

Checkin' Out My Walk  
# 20 - Sardis - Be Watchful! Be Prepared! He Is Coming!

Rev. 3:2-3 Wake up; Be watchful...for I have not found your works perfect (complete, mature) before God. Remember therefore how you have received and heard (by FAITH); hold fast and repent. Therefore if you will not watch (stay awake, be alert), I will come upon you as a thief, and you will not know what hour I will come upon you.

Will I Keep Watch Regarding My Spiritual Growth? Will I Be Prepared To Meet Him?

Parallels Between Jewish Wedding & Christian Life:

A. When a Jewish girl was betrothed to her future husband, a ceremony was held for their commitment to the future wedding. The groom gave her an object of value such as a ring to signify the promise and a legal tie.

Consider: At justification, we are saved by faith, given the robe of righteousness of Jesus Christ, sealed by the Holy Spirit and betrothed to Jesus Christ.

B. Period of Preparation: She remained in her father's home to prepare for the day her groom would return for her, marry her and take her to his house. During this time, she must remain a virgin and make herself ready. She would make her wedding garment and set her mind on her future role. She was referred to as consecrated or set apart.

She always wore a veil, a symbol of commitment, so all would know she was engaged.

Goal Of The Preparation Period: So she would be presented to her future groom as a chaste (#53 = hagnos = sanctified) and pure virgin.

Consider: The sanctification process is our time of preparation to be ready for our new role as His bride as we wait and watch and long for our Groom's return.

1. Transferring our allegiance from earthly things to heavenly things.
2. Learning to love God rather than self.
3. Depending upon the life of Christ under the power of the Holy Spirit instead of depending our self and our abilities.
4. We are commanded to walk in the Spirit and we will not fulfill the lust of the flesh.
5. Just as the Jewish bride had to be ready for his return at any time, we must be ready for Christ's return at any time. We are to have an attitude of preparing, watching, waiting and longing for His return.

6. We were given the "garment of salvation" at justification. (Isa. 61:10)

External garment without spot or wrinkle.

7. The 2<sup>nd</sup> garment that Christ requires for the Marriage festivities is the white linen garment made up of the believer's own "righteous works."

Rev. 19:7-8 Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready." <sup>8</sup> And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.

Rev. 3:5 He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments

Note: This 2<sup>nd</sup> garment can get defiled, stained, and blackened through our own choices.

Rev. 3:4 You have a few names even in Sardis who have not defiled their garments;

Defile = stain or a blackening; It refers to an internal condition = unfaithfulness

Note: We can defile our garment by not being faithful, by quenching the Holy Spirit and polluting our soul. James 1:27 Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this:... to keep oneself unspotted from the world.

What is the groom doing? He returns to his father's house to prepare a wedding chamber for his bride.

John 14:1-3 Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. <sup>2</sup> In My Father's house are many mansions; if *it were* not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. <sup>3</sup> And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, *there* you may be also.

C. The 2<sup>nd</sup> part of the ceremony was the marriage itself. The groom would surprise his bride by an unexpected or early return. Jewish brides were said to be "stolen, caught up, and snatched up by surprise."

Consider: Parallels the unexpected return of our Lord at the Rapture in I Thess. 4:13-18.

D. The bride was led to the groom's house by a wedding procession of women carrying lighted lamps. Lamps were a part of the bride's preparation in case her groom came at night.

She was to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white.

E. Wedding ceremony was held at the groom's father's house.

F. The groom would take his bride into the chamber (place) he had prepared for her where they would stay for 7 days.

G. When they emerged, a marriage feast was held at a different place and many people were invited to attend.

Consider: Jesus has returned to Heaven to prepare a place for His bride. He and His bride will emerge from Heaven at His second coming. The marriage feast will take place at the beginning of the Millennial Kingdom with many invited guests (OT saints, Tribulation Saints) who are resurrected at His Second Coming.

Our Preparation Time: Apostle Paul spends the first 3 chapters of Ephesians showering us with all of our spiritual blessings. In Ephesians 4 & 5, Paul gives us commands regarding our "heavenly calling." He uses the word "walk" 8 times to describe to us how we should walk.

Walking suggests how we are to order our behavior or conduct.

Walking also implies PROGRESS in our spiritual maturity and growth.

Eph. 3:20 tells us the secret to fulfilling these commands so our walk will be worthy is the power that works in us. He is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think.

Consider: If I abide in Christ and use the secret power to do the work in me, am I assured of a worthy walk? Required: earnest desire, discipline, focus, surrender, confession, etc.

Eph. 5:15-17 See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise,<sup>16</sup> redeeming the time, because the days are evil.<sup>17</sup> Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord *is*. And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled (continually) with the Spirit,

Note: There is an association of TIME and the difference between WISDOM and FOOLISHNESS. Walk...as wise; redeeming the time... Be not foolish.

Be A Berean!!! Acts 17:11 These (Bereans) were more fair-minded than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so.

Matthew 24 & 25, known as the Olivet Discourse, reveals Christ's answers to the disciples' questions regarding the destruction of the temple and His return.

1. His answer of WHEN is recorded in Luke 21:20-24.

2. His answer of the SIGN of His return is answered in Matthew 24:29-44.

3. His answer of the SIGN OF THE END OF THE AGE is answered in Matthew 24:4-8.

Note: Matt. 24:1-44 > Discusses outward events on the earth during the Tribulation Period.

Matt. 24:45-25:30 > Discusses His coming as it relates to the Church > Inward Attitudes

Note: 1. Preceding this section, Jesus had been describing the signs & events of the tribulation period, and had named one judgment after another, culminating in His 2<sup>nd</sup> Coming.

2. Now in the 2<sup>nd</sup> section, the emphasis is on THE LORD DELAYING HIS RETURN.

Matt. 24:48 My master is delaying his coming,

Matt. 25:5,19 the bridegroom was delayed; After a long time the lord of those servants came

3. In the 3<sup>rd</sup> section, Matt. 25:31-46, describes the judgment the Lord will execute when He returns to earth.

Conclusion: The Olivet Discourse teachings relate Christ's coming to the:

(1) Israel in Matt. 24:4-44

(2) The Professing Church in Matt. 24:45-25:30

(3) Gentile nations in Matt. 25:31-46

When Jesus takes His church at the Rapture, He will sit on His judgment seat and judge His own people for our works and give rewards to those who are found worthy and faithful.

(I Cor. 3:9-15) The 3 parables in the section to the professing church tell of obedient and disobedient servants; wise and foolish witnesses and profitable and unprofitable servants.

The lessons of these 3 parables teach us to love His appearing, look for His appearing and to labor faithfully until He comes.

Parable of the 10 Virgins: Remember: A parable is a truth told in story form to help explain a previous truth. The previous truth before this parable is:

To Watch, Be Ready, Endure To the End, You Know Not What Hour The Lord Comes

Matt. 24:45-50 Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his master made ruler over his household, to give them food in due season? <sup>46</sup> Blessed *is* that servant whom his master, when he comes, will find so doing. <sup>47</sup> Assuredly, I say to you that he will make him ruler over all his goods. <sup>48</sup> But if that evil servant says in his heart, 'My master is delaying his coming,' <sup>49</sup> and begins to beat *his* fellow servants, and to eat and drink with the drunkards, <sup>50</sup> the master of that servant will come on a day when he is not looking for *him* and at an hour that he is not aware of,

Luke 12:37 Blessed *are* those servants whom the master, when he comes, will find watching.

Matt. 25:1-13 Then the kingdom of heaven shall be likened to ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom.

Beliefs: 1. Kingdom of Heaven is the Millennial Reign of Jesus Christ.

2. It is a literal, earthly sphere of the Kingdom of God.

3. It is a physical kingdom which is limited in scope.

4. This political kingdom will rule over the earth.

5. It will be centered in Jerusalem and Jesus Christ will be the King.

<sup>2</sup> Now five of them were wise, and five *were* foolish. <sup>3</sup> Those who *were* foolish took their lamps and took no oil with them, <sup>4</sup> but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps.

Beliefs:

6. All 10 virgins were saved (justified). All had a lamp that had been lit. It was going out.

7. Oil in Scripture represents the Holy Spirit.

<sup>5</sup> But while the bridegroom was delayed, they all slumbered and slept. <sup>6</sup> "And at midnight a cry was *heard*: 'Behold, the bridegroom is coming; go out to meet him!' <sup>7</sup> Then all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps. <sup>8</sup> And the foolish said to the wise, 'Give us *some* of your oil, for our lamps are going out.' <sup>9</sup> 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.' <sup>10</sup> 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. <sup>11</sup> "Afterward the other virgins came also, saying, 'Lord, Lord, open to us!' <sup>12</sup> But he answered and said, 'Assuredly, I say to you, I do not know you.' <sup>13</sup> "Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man is coming.

Beliefs: 8. I believe ALL born again believers have the opportunity and privilege of serving Jesus Christ in some capacity in His future kingdom.

I believe this is determined at the Judgment Seat of Christ.

9. I believe many born again believers will forfeit varying degrees of their privilege and opportunity by being unprepared, not fit and not ready for Christ's return.

Closer Look: 1. The number 10 = Strong's #1176 = deka. It is used 248 times in the Bible and means "the measure of human responsibility" and "the number of completion."

2. Virgin = Strong's #3933 = an unmarried woman, undefiled, clean, chaste and pure

3. Wise = Strong's #5429 = phromiros = Single-minded (one life is being lived = Life Of Jesus). Thus the believer is full of light.

Luke 11:34a The lamp of the body is the eye. Therefore, when your eye is single, your whole body also is full of light.

The root word = phren = to rein in or curb the emotions. The wise virgins were wise because they allowed God to continually rein in their self-life, which then allowed the Holy Spirit (oil) to come forth and produce fruit in their lives.

4. Foolish = Strong's #3474 = moros = double-minded (2 lives are being lived - Life of Jesus and ours). These "foolish" believers are full of darkness. The "self-life" is ruling.

What made them foolish? They didn't bring extra oil.

Luke 11:34b But when *your eye* is evil, your body also *is* full of darkness.

Key Points:

1. ALL the virgins arose and trimmed their lamps (adjusted them), but the foolish found their lamps had gone out and they had no oil to refill them. I believe they did not maintain their faithfulness and their watchfulness. They had quenched the Holy Spirit which stopped the spiritual growth, the fellowship. They were not dwelling in the Word.

They became foolish and double-minded.

2. The 5 wise virgins who were ready, worthy and prepared (lamps lit with OIL (Holy Spirit) went in with the bridegroom to the wedding festivities and the door was shut.

3. Later, when the 5 foolish virgins came, they said, "Lord, Lord, open the door."

But he answered, "I know you not."

Closer Look:

1. Greek word for know = oida = Strong's #1492 = know intimately, to see, or to perceive.

Consider: The Lord was saying to the 5 foolish virgins, "I don't know you intimately.

We don't have a close relationship or fellowship. If we did you would have obeyed Me."

Compare: Matt. 7:21-23 "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' <sup>23</sup> And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'

1. Many CLAIMED to be Christians.

2. He does not say, "I know you not." He says, "I NEVER KNEW YOU."

Closer Look: Knew = ginosko = to have full knowledge of

Meaning: I don't recognize you at all! I never knew you to begin with.

Key Point: 4. KNOWING is the key. "Far above all the DOING...it seems the KNOWING is where we need to focus... and let the DOING spring forth from the REAL KNOWING."

Truth: As we abide in Him and are sanctified by the power of the Holy Spirit, we will have intimacy (oida) with Christ and fruit will result. If we are not faithful and aren't abiding, we won't know Him intimately, nor will any fruit be produced.

Rom. 13:11-14 Do this, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed. Let us walk properly, ... But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to *fulfill its* lusts. Ponder: If I am wise, I will redeem the time I have now and allow the Holy Spirit to bring me to the fullness of Jesus Christ.

I Thess. 5:6 Therefore let us not sleep, as others *do*, but let us watch and be sober.

Pressing Toward the Goal - If you desire to successfully run the spiritual race to win, to obtain the prize, Paul gives us essential principles to pursue the necessary deep and abiding intimate knowledge of Christ. I want Him to know me intimately.

Phil. 3:12-14 (1) Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected;

Notes: (1) There must be an awareness of the need to pursue the prize.

When Paul wrote "I have not already obtained and I am not already perfect," he had been a Christian for about 30 years. For three decades he had been intensely and faithfully pursuing the knowledge of Christ. He still wasn't there, but spiritually dissatisfied. It's like running after something that keeps moving further away from you. There is a continually increasing spiritual pursuit matched by a continually increasing dissatisfaction.

Pursuit then of knowing Christ begins with an honest assessment of my imperfection.

There should be in the life of every Christian a basic discontent.

(2) but I press on, that I may lay hold of that (Christ-likeness) for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me.

Notes: (2) I have to make the maximum effort to pursue the prize. God's purpose in saving me (to be conformed to the image of His Son) should now become my purpose and pursuit. You might become fully conformed to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.

**(3)** Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

Notes: (3) Single-minded in pursuing the prize. Focus my concentration

4. Spiritually Motivated To Pursue The Prize.

"I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus."

Greek kata, it literally means I bear down and I go after the goal.

5. Realize He who has called us to maturity will do the work in us and through us as we abide in Him.

Warning: Mediocre Christians will resist the call to spiritual maturity.

He wrote: "That I may win Christ" - yet he already had Christ!

His longing: "That I may be found in Him." - yet he was already in Him!

His desire: "That I may know Him." - yet he already knew Him!

He testified: "I follow after; I press toward the mark. I have not obtained.

I am striving to lay hold of that for which Christ laid hold on me."

Note: Paul is talking about the PRESENT and expressing his desire to continue on with Christ and experience ALL for which Christ had apprehended him.

Most of us are complete strangers to the desire and spirit which drove the Apostle Paul forward day by day: "That I may win - that I may know- that I may be found in Him.

### Running For The Prize - Run With Eternity In View

I Cor. 9:24-27 Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain *it*.<sup>25</sup> And everyone who competes (agonizomai = striveth) *for the prize* is temperate in all things. Now they *do it* to obtain a perishable crown, but we *for an imperishable crown*.<sup>26</sup> Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as *one who* beats the air.<sup>27</sup> But I discipline my body and bring *it* into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.  
(castaway = disapproved)

James 5:7-9 Therefore be patient, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. See *how* the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, waiting patiently for it until it receives the early and latter rain.<sup>8</sup> You also be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand.<sup>9</sup> Do not grumble against one another, brethren, lest you be condemned. Behold, the Judge is standing at the door!

Titus 2:13 looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ,

Acts 20:32 "So now, brethren, I commend you to God and to the Word of His grace, which is able to build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified."  
Luke confirmed it was the Word that could bring you to spiritual maturity and thereby insure your inheritance in the coming kingdom.

II Tim. 4:7-8 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.<sup>8</sup> Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.

Jude 1:24 Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to present you faultless Before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, (Promise > Reckon > Surrender>Thank)