



*³⁸ Then saith he unto them, **My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with me.** ³⁹ And he went a little further, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, **O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt.** ⁴⁰ And he cometh unto the disciples, and findeth them asleep, and saith unto Peter, **What, could ye not watch with me one hour?** ⁴¹ **Watch and pray, that ye** (Matt 26:38-41)*

¹¹ And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believe enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak. . ¹² The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light. ¹³ Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. ¹⁴ But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof. (Romans 13:11-14)

When Christ left the disciples to pray in Gethsemane, they had no idea when He might return; but one point is certain – they could not abide in prayer at the darkest moment of the ministry of Christ even for one hour! What weak and pitiful witnesses we are; and much worse, what unfaithful friends to One who is about to die in our stead for our sins.

Advent is the Season to prepare for the coming of the Lord. In fact, every season is that proper time. But the generations from Abraham had sat in seemingly interminable darkness awaiting the fullness of time for His first appearing at Bethlehem. Today's Advent hymn reminds us that we must not only be awake, but prepared with the oil of the Holy Ghost in our lamps as we expectantly look for His promised return.

The lyrics of the hymn are the composition of Philipp Nicolai in 1597, and the music as well is of his composition; however, the beauty of arrangement is a product of the great Baruch composer, Johann Sebastian Bach in early 1700's.

Wake, Awake for Night is Flying

Wake, awake, for night is flying;
the watchmen on the heights are crying:
awake, Jerusalem, at last!
Midnight hears the welcome voices
and at the thrilling cry rejoices;
come forth, ye virgins, night is past;
the Bridegroom comes, awake;
your lamps with gladness take;
Hallelujah!
And for his marriage feast prepare
for ye must go and meet him there.

Zion hears the watchmen singing,
and all her heart with joy is springing;
she wakes, she rises from her gloom;
for her Lord comes down all glorious,
the strong in grace, in truth victorious.
her Star is risen, her Light is come.
Ah come, thou blessèd One,
God's own belovèd Son;
Hallelujah!
We follow till the halls we see
where thou hast bid us sup with thee.

Now let all the heavens adore thee,
and men and angels sing before thee,
with harp and cymbal's clearest tone;
of one pearl each shining portal,
where we are with the choir immortal
of angels round thy dazzling throne;
nor eye hath seen,
nor ear hath yet attained to hear
what there is ours,
but we rejoice and sing to thee
our hymn of joy eternally.

Wake, awake, for night is flying; the watchmen on the heights are crying: awake, Jerusalem, at last! Midnight hears the welcome voices and at the thrilling cry rejoices; come forth, ye virgins, night is past; the Bridegroom comes, awake; your lamps with gladness take; Hallelujah! And for his marriage feast prepar efor ye must go and meet him there. One of the shortcomings in modern faith is the church considers the writings of Scripture to apply only in antiquity; it is certain they do apply in antiquity, but no less than at this very hour in the life of the believer. The Groomsman appears on the dark and cloudy night near the home of our hearts and sounds the Trump, and shouts the alert – “The Bridegroom Cometh!” There are two categories of virgins that hear and respond to that call. Both categories are morally sound and respectable young ladies; but one part of the group has prepared oil for their lamps in ample supply for the need. But the other part has not done so. This part of the Church has been over-sleeping at the helm. They have not loved the Bridegroom so very much as to hang onto every Word uttered about Him in the Law and the Prophets, the Gospels and Epistles. So they have no oil of the Holy Spirit to burn in their lamps and to light the way. There is no greater

privilege than to be an invited guest of the Bridegroom at this supper. Salvation and Faith are the most important considerations for our own souls today. Had we not better be prepared with oil in our lamps for that great moment of His coming? Should we not know intimately the One who bestows upon us such an honor?

Zion hears the watchmen singing, and all her heart with joy is springing; she wakes, she rises from her gloom; for her Lord comes down all glorious, the strong in grace, in truth victorious. her Star is risen, her Light is come. Ah come, thou blessed One, God's own beloved Son; Hallelujah! We follow till the halls we see where thou hast bid us sup with thee. Just as the five foolish virgins had no time to go and buy oil for their lamps at the coming of the Bridegroom, neither will we have time to make preparations for our souls at that glorious moment "when the sky shall be rolled back as a scroll, and we behold the son of God descending at the head of the Armies of Heaven." We must follow our Lord closely. We take up our crosses daily and follow Him, but where? We follow Him in sacrificial living, and yes, on the via Dolorosa to Calvary. We follow Him to a borrowed tomb (yes, our tombs are only borrowed as well). We follow Him in the sleep of death, but we also follow Him in the resurrection to life eternal. If we are absent from following Him, we shall not recover our path. If we are absent seeking worldly commodities at the crucial moment, we may find the door to the Banquet Room closed and locked for us – FOREVER!

Now let all the heavens adore thee, and men and angels sing before thee, with harp and cymbal's clearest tone; of one pearl each shining portal, where we are with the choir immortal of angels round thy dazzling throne; nor eye hath seen, nor ear hath yet attained to hear what there is ours, but we rejoice and sing to thee our hymn of joy eternally. On that wonderful Christmas Night of long ago, the Angels of Heaven adored Him, and sang the glorious song above the hills of Bethlehem, "Gloria in Excelsis Deo!" The redeemed of the Lord shall be privileged, as were the lonely shepherds, to hear that song sung by the heavenly choir in our persons. The pearl-adorned gates shall glisten and beckon. Those pearls of covering are produced over the ages by the tears of the saints and martyrs of the Lord. ⁶ *The LORD preserveth the simple: I was brought low, and he helped me.* ⁷ *Return unto thy rest, O my soul; for the LORD hath dealt bountifully with thee.* ⁸ *For thou hast delivered my soul from death, mine eyes from tears, and my feet from falling.* ⁹ *I will walk before the LORD in the land of the living.* (Psalms 116:6-9) There will be not tears at the Banquet for every one of these shall be wiped away by our Lord. He even keeps our tears today in His bottle for we need them no more when we cast our cares upon Him as did the woman who washed His feet with her tears and dried them with her hair.

⁴² *Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come.* ⁴³ *But know this, that if the goodman of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up.* ⁴⁴ *Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh.* (Matt 24:42-44)