

The Parables of Matthew 22 & 25 as Revealed in the Old Testament

Fred Wright

Note: This article comes from a transcription of an audio study given in California, in 1969 (Study #24).

In the early days of the movement, the parable-prophecies of *Matthew 22* (The Invitation to the Wedding) and *Matthew 25* (the Ten Virgins) were important in justifying the existence of a separate church, and defining where the believers stood in prophetic time.

In this presentation, Fred shows how the same prophetic truths from those two parables are found in the Old Testament as well.

Ecclesiastes 1

⁹ The thing that has been, it is that which shall be; and that which is done is that which shall be done: and there is no new thing under the sun.

IN THE Old Testament, with all its richness and beauty, the parable of the ten virgins of *Matthew 25*, and of the wedding feast in *Matthew 22*, are beautifully portrayed. In their portrayal in the Old Testament, there are certain details that are not found in the New Testament.

I always appreciate that the Lord is careful to repeat the lessons over and over again in the Word of God, but in each repetition there are facets of truth that are not brought out in the others. It is only as all these things are put together that the complete lesson is shown and made clear.

Matthew 25 – The Fulfillment

Before we begin to read in the Old Testament, I would like just to refresh our memory by giving a quick thumbnail sketch of the parable of *Matthew 25* as we know it.

The Review and Herald, Aug. 19, 1890:

I am often referred to the parable of the ten virgins, five of whom were wise, and five foolish. This parable has been and will be fulfilled to the very letter...

The first fulfillment took place between 1833 and 1844. The second fulfillment began in the year 1950 and is still going on, as the last part of the parable has yet to be fulfilled.

In 1833-1844, most of the folk in the church had their eyes turned downward to the earth, with just one or two here or there with a living connection with heaven. And to them came the first angel with his wonderful message, “The hour of God’s judgment has come,” and the everlasting gospel with which to prepare for that coming. As a result, those who had a connection with heaven gladdened up considerably, and one or two others were added to their ranks.

Then, as time went by, the ugly head of persecution raised itself to bear pressure upon the people of God. In response, both the wise and the foolish virgins went into a period of separation. But God knew that they could not do the work this way, as they both claimed to have a bright lamp—a living experience of truth.

As the first disappointment came, the experience of the foolish virgins died, and they went back again to the churches from which they had come, while the wise virgins went on to receive the second angel’s message, and beyond that, to receive the midnight cry. That message went back again to the fallen churches to bring out those who had never heard it before. As a result, 50,000 people joined the ranks of the true believers to face the great test of the second disappointment, when once again the majority went back into the churches from which they came.

OT Parallel = 1 Kings 3

Let us now read the Old Testament parallel:

1 Kings 3

¹⁶ Then came there two women, that were harlots, unto the king, and stood before him.

¹⁷ And the one woman said, O my lord, I and this woman dwell in one house; and I was delivered of a child with her in the house.

¹⁸ And it came to pass the third day after that I was delivered, that this woman was delivered also: and we were together; there was no stranger with us in the house, save we two in the house.

¹⁹ And this woman's child died in the night; because she overlaid it.

²⁰ And she arose at midnight, and took my son from beside me, while thine handmaid slept, and laid it in her bosom, and laid her dead child in my bosom.

²¹ And when I rose in the morning to give my child suck, behold, it was dead: but when I had considered it in the morning, behold, it was not my son, which I did bear.

²² And the other woman said, Nay; but the living is my son, and the dead is your son. And this said, No; but the dead is your son, and the living is my son. Thus they spoke before the king.

²³ Then said the king, The one says, This is my son that lives, and your son is the dead: and the other says, No; but your son is the dead, and my son is the living.

²⁴ And the king said, Bring me a sword. And they brought a sword before the king.

²⁵ And the king said, Divide the living child in two, and give half to the one, and half to the other.

²⁶ Then spoke the woman whose the living child was unto the king, for her bowels yearned upon her son, and she said, O my lord, give her the living child, and in no wise slay it. But the other said, Let it be neither mine nor yours, but divide it.

²⁷ Then the king answered and said, Give her the living child, and in no wise slay it: she is the mother thereof.

²⁸ And all Israel heard of the judgment which the king had judged; and they feared the king: for they saw that the wisdom of God was in him, to do judgment.

You might at first say to me, What does that have to do with this picture here of the ten virgins? Wherein do we find that these two things have any connection or bearing whatsoever? That, very likely, will be your first reaction.

Let us look more closely at this story, bearing in mind that the whole Bible is the gospel of Jesus Christ. Why was this story written? Was it just to display the wisdom of Solomon? Was it written to exalt a man? Certainly it was not! It was written to present truth, to unfold the gospel of Jesus Christ, and to reveal to

us the principles that underlie the working of the kingdom of God.

Let us translate now, as God intended we should, the various actors in the play into what they symbolize. The King must symbolize Christ, for the king here stands as a judge. Think here of when the king comes in. In the parable of *Matthew 22*, the king was God the Father rather than Christ, although God has really committed all judgment to the Son, to act on His behalf.

Next we have two women. In the word of God women symbolize churches.

Next we have the sons. In *Revelation*, chapter 12, there was a woman who was about to be delivered of a man child, which child was caught up to God into heaven. We should be careful not to think so much in terms of personalities here, for we know the son in *Revelation 12* represents Christ; and we should think of Christ, not so much as being a personality, but as being the Truth of God, as a message of righteousness.

Education, p. 79:

Not only did He teach the truth, but He was the truth. It was this that gave His teaching power.

What do you think of Jesus as being? A person or as being the truth? The Truth!

Both of these women are described as being “harlots.” In the Word of God a harlot is an impure woman, or a church that is in an apostate condition. So before these sons are born, these two women are harlots.

In considering the parable of *Matthew 25*, think of the previous condition of those who later came out as wise and foolish virgins. In their previous religious condition, they were both in a state of apostasy. The two women represent the wise and the foolish virgins of the parable.

When the story in *1 Kings* begins, both of these women are harlots. So likewise, in the beginning of the parable both are in apostasy—both! Then to them comes the light of God’s truth, and as a

result, in their hearts a message is born, as is represented by the bringing to birth of the two sons.

The foolish virgins have a certain amount of oil in their lamps. They are never in a condition where they have no oil in their lamp at all. Oil equals the life of the lamp. When the oil is gone there is death to the light. Both have living sons.

In the parable of *Matthew 25*, it was when the bridegroom tarried, that they were slumbering and sleeping. The foolish ran out of oil in their vessels at this time, and when the cry came to go out and meet the bridegroom, they had no extra oil. Then they tried to get oil from the wise.

So likewise in the story of the two women, it was at night, when they were sleeping, that the careless woman smothered her baby. And at midnight, the same time that the cry went forth in the ten virgin parable, this foolish woman tried to replace her dead baby with the living one from the wise woman.

Think back to when the message first came to us. Did it not move our hearts? It certainly did! And these women would surely have loved their babies when they were born. But the time came when one woman overlaid her baby and it died. Now, a mother who overlays her baby is neglectful, careless, and indifferent toward the precious treasure God has given her.

In the shaking chapter in *Early Writings*, p. 271, Ellen White says that for those who did not prize victory and salvation enough to perseveringly plead and agonize for it, those who neglected to go all the way in that work, their experience died! And so, one baby died.

That symbolizes the Brinsmead people, who were the foolish virgins of our day, and who refused to keep pace with the advancing light. Because they neglected to improve what God had given to them, they lost the light which they had. Their light went out, and they were left in darkness.

In spite of the fact that their message died, there is now a contention that they are the mother of the living child, and that the

living message belongs to them. We contend it, and they contend it, just as the two women contended, each one of them, that they were the mother of the living child. See the picture as it goes along?

There are various folk who believed the one woman or the other. I suppose the bystanders stood around King Solomon and those two women, and some said,

“That one is the real mother.”

And others would say,

“No, I believe this woman is the real mother.”

Just imagine the picture. And similarly today, there are people who say,

“I believe this group is the church and has the message.”

Others say,

“No, the Awakening group is God’s church and has the living message.”

But what is it that will finally decide which group is the true church of God and has the living child? That great final test—the death decree. King Solomon was wise enough to recognize that it is in a crisis that character is revealed. Therefore, he said,

“Bring me a sword.”

A sword is an instrument of death. Then he passed a death decree over the living child. He said in effect,

“Take the sword and divide the living child in two, and give half to this woman, and half to that woman, and that will very neatly settle the controversy.”

The woman who was so careless and unconcerned about the life of her child to have overlaid it and smothered it to death said,

“Just go ahead and cut it in two.”

Thus she revealed her real character. But note the character of the true mother. To her, the most important thing was the life of the child. She said,

“No, do not do that. Give the woman the child rather than it be slain. I will not contend for my position.”

The king then said,

“Now I know which of these two women is the mother.”

The death decree, which is the last action in the drama just before probation closes, will reveal to all who the mother really is—the only one who has a right to the living child. In the time of “Jacob’s trouble”, the synagogue of Satan will come and bow at the saints’ feet and say,

“Well, now we know that you are the church of God after all, and we were not His children, as we thought we were.”

Come back a moment to this mother. I want you to notice something in particular about her attitude. Think back to the controversy in heaven, around the fall of Lucifer, and so far as he was concerned, the one great object, the thing that filled his mind as being the thing that he supremely desired, sought after, eagerly grasped, and laid hold upon, was position. He wanted the position of Jesus Christ, and he did not care what the cost was to anybody else, provided he got that position.

When it became apparent to him that God had no intention of giving to him the position which he thought he ought to have, then it was that Lucifer turned around and said:

“Now I can see the character of God. The last thing in the wide world He is prepared to do is to give up that position. The most precious thing in all the world to him is to retain, hang onto, and cling to that position.”

Therefore, Satan tried to measure God by his own personal ambitions and desires. He attributed to God that spirit that was in him. Entirely so! But we know what took place, as it is written:

Philippians 2

⁵ Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God but made himself of no reputation, but took upon himself the form of a servant.

Jesus showed that He had in Him no disposition or thought about His position whatsoever, and no desire to cling to it or to hang onto it. And if necessity demanded, for the good of others, that He step down from that place, then He would gladly do that.

The mother of the living child shows the mind of Christ. She shows that she had no thought of her position as mother at all. But the only thought she had was the good of the child. That is all! And she would gladly step down from her claim, gladly relinquish her demand to be given back her only son, flesh of her flesh, bone of her bone, blood of her blood, if by so doing the child would be saved from death and be allowed to live. That is the mind of Christ.

This parable shows that those of us who come up to the death decree, will survive that great final test because, like that mother, our concern will not be for ourselves, our own lives, our position, nor even our place in heaven itself. Our one concern will be the truth of God.

That is the great and only concern which pervades the minds of the true believer in this movement today. It is not a question of anyone's position, not for a minute! That is not the issue. The issue is the principles of God's truth. Shall we be on God's side of the matter and possess the mind of Christ, or shall we be on the side of the devil and possess his mind—the mind of the papacy?

When the loud cry begins, at the setting up of the image of the beast, there is going to be a tremendous swelling of the message as thousands upon thousands hear what they have never thought they would ever hear in their lives. If this message continues to grow, as it has year after year, what will it be like when the fullness of God's Spirit joins itself to it? We have seen nothing yet, have we, beautiful as this truth is?

But then the storm of persecution will hang over the heads of God's people and bursts with relentless fury. The work will fade away to a mere trickle, and thousands of those who came in, will go out and join the ranks of the opposition. During that hour, the great death decree will be hung over the heads of God's people with all the threatening of that thing, and then the close of probation, and beyond that, the awful experience of Jacob's trouble.

Throughout history, without exception, every time God worked to bring about a great revival and a reformation, Satan made his counterattack and closed off that work till it sank away into miserable apostasy.

- Think of the apostolic church. It began so wonderfully and came to a shameful end.
- Later came the work of John Wycliff, Luther, and Huss and Jerome. And the mighty Reformation swung up to its glorious power. Again the devil counterattacked, and the thing died away.
- Then came the Wesleyan movement and the Moravians in Europe which both died away.
- Then came the Advent movement in 1844. That also died away.
- Then came the great work of the 1888 message that started off so well, and that, too, in turn, died away, as the devil succeeded in spoiling the purpose of God in His attempt to bring the work to a swift conclusion.

Satan can look back through history and see an unbroken series of victories whenever the Lord God of heaven has tried to bring about the completion of His work. When he has had success after success, and then another crisis comes, will not Satan enter this conflict with at least a degree of confidence that he can pull this thing off again?

When we enter that conflict, with a very acute consciousness that we have to succeed where all those in the past have failed, that consciousness is something which we must carry with us as a great sense of responsibility and a great sense of fear, that we

might fail where those in the past have failed. And if we as a people fail in that time, then there will not be another time. The whole plan of salvation will be ruined, and God's cause will be proved to have been false.

In *The Great Controversy* we are told that this makes the pressure of the hour extremely trying. The people of God will not be aware that the work is finished. Certainly we will know that certain souls have turned their backs on the message, even as today we can know that, by the sure Word of God. But at the same time, there will be others out there in the world, literally millions of people, which to our eyes have not yet even had an opportunity to make a decision. And Satan will say to us that this one or that one needs the message of salvation. The stream of God wherewith we are to preach the message will have been dried up, because the work is actually finished, but we do not know it.

Now let us put these two facts together. When to our eyes the work is unfinished, and yet at the same time the power in which to do the work has been withdrawn, what is the only natural conclusion that we can draw? We have failed! That is the only conclusion. And Satan will be right there saying to us,

“I have done it again. I have succeeded, and this time, he who wins this battle is the final winner.”

You have heard the old expression,

“He who wins last, wins best.”

We may lose many battles, but if we win the last battle, we win the war. Is that not true?

Think of England and America during the last world war. Before America entered, the Germans rolled the English back, pushed them into the channel, and had them with their backs to the wall. They lost battle after battle after battle, but they did not lose the war, because they won the last battle.

And this is the last battle. The people of God have lost all these battles in the past, but if we lose this battle, then we are finished. Satan will have won the day, and so he will be there saying to us:

“Now look, I have proved myself greater than God. I have proved at last that I can be the king of the North, and I can take God’s place upon this earth. From now on, whether you like it or not, I am the prince of this world, and all who approach the great God of heaven will no longer go through Jesus Christ. He is now out of the picture, and I have taken His place.”

He will also say to us:

“It is no good fighting anymore. If you do not come over to my side, the death decree will take you off. It is all for nothing. Just think of your position. Down there in the grave are all my subjects, enjoying a glorious millennium of peace and prosperity. Think of your position. Think of where this will take you. Down, down, down to ignominy and destruction.”

But let me tell you something. At that time the people of God will not be thinking about their position. That will be the furthest thought from their minds. The one and only thought they will be thinking of is the truth of God; and having the mind of Christ, as this parable shows us in *1 Kings 3*, they will say to Satan,

“Look, we have it settled in our minds forever, that even if you do succeed in this world, even if you do win this battle, even if you do abolish the presence of God forever from this earth, and even if we die an eternal death, then death or no death, we are still upon God’s side, and we believe in His principles, and we will stand for Him, Jezebel or no Jezebel.”

Can anybody ever take that stand if they do not have the mind of Christ? Impossible! And that mother back there displayed the mind of Christ when she said:

“Do not kill the child. Let the child live. I will part with him, no matter what the cost may be. I will sacrifice myself—my position—for the good of the child.”

And so, we will say:

“We will sacrifice all we have, even eternal life, for the good of the message of God’s truth.”

And we’ll tell the devil:

“While I am living, God can count upon having at least one person who will stand for Him, Jezebel or no Jezebel.”

And while you are living, the Lord will know He has one more person who will stand for Him, Jezebel or no Jezebel.

Therefore, in the end the triumph for God’s people will be complete, because they will have the mind of Christ and will make the sacrifice, no matter what the cost may be.

So, there in the Old Testament is revealed to us in this simple story, the outworking of the parable of *Matthew 25* and the attitude of God’s true people down there in the last days. We must not expect to have any vindication whatsoever, of ourselves, as a movement, or as a people, until God vindicates His people down in that great final test.

In the meantime, the only folk who will understand who we are is ourselves, because we have the Word of God. God said to Abraham:

Genesis 17

¹ Walk before me and be perfect.

So God says to us:

Hosea 6

² You are to live in my sight.

Although we are despised, and considered the off-scouring of the world, as far as the rest are concerned, the fact that we are not recognized does not bother us in the least! We could not care less about that. To us, prestige and position and those things count for nothing. Our only thought is to serve God and serve Him supremely.

Matthew 22 – The Fulfillment

Let us go back now to *Matthew 22*, and briefly and quickly layout the story of the parable, just as we did with *Matthew 25*. Then we will study an Old Testament parallel to see how it paints the same picture as *Matthew 25* does, only, once again, with added details.

In 1844 the marriage was made, and a certain class of people were called. And by being called, they became the bidden ones.

Between 1888 and 1893, the first call to come to the marriage was given by God's own chosen servants. The people of God refused to come, and so, between 1950 and 1962, came the second call to the bidden ones to come to the marriage.

When they refused, there came a tarrying time, as *Matthew 25* so plainly reveals. And then comes the third great call, to the highways and byways, which is the message of the Loud Cry, just prior to the coming in of the King. And the Loud Cry comes as a result of the outpouring of the Latter Rain.

OT Parallel – Hosea 5 & 6

Let us now consider the Old Testament parallel, as found in *Hosea* the fifth and sixth chapters:

Hosea 5

¹⁵ I will go and return to my place, till they acknowledge their offense, and seek my face: in their affliction they will seek me early.

Hosea 6

¹ Come, and let us return unto the Lord: for He has torn, and He will heal us; He has smitten, and He will bind us up.

² After two days will He revive us: in the third day He will raise us up, and we shall live in His sight.

³ Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord: His going forth is prepared as the morning; and He shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth.

First, let's consider the fifteenth verse in chapter 5. The chapter divisions of Scripture were not inspired, but added later. In this case, the last verse of chapter 5 belongs with the first three verses

of chapter 6. These four verses end up with the outpouring of the former and the latter rain. Therefore, this prophecy certainly does cover the same ground as the prophecy of *Matthew 22*, because they both end up with the same event.

Now, come back to *Hosea 5:15*, and note what it says:

“I will go and return to my place, till they acknowledge their offense, and seek my face: in their affliction they will seek me early.”

This is exactly what took place back in 1888, when the angel of *Revelation 18* came down with his mighty message and was rejected. When that angel was rejected back there in 1888, he said:

“I will go and return to my place, till they acknowledge their offense, and seek my face: in their affliction they will seek me early.”

Between the years 1950 and 1960, there was a great wave of unrest which swept throughout the Advent world. It was a reaction on the part of every soul, and even others beside, who honestly began to recognize the soul hunger which was afflicting them, a soul hunger which was the fruit of the rejection back in 1888.

That wave of unrest came clear across America and down into Australia, too, to a lesser extent. As a result, there popped up in all directions various men who claimed to have a living message from God. Men here, men there, and men somewhere else who said:

“I have the message. Here is the message.”

While the church frowned upon it, all of this was simply a reaction to a starvation situation, consequent upon the rejection of the 1888 message. If the church had been wise, they would have said to themselves:

“This is only an indication of a deeper trouble. Let us find what the real trouble is.”

A farmer, for instance, after putting his cattle into a field for several days, hears them bawling and bawling and bawling; then

he soon figures that they are either out of water, or they are out of fodder, and he must give them a new pasture so they can have plenty of good food to eat.

Likewise, this reaction which swept across America in the fifties was like the bawling of cattle that had no more fodder. And, as the result of this, there was a searching on the part of some that led them to find the living message of 1888.

Once again the *Revelation* 18 message came down, because there was a frank acknowledgment on the part of the “Awakening” generally, that we had rejected the living message back in 1888. That confession on the part of the “Awakening” people stood out as a part of their message. Everybody in the “Awakening” recognized that.

In chapter 6, verse 1, we hear the voice of the people say,

“Come, and let us return unto the Lord for He has torn, and He will heal us; He has smitten, and He will bind us up.”

The next verse is very interesting.

“After two days, He will revive us: in the third day He will raise us up, and we shall live in His sight.”

The third day comes after two days. The first day was obviously 1888-1893. The second day was 1950-1962. When did the revival message come to every one of you? It came after the second day. Is that not true? Without exception! It is in the third day that God is raising us up as a movement, and we are living in His sight. Do we have the living child? Yes! Do they believe we have living child? No!

And that paints the picture of where we stand at the present moment. The tarrying time is the third day when He will raise us up. In what sense do you suppose the words “raise us up” is intended? Does it mean to raise us up in material power? Certainly not! It means to raise us up in spiritual power! In this tarrying time, in the third day, God has raised us up and made us into a

distinct and actual unified and living movement of people, a people who are spiritually alive in the sight of God.

How precisely and completely has this prophecy been fulfilled in this picture! But now comes a solemn warning. The third verse begins with the word, “then.” And the word “then” means at this point of time. What point of time?—in the third day. Here we have a message of warning and instruction which is applicable to us at this very present moment of time.

“Then shall we know IF...”

Now comes a condition, which shows the warning and instruction which is applicable to us at this very present moment of time. It also shows to us that this process is not automatic. We cannot just sit back with folded hands and expect this all to happen automatically. There is a condition involved, and the condition is that...

“...if we follow on to know the Lord: His going forth is prepared as the morning; and He shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter and the former rain unto the earth.”

What is going to happen to us if we do *not* follow on to know the Lord during this tarrying time? The latter rain will not come. It is as serious and solemn as that.

This, then, is our responsibility. And I can thank the Lord that we have evidence that He is leading us on to know Him better and better.

What does it mean to know the Lord? Does it mean to fill our minds with a great deal of doctrine and theology? No! A man can have all that and know nothing about the Lord. Does it mean to have an emotional experience? No!

To know the Lord means to become intimately acquainted with the most fundamental principles of His kingdom, to have the mind of Christ, and to follow on in the knowing of that and receiving that mind, so that in every issue of life we shall find our-

selves acting out the very principles of the life of Jesus Christ and do what He would do in that same situation.

What messages did we need more than the ones we have had at this time? What better experience could we possibly have to enable us to know the very mind of Christ than the studies which we have heard, as the result of the experience to which God has led us in the past? We are in the school of Christ.

As we are following on to know the Lord today, tomorrow will come the outpouring of the latter rain and the loud cry, the work will be finished, and we shall go home to be with Him.

And thus we see that the Old Testament and the New Testament tell the same story. But the beauty of it is, that when you put them together, they both shine just that much brighter.

So may it be that as a result of these studies and these experiences together, we shall grow in grace day by day, and at last find ourselves with the mind of Christ, fully and perfectly reproduced in us, so when the death decree comes, we will say with that mother,

“I will not contend for my position. I only want the truth of God to live on.”

That is the kind of person who will find himself in the kingdom of God. So may it be that each one of us shall be there in that wonderful gathering of the faithful is my prayer, for Jesus' sake.