

The UNION

Get Ready to Meet the King!

God Calls His Church to
Truth, Faith and Holiness

2019

Joan H. Richardson

The UNION

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Epilogue:

The Union

¹⁹ speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord, ²⁰ giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, ²¹ submitting to one another in the fear of God.

²² Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. ²³ For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body. ²⁴ Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so *let* the wives *be* to their own husbands in everything.

²⁵ Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, ²⁶ that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, ²⁷ that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish. ²⁸ So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself. ²⁹ For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord *does* the church. ³⁰ For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones. ³¹ “For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.” ³² This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church. ³³ Nevertheless let each one of you in particular so love his own wife as himself, and let the wife *see* that she respects *her* husband. (Ephesians 5:19-33 NKJV)

The passage above *is a great mystery*, for marriage doesn't merely pertain to flesh and blood as we might think; instead, the words allude to the spiritual reality in the union of a man and a woman, so closely relating to each other that each receives the other. Then he is in her, and she is in him. They communicate almost like speaking to oneself. It's as though each were thinking aloud; she shares his thoughts and his emotions, as he does

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hers. They relate face to face, word to word, heart to heart; their affection for each other unites the two as one in the flesh, and their sexual relationship expresses the bond of that love. Thus, love unifies them as one in the marriage bed where they are one flesh as well. Marriage was made for a man and woman in love.

Though few have known such love, when a man submits to Jesus Christ and cares for his wife as Jesus loves the church, her heart should easily yield to his authority, and their relationship together patterns Christ and His church.

When we respond to the love of the Lord in full surrender to His will, we live in Him as He lives through us. Then we are one with Him, and He speaks through us. That's how He shares His life with believers who yield to His will in response to His love. Abiding in Him is not a contractual agreement: it's an attitude of the heart that's always open and available for Him; nothing is held back or hidden, but we silently release our hearts to Jesus. In Spirit and truth, we let Him know us all the time, every moment.

On a Role

Though the Scriptures adjure men to love their wives as the Lord loves the church, not many men have even attempted the feat. It's a commission of high calling. Love is a wife's greatest need and its challenge is to the husband. By esteeming his wife as himself, the husband's strong nature grows temperate.

When men love, they experience God who reveals Himself to the hearts of those who love. *He who does not love does not know not God, for God is love. (1 Jn. 4:8 NKJV)*

Since Messiah mercifully sacrificed His life and drew us into the loving union with God, He gave the man a sacrificial role in the marriage relationship. A man who neglects his wife neglects a relationship. If he does the same in his relationship with Christ, He will say, "I never knew you!"

A foolish man is proud, unkind, angry, short-tempered, and unyielding, but a wise man is disciplined by self-control, leading to godliness and love. Tenderness, understanding, and patience will win his wife's heart forever. As he shares his thoughts and feelings with her, she reciprocates. When they look at each other, their eyes dance. This is love: knowing each other with affection

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and respect. Each responds to the other with heartfelt admiration and acceptance.

When His Son's flesh was torn, the curtain of the temple's holy place was also torn as the Father opened up His heart to us; thus, as we open our hearts to Him, with nothing veiled—we can know Him as He knows us. By emotional and spiritual intimacy, the relationship becomes a union.

Christ and the church are connected in marital relationship. What does this mean to a man? Taking the wife's role, he must bare his soul to God if he wants intimacy with Him. He may not hide himself from Him; he's there for God all the time. If he refuses to disclose his heart to God, then he doesn't know God. If he is hiding something, even in the recesses of his mind, is that intimacy with the One who calls him to be holy as He is holy?

We must all expose ourselves to His light because we are all His bride. If anything is hidden in any dark places of our hearts, we must confess it by faith in His love and forgiveness. In the fear of God, we turn to Him, trusting His forgiveness and His power to cleanse us according to His promises. And how do we love Him? By our reverential fear and submission to His will, we grow to become like Him. That's when we truly love Him.

Marriage teaches us how some of us know Christ, but others only go through the motions that look like a relationship. Behind closed doors, personal intimacy is not their experience. This was true of the religious leaders in the days of Christ; we can learn a lot about ourselves from them.

Hypocrites will cry out, but Christ will say, "Go away from Me, all of you who practice iniquity!" They professed the faith, knew the right words, but were hiding from God—retaining shameful thoughts, they resisted the Holy Spirit. They agreed to the covenant but walked away from it, preferring the dark to the light that exposes hidden things. This is why it is written: *But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is the darkness!* (Mat. 6:23) We must let His fire cleanse us if we profess His name.

Marriage Rules

Yeshua described the divine plan for marriage, commanding husbands to love their wives fervently and unconditionally as

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He loves us. If the Lord is the Judge at the door of the heart; how do we speak to our mates? How do we look at them? How well do we know them? The Law of Moses and the words of Christ are in harmony on this matter, but the church has not carefully investigated the Scriptures:

³ *Some Pharisees came to Jesus, testing Him and asking, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any reason at all?"* ⁴ And He answered ⁵ and said, "Have you not read that He who created *them* from the beginning MADE THEM MALE AND FEMALE, and said, 'FOR THIS REASON A MAN SHALL LEAVE HIS FATHER AND MOTHER AND BE JOINED TO HIS WIFE, AND THE TWO SHALL BECOME ONE FLESH'?" ⁶ So they are no longer two, but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let no man separate." ⁷ They said to Him, "Why then did Moses command to GIVE HER A CERTIFICATE OF DIVORCE AND SEND *her* AWAY?" ⁸ He said to them, "Because of your hardness of heart Moses permitted you to divorce your wives; but from the beginning it has not been this way. ⁹ And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for immorality, and marries another woman commits adultery."
(Matthew 19:3-9 NASB)

No man has the right to despise his wife who is faithful and respectful to him. God has called us to peace in the marriage relationship. But the Law is for men who harden their hearts against their wives, in which case, the certificate of divorce freed her to marry another. She was not under bondage to an unloving man. When Jesus spoke to them, he commanded men to love their wives.

Marriage is a refuge, a place where a woman and man share their lives; where each loves, understands, and knows the other better than anyone else. They're best friends. It was not intended as a place of pain, loneliness, or physical or emotional illness:

24 When a man hath taken a wife, and married her, and it come to pass that she find no favor in his eyes, because he hath found some uncleanness in her: then let him write her a bill of divorcement, and give *it* in her hand, and send her out of his house. ² And when she is departed out of his house, she may go and be another

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man's wife. (Deuteronomy 24:1-2) [Christ allows this between the believer and unbeliever.]

The rabbis and lawyers challenged Christ, citing Moses on divorce; they thought Moses had justified their practice. Yeshua clarified Moses' law, explaining that divorce had been permitted because they were hardhearted, as indeed his audience was.

The Law presented an instance in which the husband had emotionally separated himself from his wife, constantly finding fault in her, even judging her, believing she was unclean; therefore, Moses said if the wife saw no favor in his eyes for her, the husband should *allow* a divorce. The law allowed divorce in mercy toward the *woman!* Yet the leaders had not understood it.

Neither Moses nor Paul denies the teaching of Christ. When Yeshua came, His words convicted their calloused hearts, even in the public places, but the seeds of truth never settle easily in hard soil. He would have changed their hearts, calling them to repent, but they were blind to mercy, love, and forgiveness. Their proud hearts always resisted the Holy Spirit. That's the way of the natural man.

Biblical counsel strengthens, unifies, and preserves lives, marriages, families, and nations. A marriage that succeeds influences the lives of others in positive ways; none of us belongs to himself alone. Our lives and marriages affect others for better or worse.

If a husband requires his wife to do things against her conscience, should she obey him regarding those things? No, but many marriage beds are defiled by acts of sodomy. The wife must obey her husband but not with sinful behavior.

Here is an illustration: Government is good because God has ordained it, but not all governors are good. Godless men create ungodly laws. Shall we disobey God and obey the government if the law requires it? No, we should obey God rather than men. In the same way, He ordained the governance of marriage, but immorality has no place in the marriage bed. Do perversion and lust enslave our minds in the marriage relationship? Is that acceptable to God?

The greatest commandment is to love. In a loving marriage, hearts are healed. Loving, we forgive and find grace with God.

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When we love, obeying the royal command, we are at peace with God and with each other. But if we use or abuse another person, we sin against God and, in marriage, against our own bodies.

If a partner neglects the relationship, he risks his marriage. The two are one flesh, but without mutual respect, there is no foundation for love. Love is not proud. *Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband.* (Eph. 5:33) Jesus is our example of humility and love—the perfect Mate to His bride.

Members of His Body

The ultimate expression of love in marriage will arrive when the Bridegroom returns for His bride, His body on earth where He lives by His Spirit. Love is our highest aspiration, and the Savior passionately desires that we be united as His own body, in truth and in love.

Christ imparts forgiveness and love to us each day. If we are holy, our words and behavior reveal it; if we are carnal, the same is true. Today is the day of salvation, and *now* is the best time to repent of any known sin.

What does it mean to *walk in the Spirit*? If His Spirit were the hand, we'd be His glove. In other words, we offer ourselves to Him, and God works in us to do what pleases Him; as we cooperate, we are walk with Him in relationship with Him, and as we walk, we learn from Him. We live by His Word, and He speaks to our hearts. In this way, He accomplishes His purposes in us as we believe.

When the Holy Spirit abounds, we rejoice with Him; we are one with Christ by the Spirit, finding peace as we rest in His strength. Apart from Him, we can't be holy, but by His Holy Spirit, we can obey His will in humble surrender, which has been the command since Eden: *"Your desire will be for your husband and he will rule over you."* (Gen. 3:16c NIV)

Just as the husband has been given godly authority over His wife, so Christ has authority over each of us. As members of His body, our desire is for our Husband. He has authority over us, and His love most often makes our submission a pleasure. There will be times when He tests our faithfulness, requiring us to do what we resist; that's when we obey out of the fear of the Lord.

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As we walk daily in His presence and keep His words, we're His body—His flesh and bones. What He wants to do, we do; where He wants to go, we go; what He wants to say, we say as we abide in Him. Since we care for our own flesh, we care for every member of His body and perceive others as ourselves.

By her betrothal to Christ, His bride is His, joined with Him as one. She belongs to Him and He is hers. He makes her holy by washing her in His Word, and bathing her with the truth, He raises her to victory! The union: it's all about our marriage to Christ and our personal intimacy with God.

³¹ For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. ³² This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.
(Ephesians 5:31-32; cf. Gen 2:24)

He sent His Word into our hearts to quicken mortality as we who are two become one. He calls this unique and holy creation His bride by our union with His Word because we have received His words. His love woos our hearts to be knitted with His by prayer and our passionate desire to know Him more. Our union consummates our covenant: we, in Him and He, in us: *that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish.* (Eph. 5:26-27 NKJV)

His goal is a new creation unlike Adam, who was made like Him but was not one in Him. The mystery of the new man is seen in the union of God and His Son. Singly and collectively, we are one *in* Him and *in* the Father as He is *in* us by our faith in His Son, *that God may be all in all.* (See 1 Cor. 15:28)

As members of His body, therefore, we interact with one another, sharing His life—Jews and gentiles—all ethnicities, races, colors, and nations. For this purpose, Jews were scattered into all nations: to gather all nations to Him. His truth makes us all one. The closer we are, the more brightly we shine.

Are we far from Him who is near to us? We are only as close as our union—together we can proclaim His love with compassion to a deceived and dying world—declaring the truth.

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We can embrace them who are not like us, for Christ cared for us and rescued us from the wrath of God though we were not at all like Him. A man and his wife are often opposites, but they become one by their love and submission to each other.

Now we remain His sign of hope for them who are unlike us; God sends His Word in us to them just because He loved us, and we reciprocate by telling others what He's done for us. He keeps changing our hearts as we learn the gain of sacrifice. *She will do him good and not evil all the days of her life. (Prov. 31:12)*

The Law has limits, restricting us who strive to keep it, but the Spirit removes our limitations, expanding and increasing us—spirit, soul, and body—with greater abilities and visions. The key to these things is our faith in the indwelling Christ as we communicate with Him in this marriage of two, becoming one since the time He poured His Spirit into our opened hearts:

³⁷ “And no one puts new wine into old wineskins; or else the new wine will burst the wineskins and be spilled, and the wineskins will be ruined. ³⁸ But new wine must be put into new wineskins, and both are preserved. ³⁹ And no one, having drunk old *wine*, immediately desires new; for he says, ‘The old is better.’” (Luke 5:37-39 NKJV)

She Is His Temple

¹⁸ “For if I build again those things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor. ¹⁹ For I through the law died to the law that I might live to God. ²⁰ I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the *life* which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me. I do not set aside the grace of God; for if righteousness *comes* through the law, then Christ died in vain.” (Galatians 2:18-20 NKJV) – Paul, reproving Peter for his hypocrisy in returning to dietary laws like one under the law returning to the works of the law for his salvation.

Unless we believe the inspired words, we stunt our growth at the point of our unbelief. Old wineskins have limited ability to live by His Spirit; He would empower us to be like Yeshua. If we refuse to believe His words, we will shrink back to who we used to be, retaining only a semblance of the faith we first had.

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Believers are the metaphorical building stones of the city of God. Unlike pebbles or quarried stones, we're sparkling gems, purified by fire and glorified under pressure. His words shape, chisel, and place us side by side in our proper locations. Finally, He fits us together, allocating our places in the holy city.

¹¹ "O afflicted one, storm-tossed, *and* not comforted,
Behold, I will set your stones in antimony,
And your foundations I will lay in sapphires.

¹² "Moreover, I will make your battlements of rubies,
And your gates of crystal,
And your entire wall of precious stones."
(Isaiah 54:11-12 NASB)

The congregation is spiritual, yet tangible; diverse, yet one with the Lord. We are not prepared to meet Him by men's teachings but by His unchanging Word. In our holy faith, we are the eternal habitation of God, entirely the body of His Holy Spirit though the Spirit of God is everywhere. We are members in the body of Yeshua the Messiah, within us by His life-giving Spirit.

²⁵ Now this Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia and corresponds to the present Jerusalem, for she is in slavery with her children. ²⁶ But the Jerusalem above is free; she is our mother. (Galatians 4:25-26 NASB)

The scripture likens Hagar to Mount Sinai, corresponding to the earthly Jerusalem, still under the Law because she was a bond-slave. Sarah is like the New Jerusalem, free and not in bondage. The promised Son freed us from the Law and from our bondage to carnality. Abraham begat children by two women, but spiritually he only united with Sarah. The Lord promised the inheritance to those who believe, even us who are being spiritually united with the Son of man and God.

The Intimacy

⁹ But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. ¹⁰ But

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God hath revealed *them* unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.

(1 Corinthians 2: 9-10)

Our Savior led the way for the resurrection of the members of His body. He paid the price of our redemption; sent His Spirit for our life, and ascended to heaven to make a place for us. Believing His words in childlike faith, we learn His ways to be a suitable match for our King. He makes us worthy as we move closer to Him in an attitude of fear and love.

When He returns, He will arrive in the most personal way. He is the closest and dearest friend to each of us who loves and obeys Him by faith in Him. We know His words are true, and our confidence in Him will not disappoint us. We're undefeated because He leads us to overcome in everything. We thank Him in all things, knowing the victory is ours to His glory:

¹⁴ But thanks be to God, who always leads us as captives in Christ's triumphal procession and uses us to spread the aroma of the knowledge of him everywhere.

¹⁵ For we are to God the pleasing aroma of Christ among those who are being saved and those who are perishing. To the one we are an aroma that brings death; to the other, an aroma that brings life. And who is equal to such a task? (2 Corinthians 2:14-16 NIV)

Prepared for His return, His bride seeks His arrival, quiet and still before Him. Learning His voice, she is sensitive to the sound of a pebble on a pane, or a whisper as she sleeps. The truth draws her into the union of her wholeness where He heals her with His words.

The Sacred Union

3 Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. ² Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. ³ And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.

(1 John 3:1-3 NKJV)

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Now is the time to know and believe the truth, and by the truth, to unite as one. Each one is responsible to seek the purity of holiness by casting off the teachings of men that fail the tests of the Scriptures. As one new creature, we embody His holy bride. Our union is unseen, one in the Father, in His Holy Spirit, and in His Son; we are one in His Word. These three agree in one Name, YHWH, for God is One, and we were chosen in the union with Him. The Holy Spirit with His Word unite the Father with His Son, and He gives us His Name—*YHWH is Salvation!*

We won't look to the right or to the left, to ourselves or to others, to experiences or to traditions to know the truth. His Word is the truth. His Word delivers us from darkness and from deception because we have dared to believe God only.

It's time to discard the leaven and purify our minds with His Word, focusing on our Savior and living by the faith that obtains the goal of God in Christ Jesus—the high calling of holiness! The aspiration is higher than knowledge, above revelation, greater than prophecy: our goal is to love others in complete devotion to the Word of God: *love covers a multitude of sins.* (See *1 Pet. 4:8*) Though we stumble with our words, sometimes offensive and at other times, defensive, stepping out of place; we know He works in us, and He *will establish us in every good work.* (*1 Thess. 2:17*)

Our obedience begins by believing His words as they are written and as He clarified them. Love and humility are the surprising products of faith in His words. If we rationalize what He authored by referring to our experiences, then we are living by what we see rather than by faith in what God says. He will finish His righteousness in us by His grace, working through our faith when we *live by faith, not by sight.* (See *Hab. 2:4*)

If we consider ourselves apart from Christ in us, we're at our wits' ends. Saints have fallen into sin, short of truth and goodness. But apart from grace, the truth would condemn us all; and mercy wouldn't exist apart from the truth. But God loved us in Eden where we first fell; compassion urged Him to reveal His love to men and to angels by the epic story of our redemption.

Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed *each other.* (Psalm 85:10)

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Mercy meets the truth in Yeshua-Jesus. Perfect in holiness, He offers peace for all who are far off the path. However, if we hide in our shame, refusing to enter the light, even as sinners; then we resist the grace of the Savior's heart. He would receive us all with forgiveness and love, but who is willing to turn to Him from sin? yet just as we are, He gives us a new life.

²⁰ "My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message,²¹ that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. (John 17:20-21 NIV)

Envisioning their union, Yeshua prayed for all of us to unite by our love for one another, living proof that God sent Him. In His faithful love, He gathered His scattered ones to the land; soon He'll gather His saints to the place where His glory rests:

²² I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one—²³ I in them and you in me— so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me. (John 17:22-23 NIV)

I have made you known to them, and will continue to make you known in order that the love you have for me may be in them and that I myself may be in them." (John 17:26 NIV) – Yeshua, praying for personal intimacy with each of us who believe.

He heals those He wounded, and out of death, raises us into His own immortality. He will not leave us in the grave. *As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness.* (Ps. 17:15)

The Consummation

He knows us though we know Him as through a veil. He carried the cross to die for her, spilling His blood for His bride; He breathed His Spirit into her, and now His life remains in her. He prepared a place for her, anticipating His return. As her faith

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increases, He empowers her for victory while she waits on earth for Him. These are His gifts to His bride.

¹⁵ Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ Himself? Shall I then take the members of Christ and unite them with a prostitute? Never! ¹⁶ Do you not know that he who unites himself with a prostitute is one with her in body? For it is said, "The two will become one flesh." ¹⁷ But whoever is united with the Lord is one with him in spirit. (1 Corinthians 6:15-17 NIV)

She was once unloved and unlovely; then He loved her and called her His beloved. Made complete in His love, she searches His words to know Him; takes up her cross to follow Him; loses her life to find Him; and gives Him her soul without regret. She relinquishes her name for His, yielding her will to His until He completes her as His own. As one, they bond and rest, assured by the embrace. Her heart, her soul, her mind, and strength—all she has, she releases to Him, casting her cares on Him also.

On earth the two become one flesh. In the kingdom, we are one Spirit, and the marriage is consummated. The Union, conceived by His Word, yields a new creation by His Spirit:

⁷ Then all those virgins rose and trimmed their lamps. ⁸ The foolish said to the prudent, 'Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.' ⁹ But the prudent answered, 'No, there will not be enough for us and you *too*; go instead to the dealers and buy *some* for yourselves.' ¹⁰ And while they were going away to make the purchase, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding feast; and the door was shut. ¹¹ Later the other virgins also came, saying, 'Lord, lord, open up for us.' ¹² But he answered, 'Truly I say to you, I do not know you.' ¹³ Be on the alert then, for you do not know the day nor the hour. (Matthew 25:7-13 NASB)

Our Husband is our King who seals us with the Signet of His life, and our godly fear secures our hearts forever. We are true witnesses, His own body, His bride. With nothing lacking, we're whole; though once opposites, we're much the same now.

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Like Esther before King Xerxes, we approach His throne with courage through trepidation because He loves us. We bow in awe before the King whose most intimate embraces we have known—what mysteries!

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

⁶ Set me as a seal upon thine heart, as a seal upon thine arm: for love *is* strong as death; jealousy *is* cruel as the grave: the coals thereof *are* coals of fire, *which hath* a most vehement flame.

⁷ Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it: if a man would give all the substance of his house for love, it would be utterly condemned.
(Song of Songs 8:6-7)

Losing this life, each one gains life; discarding this name, we take a new name; releasing the world, each finds his destiny; relinquishing the temporal, we keep the eternal; sharing the blessing, we receive the increase; dying to the past, we live for eternity. Though we can't see the details, we long for His Kingdom and His righteousness, and we are filled—His salvation fills us with joy.

The End of A Reign

⁵ And a voice came from the throne, saying,

“Give praise to our God, all you His bond-servants, you who fear Him, the small and the great.” ⁶ Then I heard *something* like the voice of a great multitude and like the sound of many waters and like the sound of mighty peals of thunder, saying,

“Hallelujah! For the Lord our God, the Almighty, reigns.

⁷ Let us rejoice and be glad and give the glory to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb has come and His bride has made herself ready.” ⁸ It was given to her to clothe herself in fine linen, bright *and* clean; for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints. (Revelation 19:5-8 NASB)

Many have feared the ominous end of the world. Though it will be a dark and disastrous day, a day of terror, its culmination

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will end Satan's reign over the world. But the end of this world's systems will establish the beginning of the Kingdom of David under the authority of his seed—Yeshua the King over all the earth, and our best Friend. Then we are no longer oppressed by unjust laws or bound by mortal sins, but we are one by the intimacy of our Union with Him.

At His designated moment, Christ will suddenly appear as a thief comes in the night. Until then, He is with us even when we don't understand or when the darkness is great or when we feel so alone. As our days turn into years, in every battle, we press in and set our focus on the finish line. Through the fray of wars, out of fiery trials, He saves us forever!

¹¹ And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him *was* called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. ¹² His eyes *were* as a flame of fire, and on his head *were* many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself. ¹³ And he *was* clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God. ¹⁴ And the armies *which were* in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. ¹⁵ And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. ¹⁶ And he hath on *his* vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS. (Revelation 19:11-16)

... And He Is Hers

²² I did not see a temple in the city, because the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. ²³ The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp. (Revelation 21:22-23)

We are His temple on earth; He is ours when the kingdom of heaven ends the divisions of time: *And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it.* (Rev. 21:22)

The God of His Word

¹⁷ “Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth. ¹⁸ As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world. ¹⁹ For them I sanctify myself, that they too may be truly sanctified. (John 17:17-19 NIV).

¹⁷ For behold, I create new heavens
and a new earth.
The former things will not
be remembered or come to mind.
¹⁸ But be glad and rejoice forever
in what I am creating.
For behold, I am creating Jerusalem
for rejoicing, and her people for joy.
¹⁹ Then I will rejoice in Jerusalem,
and be glad in My people.
No longer will the voice of weeping
or the voice of crying be heard in her.
(Isaiah 65:17-19 TLV; cf. Rev. 21:1-8)

Together we've discovered the union in various places: It's in the union of God as one God in the union of one Mankind by the union of the Father and Son in the union of the Holy Spirit as God. It's the union of believers in the union of Jews and gentiles by the union of their common faith in the union of the Word by the union of the truth. All together, we are one in the union of God.

⁷ You are all fair, my love,
And *there is* no spot in you. ...
¹² A garden enclosed
Is my sister, *my* spouse,
A spring shut up,
A fountain sealed. ...
¹⁵ A fountain of gardens,
A well of living waters,
And streams from Lebanon.
(Song of Solomon 4:7, 12, 15 NKJV)

At last His bride fills her lamp with His Spirit and His Word. She lights the oil with the fire of her passion. Intrepid of the future, she shares His heart. The threshold of her Marriage is here as He receives her members as His own. She understands

Epilogue: The UNION

the choice, the truth, and the cost. Soon her hope is relieved, and her faith finds its home in the arms of His perfect love; all that was lost fades like a dream; now everything else is meaningless.

22 Then the angel showed me a river of the water of life—bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb ² down the middle of the city's street. On either side of the river was a tree of life, bearing twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month; and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. ³ No longer will there be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and His servants shall serve Him. ⁴ They shall see His face, and His name shall be on their foreheads. ⁵ Night shall be no more, and people will have no need for lamplight or sunlight—for *ADONAI Elohim* will shine on them, and they shall reign forever and ever! (Revelation 22:1-5 TLV)

Baruch Ha-ba b'shem ADONAI!
"Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!"