

## The Bride Makes Herself Ready

In this writing we will look at what Scripture says about the Preparation of the Bride. We have all various teachings and opinions of her preparation, but we must adhere to the clear teaching of Scripture alone.

As we go into this study, there may be many with un-answered questions. Do we become prepared in the "twinkling of an eye" when we go to be with the King? Isn't it enough to be Born Again? Or, is there some particular preparation that Born-Again Believers must do, over some period of time while on earth? The Scriptures give us many examples from which we may draw our conclusions.

### Who Prepares the Bride?

First, let us see who does the preparing. Notice the following passages:

Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. (Revelation 19:7)

And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. (Revelation 19:8)

In the above passages, in verse 7, we see the Betrothed wife - the Bride - has made herself ready. She is the one who made the preparation.

In verse 8, we see her 'array' (her clothing and covering) was granted, or given to her, by the Set-apart Spirit.

So the preparation of the Bride involves the Bride's action, as well as the action of the Set-apart Spirit. Both are necessary. This two-fold process is confirmed in Esther:

And the maiden pleased him, and she obtained kindness of him; and he speedily gave her her things for purification, with such things as belonged to her, and seven maidens, which were meet to be given her, out of the king's house: and he preferred her and her maids unto the best place of the house of the women. (Esther 2:9)

Here we see that Hegai, the eunuch, as well as the seven maidens given to her, all picture the Set-apart Spirit, given to the Bride to provide help, and to provide everything that is needed to the Bride for her purification - her preparation. In Esther 2:9, notice the two-fold process that made up her preparation: (1) "he speedily gave her;" and (2) "with such things as belonged to her."

The preparation of the Bride of Messiah is a co-operation between the Set-apart Spirit, and the Bride.

### When and Where is the Bride Prepared?

Next we will address the question, "When does this preparation take place - **after** going in to the presence of the King - **or before**?" Is the Bride prepared **in heaven** - or **on earth**? Again we will look at a few passages in Esther:

Now when every maid's turn was come to go in to king Ahasuerus, after that she had been twelve months, according to the manner of the women, (for so were the days of their purifications accomplished, to wit, six months with oil of myrrh, and six months with sweet odours, and with other things for the purifying of the women;) Then thus came every maiden unto the king... (Esther 2:12b-13a)

Notice also that Esther's preparation was over a twelve-month period of time, which was six months of one preparation, and six months of another. And it was all to be done before going into the presence of the King.

Let's look further. Let's look at the following Bride preparation passages:

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 And 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.

11 Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us.

12 But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not.

13 Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh. (Matthew 25:1-13)

In the above parable five virgins were called wise, and 5 called foolish. There are two groups - a wise group and a foolish group. What were the two groups based on?

We see in verse 10, "They that were ready" went in with him to the marriage. In verse 11 we see the "Other Virgins" who came afterwards, but could not enter in.

These Ten Virgins were divided into two groups, based on "Being Ready." The Wise Virgins were "Ready" before anyone went in with the Bridegroom to the marriage. We are led also to conclude that the "Foolish" Virgins were NOT YET READY when the Bridegroom came.

This division confirms what we have seen thus far - that being ready, being prepared, must occur BEFORE the arrival of the Bridegroom. We may now conclude that **the preparation of the Bride is NOT done in heaven, but only on earth, before going in with the Bridegroom.**