

Sabbath School Today **With the 1888 Message Dynamic**

Preparation for the End Time **Lesson 7. Matthew 24 and 25**

The spiritual condition of the church worldwide is pictured in the parable of the “Ten Virgins,” *all* of whom “slept.” When the cry went forth suddenly, “The Bridegroom cometh!” five sprang awake and trimmed their lamps to go to the “wedding.” The other five had carelessly neglected to get the oil of the Holy Spirit, and it was too late now; they were shut out (Matt. 25:1-10).

This oil is not the Pentecost early rain proportions of the Holy Spirit. The oil represents the latter rain message which Christ commissions the Holy Spirit to give to a receptive church. Having received the message, the church experiences the Holy Spirit. Then follows the Spirit’s voice, through His messengers, heard resoundingly throughout the world, giving the “loud cry,” which lightens the earth with God’s glory.

As we read the parable of the virgins together with what Revelation says about the “marriage of the Lamb” (Rev. 19:7, 8), it becomes clear that the five wise “virgins” sleeping is the same lethargy as the Bride-to-be neglecting to “make herself ready for the marriage.” The parable does not say that the Bride eventually refused to “make herself ready.” But the five foolish virgins did.

In some manner the five wise virgins do have oil in their lamps. They have been receptive to the Holy Spirit’s last-day message. This receptivity serves them well for even though they too sleep, as do the five foolish virgins, when awakened by the cry, “The Bridegroom cometh” the oil is sufficient for their lighted lamps.

The Lord sent “the beginning” of the Holy Spirit’s latter rain in a “most precious message” [1] delivered at the General Conference Session in Minneapolis in 1888. The essence of this message was the call of Christ to the leadership of the Laodicean church to “repent.”

“[Revelation 3:14-20, quoted.] This message has not had the influence that it should have had upon the mind and heart of the believers. The true state of the church is to be presented before men, and they are to receive the word of God not as something originating with men, but as the word of God. Many have treated the message to the Laodiceans as it has come to them, as the word of man. Both message and messenger have been held in doubt by those who should have been the first to discern and act upon it as the word of God. Had they received the word of God sent to them, they would not now be in darkness.” [2]

For decades the Seventh-day Adventist Church has denied her history, saying that the Minneapolis Conference was a case of mistaken identity—the 1888 message was only a “re-emphasis” of historic Protestantism, not the beginning of the latter rain and the loud cry; and whatever it was, it wasn’t really rejected. There was only a temporary resistance which was later repented of and the sin of resistance was cancelled.

The message was indeed what Ellen White said it was—the beginning of the work of the fourth angel of Revelation 18; and in a great degree it *was* rejected, not by the church at large, but by the leadership of that era. And there has never been a true and faithful recovery and proclamation of the message. When we begin to grasp the enormity of these facts, we sense that no issue before us can compare in importance with the problem of actually insulting the Holy Spirit.

It was His plan that the General and local Conference leadership personnel not stand “aloof” or hostile to the message, but heartily receive it. Recognizing and joyfully accepting truth, the entire church leadership would have responded to the leading of the Holy Spirit, and our publishing houses and the *Review and Herald* would have joined unitedly and harmoniously in the glad work. The laity were ready and would have cooperated. Thus the gospel commission could have been completed in that generation. It wasn’t.

What did not happen then must happen in the future. And the “scenario” will happen because the Lord Jesus has not died in vain. He will yet see of the travail of His soul and shall be satisfied (cf. Isaiah 53:11). He has many honest-hearted people in the Seventh-day Adventist Church who will be loyal to Him and to His truth, even unto death. Corporate and denominational repentance is the work embodied in the antitypical Day of Atonement. Satan is determined to oppose it to the bitter end. Let us make sure that we do not stand on the enemy’s side.

In the hour of crisis the five foolish young women had been absorbed in self-interests, and had neglected to search for what Peter says is “the present truth” (2 Peter 1:12). What’s happening behind the scenes is a wedding. The parable is clear as sunlight: “they that were ready went in with [the Bridegroom] to the marriage and the door was shut” (Matt. 25:10). The ones “ready” are the same as those who “follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth” (Rev. 14:4). It’s just that simple.

—Paul E. Penno

Endnotes:

[1] Ellen G. White, *Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, pp. 91, 92.

[2] *The Ellen G. White 1888 Materials*, p. 1051; cf. Letter S24, 1892.

Notes:

Pastor Paul Penno’s video of this lesson is on the Internet at:

<https://youtu.be/9KaOl-x86Ng>

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