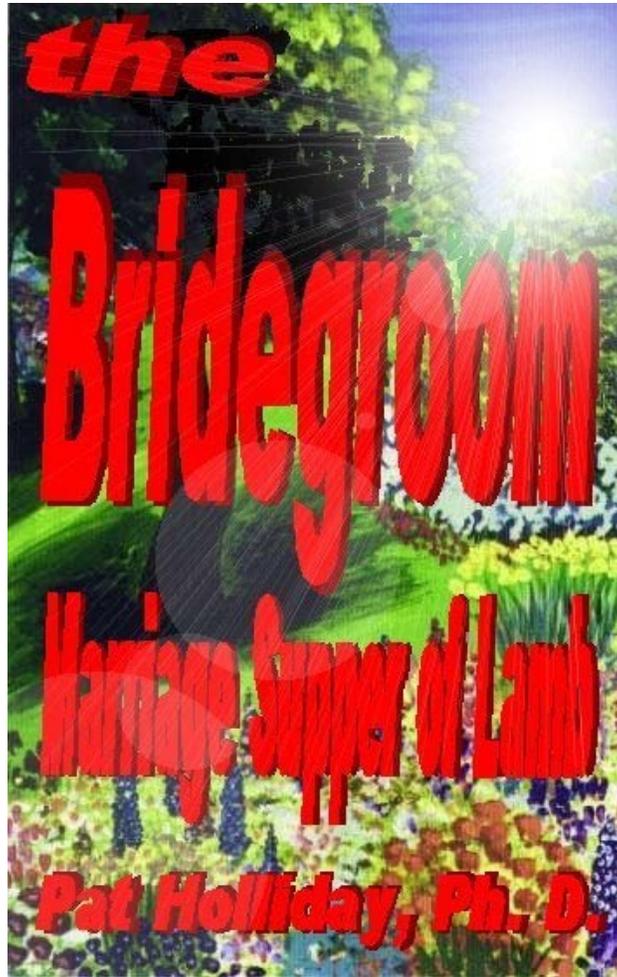


**TODD BENTLEY AND THE VIOLENT PROPHETS  
THEY WANT TO KILL THE BRIDE OF JESUS CHRIST**



# The Bridegroom ~ Marriage Supper of Lamb

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## THE BRIDE OF CHRIST

There is an erroneous teaching concerning the Bride of Christ that is raging in some streams of the Christian Church Movements. The teaching is, the Bride of Jesus is Dead. To those of you that are sitting under confused biblical teachers who no longer teach the Word and depend upon “strange fire and dooms-day prophets,” for your spiritual understanding of the Word of God, let me assure you that Jesus Christ is very much alive and well. He is sitting at the right hand of God the Father on His sovereign throne giving His divine power to usward who believe.

A group of so-called prophets of doom are going around the country with staffs that are having demonic dreams and visions pronouncing “God’s judgments” upon our country. These pronouncements that they are actually demonic curses upon ,,,,,,

Matthew Stephens said in a radio interview that God told him, “You go down there in June, strike the ground, this is their final warning to repent and they are going to start falling over dying.”

He went on to say, “I will be getting with Bentley and Bob Jones (since I know Bob Jones personally). All this is divination . . . I see a death judgment that is coming on the church. This whole captivation is going on by what I call divination is going to cease and it’s going to cease . . . God said, Strike the ground and call them to repentance. . . this is their final warning to repent and they’ll be falling over and die. . . What God is saying enough is enough, there’s a judgment coming and it’s going to cease. . .”

Matthew Stephens goes on to say in part, “My commission is that Jacksonville, Florida is the fourth corner to be sealed in America . . . I am suppose to strike the Gulf of Mexico in three places... I saw massive destruction coming in Florida 2008 . . . I saw a little piece of St. Augustine and Jacksonville left. . .”

To hear the complete words of destruction:

[http://watchmenradio.podomatic.com/player/web/2008-05-18T07\\_29\\_10-07\\_00](http://watchmenradio.podomatic.com/player/web/2008-05-18T07_29_10-07_00)

Father God, we bind the powers of the Angels of Destruction working with so-called prophets of doom and pray for God’s mercy upon America. Father we know Your Words tells of great destruction and we believe that You are able to bring Your Word forward without putting staffs in the hands of men and calling them to curse our country and our church. I just don’t find it in Your Word in the New Testament that You told people to go and curse cities, people and

nations. You Told us to preach the Word in season and out of season and that You sent Your Son to save that which is lost. You said that it is Your desire that none perish.

*”For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. 17 For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.”* (Jn 3:16-17).

KJV

## THEY WANT TO KILL THE BRIDE OF JESUS CHRIST

Mr. Stephens came to Jacksonville and held a meeting the day after his strange, not to be trusted, deceiving activity in Lakeland, Florida. You may remember in an earlier report, he had gained access to ascend to the stage at Ignited Church by using his former fellowship with the Kansas City Prophets and his claimed friendship with Bob Jones. After claiming his status of a prophet because he gave a prophecy to Bob Jones and said that he received it; then he pronounced his curses on Todd Bentley and all ministries involved in the revival, the city, the entire State of Florida, the people ~ the righteous and the unrighteous. He claimed it was God’s judgments. This man serves an angry god that has no mercy.

<http://www.scribd.com/doc/3280940/TODD-BENTLEY-CURSED-PROPHECY-OF-DOOM-AT-LAKELAND-FLA>

When Mr. Stephens came into Jacksonville to meet with a small click of people to bring their demonic visions and dreams to go into effect in Florida, he brought two other “prophets” with him. Let me read one of the weird prophecies at the Jacksonville meeting. Remember this is an Antichrist movement **THAT WANTS US TO SEE CHRIST AS HAVING A DEAD BRIDE LAYING AT THE FOOT OF THE CROSS OF JESUS**. This demonic packed language shows a totally defeated Jesus who is so weak that His blood on the cross had no power to save His Bride.

The “prophet” handed out papers with his visions printed which I quote in part; **“Yes – Jesus is comin’ . . . “I saw a huge cleansing. It was much bigger than the Church in America THE DEAD BRIDE WAS EXPOSED BY THE MIGHTY POWER OF THE PURGING WATERS. There were all sorts of idols that lay bare among the ruins. The entire land was re-arranged, cleansed, swept over. The places where “sleeping” Christians reside were destroyed”**

**Further talk about total destruction by water...**

**Then, “Those who respond to the Holy Spirit NOW will be kept safe. What I saw in the vision could easily be considered judgment. Yet, it is merciful: as the many idols and false gods were destroyed, and the DEAD BRIDE was exposed – the beginning of healing and restoration; indeed, RESURRECTION!”**

Truthfully, these “prophets” do not know the Word of God.

**THE BRIDE OF JESUS CHRIST IS NOT DEAD NOR IS HIS TRUE CHURCH AND HIS BRIDE IS ALIVE PREPARING HERSELF FOR HER BRIDEGROOM. Jesus has always had His Church and has always had faithful people.**

He said in His Word that *“And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. 19 And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven,”* (Matt 16:18-19). **KJV**

*“And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely,”* Rev 22:17.**KJV**

My prayer for the Church that is very much alive in the love and nature of Jesus Christ is the same that the great Apostle Paul prayed for the Christians of Ephesus. *“Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints, 16 Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers; 17 That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: 18 The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, 19 And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to usward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, 20 Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, 21 Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: 22 And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, 23 Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all,”* (Eph. 1:15-23). **KJV**

Mathew Stephens and his so-called “prophets” see the Mighty Church of Jesus Christ through monocled eyes that see only a small part of a fallen away, rebellious people who are serving the very same gods that these prophets are serving. They are the gods of **the Kansas City Prophets** that ordained Matthew Stephens. This is not the Church of Jesus Christ that is revealed in the Bible which involves a movement called **the Latter Rain** that originally came from the false prophet called William Branham. This is the very movement that was formerly rejected for the past 50 years by all the major Pentecostal Churches as a heretical movement. So now Stephens has caused a great division among his brethren by going over and deceptively getting on the platform to curse the leaders of his own ordination as a “pastor.” Makes you wonder if he included himself in his pronounced striking of the four corners of the church and all the pastors involved?

## **MILLIONS BELONG TO THE TRUE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST**

There are millions who have never deviated from their faith, trust and blood covering of Jesus Christ as their Savior and Lord. They can pronounce their curses upon the True Church of Jesus Christ under the inspiration of their demons of destruction, but my Bible tells me that the gates of hell shall not prevail against His Church. My Bible also tells me that His Holy Bride, that wears the covering of His Blood is still around in the last chapter of the Book of Revelation and will, together with Jesus, welcome those who survive the Antichrist to come to Jesus and drink living water.

Million of Christians have never bowed their knee to Baal. They love Jesus and He loves them and will protect them during these perilous times that we are living. He is the head of His Church and has not failed those who are seeking Him through the power of His Word. The Bible shows us the mystery of Jesus' mystical relationship with **His Church**, also known as **the Body of Christ**. He is shown as giving himself for **His Church**, and the **His Church** is made up of individuals who have given themselves to Him; body, soul and spirit and live under the cover of His blood.

**THERE HAS NEVER BEEN AND WILL NEVER BE A DEAD BRIDE LYING AT THE FOOT OF HIS CROSS!**

Oh yes, these false prophets and ministers would love you to believe that we serve an impotent, powerless, weak, crucified, dead Jesus. They want you to believe that Jesus is dead like the tattoo showing the dead Christ under Todd Bentley's arm But I tell you, **HE'S ALIVE AND HE LIVES FOREVERMORE!** Turn your eyes and ears from these phony, puny men who are trying to make a name for themselves and turn your eyes upon Jesus and His Word. Then you'll find out that Our Father has already sent our Prophet with His Word for our day and he didn't use an "Angel of the Winds of Change, or an Angel Emma-O, the King of Hell, judge of the underworld. He never needed an Angel called Liberty that replaced Emma- O.

The Angel Liberty made a grand appearance to bring a revival in California. Todd Bentley removed Emma- O from the his web site and all his articles after Stephen Strader told him and Bob Jones not to mention Emma – O in Lakeland ever again.

Father God never needed a man called Matthew Stephen or his strange prophets of chaotic curses. They say that "God never does nothing unless He sends the prophets first." The strangest thing about this statement is Father God, according to His Word, has sent His Prophet, Jesus and He gave us His Word which is a sure Word.

**"God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, 2 Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; 3 Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; 4 Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they. 5 For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee? And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son? 6 And again, when he bringeth in the firstbegotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him," KJV**

### **JESUS CHRIST IS BETROTHED TO HIS CHURCH**

Again the Apostle Paul gives us a wonderful metaphor of Jesus Christ as being betrothed to His Church as her Bridegroom. ***"Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; 26 That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, 27 That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish."*** KJV (Eph. 5:25, 26, 27).

Yes, there is a great falling away in our time but Jesus told us this was going to happen just before He returns. 2 Thess 2:3-4, **“Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; 4 Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.”** KJV

He is not surprised at the spiritual soul state of many professing Christians who do not know His Word nor do they live His Word. They have a form of godliness but deny the power of it. **“They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate,”** (Titus 1:16). KJV

Millions are now following false ministers which Jesus warned us that perilous times would come. **“Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils ; 2 Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron,”** KJV I believe the Word of God, that Jesus is coming back for a Church without spoke or winkle. NOT ALL WILL PERISH!

He warned us not to run after false Christs’. Luke 21:8), **“And he said, Take heed that ye be not deceived: for many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ ; and the time draweth near: go ye not therefore after them.”** KJV

He pleads with the end time church to repent. **“He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches. 14 And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God; 15 I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. 16 So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth. 17 Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: 18 I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see. 19 As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent. 20 Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me. 21 To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne. 22 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches,”** (Rev. 3:13-22). KJV

## **BLIND TRYING TO LEAD THE BLIND**

Recently, some prophets of doom, who are totally spiritually blinded and void of the knowledge of the Word of God came to our city to prophesy our complete destruction “because God is mad.” These men are basing all their grave outlook concerning the devastation of our city, state, churches, nation and every human being alive is because they are having dreams, visions and demonic spirits speaking to their minds and spirits.

Some in the Charismatic - Pentecostal branches of the Christian Church have received a man called Todd Bentley who is a member of the group called **the Latter Rain**. A church in Lakeland, Florida, the Ignited Church/Carpenters, Assembly of God opened the door for this cult member to minister. The Assembly of God Denomination has for 50 years, stood against the highly questionable doctrines of this movement. However, Bentley came with powerful, false signs and wonders and many pastors stepped forth in spiritual blindness and led their sheep into this grave spiritual darkness. This revival is being led, according to Bentley, by an assortment of angels. One angel is called, **“The Winds of Change.”**

Pure insanity. . . blah, blah, blah

<http://endtimespropheticwords.wordpress.com/2008/05/06/a-video-for-all-you-todd-bentley-healing-revival-fans/>

### **ALL THINGS ARE MADE BY CHRIST FOR CHRIST AND BY HIM ALL THINGS CONSIST.**

No angel can ever change this. It is written in the Rock.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e4zgJXPpI4>

Yet, because of God TV and its spiritually blinded leaders, millions are being led into a religious of confusion being led by Angels from the underworld and seduced men and women by demonic signs and wonders. When their latest idol preaches his bloodless gospel, he doesn't even have an opened Bible on the pulpit. The Bible tells us that people will come and betray Jesus. The problem is that people believe that because they are 'saved' there is no way they could be deceived. They erroneously think that as long as use the name of Jesus it will be God. However, the Bible tells us that the Spirit and the Word will always agree. Mostly the Word has been put on the back burner. Never once questioning it. Which is a recipe that the person will absolutely be deceived. These false 'preachers' love to say you have no 'faith' or are in disobedience if you question. My pastor says that if it is of God He will not get angry for you questioning or rather testing the spirit to see if it is indeed of God.

<http://pjmillier.wordpress.com/2008/06/11/pray-beware-of-the-false-prophecies-of-matthew-stephens/#more-1587>

We are living in that time that is a time filled with religious confusion. On the other hand, millions have devoted their lives to Jesus and enjoy His divine fellowship and are protected during these times of evil. *“And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; 2 Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: 3 Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. 4 But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, 5 Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) 6 And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: 7 That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. 8 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it*

*is the gift of God: 9 Not of works, lest any man should boast. 10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them,"*(Eph 2:1-10). KJV

## **THE BRIDEGROOM**

The Bridegroom is a reference that is made to the **Lord Jesus Christ** several times in the New Testament. Whether you are a new Christian or a longtime believer, you must know that the Christian faith is about a **Divine Person** and not about "**religion**" and that **Person** is our **Heavenly Bridegroom**, the **Lord Jesus Christ**. The true Church, which is made up of Born **Again** believers in Him is His Heavenly **Bride**. We are His chosen companions for all eternity, and His great love for us is without measure, and without comparison. The **Lord Jesus Christ** clearly stated that He would return **in a moment** (Rev 22:7, 12, 20). We are to expect His return at any time (1 Thess. 4:15-18). In fact, we are to await it with joy and put off all the confidence of this world in order to be prepared for His soon return for us.

This parable, or something like it is found in the Jewish records: so in a treatise entitled RESHITH CHOKMAH, the beginning of wisdom, we read thus: "Our wise men of blessed memory say, Repent whilst thou hast strength to do it, whilst thy lamp burns, and thy oil is not extinguished; for if thy lamp be gone out, thy oil will profit thee nothing."<sup>1</sup>

(Matt 25:1).

[Then shall the kingdom of heaven] (See the notes at Matt 3:2). The phrase here refers to **his coming in the day of judgment**.

[Shall be likened] Or shall resemble. The meaning is, *"When the Son of man returns to judgment, it will be as it was in the case of ten virgins in a marriage ceremony." The coming of Christ to receive his people to himself is often represented under the similitude of a marriage, the church being represented as his spouse or bride. The marriage relation is the most tender, firm, and endearing of any known on earth, and on this account it suitably represents the union of believers to Christ*". (See Matt. 9:15; Jn. 3:29; Rev. 19:7; 21:9; Eph. 5:25-32).

Another parable, mentioned by Kimchi, concerning (Isa 65:13). "Rabbi Yuchanan, the son of Zachai, spoke a parable concerning a king, who invited his servants, but set them no time to come: the prudent and wary among them adorned themselves, and, standing at the door of the king's house, said, Is anything wanting in the house of the king? (I.e., Is there any work to be done?) But the foolish ones that were among them went away, and working said, When shall the feast be in which there is no labour? Suddenly the king sought out his servants: those who were adorned entered in, and they who were still polluted entered in also. The king was glad when he met the prudent, but he was angry when he met the foolish: he said, Let the prudent sit down and eat-let the others stand and look on." Rabbi Eliezer said, "Turn to God one day before your death." His disciples said, "How can a man know the day of his death? He answered them, "Therefore you should turn to God today, perhaps you may die tomorrow; thus every day will be employed in returning."<sup>2</sup>

Sad to say, many Christians today have fallen asleep under the powers of bewitching false ministers, and are busy about the day to day cares and affairs of this world. Many walk in a

spiritual semi consciousness listening to false messages about everything but Jesus and His Word. This spiritual condition is shown interpreted and represented in our Lord's *parable of the ten virgins* (Matt. 25:1-13).

## THE BRIDE

**Question: "What does it mean that the church is the bride of Christ?"**

**Answer:** The imagery and symbolism of marriage are applied to Christ and the body of believers known as the church. These are those who have trusted in Jesus Christ as their personal savior and have received eternal life. In the New Testament, Christ, the bridegroom, has sacrificially and lovingly chosen the church to be His bride (Eph. 5:25-27). Just as there was a betrothal period in biblical times during which the bride and groom were separated until the wedding, so is the bride of Christ separate from her bridegroom during the church age. Her responsibility during the betrothal period is to be faithful to Him (2 Cor.11:2; Eph. 5:24). At the Second Coming of Christ, the church will be united with the Bridegroom, the official **"wedding ceremony" will take place and, with it, the eternal union of Christ and his bride will be actualized** (Rev. 19:7-9; 21:1-2).<sup>3</sup>

## HEAVENLY CITY

At that time, all believers will inhabit the heavenly city known as New Jerusalem, also called **"the holy city"** in Revelation 21:2 and 10. The new Jerusalem is not the church, but it takes on the church's characteristics. In his vision of the end of the age, the Apostle John sees the city coming down from heaven adorned "as a bride" meaning that the inhabitants of the city, the redeemed of the Lord, will be holy and pure, wearing white garments of holiness and righteousness. Some have misinterpreted verse 9 to mean the holy city is the bride of Christ, but that cannot be because Christ died for His people, not for a city. The city is called the bride because it encompasses all who is the bride, just as all the students of a school are sometimes called "the school."

As believers in Jesus Christ, we who are the bride of Christ wait with great anticipation for the day when we will be united with our Bridegroom. Until then, we remain faithful to Him and say with all the redeemed of the Lord, **"Come, Lord Jesus!"** (Rev. 22:20).<sup>4</sup>

Remember the standard of truth is the Scriptures.

## TEN VIRGINS

[Ten virgins] These virgins, doubtless, represent the church—a name given to it because it is pure and consecrated. (See 2 Cor. 11:2; Lam. 1:15; 2:13).

[Virgins] Denoting the purity of the Christian doctrine and character. In this parable, the bridegroom is generally understood to mean Jesus Christ. The feast that state of felicity to which he has promised to raise his genuine followers. The wise, or prudent, and foolish virgins, those who truly enjoy, and those who only profess the purity and holiness of his religion. The oil, the grace and salvation of God, or that faith which works by love. The vessel, the heart in which this oil is contained. The lamp, the profession of enjoying the burning and shining light of the Gospel of Christ. Going forth, the whole of their sojourning upon earth.<sup>5</sup>

(Matt 25:2),

[**Five of them were wise**] Or, provident, *phronimoi*-they took care to make a proper provision beforehand, and left nothing to be done in the last moment.

**The five wise virgins** represent true born again believers, and the five **foolish** virgins represent *Christendom* in general (those that profess faith in Christ but truly have no personal relationship with Him).

[**Five were foolish**] *Moorai*, which might be translated careless, is generally rendered foolish; but this does not agree so well with *phronimoi*, provident, or prudent, in the first clause; which is the proper meaning, of the word. *Mooros*, in the *Etymologicon*, is thus defined, *mee hora to deon*, he who sees not what is proper or necessary. These did not see that it was necessary to have oil in their vessels (the salvation of God in their souls), as well as a burning lamp of religious profession, (Matt 25:3-4).<sup>6</sup>

The Apostle Paul, speaking about the **imminent return** of the **Lord Jesus Christ** exhorts us to be **watchful and awaiting that day, not sleeping as others do, but eagerly awaiting God's Son from Heaven** (1 Thess. 1:10; 5:4-10), *“But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that day should overtake you as a thief. 5 Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness. 6 Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober. 7 For they that sleep, sleep, and they that be drunken are drunken in the night. 8 But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation. 9 For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, 10 Who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him.”*

## TEN VIRGINS

The parable of the ten virgins is an important key to understanding the **Bride of Christ**. It is quoted in its entirety below. It is critically important to notice that this speaks of distinguishing, even a separation, among the Christian Church people.

At that time the kingdom of heaven will be like **ten 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, 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. **'Sir! Sir!'** they said. **'Open the door for us!'** But he replied, **'I tell you the truth, I don't know you.'** Therefore keep watch, because you do not know the day or the hour.' (Matt. 25:1-13).

1. **"At that time"** (vs. 1) and the preceding context indicate this is an end-time event.

The kingdom of heaven is likened to ten virgins, not five. All ten are within the kingdom. This is not, as some have taught, a teaching about a saved group and a lost group.

There were 10 virgins. **"I promised you . . . as a pure virgin to him [Christ]"** (2 Cor. 11:2).

They all had lamps. They all had the word of God. **"Your word is a lamp to my feet"** (Ps. 119:105).

They **"went out to meet the bridegroom."** All of them were looking forward to the coming of the bridegroom. This is certainly not true of the unsaved!

**The bridegroom** (Mk. 2:18-20; Jn. 3:28-30; Rev. 19:7) **is the Lord Jesus Christ.**

**But "five were foolish and five were wise"** (vs. 2). They were all called **"virgins."** They were all spoken of as part of the kingdom of heaven. All had lamps (**the word**) and all were looking forward to the Lord's coming. They all had oil (**the Holy Spirit**). Then what differentiated the foolish from the wise? The answer is found in (Verses 3-4).

Only the wise had an abundant supply of oil! (vs. 3-4). They were trusting in the Word of God.

The oil symbolizes the anointing of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the power of God.

Then Samuel took a flask of oil and poured it on Saul's head and kissed him, saying, **"Has not the Lord anointed you leader over his inheritance? The Spirit of the Lord will come upon you in power."** (1 Sam. 10:1,6).

Then the Lord said, **"Rise and anoint him; he is the one." So Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the presence of his brothers, and from that day on the Spirit of the Lord came upon David in power."** (I Sam. 16:12-13).

God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, (Acts 10:38).

In a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit . . . you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you . . . **All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.** (Acts 1:5,8; 2:4).

You have an anointing from the Holy One, (1 Jn. 2:20).

The 'wise' category had a plentiful supply of oil. Wise Christians will have an anointing from the Lord — the baptism with the Holy Spirit — and will have an abundant, ongoing operation of the Holy Spirit in and through their lives.

Be dressed ready for service and keep your lamps burning. 12:35).

**"After a long time in coming," the bridegroom will indeed come forth to meet his bride!** (vs. 5-6). And note that this occurs in a midnight-hour time frame. Only at the end of the church age will the bride of Christ be prepared, identified and enabled to enter into that close of relationships with her bridegroom.

All the virgins arose and trimmed their lamps, (vs. 7). They all had some degree of oil. But (vs. 8) the oil of the foolish was running very low, and their lamps were going out.

All Christians have the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit. And Spirit-filled Christians have additionally partaken of the anointing of the Holy Spirit, with power (Acts 1:8). But the only 'wise' Christians, in this context, are those who possess an abundant measure of the Holy Spirit, as evidenced by their having their lamps burning brightly at the time of the bridegroom's arrival.

[Five were foolish] *Moirai*, which might be translated careless, is generally rendered foolish; but this does not agree so well with *phronimoi*, provident, or prudent, in the first clause; which is the proper meaning, of the word. *Mooros*, in the *Etymologicon*, is thus defined, *mee hora* to deon, he who sees not what is proper or necessary. These did not see that it was necessary to have oil in their vessels (the salvation of God in their souls), as well as a burning lamp of religious profession, (Matt 25:3-4).

And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him, (Matt 25:6).

**[At midnight there was a cry]** The Jewish weddings were generally celebrated in the night; yet they usually began at the rising of the evening star; but in this case there was a more than ordinary delay.

**[Behold, the bridegroom cometh]** What an awful thing to be summoned to appear before the Judge of quick and dead! The following is an affecting relation, and *fas est ab hoste doceri*. "When Rabbi Jochanan ben Zachai was sick, his disciples came to visit him; and when he saw them he began to weep.

They say to him, Rabbi! The light of Israel, the right-hand pillar, the strong hammer, wherefore dost thou weep? He answered them, If they were carrying me before a king of flesh and blood, who is here today, and tomorrow in the grave; who, if he were angry with me, his anger would not last forever; if he put me in prison, his prison would not be everlasting; if he condemned me to death, that death would not be eternal; whom I could soothe with words or bribe with riches; yet even in these circumstances I should weep. But now I am going before the King of kings, the holy and the blessed God, who liveth and endureth forever and forever; who, if he be angry with me, his anger will last forever; if he put me in prison, his bondage will be everlasting; if he condemn me to death, that death will be eternal; whom I cannot soothe with words nor bribe with riches-when, further, there are before me two ways, the one: to hell and the other to paradise, and I know not in which they are carrying me, shall I not weep?"<sup>7</sup>

When the bridegroom goes forth for the marriage, it is too late for the foolish to secure this abundant supply of oil. As they scurried about in a last-minute effort to secure oil, the wise virgins entered into the wedding banquet with the bridegroom. The key was readiness (vs. 9-10).

(Matt 25:7), Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps.

**[Trimmed their lamps.]** *Ekosmeesan*, adorned them. I have seen some of the eastern lamps or lanterns, the body of which was a skeleton of wood and threads, covered with a very thin transparent membrane, or very fine gauze, and decorated with flowers painted on it. It is probable that the nuptial lamps were highly decorated in this way; though the act mentioned here may mean no more than preparing the lamps for burning.

The following account of the celebration of a wedding in Persia, taken from the Zend Avesta, vol. 2 p. 558, etc., may cast some light on this place.

"The day appointed for the marriage, about five o'clock in the evening, the bridegroom comes to the house of the bride, where the mobed, or priest, pronounces for the first time the nuptial benediction. He then brings her to his own house, gives her some refreshment, and afterward the assembly of her relatives and friends re conduct her to her father's house. When she arrives, the mobed repeats the nuptial benediction, which is generally done about MIDNIGHT; immediately after, the bride, accompanied with a part of her attending troop (the rest having returned to their own homes), is re conducted to the house of her husband, where she generally arrives about three o'clock in the morning. Nothing can be more brilliant than these nuptial solemnities in India. Sometimes the assembly consists of not less than two thousand persons, all richly dressed in gold and silver tissue; the friends and relatives of the bride, encompassed with their domestics, are all mounted on horses richly harnessed. The goods, wardrobe, and even the bed of the bride, are carried in triumph. The husband, richly mounted and magnificently dressed, is accompanied by his friends and relatives, the friends of the bride following him in covered carriages. At intervals, during the procession, guns and rockets are fired, and the spectacle is rendered grand beyond description, by a prodigious number of LIGHTED TORCHES, and by the SOUND of a multitude of musical instruments." <sup>8</sup>

The virgins who were ready went in with him to the wedding banquet. (vs. 10). She was ready to receive the Bridegroom. The preparation was finished. She was clean, washed in the Blood of the Lamb. Her spirit, mind and body was renewed by His Word. She was watching and waiting, keeping herself holy and pure.

The wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready. (Rev. 19:7).

The parable of the ten virgins is a subject for much study. But two vital things stand out: (1) the anointing and (2) readiness made the difference!

### **THE WEDDING**

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**[Which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom]** The "lamps" used on such occasions were rather "torches" or "flambeaux." They were made by winding rags around pieces of iron or earthenware, sometimes hollowed so as to contain oil, and fastened to handles of wood. These torches were dipped in oil, and gave a large light. Marriage "ceremonies" in the East were conducted with great pomp and solemnity. The ceremony of marriage was performed commonly in the open air, on the banks of a stream. Both the bridegroom and bride were attended by friends. They were escorted in a palanquin. carried by four or more persons. After the ceremony of marriage succeeded a feast of seven days if the bride was a virgin, or three days if she was a widow. This feast was celebrated in her father's house. At the end of that time the bridegroom conducted the bride with great pomp and splendor to his own home.

This was done in the evening, or at night, (Jer. 7:34; 25:10; 33:11). Many friends and relations attended them; and besides those who went with them from the house of the bride, there was another company that came out from the house of the bridegroom to meet them and welcome them. These were probably female friends and relatives of the bridegroom, who went out to welcome him and his new companion to their home. These are the virgins mentioned in this parable. Not knowing PRECISELY the time when the procession would come, they probably went out early, and waited until they should see indications of its approach. In the celebration of marriage in the East at the present day, many of the special customs of ancient times are observed. "At a Hindu marriage," says a modern missionary, "the procession of which I saw some years ago, the bridegroom came from a distance, and the bride lived at *Serampore*, to which place the bridegroom was to come by water. After waiting two or three hours, at length, near midnight, it was announced, in the very words of Scripture, 'Behold the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him.' All the persons employed now lighted their lamps, and ran with them in their hands to fill up their stations in the procession. Some of them had lost their lights and were unprepared, but it was then too late to seek them, and the cavalcade moved forward

to the house of the bride, at which place the company entered a large and splendidly illuminated area before the house, covered with an awning, where a great multitude of friends, dressed in their best apparel, were seated upon mats.

The bridegroom was carried in the arms of a friend, and placed in a superb seat in the midst of the company, where he sat a short time, and then went into the house, the door of which was immediately shut and guarded by sepoy. I and others expostulated with the doorkeepers, but in vain. Never was I so struck with our Lord's beautiful parable as at this moment—'And the door was shut.'"

There are certain preparations which most persons believe they must make at the approach of death; but, alas! it is often too late. The lamp is defiled, the light almost out, and the oil expended; and what adorning is a wretched sinner, struggling in the agonies of death, capable of preparing for his guilty soul! <sup>9</sup>

### LAST GENERATION

(Matt 25:8).

And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out.

[**Our lamps are gone out.**] *Sbennuntai*, are going out. So then it is evident that they were once lighted. They had once hearts illuminated and warmed by faith and love; but they **had backslidden from the salvation of God**, and now they are excluded from heaven, because, through their carelessness, they have let the light that was in them become darkness, and have not applied in time for a fresh supply of the salvation of God.  
<sup>10</sup>

Not every Christian will qualify for the bride of Christ. Will all Christians who persevere in serving God spend eternity with Him? Of course! But the bride of Christ comes into being out of that last generation of believers on the earth just before Christ's second coming (Matt. 25:5-6; Rev. 19:7), in the context of (Revelation chapter 19 —), the second coming).

The Bride of Christ will emerge as a company of believers in the last generation who are still alive and on this earth. Not all believers alive at that time will measure up!

(Matt 25:9).

**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.**

[**Lest there be not enough for us and you**] These had all been companions in the Christian course, and there was a time when they might have been helpful to each other; but that time is now past forever—none has a particle of grace to spare, not even to help the soul of the dearest relative! The grace which every man receives is just enough to save his own soul; he has no merits to bequeath to the church; no work of supererogation which can be placed to the account of another. <sup>11</sup>

Follow a little further the comparison of Adam and Jesus as, respectively, the first man Adam and the last Adam (I Cor. 15:45-47, quoted above). A portion of the first Adam's body — a rib — was fashioned by God and presented as a bride to Adam. I believe that, in the same fashion, a portion of the body of Christ, which is the church, will be presented by God as a bride to his Son.

**Then the Lord God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man.** (Gen. 2:22).

Now you are the Body of Christ, (1 Cor. 12:27). Note: But the entire body will not qualify as Christ's bride! (1 Cor. 12:27-31), *“Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular. 28 And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues. 29 Are all apostles? are all prophets? are all teachers? are all workers of miracles? 30 Have all the gifts of healing? do all speak with tongues? do all interpret? 31 But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way.”*

A summary of some characteristics of the bride that we have studied follows:

The bride will be presented as a pure virgin to him,”

(2 Cor. 11:2), **For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ,”**

**The bride will be known for her righteous acts** (Rev. 19:7-8).

The bridal church will be (Eph. 5:25-27): **Holy; Cleansed and washed by the word of God; A radiant church; Without stain or wrinkle; Without blemish; Blameless.**

**The bride of Christ will have the measure of the fullness of the stature of Christ** (Eph. 4:13, KJV).

The bride will come from a portion of the body of Christ, rather than being the entire body (Gen. 2:22 by application).

**The bride will have a sincere and pure devotion to Christ** (2 Cor. 11:3).

**The bride will be watchful and prayerful** (Lk. 21:36).

**The bride will have been pressing for perfection** (2 Cor. 13:9,11).

**The anointing, the baptism with the Holy Spirit, will be abundantly operating in the lives of those who qualify for the bride of Christ** (Matt. 25:3-4).

**The bride will live in a state of readiness to meet the bridegroom** (Matt. 25:10; Lk. 12:35; Rev. 19:7).

With the help and grace of the Lord, all these are attainable. But not all Christians will cooperate with the Lord's grace and expend the effort to measure up in these and any other needful areas. Remember: Jesus is seeking a perfect bride, a "help meet" for Him!

## **TYPES AND SHADOWS**

Some topological insights into the bride of Christ are found in Genesis 24.

The reader is encouraged at this point to read the entire 24th chapter of Genesis. There we read the beautiful story of the patriarch Abraham sending his trusted servant back to Abraham's

ancestral homeland to secure a wife from among his kindred for his son Isaac. A beautiful picture emerges as we regard Abraham, typologically, as depicting God the Father, Isaac representing Jesus the Son, and the trusted servant typifying the Holy Spirit. Rebekah then comes into focus as the bride of Christ.

Abraham is a type of God the Father (vs. 1-4).

Father (vs. 1-4).

Father Abraham. (Lk. 16:24).

The faith of Abraham. He is the father of us all. (Rom. 4:16).

Those who believe are children of Abraham. (Gal. 3:7).

Isaac, Abraham's son, as a type of Jesus, the Son of God.

It is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned. (Gen. 21:12).

The promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. The scriptures does not say "and to seeds," meaning many people, but "and to your seed, meaning one person, who is Christ. (Gal. 3:16).

By faith Abraham . . . offered Isaac as a sacrifice . . . his one and only son . . . Abraham reasoned that God could raise the dead, and figuratively speaking, he did receive Isaac back from death. (Heb. 13:17-19).

The Holy Spirit is typified by the trusted servant who was "in charge of all that (Abraham) had" (vs. 2).

When the Counselor (Holy Spirits) comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father, he will testify about me. (Jn. 15:26).

The Holy spirit is seeking a bride for Jesus Christ from among God's kindred, from among God's people.

Go to my country and my own relatives and get a wife for my son Isaac, (Gen. 24:4).

During this time of seeking the bride for Christ, Christ is to remain in heaven with the Father. The Holy Spirit represents the Father and Son on earth during this time (vs. 5-6).

Make sure that you do not take my son back there. (Gen. 24:6).

That he may send the Christ . . . even Jesus. He must remain in heaven until the time comes for God to restore everything, (Acts 3:20-21).

The Holy Spirit has all the Father's resources at his disposal.

The one in charge of all that he had, (Gen. 24:2).

Then the servant took . . . with him all kinds of good things from his master. (Gen. 24:10).

This seeking of a bride is at the end of the church age.

It was toward evening . . . Rebekah came out, (Gen. 24:11,15).

The intended bride was working and serving (vs. 15-20).

Be dressed ready for service and keep your lamps burning, (Lk. 12:35).

She was "very beautiful, a virgin" (vs. 16).

I promised you to one husband, to Christ, so that I might present you as a pure virgin to him. (2 Cor. 11:2).

The bride of Christ will be quick to respond to the Holy Spirit's voice.

Please give me a little water from your jar . . . [she] quickly lowered the jar to her hands and gave him a drink. (Gen. 24:17-18).

The bride of Christ will go beyond the basic requirements of service (vs. 19).

I'll draw water for your camels too. (Gen. 14:19; unsolicited).

The bride of Christ will be abundantly gifted by the Holy Spirit.

A gold ring . . . two gold bracelets . . . Then the servant brought out gold and silver jewelry and articles of clothing and gave them to Rebekah. (Gen. 24:22,53).

There will be proper recognition of the lordship of Jesus Christ.

My master's wife Sarah has borne him a son in her old age, and he has given him everything he owns. (Gen. 24:36).

Jesus Christ: (he is Lord of all). (Acts 10:36).

The bride of Christ will evidence a willingness, a desire, to join her espoused husband, Jesus Christ.

"Will you go with this man?" "I will go," she said. (Gen. 24:58).

Bride and groom will meet at the end of the age.

(Isaac) went out to the field one evening to meditate, and as he looked up, he saw camels approaching. (Gen. 24:63).

The eventual result: the consummation of the marriage!

[Isaac] married Rebekah. So she became his wife, and he loved her, (Gen. 24:67).

Are you ready for the Bridegroom's return? Are you looking forward to that day? Will it be today?

## **SURPRISING GRACE**

[Joel 2:15], **“Blow the trumpet in Zion, sanctify a fast, call a solemn assembly”:**

[Joel 2:16], **“Gather the people, sanctify the congregation, assemble the elders, gather the children, and those that suck the breasts: let the bridegroom go forth of his chamber, and the bride out of her closet,”** (Ps. 19).

The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handiwork.

Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge.

There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard.

Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. In them hath he set a tabernacle for the sun,

Which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race.

His going forth is from the end of the heaven, and his circuit unto the ends of it: and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof.

**(Isa. 62:5) For as a young man marrieth a virgin, so shall thy sons marry thee: and as the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee.**

**[Lk 12:36] And ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their lord, when he will return from the wedding; that when he cometh and knocketh, they may open unto him immediately.**

**[Rev 19:1] And after these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven [the raptured], saying, Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God:**

**[Rev 19:7] Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his Bride has made herself ready . . .**

**[Rev 19:8] it was granted her to be clothed with fine linen, bright and pure"--for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints.**

**[Rev 19:9] And the angel said to me, "Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb." And he said to me, "These are true words of God."**

**[Rev 19:14] And the armies which were in heaven followed him [the raptured] upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean.**

**[Mat 24:29] Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken:**

**[Mat 24:30] And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.**

**[Mat 24:31] And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.**

**[Zech. 14:5] And ye shall flee to the valley of the mountains; for the valley of the mountains shall reach unto Azal: yea, ye shall flee, like as ye fled from before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah: and the LORD my God shall come, and all the saints with thee.**

**[Jud. 1:14] And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints . . .**

**1. [Rev 21:2] And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.**

[Rev 21:9] **And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife.**

[Rev 21:10] **And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God,**

[Col 3:4] **When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.**

### **IN GOD'S PRESENCE**

**"Nevertheless I am continually with Thee."** (Ps. 73:23). "Nevertheless, "As if, notwithstanding all the foolishness and ignorance which David had just been confessing to God, not one atom the less was it true and certain that David was saved and accepted, and that the blessing of being constantly in God's presence was undoubtedly his. Fully conscious of his own lost estate, and of the deceitfulness and vileness of his nature, yet, by a glorious outburst of faith, he sings "nevertheless I am continually with Thee." Believer, you are forced to enter into Asaph's confession and acknowledgment, endeavour in like spirit to say "nevertheless, since I belong to Christ I am continually with God!" By this is meant continually upon His mind, He is always thinking of me for my good. Continually before His eye;--the eye of the Lord never sleepeth, but is perpetually watching over my welfare. Continually in His *hand*, so that none shall be able to pluck me thence. Continually on His *heart*, worn there as a memorial, even as the high priest bore the names of the twelve tribes upon his heart for ever. Thou always thinkest of me, O God. The bowels of Thy love continually yearn towards me. Thou art always making providence work for my good. Thou hast set me as a signet upon thine arm; thy love is strong as death, many waters cannot quench it; neither can the floods drown it. Surprising grace! Thou seest me in Christ, and though in myself abhorred, Thou beholdest me as wearing Christ's garments, and washed in His blood, and thus I stand accepted in Thy presence. I am thus continually in Thy favour--"continually with Thee." Here is comfort for the tried and afflicted soul; vexed with the tempest within--look at the calm without. "Nevertheless"--O say it in thy heart, and take the peace it gives. "Nevertheless I am continually with Thee." <sup>12</sup>

### **SYMBOLS**

Various biblical symbols represent the **Church**. Among them is the Church's calling as the holy, radiant, spotless bride of Christ. In the Bible, God has likened the church to many things — among them a 'body,' a 'flock,' a 'family,' an 'army,' a 'building' and a 'planting.'

**Now you are the body of Christ**, (1 Cor. 12:27). **Be shepherds of God's flock**, (1 Pet. 5:2). **It is time for judgment to begin with the family of God**, (1 Pet. 4:17). **Endure hardship with us like a good soldier of Christ Jesus** (an army), (2 Tim. 2:3). **You are .**

**. . . God's building**, (1 Cor. 3:9). **They will be called . . . a planting of the Lord.** (Isa. 61:3).

Another magnificent light in which the Bible portrays the church is as the bride of Christ:

**Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready.** (Rev. 19:7). Large segments of the Christian church are unaware of the glorious calling of the church as the bride of Christ. Even among sincere Christians who see and teach this truth, there seems to be much misunderstanding.

### **DOES THE BRIDE OF CHRIST EXIST TODAY?**

The very concept of marriage between God and his people is not a uniquely New Testament idea. It also occurs in the Old Testament.

Your Maker is your husband — the Lord Almighty is his name. (Isa. 54:5).

You will be a crown of splendor in the Lord's hand, a royal diadem in the hand of your God. No longer will they call you Deserted, or name your land Desolate. But you will be called Hephzibah, and your land Beulah [which means married], for the Lord will take delight in you, and your land will be married. As a young man marries a maiden, so will your sons marry you; as a bridegroom rejoices over his bride, so will your God rejoice over you. (Isa. 62:3-5), brackets added for clarification here and throughout this chapter).

**I will betroth you to me forever; I will betroth you in righteousness and justice, in love and compassion. I will betroth you in faithfulness, and you will acknowledge the Lord.** (Hos. 2:19-20), God speaking to his people).

Jesus speaks of himself as the bridegroom.

Some people came and asked Jesus, **“Then came to him the disciples of John, saying, Why do we and the Pharisees fast oft, but thy disciples fast not? 15 And Jesus said unto them, Can the children of the bride chamber mourn, as long as the bridegroom is with them? but the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken from them, and then shall they fast,”** (Matt 9:14-15).

**[Can the children of the bride-chamber]** *Numphoonos*. Or, *numphiou*, bridegroom, as the Codex Bezae and several versions have it. These persons were the companions of the bridegroom, who accompanied him to the house of his father-in-law when he went to bring the bride to his own home. The marriage-feast among the Jews lasted seven days; but the new married woman was considered to be a bride for thirty days. Marriage feasts were times of extraordinary festivity; and even of riot, among several people of the east.<sup>13</sup>

John the Baptist spoke of Jesus as the bridegroom.

**“Ye yourselves bear me witness, that I said, I am not the Christ, but that I am sent before him. 29 He that hath the bride is the bridegroom: but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice: this my joy therefore is fulfilled. 30 He must increase, but I must decrease,”** (Jn. 3:28-30).

(Jn. 3:29):

**[He that hath the bride]** The congregation of believers.

**[Is the bridegroom]** The Lord Jesus-the Head of the church. (See Matt. 22:2, etc.), where the parable of the marriage feast is explained.

**[The friend of the bridegroom]** The person whom the Greeks called the *paranymp*-there were two at each wedding: one waited on the bride, the other on the bridegroom: their business was to serve them, to inspect the concerns of the bride chamber, and afterwards to reconcile differences between husband and wife, when any took place. John considers himself as standing in this relation to the Lord Jesus, while espousing human nature, and converting souls to himself: this is the meaning of standeth by, i.e., ready to serve.

**[He must increase]** His present success is but the beginning of a most glorious and universal spread of righteousness, peace, truth, and good will among men.

**[I must decrease.]** My baptism and teaching, as pointing out the coming Messiah, must cease; because the Messiah is now come, and has entered publicly on the work of his glorious ministry.<sup>14</sup>

## BETROTHED

The church is betrothed, espoused and promised as the intended bride of her husband, Jesus Christ. The marriage is not consummated. That is yet to come.

**“He that hath the bride is the bridegroom: but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice: this my joy therefore is fulfilled,”** (Jn. 3:29).

**[He that hath the bride . . . ]** This is an illustration drawn from marriage. The bride belongs to her husband. So the church, the bride of the Messiah, belongs to him. It is to be expected, therefore, and DESIRED, that the people should flock to him.

**[But the friend of the bridegroom]** He whose office it is to attend him on the marriage occasion. This was commonly the nearest friend, and was a high honor.

**[Rejoiceth greatly]** Esteems himself highly honored by the proof of friendship.

**[The bridegroom's voice]** His commands, requests, or conversation.

**[This my joy . . . ]** **"I sustain to the Messiah the relation which a groomsman does to the groom. The chief honor and the chief joy is not mine, but his. It is to be expected, therefore, that the people will come to him, and that his success will be great. The relation of Christ to the church is often compared with the marriage relation, denoting the tenderness of the union, and his great love for his people.** (Compare Isa. 62:5; Rev. 21:2,9; 22:17; Eph. 5:26-27,32; 2 Cor. 11:2).<sup>15</sup>

**“For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ, “(2 Cor. 11:2).**

It was because he loved them, and because he feared that they were in danger of being seduced from the simplicity of the gospel. The phrase *"I am jealous" Zeeloo means properly, I ardently love you; I am full of tender attachment to you.*<sup>16</sup>

**[That I may present you as a chaste virgin]** The allusion is still kept up; and there seems to be a reference to (Lev. 21:14), that the high priest must not marry anyone that was not a pure virgin. Here, then, Christ is the high priest, the spouse or husband; the Corinthian church the pure virgin to be espoused; the apostle and his helpers the *shoshabinim, or harmosyni*, who had educated and prepared this virgin for her husband, and espoused her to him. See the observations already referred to at the end of John 3.<sup>17</sup>

(Matt 25:10),

**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.**

**[While they went to buy, the bridegroom came]** What a dismal thing it is, not to discover the emptiness of one's heart of all that is good, till it is too late to make any successful application for relief! God alone knows how many are thus deceived.

**[And they that were ready]** They who were prepared—who had not only a burning lamp of an evangelical profession, but had oil in their vessels, the faith that works by love in their hearts, and their lives adorned with all the fruits of the Spirit.

**[The door was shut.]** Sinners on a deathbed too often meet with those deceitful merchants, who promise them salvation for a price which is of no value in the sight of God. Come unto me, says Jesus, and buy: there is no salvation but through his blood—no hope for the sinner but that which is founded upon his sacrifice and death. The door was shut—dreadful and fatal words! No hope remains. Nothing but death can shut this door; but death may surprise us in our sins, and then despair is our only portion.<sup>18</sup>

(Matt 25:11; Matt 25:12; Matt 25:13).

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

**[Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord]** Earnest prayer, when used in time, may do much good: but it appears, from this parable, that there may come a time when prayer even to Jesus may be too late! —namely when the door is shut—when death has separated the body and the soul.

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

**[I know you not.] As if he had said, Ye are not of my company—ye were neither with the bride, nor the bridegroom: ye slept while the others were in procession. I do not acknowledge you for my disciples—ye are not like him who is love—ye refused to receive his grace—ye sinned it away when ye had it; now you are necessarily excluded from that kingdom where nothing but love and purity can dwell.**

Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh.

[Watch therefore] If to watch be to employ ourselves chiefly about the business of our salvation, alas! how few of those who are called Christians are there who do watch! How many who slumber! How many who are asleep! How many seized with a lethargy! How many quite dead!

[Wherein the Son of man cometh.]<sup>19</sup>

## THE WIFE

### AT THE END WE SEE THE BRIDE MARRIED TO JESUS.

**“Hallelujah! For our Lord God Almighty reigns. Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready. Fine linen, bright and clean, was given her to wear,”** (Rev. 19:7)  
(Fine linen stands for the righteous acts of the saints).

[**The marriage of the Lamb is come**] The meaning of these figurative expressions appears to be this: After this overthrow of idolatry and superstition, and the discomfiture of antichrist, there will be a more glorious state of Christianity than ever was before.

(Rev. 19:6-8). **“And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. 7 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. 8 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. 9 And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God,”**(Rev. 19:6-8).

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.

[**Arrayed in fine linen**] A prediction that the church should become more pure in her doctrines, more pious in her experience, and more righteous in her conduct, than she had ever been from her formation.

The fine linen here spoken of is not the righteousness of Christ imputed to believers, for it is here called the righteousness of the saints-that which the grace and Spirit of Christ has wrought in them.<sup>20</sup>

The marriage described in Psalm 45, on the other hand, is a union far more glorious and grand. It too is full of romance, beauty, majesty - but it is a marriage that will never end. It is meant for eternal glory!

## Jesus Takes a Bride

### **This Wedding Is All About King Jesus Taking A Bride!**

**David Wilkerson**<sup>21</sup>

At this very moment, you and I are seated in heavenly places with King Jesus. Yet, much greater than that, we are engaged to Him! And soon a grand and glorious marriage will take place - a majestic royal wedding beyond anything this world has ever seen. The commentator for this marriage is the Holy Spirit, who unfolds to us a glorious scene:

King Jesus is standing before His throne - His royal scepter in His hand, His garments full of the wonderful aroma of myrrh and aloes. He has come from the ivory palace of His Father, where He has been anointed with the oil of gladness.

He is dressed in His full military regalia. His glittering sword is strapped upon His thigh. He has conquered all His enemies, and His kingdom is secure. He reigns in peace and power, Victor over all. And, Scripture says, He is "*... fairer than the children of men: grace is poured into thy lips . . .*" (Psa. 45:2).

Every battle this King has fought - every enemy He has laid low, every act of grace and mercy He has provided - has been for His bride. It all has been meant for this moment. And now He is ecstatic, beaming with joy, full of excitement - because He anticipates being joined to His beautiful bride. He gazes down the long corridor of the palace, waiting for her to approach with all her retinue!

The psalmist tells us that the Bridegroom could have chosen a bride from many honorable daughters in the kingdom. "Kings' daughters were among thy honourable women . . ." (Psalm 45:9). But He chose only one: "*...upon thy right hand did stand the queen in gold of Ophir*" (same verse).

Now, Ophir gold was the purest, most refined gold made in those days. And this bride is adorned in it. What a sight she is, as she is ". . . brought unto the king . . ." (verse 14). She absolutely glows, because her heart is pure.

Her golden gown glistens with incredible needlework. This isn't some broad cloth picked out of endless yards; it has been intricately interwoven with threads of the purest gold. And its gold ornaments shine forth spectacularly.

The queen in gold marches toward the King with great fanfare. And what a glorious sound - tambourines, trumpets, stringed instruments! Behind her, as far as the eye can see, is her retinue - an army of virgins, all dressed in white, singing, dancing, praising with great joy. The bride is leading the whole procession - and they're coming to meet the King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

Finally, the queen takes her place at the King's right hand. And everyone is rejoicing - because this is the royal wedding of eternity! **"...the virgins her companions that follow her shall be brought unto thee. With gladness and rejoicing shall they be brought: they shall enter into the king's palace"** (verses 14-15).

Talk about a Holy-Ghost revival meeting! Can you imagine the scene? This wedding is the purpose, the highlight, of all Creation. There stands King Jesus, His heart full of joy. And here comes His bride - the redeemed of mankind - dressed in pure gold, the righteousness of Christ!

Yet, I want to stop here for a moment. So far, this looks like another romantic, royal wedding. My question is: Just who is this bride in gold?

Some commentators say this psalm merely describes an historical marriage between King Joram of Judah and Athaliah. Scholarship shows that there was a great, royal wedding at the time. But to say this psalm is about that wedding is mere conjecture.

I agree with most spiritually-minded scholars that this psalm is messianic. And I believe its message is very clear: It's about Jesus and His bride! The Bridegroom is our King and Lord, Jesus Christ. And the bride is His church - believers who have prepared themselves for His coming - who yearn for Him with great expectancy, and whose hearts are without spot or wrinkle.

***"And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband . . . And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife.***

***"And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal,"*** (Rev. 21:2, 9-11).

This picture in Revelation 21 is a beautiful picture of the last-day church of Jesus Christ! The great, holy city descending out of heaven is His spotless bride - the overcoming church seated with Him right now in heavenly places. This church is built upon the foundation of gospel truths of the twelve apostles. And it is surrounded by walls and gates that keep out everything impure and uninvited.

Scripture also speaks of a pure, crystal water, which represents a clear conscience. And that is another component of this last-day church: It is transparent, pure, walking in the light - with no other temple but Christ!

As the Queen Stands Before Her Bridegroom, The Wedding About to Begin, the Voice of a Third Party Is Heard! The queen in gold is honored, favored, greatly adorned. ***"And now she stands at her Beloved's right hand, the marriage about to be performed. But before the ceremony begins, a voice whispers an admonition to her: "Hearken, O daughter, and consider . . . "*** (Psa. 45:10).

I believe this voice is the Holy Ghost, warning all who are called by His name. He is speaking a word to overcomers - to those most in love with Jesus - saying, "Harken, consider, listen!" This voice comes to the bride in the final moments just before the marriage is to be consummated.

Now, you must understand - the queen has already been chosen. Her heart has already been won to her Bridegroom. She has left her home, family and country and has committed herself to Him. And she is full of joy because she passionately loves the King.

So, let me ask you: Do you think of yourself as chosen by the Lord? Are you the blood-covered, redeemed apple of His eye? Do you love Him with all your heart? Have you forsaken all the world, all your past, for Him? Can you say, "He is mine, and I am committed to Him. Lord, I love You with all my heart!"

My point is this: If you want to be in the bride of Christ, you must be concerned with more than simply escaping a godless hell. Rather, you must desire not to be absent on that great wedding day! You must shudder at the very thought of not being His bride - of not being in His embrace, not spending eternity with Him.

The Holy Ghost's message to the bride was: ***"...forget also thine own people, and thy father's house"*** (Psa. 45:10). The still, small voice was whispering, ***"It's not enough just to leave your past behind. You must also forget it all - put it out of your mind - all past loves and distractions!"***

Jesus said, ***" . . . Whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple"*** (Lk. 14:33). And the messenger here is saying to the bride, "Are you counting the cost as you prepare to be united to Him? Or are you going to give Him mere lip service after the wedding? Have you started a commitment you're willing to finish? Or does your mind wander back to things of your past - old friends, old habits, old loves? If you commit to this marriage, you must not only leave your past behind - you must forget it completely!"

Are the Holy Spirit's words a call for us to physically leave family, job, career? No - never! His warning isn't an excuse to escape the obligations of marriage or family. In fact, the Bible is full of commands and warnings about providing for our household. We are to cling to our mate, care for our relatives and raise our children in the fear of God.

No, this isn't just a physical call. When Jesus speaks of some "not forsaking all," He is speaking of those who turn from Him and cling to idols. An idol is anything that becomes the sole focus of our devotion - anything that possesses our time, attention, money, love, interest.

***"And they forsook the Lord God of their fathers . . . and followed other gods . . ."*** (Judg. 2:12).<sup>22</sup>

### **The New Jerusalem**

(Rev 21:2-7), ***"And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. 3 And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men,***

*and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. 4 And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. 5 And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful. 6 And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely. 7 He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son.”*

### **THE FUTURE STATE**

We have here a more general account of the happiness of the church of God in the future state, by which it seems most safe to understand the heavenly state.

I. A new world now opens to our view (v. 1): I saw a new heaven and a new earth; that is, a new universe; for we suppose the world to be made up of heaven and earth. By the new earth we may understand a new state for the bodies of men, as well as a heaven for their souls. This world is not now newly created, but newly opened, and filled with all those who were the heirs of it. The new heaven and the new earth will not then be distinct; the very earth of the saints, their glorified bodies, will now be spiritual and heavenly, and suited to those pure and bright mansions. To make way for the commencement of this new world, the old world, with all its troubles and commotions, passed away.

II. In this new world the apostle saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down from heaven, not locally, but as to its original: this new Jerusalem is the church of God in its new and perfect state, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband, beautified with all perfection of wisdom and holiness, meet for the full fruition of the Lord Jesus Christ in glory.

III. The blessed presence of God with his people is here proclaimed and admired: I heard a great voice out of heaven, saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, etc., v. 3. Observe,

1. The presence of God with his church is the glory of the church.
2. It is matter of wonder that a holy God should ever dwell with any of the children of men.
3. The presence of God with his people in heaven will not be interrupted as it is on earth, but he will dwell with them continually.
4. The covenant, interest, and relation, that there are now between God and his people, will be filled up and perfected in heaven. They shall be his people; their souls shall be assimilated to him, filled with all the love, honour, and delight in God which their relation to him requires, and this will constitute their perfect holiness; and he will be their God: God himself will be their God; his immediate presence with them, his love fully manifested to them, and his glory put upon them, will be their perfect happiness; then he will fully answer the character of the relation on his part, as they shall do on their part.

IV. This new and blessed state will be free from all trouble and sorrow; for:

1. All the effects of former trouble shall be done away. They have been often before in tears, by reason of sin, of affliction, of the calamities of the church; but now all tears

shall be wiped away; no signs, no remembrance of former sorrows shall remain, any further than to make their present felicity the greater. God himself, as their tender Father, with his own kind hand, shall wipe away the tears of his children; and they would not have been without those tears when God shall come and wipe them away.

2. All the causes of future sorrow shall be forever removed: There shall be neither death nor pain; and therefore no sorrow nor crying; these are things incident to that state in which they were before, but now all former things have passed away.

V. The truth and certainty of this blessed state are ratified by the word and promise of God, and ordered to be committed to writing, as matter of perpetual record, v. 5, 6. The subject-matter of this vision is so great, and of such great importance to the church and people of God, that they have need of the fullest assurances of it; and God therefore from heaven repeats and ratifies the truth thereof. Besides, many ages must pass between the time when this vision was given forth and the accomplishment of it, and many great trials must intervene; and therefore God would have it committed to writing, for perpetual memory, and continual use to his people. Observe,

1. The certainty of the promise averred: These words are faithful and true; and it follows, It is done, is as sure as if it were done already. We may and ought to take God's promise as present payment; if he has said that he makes all things new, it is done.

2. He gives us his titles of honor as a pledge or surety of the full performance, even those titles of Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. As it was his glory that he gave the rise and beginning to the world and to his church, it will be his glory to finish the work begin, and not to leave it imperfect. As his power and will were the first cause of all things, his pleasure and glory are the last end, and he will not lose his design; for then he would no longer be the Alpha and Omega. Men may begin designs which they can never bring to perfection; but the counsel of God shall stand, and he will do all his pleasure.

3. The desires of his people towards this blessed state furnish another evidence of the truth and certainty of it. They thirst after a state of sinless perfection and the uninterrupted enjoyment of God, and God has wrought in them these longing desires, which cannot be satisfied with anything else, and therefore would be the torment of the soul if they were disappointed but it would be inconsistent with the goodness of God, and his love to his people, to create in them holy and heavenly desires, and then deny them their proper satisfaction; and therefore they may be assured that, when they have overcome their present difficulties, he will give them of the fountain of the water of life freely.

VI. The greatness of this future felicity is declared and illustrated,

1. By the freeness of it-it is the free gift of God: He gives of the water of life freely; this will not make it less but more grateful to his people.

2. The fullness of it. The people of God then lie at the fountain-head of all blessedness: they inherit all things (v. 7); enjoying God, they enjoy all things. He is all in all.

3. By the tenure and title by which they enjoy this blessedness-by right of inheritance, as the sons of God, a title of all others the most honorable, as resulting from so near and endeared a relation to God himself, and the most sure and indefeasible, that can no more cease than the relation from which it results.

4. By the vastly different state of the wicked. Their misery helps to illustrate the glory and blessedness of the saints, and the distinguishing goodness of God towards them, v. 8. Here observe,

(1.) The sins of those who perish, among which are first mentioned their cowardliness and unbelief. The fearful lead the van in this black list. They durst not encounter the difficulties of religion, and their slavish fear proceeded from their unbelief; but those who were so dastardly as not to dare to take up the cross of Christ, and discharge their duty to him, were yet so desperate as to run into all manner of abominable wickedness - murder, adultery, sorcery, idolatry, and (Rev 21:1-8).

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(2.) Their punishment: They have their part in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.

[1.] They could not burn at a stake for Christ, but they must burn in hell for sin.

[2.] They must die another death after their natural death; the agonies and terrors of the first death will consign them over to the far greater terrors and agonies of eternal death, to die and to be always dying.

[3.] This misery will be their proper part and portion, what they have justly deserved, what they have in effect chosen, and what they have prepared themselves for by their sins. Thus the misery of the damned will illustrate the blessedness of those that are saved, and the blessedness of the saved will aggravate the misery of those that are damned.<sup>23</sup>

## **THE BRIDE ~THE LAMB'S WIFE**

### **ANGEL INTRODUCES THE BRIDE**

**“And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will shew thee**

**the bride, the Lamb's wife. 10 And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, 11 Having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal . . . ”** (Rev. 21:9-11).

The thought of both men and women as a bride need not puzzle you. For although God made us male and female (Gen. 1:27), that distinction is relevant only in our earthly perspective. As far as our relationship to Christ, and our position of being in Christ, there is no relevance of gender to him.

(Gal 3:26-29), **“For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. 27 For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. 28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. 29 And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.”**

[**And if ye be Christ's**] Or, as several good MSS. read, If ye be one in Christ. If ye have all received justification through his blood, and the mind that was in him, then are ye Abraham's seed; ye are that real, spiritual posterity of Abraham, that other seed, to whom the promises were made; and then heirs, according to that promise, being fitted for the rest that remains for the people of God, that heavenly inheritance which was typified by the earthly Canaan, even to the Jews.<sup>24</sup>

(Gal 3:29), (Gal 3:29).

1. The Galatians, it appears, had begun well, and for a time run well, but they permitted Satan to hinder, and they stopped short of the prize. Let us beware of those teachers who would draw us away from trusting in Christ crucified. By listening too such, the Galatians lost their religion.

2. The temptation that leads us astray may be as sudden as it is successful. We may lose in one moment the fruit of a whole life! How frequently is this the case, and how few lay it to heart! A man may fall by the means of his understanding, as well as by means of his passions.

3. How strange is it that there should be found any backslider! that one who once felt the power of Christ should ever turn aside! But it is still stranger that anyone who has felt it, and given in his life and conversation full proof that he has felt it, should not only let it slip, but at last deny that he ever had it, and even ridicules a work of grace in the heart! Such instances have appeared among men.

The Jewish covenant, the sign of which was circumcision, is annulled, though the people with whom it was made are still preserved, and they preserve the rite or sign. Why then should the covenant be annulled? This question admits a

twofold answer. This covenant was designed to last only for a time, and when that time came, having waxed old, it vanished away.

4. It was long before that void, through want of the performance of the conditions. The covenant did not state merely, ye shall be circumcised, and observe all the rites and ceremonies of the law; but, ye shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength, and your neighbor as yourself. This condition, which was the very soul of the covenant, was universally broken by that people. Need they wonder, therefore, that God has cast them off? Jesus alone can restore them, and him they continue to reject. To us the new covenant says the same things: Ye shall love the Lord, etc.; if we do not so, we also shall be cut off. Take heed, lest he who did not spare the natural branches, spare not thee; therefore, make a profitable use of the goodness and severity of God.<sup>25</sup>

Note: In Verse 26, both men and women are called 'sons' of God. In our relationship to God, gender distinctions are not significant.

There will be a bride, who will be presented perfect to Jesus Christ.

## **HUSBANDS LOVE YOUR WIVES**

The Bible tells husbands to love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for His Church. It is through His righteousness that makes His church holy. This happens through Jesus cleansing her by the washing with water through the power of His Word. His love and His Word, He is able to present her to His Father as a radiant church without spot or wrinkle or any other blemish, but His wife is sanctified and vindicated by His blood.

This is a profound mystery — but I am talking about Christ and the church. (Eph. 5:32).

**[Husbands, love your wives]** The duty of the wife is to obey; the right of the husband is to command. But the apostle would guard against the abuse of that right by enjoining the manifestation of such a spirit on the husband as would secure obedience on the part of the wife. He proceeds, therefore, to show, that the husband, in all his conversation with the wife, should manifest the same spirit which the Lord Jesus did toward the church; or, in other words, he holds up the conduct of the Redeemer toward the church, as the model for a husband to imitate. If a husband wished a rule that would be short, simple, clear, and efficacious, about the manner in which he should regard and treat his wife, he could not find a better one than that here suggested.

**[Even as Christ loved the church]** This was the strongest love that has ever been evinced in this world. It follows, that a husband is in no danger of loving his wife too much, provided she be not loved more than God. We are to make the love which Christ had for the church the model.

**[And gave himself for it]** Gave himself to die to redeem it. The meaning here is, that husbands are to imitate the Redeemer in this respect. As he gave himself to suffer on the cross to save the church, so we are to be willing to deny ourselves, and to bear toil and trial, that we may promote the happiness of the wife. It is the duty of the husband to toil for her support; to provide for her needs; to deny himself of rest and ease, if necessary, in order to attend on her in sickness to go before her in danger; to defend her if she is in peril; and to be ready to die to save her Why should he not be? If they are shipwrecked, and there is a single plank on which safety can be secured, should he not be willing to place her on that, and see her safe at all hazards to himself? But there may be more implied in this than that a man is to toil, and even to lay down his life for the welfare of his wife. Christ laid down his life to save the church; and a husband should feel that it should be one great object of his life to promote the salvation of his wife. He is bound so to live as not to interfere with her salvation, but so as to promote it in every way possible. He is to furnish her all the "facilities" that she may need, to enable her to attend on the worship of God; and to throw no obstacles in her way. He is to set her the example; to counsel her if she needs counsel, and to make the path of salvation as easy for her as possible. If a husband has the spirit and self-denial of the Savior, he will regard no sacrifice too great if he may promote the salvation of his family.<sup>26</sup>

The bride-church is called to measure up to the stature of Jesus Christ!

Those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.

(Rom 8:29-30), **“For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. 30 Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.”**

## **BODY OF CHRIST**

**Jesus gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.**

(Eph. 4:11-15).

That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;

**[Be no more children]** Children, here, are opposed to the perfect man in the preceding verse; and the state of both is well explained by the apostle's allusions.

The man is grown up strong and healthy, and has attained such a measure or height as qualifies him for the most respectable place in the ranks of his country.

The child is ignorant, weak, and unsteady, tossed about in the nurse's arms, or whirled round in the giddy sports or mazes of youth; this seems to be the apostle's allusion. Being tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, refers to some kind of ancient play, but what I cannot absolutely determine; probably to something similar to a top, or to our paper kite.

**[By the sleight of men]** The words *en tee kubeia* refer to the arts used by gamblers, who employ false dice that will always throw up one kind of number, which is that by which those who play with them cannot win.

**[Cunning craftiness]** It is difficult to give a literal translation of the original words: *en panourgia pros teen methodeian tees planees*. "By cunning, for the purpose of using the various means of deception." *Panourgia* signifies craft and subtlety in general, cheating and imposition: *methodeia*, from which we have our term method, signifies a wile, a particular sleight, mode of tricking and deceiving; it is applied to the arts which the Devil uses to deceive and destroy souls; (see Eph. 6:11), called there the WILES of the Devil. From this it seems that various arts were used, both by the Greek sophists and the Judaizing teachers, to render the Gospel of none effect, or to adulterate and corrupt it.<sup>27</sup>

**“Unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ,”** (Eph. 4:13).

**In Eden God created a bride for Adam, a help meet for him** (Gen. 2:18 KJV). **The bride was meet for him— that is, suitable, fitting, adapted to and completing him; as Lamsa's translation says, "a helper who is like him."**

The Lord God said, **"It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him."... Then the Lord God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man.**" (Gen. 2:18,22).

1. The Bible (1 Cor. 15:45-49). gives certain parallels (and contrasts!) between Adam and Jesus, calling the former "the first man Adam . . . the first man," and calling Jesus "the last Adam . . . the second man from heaven."

2. I am convinced that just as God presented a suitable bride to the first Adam, so he will present a suitable bride to Jesus, the last Adam.

Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man. (Lk. 21:36).

The bride of Christ will be a perfect bride, with no spot or blemish.

**Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle, or any other blemish, but holy and blameless.** (Eph. 5:25-27).

In the last days a measuring rod will be applied to the church. The standard of measurement, of evaluation, will be **"the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ"** (Eph. 4:13).

I was given a reed like a measuring rod and was told, **"Go and measure the temple of God and the altar, and count the worshipers there."** (Rev. 11:1).

The Apostle Paul, who spoke of the church as Christ's intended bride, also in the same epistle pointed that church-bride toward the standard of perfection.

**I promised you to one husband, to Christ.** (2 Cor. 11:2).

**Our prayer is for your perfection.** (2 Cor. 13:9).

**Finally, brothers, good-by. Aim for perfection.** (2 Cor. 13:11).

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1. (from Adam Clarke's Commentary, Electronic Database. Copyright © 1996, 2003 by Biblesoft, Inc. All rights reserved.)
  2. See Kimchi in Isa 65:13.(from Adam Clarke's Commentary,
  3. <http://www.gotquestions.org/bride-of-Christ.html>
  4. ibid
  5. ibid
  6. ibid
  7. TALMUD Beracoth, fol. 28.
  8. ibid, Adam . . .
  9. Ibid
  10. ibid, Matt 25:8
  11. ibid, Adams
  - 12.. Spurgeon's Daily Devotion, Electronic.
  - 13.. ibid, (from Adam Clarke's Commentary,
  - 14.. ibid
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  - 16.. ibid
  - 17.. ibid, (from Adam Clarke's Commentary,
  - 18.. ibid
  - 19.. ibid
  - 20.. ibid
  - 21.. <http://www.tsculpitseries.org/english/1990s/ts950313.html>

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22.. **ibid**

23.. (from Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible: New Modern Edition, Electronic Database.  
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24.. **ibid**

25.. **ibid**

26.. **ibid**, from Barnes' Notes,

27.. **ibid**, (from Adam Clarke's