

The Parable of the Ten Virgins

New Testament: Matthew 25: v 1-10

This parable I believe illustrates our separation from our source and gives guidance for reconciliation.

“1. Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom.
2. and five of them were wise, and five were foolish.
3. They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them:
4. But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps.
5. While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept.
6. At midnight there was a cry made, behold the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him.
7. Then **all** those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps.
8. and the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out.
9. But the wise answered, saying, not so; lest there be not enough for us and you: but go ye rather to them that sell and buy for yourselves.
10. And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut.”

The parable as written in the KJV.

As a parable it is a story with an in-depth message. Dr. Barbara Thiering the Australian Biblical scholar has written extensively on the Essenes and the life of Christ. She indicates that parables and other biblical writings were directed at three levels of understanding. Firstly the simple story, which could be understood by all. Secondly, the archetypal meaning and thirdly, the hidden esoteric meaning, for those prepared and able to search for a deeper significance.

In this parable we have several basic factors which each culture would understand. A wedding ceremony. Well known and celebrated in any culture. A Bridegroom – as essential part of a wedding ceremony. Then we have the 10 Virgins.

Here we are looking at the “players” and the significance of the numbers. We can also draw an astrological parallel.

We have a bridegroom, but not a specific mention of a bride as such. Surely he is not planning to marry all ten of them. (He’s a brave man if he is!) The women are described as “virgins”. There are 10 of them and they are further broken down into two groups of five. Five wise and five foolish.

On closer examination this parable is not really about a literal wedding at all.

The people represent archetypes. So we must ask who is the Bridegroom? Who are the Virgins? Do the numbers have any special meaning? Is there an astrological significance?

We are not considering a literal bridegroom. I see that humankind as a whole is represented by the virgins. Here we have described the masculine and feminine principles. The Male principle

as active and assertive. The Feminine principle is receptive and reactive. If this parable had literal meaning then it is directed specifically at women, not at humankind as a whole. As humankind comprises both sexes, then the Bridegroom is as relevant to men as to women. Also the virgins represent both male and female. It is our role and understanding of esoteric matters that is at stake here.

Now let us consider the numbers selected in this story:

We have the specific numbers of 1, 5 and 10. I quote in part from Robert Zoller's book "Arabic Parts: the lost key to prediction 1982." In the first section of this book he goes at length into the meaning of numbers and their basic principles.

The number 1 is the first Principle and is the "Light of consciousness" which flows forth from the Sun and from God. In astrology the Sun is representative of our source of energy and identity as well as the physical and emotional heart (our source of love). The number ONE is the Monad. It is unique in that $1 \times 1 = 1$. Also $1 \div 1 = 1$. The number ONE represents Unity. Unity is always Unity. It is the stable self and is totally sufficient.

The number 5 is the Quinary – the fivefold cause. It is the number of the senses as in the four limbs connected to the body. The head making the fifth point. See the diagram of the Virtruvian man representing the five pointed star. Five is the number of the senses, taste, touch, smell, sight and sound. These are all functions which we associate with the human body. The senses enrich our experience of life and we take them for granted. Yet they add greatly to our enjoyment of things physical.

The Quinary is the midpoint between the Monad (1) and Ennead (9). The Quinary must make decisions. Which way will it move? It stands between the realm of light and darkness. As a midpoint it has significance as any midpoint is a critical placement and takes the stress. That is: the weakest link in the chain.

The number 10 is the Decad. Which Zoller describes as the "return to the source". These are the numbers of the story.

Astrological significance.

It is clear that the bridegroom is the Sun, the source of power and light. The masculine principle. The virgins or women are astrologically symbolized by the Moon. The Moon rules the night or darkness and is the feminine or receptive principle. The Moon is changeable and has cycles. The virgins are aware that it is dark as they carry lamps.

Now the people:

The Virgins. What is meant by the word Virgin and what or whom do they represent? A Virgin may be described as a pure person with integrity. The astrological sign of Virgo has a connection with the state of virginity. A virgin is unsullied and untainted, "unmarried" and not committed to another. She has not yet conceived a child.

The virgins are further broken down into two groups of 5. The wise and the foolish virgins.

How should we judge them? We are told that five slumbered and slept, whilst the other five trimmed their lamps and carried oil in preparation for the Bridegroom. They are “waiting for the Bridegroom.”

We have further symbolism with the lamp and the oil. What do they represent?

The lamp is easily recognized as a means of finding the path or way. It is light for the way.

The virgins need a lamp because it is dark. They cannot find their way. There is something they cannot see.

The oil supports fire, the spirit that burns within us all. It is also used to anoint, and to smooth the way as in healing. Oil is also a lubricant. It may be perfumed and is mentioned often in the Bible and was of value.

All the Virgins are waiting for the Bridegroom. This indicates a passage of time. The bridegroom is not immediate to the story, although certainly central to it. They do not know when he is coming.

So what does the marriage represent? Traditionally it is the union between male and female and symbolized in many ways.

Marriage represents union.

Light and dark.

Masculine and feminine

Two become one.

Merging

Sun and Moon symbols in Astrology. The word “conjunctio” is used, which means literally “married” (think its Latin! or Greek)

Re-union of the soul with the Source.

So who or what does the Bridegroom represent? Why do they need a Bridegroom?

The Bridegroom is essential to the ceremony and marriage. Otherwise the girls remain Virgins.

I believe the Bridegroom represents physical death, where the soul reunites with the source from which it came, and from which it suffered the pain of separation.

The initial separation occurs when we enter life. If the Bridegroom represents death – this explains why the Virgins ALL slumbered and slept. They were unconscious to the Bridegroom’s coming. In our embodied state we do not want to accept that we will someday die. We believe we are immortal in our bodily form. We are in a state of denial. Death only happens to others, not us.

So we ignore our preparation for death, particularly conscious death. The flame and oil are the life force that burns within us. We can choose to die consciously or unconsciously. The five foolish virgins die unconsciously and are not aware of the return/reconciliation with the source.

The five wise Virgins – although unconscious for a time – do wake up and are ready and prepared to meet the Bridegroom. They embrace awareness and consciousness.

I note also that the Bridegroom eventually arrives at Midnight. Now this time is significant. If we accept that when we die we return to our source, then the parable also supports this concept. It is not by accident that the bridegroom arrives at Midnight. Now in any Natal (birth) astrology chart, the place representing midnight is the cusp of the 4th house (Immun Coeli – IC). To explain, imagine a clock dial with a horizontal and vertical cross intersection of the circle. This would correspond to the figures 9 (sunrise) 12 (midday) 3 (sunset) and 6 (midnight) on the clock face. The clock numbers are irrelevant. I just wanted the diagram to be clear.

The sunrise point represents the moment of birth – which is why an astrologer requires an accurate time of birth, as this is “sunrise” for the incoming soul, regardless of the time the actual birth occurs.

The point of midnight is 10 signs/houses on using east to west primary motion and is another point of manifestation. The number 10 remember represents manifestation as well as source. So what are we manifesting? A return to the source. Furthermore this midnight point is referred to as “the end of the matter” astrologically, or place of death and is the lowest point in the chart. This 4th house is a place of endings, a return to the “home”, the earth or dust.

So the real role of the Bridegroom (assertive) is to unite with the Virgin (receptive) and carry her home to the source.

“1. Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom.

This is a description of a wedding ceremony, something familiar in all cultures.

2. and five of them were wise, and five were foolish.

The number 10 is divided into two groups of five. One wise and one foolish.

3. They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them:

The foolish virgins are not aware or conscious.

4. But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps.

They have some level of consciousness and make preparation.

5. While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept.

There is a time factor here before the bridegroom arrives. Yet ALL the virgins fall into a state of unconsciousness and unpreparedness.

6. At midnight there was a cry made, behold the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him.

Midnight seems to be significant, astrologically as it represents the “end of the matter”. Midnight is a time of little clarity. Yet the meeting must take place.

7. Then **all** those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps.

All the virgins become aware of the coming of the bridegroom. They cannot ignore him forever.

8. and the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out.

The foolish appear not to have prepared for this event and do not leave this realm in a conscious manner.

9. But the wise answered, saying, not so; lest there be not enough for us and you: but go ye rather to them that sell and buy for yourselves.

The wise are unable to “give” their experience away. No one can give experience to another.

10. And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut.”

The Bridegroom will come whether we are ready or not. The shut door is the end of life. The departing breath. The reconciliation and atonement with our source.

Cindy Naunton
Traditional Astrologer

March 2013