

studies, but for those that take a deeper look, there will appear the bright glimmer of ancient truth newly seen, as they search the Scriptures with us to see what is so (Acts 17:11), and find ample evidence that only a remnant within a remnant will be ready for the Lord's return for His Bride.

## *Ten Virgins And Five Ready Ones*

*Matthew 25:1-13: "Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. And five of them were wise, and five were foolish. They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them: But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept. And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him. Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out. 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. 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. Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not. Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh."*

This parable, which throws into bold relief our basic premise, must be a cause of consternation among those

who entertain light and rather generic views concerning the eligible participants in the rapture. For here we find Jesus provoking His disciples to a deeper consideration of the whole subject of readiness for His return, in an attempt to impress upon their minds the high level of preparation necessary to readiness, and the common, but dangerous tendency to become satisfied with a minimal preparation. Throughout, there is an emphasis upon the fact that it is not enough to possess a lamp with an initial supply of oil (representing the initial aspects of the Holy Spirit's presence, power, and activity in the life of the believer), enjoy a measure of spiritual light (anointed understanding of Christian truth), affiliate with a wise company of saints, or even entertain a lively expectation of Jesus' imminent return. There must be an added dimension in our Christianity. We must exercise the prudential foresight to see the need for an *extra supply of oil*—an ongoing, additional presence of the Holy Spirit's power and activity derived from deeper prayer, communion (II Cor. 13:14), and a greater love for righteousness and true holiness (Heb. 1:9; Ps. 45:7). By acquiring this oil at the price of expended time, energy, and labour in the Word and doctrine (I Tim. 5:17; II Tim. 2:15), these greatly favored saints are given an unctonized Christianity which will provide

them with illumination and insight as they face the perils and pitfalls of the midnight hour. They emerged as the ones readied for rapture, while their religious colleagues were shut out from the marriage festivities: "*and they that were ready went in with Him to the marriage: and the door was shut*" (Matt. 25:10b).

## *A Handful Among A Larger Host*

*"Judges 7:4-7: "And the LORD said unto Gideon, The people are yet too many; bring them down unto the water, and I will try them for thee there: and it shall be, that of whom I say unto thee, This shall go with thee, the same shall go with thee; and of whomsoever I say unto thee, This shall not go with thee, the same shall not go. So he brought down the people unto the water: and the LORD said unto Gideon, Every one that lapped of the water with his tongue, as a dog lapped, him shalt thou set by himself; likewise every one that boweth down upon his knees to drink. And the number of them that lapped, putting their hand to their mouth, were three hundred men: but all the rest of the people bowed down upon their knees to drink water. And the LORD said unto Gideon, By the three hundred men that lapped will I save you, and deliver the Midianites into thine hand: and let all the other people go every man unto his place."*

The large scale reduction in the ranks of Gideon's army, lest Israel vaunt themselves against God, sets forth in vivid detail the principle that

governs God's selection of a remnant within a larger remnant. The Abiezrites and other Israelites who were loyal, under God, to Gideon's leadership, were themselves a remnant from the larger mass of the Israelites, but they were largely unprepared, as subsequent tests revealed, to engage the formidable host of Midianites that had amassed in the valley near the hill of Moreh. Since most were not battle-ready, Gideon's sizable host, comprised of 32,000 men, had to be Divinely downsized, lest the larger corps prove bulky and unwieldy in a serious conflict. After those who were psychologically unprepared due to dominant fear, and who lacked sufficient self-government to maintain their vigilance, were removed from the ranks, only a small contingent of 300 remained as a remnant through whom God could work and fulfill His purpose by routing the enemy.

God is likewise bringing His remnant to a point of readiness to engage the enemy in the fiercest conflict of the ages as we approach the coming of Jesus Christ. These spiritual warriors will become adept, through a preliminary period of training and trial, in wielding the weapons of their warfare, which are mighty to God to the pulling down of strongholds (II Cor. 10:3-5). Having done all (Eph. 6:11-13), they will be able to withstand the wiles of Satan as he seeks to subvert

the church of the last days with one final assault of doctrinal deviation (I Tim. 4:1-4; II Tim. 4:1-4), spiritual declension (Matt. 24:12,37,38), and moral decay (II Tim. 3:1-7). They will emerge from the ranks of the would-be-warriors, through probation and purging (II Tim. 2:21), to become vessels onto honor, meet for the Master's use in the final confrontation with the forces of darkness.

## *A Manchild From A Woman*

*Revelation 12:1-2,5: "And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars: And she being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered...And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne."*

Another portrait of the latter-day remnant is set forth in Revelation, chapter 12, as a male-child company that emerges, through much trouble, turmoil, and travail, from the womb of the church. The sun-clothed woman represents the church as a composite, consisting of the carnal and spiritual, the weak and strong, the babes and full-grown, in its maternal role, and the manchild that remnant among the larger group, which is produced through the throes, travailing prayer, and agonies to which the woman is

subjected in the birthing process. While Satan stands poised to devour this highly favored child of sorrow, God snatches him to His heavenly throne, beyond the reach of Satan's hostile aims. As a picture of the last-day remnant, this scene serves to illustrate the matrix from which these saints originate. The sorrow and travail of soul agony shall bring them to the birth, and thus the trials, tribulations, distresses, chastisements, and persecutions which this special group (II Tim. 3:12) must undergo, are to be interpreted in the light of this imagery. Within God's purpose, last day labor pains will be productive, and are to be seen as the necessary means to a glorious end—the emergence of the endtime remnant.

## *Firstfruits From Among A General Harvest*

*Revelation 14:1-5: "And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads. And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps: And they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth. These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were*

*redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb. And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God."*

The fact of a firstfruit company, taken to the heavenly mount Zion, before the general harvest of remaining saints on the earth, serves to substantiate again our fundamental thesis of a bare remnant within a remnant being ready for that first installment of a serial rapture. But the portrait here emphasizes this group's high and holy privileges—they were "with Him," which speaks of close proximity; they "follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth" as an elite heavenly entourage; they evince a special aptitude to learn the heavenly anthem; are "redeemed from the earth," having escaped (Luke 21:36) the blood-drenched scenes that will redden its tribulation woes; and, are styled firstfruits unto God and the Lamb, since they reached the maturity of spiritual perfection (Eph. 4:13), and ripened for rapture first. In addition to these special privileges, exceptional character traits are attributed to them. They are guileless (without deceit), faultless (without moral blemish), and possessed of a virginal chastity. By so much are they commended to us as worthy of emulation, that we, by their stellar example, may be stirred to seek a place, and find a portion among the remnant that are even now being readied to be redeemed from among men.

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**A REMNANT  
WITHIN A  
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Contrary to the conceptions of many who have made Biblical prophecy the focus of their study, the Scriptures are abundantly clear in their assertion that not all Christians will be removed en masse from this world at the time of the first translation. This seems to be the burden of the Parable of the Ten Virgins and the teaching of several pertinent passages which describe a prepared, trained, and tried remnant emerging from a larger remnant, as those eligible and ready for the "catching up." It is hoped that a survey of some of these passages will stir the hearts of the would-be-ready, awaken slumbering virgins, and provoke God's people to a state of last-minute readiness as we await the arrival of the Heavenly Bridegroom. For some these truths may, at first glance, seem controversial, and cross-grain to that which is considered conventional in Last-Day