

Michael Youssef: Make Sure Your Lamp Is Lit for Jesus' Return

Read Time: 4 Minutes 2 Seconds

If you do an Internet search asking such questions as, "What does the Bible teach about hell?" some of the first few results will be from false teachers. Here are the titles of webpages that popped up at the top of my search: "Hell Is Not a Biblical Concept." "Jesus Christ Did Not Teach or Believe in Hell." "There Is No Hell in the Bible." "Heaven And Hell Are 'Not What Jesus Preached,' Religion Scholar Says."

It is shocking that so many of these false teachers will look you in the eye and deny what is plainly printed on the pages of God's Word.

Jesus spoke more about heaven and hell than any other preacher or prophet in the Bible. Jesus spoke more about hell than He spoke about heaven. Yet He always talked about judgment in the most caring and compassionate language. Why? Because He was pleading with people to repent, to receive the free gift of salvation and to escape the wrath to come. Jesus wept over Jerusalem because the people's rejection of Him would result in judgment. And He weeps over every human soul who rejects Him and incurs the coming judgment.

As we wait for Him to come back for us, Jesus warns us not to be deceived by false messiahs and false preachers and their deceptive teachings. He pleads with us to repent and accept God's plan of salvation. He pleads with us to take refuge in Him from the wrath to come.

The Ten Virgins

“At that time the kingdom of heaven will be like 10 virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. Five of them were foolish and five were wise. The foolish ones took their lamps but did not take any oil with them. The wise ones, however, took oil in jars along with their lamps. The bridegroom was a long time in coming, and they all became drowsy and fell asleep.

“At midnight the cry rang out: ‘Here’s the bridegroom! Come out to meet him!’

“Then all the virgins woke up and trimmed their lamps. The foolish ones said to the wise, ‘Give us some of your oil; our lamps are going out.’

“‘No,’ they replied, ‘there may not be enough for both us and you. Instead, go to those who sell oil and buy some for yourselves.’

“But while they were on their way to buy the oil, the bridegroom arrived. The virgins who were ready went in with him to the wedding banquet. And the door was shut.

“Later the others also came. ‘Lord, Lord,’ they said, ‘open the door for us!’

“But he replied, ‘Truly I tell you, I don’t know you.’

“Therefore keep watch, because you do not know the day or the hour” (Matt. 25:1-13).

The bridegroom, of course, is Jesus. Everyone expected the wedding to begin at a certain time, but the bridegroom was late. He arrived much later than anyone expected—at midnight.

The 10 virgins represent all who claim to be Christians, all who claim to be awaiting the return of Jesus. There were five virgins who were wise and five who were foolish. The five wise virgins brought extra oil for their lamps, just in case the bridegroom was late. When he arrived at midnight, they were

ready. The five foolish virgins were caught unprepared—and when they had to go out to buy oil, the doors were shut and they were locked out of the wedding.

What did the wise virgins and foolish virgins have in common? All 10 virgins were invited, and had responded to the invitation. All of them believed that the bridegroom was coming. All of them fell asleep. But at midnight, when the bridegroom arrived, those similarities disappeared. Only the five wise virgins were prepared for His coming.

The Bible tells us that, at the end of history, there will be a great falling away. Many who claim to know Christ, who claim to be Christians, will be revealed as faithless. About those days Jesus warned, “Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold, but the one who stands firm to the end will be saved” (Matt. 24:12-13).

 Many in the church today are like the foolish virgins in Jesus’s parable. They have fallen asleep and are unprepared for His coming. It’s time to wake up and prepare for His return. It’s time to ask God to strengthen our faith and give us power to work for His kingdom, knowing that the Bridegroom could arrive at any moment. {eo}

The preceding is an excerpt from chapter six of Michael Youssef’s book, “Is the End Near?” For more information, or to order the book, visit .

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Dr. Michael Youssef was born in Egypt and lived in Lebanon and Australia before coming to the United States, where he fulfilled a childhood dream of becoming an American citizen. He holds degrees from Moore College in Sydney and Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, California, and a doctorate in social anthropology from Emory University in Atlanta. He founded The Church of the Apostles, which was the launching pad for his *Leading The Way* television and radio international

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