



GIVING YOU JESUS

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER | Summer 2023

Let us rejoice and be glad and give Him glory! For... His bride has made herself ready.
— Revelation 19:7

The fact that Jesus is coming for His bride isn't debatable. The Bible is clear. He will come for us in one of two ways. Either He will come for us at our death, or He will come for us at what is referred to as the Rapture—when believers will be caught up to meet Him in the air, as Paul described in 1 Thessalonians 4. While old age or infirmity may alert us that our physical death is near, the return of Jesus at the Rapture will occur suddenly, with no warning beyond the signs given in Scripture. How do I know? Because He said so! And He is The Truth. He clearly stated that He would come again to receive us to Himself.¹ If I believe what He said about sin, salvation, forgiveness, the love of God the Father, eternal life, His own identity, and all the other big truths,² then it stands to reason that what He said about His return is equally true. Jesus is coming! "The glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ" is imminent!³

We live in a world filled with blasphemy, obscenity, profanity, and outright rebellion against God; a world that is morally, spiritually, and environmentally filthy; a world of selfishness, greed, pride, abuse, where the family unit is being destroyed;⁴ a world of hate, rage, lies, corruption, cruelty, confusion, lawlessness, and delusion. But make no mistake: our blessed hope is that a new world is coming! Even now it is being prepared as a Home for the Son's bride. And when all preparations are complete, He will come, whether or not we are ready.

The ten young women in Jesus' story in Matthew 25:1-13 had several things in common: Each had a lamp, which represents a profession of faith. Each believed and expected that the bridegroom was coming. Eventually, all grew so tired of waiting

when he seemed to tarry that they went to sleep. But there was also one life-changing, destiny-altering difference: Five of the young women had oil for their lamps, and five of the young women had none. Throughout Scripture, oil represents the Holy Spirit. In other words, half of those waiting for the bridegroom's coming were ready because they had a personal relationship with Jesus and were

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Four days after returning from Israel, my oldest granddaughter, Bell, was married in my backyard. The preparation for that moment was intense, but well worth all the time and effort. I love this picture when she and her father stepped out of the house. We could all see that she was excited and ready to meet her bridegroom.

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One of the highlights of our Refresh Your Faith tour in Israel was the boat ride we took on Galilee. I encouraged the ladies to remember that when storms arise in our lives as they did for the disciples, the wind and waves still obey His voice.

indwelt by the Holy Spirit, while the other half had only a profession of faith. They looked the part, they were religious, but they had no oil—no indwelling of the Holy Spirit. They had never been born again. Jesus said earlier that while some people may know His Word, they don't live it out.⁵ The apostle Paul described such people as "having a form of godliness but denying its power".⁶ In His story, Jesus called them "foolish".

To be honest, it can be very difficult for you and me to tell the difference between wise and foolish people, between those who have an authentic relationship with God through faith in Jesus and those who are simply outwardly religious. Jesus told this story not to prompt us to speculate about or be judgmental of others, but to stir us to examine our own hearts. From His point of view, are you wise or foolish? Do you have the oil of the indwelling Holy Spirit? If the answer is yes, praise God! And do all that you can to get someone else ready, too!

For His Glory,

Anne Zahau Holtz

Adapted from *Preparing to Meet Jesus*, 2023, pages 186-188.

¹ John 14:3; Revelation 22:20.

² John 3:16-17; 5:17-21; 11:25-26.

³ Titus 2:13.

⁴ 2 Timothy 3:1-4.

⁵ Matthew 7:26-27.

⁶ 2 Timothy 3:5.

Intercession

PRAISE

- *For the tens of thousands who participated in the online *Jesus Followers* Bible Study.
- *For the *Refresh Your Faith* Israel tour that resulted in many changed lives.
- *For the beautiful wedding of Rachel-Ruth's oldest daughter, which was held in Anne's backyard!

PRAYER

- *For God's direction and blessing upon the launch of the new book, *Preparing to Meet Jesus*.
- *For wisdom and meaningful interaction as Anne and Rachel-Ruth participate in many interviews, which are part of the media promotion for the new book.
- *For Anne's five-year cancer check-up in September to give all-clear results.



One of the joys of the Israel tour was to share it with my daughters, Rachel-Ruth and Morrow, and two of my granddaughters, Sophia and Riffin. They all took good care of me as was evident as we walked down the steep Palm Sunday road.

Bible Study: Are You Ready?

My oldest granddaughter just got married in my backyard! The detail of preparation was intense, but so worth it when the moment came for the "first look". Our Bridegroom, Jesus, is coming! What are you doing to prepare for the first look? While no one knows the day or the hour of His return, Jesus Himself instructed His disciples repeatedly to be ready....

Read 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 and Matthew 25:1-13

I. BY BEING FOCUSED ON THE FUTURE

- *In your own words describe the event Paul is referring to in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18.
- *Do you think this event is symbolic, spiritual, or a literal event that will take place in human history? Give Biblical reasons for your answer.
- *What additional information about this future event do you learn from 1 Corinthians 15:51-57? Matthew 24:36-42? Matthew 25:1-13?
- *How are we encouraged to use this information? 1 Thessalonians 4:18; 5:11; John 14:1-3.
- *If Jesus returns tomorrow what will you wish you had done differently today?

II. BY BEING FAITHFUL IN THE PRESENT

- *How should our focus on the future impact the way we live today? 1 John 2:28-3:3.
- *According to the following verses in what other ways are we to be faithful in the present? Matthew 24:42-44; 25:13.
- *What do you think it means practically to "watch"?



On our Israel tour we crossed into the Palestinian territory of Jericho. Rachel-Ruth taught on Bartimaeus as the crowds who had gathered for an environmental rally swirled around her. She kept her focus and concentration in the midst of the chaos and delivered a moving message of hope.



Writing a book is like having a baby! It requires enormous time and effort. When it's published, we are excited and can't wait to find out what everyone thinks! How we pray you will be as excited and blessed in reading it as Rachel-Ruth and I were when writing it!

- *Why do we need to be intentional about watching? 1 Thessalonians 5:1-4; 2 Peter 3:10; Luke 12:38-40; Revelation 16:15.
- *What are some of the consequences of not watching? Matthew 24:48-51; 25:1-13.
- *What is another way we can be faithful at present? Matthew 24:45-47; John 9:4; Luke 12:35-38.
- *If Jesus returns tomorrow, what will you be glad you did today?

III. BY BEING FILLED EVERY MOMENT

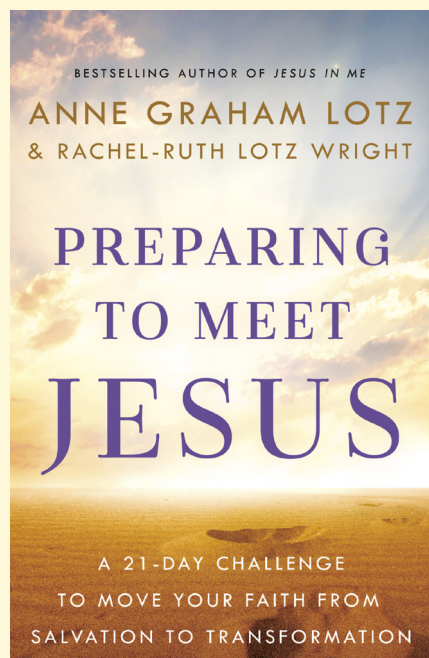
- *Read Matthew 25:1-13.
- *What did all 10 of the virgins have in common?
- *How are all 10 virgins representative of the organized, church today?
- *What was the primary difference between the two groups of five?
- *What do you think the oil represents?
- *How does this difference also exist in the church today?
- *In light of 1 Thessalonians 4:16, what do you think the midnight cry represents?
- *What was the reason the bridegroom didn't let the foolish virgins into the wedding banquet?
- *Relate this to Matthew 7:21-23; John 3:5-6; Romans 8:9; 2 Corinthians 1:21-22.
- *Give one action item from each pair of verses that, taken together, insure you are one of the wise virgins: Romans 3:23 with 1 John 1:9; Acts 2:38 with Acts 3:19; John 3:16 with Romans 10:9-10; Revelation 3:20 with John 1:12; John 14:16-17 with Ephesians 1:13-14; Ephesians 5:15-18 with 2 Peter 3:14.
- *If Jesus returns at midnight, are you ready?

If you are ready, what will you do to help others get ready? And if you are not ready, what will you do to get ready yourself? Do it now.

NOW AVAILABLE

Preparing to Meet Jesus

Preparing to Meet Jesus is based on the Biblical account in Genesis that describes Abraham sending his servant to find a suitable bride for his son Isaac. It details how the faithful servant found Rebekah, a woman of remarkable character who met the father's criteria. That story is an allegory of God the Father who sends His Servant, the Holy Spirit, to find a desirable Bride for His Son Jesus. With this in mind, Anne and Rachel-Ruth explore 21 characteristics of Rebekah that the Father desires to be found in the Bride of His Son. They have used each of these characteristics as the basis for a twenty-one-day challenge, with prompts for reflection and prayer, to prepare you for the critical moment of the "first look", so that you are transformed into a beautiful "Bride who has made Herself ready" (Revelation 19:7).



My daughter, Morrow, and her husband, Traynor, hosted my entire family for my 75th birthday dinner! Front row, from left to right: my son Jonathan, my granddaughter Bell and her fiancé (now husband) Sean; second row, my granddaughter Sophia, me, and my granddaughter Riffin; third row: Traynor and Morrow; top row, Steven and Rachel-Ruth. Being together was the best birthday present ever!



381 ***Preparing to Meet Jesus* (hardback)**

_____ @ \$14.00 _____

For details and a complete list of resources, visit www.annegrahamlotz.org

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