

## Preparing the Bride: Oil for Our Lamps (Part 1 of 3)

From the website: [http://www.geocities.com/hebrew\\_roots/html/hr-2-3-01.html#Lamps](http://www.geocities.com/hebrew_roots/html/hr-2-3-01.html#Lamps)

The Parable of the Ten Virgins is probably one of the better known of Yeshua's teachings. Many commentaries have been written on this parable, yet many differences of opinion still exist, and a number of questions remain. Who are the ten virgins? What relationship do they have with the Messiah? Why do five of them not have enough oil for their lamps? Just what does that missing oil signify? Is there something Believers can do to insure that they will have enough oil to see their way to the wedding ceremony.

### ~ A Principle for Parable Study ~

When studying a parable it is important to keep in mind that one must not try to interpret each detail before understanding the overall concept. To do so may lead to confusion rather than understanding. Parables, by their very nature, contain analogies. The details of analogies will almost always begin to break down at some point. This fact does not invalidate the analogy or parable in question, nor does it invalidate the study of the details. Rather, it points directly back to the very first question which must be asked; what is the moral teaching of the story? Each parable usually has one overriding principle that is being taught. If one does not understand that principle, then examination of the details will probably not be helpful. With this in mind, let us look at the Parable of the Ten Virgins.

"Then 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 to meet him!" "Then all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said to 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. "Afterward the other virgins came also, saying, "Lord, Lord, open to us!" But he answered and said, "Assuredly, I say to you, I do not know you." "Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man is coming." (Matt. 25:1-13)

The overriding principle upon which Yeshua built this particular parable, is to warn His disciples that they must be in a constant state of preparedness. This could be likened to a nation's military being on constant alert; maybe not a 'red alert' but at least on alert. The reason Yeshua wants His disciples to be on alert is because they do not know the exact time when He will be returning, and He does not want them to be found derelict in their duty. Only the Father holds all the information concerning Yeshua's return, and only He can issue the command for Yeshua to go and fetch His Bride.

"But of that day and hour no one knows, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. Take heed, watch and pray for you do not know when the time is. "It is like a man going to a far country, who left his house and gave authority to his servants, and to each his work, and commanded the doorkeeper to watch. "Watch therefore, for you do not know when the master of the house is coming--in the evening, at midnight, at the crowing of the rooster, or in the morning--lest, coming suddenly, he find you sleeping. "And what I say to you, I say to all: Watch!" (Mark 13:32-37)

### ~ The Watchful Bride ~

The implication here is clear. If the Bride is watching she will not be taken by surprise when her Husband Yeshua comes for her. This is not to say that the Bride will know the exact time of His return, but rather that she will be able to discern the signs of the times and thereby know approximately when that promised return will take place. This idea was confirmed by the apostle Paul (Hebrew = Shaul):

"But concerning the times and the seasons, brethren, you have no need that I should write to you. For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night. For when they say, 'Peace and safety!' then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape. "But you, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this Day should overtake you as a thief. You are all sons of light and sons of the day. We are not of the night nor of darkness. "Therefore let us not sleep, as others do, but let us watch and be sober. For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk are drunk at night. But let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet the hope of salvation." (I Thess. 5:1-8)

Believers are not supposed to be in total darkness concerning the return of their Husband, Yeshua HaMashiach. That day is not to overtake us the way a pickpocket might sneak up unsuspectingly and steal our wallet while we are preoccupied with other things. Rather, Yeshua's return is likened to an expectant mother getting ready to birth her child. She does not know the exact day or time when the baby will be born, but she has a pretty good idea when delivery is near.

As Believers, we need to develop the awareness of an expectant mother. We need to discern the times in which we live, comparing them to the prophecies found in Scripture concerning the coming of the Messiah, so that we might be able to recognize when we are entering the 'last days.' It is interesting to note that the phrase 'Day of the Lord,' which identifies the very time when Messiah will come, is also known, in Jewish thought, as 'The Birthpains of the Messiah.'

So, it is clear from scripture; "...of that day and hour no one knows..." (Matt. 24:36). Yet it is also clear from scripture that: "...you, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this Day should overtake you as a thief." (I Thess. 5:4) Therefore, the key is to always be ready; to never allow yourself the luxury of letting down your guard, of falling asleep in a spiritual sense, for that may be just the time when the Father chooses to send Yeshua for His Bride, and you may find yourself without sufficient spiritual oil. This is the overriding moral teaching of the Parable of the Ten Virgins.

~ Times and Seasons ~

However, there will come a certain period of time when one will want to be most ready. These might be called the 'red alert' days. Recall that Shaul said; "But concerning the times and the seasons..." (I Thess. 5:1) Just what are these 'times and seasons?'

The English word 'times' is translated from the Greek word *chronos* (Strong's #5550). It means; "a space of time." In other words, as Believers we need to be able to discern when the 'space of time' occurs during which we should expect Messiah's return. This can be done in a number of ways.

When people in world leadership say; 'peace and safety,' then be prepared, for the *chronos* (space of time) for Yeshua's return draws near. When there occur signs in the heavens that point towards the end of days, then be prepared, for the *chronos* (space of time) for Yeshua's return draws near. When Yeshua's prophecies concerning the end times begin to come to pass, then be prepared, for the *chronos* (space of time) for Yeshua's return draws near. When the world reaches a time which finds that a majority of the people are living in a way that is similar to the time of Noah, then be

prepared, for the chronos (space of time) for Yeshua's return draws near. When the world seems to be in the throes of great weather upsets, then be prepared, for the chronos (space of time) for Yeshua's return draws near. When the world reaches the year 6000 from creation, then be prepared, for the chronos (space of time) for Yeshua's return draws near. When you see the Temple or Tabernacle rebuilt and animal sacrifices resumed in Israel, then be prepared, for the chronos (space of time) for Yeshua's return draws near. When you see 'great tribulation' such as the world has never seen before, then be prepared, for the chronos (space of time) for Yeshua's return draws near.

We have examined the meaning of the word 'times,' now let us take a look at the word 'seasons.' The English word 'seasons' is translated from the Greek word kairos (Strong's #2540). It means; "an occasion, i.e. set or proper time." Now we have moved from a "space of time," or span of years, to a specific time during the year when the Bride can expect her Husband Yeshua to come for her. Immediately one is drawn to make the comparison with the Hebrew word moed (Strong's #4150) which means: "an appointment, i.e. a fixed time or season; spec. a festival." Moed is commonly translated as 'Feasts' in the Hebrew scriptures.

So kairos points towards the annual festivals listed in Leviticus chapter 23. These festivals are called by God: "...The feasts of the LORD..." (Lev. 23:2). The phraseology used by Yeshua in describing His return points specifically to one particular festival, Rosh HaShanah, the Feast of Trumpets. That phrase is found in Matthew 24:36 and Mark 13:32: "But of that day and hour no one knows..." This is a Hebrew idiomatic expression which denotes Rosh HaShanah. The reason for this understanding is because Rosh HaShanah is the only festival which is celebrated on the first day of a month. In Yeshua's day, months were determined when at least two credible witnesses actually observed the new moon crescent with the naked eye. The festival could not be officially proclaimed until the new moon had been sighted and the Sanhedrin (Jewish supreme court) had accepted the sighting as valid. If the evening of the expected new moon did not produce a clear sighting, then the beginning of the festival was postponed until the next evening. Thus, Rosh HaShanah became known as the Holyday for which "no one knew the day or the hour" of its beginning.

Thus, the Greek word kairos gives us a clear indication that Yeshua will return at a specific 'season' or 'appointed time' or moed. When coupled with the expression from Matthew 24:36 we find that it is a very distinct possibility that Yeshua will return for His Bride on the festival of Rosh HaShanah (The Feast of Trumpets).

Yet the question always lingers, could this too be a device that will lull those who are not fully prepared into a yearly slumber, or even deep sleep, once Rosh HaShanah has passed by each year. Therefore, it is very important to always be ready, never allowing spiritual sleep to overtake us at any time of the year. With this principle in mind let us go on to examine some of the details of the Parable of the Ten Virgins, to see what else can be learned from these verses.

~ Ten Virgins ~

Why are there ten virgins in this parable? Why not seven or twelve? After all, seven is considered to be the number of perfection and completion, and twelve is the number of governmental perfection.

Ten, however, has a somewhat different meaning from the above numbers which makes it very important to the understanding of this parable. In Jewish practice it required ten men, who knew the Torah, in order to form a new assembly or synagogue. Such a group of men were called a 'minion.' (Interestingly enough, when an assembly became too large it was expected that at least ten men would break off and form a new synagogue. A far cry from some of the megachurches of today.)

This principle was derived from the custom established by Moshe (Mow-shay = Moses) at the suggestion of his father-in-

law, Jethro.

"So Moses' father-in-law said to him, 'The thing that you do is not good. ... Listen to my voice; I will give you counsel, and God will be with you: ...' "...you shall select from all the people able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness; and place such over them to be rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens. And let them Judge the people at all times. ...'" (Ex. 18:17,19,21-22)

Ten was considered the smallest unit that was practical for matters concerning judgment. Also, it was a number that allowed all of the members to be active participants in the congregation or assembly, thus providing leadership training so that when the assembly again became too large, ten qualified men could be found to form another new assembly.

Prophecy seems to indicate that this practice will again be established in the 'last days.'

"Thus says the LORD of hosts: 'In those days ten men from every language of the nations shall grasp the sleeve of a Jewish man, saying, "Let us go with you, for we have heard that God is with you."'" (Zech. 8:23)

Thus it is that the number ten, in the Parable of the Ten Virgins, represents the entirety of the body of Believers, the Church, the called out ones, the Bride of Messiah. All are looking for the return of Yeshua, the Bridegroom. All have gathered into a certain place in expectation of His return. All have brought lamps to use in case He comes during the night. All have made some degree of preparations in anticipation of this event.

The fact that the ten virgins represent all of the Believers is confirmed within the parable itself:

"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. Afterward the other virgins came also, saying, 'Lord, Lord, open to us!'" (Matt. 25:10-11)

Since the practice, in the ancient Hebrew wedding, was for only the Bridegroom and the Bride to enter the Chuppah (Who-pah = wedding chamber) by themselves, and the five foolish virgins are knocking at the door trying to enter, it is clear that the virgins represent the Bride herself, and are not to be considered merely attendants. In the ancient Hebrew wedding practice the guests who were present always stood outside the wedding chamber; they were never allowed to enter and would not have dared knock on the door.

\* Detail #1 \*

The first detail of this parable tells us that the ten virgins represent the entirety of the Bride, the Church of called out ones.

~ Slumber and Sleep ~

~ Two Witnesses ~

In the Parable of the Ten Virgins it is apparent the Bridegroom is expected to come at night. In fact, this was the normal custom in the ancient Hebrew wedding. In those days, the Bridegroom was assisted by two attendants who were also witnesses to the marriage. One of the witnesses represented Moshe, the other represented Elijah. The witness representing Moshe provided assistance to the Bride, while the one representing Elijah provided assistance to the Bridegroom.

This sharing of duties was based on the fact that it was Moshe who led the first Bride, the children of Israel, through the wilderness and right up to the wedding chamber at Mount Sinai. Then, after the wedding, he went on to lead the Bride to the door of their new home, the promised land of Canaan.

On the other hand, the original Elijah provided witness for God against the evil of his day, especially that of King Ahab and his wicked queen, Jezebel. The second Elijah was, of course, John the Baptist (Yochanan the Immerser) who proclaimed the arrival of the Messiah, and called the people to repentance. He also proclaimed himself to be the friend of the Bridegroom, a Hebrew idiom for the 'Elijah' attendant at a wedding.

"Then there arose a dispute between some of John's disciples and the Jews about purification. And they came to John and said to him, 'Rabbi, He who was with you beyond the Jordan, to whom you have testified--behold, He is baptizing, and all are coming to Him!'

"John answered and said, 'A man can receive nothing unless it has been given to him from heaven. You yourselves bear me witness, that I said, "I am not the Christ," but, "I have been sent before Him." "'He who has the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly because of the bridegroom's voice. Therefore this joy of mine is fulfilled. He must increase, but I must decrease.'" (John 3:25-30)

One of the responsibilities of the 'friend of the Bridegroom' was to wait outside the door of the Chuppah (Wedding Chamber). Once the marriage had been consummated the Bridegroom would come to the door with the bloody sheets of the marriage bed, hand them to the 'friend of the Bridegroom,' telling him that the marriage was complete. This would bring joy to the heart of the attendant called 'Elijah,' for he truly felt the joy that was in the heart of the Bridegroom.

~ Sending Forth the Bridegroom ~

Once the father of the bridegroom announced to his son that it was time to fetch his bride, the bridegroom would call the Moshe and Elijah witnesses and last minute preparations would begin.

If the bridegroom and bride lived in the same village, it would be but a short journey for him to fetch her. However, if they lived a long distance apart, more extensive preparations would need to be made. If the journey were to take several days, provisions would have to be gathered and other people would need to be enlisted to aid in the journey.

Prior to the Father's decision to send his son, the Bride had already been in a state of waiting for quite a long time. Anciently, the period of time between the betrothal and full marriage was about one year. During this time the Bride did all that she believed was necessary to prepare for the wedding. Once the preparations were completed, all she had left to do was wait.

When the Father declared all was ready, 'Moshe' was sent ahead to announce the coming of the Husband. The Bride then gathered her things and put on her wedding gown. The bridesmaids were called and all waited in eager anticipation. This is the situation that exists at the beginning of this parable.

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

Here we see that the Bride has been warned by 'Moshe' of the coming of her Husband, and she has gone out to meet Him, but for some unknown reason He is delayed in coming.

"But while the bridegroom was delayed, they all slumbered and slept." (Matt. 25:5)

At first this final waiting period is filled with alertness and energy, such as the first love of a new Believer, but as time wears on her nervous energy begins to turn to weariness. Gradually the Bride begins to nod off, reawakening herself again and again, but ultimately she succumbs to deep sleep.

Right now, many Believers are on high alert in the expectation of Yeshua's return. The conditions listed earlier in this article seem to be happening before our very eyes, "Moshe's" message of Messiah's return is being delivered from many different sources. Also, the idea that we are reaching the turn of a millennium is having a very significant effect on great numbers of people.

But what if the Father's timetable is not what we expect? What if Yeshua does not return within the next very few years? What if the 21st century comes, and there is still no sign of Messiah's return? Could that cause the Church to fall asleep?

According to this parable, the end time Church will be in this precise condition when the final cry comes warning the Bride about the imminent return of Messiah. At that time the entire Church will be asleep, even though She has previously been warned that the end of Her wait is near.

\* Detail #2 \*

The second detail of this parable tells us that the entire Church will be asleep when Messiah returns, even though she has been warned that Messiah's return is close.

~ Oil Vessels ~

Then comes that final, last minute awakening cry. The Bride is lifted out of her sleep.

"And at midnight a cry was heard: 'Behold, the bridegroom is coming; go out to meet him!'" (Matt. 25:6)

The Bride of Messiah is composed of many members. Each one of the ten virgins represents a part of the Bride. In this parable, the Bride is divided into two basic parts, the 'wise virgins,' those who made adequate preparations, and the 'foolish virgins' who did not. However, all ten virgins did make some type of preparation. The key to understanding this lesson is to determine what constitutes adequate preparation for the wedding.

All of the virgins did have lamps to aid them in seeing their way to the wedding. These lamps are devices that hold olive oil for fuel and are constructed in a way that, when lit, provide an adequate amount of light for their intended purpose. The lamps used for outdoor lighting had to be somewhat larger than the ones used indoors. According to archeological evidence, these lamps were fairly large and were mounted upon poles so they could be held aloft, thus providing a larger range of light. Because the outdoor lamps were considerably larger than indoor lamps, they also used a much greater amount of oil. For this reason, it was necessary to carry along an extra vessel of oil so that the lamps could be replenished along the way. This is the meaning of verse four which says: "...but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps." (Matt. 25:4)

It was this extra vessel, full of oil, which the 'wise virgins' carried, that made them wise instead of foolish; since the 'foolish virgins' brought only their lamp with the amount of oil which it contained. The 'foolish virgins' might have thought that such a vessel would just be extra baggage that was not needed. Both groups had oil for the beginning of the journey, but the foolish ones did not have enough to complete it. Realizing this, they asked the 'wise virgins' to share some of their oil with them so that all ten virgins would have light for their lamps. The 'wise' answer was: "'No, lest there should not be enough for us and you..." (Matt. 25:9)

In the interpretation of this detail let us look at this extra vessel, which carried the additional oil. There are two Greek words translated as 'vessel' into English. The one used in this parable is *aggeion* (Strong's #30). It means; "a receptacle." It is used in only two other places. #The first is in Matt. 13:48 where it refers to a basket. The other verse is found in I John 3:11:

"In this the children of God and the children of the devil are manifest: Whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is he who does not love his brother. For this is the message that you heard from the beginning, that we should love one another, not as Cain who was of the wicked one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his works were evil and his brother's righteous." (I John 3:10-12)

The underlined word 'message' is the Greek word *aggeion* which means; "a receptacle." At first, this meaning seems incongruous to the context of the passage. Yet, this is God's word and we need to understand what is being communicated. If we do not understand a particular scripture the fault lies not with the original scripture itself, but rather with either the translation or with our lack of understanding.

So, pursuing this passage a little deeper we find that the object of the word 'message' (Greek *aggeion* = receptacle) is the word love. Now we see that the Believer is to be a vessel or receptacle of love, not of hate such as Cain had for his brother Abel. Verse 10 takes this concept one step further and equates love with righteous acts. This is an indication that it is not only necessary to carry that extra vessel of oil to the wedding, but that it must be a particular kind of vessel, one that is constructed from love and righteousness. The specific kind of 'love' spoken of for this vessel is *agape* love; the highest level of love, the kind of love that God has for us and that we are to have for each other.

There is another Greek word translated into the English word 'vessel;' it is *skeuos* (Strong's #4632). It is defined as; "a vessel, implement; equipment or apparatus." It is kin to the Hebrew word *keliy* (kehl-lee; Strong's #3627), which is nearly identical except for the additional definition that it is; "something prepared."

There are many verses in both the Hebrew and Greek scriptures which indicate that people are considered to be vessels or receptacles. Shaul, the one who became the apostle Paul, was one such person:

"But the Lord said to him, 'Go, for he is a chosen vessel of Mine to bear My name before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel For I will show him how many things he must suffer for My name's sake.'" (Acts 9:15-16)

"But now, O Lord, You are our Father; We are the clay, and You our potter; And all we are the work of Your hand." (Isa. 64:8)

"What if God, wanting to show His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath prepared for destruction, and that He might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy, which He had prepared before hand for glory, even us whom He called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles?" (Rom.

9:22-24)

Thus it is, that the mind and heart of the Believer is to be the vessel which carries the oil for the lamp. But we are not to be just any old kind of vessel, we are to be vessels of agape (love) and mercy. The message is clear; the Bride is to be a 'righteous love vessel,' practicing loving acts of righteousness.

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God." (Rom. 12:1-2)

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"Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his master made ruler over his household, to give them food in due season? "Blessed is that servant whom his master, when he comes, will find so doing. Assuredly, I say to you that he will make him ruler over all his goods. But if that evil servant says in his heart, 'My master is delaying his coming,' and begins to beat his fellow servants, and to eat and drink with the drunkards, 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, and will cut him in two and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites.

"There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." (Matt 24:45-51)

Apparently, the 'foolish virgins' failed to prepare adequately by not bringing with them an attitude of righteous love. Perhaps they were the ones who were abusing their fellow servants because they did not agree in every detail of doctrine, or those members of the Bride who had little patience for others who did not have the same understanding of scripture as they did.

(End Part 1 of 3)

Preparing the Bride: Oil for Our Lamps (Part 2 of 3)

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\* Detail #3 \*

The third detail of this parable is that we must bring to the wedding a receptacle (ourselves) of righteous love for one another.

~ Lamps ~

The next item to be examined is the lamp itself. As previously mentioned, it must be of proper construction for outdoor use. The small lamps that were used inside the home would not provide nearly enough light for use at night, especially if the wedding were to take place on a new moon, when the sky is dark, such as at Rosh HaShanah. Also, a small indoor lamp would be susceptible to being blown out if a gust of wind should come along. The lamp had to be constructed specifically for outdoor use.

The lamps also had to be well constructed so that they would not leak oil. A leak, dripping oil down the supporting pole, could prove dangerous to the person carrying it if it were to ignite. This could result in the carrier being burned and the lamp being dropped, with the added possibility of a larger fire being started. Such an event could have a disastrous effect on a wedding procession.

Lampas is the Greek word for our English word lamp. (Strong's #2985). It is defined as: "lamp, light or torch." It comes from another Greek word lampo (Strong's #2989) which means: "to beam, i.e. radiate brilliancy: give light, shine." So the lamp is an object which 'radiates a brilliant light' when lit.

The Hebrew form for lamp is the word neer (Strong's #5216). It means; "to glisten; a lamp or light.--candle, lamp, light." The most famous lamp in the Hebrew scriptures is the seven branched menorah (meh-nor-rah').

"You shall make a lampstand of pure gold; And six branches shall come out of its sides: .., You shall make seven lamps for it, and they shall arrange its lamps so that they give light in front of it." (Ex. 25:31-32,37)

In addition to the literal lamp, this word also has a figurative meaning.

"Your word is a lamp to my feet And a light to my path." (Psalm 119:105)

"For the commandment is a lamp, And the law is light; Reproofs of instruction are the way of life." (Prov. 6:23)

God's word (the scriptures) and His commandments are to be a lamp or a light to guide our way as we travel through life. Without the proper lamp, the oil would not give light in a way that would be sufficient for that travel, There are many philosophies by which people live their lives, however, only one lamp will give the proper light that is needed in order to travel to the wedding with the Messiah and on into eternal life. That is the lamp of God's own holy word, His instruction book.

But neer (lamp or candle) is also used to identify a personal connection with God. According to scripture, when our lamp is lit, we are connected with Him, and when our light has gone out, that connection has been severed.

"The spirit of a man is the lamp of the LORD, Searching all the inner depths of his heart." (Prov. 20:27)

"For there will be no prospect for the evil man; The lamp of the wicked will be put out." (Prov. 24:20)

While it is our mind and heart that is to be the righteous love vessel which carries the much needed extra oil, it is our spirit that is to be the lamp which is capable of showing forth an adequate amount of light for our journey to the sacred wedding of Messiah. A righteous spirit is the only lamp which will be sufficient to light the way to the wedding. Therefore our spirits must be clean and ready for lighting.

"Create in me a clean heart, O God, And renew a steadfast spirit within me." (Psalm 51:10)

\* Detail #4 \*

Detail number four tells us that our own spirit must be clean and right with God so that our lamp can light our way. All of the virgins possessed proper lamps, the problem was, five were not in good working order because they did not have enough oil.

~ Oil ~

Now we come to the commodity which the 'wise virgins' had in adequate supply and, of which, the 'foolish virgins' had to little. Although in the parable, oil is of a spiritual nature, it is also something that can be acquired, since the 'foolish virgins' were told to go and obtain their own supply from those who sold it. This spiritual essence is pictured by olive oil.

Olive oil was a common, though valuable, commodity in ancient Israel and Judea. The finest and most expensive oil was that which came from the first beating of the olives, prior to their being pressed. Normally it was the final pressing of the olives, which produced the lowest grade of oil, which was used to light ordinary lamps. (Olive oil was also used in the home for cooking, dressing wounds and massage.)

Beaten olive oil (the finest kind) had many religious uses in Temple worship and ritual. It was used to light the seven branched menorah (men-ore-ah), it was part of the meal offerings; and it was used in all of the sacrifices with the exception of the sin offering. (Lev. 5:11).

Oil was also used in the ceremony for the cleansing of the leper (Lev. 14). However, in the Sotah (Soh-tah') ceremony (Ceremony of the Jealous Husband) it was forbidden to use oil (Numbers 5). A part of this ritual includes the bringing of an offering by the offended husband. However, he is to:

"... put no oil on it and put no frankincense on it, because it is a grain offering of jealousy ..." (Num. 5:15)

Since neither the sin offering or the jealousy offering could include oil, it must be concluded that oil is somehow associated with righteousness, as opposed to sin (unrighteousness).

~ Anointing Oil ~

Another primary use of olive oil was for anointing. Aaron and his sons were first anointed with oil, and then sprinkled with a mixture of blood and oil prior to their being allowed to serve as priests in the Tabernacle.

"And you shall take the anointing oil, pour it on his head, and anoint him. ... "And you shall take some of the blood that is on the altar, and some of the anointing oil, and sprinkle it on Aaron and on his garments, on his sons and on the garments of his sons with him; and he and his garments shall be hallowed, and his sons and his sons' garments with him." (Ex. 29:7,2 1)

~ The Anointing of Kings ~

Another use of oil in the scriptures is for the purpose of anointing kings. Both Saul (I Sam. 10:1) and David (I Sam. 16:1,13) were anointed, by the righteous judge Samuel, to be king over Israel. Even after David himself had been anointed to succeed Saul as king, he still had the utmost respect for Saul as God's anointed. This in spite of the fact that Saul was continually trying to take David's life.

In one instance David was on the run and Saul was in hot pursuit: Saul followed David into the wilderness of En Gedi, which is on the west side of the Dead Sea. Saul had three thousand men with him and his sole purpose in being there was to find David and have him killed. Nature called, so Saul looked for a private place where he could go to relieve himself. This is how he happened to enter the very cave where David and his men were hiding. Saul left off his robe, while attending to his needs, and David sneaked up and cut off a corner (tzit-tzit) of his robe. All Israelites were required to wear tzit-tzit.

"Speak to the children of Israel Tell them to make tassels (tzit-tzit) on the corners of their garments throughout their generations, and to put a blue thread in the tassels of the corners. And you shall have the tassel, that you may look upon it and remember all the commandments of the LORD and do them..." (Num. 15:38-39)

The tzit-tzit are a symbol of righteousness, therefore, in effect, David was symbolically cutting off the righteousness of Saul.

"Now it happened afterward that David's heart troubled him because he had cut Saul's robe. And he said to his men, 'The LORD forbid that I should do this thing to my master, the LORD's anointed, to stretch out my hand against him, seeing he is the anointed of the LORD.'" (I Sam. 24:5-6)

It is interesting to note that once a king had been anointed and had ascended to the throne, he was required to do a very specific thing:

"When you come to the land which the LORD your God is giving you, and possess it and dwell in it, and say, 'I will set a king over me like all the nations that are around me,' you shall surely set a king over you whom the LORD your God chooses;...

"Also it shall be, when he sits on the throne of his kingdom, that he shall write for himself a copy of this law in a book, from the one before the priests, the Levites. And it shall be with him, and he shall read it all the days of his life, that he may learn to fear the LORD his God and be careful to observe all the words of this law and these statutes, that his heart may not be lifted above his brethren, that he may not turn aside from the commandment to the right hand or to the left, and that he may prolong his days in his kingdom, he and his children in the midst of Israel." (Deut. 17:14-15,18-20)

The anointed of God was supposed to copy, study, learn and then apply the instruction book of God, the Torah, into his rule over the people. This action allowed the king to become totally familiar with the instructions of God and thereby become a righteous ruler, one who feared God and ruled with justice and mercy. Obviously, this did not always happen.

Thus it was, that the oil of anointing never excused an 'anointed one' (king) from keeping the 'law' (Torah), rather his anointing required him to be the leading teacher and practitioner of the Torah.

~ The Anointed One ~

Even though every king was considered to be the 'anointed' of God, there was prophesied to come one whom the

Israelites called "The Anointed One." This was the Messiah. In fact, the Hebrew word Mashiach (Mah-shee-ach = Messiah) literally means: "the anointed one." To be anointed in Israel meant having the very finest olive oil poured over one's head.

To be anointed with oil implies that the person being anointed will follow a path of righteousness. This is certainly true of the Messiah.

"Your throne, O God, is forever and ever; A scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Your kingdom. You love righteousness and hate wickedness; Therefore God, Your God, has anointed You With the oil of gladness more than Your companions." (Psalm 45:7)

~ Oil of Righteousness ~

To live a righteous life means to live according to the instructions found in the Torah, for it is the book that makes one wise:

"There is desirable treasure, And oil in the dwelling of the wise, But a foolish man squanders it.

"He who follows righteousness and mercy Finds life, righteousness and honor." (Prov. 21:20-21)

One of the benefits of living according to the 'anointing oil' of Torah is that it permits the brethren to dwell together in peace and unity.

"Behold, how good and how pleasant it is For brethren to dwell together in unity! It is like the precious oil upon the head, Running down on the beard, The beard of Aaron, Running down on the edge of his garments. It is like the dew of Hermon, Descending upon the mountains of Zion; For there the LORD commanded the blessing--Life forevermore." (Psalm 133)

The foolish squander their oil, their precious oil of Torah instruction which tells them how to live their lives in a righteous manner. Meanwhile the wise hang on to their Torah learning, and thereby save their oil for that time when it is needed. And the time when it will be most needed is that time when Messiah arrives to take us to the wedding. Then we will need all of the Torah oil we can muster. That is what the 'foolish virgins' were missing. They did not have an adequate supply of understanding of the Torah, they were not living a Torah centered life, they had not prepared themselves adequately to be the wife of the Messiah Yeshua, the one who was called the 'living Torah' when He walked the earth some two thousand years ago.

Where does one buy this precious oil? In Jewish thought, oil is a symbol for knowledge. So the primary source for the oil is from persistent study of the Torah itself. Assistance may also be obtained from literature and messages by well grounded Torah teachers. However, the place to start is with regular, weekly Torah study. (See the article in this issue: Annual Torah Readings for 1997-98).

It is only through Messiah (the Anointed One) that we are able to come into the fullness of the oil of Torah living. For olive oil is also used to anoint the sick that they may be made well. (James 5:14). Truly, we are all sick, laden down with sin, but it is through the Anointed One that our spiritual sickness is removed and we are made whole once again, now able to continue on in our life of righteousness (Torah observance).

\* Detail #5 \*

The fifth detail of The Parable of the Ten Virgins shows us that we must begin right now to purchase the Torah oil we need in order to have our 'righteous love vessels' full when Messiah arrives for us.

~ Trimming the Lamps ~

"Then all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps." (Matt. 25:7)

The Greek word for 'trimmed' is kosmeo (Strong's #2885). It means to put something in its proper order, or to decorate or garnish something. So each of the 'virgins' put their lamp (spirit) in the best order they could so that it would be ready for lighting. It was at this point that the 'foolish virgins' realized they were low on oil. They had not learned how to live a Torah centered lifestyle; they had neglected to gain understanding about the way God wanted them to conduct their lives. Instead, they had chosen to follow the customs of the world. Maybe some had stumbled on the fourth commandment. For others it may have been Leviticus 11. Still others may have ignored the second commandment or Leviticus 23 or the command to love their neighbors as themselves. Whatever the cause, the 'foolish virgins' did not have enough Torah oil to take them all the way to the wedding. Yeshua spoke of those who would desire to have a part in the Kingdom of Heaven but would be shut out.

"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?'"

"And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'" (Matt. 7:21-23)

The way to eternal life is strait and narrow. The path is the one that takes us through all of the Holy Scriptures, not just one portion. It requires lifelong study, but it is also definitely a work of faith. For as we study the scriptures and learn our shortcomings, it becomes readily apparent that it is only by faith in the forgiveness of our Torahlessness (iniquity or lawlessness) that we can ever achieve entrance to the wedding and the Kingdom (family) of God.

"Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out." cried the 'foolish virgins.' Now they understood that they needed the same Torah righteousness which the 'wise virgins' had taken the pains to acquire over the years. The 'wise virgins' had worked hard to gain the understanding of Torah which now filled their 'righteous love vessels.' They had proven their faith in their Husband (that He would return as promised) by learning how to live an obedient life according to the Instruction Book of God.

"What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him? "If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, and one of you says to them, 'Depart in peace, be warmed and filled,' but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit? Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.

"But someone will say, 'You have faith and I have works.' Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works. You believe there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe--and tremble! But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead?" (James 2:14-20)

This is not to say that the 'wise virgins' earned their salvation by their Torah works. Rather, as James states, they merely

proved their faith by their good works. Meanwhile, the 'foolish virgins' were found wanting, both in faith and in works. They thought they could piggyback into the Kingdom of God using the Torah oil of their friends, teachers, relatives, pastors or ministers.

"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..." (Matt. 25:9-10)

So, where could the 'foolish virgins' go to but the needed oil in the middle of the night? Since the virgins did not have enough oil to see their way to the wedding, how could they see their way to the homes of those who had oil to sell? Besides, the Torah teachers would undoubtedly be a part of the 'wise virgins,' and therefore would be in the Chuppah with the Messiah. It is all a rather bleak and dismal picture for the 'foolish virgins.'

For it is prophesied:

"Behold, the days are coming," says the Lord God, "That I will send a famine on the land, Not a famine of bread, Nor a thirst for water, But of hearing the words of the LORD, They shall wander from sea to sea, And from north to east; They shall run to and fro, seeking the word of the LORD, But shall not find it." (Amos 8:11-12)

But one must give the 'foolish virgins' some credit. They did persist. Eventually they ended up at the door of the Chuppah (wedding chamber). Since the obstacles to purchasing Torah oil in the middle of the night were so great, it is this writer's opinion that the 'foolish virgins' must have waited until morning to head on over to the Chuppah, but they were too late.

"Afterward the other virgins came also saying, 'Lord, Lord, open to us!' But he answered and said, 'Assuredly, I say to you, I do not know you.'" (Matt. 25:11-12)

It is apparent that Yeshua HaMashiach cannot know someone who does not share His own lifestyle. The Bride has had all of her life (up to this point) to learn how to live a lifestyle that will be pleasing to her Husband. The instruction book has been here for all to study for 3500 years. To ignore all of those instructions for all of those years is just plain foolish. No wonder they are called the 'foolish virgins.'

\* Detail #6 \*

Thus, we find the fifth detail of this parable instructs all of us to be much more circumspect concerning the oil of Torah knowledge. We must not only learn it, we must live it.

~ The Igniting Fire ~

It is possible for a person to have the proper vessel to carry the oil, the correct and fully cleaned lamp for outdoor use, and the finest beaten olive oil to be found; but if an igniting fire is not present, all preparations are useless because no light will be produced. This parable does not tell us how the lamps of the 'wise virgins' were to be lit, so we must go to other scriptures to find the spiritual source of this igniting fire.

Fire is: "...a rapid, persistent, chemical change that releases heat and light and is accompanied by flame..." It can be either destructive or, if properly contained, put to productive use. The vast majority of passages in Scripture, that

pertain to fire, refer to its use in a destructive sense, although many of these have a productive outcome (i.e. destruction of the wicked). But a few verses do show fire in a contained and positive way. One of the most significant of the positive passages dealing with fire is found in the second chapter of the book of Acts:

"Now when the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." (Acts. 2:1-4)

Here we see that the very Holy Spirit of God is first introduced to the Believing community through the symbol of fire. Likewise, it was also through fire (the burning bush) that God first revealed Himself to Moshe (Moses).

"And the Angel of the LORD appeared to him in a flame of fire from the midst of a bush. ..." (Ex. 3:2)

Also, God's throne is encased in a whirlwind of fire (Ezek. 1:4) and His eyes are like flames or lamps of fire. (Dan. 10:6; Rev. 1:14; 2:18 and 19:12).

"And from the throne proceeded lightnings, thunderings, and voices. And there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God." (Rev. 4:5)

The Holy Spirit of God is the igniting fire. For those who Believe and accept Yeshua HaMashiach as their Lord, Saviour and Husband, an earnest payment of the Holy Spirit has been given so that the Torah oil contained in the lamp can be lit.

"Now He who establishes us with you in Christ and has anointed us is God, who also has sealed us and given us the Spirit in our hearts as a deposit." (II Cor. 1:21-22)

The Greek word for 'earnest' is arrhabon (Strong's #728). The Greeks actually took the word from Hebrew (Strong's #6162). It could also be translated as a pledge; that which is given in advance so that the recipient knows for sure that the promise which has been made will be honored. The Hebrew form is used in only one scripture passage in the Old Testament, the story of Judah and Tamar:

"When Judah saw her, he thought she was a harlot, because she had covered her face. "Then he turned to her by the way, and said, 'Please let me come in to you;' for he did not know that she was his daughter-in-law. So she said, 'What will you give me, that you may come in to me?' "And he said, 'I will send you a young goat from the flock.' And she said, 'Will you give me a pledge (arabon) till you send it?' Then he said, 'What pledge shall I give you?' So she said, 'Your signet and cord, and your staff that is in your hand.' Then he gave them to her, and went in to her, and she conceived by him." (Gen. 38:15-18)

It is absolutely profound to note that in the modern Greek language this same word, arrhabon, is the very word for the engagement ring. This 'earnest' (engagement ring) is the gift by which Yeshua has sealed our betrothal to Him, and it is nothing less than His very own Holy Spirit, which He sent to us so that we might have comfort (The Comforter) during His absence, knowing with full assurance that He will return for us.

But there is one more much needed element which is also symbolized by the Holy Spirit. That element is oxygen. A fire cannot remain lit if there is no oxygen available to feed the flame. The very word 'Spirit' in both Hebrew (Ruach = Rue-ach; Strong's #7307) and Greek (Pneuma = new-mah; Strong's #415 1) means 'wind' or 'breath.' The manifestation of

the Holy Spirit at Pentecost included not only fire, but: "... a sound from heaven , as a rushing mighty wind..." (Acts 2:2).

~ Light ~

In order for there to be light there must be fire. In order for fire to exist three things must be present; fuel, heat and oxygen. If any one of these is taken away, the fire will die and the light will go out.

So it is, that the Holy Spirit brings two of the three essential ingredients to produce light.

"The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs--heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together." (Rom. 8:16-17)

If we are filled with Torah oil as a source of fuel, then when the air and fire of God's Holy Spirit joins with our human spirit (the lamp which holds the oil) the result is light! All the ingredients are now in place; lamp, oil, fire and oxygen, plus the additional vessel of Torah oil from which our lamps (spirit) can be refilled should they begin to run low. In fact, if we study the weekly Torah portions every Sabbath, our fuel supply will be constantly replenished.

But now we must come back again to the source of all things. That is God Himself. He is the Creator who created in us a new heart and commanded us to renew our minds.

"And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God." (Rom. 12:2)

He has created us, in His own image, to be vessels of love and righteousness, for God is love and God is righteous. He is the one who gave each of us life and set our spirit (lamp) within us. He is the one who provides the Holy Spirit which lights our lamp and provides the oxygen to keep it burning. He is also the One who gives us the Torah oil for fuel. In fact, He is the Creator of light, for it did not even exist until He spoke these words:

"Then God Said, 'Let there be light;' and there was light. And God saw the light, that it was good; and God divided the light from the darkness. God called the light Day, and the darkness He called Night. So the evening and the morning were the first day." (Gen. 1:3-5)

It was God the Father who sent into this world the one who became the source of true light for the world, because the world had fallen into darkness.

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. In Him was life, and the and the life was the light of men, And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did nor comprehend it." (John 1:1-5)

It is only through the true light of Messiah Yeshua, that we can receive this light.

"That was the true Light which gives light to every man who comes into the world." (John 1:9)

"Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, 'I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life.'" (John 8:12)

Because Yeshua is the Light of the world, and because we are betrothed to Him through the engagement ring of the Holy Spirit, we also become lights, for Yeshuah said:

"You are the light of the world. ..." (Matt. 5:14)

Since we are also to be lights for the world, it is important that the light which shines forth from us be the same light that originates from Messiah, and not a light that is from some less desirable source. Once the light of Messiah is lit within us as individuals, it is imperative that we allow it to be seen by others:

"No one, when he has lit a lamp, puts it in a secret place or under a basket, but on a lampstand, that those who come in may see the light. The lamp of the body is the eye. Therefore, when your eye is good, your whole body also is full of light. But when your eye is bad, your body also is full of darkness. Therefore take heed that the light which is in you is not darkness. If then your whole body is full of light, having no part dark, the whole body will be full of light, as when the bright shining of a lamp gives you light." (Luke 11:33-36)

(End Part 2 of 3)

Preparing the Bride: Oil for Our Lamps (Part 3 of 3)

From the website: [http://www.geocities.com/hebrew\\_roots/html/hr-2-3-01.html#Lamps](http://www.geocities.com/hebrew_roots/html/hr-2-3-01.html#Lamps)

Our eye must be good, (sincere) in our devotion to our Husband Yeshua, our Father in heaven and to the instruction book of God (the Torah) which He has so graciously given us. If we are full of the righteous oil of the Torah, then we will have plenty of fuel for our light to shine brightly and it will be 'good' light. However, there is another kind of light which is a mixture of good and evil. Some people think this 'light' is the good light, but it is really a very old 'light' that is total darkness at its core.

"For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ. And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works." (II Cor. 11:13-15)

~ Flickering Light ~

If our Torah fuel should run low, then our light will begin to flicker. When this happens it is urgent for us to return immediately to our source book of oil for replenishment.

"Through Your precepts I get understanding; Therefore I hate every false way." (Psalm 119:104)

As a result of industrious Torah study and diligent application of Torah into our lives, we can be assured that:

"He shall bring forth your righteousness as the light, And your justice as the noonday." (Psalm 37:6)

Even if we have abundant Torah oil it is still possible that our light of Messiah might go out, for in order for there to be

light there must be fire.

If we blaspheme the Holy Spirit and God removes it from us, then our source of heat (fire) and oxygen (air) is gone, and all we are left with is empty knowledge of Torah with no possible way to put it into effect.

"And anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man, it will be forgiven him; but to him who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven." (Luke 12:10)

If our lamp (our own human spirit) becomes damaged to the point that the oxygen of the Holy Spirit cannot reach the flame, or it is broken to the point where it can no longer hold Torah oil, then once again the light of Messiah will be extinguished. This is why we are told:

"Quench not the Spirit." (I Thess. 5:19)

"And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption." (Eph. 4:30)

We quench the Spirit when we refuse to follow his lead. We grieve the Spirit when we commit sin. Both have a dampening effect (water is one way to prevent oxygen from reaching the flame) upon our light.

~ Summary ~

This has been a rather lengthy journey through the Parable of the Ten Virgins. However, the lessons to be learned are most profound:

The great lesson is that we must always be ready for Messiah's return. Even if He does not come back during our lifetime; He will, in effect, come for each of us individually when we die. Now is the time to make preparations for our wedding to Yeshua, while it is still day. "I must work the works of Him who sent Me while it is day; the night is coming when no one can work." (John 9:4). Now is the time to be studying Torah and learning how to live a Torah lifestyle. Now is the time to repair our 'righteous love vessel' so that it can be filled to the brim with Torah oil and not lose a single drop. We can do this by putting into action those things we learn from the Torah. Now is the time to cleanse our own spirit (lamp) of all iniquity, bitterness, hatred, jealousy, lust, vanity and greed; so that it can burn clean and bright and not prevent the pure oxygen from reaching the flame. This can be accomplished by confessing our sins to God (I John 1:9) and beseeching Him to forgive them through the precious blood of our Savior Yeshua. Now is the time to accept wholeheartedly the igniting fire of God's Holy Spirit. This will mean a recognition and acceptance of all the spiritual gifts found in I Cor. 12 and Romans 12. This means a total commitment not to quench the Spirit through inactivity or grieve the Spirit through sin. Now is the time to let our light shine before all men. We must not be ashamed of our calling but be willing to confess openly that Yeshua is our Messiah, lest He not confess us before the Father when He returns.

If all of these pieces are in place: the vessel of righteous love, the lamp of our spirit, the oil of Torah understanding, and the fire and wind of the Holy Spirit of God; then we will be able to clearly see our way to the great wedding that is to take place in heaven.

"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. 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." "Then he said to me, 'Write: "Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!"'" (Rev. 19:7-9)

