

# ***The Parable of the Ten Virgins: Clearing Up the Confusion***

By Jack Kelly of GracethruFaith.com

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** The following excellent commentaries are from the Gracethrufaith.com website and address the often misapplied parable of the 10 virgins taught by Christ. This parable is commonly applied to Church Age believers by those who embrace Legalism; an aberrant theology based on a conditional merit-based salvation that operated before the cross. As a result, the erroneous tenants of Legalism – and not authentic Grace-based Christianity - are applied to certain Bible Prophecy topics such as the rapture and the Tribulation. Legalism, which masquerades as rock-solid fundamental Bible teaching, represents a disastrous violation of Biblical context. It changes some events connected to our “freely given blood bought redemption” provided by Christ (such as the rapture) ... into ‘a reward for Christian performance and service’. This sets up a spiritually abusive environment – where a Christian can never know if they have successfully satisfied what they believe to be God's meritorious conditions ... until the expected event occurs. Of course, by then it's too late. This creates what the Apostle Paul calls, "spiritual bondage" (Galatians 5:1) and forces its followers to keep feverishly working to meet these unspecified merit-based conditions to avoid an eternity in hell. As a result, these fear-based efforts (some church leaders refer to it as "keeping your lamps burning brightly") must be maintained to avoid being 'shut out' of Christ's Marriage Feast; also understood as a loss of salvation. Unfortunately, this brand of theology operates, in varying degrees, in many sectors of Christendom, yet is condemned in the New Testament Epistles of Saint Paul.

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End Times Commentary #1  
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## The Parable Of The 10 Virgins

By Jack Kelly

Re: your article "The Parable of the Ten Virgins." If oil represents the Holy Spirit then how did the foolish virgins have it in the beginning and run out. How is it possible to run out of the Holy Spirit, and then go get more. Did they run out of the Holy Spirit and lose their salvation?

Q. Re: your article "The Parable of the Ten Virgins." If oil represents the Holy Spirit then how did the foolish virgins have it in the beginning and run out. How is it possible to run out of the Holy Spirit, and then go get more. Did they run out of the Holy Spirit and lose their salvation?

A. As you know, I believe that the parable of the 10 virgins speaks about a time on Earth just after the 2nd Coming, and that these 10 represent Tribulation survivors.

During the Church Age the Holy Spirit is sealed within believers as a guarantee of our inheritance (Ephes. 1:13-14). But only the church is promised this and the Church will be long gone by this time. No such guarantee is mentioned for Tribulation believers. In fact Rev. 16:15 specifically warns them to stay awake and maintain their righteousness, symbolized by keeping their clothes with them. (Clothing is often used to represent righteousness, as in Isaiah 61:10). Rev. 16:15 implies that Tribulation believers are responsible for remaining steadfast in their faith to avoid losing their salvation. Matt. 25:8 agrees, telling us that all 10 virgins had oil in their lamps at the beginning, but the five foolish ones didn't have enough to carry them through. All 10 fell asleep and their lamps were in danger of going out. Only 5 had the ability to replenish their lamps with oil they had brought, and refused to lend any to the others. (You can't "lend" the Holy Spirit to someone.)

So yes, the parable would seem to indicate that Tribulation believers are not promised eternal security and the five who fell asleep spiritually did not have time to restore their salvation when they finally woke up and found that the Lord had returned. It was too late.

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End Times Commentary #2  
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## Why Must The Rapture Precede The Tribulation?

By Jack Kelly

Q. I've studied many positions concerning the rapture and would like you to answer why so many people feel that a rapture of the church must happen before the tribulation and Christ's Return.

There are two parables where Jesus taught about the wheat and tares and the ten virgins carrying their lamps. The first parable suggests that the tares are gathered and burned before the wheat is stored, suggesting the good will reside with the evil until the harvest and judgment.

The second parable suggests that 5 faithful virgins wait for the groom while the other 5, while apparently followers at first...give up and miss the Lords return.

There are many Christians who are expecting a rapture because religious leaders are preaching it as fact. What will happen if they aren't raptured and all hell is poured out on earth?

A. Sorry, but I don't agree with your interpretation of these parables. Neither the parable of the Wheat and Tares nor the parable of the 10 Virgins is about the Church.

In the Lord's explanation of the parable of the Wheat and Tares (Matt. 13:36-43), He said the "wicked" will be gathered up and removed and the "good" will be left in place. This order is confirmed in the Sheep and Goat judgment of Matt. 25:31-46. There, He said the goats (wicked) will be sent to the fire and then the sheep (good) will be welcomed into the Kingdom. According to Matt. 25:31 this judgment takes place after the 2nd Coming and confirms the placement of the parable of the Wheat and Tares as being after the 2nd Coming as well.

But in 1 Thes. 4:16-17, where Paul explained the rapture, he said only the Church will be taken, which infers that unbelievers will be left in place. This reversal of order tells us Jesus and Paul were talking about two different events. The Church will be taken (raptured) before the second Coming, and evil will be purged from Earth after it.

The Parable of the 10 Virgins is also called the Parable of the 10 Bridesmaids. The Church is the Bride, not a bridesmaid. The Bride is never mentioned in this parable and in any case could not be barred from her own wedding banquet by her bridegroom. Neither group of bridesmaids can represent the Church. Like the parable of the Wheat and Tares this parable also tells of the time after the 2nd Coming.

In the Rapture the Lord will fulfill a promise made to the Church. The Bible says that before the great End Times judgments begin, the Church will be rescued (1 Thes. 1:10) and kept from the world wide time of trial (Rev. 3:10) because we are not appointed to suffer wrath (1 Thes. 5:9). If this doesn't happen then Jesus will have failed to keep His promise to us.

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End Times Commentary #3  
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## **Left Behind For Bad Behavior?**

A Bible Study by Jack Kelley

One of the most telling indicators that the rapture is near is the number of people who write fearing that because of their behavior they're going to be left behind. People didn't worry so much about that when they thought the rapture was off in the distant future.

I'm sure some of this is due to the normal conviction of the Holy Spirit and in that case it's not a rapture issue because as we'll see born again believers can't be excluded from the Rapture for any reason.

No, I think most of the fear of missing the rapture comes from the false “partial-rapture” teaching. There are several variations on this theme but they all claim that just being saved is either not enough to put you in the rapture, or it’s not enough to get you into the Kingdom after you are raptured. They say you also have to be worthy in some additional way. In my opinion none of this can be reconciled with Scripture.

I want to approach the subject the way the US Treasury department trains bank employees to recognize counterfeit money. Instead of showing them all the fakes and pointing out what makes them fake, they focus on what legitimate bills look like. That way when bank tellers spot a bill that doesn’t look like what they have learned to recognize, they know it has to be a fake.

Let’s use that same principle to focus on what the Bible says about who qualifies for the rapture. Then we’ll know whether what we hear matches that. If it doesn’t it’s a false teaching.  
How Do We Qualify?

In order to exist in the presence of God, we have to be as righteous as He is. In the Lord’s time the Pharisees were thought to be the most righteous men in Israel. They were absolutely compulsive about keeping the Law, even straining their water before drinking it to avoid accidentally swallowing a tiny bug.

They come off badly in the Bible because of their resistance to the Gospel, but they were held in high esteem by the people as role models of righteousness.

Their problems with Jesus began in the early days of His ministry. Speaking to a large group on the shores of the Sea of Galilee, Jesus said, “For I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law you will certainly not enter the Kingdom of Heaven” (Matt. 5:20). They didn’t like hearing that they would be excluded from the Kingdom.

Then He explained that righteousness is not just a matter of outward behavior, but also includes inner motivation. Anger is as bad as murder, lustful thoughts are as bad as adultery. He went on to teach them things that were utterly amazing to them, even saying they must “Be perfect therefore, as your Father in Heaven is perfect”(Matt. 5:48) in order to qualify for the Kingdom . By the time He was finished it was clear that no human on Earth could ever achieve this high standard.

Then He said if they asked Him for this righteousness He would give it to them. All of them. He said, “Everyone who asks receives. He who seeks finds, and to Him who knocks the door will be opened (Matt. 7:7-8).

He compared depending on Him to a narrow road with a small gate (Matt. 7:13-14). The name on the gate is faith. The temptation to do things in our own strength in an effort to secure our own righteousness is hard to resist, but if we’re not careful we’ll find ourselves on the wrong road, the one with the gate named works. Read Two Roads, Two Gates One Goal

We must watch out for false teachers who will try to take us off the narrow road with a combination of faith and works. It doesn’t matter what kind of good work we do, even if we do it in His name, only those who do the will of our Father in Heaven will enter the Kingdom (Matt. 7:13-23). And what is our Father’s will?

Jesus said, "I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me. And this is the will of him who sent me, that I shall lose none of all that he has given me, but raise them up at the last day. For my Father's will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day" (John 6:38-40)

And what kind of work does He require of us? When they asked Him this a few verses earlier, He replied, "The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent" (John 6:29) There's nothing you can add to your faith in what the Lord has done. No good works of yours will either earn or hold your place in the rapture. It's based totally on what you believe and not on how you behave.

Paul had a lot to say about this, and some of it has been misinterpreted too.

But now a righteousness from God, apart from law, has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. (Romans 3:21-22)

Our righteousness is imputed to us by faith because of our belief that when Jesus went to the cross He took all the sins of our life and paid the full penalty for them there (Colossians 2:13-14). If all the penalty for all your sins has already been paid, what more can you do?

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! (2 Cor. 5:17)

From God's perspective, the old sinner no longer exists. He's been replaced by the new righteous saint. How could this be?

God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God (2 Cor. 5:21). Because by one sacrifice he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy. (Hebrews 10:14)

Because of our faith in the sufficiency of the cross, God is able to see us not as we are but as we will become when we're perfected in the rapture. The sins we still commit are viewed as if it's no longer us doing the sinning but the sin nature that still temporarily dwells within us. Here's Paul again.

I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. For what I do is not the good I want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do—this I keep on doing. Now if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin living in me that does it. (Romans 7:18-20)

Those who want to deny this call our attention to passages like 1 Cor. 6:8-10 as if Paul, writing under the influence of the Holy Spirit could contradict himself.

"Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God."

But they stop too soon because in verse 11 Paul explained, "And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God." (1 Cor. 6:11)

Notice he said, “And that is what some of you were.” Because we’re a new creation, God no longer sees us the way we used to be. We’ve been washed, sanctified and justified. In other words, all our sins have been washed away by the blood of Jesus, we’ve been made holy by Him, and He has rendered us righteous. As righteous as He is. Please understand that all this was done by Him. We might have been part of the group described in 1 Cor. 6:9-10 sometime in the past, but because we accepted the Lord’s sacrifice on our behalf we no longer are.

Some folks can’t get past the idea that being good has to count for something and it does, but it’s not what they think. Once again we’ll get Paul’s input.

“Everything is permissible”—but not everything is beneficial. “Everything is permissible”—but not everything is constructive. Nobody should seek his own good, but the good of others. (1 Cor. 10:23-24)

Although we’re encouraged in the strongest possible way to behave in a manner pleasing to the Lord, no where in the New Testament are we told that our behavior will endanger our salvation, nor will it jeopardize our place in the rapture. So while we can theoretically do whatever we want, some behavior is just not good. First of all, our bad behavior can have a negative impact on others. We should always be aware of how our actions are being viewed, and we should never knowingly behave in a manner that causes a weaker brother to stumble.

Second, and more important, living up to what we have already attained (as Paul put it in Phil. 3:16) is how the Lord wants us to express our gratitude to Him for what we’ve been given. Not to earn or keep anything, but to give thanks for what we already have. It’s something He wants us to want to do.

You see, we didn’t get where we are because of any merit or worthiness on our part. But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— not by works, so that no one can boast. (Ephesians 2:4-9) It’s the best gift ever given, it’s free, and it’s worthy of our gratitude.

So the bottom line is your ticket to the rapture came with your membership in the Church. It’s part of the inheritance you were guaranteed when you first believed (Ephes. 1:13-14). And your membership in the Church came as a result of your belief that Jesus gave His life to pay the penalty for all your sins and rose again to show that His payment was sufficient (Romans 10:9). As soon as you believed that you became as righteous as He is. There’s nothing you can do for good or bad that will ever change that (Romans 8:38-39). So if we’re all as righteous as God is, how can some deserve to go in the rapture or gain entry into the Kingdom while others don’t? They can’t.

As an expression of your gratitude you can choose to behave in a manner that’s more pleasing to God. That’s what He wants you to do. But you’d better hurry because soon you won’t even be able to do that. For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. (1 Thes. 4:16-17) You can almost hear the footsteps of the Messiah. 04-09-11

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End Times Commentary #4  
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## Back Slidden Brides Maids?

By Jack Kelley

Q. Having just read the article on 'The Rapture and the ten virgins' I am left feeling very confused. Most bible commentaries I have read suggest that the foolish virgins represent Christians who have become 'backslidden' and do not seek a true relationship with Our Lord or those who have been 'given over to their sin' (1 Cor 5:5), but haven't yet cried out to God for the mercy of His Grace. I would be grateful for your comments.

A. Many commentaries are wrong about this parable on four counts. First, a careful reading shows it takes place after the 2nd Coming. The phrase "At that time" which opens chapter 25 refers back to Matt 24:36, the day of the Lord's return to earth. Not for the rapture, but the 2nd Coming.

Second, the church is never called a bridesmaid in scripture, yet the 10 virgins are often called bridesmaids. The church is called the bride and the word is always singular. There's never more than one bride.

Third, every member of the church, "back slidden" or not, has sufficient oil, which represents the Holy Spirit sealed within us at the first moment of belief (Ephes. 1:13-14) before there was any chance to "back slide." By the way, I consider every believer over let's say one year old in the Lord to be "backslidden."

But the parable doesn't say that five of them had oil and somehow lost it. On the contrary it says that five of them never took any oil in the first place, implying they were never saved. And remember, all 10 of the virgins were asleep at the Lord's return.

Fourth, the wedding banquet follows the wedding. In the parable there's no mention of the wedding ceremony or the bride, so all ten missed it, oil or not.

To see this parable as a teaching about the church one would have to believe that if there's a Rapture it follows the 2nd Coming, that some believers are not the Bride of Christ but are only bridesmaids who can lose their salvation, the Holy Spirit "unsealed" from within them, and their reservation at the wedding canceled for no discernible reason. In short, there's no Biblical support for the "back slider" view.

Every logical fact about the parable points to the 10 virgins being Tribulation survivors alive at the Lord's return, some of whom have become believers during the Great Tribulation and are welcomed into the Kingdom, while others are not and are excluded.

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End Times Commentary #5  
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## Conditions For Going In The Rapture

By Jack Kelley

Q. What conditions are there for us to be raptured when we are born again? What brings me to this question is Matt. 25:1-13 the parable of the 10 virgins, 5 with oil and with out oil. It looks like 5 did not make it.

A. The first verse of Matt. 25:1 tells us that the Lord is speaking about the time of the 2nd Coming, because the word “then” means “at that time”. Matt. 24:29, 30, & 36 all tell us that “that time” is the time of His coming after it’s too late for the Rapture no matter when you think it will happen.

But there are other clues that tell us the parable of the 10 bridesmaids can’t be about the church. First of all the banquet comes after the wedding, so when these 10 wake up the wedding is already over. And second the Church is the Bride of Christ not a bride’s maid. No bride is ever excluded from her own wedding, and especially not by the man who’s marrying her. In this Parable the bride is never mentioned. And third there is only one Bride, not 10.

The parable of the 10 virgins has to do with Tribulation Survivors, some of whom will go into the kingdom while others will not.

The only condition for going in the Rapture is to be born again before the Rapture occurs.

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End Times Commentary #6  
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## The Rapture And The 10 Virgins

By Jack Kelley

Q. After reading the “Left Behind” series I became convinced that there was a second chance for all people to choose Christ and have salvation through Him after the Rapture of the church and during the Tribulation period. But after reading the parable of the Ten Virgins, it sounds like the door will be shut to everyone after the bridegroom comes and takes those who are ready into the wedding banquet.



Am I confusing two different subjects, or are there conflicting interpretations of the ability of Gentiles to be saved post-rapture during the Tribulation period?

A. Yes, you're confusing two different subjects. People left behind after the Rapture will have one more opportunity to be saved, by accepting the Lord's pardon during the Tribulation period (Daniel's 70th Week). They won't be part of the Church but can still attain eternal life. The only exception is that according to 2 Thes. 2:9-12 those who will have had the gospel presented to them before the rapture and firmly refused to accept it will not have another chance.

The parable of the 10 virgins isn't about the time of the Rapture. It describes people who survive the Great Tribulation and are there at the 2nd Coming. The five with oil represent tribulation believers who have remained faithful to the end and will be saved (Matt. 24:13). They will be ushered live into the Kingdom to help re-populate the Earth. The five without oil are those who have not kept the faith. They will be cast into the outer darkness.

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End Times Commentary #7  
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## More On The Parable Of The 10 Virgins

By Jack Kelley

Q. Re: The parable of the 10 virgins. At the risk of beating an issue to death I have question about this parable. In reading different Bible translations for Matt. 25:10 sometimes marriage is used and others wedding banquet or wedding feast. I am a bit confused since going to the marriage is completely different than going to the feast. One way indicates the marriage is still to be and the feast indicates the marriage has taken place. In my view that changes the meaning quite a bit. If the "marriage" is a reference to the rapture this parable could be about that. If "feast" is used your view of this parable describing end of tribulation events makes more sense. Can you enlighten me as to the more correct translation?

A. In a general sense the Greek word in Matt. 25:10 can be translated marriage, but it specifically refers to the marriage feast (or wedding banquet). But there are lots of other problems trying to make this about the Church. First, like all the parables of Matt. 24-25 the timing is after the 2nd coming, not just at the end of the Tribulation. If it's about the Church that would mean there's no rapture.

Then, to believe it's about the Church you have to accept that some will be admitted into the Kingdom while others will not. This means some will have exhausted their supply of the Holy Spirit (Oil), and therefore lost their salvation, while waiting for the Lord's return. This contradicts Paul's promise that the Holy Spirit was sealed within us at the time of belief as a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance (Ephes. 1:13-14), of which our marriage to the Lord is a major component.

And finally in no translation of the parable are these 10 women ever referred to as the bride. They're either called virgins or bridesmaids. In fact the Greek word used here is parthenos, which simply means virgin. The Greek word for bride is nymphe. These women do not represent the Bride of Christ.