

Lesson Outline

I Defining Some Important Words

- Betrothal
- Espousal
- Marriage

II Identity Of The Bride

- A. Is ISRAEL The Bride?
- B. Do The Saints Of All Ages Make up The Bride?
- C. Is The Church The Bride?
- D. What Is The Church?

III The Preparation Of The Bride

- A. Christ's Love For His Churches
- B. Christ's Plan For His Churches
- C. Christ's Preparing Of His Churches

IV The Purity Of The Bride

- A. Can A Church Lose Her Purity?
- B. When Does A Church Lose Her Purity?
- C. What Happens When A Church Loses Her Purity?

V The Presentation Of The Bride

- A. The Time Of The Marriage
- B. The Place Of The Marriage

C. The Participants At The Marriage

D. The Celebration Of The Marriage

VI The Picture Of The Bride

- A. The Bride Is Found
- B. The Tokens Of Betrothal Are Received
- C. The Bride Decides
- D. The Bride Comes To The Son
- E. The Marriage Takes Place

VII The Privilege Of The Bride

- A. A Future Wife Is Chosen
- B. The Couple Are Introduced
- C. The Dowry Is Paid
- D. The Token Is Given
- E. The Period Of Espousal
- F. The Wedding Procession
- G. The Marriage Feast
- H. The Honeymoon
- I. The New Home

VIII The Parody Of The Bride

- A. The Name Of The Bride
- B. The Nature Of The False Bride
- C. The Identity Of The False Bride

The Bride of Christ

This subject is one of the more unfamiliar and misunderstood doctrines of the Word of God. One reason for this has been due to some of the bizarre claims made over the years as to who or what constitutes the Bride of Christ. The title itself is not used consistently in the New Testament. It is “bride” in John 3 and Revelation 22, “espoused” in II Corinthians 11 and “wife” in Revelation 19 and 21.

In Baptist circles the doctrine has become somewhat divisive. The reasons for this are basic:

- Pride of position – where some brethren have taken a bombastic [inflated or pretentious] attitude of superiority over those they consider are not “in the Bride,” etc.
- Misunderstanding – where some think that for a Bible-believing Baptist to believe the Bride of Christ means he believes only Baptists are saved, or that only Baptists will be raptured.

Nevertheless, the fact remains that the doctrine of the Bride of Christ **is** found in the Bible (John 3:29, Revelation 19:7-9, 22:17). Therefore the purpose of this lesson is to study what the Word of God teaches on this matter. We will find a beautiful, thrilling, and challenging doctrine.

I Defining Some Important Words

References to the Bride of Christ are couched in the customs of the oriental and Biblical marriage – which differ from those of the western world. Engagement, then marriage is the usual practice in this country. However, the Bible uses three (3) terms:

- **Betrothal** – engagement, often arranged by others (read Exodus 21:8-11 ⁸ If she please not her master, who hath betrothed her to himself, then shall he let her be redeemed: to sell her unto a strange nation he shall have no power, seeing he hath dealt deceitfully with her. ⁹ And if he have betrothed her unto his son, he shall deal with her after the manner of daughters. ¹⁰ If he take him another wife; her food, her raiment, and her duty of marriage, shall he not diminish. ¹¹ And if he do not these three unto her, then shall she go out free without money.

- **Espousal** – engagement, demonstrated by expensive gifts and a dowry. The period of espousal was typically one year, during which time neither party saw each other. **For some examples**, read:
 - **II Samuel 3:14** ¹⁴ And David sent messengers to Ishbosheth Saul's son, saying, Deliver me my wife Michal, which I espoused to me for an hundred foreskins of the Philistines.
 - **Genesis 34:12** ¹¹ And Shechem said unto her father [Jacob] and unto her brethren, Let me find grace in your eyes, and what ye shall say unto me I will give. ¹² Ask me never so much dowry and gift, and I will give according as ye shall say unto me: but give me the damsel to wife.

Though NOT consummated, espousal was as binding as marriage.

- **Matthew 1:18** ¹⁸ Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost.
 - **Luke 1:27** ²⁷ To a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary.
 - **Luke 2:5** ⁵ To be taxed with Mary his espoused **wife**, being great with child.
- **Marriage** – the consummation, accompanied by long feasting (usually one week). Read **Matthew 22:1-10** ¹ And Jesus answered and spake unto them again by parables, and said, ² The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his son, ³ And sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden to the wedding: and they would not come. ⁴ Again, he sent forth other servants, saying, Tell them which are bidden, Behold, I have prepared my dinner: my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready: come unto the marriage. ⁵ But they made light of it, and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise: ⁶ And the remnant took his servants, and entreated them spitefully, and slew them. ⁷ But when the king heard thereof, he was wroth: and he sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city. ⁸ Then saith he to his servants, The wedding is ready, but they which were bidden were not worthy. ⁹ Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage. ¹⁰ So those servants went out into the highways, and gathered together all as many as they found, both bad and good: and the wedding was furnished with guests.

II Identity Of The Bride

The first question to consider is: Who or what is the Bride of Christ? There have been a number of suggestions put forward which will now be considered.

A. Is ISRAEL The Bride?

Some believe the nation of Israel is the Bride of Christ, based upon many passages such as follows. But we will see that this is NOT the correct interpretation:

Isaiah 54:5-6 ⁵ *For thy Maker is thine husband; the LORD of hosts is his name; and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel; The God of the whole earth shall he be called.* ⁶ *For the LORD hath called thee as a woman forsaken and grieved in spirit, and a wife of youth, when thou wast refused, saith thy God.* ⁷ *For a small moment have I forsaken thee; but with great mercies will I gather thee.*

1. The Lord refers to Himself as Israel's husband.
2. Israel is called a wife of youth.
3. According to Isaiah 54:7, God has forsaken Israel for a small moment, but one day will gather them with great mercies.

Read Jeremiah 3:8 ⁸ *And I saw, when for all the causes whereby backsliding Israel committed adultery I had put her away, and given her a bill of divorce; yet her treacherous sister Judah feared not, but went and played the harlot also.*

[The Book of Jeremiah (630 - 580 B.C.) is primarily a message of judgment on Judah for rampant idolatry. After the death of **King Josiah**, the last righteous king, the nation of Judah had almost completely abandoned God and His commandments. Jeremiah compares Judah to a prostitute. God had promised that He would judge idolatry most severely, and Jeremiah was warning Judah that God's judgment was at hand. God had delivered Judah from destruction on countless occasions, but His mercy was at its end. Jeremiah records King

Nebuchadnezzar conquering Judah and making it subject to him. After further rebellion, God brought Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonian armies back to destroy and desolate Judah and Jerusalem. Even in this most severe judgment, God promises the restoration of Judah back into the land God has given them.]

4. According to Jeremiah 3:8, Israel committed adultery and Judah played the harlot.
5. According to Jeremiah 3:8, God put away Israel and given her a bill of divorce.
6. Read Jeremiah 3:14 ¹⁴ *Turn, O backsliding children, saith the LORD; for I am married unto you: and I will take you one of a city, and two of a family, and I will bring you to Zion:* The LORD declares He is married to Israel.
7. Read Ezekiel 16:30-33 (written 593 and 565 B.C. during the Babylonian captivity of the Jews) ³⁰ *How weak is thine heart, saith the LORD GOD, seeing thou doest all these things, the work of an imperious whorish woman;* ³¹ *In that thou buildest thine eminent place in the head of every way, and makest thine high place in every street; and hast not been as an harlot, in that thou scornest hire;* ³² *But as a **wife** that committeth adultery, which taketh strangers instead of her husband!* ³³ *They give gifts to all whores: but thou givest thy gifts to all thy lovers, and hirest them, that they may come unto thee on every side for thy whoredom.*
8. Read Hosea 2:19-20 ¹⁹ *And I will betroth thee unto me for ever; yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in lovingkindness, and in mercies.* ²⁰ *I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness: and thou shalt know the LORD.* The Lord will once more betroth His chosen people in righteousness, judgment, loving kindness, mercy, and faithfulness. [The Book of Hosea was likely written between 755 and 725 B.C. Hosea wrote this book to remind the Israelites—and us—that ours is a loving God whose loyalty to His covenant people is unwavering. In spite of Israel's continual turning to false gods, God's steadfast love is portrayed in the long-suffering husband of the unfaithful wife.]

9. Israel will be reunited with her estranged Husband – at the second coming of Christ. Read Zechariah [written 520 and 470 B.C. Zechariah emphasized that God has used His prophets to teach, warn and correct His people. Unfortunately, they refused to listen. Their sin brought God's punishment. The book also bears evidence that even prophecy could be corrupted. History shows that in this period prophecy fell into disfavor among the Jews, leading to the period between the Testaments when no lasting prophetic voice spoke to God's people.]
- Zechariah 12:10 ¹⁰ *And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn.*
 - Zechariah 13:9 ⁹ *And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried: they shall call on my name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is my people: and they shall say, The LORD is my God.*

However, Israel is NOT the Bride of Christ for two reasons:

- Israel is a **wife**, NOT A BRIDE. (Israel is sometimes referred to as the wife of Jehovah)
- Israel's future reconciliation occurs on Earth, not in Heaven
 - Read Zechariah 14:4 (regarding the second coming of Jesus Christ from verse 14:1): ¹ *Behold, the day of the LORD cometh, and thy spoil shall be divided in the midst of thee.* ² *For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle; and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished; and half of the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city.* ³ *Then shall the LORD go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle.* ⁴ *And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the*

midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south.

- However, scripture states the marriage of the Lamb is in Heaven. Read Revelation 19:7 (from verse 1) ¹ And after these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God: ² For true and righteous are his judgments: for he hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand. ³ And again they said, Alleluia And her smoke rose up for ever and ever. ⁴ And the four and twenty elders and the four beasts fell down and worshipped God that sat on the throne, saying, Amen; Alleluia. ⁵ And a voice came out of the throne, saying, Praise our God, all ye his servants, and ye that fear him, both small and great. ⁶ 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. ¹⁰ And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me, See thou do it not: I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy. ¹¹ And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. ¹² His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself. ¹³ And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God. ¹⁴ And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. ¹⁵ And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. ¹⁶ And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS. ¹⁷ And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God; ¹⁸ That ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the

flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great. ¹⁹ And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army.

Revelation 19 makes it clear: This marriage is Heaven before Christ returns to the Earth.

B. Do The Saints Of All Ages Make Up The Bride?

This is a plausible suggestion, because saved people are most certainly the objects of the great love of the Lord Jesus Christ. Read:

- Romans 5:8 ⁸ But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.
- Romans 8:38 ³⁸ For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, ³⁹ Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.
- I John 4:10(from verse 7) ⁷ Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. ⁸ He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love. ⁹ In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. ¹⁰ Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.
- Revelation 1:5(b) ⁵ And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood

However, study the following scriptures to see if all saved people from all ages really make up the Bride of Christ

1. Read John 3:29 (from verse 23 and beyond) ²³ And John also was baptizing in Aenon near to Salim, because there was much water there: and they came, and were baptized. ²⁴ For John was not yet cast into prison. ²⁵ Then there arose a question between some of John's disciples and the Jews about purifying. ²⁶ And they came unto John, and said unto him, Rabbi, he that was with thee beyond Jordan, to whom thou barest witness, behold, the same baptizeth, and all men come to him. ²⁷ John answered and said, A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven. ²⁸ 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. ³¹ He that cometh from above is above all: he that is of the earth is earthly, and speaketh of the earth: he that cometh from heaven is above all. ³² And what he hath seen and heard, that he testifieth; and no man receiveth his testimony. ³³ He that hath received his testimony hath set to his seal that God is true. ³⁴ For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him. ³⁵ The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand. ³⁶ He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.

a. John the Baptist calls himself **a friend of the bride groom (not the bride).**

b. Did John consider himself to be in or of the Bride? Yes since John the Baptist: *“standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice: this my joy therefore is fulfilled.”*

c. Was John the Baptist a saved man? Read:

➤ Luke 1:15-16 (from verse 11) ¹¹ *And there appeared unto him an angel of the Lord standing on the right side of the altar of incense.* ¹² *And when Zacharias saw him, he was troubled, and fear fell upon him.* ¹³ *But the angel said unto him, Fear not, Zacharias: for thy prayer is heard; and thy wife Elisabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John.* ¹⁴ *And thou shalt have joy and gladness; and many shall rejoice at his birth.* ¹⁵ *For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb.* ¹⁶ *And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God.* ¹⁷ *And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn*

the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.

- Luke 7:24-28 (from verse 11 for context): ¹¹ And it came to pass the day after, that he went into a city called Nain; and many of his disciples went with him, and much people. ¹² Now when he came nigh to the gate of the city, behold, there was a dead man carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow: and much people of the city was with her. ¹³ And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her, and said unto her, Weep not. ¹⁴ And he came and touched the bier: and they that bare him stood still. And he said, **Young man, I say unto thee, Arise.** ¹⁵ And he that was dead sat up, and began to speak. And he delivered him to his mother. ¹⁶ And there came a fear on all: and they glorified God, saying, That a great prophet is risen up among us; and, That God hath visited his people. ¹⁷ And this rumour of him went forth throughout all Judaea, and throughout all the region round about. ¹⁸ And the disciples of John shewed him of all these things. ¹⁹ And John calling unto him two of his disciples sent them to Jesus, saying, Art thou he that should come? or look we for another? ²⁰ When the men were come unto him, they said, John Baptist hath sent us unto thee, saying, Art thou he that should come? or look we for another? ²¹ And in that same hour he cured many of their infirmities and plagues, and of evil spirits; and unto many that were blind he gave sight. ²² Then Jesus answering said unto them, **Go your way, and tell John what things ye have seen and heard; how that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, to the poor the gospel is preached.** ²³ **And blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me.** ²⁴ And when the messengers of John were departed, he began to speak unto the people concerning John, **What went ye out into the wilderness for to see? A reed shaken with the wind?** ²⁵ **But what went ye out for to see? A man clothed in soft raiment? Behold, they which are gorgeously apparelled, and live delicately, are in kings' courts.** ²⁶ **But what went ye out for to see? A prophet? Yea, I say unto you, and much more than a prophet.** ²⁷ **This is he, of whom it is written, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee.** ²⁸ **For I say unto you, Among those that are born of women there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist: but he that is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he.**

John the Baptist was a saved man.

2. Read Luke 5:33-35 From verse 29

[A great message of redemption]²⁹ *And Levi made him a great feast in his own house: and there was a great company of publicans and of others that sat down with them.*³⁰ *But their scribes and Pharisees murmured against his disciples, saying, Why do ye eat and drink with publicans and sinners?*³¹ *And Jesus answering said unto them, They that are whole need not a physician; but they that are sick.*³² ***I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.***

³³ *And they said unto him, Why do the disciples of John fast often, and make prayers, and likewise the disciples of the Pharisees; but thine eat and drink?*³⁴ *And he said unto them, Can ye make the children of the bridechamber fast, while the bridegroom is with them?*³⁵ *But the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then shall they fast in those days.*³⁶ *And he spake also a parable unto them; No man putteth a piece of a new garment upon an old; if otherwise, then both the new maketh a rent, and the piece that was taken out of the new agreeth not with the old.*³⁷ *And no man putteth new wine into old bottles; else the new wine will burst the bottles, and be spilled, and the bottles shall perish.*

a. What 3 groups of disciples are mentioned?

- Disciples of John the Baptists
- Disciples of the Pharisees
- Disciples of Jesus

b. The disciples of Jesus were associated with the bridegroom.

c. Read John 1:35-42 ³⁵ *Again the next day after John [the Baptist] stood, and two of his disciples;*³⁶ *And looking upon Jesus as he walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God!*³⁷ *And the two disciples [of John the Baptist] heard him speak, and they followed Jesus.*³⁸ *Then Jesus turned, and saw them following, and saith unto them, What seek ye? They said unto him, Rabbi, (which is to say, being interpreted, Master,) where dwellest thou?*³⁹ *He saith unto them, Come and see. They came and saw where he dwelt, and abode with him that day: for it was about the tenth hour.*⁴⁰ *One of the two which heard John speak, and followed him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother.*⁴¹ *He first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messias, which is, being interpreted, the*

Christ. ⁴² And he brought him to Jesus. And when Jesus beheld him, he said, Thou art Simon the son of Jona: thou shalt be called Cephas, which is by interpretation, A stone.

Two of disciples of John Baptist (Andrew and Simon) who were saved and baptized became Disciples of Christ

The saints of all ages will enjoy the blessings of eternity with Christ: Read Revelation 21:24 (from verse 23) ²³ And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof. ²⁴ And the nations of them **which are saved** shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it. ²⁵ And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there. ²⁶ And they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it. ²⁷ And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: **but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life.**

However, the saved of all ages do not constitute the Bride of Christ because the Bible **distinguishes** the bride from other saved people.

C. Is The Church The Bride?

1. Read II Corinthians 1:1 ¹ Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, unto the church of God which is at Corinth, with all the saints which are in all Achaia:
 - a. Addressed to the church of God
 - b. Which is at Corinth
 - c. With all the saints which are in Achaia

2. Some might argue that the words “with all the saints” widen the membership to include every believer – regardless of church membership. However a careful study of the following scriptures always shows these “saints” were always connected with churches:

- a. I Corinthians 1:2² Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both their's and our's:
- b. I Corinthians 14:33³³ For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints.
- c. Ephesians 1:1¹ Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus:
- d. Ephesians 4:12¹² For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:
- e. Philippians 1:1¹ Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons:
- f. Colossians 1:2¹ Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timotheus our brother,² To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ which are at Colosse: Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

“Saints” were always connected with churches!

3. Read II Corinthians 11:2² 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 church at Corinth had been espoused by the apostle Paul to Christ.

4. Read Ephesians 5:25b²⁵ Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; ... Christ loved the church.
5. Read Ephesians 5:32 (from verse 28)²⁸ So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself.²⁹ For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church:³⁰ For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.³¹ For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh.³² **This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.**³³ Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband.

The conclusion we draw from scriptures is that the Bride of Christ IS none other than the Church of Lord Jesus Christ.

D. But, what Is The Church?

Remember, the Bible speaks only of “the Church” in a generic or institutional sense – in the same way that the Bible speaks of “the husband” or “the wife.” There is no such thing as a universal “Church” [an invisible, mystical Body of Christ]. There are only churcheses.

A simple Biblical definition of a New Testament Church is “An assembly of baptized believers, organized to carry out the Lord’s work.”

III The Preparation Of The Bride

There is a wonderful scripture passage in which the Lord’s relationship with His churches is held up as an example of true love between a husband and wife. Read Ephesians 5:25-33 (from verse 23) ²³ For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. ²⁴ Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing. ²⁵ 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. ²⁸ So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. ²⁹ For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church: ³⁰ For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. ³¹ For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. ³² This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church. ³³ Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband.

A. Christ’s Love For His Churches

1. He gave himself for it. (the church – a selfless love)
2. He nourished it. (- a nurturing love)
3. He cherished it. (- a possessive love)

B. Christ's Plan For His Churches

The love of Christ for His churches is a visionary love.

1. One day Christ will present His bride to Himself
2. On His wedding day, the Lord desires His bride be presented as:
 - a. A glorious church
 - b. A spotless church
 - c. A wrinkle-free church
 - d. A holy church
 - e. A blemish-free church
3. **Read 2 Corinthians 11:2** 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 Lord expects His bride to be presented as a pure, chaste virgin.
4. **For the marriage of the Lamb to the Bride of Christ, read Revelation 19:7**
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.
On the wedding day the bride will have made herself ready.

C. Christ's Preparing Of His Churches

1. **Read Ephesians 5:26** ²⁶ That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, The Lord washes His bride with the WORD of GOD.
2. **Read John 17:17 (from verse 1 since it's so beautiful)** ¹ These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee: ² As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. ³ And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent. ⁴ I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. ⁵ And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was. ⁶

I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word. ⁷ Now they have known that all things whatsoever thou hast given me are of thee. ⁸ For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me. ⁹ I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine. ¹⁰ And all mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them. ¹¹ And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are. ¹² While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled. ¹³ And now come I to thee; and these things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves. ¹⁴ I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. ¹⁵ I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil. ¹⁶ They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. ¹⁷ **Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth. The applied Word of Truth will sanctify (separate) His bride from the world.**

3. According to oriental customs of marriage, the bride would spend a lot of time and money preparing for her wedding day:

- a. **Read Ester 2:7f and 12 (from verse 1 for context)** ¹ After these things, when the wrath of king Ahasuerus was appeased, he remembered Vashti, and what she had done, and what was decreed against her. ² Then said the king's servants that ministered unto him, Let there be fair young virgins sought for the king: ³ And let the king appoint officers in all the provinces of his kingdom, that they may gather together all the fair young virgins unto Shushan the palace, to the house of the women, unto the custody of Hege the king's chamberlain, keeper of the women; and let their things for purification be given them: ⁴ And let the maiden which pleaseth the king be queen instead of Vashti. And the thing pleased the king; and he did so. ⁵ Now in Shushan the palace there was a certain Jew, whose name was Mordecai, the son of Jair, the son of Shimei, the son of Kish, a Benjamite; ⁶ Who had been carried away from Jerusalem with the captivity which had been carried away with Jeconiah king of Judah, whom Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon had carried away. ⁷ And he brought up Hadassah, that is, Esther, his uncle's daughter: for she had neither father nor mother, and **the maid was fair and beautiful;** whom Mordecai, when her father and mother were dead, took for his own daughter. ⁸ So it came to pass, when the king's commandment and his decree was heard, and when

many maidens were gathered together unto Shushan the palace, to the custody of Hegai, that Esther was brought also unto the king's house, to the custody of Hegai, keeper of the women. ⁹ And the maiden pleased him, and she obtained kindness of him; and he speedily gave her her things for purification, with such things as belonged to her, and seven maidens, which were meet to be given her, out of the king's house: and he preferred her and her maids unto the best place of the house of the women. ¹⁰ Esther had not shewed her people nor her kindred: for Mordecai had charged her that she should not shew it. ¹¹ And Mordecai walked every day before the court of the women's house, to know how Esther did, and what should become of her. ¹² Now when every maid's turn was come to go in to king Ahasuerus, after that she had been twelve months, according to the manner of the women, (for so were the days of their purifications accomplished, to wit, six months with oil of myrrh, and six months with sweet odours, and with other things for the purifying of the women:)

Ester was fair and beautiful yet she took 12 months of preparation for marriage.

b. Read Isaiah 61:10 to see a bride would adorn herself with her jewels.

¹⁰ I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels.

c. Read Ezekiel 16: 10-14 and observe how the Lord describes His preparation of Israel as His wife.

¹⁰ I clothed thee also with brodered work, and shod thee with badgers' skin, and I girded thee about with fine linen, and I covered thee with silk. ¹¹ I decked thee also with ornaments, and I put bracelets upon thy hands, and a chain on thy neck. ¹² And I put a jewel on thy forehead, and earrings in thine ears, and a beautiful crown upon thine head. ¹³ Thus wast thou decked with gold and silver; and thy raiment was of fine linen, and silk, and brodered work; thou didst eat fine flour, and honey, and oil: and thou wast exceeding beautiful, and thou didst prosper into a kingdom. ¹⁴ And thy renown went forth among the heathen for thy beauty: for it was perfect through my comeliness, which I had put upon thee, saith the Lord GOD.

d. **Read II Peter 2:13 to see the spots and blemishes which afflict the Lord's churches: (basically apostasy) [from verse 1]**

¹ But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. ² And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. ³ And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not. ⁴ For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment; ⁵ And spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly; ⁶ And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrha into ashes condemned them with an overthrow, making them an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly; ⁷ And delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked: ⁸ (For that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds;) ⁹ The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished: ¹⁰ But chiefly them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and despise government. Presumptuous are they, selfwilled, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities. ¹¹ Whereas angels, which are greater in power and might, bring not railing accusation against them before the Lord. ¹² But these, as natural brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed, speak evil of the things that they understand not; and shall utterly perish in their own corruption; ¹³ And shall receive the reward of unrighteousness, as they that count it pleasure to riot in the day time. Spots they are and blemishes, sporting themselves with their own deceivings while they feast with you;

IV The Purity Of The Bride

The New Testament uses three important metaphors to describe a true Church:

- Each New Testament church is likened to a **Body**, with Christ as its head. **This speaks of service.** Read Colossians 1:18a (from verse 12) ¹² Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: ¹³ Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us

into the kingdom of his dear Son: ¹⁴ In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins: ¹⁵ Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: ¹⁶ For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: ¹⁷ And he is before all things, and by him all things consist. ¹⁸ **And he is the head of the body, the church:** who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.

- Each true New Testament Church is likened to a **Building** with Christ as the chief cornerstone. **This speaks of sanctuary – the special presence of God.** Read Ephesians 2:20-22 (from verse 13) ¹³ But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. ¹⁴ For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; ¹⁵ Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; ¹⁶ And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: ¹⁷ And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh. ¹⁸ For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father. ¹⁹ Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; ²⁰ **And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; ²¹ In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: ²² In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.** This speaks of sanctuary – the special presence of GOD.
- Each true New Testament church is likened to a **BRIDE**, with Christ as the BRIDEGROOM. **This speaks of spotlessness.**

A. Can A Church Lose Her Purity?

1. The apostle's greatest fear for the church at Corinth was that she might be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. Read II Corinthians 11:3d (from verse 1) ¹ Would to God ye could bear with me a little in my folly: and indeed bear with me. 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. ³ But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, **so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.** ⁴ For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or if ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with him.

2. Satan employs the same methods by which he beguiled Eve – II Corinthians 11:3c (above).
 - a. The first recorded words of Satan on the planet Earth were, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? Read Genesis 3:1 ¹ Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?
 - b. Satan's foremost attack is to create doubt in God's WORD.
 - c. Satan uses his ministers to sow seeds of corruption in a church. Read II Corinthians 11:15 (from verse 13) ¹³ For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. ¹⁴ And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. ¹⁵ **Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works.** ¹⁶ I say again, let no man think me a fool; if otherwise, yet as a fool receive me, that I may boast myself a little.

3. The church at Ephesus eventually left its "first love".
 - a. Read Revelation 2:4 (from verse 2) ² I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars: ³ And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted. ⁴ Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love.

- b. Contrast this with the Song of Solomon 2:2-5 ¹ I [Jesus] am the rose of Sharon, and the lily of the valleys. ² As the lily among thorns, so is my love among the daughters. ³ As the apple tree among the trees of the wood, so is my beloved among the sons. I sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste. ⁴ He brought me to the banqueting house, and his banner over me was love. ⁵ Stay me with flagons, comfort me with apples: for I am sick of love.
4. The church of the Laodiceans had effectively left the Bridegroom standing at the altar, knocking [**they had forgotten their passion for Christ and had become lukewarm**].
- a. Read Revelation 3:20 (from verse 19) 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.
- b. Compare this with Song of Solomon 5:2-9 (from verse 1) ¹ I am come into my garden, my sister, my spouse: I have gathered my myrrh with my spice; I have eaten my honeycomb with my honey; I have drunk my wine with my milk: eat, O friends; drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved. ² I sleep, but my heart waketh: it is the voice of my beloved that knocketh, saying, Open to me, my sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled: for my head is filled with dew, and my locks with the drops of the night. ³ I have put off my coat; how shall I put it on? I have washed my feet; how shall I defile them? ⁴ My beloved put in his hand by the hole of the door, and my bowels were moved for him. ⁵ I rose up to open to my beloved; and my hands dropped with myrrh, and my fingers with sweet smelling myrrh, upon the handles of the lock.

B. When Does A Church Lose Her Purity?

1. A true New Testament church loses her purity when she receives a “Bible” that is corrupt. Read II Corinthians 2:17 ¹⁷ For we are not as many, which corrupt the word of God: but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ.

2. A New Testament church loses her purity when a receives a doctrine that is corrupt. Read about some New Testament church struggles: Revelation 2: 12-24 ¹² And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write; These things saith he which hath the sharp sword with two edges; ¹³ I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is: and thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith, even in those days wherein Antipas was my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth. ¹⁴ But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication. ¹⁵ So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, which thing I hate. ¹⁶ Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth. ¹⁷ He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it. ¹⁸ And unto the angel of the church in Thyatira write; These things saith the Son of God, who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire, and his feet are like fine brass; ¹⁹ I know thy works, and charity, and service, and faith, and thy patience, and thy works; and the last to be more than the first. ²⁰ Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols. ²¹ And I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not. ²² Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds. ²³ And I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works. ²⁴ But unto you I say, and unto the rest in Thyatira, as many as have not this doctrine, and which have not known the depths of Satan, as they speak; I will put upon you none other burden.
 - a. The church at Pergamos was tolerating those within her membership who held false doctrine. Rev 2:14-15

- b. The church at Thyatire was permitting a false prophet (from verse 20: “woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess”) to teach its members, causing them to commit spiritual fornication.
3. A true New Testament church loses her purity when she becomes a friend of the world. Read James 4:4 ⁴ Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.

The Lord’s Bride must keep herself doctrinally and morally pure!

C. What Happens When A Church Loses Her Purity?

1. During the time of espousal, Christ expects His bride to keep herself pure and spotless, committed exclusively to Him. The Bible says marriage and the bed undefiled are honorable. Read Hebrews 13:4a ⁴ Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.
2. The sin of fornication (whether personal or corporate) joins one to a harlot. Read According to I Corinthians 6:15-18, ¹⁵ Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ? shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of an harlot? God forbid. ¹⁶ What? know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot is one body? for two, saith he, shall be one flesh. ¹⁷ But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit. ¹⁸ Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body.
3. The Lord calls upon his churches to repent or “do thy first works” in Revelation 2:
 - a. Revelation 2:5, ¹⁶ ⁵ Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.

- b. Revelation 2:5,16 ¹⁶ Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth.
4. In Revelation 2:21, The Lord gives space to repent. ²¹ And I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not.
5. In Revelation 3:4, the Lord appeals to a few names in the church at Sardis which has remained undefiled. ⁴ Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy.
6. According to Hebrews 13:4, God will judge adulterers. ⁴ Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.
7. According to I Corinthians 3:17, God will destroy those who defile His temple (each New Testament church). (from verse 10 because it's so powerful) ¹⁰ According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. ¹¹ For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. ¹² Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; ¹³ Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. ¹⁴ If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. ¹⁵ If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire. ¹⁶ Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? ¹⁷ **If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are.** ¹⁸ Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise. ¹⁹ For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, He taketh the wise in their own craftiness. ²⁰ And again, The Lord knoweth the thoughts of the wise, that they are vain. ²¹ Therefore let no man glory in men.
8. Churches which join themselves to the harlot will suffer the harlot's fate and be cast into great tribulation. Read:

- a. Revelation 2:22-23 ²² Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds. ²³ And I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works.
- b. Revelation 17:16 ¹⁶ And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire.

V The Presentation Of The Bride

In Revelation, we are given a glimpse of the great wedding day and the marriage of the lamb. Read Revelation 19:1-9 ¹ And after these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God: ² For true and righteous are his judgments: for he hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand. ³ And again they said, Alleluia And her smoke rose up for ever and ever. ⁴ And the four and twenty elders and the four beasts fell down and worshipped God that sat on the throne, saying, Amen; Alleluia. ⁵ And a voice came out of the throne, saying, Praise our God, all ye his servants, and ye that fear him, both small and great. ⁶ 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.

A. The Time Of The Marriage

1. Revelation 19:1 says: “after these things...”
2. “These things” refer back to Revelation 18:2 which details the destruction of Babylon; (from verse 1 thru verse 3) ¹ And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory. ² And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean

and hateful bird. ³ For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies.

3. This calamitous event will occur with the 7th vial judgment. Read Revelation 16:17-19 ¹⁷ And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air; and there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, It is done. ¹⁸ And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great. ¹⁹ And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell: and great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath.

4. According to Revelation 19:11-15, after the marriage, Jesus returns: ¹¹ And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. ¹² His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself. ¹³ And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God. ¹⁴ And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. ¹⁵ And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.

B. The Place Of The Marriage: HEAVEN.

Note the time line:

- Revelation 18 Babylon destroyed
- Revelation 19:1-9 Marriage of the Lamb
- Revelation 19:11-15 Jesus returns

C. The Participants At The Marriage

1. The Father – “God that sat on the throne” (Revelation 19:4)

2. The massed choir – a great multitude, singing as the voice of many waters and thundering. Rev 19:6 ⁶ 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.

3. The center of attraction – the Lord. Revelation 19:7 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.

4. The Wife. Revelation 19:8 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.

5. Eight things we shall see “in glory (mount Sion)”: Read Hebrews 12:22-24 ²² But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, ²³ To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, ²⁴ And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel.
 - a. The heavenly Jerusalem.
 - b. An innumerable company of angles.
 - c. The General Assembly (GATHERING OF THE WHOLE KINGDOM).
 - d. The Church of the First Born (a local assembly within the Kingdom).
 - e. God the Judge.
 - f. The spirits of men made perfect.
 - g. Jesus the mediator of the new covenant.

D. The Celebration Of The Marriage

1. Involves a prepared dinner. From Matthew 22:4 ⁴ Again, he sent forth other servants, saying, Tell them which are bidden, Behold, I have prepared my dinner: my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready: come unto the marriage.

2. Involves a feast. From John 2:8-9 ⁸ And he saith unto them, Draw out now, and bear unto the governor of the feast. And they bare it. ⁹ When the ruler of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine, and knew not whence it was: (but the servants which drew the water knew;) the governor of the feast called the bridegroom,

3. The marriage of the Lamb is followed by the marriage supper. Revelation 19:9 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.

4. This will fulfill the Lord's promise to His church, made when He instituted the memorial Lord's Supper (Matthew 26:29 ²⁹ But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom.) Churches are to observe the Lord's Supper "until He [Jesus] comes." (Read I Corinthians 11:26 ²⁶ For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come.).

VI The Picture Of The Bride

The Old Testament account of Isaac and Rebekah (Genesis 24) is the first love story in the Bible, and presents an interesting picture of what we have studied above.

In particular, we will see how **the servant of Abraham is an illustration of the Holy Spirit**

Read all of Genesis Chapter 24 ¹And Abraham was old, and well stricken in age: and the LORD had blessed Abraham in all things. ² And Abraham said unto his eldest servant of his house, that ruled over all that he had, Put, I pray thee, thy hand under my thigh: ³ And I will make thee swear by the LORD, the God of heaven, and the God of the earth, that thou shalt not take a wife unto my son of the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I dwell: ⁴ But thou shalt go unto my country, and to my kindred, and take a wife unto my son Isaac. ⁵ And the servant said unto him, Peradventure the woman will not be willing to follow me unto this land: must I needs bring thy son again unto the land from whence thou camest? ⁶ And Abraham said unto him, Beware thou that thou bring not my son thither again. ⁷ The LORD God of heaven, which took me from my father's house, and from the land of my kindred, and which spake unto me, and that sware unto me, saying, Unto thy seed will I give this land; he shall send his angel before thee, and thou shalt take a wife unto my son from thence. ⁸ And if the woman will not be willing to follow thee, then thou shalt be clear from this my oath: only bring not my son thither again. ⁹ And the servant put his hand under the thigh of Abraham his master, and sware to him concerning that matter. ¹⁰ And the servant took ten camels of the camels of his master, and departed; for all the goods of his master were in his hand: and he arose, and went to Mesopotamia, unto the city of Nahor. ¹¹ And he made his camels to kneel down without the city by a well of water at the time of the evening, even the time that women go out to draw water. ¹² And he said O LORD God of my master Abraham, I pray thee, send me good speed this day, and shew kindness unto my master Abraham. ¹³ Behold, I stand here by the well of water; and the daughters of the men of the city come out to draw water: ¹⁴ And let it come to pass, that the damsel to whom I shall say, Let down thy pitcher, I pray thee, that I may drink; and she shall say, Drink, and I will give thy camels drink also: let the same be she that thou hast appointed for thy servant Isaac; and thereby shall I know that thou hast shewed kindness unto my master. ¹⁵ And it came to pass, before he had done speaking, that, behold, Rebekah came out, who was born to Bethuel, son of Milcah, the wife of Nahor, Abraham's brother, with her pitcher upon her shoulder. ¹⁶ And the damsel was very fair to look upon, a virgin, neither had any man known her: and she went down to the well, and filled her pitcher, and came up. ¹⁷ And the servant ran to meet her, and said, Let me, I pray thee, drink a little water of thy pitcher. ¹⁸ And she said, Drink, my lord: and she hastened, and let down her pitcher upon her hand, and gave him drink. ¹⁹ And when she had done giving him drink, she said, I will draw water for thy

camels also, until they have done drinking. ²⁰ And she hasted, and emptied her pitcher into the trough, and ran again unto the well to draw water, and drew for all his camels. ²¹ And the man wondering at her held his peace, to wit whether the LORD had made his journey prosperous or not. ²² And it came to pass, as the camels had done drinking, that the man took a golden earring of half a shekel weight, and two bracelets for her hands of ten shekels weight of gold; ²³ And said, Whose daughter art thou? tell me, I pray thee: is there room in thy father's house for us to lodge in? ²⁴ And she said unto him, I am the daughter of Bethuel the son of Milcah, which she bare unto Nahor. ²⁵ She said moreover unto him, We have both straw and provender enough, and room to lodge in. ²⁶ And the man bowed down his head, and worshipped the LORD. ²⁷ And he said, Blessed be the LORD God of my master Abraham, who hath not left destitute my master of his mercy and his truth: I being in the way, the LORD led me to the house of my master's brethren. ²⁸ And the damsel ran, and told them of her mother's house these things. ²⁹ And Rebekah had a brother, and his name was Laban: and Laban ran out unto the man, unto the well. ³⁰ And it came to pass, when he saw the earring and bracelets upon his sister's hands, and when he heard the words of Rebekah his sister, saying, Thus spake the man unto me; that he came unto the man; and, behold, he stood by the camels at the well. ³¹ And he said, Come in, thou blessed of the LORD; wherefore standest thou without? for I have prepared the house, and room for the camels. ³² And the man came into the house: and he ungirded his camels, and gave straw and provender for the camels, and water to wash his feet, and the men's feet that were with him. ³³ And there was set meat before him to eat: but he said, I will not eat, until I have told mine errand. And he said, Speak on. ³⁴ And he said, I am Abraham's servant. ³⁵ And the LORD hath blessed my master greatly; and he is become great: and he hath given him flocks, and herds, and silver, and gold, and menservants, and maidservants, and camels, and asses. ³⁶ And Sarah my master's wife bare a son to my master when she was old: and unto him hath he given all that he hath. ³⁷ And my master made me swear, saying, Thou shalt not take a wife to my son of the daughters of the Canaanites, in whose land I dwell: ³⁸ But thou shalt go unto my father's house, and to my kindred, and take a wife unto my son. ³⁹ And I said unto my master, Peradventure the woman will not follow me. ⁴⁰ And he said unto me, The LORD, before whom I walk, will send his angel with thee, and prosper thy way; and thou shalt take a wife for my son of my kindred, and of my father's house: ⁴¹ Then shalt thou be clear from this my oath, when thou comest to my kindred; and if they give not thee one, thou shalt be clear from my oath. ⁴² And I came this day unto the well, and said, O LORD God of my master Abraham, if now thou do prosper my way which I go: ⁴³ Behold, I stand by the well of water; and it shall come to pass, that when the virgin cometh forth to draw water, and I say to her, Give me, I pray thee, a little water of thy pitcher to drink; ⁴⁴ And she say to me, Both drink thou, and I will also draw for thy camels: let the same be the woman whom the LORD hath appointed out for my master's son. ⁴⁵ And before I had done speaking in mine heart, behold, Rebekah came forth with her pitcher on her shoulder; and she went down unto the well, and drew water: and I said unto her, Let me drink, I pray thee. ⁴⁶ And she made haste, and let down her pitcher from her shoulder, and said,

Drink, and I will give thy camels drink also: so I drank, and she made the camels drink also. ⁴⁷ And I asked her, and said, Whose daughter art thou? And she said, the daughter of Bethuel, Nahor's son, whom Milcah bare unto him: and I put the earring upon her face, and the bracelets upon her hands. ⁴⁸ And I bowed down my head, and worshipped the LORD, and blessed the LORD God of my master Abraham, which had led me in the right way to take my master's brother's daughter unto his son. ⁴⁹ And now if ye will deal kindly and truly with my master, tell me: and if not, tell me; that I may turn to the right hand, or to the left. ⁵⁰ Then Laban and Bethuel answered and said, The thing proceedeth from the LORD: we cannot speak unto thee bad or good. ⁵¹ Behold, Rebekah is before thee, take her, and go, and let her be thy master's son's wife, as the LORD hath spoken. ⁵² And it came to pass, that, when Abraham's servant heard their words, he worshipped the LORD, bowing himself to the earth. ⁵³ And the servant brought forth jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment, and gave them to Rebekah: he gave also to her brother and to her mother precious things. ⁵⁴ And they did eat and drink, he and the men that were with him, and tarried all night; and they rose up in the morning, and he said, Send me away unto my master. ⁵⁵ And her brother and her mother said, Let the damsel abide with us a few days, at the least ten; after that she shall go. ⁵⁶ And he said unto them, Hinder me not, seeing the LORD hath prospered my way; send me away that I may go to my master. ⁵⁷ And they said, We will call the damsel, and enquire at her mouth. ⁵⁸ And they called Rebekah, and said unto her, Wilt thou go with this man? And she said, I will go. ⁵⁹ And they sent away Rebekah their sister, and her nurse, and Abraham's servant, and his men. ⁶⁰ And they blessed Rebekah, and said unto her, Thou art our sister, be thou the mother of thousands of millions, and let thy seed possess the gate of those which hate them. ⁶¹ And Rebekah arose, and her damsels, and they rode upon the camels, and followed the man: and the servant took Rebekah, and went his way. ⁶² And Isaac came from the way of the well Lahairoi; for he dwelt in the south country. ⁶³ And Isaac went out to meditate in the field at the eventide: and he lifted up his eyes, and saw, and, behold, the camels were coming. ⁶⁴ And Rebekah lifted up her eyes, and when she saw Isaac, she lighted off the camel. ⁶⁵ For she had said unto the servant, What man is this that walketh in the field to meet us? And the servant had said, It is my master: therefore she took a vail, and covered herself. ⁶⁶ And the servant told Isaac all things that he had done. ⁶⁷ And Isaac brought her into his mother Sarah's tent, and took Rebekah, and she became his wife; and he loved her: and Isaac was comforted after his mother's death.

From what we have studied previously, Genesis 24 portrays the following scenario:

- A. The Bride Is Found – a beautiful chaste virgin. Gen 24:15-16 ¹⁵ And it came to pass, before he had done speaking, that, behold, Rebekah came out, who was born to Bethuel, son of Milcah, the wife of Nahor, **Abraham's brother**, with her pitcher upon her shoulder. ¹⁶ And the damsel was very fair to look upon, a virgin, neither had any man known her: and she went down to the well, and filled her pitcher, and came up.
- B. The Tokens Of Betrothal (given to the bride-to-be and her family) Are Received: Gen 24:53 ⁵³ And the servant brought forth jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment, and gave them to Rebekah: he gave also to her brother and to her mother precious things.
- C. The Bride Decides (Note: a willing relationship. Rebekah belonged to a wider household of Abraham, but is set apart from the family through her new relationship with Isaac): Gen 25:58 ⁵⁸ And they called Rebekah, and said unto her, Wilt thou go with this man? And she said, I will go.
- D. The Bride Comes to The Son: Gen 24: 61-66 ⁶¹ And Rebekah arose, and her damsels, and they rode upon the camels, and followed the man: and the servant took Rebekah, and went his way. ⁶² And Isaac came from the way of the well Lahairoi; for he dwelt in the south country. ⁶³ **And Isaac went out to meditate in the field at the eventide:** and he lifted up his eyes, and saw, and, behold, the camels were coming. ⁶⁴ And Rebekah lifted up her eyes, and when she saw Isaac, she lighted off the camel. ⁶⁵ For she had said unto the servant, What man is this that walketh in the field to meet us? And the servant had said, It is my master: therefore she took a vail, and covered herself. ⁶⁶ And the servant told Isaac all things that he had done.

Note: Isaac went out into the field (the world... read Matt 13:38a) at evening tide (late in the day).

Also read Matthew 25 (verse 1-13) ¹ Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. ² And five of them were wise, and five were foolish. ³ They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them: ⁴ But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. ⁵ While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept. ⁶ **And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him.** ⁷ Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps. ⁸ And

the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out. 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. 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. ¹¹ Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. ¹² But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not. ¹³ Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh.

- E. The Marriage Takes Place (Gen 24:67 ⁶⁷ And Isaac brought her into his mother Sarah's tent, and took Rebekah, and she became his wife; **and he loved her**: and Isaac was comforted after his mother's death.)

In this verse we see the first mention of love in the Bible.

The servant of Abraham is an illustration of the Holy Spirit

- Sent by the father on behalf of the Son. Compare:
 - Verse 4 ⁴ But thou shalt go unto my country, and to my kindred, and take a wife unto my son Isaac.
 - John 14:16 ¹⁶ **And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever;**
- Revealing the Father and Son. Compare:
 - Verse 34-36 ³⁴ And he said, I am Abraham's servant. ³⁵ And the LORD hath blessed my master greatly; and he is become great: and he hath given him flocks, and herds, and silver, and gold, and menservants, and maidservants, and camels, and asses. ³⁶ And Sarah my master's wife bare a son to my master when she was old: and unto him hath he given all that he hath.
 - John 16:13-14 ¹³ **Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.**
- Proclaiming the riches of the Son. Compare:
 - Verse 53: ⁵³ And the servant brought forth jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment, and gave them to Rebekah: he gave also to her brother and to her mother precious things.
 - I Corinthians 2:9-10 ⁹ But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, **the things**

which God hath prepared for them that love him. ¹⁰ But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. ¹¹ For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.

- Guiding the bride on her journey. Compare:
 - Verse 61: ⁶¹ And Rebekah arose, and her damsels, and they rode upon the camels, and followed the man: and the servant took Rebekah, and went his way.
 - John 16:13a ¹³ **Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth:**

VII The Privilege Of The Bride

What a beautiful love story in Genesis 24! Let's construct a possible chain of events from the beginning to end, based upon the Word of God, and some common customs of the Biblical world:

- A. A Future Wife Is Chosen – Just as parents play a prominent role in selecting their child's spouse, so the Heavenly father has chosen a wife for His Son.
- B. The Couple Are Introduced – The friend of the groom often played an important part in the back-and-forth transactions of courting. John the Baptist prepared the materials (baptized believers) Jesus would use to build His church.

Matthew 3: ¹ In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea, ² And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. ³ For this is he that was spoken of by the prophet Esaias, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.

C. The Dowry Is Paid – Jesus purchased His churches with His blood.

Read: Acts 20:28e ²⁸ Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, **which he hath purchased with his own blood.**

D. The Token Is Given – Not an engagement ring but the earnest of the indwelling Spirit.

Read: Ephesians 1:13-14 ¹³ In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, ¹⁴ **Which is the earnest of our inheritance** until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.

E. The Period Of Espousal – While the bridegroom tarries (Matthew 25:5, from verse 1 ¹ *Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom.* ² *And five of them were wise, and five were foolish.* ³ *They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them:* ⁴ *But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps.* ⁵ *While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept.* ⁶ *And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him.*), the bride is busy sending out invitations to the wedding.

Read Revelation 22:17 ¹⁷ 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.

Notice there are three essential parties involved in this period of espousal:

1. The Spirit

- a. John 16:8-11 ⁸ And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: ⁹ Of sin, because they believe not on me; ¹⁰ Of righteousness, because I go to my Father,

and ye see me no more; ¹¹ Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.

b. Ephesians 6:17b ¹⁷ And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:

2. The Bride – the Great Commission was given to the Lord's churches

3. Him that hearth – the saved individual is to witness. Read Romans 10:17

¹⁷ So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

F. The Wedding Procession

This usually took place in the evening. The wedding party would meet at the bride's house, then the bride groom would come and escort his bride to his house.

- She was accompanied by virgins (Read Psalm 45:14 ¹⁴ She shall be brought unto the king in raiment of needlework: the virgins her companions that follow her shall be brought unto thee.)
- Such a procession would be accompanied with great joy and merriment. (Read Jeremiah 7:34 ³⁴ *Then will I cause to cease from the cities of Judah, and from the streets of Jerusalem, the voice of mirth, and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom, and the voice of the bride: for the land shall be desolate. [God appointed Jeremiah to confront Judah and Jerusalem for the worship of idols and other violations of the covenant described in Deuteronomy.]*
- One day the "midnight cry" will herald the Bridegroom's coming for His Bride. All saints will be raptured and taken to Heaven.
 - I Thessalonians 4:14-17 ¹⁴ *For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. ¹⁵ For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. ¹⁶ For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with*

a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: ¹⁷ Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

- *I Corinthians 15:51-53 ⁵¹ Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, ⁵² In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. ⁵³ For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.*

- *Matthew 25:6,13 ⁶ And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him. ⁷ Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps. ⁸ And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out. 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. 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. ¹¹ Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. ¹² But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not. ¹³ Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh.*

- *Philippians 3:20-21 ²⁰ For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: ²¹ Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.*

G. The Marriage Feast

- *This was usually held at the groom's house. (Read Matthew 22:1-10 ¹ And Jesus answered and spake unto them again by parables, and said, ² The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his son, ³ And sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden to the wedding: and they would not come. ⁴ Again,*

he sent forth other servants, saying, Tell them which are bidden, Behold, I have prepared my dinner: my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready: come unto the marriage. ⁵ But they made light of it, and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise: ⁶ And the remnant took his servants, and entreated them spitefully, and slew them. ⁷ But when the king heard thereof, he was wroth: and he sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city. ⁸ Then saith he to his servants, The wedding is ready, but they which were bidden were not worthy. ⁹ Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage. ¹⁰ So those servants went out into the highways, and gathered together all as many as they found, both bad and good: and the wedding was furnished with guests.)

- Guests were required to wear a wedding garment (Matthew 22:11-12 ¹¹ And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment: ¹² And he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless. ¹³ Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness, there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. ¹⁴ **For many are called, but few are chosen.**)
- There was no religious ceremony conducted at the feast. Instead, witnesses would be called upon to attest to the marriage. (Read Ruth 4:19-13 ⁹ And Boaz said unto the elders, and unto all the people, Ye are witnesses this day, that I have bought all that was Elimelech's, and all that was Chilion's and Mahlon's, of the hand of Naomi. ¹⁰ Moreover Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of Mahlon, have I purchased to be my wife, to raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance, that the name of the dead be not cut off from among his brethren, and from the gate of his place: **ye are witnesses this day.** ¹¹ **And all the people that were in the gate, and the elders, said, We are witnesses.** The LORD make the woman that is come into thine house like Rachel and like Leah, which two did build the house of Israel: and do thou worthily in Ephrath, and be famous in Bethlehem: ¹² And let thy house be like the house of Pharez, whom Tamar bare unto Judah, of the seed which the LORD shall give thee of this young woman. ¹³ So Boaz took Ruth, and she was his wife: and when he went in unto her, the LORD gave her conception, and she bare a son.)
- The feast and festivities could last as long as a week. (Read Judges 14:16-17 (passage concerning Sampson's marriage to a Philistine

woman) ¹⁶ And Samson's wife wept before him, and said, Thou dost but hate me, and lovest me not: thou hast put forth a riddle unto the children of my people, and hast not told it me. And he said unto her, Behold, I have not told it my father nor my mother, and shall I tell it thee? ¹⁷ And she wept before him the seven days, while their feast lasted: and it came to pass on the seventh day, that he told her, because she lay sore upon him: and she told the riddle to the children of her people.

H. The Honeymoon

Following the marriage of the supper of the Lamb, The Lord Jesus Christ will return to earth and establish His glorious kingdom of 1,000 years (Revelation 20: 1-6 ¹ *And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand.* ² *And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years,* ³ *And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season.* ⁴ *And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.* ⁵ *But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection.* ⁶ *Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.*

The Lord's promise to His faithful servants is that they shall rule and reign with Him. Read:

- **Matthew 25:21-23** ²¹ *His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.* ²² *He also that had received two talents came and said, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me two talents: behold, I have gained two other talents beside them.* ²³ *His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.*

- Revelation 2:26-27 ²⁶ *And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations:* ²⁷ *And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father.*
- Revelation 5:10 ¹⁰ *And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.*

WHAT A HONEYMOON!

I. The New Home

Right now, Jesus is preparing our Heavenly home. Read:

- John 14:1-3 ¹ Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. ² In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. ³ And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.
- I Corinthians 2:9 ⁹ But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.
- The Word of God describes this home in Revelation 21:2 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.
- In Revelation, the bride and Groom are already there. Revelation 21:9-21 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. 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, [Obviously, Jerusalem is not the bride but those inside the city] ¹¹ Having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal; ¹² And had a wall great and high, and had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel: ¹³ On the east three gates; on the north three gates; on the south three gates; and on the west three gates. ¹⁴ And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. ¹⁵ And he that talked with me had a golden reed to measure the city, and the gates thereof, and the wall thereof. ¹⁶ And the city lieth foursquare, and the length is as large as the breadth: and he measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs **(1500 miles)**. The length and the breadth and the height of it are equal. ¹⁷ And he measured the wall thereof, an hundred and forty and four cubits, according to the measure of a man, that is, of the angel. ¹⁸ And the building of the wall of it was of jasper: and the city was pure gold, like unto clear glass. ¹⁹ And the foundations of the wall of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones. The first foundation was jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, a chalcedony; the fourth, an emerald; ²⁰ The fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolite; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, a topaz; the tenth, a chrysoprasus; the eleventh, a jacinth; the twelfth, an amethyst. ²¹ And the twelve gates were twelve pearls:

every several gate was of one pearl: and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass.

VIII The Parody Of The Bride

There is one final aspect of this study. Satan, the great imitator, has successfully produced a counterfeit “bride”. Her description is given in Revelation 17. She is the consummation of religious Babylon, the sinkhole of all false religion. This is the church of the Antichrist – already in existence, yet awaiting her supreme movement of glory.

Revelation 17 ¹ *And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither; I will shew unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters:* ² *With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication.* ³ *So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns.* ⁴ *And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication:* ⁵ *And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.* ⁶ *And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus: and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration.* ⁷ *And the angel said unto me, Wherefore didst thou marvel? I will tell thee the mystery of the woman, and of the beast that carrieth her, which hath the seven heads and ten horns.* ⁸ *The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition: and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is.* ⁹ *And here is the mind which hath wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth.*

A. The Name Of The False Bride

1. Verse 1 - The “great whore”. Exactly the opposite of 2 Corinthians 11:2 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.*
2. Verse 5 - “MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT” this identifies her true pagan origins.

3. Verse 5 - The "*MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.*"

B. The Nature Of The False Bride

1. Verse 1 – She is a universal church: She "sitteth upon many waters". Revelation 17:15 defines these as ¹⁵ And he saith unto me, The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, **are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues.**
2. Verse 2 – She is a **state** church. "She has committed fornication with the kings of the earth."
3. Verse 3 - She is "*full of names of blasphemy*".
4. Verse 4a – She is a **pompous** church: She is "*arrayed in purple and scarlet colour,*"
5. Verse 4b – She is a **wealthy** church: She is "*decked with gold and precious stones and pearls,*"
6. Verse 6 – She is a **persecuting** 'church'. She is "*with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus*"

C. The Identity Of The False Bride

According to verse 9, the woman sits on seven (7) mountains: ⁹ *And here is the mind which hath wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth.*

The only city in the Biblical world built upon this number of hills is Rome. Today, the "Church" of Rome and her offspring are coming together in a concerted effort to bring a ONE WORLD, end-time, religious body. The multifaceted ecumenical movement is their present day mechanism.