

# **PART 3, THE MYSTERY OF CHRIST AND THE CHURCH: The Wedding Part 3 of 3**

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*All scriptures are NKJV unless noted otherwise.*

## **Summary:**

This is Part 3, the "Final" session on the Mystery of Christ and Church. I hope you find it motivating and exciting, to get you *thrilled* again about being called by God to be more than just a Christian, but called to be the very *bride*, executive assistant, personal aide and helper, and constant *companion* of Jesus Christ, the King of kings. It's a calling never again to be repeated quite the same way. If you can grasp what it means to be called to be the Bride of Christ, we'd be incredibly thrilled, and show God we value this calling by allowing Him to change our lives to be compatible with our Husband.

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Every day that passes, is a day that draws us nearer to becoming fully at-one with our Savior, when we will say "I do" and marry the Son of God. It's time we wake up, quit the interdenominational bickering, focus on what tasks lie ahead, and "be of Christ."

**Part 1 focused on the Husband** -- Jesus, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Adam, and all the parallels with that. We should note, that the Bible nowhere calls the Church "the 2<sup>nd</sup> Eve", but there may still be parallels as we noted.

**Part 2 focused on the Bride (the church)** -- typified by Rebekah, and Israel, and the church. We reviewed how God had to divorce Israel of old (**Jeremiah 3:8**) and then in His death was free to marry another at His resurrection. I focused on how Jesus proposed to us, represented by His disciples, on the eve of Passover day, when He put the cup of wine in front of them and asked them to drink of it -- the standard way Jewish men would propose to women in that day. In accepting and drinking of the cup, the church said, "I will marry you". Then the man typically leaves the young lady *and returns to his father's house and prepares the wedding chamber* before coming to get the bride later.

***This part 3 will focus some more on the Husband Christ and the Bride, and then culminate with information about how Jesus is preparing for the wedding, when the wedding could be (though we don't know the day nor the hour of Jesus' return yet), and possibly where the wedding may take place.***

***\*\*\*How far back did God start working with those He wanted to be the Bride of Christ? Perhaps, just perhaps, God started long, long before you and I realize.*** Some of you won't agree with this, but I think with some who compose the Bride, and perhaps all, God knew *exactly* what kind of person He wanted for a particular position in His family and temple -- and started to form you by bringing together the specific genes and DNA to form you many, many generations before you were born!!! We have free will, free moral agency, and somehow I also feel God can work with free will and still also work out HIS plans and purposes within free moral agency generations before we were ever born.

I personally believe that. And I'll show you a couple scriptures in a minute which appear to substantiate this.

I believe that GOD, who *knows* the end from the beginning, God, who leaves *nothing to chance* – knew you before you were born and knows what to do to present you perfect in His family as the perfect Bride of Christ!!! Out of billions and billions of people, the most High God, our Abba -- our dear Father, the Ancient of Days, the Almighty Holy One -- picked you! **Hand-selected you!!** *When* He picked you it might surprise you when you really get the whole story some day. I suspect it is at a much younger age -- and perhaps at a much earlier **time** than we have suspected before. We'll have to wait and see.... **but here are some teasers from scripture**, some strong hints as to when all this could have started, as far as God calling *you*, yes *you* specifically!

***Just as the Bride of the first Adam was carefully designed directly by God Himself -- and then presented to Adam – would God do any less in preparing the more important spiritual bride of the “2<sup>nd</sup> Adam”, Jesus Christ, the very Son of the Highest?***

### **Ephesians 1:3-6**

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, 4 ***just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world***, [did you get that?] that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, 5 ***having predestined us to adoption as sons*** by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, 6 to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He made us accepted in the Beloved.”

### **REMEMBER Matthew 25:34 a well known verse (cite:)**

“Then the King will say to those on his right hand, 'Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the ***kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world***’ [OK, it doesn't say “YOU” were prepared from the world's foundational time, but the kingdom was, for you]

**THERE IS A BOOK OF LIFE** -- a registry of God's holy people made perfect, reserved in the heavens, and your name is in there if God is working with you. That name can be blotted out, if we don't value that calling to be the Bride of Christ, so beware. I'll someday do a whole study just on the Book of Life. It's fascinating.

### **Revelation 17:8**

“The beast that you saw was, and is not, and will ascend out of the bottomless pit and go to perdition. And those who dwell on the earth will marvel, ***whose names are not written in the Book of Life from the foundation of the world***, when they see the beast that was, and is not, and yet is.”

Could *your* name have been written in a book thousands of years ago? Or is it saying people like Abel and others were written in there “from the foundation”? It's fascinating to ponder about that though, isn't it?

***In Isaiah 44:2***, in describing Jacob, God says He formed Jacob “from the womb”. In many cases, we'll find that specific verse like this have a much wider application.

**Psalms 139:13-17 LIVING BIBLE**

“You made all the delicate, inner parts of my body and knit them together in my mother's womb. 14 Thank you for making me so wonderfully complex! It is amazing to think about it. Your workmanship is marvelous -- and how well I know it. **15 You were there while I was being formed in utter seclusion! 16 You saw me before I was born and scheduled each day of my life before I began to breathe. Every day was recorded in your book! 17 How precious it is, Lord, to realize that you are thinking about me constantly! I can't even count how many times a day your thoughts turn toward me. And when I waken in the morning, you are still thinking of me!**”

Of course! Of course! Jesus is in love! Jesus is excited! He's about to be married! This time to a real bride, who will be like He is, spirit, of the same body, same mind, same will, same goal, same purpose -- and like Him, without spot or wrinkle...for he will cover her with His righteousness and give her the means to do righteousness too.

**There's another analogy of Christ and the church: The Marriage of Boaz and Ruth**, told in the book of RUTH. Be turning there please. I don't have the time in this message to go verse by verse, but just want to point a couple of things out that bear on this topic – sometime in the future we can do a whole message on the story of Ruth and Boaz.

The author of the book of Ruth is unknown and unstated. It is based on the latter period of the Judges. What seemed to be very common, every-day events were really pieces of a puzzle coming together to get RUTH and BOAZ to be married, to prepare for Israel's greatest kings – both King David -- and the Messianic Line leading to Jesus Christ, the King of all kings.

- **Elimelech, meaning “My God is King”**, a man from “the house of bread” (Bethlehem) marries NAOMI -- and they have 2 sons, Mahlon and Chilion. During a famine, they move to Moab. While there Elimelech dies, and his two sons marry two Moabite women. (MOAB was the son of Lot and the incestuous union with his daughter, remember.) Yes, Ruth was a Moabite – not an Israelite living in Moab!
- Remember Nehemiah took the instructions about not admitting Moabites into the assembly of Israel, to mean they were not to intermarry with them (**Deuteronomy 23:3-6; Nehemiah 13:1-3**). God was clear about not intermarrying with Canaanites (**Deuteronomy 7:1-3**). Remember Ruth was a Moabite.

The 2 sons of Elimelech soon die too -- so you now have 3 widows: Naomi, Ruth and Orpah.

Ruth 1 - Naomi releases Ruth and Orpah to return to their native land **as she wants to return to Bethlehem**. Orpah leaves, but notice what Ruth does:

**Ruth 1:16-17**

But Ruth said: "Entreat me not to leave you, Or to turn back from following after you; For wherever you go, I will go And wherever you lodge, I will lodge; **Your people shall be my people, And your God, my God.** 17 Where you die, I will die, and there will I be buried. The LORD do so to me, and more also, If anything but death parts you and me."

RUTH -- the other Moabite widow, **converts** to the true God, the true religion. It seems clear

that the reason then not to marry a Moabitess is nullified at this point, since she is now an Israelite by religion. Just as Rahab – a Canaanite from Jericho – married into Israel after her conversion, and she probably married one of the 2 spies! And neither was there any censure of that marriage, because she had converted to the true God.

I will gladly cover in detail in future messages why I said what I just said. Here's a thumb nail for now: Yes, there are many, many passages in the Torah, the first 5 books, and in Ezra and Nehemiah that say Israel was not to intermarry with the surrounding nations. I'm just saying, when you study all the passages in *context*, it seems clear to me at least that God is not as concerned about racial reasons so much as for keeping their *false religious beliefs* out of Israel.

If you disagree, that's fine. ***I think it is better and wiser to marry within our races, and even more so within our cultures*** -- but if the Bible categorically forbid all marriages outside of Israel, then why:

-- Why was there no *hint* of any sanction against righteous BOAZ for marrying Moabitess Ruth?

-- If inter-racial marriage was always wrong, why would God allow the Israelite men to marry *captured* women from surrounding nations (**Deuteronomy 20:12-18 and Deuteronomy 21:10-14**)? Of course, as captured women, they could be forbidden from keeping their old religion and pagan idol worship.

-- Why then was Rahab the former harlot, who now had converted to the Israelite God and religion, allowed to marry Salmon, perhaps one of the 2 spies? And not a hint of censure there.

-- If inter-racial marriage was always forbidden, why was Bathsheba allowed to marry Uriah the Hittite -- another of the nations that was forbidden (**Deuteronomy 7:1-5**). The reason given in **Deuteronomy 7:4** for the prohibition was so those pagan nations would not bring in their heathen religions into Israel. Remember that also.

-- For that matter Moses married a Midianite and a black Cushite and never is recorded to have ever put either one away; Joseph married Asenath, the daughter of an Egyptian priest; David may have had at least one Canaanite wife and so on.

WHY were those not condemned? *Because each of those had converted to Israel's God and faith, and so the reason to not marry them was void.* I think the reason for the prohibition against marrying outside of Israel was religious, not racial. Otherwise, proponents who forbid dating and marriage outside of Israel on Biblical grounds would have to also forbid an Anglo from marrying a German, for example, though they're of the same race – for the command in the Bible is about not marrying from the surrounding countries – without mentioning race whatsoever. The Bible wasn't addressing *racial*, but religious issues.

***What's my point in my mentioning of all this?*** When Jesus was introduced by John the Baptist, He called Jesus “the Lamb of God who shall take away the sins of the

WORLD”. Not just the sins of Israel. It is appropriate then that the Messiah's lineage included a *uniting of Jew and Gentile* to share in the ancestry of David and Jesus Christ,

who is the Redeemer of the whole *world*, not just the Jews. The fact that He had Israelites and Gentiles in HIS ancestry shows that He came to save Gentiles as well. We of Israel should not put too much stock in that physical line anyway, anymore, because “in Christ, there is *no more Jew, no more Gentile*”, no more black/white/Asian/Hispanic and so on; but we’re all one in Christ (*Galatians 3:26-29*) and we’re *all* therefore heirs of God’s promises!

*In God’s eyes in the new covenant, what is important is the relationship with Jesus, not whether you are a physical descendant of Israel or of a Gentile. This new relationship, this new creation, is called “**the Israel of God**”, now composed of converted Israelites and Gentiles. And for that matter, Jesus Himself is going to marry a church that is going to be composed of former Gentiles as well as former Israelites, and all now is called “the Israel of God” (*Galatians 6:15-16*).*

\* Continuing on: *when* do Naomi and Ruth show up in Bethlehem? **Right in the Passover season -- Ruth 1:22** “So Naomi returned, and Ruth the Moabitess her daughter-in-law with her, who returned from the country of Moab. **Now they came to Bethlehem at the beginning of barley harvest.**” (Remember you can’t have the barley harvest until the wavesheaf offering has been offered).

\* God’s **church**, represents primarily those called in the first small harvest of spring **barley** in late March or early April, in the Hebrew month of ABIB -- not the big fall harvest later.

\* **Ruth 2** -- introduces a relative of Elimelech, Naomi’s deceased husband... The relative is **BOAZ**. Ruth is trying to help provide food by following the *reapers* and picking up what they left or dropped. She “happens to come upon” the fields of Boaz -- though God was the one really leading it. Boaz starts to provide more grain for her. “The reapers” also portray significant things, which we’ll cover later.

\* CHAPTER 3 -- As they find out that Boaz is a relative, and can redeem *Ruth*, and marry her, since her husband died, Naomi and Ruth devise a plan to inform Boaz that he could and should marry Ruth, since he was a close relative, and needed to fulfill what’s called the “Levirate” marriage... which I’ll fully explain in the full session on this book. You can read about how a brother was to marry his deceased brother’s widow to pass on the *name* and inheritance **in Deuteronomy 25:5-10**.

\* Now notice the timing: **Ruth 3:1-9** “Then Naomi her mother-in-law said to her, “My daughter, shall I not seek security for you, that it may be well with you? 2 Now Boaz, whose young women you were with, is he not our kinsman? In fact, he is **winnowing barley** tonight at the threshing floor. 3 Therefore wash yourself and anoint yourself, put on your best garment and go down to the threshing floor; but do not make yourself known to the man until he has finished eating and drinking. 4 Then it shall be, when he lies down, that you shall notice the place where he lies; and you shall go in, uncover his feet, and lie down; and he will tell you what you should do.”

5 And she said to her, “All that you say to me I will do.”

6 So she went down to the threshing floor and did according to all that her mother-in-law instructed her. 7 **And after Boaz had eaten and drunk, and his heart was cheerful,**

**he went to lie down at the end of the heap of grain; and she came softly, uncovered his feet, and lay down.**

8 Now it happened at midnight that the man was startled, and turned himself; and there, a

woman was lying at his feet. 9 And he said, "Who are you?"

So she answered, "I am Ruth, your maidservant. Take your maidservant under your wing, for you are a close relative."

\* **Ruth 4** -- he goes to the gate of Bethlehem and talks to the one who is a closer relative, and Boaz agrees to be her Redeemer, to buy, pay for, *Ruth* as his bride, right there where the marketplace was. But it's the end of the barley season, which puts it right at Pentecost. Boaz becomes the Redeemer -- **literally "the GO-EL" in the Hebrew**, the one who buys the rights to the fields owned by Naomi's sons and the rights to RUTH herself.

***In the same way, Jesus is our "Go-el", our Redeemer, who redeems -- and even purchases*** -- the rights to have us as His wife! Price: His blood!

In **Job 19:25** – Job says, in a prophetic statement, "I know that my Redeemer lives." David and Isaiah knew the Eternal was their Redeemer too: **Psalm 19:14; 78:35; Isaiah 41:14; Isaiah 43:14; 49:26** plus many, many more verses.

Paul, Peter and John knew Jesus as our Redeemer – the Hebrew "Go-el" as well. WE, the called out ones, are the redeemed ones. **See Galatians 3:13; 1 Peter 1:18; Revelation. 5:9; Revelation 14:3-4.** We were bought with a price, the price of Jesus' blood in our behalf (**1 Corinthians. 6:20; 7:23**).

***Back to our story of Ruth and Boaz:*** Their wedding takes place right at the end of the barley harvest, which places it right at Pentecost. Remember that.

\* At the end of RUTH 4 we have the genealogy of Judah's son Perez, culminating in the births of Boaz and then his great grandson DAVID, the son of Jesse.

So just as **REBEKAH's** decision to marry Isaac impacted eternity, and impacted you and me -- so does *this* marriage impact eternity, and so will the marriage you and I are being called to be part of.

***THE POINT: THE WEDDING OF BOAZ AND RUTH***, which many see as a type of Christ marrying the Church -- which is now composed of *all nations*, Israelite and Gentile -- happens at the end of the barley harvest, **at Pentecost season**. Of course we all become spiritual Israelites in God's eyes, upon conversion. ***Does it not stand to reason Jesus' wedding will also be on the very anniversary of His marriage to physical Israel, and anniversary of giving the Holy Spirit in Acts 2 to the new covenant church? Pentecost -- at the end of the barley season.*** It makes sense to me as a strong possibility. *I don't preach that as dogma, because God can marry whenever He chooses, and I'm not going to get all fanatical about speculation.*

**LET'S move on to more new material: Please turn to Proverbs 31.** We men think of this as being something for the women. I think you'll find it's about us men *and* women, all of us who are the Bride of Christ -- because I think it is about the bride of Christ, not just any woman.

From ancient times -- even Augustine, around 400 AD -- believed it to be a description of the church... and I think he was right on that point. Others more recently have expounded on this point also.

***I don't have the time at this point to go verse by verse -- but just want to assign you all some homework: study the passages and find the clues that show this is very likely talking about the church. I'll hit a few hi-lites right now to get you started (and there are many more):***

**Proverbs 31:10-31 from New Living translation**

10 Who can find a virtuous and capable wife? She is worth more than precious rubies.

**Verse 12** *'she does Him good and not evil, all the days of her life'*. Our sins bring reproach on the name of God. People should say that all they know about Christ, they learned by watching God's people.

**Proverbs 12:4** "An excellent wife is the crown of her husband"

**Proverbs 31:15** *"She gets up before dawn (rises while it is yet night) to prepare food for her household* and plan the day's work for her servant girls. (Remember manna: you had to pick it up for your tent, and before it got hot. We have to have our meal with our husband early in the day; He was what the manna pictured)

**Proverbs 31:16** *"She goes out to inspect a field and buys it; with her earnings she plants a vineyard.*

(Have you got the picture yet?) **Matthew 13:44** -- the kingdom of God is like a man who finds treasure in a field and gives everything he has to buy that field! The church knows a good field when she sees it!

**Then she plants a vineyard.** Does that remind you of our relationship with Christ? HE is the Vine, YOU are the branches -- **John 15:1**. All the way through Proverbs 31 are things that recall Jesus and His church. So the church buys the field, and puts Christ right in it.

**Proverbs 31:18** "She sees that her business affairs go well (Jewish); *Her lamp does not go out by night (the Jewish version: "her lamp stays lit all night")."*

(Remember *the virgins of Matthew 25*? Their lamps were about to go out, but the wise had extra oil and trimmed their wicks and got their lamps burning again! Again, this pictures the church!)

**Proverbs 31:23** *"Her husband is known in the gates, when he sits among the elders of the land"*

Do you remember, or know, *where* Boaz buys the rights for Ruth to be his wife? At the GATES of the city of Bethlehem, which means "house of bread". What kind of bread at this time? Barley, the bread of the common man.

**Proverbs 31:25** *"She is clothed with strength and dignity, and she laughs with no fear of the future."*

***Are you strong spiritually? Do you think this is speaking physically? Not just physically. How can we be spiritually strong? 1 John 2:14***, last part of the verse: "... I

have written to you, young men, ***Because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you,*** And you have overcome the wicked one.” We can be strong too, if we let God abide in us. “GOD” – from Hebrew “EL” means “Strong one”.

This is a woman in Proverbs 31 who is strong because she’s using her Husband’s strength! So I hope you’re seeing why I believe Proverbs 31 is really talking about Christ and the Church.

***(Story of my daughter Rachel, as a little girl,*** trying to lift something heavy. I asked her to use *all* her strength. So she tried again, but couldn’t. I asked if she was using ALL her strength. She said she was. I told her she wasn’t. I said, “Rachel, *I’m* here. I can help you, if you ask me. You can be *stronger* if you use *my* strength too.” She asked for my help, so I then picked up her burden for her, and we had a little Bible study about how if we use *God’s* strength, we become truly strong. We also covered how God wants to take our burdens, and in fact commands us cast our burdens to Him.)

**Ephesians 6:10** "Finally, my brethren, ***be strong in the Lord*** and in the power of ***HIS*** might.”

**Philippians 4:13** “I can do all things ***through Christ who strengthens me***”.

God tells us not to glory in our muscular strength, but in knowing God (**Jeremiah 9:23-24**).

**Proverbs 31:26** “***When she speaks, her words are wise, and kindness is the rule when she gives instructions.***”

(Read on your own, Psalm 111:10 and Proverbs 1:7. Wisdom comes from fearing to disobey God. If this Proverbs 31 woman speaks wisely, she must be one who fears God: a definition of God’s people).

**V. 28** “***Her children stand and bless her. Her husband praises her:*** 29 "There are many virtuous and capable women in the world, but you surpass them all!" “many are called, few are chosen.”

**Proverbs 31:30** “***Charm is deceptive, and beauty does not last; but a woman who fears the LORD will be greatly praised.*** (New Living)

Do you see yourself praised by your husband-to-be Jesus Christ? You will be, if you stay close to Him. *Who* is greatly *praised*? That bride who has the testimony of Jesus Christ -- and keeps the 10 commandments, according to the book of Revelation.

It says she fears the Lord. What is “fear of the Lord”? Write this cross reference in your Bible: \_

**Proverbs 8:13** says “***the fear of the Lord is to hate evil***”

I agree with those who feel that Proverbs 31 may well be about the bride of Christ. It’s speculation, but interesting. Feel free to accept or reject it! Let’s move on.

***In the days when the Bible was written, remember the groom has to prepare for his bride, and have a job prior to marrying. Remember Adam was given a job***

**John 14:1-4** "Let not your heart be troubled; you 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 to Myself**; that where I am, there you may be also. **4** And where I go you know, and the way you know."

**V. 2 -- FATHER'S HOUSE: or put another way, "The House of the Father". What's that? GOD is the Father. So "the Father's house" is simply "the house of God". What is "the house of God"?**

*Numerous verses called the Tabernacle and the Temple, the "house of God", eighty four times in the Old Testament alone, for example.*

**1 Timothy 3:15** "but if I am delayed, I write so that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in **the house of God, which is the church of the living God**, the pillar and ground of the truth".

**"Many mansions"**. The Greek word for "mansion" is "mo-ne". The Greek word (*mo-ne*) means "dwelling place, abode". Some have said it means "offices". But it's from a root meaning "abide, dwell". One doesn't abide in, or dwell in, an office! Brethren, it's much more than an office.

MANSION -- the Greek word is the same word used in **John 14:23** – "Jesus answered and said unto him, 'If a man loves me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make **our abode** with him.'" God actually *dwells* within us. He doesn't just make us an "office". Same word.

**Remember we covered last time that Jesus proposed**, and a new agreement or covenant, was agreed upon -- all symbolized by the cup of wine Jesus offered. I covered that in the last message. God sends His holy spirit which is called "the earnest, the guarantee" and that is the same word used for "engagement ring" in Greece today ("**arrabona**").

**After the engagement and proposal**, the fiancé typically had to leave the girl and go back to his father's house, to do what? To prepare a bridal chamber, a place for her. At **his father's** house.

The place prepared for Isaac's bride Rebekah – was apparently the tent of his now deceased mother Sarah. The abode, or tent, was fully ready, decked out, lavishly furnished. Rebekah had to leave her kindred, home and country and go to where Isaac was -- who was a type of Christ.

**Keep in mind: Rebekah went to Isaac and to Isaac's father's (Abraham) home. She went to him, following the servant who came to get her. There is an important symbolism for us here!**

**John 14:2** – "I go prepare a place for you". What's that all about?

\* The father usually allowed his son to add a partition or house next door on the land to prepare for his bride, at least for the wedding – and even “the wedding chamber”. The father insisted that the son first prepare a place for his new bride that would be a satisfactory place to live before he could go through with the marriage.

This is actually about preparing the wedding chamber, the honeymoon suite, where Christ and the church will be married. Where? In the house of Jesus’ father. In “the father’s house”.

### **Where is the “Father’s house”?**

After His resurrection, Jesus told Mary Magdalene, I must go to my Father” (John 20:17).

Where?

He taught us to pray, “Our Father, in *heaven*...”

**Remember the parable of the wedding supper in Matthew 22:2 -- “the kingdom of heaven is like a certain king who arranged for a marriage for his Son.”**

Who is “the king”? Obviously God the Father.

Who is “the Son”? Obviously Jesus.

*Where* is that Kingdom of that Father? Right now it’s the kingdom of *heaven*. “Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God” (**1 Corinthians 15:50**), so right now it’s limited to the Father and Jesus, but remember that Jesus is but the “firstborn among many brethren” (**Romans 8:29**).

***Who alone could possibly be qualified to perform the wedding of Jesus Christ?***

Where is the *only* suitable place befitting the holiness, the purity, the perfection of Jesus and His then perfect bride? I cannot think of any alternative to heaven itself, though of course I’m very limited in my thinking compared to what God has in mind. I concede that, but at least ponder these possibilities.

**Matthew 22:11** -- the King (God the Father) comes in to see the guests. *Where* is this King, so He could come in to see the guests? God our Father is in heaven and apparently stays there until the thousand-year millennium is complete (**Revelation 21:1-4**).

**Hebrews 11:16** “But now they desire a better, that is, *a heavenly country*. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, **for He has prepared a city for them.**”

***Back to the story of how a young man “in Bible days” proposes and what he would do after that:***

\* the man getting married would give the bride clues of things to watch for that would indicate he’s getting close to completion of his tasks, so she could get dressed and prepared.

\* Jesus provides the bridal gown -- just as we read and explained previously, in **Matthew 22**. When guests came to a prestigious wedding, the hosts provided the wedding garments so the guests would be appropriately attired with elegant, festive and clean wedding garments. It was a serious insult to refuse to put on the wedding clothes provided. Remember we are clothed now with Jesus Christ and His righteousness (**Ezekiel 16:10; Revelation**

**3:5, 18).** These garments of righteousness from God have to be closely guarded (**Revelation 16:15**).

**\*Another huge point in weddings back then: Only the Father knew, or would say, when the bridal chamber was ready!** The groom could see the progress being made and so would have a general idea of how close he was to the wedding date. Meanwhile the bride was busy getting her garments ready, and the groom was busy with the wedding chamber, waiting for his father to say the wedding preparations were complete and the marriage could proceed.

**Finally the day would come when the Father would say, “OK, everything is ready. Let’s do it”. After all, He is the one putting on the wedding. So no wonder Jesus said, “No man knows the day nor the hour, except my Father” (Matthew 24:36; 25:13; 24:42-44).**

- The groom’s return *seems* to be delayed (**Matthew 25:5** – “while the Bridegroom delayed..”) and that causes a let down in the bride when her hope deferred causes discouragement and sleep. However the virgins keep their lamps burning in the window so the wedding party would know where they are.

**John 14:2-6** “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 to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also.*** 4 ***And where I go you know, and the way you know.***”

The Greek tense however is not “I will come” but “I am coming”. It’s an absolute promise from the very lips of our Husband, who says He’s coming again for you and for me. ***Are you getting excited yet? Are you ready, or getting ready? Remember we are commanded to “BE ready”, not just to “get ready” (Matthew 24:44; Luke 12:40).***

**Back to John 14:5:** “Thomas said to Him, "Lord, we do not know where You are going, and how can we know the way?"

***In verses 6 and 28, Jesus makes it absolutely clear where He is going: “no one comes to the Father but by me” -- so He is the way, to where He was going, back to His Father in heaven.***

**John 14:28** “You have heard Me say to you, 'I am going away and coming back to you.' ***If you loved Me, you would rejoice because I said, 'I am going to the Father,'*** for

My Father is greater than I.”

Can it get any clearer than that? Again, where is the Father? We pray, “Our Father who art in heaven”.

**Remember: Jesus cannot marry a human church of flesh and blood.** They have to be of the same kind, of the same family, same kindred. We must be born again, literally, not just in concept -- of spirit, to be a fully born child of God.

The offspring of a dog is a dog. The offspring of an oak tree is an oak. The child of **GOD** is also of the same kind. God is reproducing more children -- and that is why the Bible clearly says Jesus is the firstborn of *many, many brothers!* (**Romans 8:29-30**) He told Mary in John 20 that He was going to His Father and our Father (**John 20:17**). We are now of the same family -- and the wedding is becoming *real* and *can* happen.

***We now have to mature, grow up, act like, be like the Father.*** You notice how a child *looks like* the Father, and takes on the family resemblance? We must start becoming obviously of God's family -- in the way we act, talk, walk, and live.

Remember we are made ***in God's image and likeness***. "Likeness" has more to do with *looking* like someone, their appearance. "*Image*" has more to do with "*BEING like*", *in like character*. That is why Jesus is described, ***in Hebrews 1:2-3*** as being the *exact replica*, express image, of His Father.

***Please turn now to 1 Corinthians 15:49.***

So we *must be changing now, and be changed completely at the resurrection*. We can't enter God's kingdom as a flesh and blood mortal. We have to be changed first.

**1 Corinthians 15:49-54** "And as we have borne the image of the man of dust, ***we shall also bear the image of the heavenly Man***. 50 Now this I say, brethren, that ***flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God***; nor does corruption inherit incorruption. 51 Behold, I tell 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 trumpet***. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. 53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality."

Earlier, in **verses 42-44**, it is made clear that we are raised with a *spirit* body.

So we shall all be changed -- ***each in his own number sequence***. There is a certain number of people composing the "***bride***". Most feel it is the 144,000. There's no point in arguing about it, as it's not a salvation issue. We'll find out soon enough. But each one has a number -- when he or she is changed to spirit. Jesus is the *first* of many brethren. His number is #1. I suspect I know who # 2 and #3 are.

**1 Corinthians 15:20-24** "But now Christ is risen from the dead, and ***has become the firstfruits*** of those who have fallen asleep. 21 For since by man came death, by Man also came the resurrection of the dead. 22 For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive. 23 ***But each one in his OWN order: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who are Christ's at His coming***".

**1 Thessalonians 4:16-17** "For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with ***a shout***, with the voice of an archangel, and with ***the trumpet*** of God. [remember **1 Corinthians 15:52** says it's the last trumpet]. ***And the dead in Christ will rise first. 17 Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them*** in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord."

SO WHO'S #2, 3 in the sequence of being resurrected? I suspect I know. The clue is that "The

last shall be first”. Who are the very *last* ones to die “in the Lord” *just before* the 7<sup>th</sup> trumpet? I speculate *they* will be the first ones resurrected after Christ. I think we might be able to guess who they are:

**Revelation 11:7** in the section about the 2 *witnesses* who give one final warning to the world: “When they finish their testimony, the beast that ascends out of the bottomless pit will make war against them, overcome them, *and kill them.*” (they lie there for 3-1/2 days)

**Revelation 11:11-12** “*Now after the three-and-a-half days the breath of life from God entered them, and they stood on their feet, and great fear fell on those who saw them. 12 And they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, “Come up here.” And they ascended to heaven in a cloud, and their enemies saw them.*” (They’re resurrected)

*But this is actually BEFORE verse 15 when the 7<sup>th</sup> trumpet sounds! What an honor they’re being given. Continuing:*

**Revelation 11:13-17** “In the same hour there was a great earthquake, and a tenth of the city fell. In the earthquake seven thousand men were killed, and the rest were afraid and gave glory to the God of heaven. 14 The second woe is past. Behold, the third woe is coming quickly.

15 ***Then the seventh angel sounded:*** And there were loud voices in heaven, saying, “The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!” 16 And the twenty-four elders who sat before God on their thrones fell on their faces and worshiped God” (***Keep your finger here for now***)

**Remember: there are only seven trumpets. Revelation 11:15 says “then the seventh angel sounded..” so that has to also be the last trumpet of 1 Corinthians 15:52.**

Some feel the resurrection occurs at an earlier trumpet, but the Bible clearly says in **1 Corinthians 15:52** “in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, ***at the last trumpet.*** For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised ***incorruptible***, and we shall be ***changed***”.

Then what? OK, the last trumpet sounds.... but just before that last trumpet sounds, the 2 witnesses are resurrected. Then the *rest* of the dead rise *next*, at the 7<sup>th</sup> trumpet. *Then*, those who are still alive are changed and caught up to meet Christ in the air. Isn’t this exciting to contemplate, especially when you realize you’re being called to be there! And when you realize

that God the Father loves YOU just as much as He loves His Son Jesus Christ – read it for yourself at ***the end of John 17:23.***

***Now please turn to Matthew 24.*** This is coming soon, brethren. We must be ready!

**Matthew 24:29-31** “Immediately ***after*** the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. 30 Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. 31 ***And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four***

***But notice Jesus comes for his elect after the tribulation. There are many who believe the elect of God are raptured to heaven before the tribulation to spare them the suffering here on earth. But Matthew 24:29 and 31 show that in fact Jesus gathers the elect after the great tribulation. They’re still on earth.***

***We’ve already read that I Corinthians 15:52 calls it the last trumpet, and Revelation 11:15 mentions the 7<sup>th</sup> trumpet is when the first of the human righteous are changed and rise to meet Christ.***

This has to be the 7<sup>th</sup> trumpet, as far as I can see it. I spent the time I did on that concept because there are those who really believe that the resurrection takes place at an earlier trumpet – perhaps the 5<sup>th</sup> one. But that can’t make sense when we carefully study all the verses on it.

But do remember God’s numerous warnings to the church not to sleep, not to let our oil run out of our lamps, not to be distracted, and many others:

\* **Matthew 25:1-8** – God’s virgins are all sleeping.

\* **Revelation 2 and 3 -- 5** of the 7 churches are faulted for many things: being not passionate for Christ (left first love), or for getting involved in other affairs, or for being spiritually dead or self-satisfied and deceived as to their true state!

Now let’s look at one more passage that probably also has a dual application to the end-time Bride of Christ:

**Song of Solomon 5:2-6** (Could the Shulamite be a type of the end time church?)

2 “I **sleep** (SEE MATTHEW 25:1-5), but my heart is awake;

It is the voice of my beloved! **He knocks**, saying, (see Revelation 3:20) “Open for me, my sister, my love, My dove, my perfect one; For my head is covered with dew, My locks with the drops of the night.”

The Bridegroom, like in **Revelation 3:20**, is pictured *outside* of the church, outside trying to get in. The bride has locked out her own groom and is in bed asleep!

3 “I have taken off my robe (“You are naked” - **Revelation 3:17**)

How can I put it on again? I have washed my feet; How can I defile them?

4 *My beloved put his hand By the latch of the door*, And my heart yearned for him.

5 I arose to open for my beloved, And my hands dripped with myrrh, My fingers with liquid myrrh, On the handles of the lock.

6 ***I opened for my beloved, But my beloved had turned away and was gone. [she had taken too long to wake up and open her door to him]***

My heart leaped up when he spoke. ***I sought him, but I could not find him; I called him, but he gave me no answer”.***

A common teaching is that “it is never too late”. However, a closer look at scripture shows that there are those who will come too late, and the doors will be shut to them. Let’s

not be among those who miss out due to taking our high calling to be the bride of Christ Himself, all for granted!

**Luke 12:35-40** Let's read this reminder of what our spiritual state should be at Christ's return.

"Let your waist be girded and **your lamps burning**; 36 and you yourselves be like men who wait for their master, when he will return from the wedding, that **when he comes and knocks they may open to him immediately**. 37 Blessed are those servants whom the master, when he comes, will find **watching**. Assuredly, I say to you that he will gird himself and have them sit down to eat, and will come and serve them. 38 And if he should come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find them so, blessed are those servants. 39 But know this, that if the master of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and not allowed his house to be broken into. **40 Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.**"

**Daniel 12:1-3** says that at this time, God delivers His people, and many who sleep will awake to everlasting life...and those who are wise will shine like the brightness of the heavens, and those who turn many to righteousness like the stars forever and ever". That can be you and can be me, brethren, if we value this calling enough to stay close to God.

So we're changed to a spirit being, but we don't know how to fly and all that, so your own angel comes for you to carry you to our Groom, to Jesus Christ, waiting for us in the clouds above Jerusalem (**Matthew 24:30-31**).

***Then what? Do we just hover there?*** There are seven last plagues that have to happen before Christ will land on the Mount of Olives and set up His kingdom. How long will those 7 last plagues take? Traditional thinking by several is that ***all this happens in one day. Brethren, that simply cannot be, as you'll see.***

**We can read of the "7 last plagues" in Revelation 15 and 16**

### **Revelation 16**

plague #1 - boils on man and beast

plague #2 - seas turn to blood, killing all sea life

plague #3 - all the fresh waters turn to blood

**v 8** - plague #4 - the sun scorches the earth

For these to be perceived as plagues, they can't be just for minutes or hours....surely at least, many days.

**v 10** - plague #5 - darkness and pain over the land

**v 12** - plague #6 - Euphrates River is dried up so that the 200 million army can march from east of Iraq into Israel.

Brethren, it will take *months* to move 200 million people hundreds and hundreds of miles. **Verse 16** - they are coming to Megiddo, for the final battle of Armageddon.

**Revelation 16:17-18** to the end of the chapter describes this 7<sup>th</sup> plague: a huge, huge

***So my point is: After the 7<sup>th</sup> trumpet – which blows way back in Revelation 11:15, surely at least months go by before the seven last plagues are completed, when we analyze what has to happen during those 7 last plagues.***

While those plagues are going on, what *else* is happening?

**Revelation 11:15** “Then the seventh angel sounded: And there were loud voices in heaven, saying, “The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!”

***What happens next is so exciting for it’s a huge clue!***

**Revelation 11:19** “***Then the temple of God was opened in heaven***, and the ark of His covenant was seen in His temple. And there were lightnings, noises, thunderings, an earthquake, and great hail.”

**WHY is the temple of God in heaven opened?**

Remember Isaac and Rebekah? The servant went to get her -- and the angels are servants of God who get us -- and the servants took Rebekah *where?* To *Isaac*, to *Sarah’s* tent, back to the groom’s father’s “house”.

***We are taken to Christ, who has to present us, which He considers His body, now made complete and perfect, to the Father***, just as He had to present *Himself* to the Father at His resurrection! Keep your finger in Revelation 11.

**Jude 24** says “to him who is able to present *you faultless* before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy.....”

“FAULTLESS”, brethren!!! This is mind boggling to me! You, me, all who may become the Bride of Christ – “faultless”.

This is what “corruptible” being changed to “incorruptible” also can mean!

It’s not something we will *ever* be able to do on our own – that’s working out our own righteousness, and not the righteousness of God that comes by grace through faith (**Philippians 3:8-9**). This is when the “change” is complete. We should be changing now, with the power of the Holy Spirit, but while we are flesh, we often fail, often stumble. Only when we are born fully, changed to a spirit child of God, will we never sin again. But already, if we have repented and now walk and live “in Christ”, we do not stand before Him condemned but redeemed and justified (**Romans. 8:1**).

**At that time we will be truly “perfect” in our sense of the English word, though the word in the original Greek implies “complete, mature”. FAULTLESS. Without spot or wrinkle or any such thing**, because His righteousness is imputed to us (**Romans 4:20-25**). **2 Corinthians 5:21** says “He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him”. We don’t become righteous by doing our own works of the law, but by the righteousness of Christ that clothes and covers us.

Be sure to hear my sermon on “**New Creation**” for a fuller exposition on this. If for some reason you don’t agree with what I’m saying here, be sure to carefully study the Bible passages that I’m quoting.

This should truly motivate and excite us, brethren.

Are you hearing it? Are we getting it? You and I will never, ever be perfect enough on our own efforts. If righteousness were possible from works of the law, then why would we need GRACE? (**Galatians 2:20-21**). Now I don’t have time to go into all of that here as it is not my main point here. My message on “New Creation” more fully explains the balance between the need for us to absolutely keep and obey the 10 commandments and to fear God -- and our total reliance upon faith IN and OF Christ.

Do any of you know any human who when they died were examples of righteousness 100% of the time? I don’t! Even if you think you know someone like that, you don’t know their hearts and attitudes all the time. **And you WON’T find a single one, because we are saved by GRACE, not of works, lest any man should boast.** But at the resurrection, you and I will be perfect. Sinless, and unable to sin. Incorruptible. **PRAISE GOD!**

***We are saved by grace. Salvation is a free gift. Many people mix up salvation and rewards. We are saved by grace, rewarded by works. Our works will not save us, but our works DO determine the extent of our rewards. This particular topic is really for another time.***

**How does God see you?** The scriptures say his people are the “apple of His eye”; His own “crown Jewels” (**Malachi 3:17**); and Proverbs says a godly woman is like a “crown” (that’s us to her husband, and in **Isaiah. 62:3** says “You shall be *a crown of glory* in the hand of the LORD, and **a royal diadem** in the hand of your God”

You and I are so special that God makes it clear He planned us, designed us and focused on His plan for us (to HIS glory) since before the earth began (**Ephesians 1:4; Psalm 139**). He says He can’t forget His people.

**Isaiah 49:14-16** “But Zion said, “The LORD has forsaken me, And my Lord has forgotten me.” 15 “Can a woman forget her nursing child, And not have compassion on the son of her womb? Surely they may forget, Yet I will not forget you. 16 **See, I have inscribed you on the palms of My hands;** Your walls are continually before Me.”

***So back to our time sequence. The 7<sup>th</sup> trumpet has sounded. God’s people are resurrected to glorious spirit beings. The 7 last plagues have begun on those on earth. We’ve been gathered, probably 144,000 strong, to be with Christ in the air – and then it says the temple in heaven is opened at that time too.***

**SO THE TEMPLE IN HEAVEN IS OPENED. WHEN does all this take place?**

**[These next three paragraphs have been added since the message was recorded]**  
There has been much speculation on the TIMING of the return of Christ and on the first resurrection. I have no problem as long as I, and all the other speakers, will honestly state

*that we really don't know for sure, and according to Christ, 'NO ONE knows the day nor the hour' (Matthew 24:36). If we knew the return of Christ was definitely on the Feast of Trumpets, or on Pentecost, or any other day, we would be knowing the "day and the hour". But we don't. I don't. Beware of ANY speaker who claims to absolutely know.*

*Many feel that the 2 leavened loaves raised by the priest on the Feast of Pentecost picture the Bride of Christ. That may be right. And perhaps that pictures the ascension to heaven of the Bride to be presented to the Father, as the wavesheaf was waved 50 days earlier, which clearly represented Jesus Christ being raised to heaven to be presented to HIS Father on wavesheaf Sunday, which we can read about in **John 20:1-10**. By the way, note that the English translators all missed the literal translation from the Greek of John 20:1-10. The literal Greek does NOT say "on the first day of the week", but "on the first of the weeks (or seven sabbaths)..." Pentecost is the Feast of Weeks (**Leviticus 23:15**). **John 20:1** is about the first of the weeks. That wavesheaf offering of **Leviticus 23:9-11** was done 50 days before Pentecost and pictures Christ.*

*There is another possibility, though apparently very few seriously consider it. I don't know if it's right or not. But it's worth considering. Remember when we are changed to spirit, we are changed from corruptible to incorruptible. We are seen as without spot or wrinkle, without guilt, without sin. "For you are unleavened" (**1 Corinthians 5:7**) once we eat of the unleavened bread of Christ and have His blood wash away our sins. So do the two LEAVENED loaves of Pentecost really reflect the situation – that when we are presented to God in heaven, having been changed to spirit, that we will have to be at that time Unleavened, without sin, without guile, without fault.*

*[back to the recorded message]*

I personally think that since we will be, at that time, the perfect body of Christ, without leaven, without sin (Jude 24, etc), the loaves may picture more than we realized before. Now listen carefully, since it will take a few *months* for the 7 last plagues to transpire, and since I *still* believe we land on the Mount of Olives on the Feast of Trumpets, long after Christ has returned for the Bride. So we still wouldn't know the exact day of His 2<sup>nd</sup> coming.

It seems possible to me at least that we rise to *heaven* to be presented to the Father on the day of the wavesheaf offering, right after Passover, **as the BODY OF CHRIST, now made perfect**. Then count to the wedding 50 days later, and then after a several month "honeymoon" and to discuss final plans, come back to take care of business on earth with our Husband. This may not be the way it all plays out – and that's fine with me. It's good for alternative speculation.

HOWEVER: This scenario would leave unanswered WHO the two *leavened* wave loaves of Pentecost are (**Leviticus 23:15-17**). I used to think they had to represent the church, because back then I assumed we were still "leavened" at the resurrection – but since leaven usually represents sin, and since we are going to be presented "faultless", it doesn't continue to make sense to me that the 2 leavened loaves must represent God's now-perfect bride.

We will just have to wait and see who the 2 leavened loaves of Pentecost are for sure.

***And I suspect the year that all this will happen will be a JUBILEE year***, for surely that is what Jubilee pictures. We do not know when the Jubilee years are for sure, but

God knows. Some have given evidence that the next Jubilee years are **2012** and **2062**. Some claim to know, but I'm just not able to nail it down to my satisfaction. For those of you new to this concept, the Jubilee year is mentioned in **Leviticus 25:8-17**. You can read it later.

***IF I'm right, we will then COUNT 50 days to the wedding*** -- excitedly -- AS we're given the grand tour of HEAVEN, meet the Father, receive training and orientation, and all the exciting things to be done before the wedding. Many of the other ministers who also teach we will be married in heaven teach we will ascend on Pentecost itself and be immediately ushered into the temple for an immediate wedding ceremony on Pentecost day.

*When* did God marry Israel: on the Feast of Pentecost -- **Exodus 19-24**.

*When* did He give His disciples the "earnest" or engagement ring of the Holy Spirit -- **Acts 2**, day of Pentecost.

When did Ruth and Boaz marry? At the end of the barley harvest. And they are examples of the marriage of Jesus and the Church. The end of the Barley harvest is Pentecost.

So when do I think the *actual* wedding of Christ and the Church will take place? On Pentecost, followed by a 3 month honeymoon as the final 7 last plagues on earth run their course.

Let's see the scriptures.

***In "Bible days", the SON came for the bride and took her back to his father's home, where the marriage takes place. We see this in type with the marriage of Isaac and Rebekah.***

We see it also in Ruth going to the land of Boaz to marry him.

Where will the wedding occur? Where **could** it occur, with the earth in chaos?

If the Son goes back to the Father's house to get married, where is "the Father's House"?

Who alone is qualified to perform the wedding? Matthew 22 says "the King" puts on the wedding for His Son.

***Where is the bride*** after her resurrection: (Revelation 14 says 144,000 are on a sea of glass, Revelation 15 before the throne of God. Where is that throne? In heaven! One man I know well has also speculated that there is A sea of glass hovering over Jerusalem; a different Sea of Glass from what is before the throne. I personally don't see it that way but feel it is more likely THE Sea of Glass before God's throne in heaven.

**Revelation 11:15** - the 7<sup>th</sup> trumpet sounds, and then the temple in heaven is opened. WHY? We'll see!

Revelation 12, 13 are inset chapters. Chapter 12 is about Israel and the church, *not* the

whorish Babylon of Revelation 17. They can't be one and the same woman, for the woman in

Revelation 12 is attacked by Satan for her obedience to God. The woman of Revelation 17 is part of Satan's system and will be destroyed by God Himself. They're 2 drastically different "women".

Revelation 14 picks up the story flow from end of chapter 13.

**Revelation 14:1-6** "Then I looked, and behold, **a Lamb standing on Mount Zion, and with Him one hundred and forty-four thousand**, having His Father's name written on their foreheads [so it is saying they are of the same family and household as God the Father!]

**PAUSE:** Where's this Mt. Zion? This is *heavenly* Mt. Zion for verse 3 says it's before the throne of God.

**WHEN is this event of Revelation 14?** It's *after* the 7<sup>th</sup> trumpet of Revelation 11:15, but *before* the 7 last plagues of Revelation 16, and also *before* the wedding of the Lamb mentioned in Revelation 19.

**Revelation 14:2** And I heard a voice from heaven, like the voice of many waters, and like the voice of loud thunder. And I heard the sound of harpists playing their harps. **3 And They sang as it were a new song before the throne, before the four living creatures, and the elders;** and no one could learn that song except the hundred and forty-four thousand who were redeemed from the earth. **4** These are the ones who were not defiled with women, **for they are virgins. These are the ones who follow the Lamb wherever He goes.** These were **redeemed** (*bought*) from among men, **being firstfruits** to God and to the Lamb. **5** And in their mouth was found no guile, **for they are without fault before the throne of God."**

\* Who are the ones who have been *bought*?

The church! Bought with blood of the Lamb (**1 Peter 1:18-19**)

\* Who are called "first fruits" of Revelation 14:4 ? WE are (**James 1:18**)

\* How does God see the Bride at this point: "without fault" (**Revelation 14:5; Jude 24**)

**Revelation 14:14 - 19** --- The rest of the chapter is about angels coming and going from the context of heaven, IN heaven, and starting the reaping of the earth in the winepress of the wrath of God.

**Revelation 15** "Then I saw another **sign in heaven**, great and marvelous: seven angels having the seven last plagues, for in them the wrath of God is complete. **2 And I saw something like a sea of glass mingled with fire, and those who have the victory over the beast, over his image and over his mark and over the number of his name, standing on the sea of glass, having harps of God. 3 and they sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying:**

"Great and marvelous are Your works, Lord God Almighty! Just and true are Your ways, O

King of the saints! 4 Who shall not fear You, O Lord, and glorify Your name? For You alone are holy. For all nations shall come and worship before You, For Your judgments have been manifested."

**5 After these things I looked, and behold, the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened. 6 And out of the temple came the seven angels** having the seven plagues, clothed in pure bright linen, and having their chests girded with golden bands. 7 Then one of the four living creatures [that's obviously *in heaven*] gave to the seven angels seven golden bowls full of the wrath of God who lives forever and ever. **8 The temple [remember in heaven] was filled with smoke from the glory of God and from His power, and no one was able to enter the temple till the seven plagues of the seven angels were completed."**

*So now it is obvious the temple in heaven is now closed until the seven last plagues are completed.*

The 144,000 apparently are in the temple, on the sea of glass, before the throne and the 24 elders.... awaiting the completion of the 7 last plagues on the earth.

Jesus has come for His bride, a bride now like Him, a spirit being of the God family. He has taken her back to His father's house that has many mansions or dwelling places, seen in heaven, but they're not yet married *and now the temple is not open for anyone for a time.*

### ***What could be happening in that temple?***

**Revelation 16:1** "Then I heard a loud voice from the temple saying to the seven angels, "Go and pour out the bowls of the wrath of God on the earth."

And *now* the marriage will take place!

**Psalm 87:1-6** -- and our heavenly registration is sealed.

*A Psalm of the sons of Korah. [Isn't it exciting that Korah's family ended up so well?] A Song.*

His foundation is in the holy mountains.

2 The LORD loves the gates of Zion More than all the dwellings of Jacob.

**3 Glorious things are spoken of YOU, O city of God!** Selah [The Mother of us all]

4 "I will make mention of Rahab and Babylon to those who know Me; Behold, O Philistia and Tyre, with Ethiopia: "This one was born there."

**5 And of Zion it will be said, "This one and that one were born in her; and the Most High Himself shall establish her." (God the Highest, the Father is apparently going to be there) 6 The Lord will record, when He registers the peoples: "This one was born there"**

***Could that be talking about you or me?***

**Our marriage takes place in "Sarah's tent". What is typed by Sarah? Heavenly Jerusalem! Remember Galatians 4:22-26?**

**Matthew 22:1-3, 10-11** “And Jesus answered and spoke to them again by parables and said:

2 “The **kingdom of HEAVEN** is like **a certain king who arranged a marriage for his son,**

3 “and sent out his servants to call those who were invited to the wedding; and they were not willing to come. [jump now to verse 10]

10 “So those servants went out into the highways and gathered together all whom they found, both bad and good. And the wedding hall was filled with guests.

11 “But **when the King came in** to see the guests, he saw a man there who did not have on a wedding garment. [who that is, is for another topic, another day]”

**Psalm 45:10-15** “Listen, O daughter, consider and incline your ear; forget your own people also, and your father's house; 11 **So the King will greatly desire your beauty; because He is your Lord, worship Him.** 12 And the daughter of Tyre will be there with a gift; the rich among the people will seek your favor.

**13 The royal daughter is all glorious within the Palace;** her clothing is woven with gold.

14 She shall be **brought to the King** in robes of many colors; the virgins, her companions who follow her, shall be brought to You.

15 With gladness and rejoicing they shall be brought; **they shall enter the King's palace**”.

**Where's the King's palace: heavenly Jerusalem.** It's not -- in my opinion -- just a sea of glass hovering over earthly Jerusalem. Why not? Because the Father is pictured as being there. The Father does not come down to earth, or leave heaven (in my opinion) until a thousand years later!

### **Back to Revelation.**

Revelation 14, 15, show they are in heaven with the temple opening and shutting. Why? A wedding is going on, and there's some privacy needed.

### **Revelation 19:1-21 Look at the location of these verses**

1 **After** these things I heard a loud voice of **a great multitude in heaven**, saying, "Alleluia! Salvation and glory and honor and power belong to the Lord our God!

4 And the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshiped God who sat on the **throne**, saying, "Amen! Alleluia!"

5 Then a voice came **from the throne**, saying, "Praise our God, all you His servants and those who fear Him, both small and great!"

6 And I heard, as it were, the voice of a great multitude, as the sound of many waters and as the sound of mighty thunderings, saying, "Alleluia! For the Lord God Omnipotent reigns!

**7 "Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready."**

(In context, where is this happening? Verse 1 -- heaven!! In fact when the wedding supper is finished, we see in verse 11 that heaven is opened up.)

*Where else can there be a wedding for the king of kings befitting His majesty and honor?* To me, it is very clear that Jesus comes to get His Bride first, at the 7<sup>th</sup> trump, when we are changed to spirit. We are raised back to the Son's Father in heaven, and presented to Him, as Jesus was after *His* resurrection. *Every* father wants to see His children as they're born, after all.

We then count the 50 days to the wedding and during that time we no doubt will be getting to know the many others of God's elect who lived and died before us, or in other places of the world. During this time, the 7 last plagues are being poured out on earth and the 200 million army will be gathering in Megiddo and of course Jerusalem. All that takes time, perhaps many months.

Probably right on the day of Pentecost we get married, then return to earth 3 months later probably in the Fall, for the Fall holy days.

**Revelation 19:8** “And TO her it was **granted** to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints. (Remember sinful Joshua the High Priest of Zechariah 3:1-5? He too was *granted* clean clothes)  
 9 Then he said to me, "Write: 'Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!'" And he said to me, "These are the true sayings of God."  
 10 And I fell at his feet to worship him. But he said to me, "See that you do not do that! I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren who have the testimony of Jesus. Worship God! For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy."  
 11 **Then I saw heaven opened**, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war.  
 12 His eyes were like a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself.  
 13 He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God.  
 14 **And the armies in heaven**, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses. [WHO are the armies who accompany him? Jude says it's His angels and saints, that's us, His bride, the church, coming out of heaven.]  
 15 Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And

He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.

16 And He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written: King of Kings and Lord of Lords. [and: He is now also our Husband at this time! And the Church is His one wife!]  
 17-19 -- now the 200 million army has gathered in Megiddo and even around Jerusalem, and the first thing Jesus and His Bride has to do is destroy that opposing army.

That battle is described in **Zechariah 14:12-15**. **The full story starts in verse 3 of Zechariah 14.**

THEN, we land on Mount of Olives and all of Zechariah 14 happens. You can read it on your own how Jesus lands on the Mount of Olives, and then dissolves the army that has amassed there to fight him.

And from then on, we are the Bride of Christ, at one with him.

**There will never be another bride for Christ.** This is truly a one time opportunity. It is

the greatest calling you can have. Paul called it “a high calling”. Later, in **Hebrews 11:35**, he calls it “*a better resurrection.*” And God wants you to be in it. To be part of it, as the very Bride of the King of kings.

Adam and Eve turned from it. Esau sold His birthright for a bowl of red lentil stew. Too many of the Bride of Christ are treating this calling the same way and some will lose out of this calling for treating it lightly.

It’s exciting, if we catch the vision. Let’s wake up brethren, to this high calling -- and value it.

IF this series of messages has helped awaken you -- and rekindle your excitement, then talk about it. Spread the word. Help your fellow Christians wake up. Show excitement yourself for being the bride of Christ. And let’s pray the very elect will now be trimming their lamps, donning their wedding garments, and pray, and pray as never before.... for one another, and for everyone. Pray for me too brethren, and for these messages, that I can be a help to awaken and prepare the people of God.

Time is short. Please be thanking God with all your heart for what He has asked you to do. All for now. Feel free to check other messages on our website:  
**[www.Lightontherock.com](http://www.Lightontherock.com)**

Jesus loves us brethren, and wants to marry us, IF we show Him it means something to us. Let’s never, ever treat lightly this very high calling.

Until next time, this is Philip, your brother in our Messiah. Stay close to God. Feel free to share this message and website with others. Until next time – Shalom and joy!

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