standard of the Bible. The Prophet Hosea saw this time; and for "our learning" and guide has written—"They have dealt treacherously against the Lord; for they have begotten strange children."

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