

THE MYSTERY OF CHRIST AND THE CHURCH

A Spiritual Love Story (The Bride)

PART 2: Isaac/Rebekah; Israel and the Church; The proposal and "engagement ring"

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All scriptures are NKJV unless noted otherwise

The Son of God, the King of Kings, is getting married. We know we are called to be the Bride of Christ. **2 Corinthians 11:1-2.** ***Paul calls it a mystery in Ephesians 5:25-32***, but Jesus had said it was given to the disciples to *know* the mysteries. Daniel 12:10 says the wise will understand in the end time. So the mystery of the Bride and Groom IS being made clear. ***This is the 2nd in a 3-part series on the intricacies of the mystery of Christ choosing to marry the Church.***

The passage about husbands and wives in **Ephesians 5:25-32** is instructive about our marriages, but the *real* intent was to clarify our relationship with Christ. And we *men* have a *huge* responsibility to be more Christ-like in our marriage, and wives must respect their husbands as they would to Christ himself. That's what it says. And we husbands are to love our *wives* in the same manner as Christ loves us - giving Himself for us, serving us, defending us, and being faithful to us.

And beyond that, even we *men* must understand that if we are God's people, we are actually in the role of a *fiancée* to Christ. The church, so united that they are seen as *one*, is to be the *wife* of Christ - and that includes us men who may be hearing or reading this. (I do have these messages available as **written transcripts**, right off the website if you wish: LightontheRock.org).

As young girls dream about a future, they read the fairy tales of marrying Prince Charming someday. This is not such a dream for guys, so much, so this concept of being "a BRIDE" is sometimes not very motivating for men. But listen carefully, men, for I think and hope your thinking can change as we go through this.

It's very hard for *men* to get the mind around that concept of being a bride, a *virgin* no less. And the idea of getting married in the role of bride may be difficult for us men -- IF we're thinking of wedding gowns, garters, bouquets of flowers and veils! "*That's not me, man!*"

Our western society has come so far from the customs of the Mideast that we miss much of the topology involved.

What's the point of being a bride? Is it just for the status of being the bride of the King of kings? NO, NO, NO. That would be very *selfish* and *vain* way of looking at our calling as bride. Our goal cannot be just to "make it" or be in the kingdom, but to understand *why* God is calling us *now*, and that is to *serve*! To *teach*, to *convert*, to *change others*, to *rebuild* -- ***we will have a purpose, and not just be a trophy wife!***

We are being called to be a helpmeet, but not just *any* helpmeet - but *the* helpmeet for the KING OF KINGS, for the *Creator* of the entire *universe*. Being a helpmeet is the chief way we're going to be able to *serve humanity* in that pivotal role. *It's a service issue*. It's not for a selfish issue but a *service* issue, and *leadership* issue - and a *loving* issue, to help, *really help*, the suffering billions of the world.

This topic I hope, will kindle anew the flame of excitement we need to have about being the bride of Christ - and getting ready for the wedding. Taking our calling very, very seriously, and awaking out of our sleep. I pray it will encourage you. We must be inspired too!

Have you ever wanted to really change the way things are in the world, to make a difference, to help those needing help, to strengthen those feeling weak, to give hope to the hopeless? Have you ever wanted to give a helping hand to those who have lost faith that there are such people? Have you ever wanted to be able to *change* what we all see around us - to have a world of hope, a world of joy and peace, a world where leaders *care* for people?

Then you'll drool to be part of the bride of Christ - if we're so chosen to be. Because the Bride of Christ will be the means that all those dreams could come true.

But there's an important process to becoming the bride of Christ - and we need to know the solemn process, the role we have in that, and what the rewards can be. But we must become like our Husband! Be compatible!

So the reason this study is vital - is that it will I hope wake us up to value the calling we've been given, to respond to that calling while we have time, and to be building the relationship now that will result in being in the wedding supper.

It's also important to give us a picture of the JOYS that are set before us, just as it says Jesus was able to endure the cross "for the JOY that was set before Him" (Hebrews 12:2 -- perhaps you should read it!). If we don't have a goal, we can perish. Eternally. Lose out of what COULD have been, eternally. David said, in Psalms 16:11, "In your presence are joys forevermore!" The Jewish Tanakh of Psalms 16:11 says, "You make me know the path of life; in your presence is unbounded joy, in your right hand eternal delight".

That's interesting because the Garden of Eden *means* "the garden of *delights*".

Last time we talked about Adam and the 2nd Adam Jesus - and all the many parallels and type-anti-type. Adam needed a wife, and so does the 2nd Adam Jesus.

* God built and God presented a wife to Adam - and God can do the same today for singles.

* God made a woman - a human of the same type and kind. *One* woman - Eve.

* God made Adam and EVE, by the way - not Adam and Steve, and certainly not Adam and

Eve and Susan and Abigail and Brittany - no, just one, Adam and *Eve*.

They married, and became *one*. They became husband and wife - not “*significant other*” or “*partner*” or *all the other terms people use today to not say wife, when they can’t say wife*. We talked at length about when Adam was created in relation to Eve, who was given the leadership, when Eve was created at the end of the 6th day - the beginning of their marriage - just as the church will be married to Christ at the end of man’s 6,000 years on this earth, just before the 7th thousand years - the beginning of the Millennium, and the Rest of God.

We also talked about how Adam did not defend his wife from Satan’s deceptions, even though *he was not deceived* and could see that Eve was! She should have told the serpent to take a hike! To get behind me, Satan! A woman - - especially a wife - wants to know her husband will *fight* for her, *defend* her and *yes*, even risk his very life for her - and *die* for her if need be!

We went into a lot more detail than I’ve reviewed here, so be sure to hear the first message if you haven’t, before hearing the rest of this one.

We ended the last message with some comments about how Jesus - the 2nd Adam - *does* defend His wife this time around, but I had to *rush it* and skipped over a lot of it. I want to start this new material with more about that thought - that this time around, YOU -- the wife of Adam, ***that is of the 2nd ADAM Christ, YOU are being actively fought over, defended and protected by our husband Jesus the Christ.*** And I hope you’ll be *moved* by this if you *understood* its deep importance!

CITE Luke 22:31-32 “And the Lord said, “Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift you as wheat. ***32 BUT I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail;*** and when you have returned to Me, strengthen your brethren.”

Jesus is up there interceding for you, praying for you, defending you in the same way as He said He was for Peter! Satan has asked for you too, brethren, as he hates you, knowing his time is short!

Though we, unfortunately like ancient Israel, *break faith* with our fiancé Jesus - and do not always do the things that are right, or pleasing - *He does not break faith with us!*

Notice 2 Timothy 2:13, which I’ll read for you:

13 If we are faithless, He remains faithful; He cannot deny Himself. (We’re His body, how could He deny his own body?) Remember the Tammy Wynette song, “Stand by Your Man”? Well, Jesus - *thank God* - *stands by US!* Unlike the song, the roles are reversed: He’s the *faithful* husband, and we’re too often the faithless wife - but He does *not* leave us nor forsake us but *defends us and works with us!*

Look at these scriptures - which show *his undying love* for a wife - you and me - who are constantly falling short, but He *understands* and He *is patient* for He began something in us that He is committed to *finishing!* That’s clear in ***Philippians 1:6.***

Turn now to 1 JOHN 2:1-2. We come up - by *name* - before the Supreme Court...but not the Supreme Court of *man* - or of the United States or any other country - but before the Supreme Court of **Heaven**. And when your case goes *that high*, you want the *best Defense Attorney money can buy!* And you have it! But money didn't buy Him - no. His *own blood* was the price.

1 John 2:1-2 "My little children, I am writing these things to you that you may not sin. ***And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate (One who speaks in our behalf) with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous;*** (do you realize that ***you're*** the topic of many conversations!? Yes, I mean YOU!

Other verses, which I'll ask you to just jot down for now - we won't be turning to them - that speak of Jesus making intercession for us include: **Hebrews 7:24-25** which says He lives to make intercession FOR us; **and Hebrews 9:24** says He appears in the presence of God *for* us, in our behalf - not against us! Be sure to hear my message on "OUR JUDGMENT" - and I don't think we look at it the way the Bible actually speaks of it in terms of the bride of Christ. He's always there *defending* us, as He promises in Hebrews 13:5 - to "*never, ever, no never*" leave us or forsake us.

Turn now with me to Zechariah 3:1. This is such an incredible passage of the *kind* of defense Jesus makes in our behalf and the way HE *stands by His wife*, even when the accusations are *true*! It's about JOSHUA the High Priest, at the time of *Zerubbabel*, when some of the Jews had returned from Babylon back to the Promised Land.

Zechariah 3. Joshua had apparently gotten into some sins. Satan pounces on it and is pictured as being in front of *God* accusing Joshua. Joshua pictures the body of Christ - for after all, his *very name* is the Hebrew equivalent of JESUS. So Joshua *pictures the church* - and notice how *the Eternal* defends us (as pictured through Joshua, the sinful high priest "clothed in filthy garments").

"SATAN" is the actual word in the original text and could be translated "*The Accuser*" or "the *prosecutor*" - *and when* people get into this attitude of *accusation* and *slander* - it's feeding right into Satan's *kind of mind*.

Zechariah 3:1-2 "Then he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the Angel of the LORD, and Satan standing at his right hand to oppose him. 2 And the LORD said to Satan," The LORD rebuke you, Satan! The LORD who has chosen Jerusalem rebuke you! Is this not a brand plucked from the fire?"

As you keep reading the story in Zechariah 3, you realize Joshua IS guilty. He's in filthy garments that have to be changed. And who orders the change? Who provides the clean clothes? Who RESTORES him to his office - that's what the turban means!

Zechariah 3:3-5 "Now Joshua *was* clothed with *filthy* garments, and was standing before the Angel. 4 Then He answered and spoke to those who stood before Him, saying, "Take away the filthy garments from him." And to him He said, "See, ***I*** have removed your

iniquity from you, **and I will clothe you with rich robes." (WHO provides the clean garments of righteousness?)**

5 And I said, "Let them put a clean turban on his head." So they put a clean turban on his head, and they put the clothes on him. And the Angel of the LORD **stood by**".

And Jesus our Husband is standing by you too!!! So this is what the 2nd Adam is doing - **He's fighting for you**, defending you, guarding you... He is with you.... and He loves you dearly, dearly, dearly.

This next time around, with the 2nd Adam, it's going to be definitely different! When the Serpent comes hissing up to the Bride of Christ – i.e., the church - this time the 2nd Adam is ready to defend - and protect - as the first Adam should have done. **This time the 2nd Adam has faced this Serpent of old - and has given Satan a royal trouncing!!**

He commanded that devil - "Get behind me, Satan!"

Jesus is in love with His bride. He's very concerned about her spiritual state right now - but in His love He admonishes us to repent, to come back to Him; to wake up, to be vigilant.

FIVE of HIS 7 churches of Revelation 2-3 are in deep trouble - but to each of those 5, He offers a plea to repent, and *if they do*, then the relationship will be just fine! Even the Laodiceans, which are pictured all the time as being so lukewarm to God that He wants to vomit them out - even they - if they repent, He says "will sit with me on my throne".

That's describing a very intimate relationship. We're not going to just sit on OUR throne, but Jesus wants us with Him on HIS throne. Obviously there are going to be thousands and thousands in the first resurrection, so this is symbolic of a very close, intimate relationship with our Husband and King. He's on our side, He's fighting for us, He wants us there with Him. Are we listening?

GOD'S SEED – ITS EXCITING MEANING FOR US

God gave us his seed of the Holy Spirit to beget us - as it clearly says in 1 Peter 1:22-23. Where it says "born again", The ASV says "begotten again" because the word is "gennao" in the Greek Vine's Expository has that word under "beget, to be begotten, to be born".

1 Peter 1:22-23 "Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through **the Spirit** in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart, 23 having been born again, not of corruptible **seed** but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever.."

We're of *incorruptible seed* right now - but must wait until we're *born* fully of incorruptible at the resurrection, according to 1 Corinthians 15, when this corruptible puts on - at that

Now, besides begetting us, that seed is seen in the Bible as God's guarantee that He's serious about you. The Greek word used for "guarantee" or also translated "earnest" in the KJV - is *very* interesting, and will relate to *marriage* as you'll soon see.

2 Corinthians 1:22 KJV: "Who hath also sealed us, and given *the earnest* of the Spirit in our hearts."

The NKJV calls it "a guarantee". Other translations say "pledge, guarantee, deposit, first installment". The same concept is repeated again in 2 Corinthians 5:5 and Ephesians 1:13-14 in KJV. Just jot those passages down Ephesians 1:13-14; and 2 Corinthians 5:5.

"Earnest" is like "earnest money" -- what we do when we're making a *serious offer* on a house purchase. It's called the *earnest* of the Spirit, in 3 *places* in the New Testament, the *down payment*, the *guarantee* that we want to buy this. ***But it is even more.***

"VINE'S Expository Dictionary of New Testament words" says something very interesting about this word "earnest" from Strong's number 728.

EARNEST (NOUN). The GREEK word is ARRABONA. **Here's what Vine's says** - I find the END of what they say, SO INSPIRING, and I pray you will too:

"Arrabona" NT:728, originally, "earnest-money" deposited by the purchaser and forfeited if the purchase was not completed, was probably a Phoenician word, introduced into Greece. In general usage it came to denote "a pledge" or "earnest" of any sort; in the NT it is used only of that which is assured by God to believers; it is said of the Holy Spirit as the divine "pledge" of... their eternal inheritance. (NOW THE LAST SENTENCE IS SO EXCITING...)

"In modern Greek arrabona is an "engagement ring." - Vine's Expository.

Are we getting the picture? The Holy Spirit is both the seed of God that allows you to be part of his actual "kind" (as in genus) and family, -- and God's engagement ring to the betrothed fiancée of Christ. Is this coming together for you!?

So God's *seed begets* us into His very *household* - and gives us the assurance that He is serious about buying us. He pays the wages of sins for us by the death of Christ.

ISAAC AND REBEKAH – A PICTURE OF CHRIST AND THE CHURCH

Anyway, GOD the Father hand-picked the Bride for His Son. Do you know that you were personally selected *a long time ago*? Just a thought for now - but we'll see verses on it later.

I believe the story of *finding a bride for Isaac is a lesson for us today* - and teaches us a lot about the process of finding a bride for Christ.

Now how does all matter? Is it just spiritual titillation? How does this help you and me be better Christians?

Very much so! In parables given in Matthew 22, many of those called to be at the wedding took that calling lightly and lost out. I'm hoping today's message gets you excited about your calling - and that you will renew your zeal, pray like never before, *study* like never before, *overcome* and face up to your problems - *because you want to show God you value your calling, because you'll see it better now, I hope, as we go thru these studies.* Be turning to Genesis 24.

(Also be sure to hear the message coming on "What, where and *why* is the True Church of God")

Genesis 24:2-4 Abraham - who pictures God the Father in the analogy is about to arrange for a bride for his son Isaac - who pictures Christ.

(And as an aside, single people - remember you still have that same father - God - who will pick you your spouse too, when and how he pleases, and if he pleases.

Verse 2 "So Abraham said to the oldest servant of his house [possibly Eliezer of Genesis 15:2], who ruled over all that he had, "Please, put your hand under my thigh,
3 "and I will make you swear by the LORD, the God of heaven and the God of the earth, that you will not take a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I dwell; 4 "but ***you shall go to my country and TO MY FAMILY, and take a wife for my son Isaac.***"

Isaac is 40 years old at this time. Abraham wants a bride from his *Family*. Keep that in mind.

In the same way, in the first message, we clearly saw that Adam could not find a suitable partner among the animals - it was wrong, it was confusion, it was impossible in fact. So God had to build a wife for Adam who was of the same type!

God will not, cannot, marry a human, for humankind is *not yet* of the God kind. We look like God, have some *God-like* characteristics, but we're not yet of that same *God kind* (genus).

So Jesus' *bride* has to be from *His* own family type -- of the family of God. If you're thinking ahead - you'll remember that we *are* called the family of God - even now - and that we ***shall be changed to be like He is, and see Jesus as He is (1 John 3:1-3).***

Now, *REBEKAH* apparently *had no idea* that her relative *Abraham* was looking for a bride for his son. ***In the same way, we had no idea we were being called to be a bride of Christ when we were born, or when God began to call us.***

It was by God's grace that He selected you -- not because of anything we've done, but because of God's grace.

Do you realize how *far* Abraham's servant traveled to get Isaac a wife? All the way to modern day IRAQ from the promised land (modern nation of Israel). Walking, and by camel.

Do you realize from how far back God began His work with you? We'll come back to that later....but I personally think it is a lot farther back than some are willing to acknowledge.

And notice the FATHER selects the *bride*. Jesus clearly says in John 6:44 that no one could come to Him unless the Father first draws him, calls him, to Jesus.

The Father arranges for a bride by going, or sending a servant to - the country of the brideso let's pick up the story in Genesis 24.

Genesis 24:5, 8 "And the servant said to him, "Perhaps the woman will not be willing to follow me to this land. Must I take your son back to the land from which you came?" verse 8, Abraham says: "And if the woman is not willing to follow you, then you will be released from this oath; only do not take my son back there." 9 So the servant put his hand under the thigh of Abraham his master, and swore to him concerning this matter."

"Under the thigh" - right in the groin area, because the things this servant was about to do would *affect the eternal posterity of Abraham, of the Messianic line - and of all humanity!!!*

This trip was of supreme importance! Even you and I are here because of that trip, if you're *either* of the physical OR spiritual seed of Abraham, ***this trip was for YOU.***

Are you getting the picture? But the servant is concerned that the damsel may not want to take up the offer. Then what? Well - she loses out and we'll have to find someone else, Abraham implies. ABRAHAM was extremely wealthy and powerful. He would be a multi-millionaire or even a billionaire by today's standards. More than that, God had promised Him an incredible set of promises. To marry into that family would be an incredible honor and blessing.

Abraham is a type of God the Father. Isaac is a type of Christ. That is very clear in Genesis 22 when Abraham was asked to sacrifice Isaac, who was a full grown man by that time. The Jewish historian Josephus thinks he was 25, but The Talmud says he was 33 when they trudged up to Mt. Moriah, which became the temple site in Christ's day. Remember Who else was 33 when *He* was sacrificed? JESUS! Abraham and Isaac are allegories of God and Christ. But in this case, Isaac was *let off the hook* by a ram caught in a thicket by its *horns*. Amazing!

As a side point: the ram's horn - called a "shofar" in other places - was

the same thing the priests blew at the battle of Jericho and on the Feast of Trumpets (Rosh Hashanah) 7 rams horns, 7 trumpets. There's a lot there. The ram's horn was also blown at the Jubilee that released people from their debts. The shofar symbolized God letting His people *off the hook*, canceling debts. It's not coincidental that Isaac and Abraham are taken off the hook by - not just any part of the ram - but by its ram's horns. It's the liberating "shofar" blown during the year of Jubilee, and during the holydays of God, that also picture the liberating sacrifice of the real Lamb or ram of God -- Jesus Christ. He is the real Lamb of God who dies for us and frees us from having to die for our own sins.

Let's pick up again in Genesis 24 and read the story from verse 10 thru verse 21 straight thru - then come back and expound on it, and how it pictures what God is doing for US:

Genesis 24:10-21 "Then the servant took *ten* of his master's camels and departed, for all his master's goods were in his hand. And he arose and went to Mesopotamia [Now in today's IRAQ, a *long* journey], to the city of Nahor."

v. 10 comment: *Why 10 camels? Why ten?* He needed a means to get the bride and her belongings back with, but doesn't *ten* remind you of something? Be sure to hear the study I have soon on NUMBERS in the Bible. Later you'll see how the *testimony, witness* of the bride has to do with the 10 commandments.

"to the CITY OF NAHOR". This is interesting. Nahor was the name of both Abraham's grandfather and brother, who had a son named Bethuel (Abraham's nephew), who had the daughter Rebekah. Nahor was now the city's name. Do you know what it means? Christ says that in the end time, His bride will be *sleeping* when the time comes to get her. I just think it's a possible tie-in, just interesting. Nahor means "SNORING".

Genesis 24:11 "And he made his camels kneel down outside the city by a well of water at evening time, the time when women go out to draw water."

v. 11: HE WENT to a good place to find where the nice girls would be, the *servings*, working girls. You don't find a good wife at a rowdy *bar*. He went to *the springs of bubbling water*. The word translated "well" in KJV and NKJV is translated in every other translation as "the spring". **The Hebrew strongly implies a SPRING.** Fresh, bubbling waters.

And when we understand it, it makes sense. Jesus said He will send *springs of living water*. It's a symbol of the holy spirit, I believe. God's bride will be found where the *Holy Spirit* is flowing, bubbling, living, providing cleansing/nourishing water. **(John 4:10-13)**

WHAT TIME OF DAY is it? EVENING - the Hebrew "ereb" is the time when evening shadows start, just at and around sundown. **Not dark yet**, but light enough to see, but late enough to be the cool of the day - the same time God would come and talk and walk with Adam and Eve. HERE, EREB is still light enough for Rebekah to see what she's doing at the springs; and it will be "evening" also when ISAAC sees her coming from afar - so "EREB" shows a time when it's light enough to see the camels coming in the distance.

We keep the sabbaths, from *ereb* to “*ereb*”, evening to evening, it says in **Leviticus 23:32**. So he’s at the well at the start of a new day - at evening, as the sun is going down and about to set. When God calls us to be the *bride of Christ*, it’s a new day for us too!!

Our old life, our old way, is about to end - and a new way, a new life, is about to begin - shortly at or after sunset of that day.

Genesis 24:12 “Then he said, “O LORD God of my master Abraham, please give me success this day, and show kindness to my master Abraham. 13 Behold, here I stand by the well of water, and the daughters of the men of the city are coming out to draw water. 14 Now let it be that the young woman to whom I say, ‘Please let down your pitcher that I may drink,’ and she says, ‘Drink, and I will also give your camels a drink’ -- let her be the one You have appointed for Your servant Isaac. And by this I will know that You have shown kindness to my master.”

Genesis 24:12-14 comments: The servant, Eliezer perhaps, prays for God’s blessing on this endeavor. He wanted *God* to bring the right woman. He understood the concept that a *good wife is from the Lord*, as it says in Proverbs 19:14 and Proverbs 18:22. So any of you *singles* listening to this: *ask* God to lead you to the one *He* knows would be good for you.

“THE DAUGHTERS” - *many* to choose from, but wanted just the right *one*. Many are called, few are chosen.

One of the things he was looking for: *a friendly, hospitable, serving - going-the-extra-mile* mentality. He asked for someone who would water *all* his 10 camels! Any idea how many gallons of water ONE thirsty camel could drink? I was told many, many gallons, after a long trip. (I had heard up to 40 gallons per camel after a long trip).

Continuing Genesis 24:15... And it happened, before he had finished speaking, that behold, Rebekah, who was **born to Bethuel**, son of Milcah, the wife of **Nahor, Abraham's brother**, came out with her pitcher on her shoulder. 16 Now the young woman was very beautiful to behold, a virgin; no man had known her. And she went down to the well, filled her pitcher, and came up. 17 And the servant ran to meet her and said, “Please let me drink a little water from your pitcher.”

Genesis 24:15-17 comments: Rebekah ‘ means “noose”, as in being so beautiful she could lasso you.

- **daughter of BETHUEL: very interesting. This bride was from a man whose name means “the house of God!”** JESUS also is finding his bride from the *house of God*.

- **“young woman” in the Hebrew, according to Strong’s, means a female any age up to adolescence.** Rebekah - a damsel - was very young. Perhaps somewhere between 16-20. That’s what the Hebrew tells us, like it or not. And she was a virgin, a very young virgin. Brown, Driver, Briggs lexicon says, word # 5291, means: “a girl, a damsel, a female servant, a little girl, used of any young woman, a marriageable young woman...” and

so forth.

My point though: she is a VIRGIN. *Jesus is to marry a virgin - 2 Corinthians 11:2.* The **priests** of old were not to marry a divorced woman or widow - but also that she had to be a *virgin* (**Leviticus 21:13-14; Ezekiel 44:22**).

It says "no man had known her". I think it is *so* special when our young people can get married - and know that the first one they knew *intimately* - is the one they marry, and never anyone else.

"Very BEAUTIFUL" - Jesus wants US to be beautiful to Him too, but in the *spiritual* sense, or a lot of us are doomed! Our beauty that Jesus is looking for is a *beautiful "inside"*, not outside. **Ephesians 5** says HE sees a *glorious* church, and *presents her* to Himself.

KEEP YOUR MARKER IN GENESIS 24, but now please turn to 1 Peter 3. Have you men always thought of 1 Peter 3 as instructions for wives? Since YOU are going to be a wife too, they're for *you too*.

1 Peter 3:3-4 NIV: YOUR beauty should not come from outward adornment, such as braided hair and the wearing of gold jewelry and fine clothes. **4 *Instead, it should be that of your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit,*** which is of great worth in God's sight.

Back to Genesis 24:18 So she said, "Drink, my lord." Then she quickly let her pitcher down to her hand, and gave him a drink. 19 And when she had finished giving him a drink, she said, "I will draw water for your camels also, until they have finished drinking." 20 Then she quickly emptied her pitcher into the trough, ran back to the well to draw water, and drew for all his camels. 21 And the man, wondering at her, remained silent so as to know whether the LORD had made his journey prosperous or not.

Genesis 24:22-50 - the servant goes to the house of Bethuel, meets Laban, meets Rebekah's family, and recounts the whole story. He gives her a nose ring of 1/4 oz gold and two bracelet of 4 ounces each.

Genesis 24:50-53 "Then *Laban and Bethuel answered and said, "The thing comes from the LORD; we cannot speak to you either bad or good. 51 Here is Rebekah before you; take her and go, and let her be your master's son's wife, as the LORD has spoken."* 52 And it came to pass, when Abraham's servant heard their words, that he worshiped the LORD, bowing himself to the earth. 53 Then the servant brought out jewelry of silver, jewelry of gold, ***and clothing, and gave them to Rebekah. He also gave precious things to her brother and to her mother.***

This may apparently have been the bride price...the cost of buying the bride for Isaac.

1 Corinthians 6:20 "For you were bought at a price [the life, the shed blood of

Christ!] therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's."

And also notice garments are GIVEN to Rebekah (verse 53), who is a type of the church here. Remember God *grants* his Church to be arrayed in *fine white linen* - He gives the wedding garments... just as Rebekah here receives garments. (**Revelation 19:8**)

Genesis 24:54-56: the servant pleads to be able to get on his way - and we need to *also be single-minded about the work God has given us.*

57 So they said, "We will call the young woman and ask her personally." 58 Then they called Rebekah and said to her, "Will you go with this man?" And she said, "I will go." [She says "yes" -- like the church does -- unlike the story Jesus tells in Matthew 22 - of the WEDDING SUPPER - - where each one had an excuse to turn down the invitation to the dinner of all dinners, the wedding supper of the Lamb! Many are called, few are chosen. we have to decide to say "Yes" or "no". God won't force us to accept His invitation, but doesn't take it lightly when WE take the invitation lightly, which many in the church are now doing, frankly, by their actions]

Rebekah - a type of us - is in love, even though she hasn't yet seen Isaac. **Remember 1 John 4:20** says we love GOD whom we have not seen. Just like Rebekah. That's **1 John 4:20**.

Genesis 24:59-61- they get on their way.

ANOTHER THING: we too have to love Jesus *more than* family and be willing to forsake all we have known, if we have to, to follow Christ. And - she had to *leave* Babylon, just as Abraham had. The city of Nahor was in Mesopotamia (according to v. 10), not far from Babylon. We TOO have to "Come out of her (modern day Babylon) my people" - this world's system (**Revelation 18:4**). **Certainly for the wedding, she left her home and went to Isaac's father's home.** Keep that in mind for the next recording.

Genesis 24:62-65 - Isaac is at Beer Lahai Roi - where God gave Hagar a pool of water, and the place means "THE GOD WHO SEES". Isaac sees God's answer to his prayers, at the very place that means "GOD SEES".

Genesis 24:66 "And the servant told Isaac all the things that he had done. **67 Then Isaac brought her into his mother Sarah's tent; and he took Rebekah and she became his wife, and he loved her.** So Isaac was comforted after his mother's death."

NOTE: Sarah had died almost 3 years prior apparently. But her *tent* was still there. Sarah was Isaac's *mother*. Now Sarah's *tent* is going to become *Isaac's wife's tent* and represents her in fact. **There are incredible meanings and symbolism here!**

Who is the mother of us all? **Galatians 4:26** - Jerusalem above! Let's read it:

Galatians 4:23-27 "But he who was of the bondwoman was born according to the flesh, and he of the freewoman through promise, 24 which things are symbolic. For these are the

two covenants: the one from Mount Sinai which gives birth to bondage, which is Hagar -- 25 for this Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia, and corresponds to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children -- 26 ***but the Jerusalem above is free, which is the mother of us all.***"

Remember that, when we discuss where the wedding supper will take place.

So I hope this review of Isaac and Rebekah has been instructive of our relationship with Christ.

NEXT - IS GOD'S MARRIAGE TO ISRAEL

When I do a full study on the covenants, we'll go into much more detail into God's marriage covenant with ancient Israel. But we need to understand the basics of that today, to more fully understand this topic of the mystery of the Bride and Groom.

God's *contract, covenant* with Israel was not just an agreement - but a *wedding* contract. ***It was traditionally made on the day of Pentecost***, at Mt. Sinai, with God giving His laws and Israel agreeing to the relationship. That covenant was ratified with the blood of bulls and God became the HUSBAND of Israel.

In Exodus 19 - God told them to wash and prepare for 3 days, as He was going to come down on Mt. Sinai in Arabia and give them His laws.

Exodus 20 - He does, speaks with mighty thunderings, lightnings, mountain quaking - and the people were so terrified, they ask Moses to speak to God instead and just pass on to them what He says.

Exodus 21, 22, 23 - God gives His laws. **Exodus 24** - the covenant, contract, agreement is ratified.

Exodus 24:1-12 "Now He said to Moses, ***"Come up to the LORD, you and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel, and worship from afar. 2 And Moses alone shall come near the LORD, but they shall not come near; nor shall the people go up with him."***

3 So Moses came and told the people all the words of the LORD and all the judgments.

And all the people answered with one voice and said, "All the words which the LORD has said we will do." 4 ***And Moses wrote all the words of the LORD. And he rose early in the morning, and built an altar at the foot of the mountain, and twelve pillars according to the twelve tribes of Israel.*** 5 Then he sent young men of the children of Israel, who offered burnt offerings and sacrificed peace offerings of oxen to the LORD. 6 And Moses took half the **blood** and put it in basins, and half the blood he sprinkled on the altar. 7 Then he took **the Book of the Covenant** and read in the hearing of the people. And they said, "All that the LORD has said we will do, and be obedient." 8 And Moses took the blood, sprinkled it on the people, and said, **"This is the blood of the covenant which the LORD has made with you"**

according to all these words."

It actually didn't take long for them to break that agreement.

Moses has to go back up to God now - and from Exodus 24-31, there are more details God gives Moses.

While we're here in Exodus 24 though, I want us to read something else that was very interesting on this Pentecost day and will bear more in the 3rd message I'll give on the Bride and Groom:

Exodus 24:9-12 (continuing) "Then Moses went up, also Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel, **10 and they saw the God of Israel. And there was under His feet as it were a paved work of sapphire stone**, and it was like the very heavens in its clarity. 11 But on the nobles of the children of Israel He did not lay His hand. **So they saw God, and they ate and drank.** 12 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Come up to Me on the mountain and be there; and I will give you tablets of stone, and the law and commandments which I have written, that you may teach them."

So on the feast of Pentecost, they're eating and drinking with God. I want you remember that when we do Message #3 about when and where the wedding supper will be. 74 of them. 70 elders, plus 1 Moses, + 3 priests (Aaron, Nadab and Abihu). So the 74 was 70, 1, 3. Remember that when we do the study on numbers in the Bible.

So then chapters 24-31 are the other details of the priesthood, the ark, and so on.

Exodus 32 - the gold calf story. Like I said, it didn't take long to break the agreement.

Exodus 34:9-10 God *renews* the brand new, broken covenant, but God's hurt is palpable (v. 3 - go on up, but I won't go with you". Moses intercedes, and God restored the covenant).

In any case, God marries Israel and she becomes God's wife. Some wonder if there was an actual marriage, but the least anyone can say is that Israel at least at this point is betrothed. The Hebrew word for "husband" can be much broader apparently than our English word. But even a betrothal took divorce to dissolve. I personally still think God *married* Israel.

Cite Isaiah 54:5 "For your Maker is your husband, The LORD of hosts is His name; And your Redeemer is the Holy One of Israel; He is called the God of the whole earth."

Exodus 34:29-35 tells the account of Moses coming back down with 2 new tablets of the *testimony*, the WITNESS of the covenant. Moses' face shone, from being in the presence of the Almighty. These 2 tablets are the "*witness of the bride*", the *TESTIMONY* of this covenant.

Verses 29-31: "Now it was so, when Moses came down from Mount Sinai (**and the two**

tablets of the Testimony were in Moses' hand) when he came down from the mountain), that Moses did not know that the skin of his face shone while he talked with Him.”

V 30-31 - Israel is taken aback by Moses' shining face.

The SYMBOLISM of all this - for a future study - for those of you who wish to study it now - is clearly laid out in **2 Corinthians 3:7-18**.

The Hebrew word for “testimony” is Strong’s word #5715. It’s a *feminine* word - just as the *bride* is female in God’s eyes.

Hebrew: `eduwth (ay-dooth'); feminine of OT: Strong’s word number 5707; testimony: (5707 is the word for witness) Translated in the KJV as “testimony, witness”

These 10 commandments - called the *witness of the bride, the testimony* - go into the ark, and the ark becomes called the *ark of the testimony*. The ark was placed in the tabernacle, which was then called the *tabernacle of testimony*.

By the way, those tablets were small enough that *both* fit in one hand - and Moses could run up and down Mt Sinai with them. They weren’t like huge *gravestone-size* like the movies depict. Moses could never have lifted them, and neither would they have fit into the ark, which was basically not a huge box. The ark also had to hold the container of manna and Aaron’s rod that budded.

But anyway, these 10 commandments were the *testimony*, the *witness* of the bride. You can see that in the story of Satan persecuting God’s end-time people, the CHURCH, in **Revelation 12:17** “And the dragon was enraged with the woman, and he went to make war with the rest of her offspring, **who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.**”

Here again, “testimony” of the bride and keeping the 10 commandments are put in the same sentence. The word “testimony” is from the Greek word “MARTURIA” meaning, translated, witness, testimony. Strong’s word # NT: 3141 - giving witness, evidence, record, report. Translated witness)

This speaks of a bride who is so faithful to her fiancé that she’s willing to *witness to her relationship* with Him, even to *death*, even to martyrdom.

LATER in Revelation, the testimony of Jesus is also defined as the spirit of prophecy (Revelation 19:10).

But Israel was a faithless wife, not a faithful witness, often committing adultery spiritually with other gods. God warns her, forgives her over and over and over for her adultery - but finally in the end, when she would not *stop*, God divorces the house of Israel. God *hates* divorce, He tells us in **Malachi 2:16** - but even GOD divorced His wife when she wouldn’t *stop* being unfaithful.

You can read a summary of the account in Ezekiel 16:1-14 - *which for time's sake I ask you to read on your own afterwards. As you read the account, pick up the clues of the marriage covenant all thru there.*

Ezekiel 16:8-10 *"Yes, I swore an oath to you and entered into a covenant with you, and you became Mine," says the Lord GOD.* 9 *"Then I washed you in water; yes, I thoroughly washed off your blood, and I anointed you with oil.* 10 *I clothed you in embroidered cloth and gave you sandals of badger skin; I clothed you with fine linen and covered you with silk."*
verses 11-14 - how God adorns Israel - and that she was so beautiful to Him.

If you read the rest of **Ezekiel 16**, you'll see how unfaithful Israel became - and in the end, God has to *divorce* Israel. They broke the covenant over and over, so there was no contract. If *both* parties don't fulfill their responsibilities in a contract, then the guarantees are null and void too.

Jesus *dies* as our *Passover*.... This frees Him *completely* from any *hint* of any ties left to ancient, physical Israel. And He's free to make a new covenant, a new agreement, which He does. The NEW covenant *does* have *elements of a testamentary will* to it - and that is clearly shown in **Hebrews 9:16-17** - but overall, I prefer the term "New Covenant", to "New Testament".

Jeremiah 31:31-33 "Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when ***I will make a new covenant*** with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah -- 32 not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, though I was a husband to them, says the LORD. 33 ***But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.***"

The books of Romans, Galatians and Hebrews in particular - we'll go into them in far more detail in future studies - make plain that the *new agreement is with spiritual Israel* - comprised of people from all nations, whomever and wherever God is calling them. There is no more Greek or Jew, male or female, circumcised or uncircumcised, black or white. We are *all one* now in Christ (**Galatians 3:26-29**) through FAITH. *The true church is now scattered around the world.*

The new affianced bride is God's Church. Paul speaks of that in Ephesians 5:25-32; 2 Corinthians 11:2 - where he speaks of the church being the virgin bride of Christ, and many other places.

Just as Moses RATIFIED the old covenant with Blood, so did Jesus speak of the *new* covenant being ratified with HIS blood.

But before we see that, we need to answer -- What is "the church"? (Be sure to

hear my full message on this topic)

It is *not any* organization of **men**, though many of God's people attend with organized groups that are incorporated for tax and liability purposes, etc. GOD'S *people* are those *who have God's seed, God's spirit* and are being *led* by that spirit (**Romans 8:14** - as many as are *led* by the Spirit, these are the sons of God"); they *live a holy, righteous life as*

called out ones from the rest of the world. Wherever they attend, whoever they are - *they comprise the church*. God knows who His people are.

Right now "The church" is split among many flocks - but someday, *Christ will bring them all together into one flock*. Notice John 10.

John 10:14-16, Jesus speaking, says He's the good shepherd - and in **verse 16** ***"And other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they will hear My voice; and there WILL BE ONE flock and one shepherd."***

Now remember that THE FATHER PICKS THE BRIDE:

On the night Jesus was betrayed, He said in His prayer:

John 17:24 "Father, I desire that ***THEY ALSO WHOM YOU GAVE ME*** may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory which You have given Me; for You loved Me before the foundation of the world."

Nobody can come to Christ unless the Father draws Him to Jesus (John 6:44). The very highest, most awesome Being in the universe - handpicked YOU to be the Bride of His Son.

Not a bride's maid - but *the Bride herself*. And not just any bride to just any groom. But the bride of the King of Kings. Talk about the old fairytales of a prince falling in love with a nobody, and marrying her - and bringing her into His kingdom on HIS throne. That's no Cinderella story - but a *real* story, *your* story, if you *value* it and *show* you do by the way you treat that calling.

In Jesus' day on earth, the father would select the bride price - and then the groom would go to the woman he wanted to marry and pour some wine into 2 glasses, and offer to be her husband.

If she drank of his cup, she was *accepting* the wedding proposal -- and agreeing to *participate* in *his* life, for better or worse, pictured by whatever was in that *cup*.

Are bells going off in your mind? Any epiphanies happening? Any "ah-huh" moments?

Who called us? Father did. Who was the GROOM? JESUS. Remember, a KING puts on a wedding for HIS SON..... We'll read all that later.

Did Jesus ever present a cup of wine to His bride to be? YOU BET. It was the cup of blessing which He offered on the night he was betrayed.

The *cup* of Christ was offered with the blood symbolism:

Matthew 26:26-29 “And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to the disciples and said, “Take, eat; this is My body.”

27 Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, “Drink from it, all of you. 28 For this is ***My blood of the new covenant***, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. 29 But I say to you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom.” (**I Corinthians 11** also speaks of the NEW COVENANT with the cup).

The disciples are probably wondering, “why is he proposing to us?” - for the wording He used was very *similar* to what Jewish men would say when proposing to a girl they wanted to marry. They’d have the cup of wine in hand and say something like that – “this cup represents my LIFE, and all that is ahead of me. I’m offering you this cup, so please *drink of it*, and form a covenant with me. Be my wife, and let us be married.”

You’ll notice that the *emphasis* of scripture is on the *cup* - which *included* its contents - rather than just on the wine itself.

Drinking of the cup had profound meaning. The cup could be very painful indeed.. . as Jesus even in ***Gethsemane*** begged that “IF POSSIBLE, let this *cup* pass from me.” But Father - and Jesus - knew He had to drink of that cup. That was His destiny, His purpose and calling.

That’s why Jesus told SALOME, the mother of James and John - when she asked if her 2 sons could sit on Jesus’ right and left in the kingdom:

Matthew 20:20-23 “Then the mother of Zebedee's sons came to Him with her sons, kneeling down and asking something from Him. 21 And He said to her, “What do you wish?” She said to Him, “Grant that these two sons of mine may sit, one on Your right hand and the other on the left, in Your kingdom.” 22 But Jesus answered and said, “You do not know what you ask. ***Are you able to drink the cup*** that I am about to drink, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?”

They said to Him, “We are able.”

23 So He said to them, ***“You will indeed drink My cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with; but to sit on My right hand and on My left is not Mine to give, but it is for those for whom it is prepared by My Father”***

When you and I drink of the cup each year at Passover season, ***we too are renewing our engagement promise to be faithful, no matter what is in that cup.*** We cannot drink of the cup of the Lord and of demons. Neither should we drink of it unworthily - but *esteeming* the body of the Lord.

I think the evidence is that we have not esteemed his cup, or how we are to imbibe of it, seriously enough - and that is why so many are sick, and even die, among God's people. Read it for yourself in 1 Corinthians 11:27-30. I'll speak more on the cup, and the Passover, in a future study dedicated just to that topic.

And we certainly look *forward* to the time our Master will drink that cup anew with us in the world to come. What will our *husband* say - when He raises a glass of wine in a toast: "Here is the reminder of my covenant with you, to be faithful to you - *for all eternity*". He can't say, "may we grow old together" - because God doesn't grow old!

So now Christ has proposed to you and me. And like I said earlier - we have Father's seed in us so we can be of the same kind.

The Holy Spirit is also referred to as the "earnest" - the down payment, the guarantee, the deposit, - and the Greek word is ARRABONA..... and remember: that's the same word used today for engagement ring!!!

Are you getting excited yet? I sure *hope* so! IS this spiritually important? Yes! How?
GOD won't allow someone to be part of the BRIDE unless that bride is for all purposes one flesh with him in every way. Must be totally compatible. ***We must grow up, mature to the fullness of Christ, to a mature or old KJV "perfect" man - EPHESIANS 4:11-16.***

We must exhibit the kind of loyalty as Jesus did to Father - "No thought, no word, no action, no conduct, no direction of my life is done on my own power, Jesus says, but only what is according to what Father wants!" We must be the same way for the kingdom of God to be set up correctly

*** JESUS WILL NOT JUST MARRY A WOMAN JUST BECAUSE IT'S TIME TO HAVE A WIFE, BUT WANTS AFFECTION AND A SHARING, LOVING RELATIONSHIP....THAT EVERY STEP OF THE WAY, THERE IS LOVE.**

The Ephesians left their first love, CONTINUED to do the work, but didn't LOVE HIM anymore. HE WANTS OUR FEELINGS IN IT TOO. His FEELINGS are in it for US, and he wants the same back like David who said: "I LOVE YOU O LORD".

THE WOMAN -- WHICH IS US -- HAS TO HAVE SOME DESIRE FOR THE MAN TOO. UNLIKE MANY MIDEASTERN WEDDINGS, GOD WILL NOT FORCE himself upon HIS BRIDE. HE WANTS A MUTUALLY AFFECTIONATE, IN-LOVE RELATIONSHIP.

I have to wind down this 2nd message now and I feel like I'd really like to keep going! It's so exciting. I prayed that somehow you'd hear and feel and capture that same passion for Jesus our Husband as you may never have had before -- or to go deeper than ever before in your thrilling adoration of Him. The exciting climax of this 3 part study will really tie it all together. In that 3RD message, we'll cover - so be sure to finish the series:

* How long ago God really knew you - it may surprise you, and humble you.

* How the Proverbs 31 woman is really a description of much more than just an ideal wife.

* How RUTH AND BOAZ show us so much about the wedding of Christ - when and where it will be.

* What Jesus meant when He said I go prepare a place for you?

* Why did Jesus say no man knows the day nor the hour -not even the Son of Man - just the Father knows when that exact time is"? WHY did He say that? Why only the Father?

* WHEN - and WHERE - the wedding will take place, and who will perform it. The Bible tells us a lot more than you might think.

* We'll read thru parts of Revelation - and get some thrilling insights from those passages of what lies ahead for you and me as the bride of Christ.

* We'll read about the *warnings* not to miss out, not to undervalue the marriage.

* I'll do a whole separate message on the wise and foolish virgins, for time won't allow that in the next message.

* We'll also find some parallels from the Song of Songs if time permits - very much a series of lessons about Christ and the Bride. It's all in code. Let's open the code and reveal what's there. It's exciting! Don't miss it.

I hope we can wrap it up in the next message. We may have future messages - continuing on how Jesus and His Bride will bring about *children* of that *union* in the world tomorrow....

It's all so exciting. Pray that you will be counted worthy to escape the horrific times coming ahead just before the wedding of the Messiah - and to be counted among the Bride of Christ. May God's peace be with you always.

Until next time, this is Philip, your brother in our Messiah asking for blessings, peace and shalom to all of you as you walk in His light. Until next tie.... Shalom and joy!

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