

## Are we responding?

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Those who are best acquainted with Eastern life tell us that the parable of the virgins exactly represents marriage customs which prevail to this day.

The ten virgins "went forth to meet the Bridegroom." Such is their profession — the part they play in the ceremonies. Assembling at the bride's house they await the Bridegroom, who does not appear before midnight. Overcome with drowsiness they all slumber and sleep. At midnight the cry is raised, "Behold the Bridegroom; go ye out to meet him."

The virgins of the parable represent not the church in its corporate capacity but the saints in their individual capacity as disciples of an *absent* Lord. Their original place and profession was this: "they went forth to meet the Bridegroom." They were God's called out ones. Out of Judaism, out of heathenism, they went into the church's separate place: "to serve the living and true God and to wait for His Son from heaven" (1 Thess. 1: 9, 10).

As time wore on they declined from this, however, and in the shelter of the house they lapsed into the unconscious and lifeless condition indicated by sleep.

The midnight cry and the words "go ye forth to meet Him" are a call to us to not only awake to the original hope of the church — the coming of the Lord, but to revert to the original position of the church — outside the world whether viewed in its carnality or its religious.