

Christ's Warning to Christianity

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In the book of Matthew there are two examples of Christ describing people who are alive at his return and, although they say they know him, he states that he does not know them. Upon closer examination of these scriptures, it should become apparent that Christ is warning these people ahead of time, allowing them to make the changes necessary to enter the first resurrection. If they refuse to heed this advice now, they will have to wait until they come up in the second resurrection (Heb. 11:35).

In one example, Christ used a parable with important symbolic language to expose a problem that is serious enough to alienate a specific group of people from Christ at exactly the same time he returns to rule this planet (Acts 1:9-11; 1 Thes. 4:16; 1 Cor. 15:51-52). This is ironic because they seem to know a lot about him and appear to associate themselves with him.

In Matthew 25:1-12, Christ is describing a group of ten virgins who are preparing for a wedding. In this figurative language, virgins are synonymous with churches as scripture reveals (2 Cor. 11:2; Eph. 5:25-27; Lev. 21:10-13). Unfortunately, half of them are regarded as being foolish. In Matthew 7:26-27, Christ explains that anyone hearing, and then not doing what he said is foolish. James, the brother of Christ, reiterates this principle (Js. 2:20). Therefore, at some point in time the five virgins must have heard what Christ said, but ignored it.

All ten virgins (churches) had lamps or torches. Obviously, lamps give light to those around them. Christ described this light as being associated with good works (Mat. 5:14-16). In contrast, evil works are associated with darkness (Eph. 5: 8-21; Jn 3:19). Light is associated with the law and commandments of the One True God (Psalms 119:105; Pro. 6:23; Isa. 8:20). Therefore, the works that Christ mentioned in Matthew 5:14-16 refer to hearing the law and commandments and then acting on them in a manner that serves as an example to others.

Due to the false assumptions of the ten virgins (churches) concerning the arrival of the bridegroom (Christ), his arrival appeared to be delayed and they fell asleep (Mat. 22:1-14). This has spiritual ramifications because Christ made it plain a number of times that no one could know the exact time of his arrival (Mt. 24:36, 42; Mk. 13:32). It appears all ten churches thought they had accurately calculated the time of Christ's return. The lesson here is that date setting can be dangerous. If people think they know even the approximate date of Christ's return, and it is calculated to be in the distant future, there is a strong tendency to slack off from doing those things that need to be done in order to properly serve God (Lk. 12: 42-48).

In order to navigate through the darkness as the virgins were going to meet with the bridegroom, all ten virgins had to have their lights shining, or they would not be able to

find the way. Light also is associated with Christ because he is the light of the world (Jn. 1:9; 8:12; 12:36, 46), and as such he came to bring the correct understanding of his Father's laws and commandments to mankind (Mat. 5: 17-48). So those who follow Christ will likewise be associated with this particular type of light and they will teach others accordingly.

To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, it is because there is no light in them (Isa. 8:20).

The five virgins who did not have enough oil to keep their lights burning were not able to meet with the bridegroom. Instead, they wanted to take oil from the five wise virgins in order to appear as if they had been giving forth light as Christ commanded in Matthew 5:14-16. Unfortunately, they had to go and learn the lesson the hard way, but it was not without some insistence from them that Christ accept them as they were (Mat. 25:11). Christ then declared that he did not know them (Mat. 25:12), and he gave them a specific reason why in the next section of scripture that we will examine below.

It is important first to note that the use of oil in scripture is sometimes associated with God's holy spirit (1Sam. 16:13 cf. Isa. 32:15), which is given to those who seek to obey the law and commandments of God (Acts 5:32; 1Jn. 3:24). As the five foolish virgins had run out of oil, this indicates they neglected the law and commandments of God and thus quenched God's holy spirit (1Thes. 5:19; Eph. 4:30).

We will now examine the other section of scripture where Christ dealt with the same problem as in Matthew 25:12.

In Matthew 7:21-27, Christ is speaking to a group of people who claim to know him, do many wonderful things in his name, and yet he states that he never knew them because they practice lawlessness (1Jn. 3:4). This proves beyond doubt that the lack of oil in the lamps of the five foolish virgins represents a group who minimized the importance of keeping God's law and commandments, which is why Christ said he did not know them. Christ only recognizes those who strive to obey his Father's law and commandments (Mat. 19:17; Jn. 15:10; 1Jn. 5:1-3; Rev. 14:12 Ps. 112:1).

By comparing these two sections of scripture in the book of Matthew, it should be apparent that a large portion of this world's Christianity will be excluded from the first resurrection (Heb. 11:35; Rev. 20:6) unless they repent of living contrary to God's law and commandments (Mat. 4:4; Ps. 119:160). Scripture is clear that Christ did not come to do away with his Father's law and commandments (Mat. 5:17-48). Christ did fulfill the law of animal sacrifice (Heb. 10: 4, 18), and the Levitical priesthood (Heb. 7:11-12). Therefore, Christians need to examine all other aspects of God's law and commandments with the idea of obeying them rather than excusing themselves from doing so (Rom. 6:1-2, 15; 7:7; 1Cor. 6: 15-20)

Scripture is clear that it is difficult to keep God's law and commandments because the world we live in puts immense pressure on those trying to do what is right (Mat. 7:13-

14). The god of this world (i.e. Satan – 2Cor. 4:4), wants everyone to be conformed to his image and way of doing things (2Cor. 11:14), but followers of Christ are told to resist this influence (Rom. 12:2; Jas. 4:7; 1Pet. 5:8-9). As hard as it may be, Christ tells his followers that they need to put forth whatever effort is necessary to overcome every obstacle to obedience (Rev. 2:7, 17, 26; 3:5, 12, 21; 18:4; 21:7; Mat. 24:13; Mk. 13:13). Keeping God's law and commandments requires sacrifice on the part of those trying to do so (Mk. 10:29-30; Rom. 12:2). Sacrifice means giving up something that is deemed important or valuable for something of even greater importance or value. For example, keeping Christmas celebrations may be very important to most people, but if an individual wants to obey God and is shown that this custom is contrary to God's will (Jer. 10:1-5 cf. Mk. 7:6-13), having nothing whatsoever to do with Christ or his birth, they will put up with mocking, being alienated from family and friends, etc. (Mat. 12:50; 19:29) in order to do what is of greater importance, namely, obeying the word of God and having nothing to do with this world's traditions (2Cor. 6:17; Rev. 18:4).

It is ironic that one of the first things Christ is going to do upon his return is the very thing that many Christians strongly resist and deny. In Micah 4:2, we see that Christ is going to establish the law and commandments of his Father. How embarrassing this will be for those who considered themselves Christian, and yet denied the person who made salvation available to them by stating that Christ came to do away with the law and commandments of his Father (Mt. 10:33; Ti. 1:16).

Nevertheless the solid foundation of God stands, having this seal: "The Lord knows those who are His", and, "Let everyone who names the name of Christ depart from iniquity" (2Tim 2:19).

This document is the collaborative work of individuals who believe God's truth should be given freely (Mt. 10:8; 1Cor. 2:12; 2Cor. 11:7; Rom. 10:14-21) and the message of the one true God should be made available to all nations (Mt. 24:14) as a prerequisite to the return of Jesus Christ as King of kings (Mt. 17:10; 19:17; Mk. 9:11; Lk. 1:17; Rev. 19:11-16).

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