

# JESUS - Our returning Bridegroom



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# JESUS - Our returning Bridegroom

## JESUS, OUR RETURNING BRIDEGROOM

### The Divine Romance: The Bible - a love letter

#### INTRODUCTION

Before we can build anything of lasting value, we must first lay a solid foundation. This e-book begins exactly there — at the beginning — because everything we believe, everything we hope for, and everything we are called to walk in flows from one unshakeable truth: the Word of God is eternal, unchanging, and written to you as a love letter from a Father who chose you before the foundations of the world were laid.

Many Christians today are familiar with the Gospel story — the cross, the resurrection, the promise of eternal life — yet so few have grasped the breathtaking depth of what that story is really about. The Bible is not simply a collection of moral teachings or historical accounts. It is, from Genesis to Revelation, a single, unfolding love story. It is the story of a Father searching for a bride for His Son.

Understanding this changes everything.

In the pages that follow, we will explore what it truly means to be called, chosen, and set apart for Christ. We will look at the ancient Jewish wedding customs that Jesus and His disciples would have known intimately — customs that the New Testament is saturated with, and that unlock an entirely new dimension of meaning in Scripture. When we understand what a Jewish betrothal meant, what the bridegroom promised, what the bride was expected to do during the waiting period, and what the final, glorious reunion looked like — we begin to see ourselves and our faith through completely new eyes.

We will also be honest about two common misunderstandings that keep many sincere believers from fully preparing themselves for the Lord's return. And we will look carefully at what the Word says the bride actually looks like — not in theory, but in practical, daily, Spirit-led living.

This is not a course about religion. It is an invitation into relationship — the most profound and transformative relationship available to any human being. It is a call to know Him, to prepare for Him, and to love Him with the kind of wholehearted, consecrated devotion that a bride reserves for her bridegroom alone.

The Holy Spirit is your guide through everything that follows. He was given to you precisely for this — to remind you of all that Jesus has promised, to lead you into all truth, and to keep your heart tender and responsive toward the One who paid everything to have you.

Come with an open heart. Come ready to be changed. And come expectant — because the Bridegroom is coming.

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## ESTABLISHING THE FOUNDATION

We need to begin at the beginning and establish a basis for what we believe. In this part of the course material I want to establish some foundational truth and present the Word of God as a love letter, written to the sons and daughters.

It is essential that we hold firmly to the truth that God's Word is eternal and unchanging, enduring forever alongside His very name and nature. We must make a conscious decision to trust and embrace the Word of the Lord. In John 1:14, the Apostle John testifies of Jesus: "*And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.*" (ESV). The Word of God is Jesus, not simply a text that testify of Jesus. Consider the following scriptures:

**Isaiah 40:8:** The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of our God *endures forever.*"

**Luke 21: 33:** The sky and the earth (the universe, the world) will pass away, but *My words will not pass away.*

**2 Timothy 2:13:** If we are faithless [do not believe and are untrue to Him], He remains true (faithful to His Word and His righteous character), for He cannot deny Himself.

We need to understand and agree that our salvation is in Christ alone. The apostle John, again clarifies that for us so well, when he writes:

"In order that everyone who believes in Him [who cleaves to Him, trusts Him, and relies on Him] may not perish, but have eternal life and [actually] live forever!" (John 3:15 AMP)

We need to believe that God never changes, that He is the same God of the Old Testament, the New Testament, and for today:

God is not man, that he should lie, or a son of man, that he should change his mind.  
Has he said, and will he not do it? Or has he spoken, and will he not fulfill it?

(Numbers 23:19 ESV)

Another fact that we need to wrap our minds, and hearts, around is that He is not an "acceptor of persons" and there is no partiality with God. What He will do for one, He will do for another, if they will obey. The apostle Paul, in his letter to the Church in Rome, writes: "For God shows no partiality [undue favor or unfairness; with Him one man is not different from another]. (Romans 2:11 AMP)

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We have to look to the scriptures as in a mirror and see what our life could and should be with the help of Holy Spirit. As we do this, the Word and glory of God changes us into His image. Here are a couple of scriptures to read, and meditate on:

**2 Corinthians 3:18:** And all of us, as with unveiled face, [because we] continued to behold [in the Word of God] as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are constantly being transfigured into His very own image in ever increasing splendor and from one degree of glory to another; [for this comes] from the Lord [Who is] the Spirit. (AMP)

**2 Corinthians 2:17:** For we are not, like so many, [like hucksters making a trade of] peddling God's Word [short-changing and adulterating the divine message]; but like [men] of sincerity and the purest motive, as [commissioned and sent] by God, we speak [His message] in Christ (the Messiah), in the [very] sight and presence of God. (AMP)



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## THE STORY OF A WEDDING

The Bible is a story of the search of a Father for a suitable bride for His Son. It unfolds in Genesis and has the same theme throughout the Bible. It's a love story, and we are written into it!

After Jesus paid the price on the Cross, He said that He was going back to His Father's house to prepare a place for His bride. Furthermore, He promised that He would return for His bride, once that task was complete.

The final chapters in Revelation tell about the bride making herself ready, her yearning for the Bridegroom and her longing for His return. Just like the first Adam needed a helper, a bride, so the last Adam longs for a bride to adore Him.

**Genesis 2:18:** Now the Lord God said, It is not good (sufficient, satisfactory) that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper (suitable, adapted, complementary) for him. (AMP)

**Revelation 22:17:** The [Holy] Spirit and the bride (the church, the true Christians) say, Come! And let him who is listening say, Come! And let everyone come who is thirsty [who is painfully conscious of his need of those things by which the soul is refreshed, supported, and strengthened]; and whoever [earnestly] desires to do it, let him come, take, appropriate, and drink the water of Life without cost.

## THE ANCIENT JEWISH WEDDING

Many Christians today don't have a strong understanding of Jewish life and culture, and we tend to read the Bible through a modern, Western perspective. This can cause us to miss what God is really saying, and the true meaning behind Jesus' words can get lost. In Jewish culture, every wedding ceremony was a living picture of the love story told throughout the Bible. Let me tell you the story of the ancient Jewish wedding, a practice that's still followed by many orthodox Jewish couples today..

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## The Betrothal (engagement)

In Jewish tradition, it's customary for the father to choose the bride for his son. When a young man spotted a young lady that he wanted to marry, he would approach his father first. The desire of the son was considered, but final the final choice was made by the Father. It would be the father's role to investigate the woman, and her family, to consider whether she would be a suitable match for his son.

The whole family would need to be of good reputation, and she needed to be upstanding and pure. The two fathers would meet without the couple present and decide between the two of them whether the match would be beneficial to both families, as the families and often, the family businesses, would merge into one. The father of the bride, also, would consider whether the match was going to be suitable for his daughter.

Next, the son met with the father of the bride to ask for her hand in marriage. He took three things to present to father of the bride...the Bride Price, the marriage contract and a skin of wine, with which the cup of acceptance would be drunk, if the father of the bride was satisfied that the young man was a suitable bridegroom for his beloved daughter.

The bride price would have consisted of a large sum of money or jewels to offer to girl's father, as the price he was willing to pay to purchase the daughter as his wife. If the price was too small, the father could be offended and refuse his daughter, so it had to reflect her value. The marriage contract was a written contract, stating the rights of the bride and his promises to her. It would have included promises to provide for her, an outline of his businesses and so forth.

These were by no means forced marriages. Only if bride agreed, the father and bridegroom would sign the contract, or covenant. These contracts were legally binding – they are now betrothed, or engaged, and the father, the bride and the bridegroom would drink the cup of acceptance to seal the betrothal. It was covenantal, and they were now as good as married. A trumpet, or shofar, sounded to announce the betrothal.

After the trumpet sounded, the bridegroom presented the bride with gifts before he left, so she would not forget him. These gifts were to remind her of him, and his promises during the time of preparation, as they often would not see one another. They were now committed to be man and wife, although union was not yet consummated.

The bridegroom made a final declaration and left the bride to go back to his father's house to prepare a place for his bride.

## Preparation for a wedding

There was no sexual relations before the wedding ceremony, in fact, there was often no further contact between the two until their wedding day. Consummation only happened up to two years later, when the bridegroom returned for the bride.

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Only a certificate of divorce could dissolve the covenant that was signed. If the bride was unfaithful during the waiting period, by law she could be taken outside the city walls and be stoned.

The bridegroom returns to his father's house to prepare the bridal chamber for his bride. This was built onto the father's house, and prepared specially for her arrival.

The couple could only see one another with chaperones or a messenger would bring messages from one to another.

During the betrothal the bride was completely set apart or consecrated for her bridegroom. She could not have eyes or affection for anyone else, or anything else. She was set apart for him alone and would wear a veil when going about her business. This was a sign to all other young men that she was spoken for, and unavailable to any other suitors.

The father decided when the place prepared was ready for his son's bride.

A young Hebrew bride focused on her bridegroom with complete abandonment of everything else, because she knew he would be returning for her. In his absence she prepared herself for his return, focusing on her bridegroom and on the day that he will take her to be with himself in his fathers' house.

She prepared her heart and took care of practical requirements: preparing her gown and accessories and preparing articles that she would take with her to her new home.

During this time of preparation, her bridesmaids were in attendance, and her constant companions. Their role was to keep her focused on the task at hand. They would remind her of her obligations, of her bridegroom's imminent return and they would help her sew linens and garments to bring with her. They would convey messages between the couple and make sure that she kept herself set apart and pure.

## **The Timing and call**

When the time was right, the bridegroom was ready and father was satisfied that chamber was ready, he sent the bridegroom to collect his bride. No one knew when the bridegroom would return for his bride, not even the bridegroom himself. Only the father knew the timing, and the bridegroom would discuss the timing only with his father.

He may talk to his bride via the chaperone about the general timing and that he was almost ready, but the exact timing only the father knew. It was difficult to reserve a day for celebration, because only the father knew and he did not give any prior warning.

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In Hebrew tradition, if bridegroom came and found his bride ill-prepared or giving her affections to other things, it was terms for divorce and wedding could be called off. The bride had to be in state of constant readiness, so that the bridegroom's arrival did not catch her by surprise i.e. extra jars of oil for her lamp, in case he came in the night

In Jewish tradition, bridegrooms often came for their brides in the middle of the night.

## **The Marriage ceremony (coronation)**

When father informed the bridegroom it was time, the bridegroom dressed in wedding garments and called for his best man and attendants, and family and friends to get ready. The best man, along with other attendants, went slightly ahead of the bridegroom and blew a trumpet and shouted: Behold the bridegroom! Come out to meet him!

The bride and her attendants dressed quickly. If they were asleep, they would get up and prepare immediately. The bride would have attendants sleeping with her in her room, and they had everything ready. Dress and jewels were ready and waiting. Their lamps were trimmed and filled with oil, with everything else packed up and ready to go.

When the trumpet sounded, the whole village rose to celebrate along with the bride, and they would run out to meet the bridegroom. A great celebration started and there was great joy, with blasts of trumpets, singing and dancing. The father of bride was also ready for the celebration. Friends and family of the groom would gather at the father's house, waiting for the other guests, and most importantly, the arrival of the bride and groom.

The bride was veiled when groom came for her and remained so during the coronation (ceremony or wedding). The father of the bride would take her hand and put it in the hand of the bridegroom and crowns were placed on their heads. They were called the king and queen during the celebration.

## **The Consummation**

After being crowned, the groom and his veiled bride were escorted to the bridal chamber where they consummated the marriage, and they became one physically.

The best man would guard the door the entire time, letting no-one in or out and he would announce the consummation to other guests outside the wedding chamber, who cheered and celebrated. The celebration lasted 7 days, while bridegroom and bride spend seven days of intimacy alone in the bridal chamber, getting to know one another and planning their life together.

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## The Presentation

On the seventh day, the best man waited at the door of the bridal chamber (huppah), listening for the groom's knock to signal they were ready. He opened the door and the groom and his unveiled bride came out and were presented to the guests as husband and wife. From this time they publicly and officially lived their lives together, ruling and reigning over their domain of influence, and building their family



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## THE BRIDE'S BETROTHAL AND WEDDING WITH JESUS

Father created us to be a bride for His Son. He chose or picked us out. Father, Son and Holy Spirit are ONE, so they created a being after THEIR image, a created being they had a desire to be with. Drawing a parallel between the story of the Jewish wedding, and what the scriptures say, a picture emerges of the love story we were written into as the Bride of Christ.

- **Ephesians 1:4:** Even as [in His love] He chose us [actually picked us out for Himself as His own] in Christ before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy (consecrated and set apart for Him) and blameless in His sight, even above reproach, before Him in love. (AMP)
- **Romans 9:25:** As He says also in Hosea: "I will call them My people, who were not My people, And her beloved, who was not beloved.
- **1 Thessalonians 1:4:** We know, dear brothers and sisters, that God loves you and has chosen you to be his own people.
- **Deuteronomy 7:6:** For you are a holy and set-apart people to the Lord your God; the Lord your God has chosen you to be a special people to Himself out of all the peoples on the face of the earth.
- **Genesis 1:26:** God said, Let Us [Father, Son, and Holy Spirit] make mankind in Our image, after Our likeness, and let them have complete authority over the fish of the sea, the birds of the air, the [tame] beasts, and over all of the earth, and over everything that creeps upon the earth. (AMP)

God is the Eternal Father, both the Father of the Bride and of the Son

- I and *the Father* are one. John 10:30 (ESV)
- John 20:17 Jesus said to her, "Do not cling to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to my brothers and say to them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'" (ESV)

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The story of the man who found a pearl of great worth is a picture of Jesus, finding us and giving up everything to have us. Matthew wrote "Who, on finding a single pearl of great price, went and sold all he had and bought it" (Matthew 13:46).

The Bride price for us was "*Jesus' everything*". It was what His Father and Our Father needed, in order to give us as a bride to Jesus. Without the cleansing blood of Jesus, we would have been too filthy to be a bride and without the cleansing, Jesus and the Father, could not even consider us as a suitable bride.

The bride price Jesus paid was to be stripped of His divinity, stripped of unity with the Father, stripped of His life, stripped of His glory, stripped of His dignity, stripped of His clothes, food, water, blessing, and stripped of every ounce of blood.

Consider 1 Corinthians 6:20: You were *bought with a price [purchased with a preciousness and paid for, made His own]*. So then, honor God and bring glory to Him in your body. (AMP)

His heart is ravished for us, just like our hearts should be ravished for Him. The beauty He desires is a pure heart and a consecrated life. He paid the Bride price with His life, and by His death He enabled the bride He longed for to emerge and to become real...a bride that will have His divine nature.

- **Song of Songs 7:10** (ESV) I am my beloved's, and his desire is for me.
- **Song of Solomon 4:9** (AMP) You have *ravished my heart and* given me courage, my sister, my [promised] bride; you have **ravished** my heart *and* given me courage with one look from your eyes, with one jewel of your necklace.
- **Psalm 45:11**(AMP) So will the *King desire your beauty*; because He is your Lord, be submissive *and* reverence *and* honor Him.
- **1 Corinthians 7 : 23** (AMP) You *were bought with a price* [purchased with a preciousness and paid for by Christ]; then do not yield yourselves up to become [in your own estimation] slaves to men [but consider yourselves slaves to Christ
- **1 Peter 1:17-19** (ESV) **17** And if you call on him as Father who judges impartially according to each one's deeds, conduct yourselves with fear throughout the time of your exile, **18** knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, **19** but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot.

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With the price He paid, He ensured that we can be the perfect bride for Him, He enables us, if we desire Him, to prepare and be ready for Him. He desires for His bride to be holy and to live in the fear of the Lord; He desires a bride without spot and wrinkle.

- **2 Peter 1:2-4** (ESV) **2** May grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord. **3** His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence, **4** by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire.
- **Romans 12:1** (Amp) I appeal to you therefore, brethren, and beg of you in view of [all] the mercies of God, to make a *decisive dedication of your bodies [presenting all your members and faculties] as a living sacrifice, holy (devoted, consecrated) and well pleasing to God,* which is your reasonable (rational, intelligent) service and spiritual worship.
- **Ephesians 5:25 – 27** (AMP) Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her, *So that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the Word, That He might present the church to Himself in glorious splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such things [that she might be holy and faultless].*

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The New Testament and all the promises in the Bible are collectively our marriage covenant and contract with Jesus – a legal contract, or covenant. He gave us everything He had and promised us everything He is entitled to.

- **Hebrews 13:20-23(AMP)** Now may the God of peace [Who is the Author and the Giver of peace], Who brought again from among the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, *by the blood [that sealed, ratified] the everlasting agreement (covenant, testament)*, Strengthen (complete, perfect) and make you what you ought to be and equip you with everything good that you may carry out His will; [while He Himself] works in you and accomplishes that which is pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ (the Messiah); to Whom be the glory forever and ever (to the ages of the ages). Amen (so be it).
- **Ephesians 1: 3 (AMP)** May blessing (praise, laudation, and eulogy) be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ (the Messiah) *Who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual (given by the Holy Spirit) blessing in the heavenly realm!*
- **John 1:16 (AMP)** For out of His fullness (abundance) we have all received [all had a share and we were all supplied with] *one grace after another and spiritual blessing upon spiritual blessing and even favor upon favor and gift [heaped] upon gift.*
- **Romans 8:32 (AMP)** He who did not withhold or spare [even] His own Son but gave Him up for us all, *will He not also with Him freely and graciously give us all [other] things?*

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The Father, Jesus and bride drink the **cup of acceptance** when bride price is accepted, just like we saw in the ancient wedding ritual. We toast the contract, the price accepted and on the betrothal. As we do so, it becomes a covenant or contract. We call this our "salvation" and it happens when we choose Jesus as Lord and Savior, and surrender our lives to Him.

- **Psalm 16:5** (ESV) The Lord is my chosen portion and my cup; you hold my lot.
- **Psalm 116:13** (AMP) I will lift up (take up) the *cup of salvation and deliverance* and call on the name of the Lord.
- **Luke 22:20** (ESV) And likewise the cup after they had eaten, saying, "This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood.
- **1 Corinthians 10:16** (AMP) The **cup** of blessing [of wine at the Lord's Supper] upon which we ask [God's] blessing, does it not mean [that in drinking it] we participate in *and share a fellowship (a communion) in the blood of Christ* (the Messiah)? The bread which we break, does it not mean [that in eating it] we participate in *and share a fellowship (a communion) in the body of Christ*?
- **1 Corinthians 10:21** (ESV) You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons. You cannot partake of the table of the Lord and the table of demons.
- **1 Corinthians 11:29** (ESV) For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment on himself.
- **Matthew 26:27** (ESV) And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, "Drink of it, all of you,
- **Hebrews 9:15** (AMP) [Christ, the Messiah] is therefore the Negotiator and Mediator of *an [entirely] new agreement (testament, covenant), so that those who are called and offered it may receive the fulfillment of the promised everlasting inheritance*—since a death has taken place which rescues and delivers and redeems them from the transgressions committed under the [old] first agreement.

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During the betrothal the Bridegroom prepares to return to His fathers' house and makes a final declaration

**John 14:3** (Amp) And when (if) I go and *make ready a place for you*, I will come back again and *will take you to Myself*, that where I am you may be also.

Before He left, He gave us the Holy Spirit as the promise from the Father. During the time of betrothal, they only have the messenger to communicate through. Holy Spirit is the messenger and gift from the Father to the Bride after betrothal, to remind the bride of the bridegroom and of everything he has promised to her.

- **Luke 24:49** (ESV) And behold, I am sending the promise of my Father upon you. But stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high." – This was after the cup was drank, Jesus had paid the price and was resurrected, just before he left for His Father's house. Holy Spirit empowers us to stay consecrated, set apart and holy until the Bridegroom's return.
- **John 15:26** (AMP) But the Comforter (Counselor, Helper, Intercessor, Advocate, Strengthener, Standby), the Holy Spirit, Whom the Father will send in My name [in My place, to represent Me and act on My behalf], He will teach you all things. And *He will cause you to recall (will remind you of, bring to your remembrance) everything I have told you.*
- **John 16:13** (AMP) But when He, the Spirit of Truth (the Truth-giving Spirit) comes, He will guide you into all the Truth (the whole, full Truth). *For He will not speak His own message [on His own authority]; but He will tell whatever He hears [from the Father; He will give the message that has been given to Him], and He will announce and declare to you the things that are to come [that will happen in the future].*
- **1 Corinthians 6:19** (AMP) Do you not know that your body is the temple (the very sanctuary) of the Holy Spirit Who lives within you, *Whom you have received [as a Gift] from God?* You are not your own.
- **John 14:26** (AMP) But the Comforter (Counselor, Helper, Intercessor, Advocate, Strengthener, Standby), the Holy Spirit, Whom the Father will send in My name [in My place, to represent Me and act on My behalf], He will teach you all things. *And He will cause you to recall (will remind you of, bring to your remembrance) everything I have told you.*

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The Bridegroom returns to His Father's house to prepare a marriage chamber for His bride. He leaves the Bride and goes back to His Father

- **John 14:2** (AMP) *In My Father's house* there are many dwelling places (homes). If it were not so, I would have told you; for I am going away *to prepare a place for you*.
- **John 17:11** (AMP) And [now] I am no more in the world, but these are [still] in the world, *and I am coming to You*. Holy Father, keep in Your Name [in the knowledge of Yourself] those whom You have given Me, that they may be one as We [are one].
- **Mark 16:19** (ESV) So then the Lord Jesus, after he had spoken to them, was taken up into heaven and sat down at the right hand of God.
- **Luke 24:51**(ESV) And it occurred that while He was blessing them, He parted from them and was taken up into heaven.
- 

He longs for His bride

**Song of Songs 4:9 NIV** *You have stolen my heart, my sister, my bride; you have stolen my heart with one glance of your eyes, with one jewel of your necklace.*

and she longs for Him

**Song of Solomon 5:8** I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, if you find my beloved, that you tell him that *I am sick from love [simply sick to be with him]*.

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The bride gets herself ready and longs for her Bridegroom – she is lovesick for Him. She prepares herself for her Bridegroom and for their life together. She waits for His trumpet, for the day He will take her to be with Him and she prepares herself diligently, with her attention focused on Him only.

- **Revelation 19:8** (AMP) She has been permitted to dress in fine (radiant) linen, dazzling and white—for the fine linen is (signifies, represents) the righteousness (the upright, just, and godly living, deeds, and conduct, and right standing with God) of the saints (God's holy people).
- **Revelation 19:7** (AMP) Let us rejoice and shout for joy [exulting and triumphant!] Let us celebrate and ascribe to Him glory and honor, for the marriage of the Lamb [at last] has come, and His bride has prepared herself.
- **John 6:27** (AMP) Stop toiling and doing and producing for the food that perishes and decomposes [in the using], *but strive and work and produce rather for the [lasting] food which endures [continually] unto life eternal*; the Son of Man will give (furnish) you that, for God the Father has authorized and certified Him and put His seal of endorsement upon Him.



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The day and the hour when Jesus will return for His bride is not known, but His bride must be ready. Only the Father knows and we are told that He will come for her like a thief in the night. The Bridegroom will come for a bride that has prepared herself and is ready and waiting. If she is not pure and ready, it is terms for a divorce.

- **Matthew 24:36** (AMP) But of that [exact] *day and hour no one knows*, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, *but only the Father*.
- **Mark 13** (ESV) "But concerning that day or that hour, no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.
- **1 Thessalonians 5:2** (AMP) For you yourselves know perfectly well that the day of the [return of the] *Lord will come [as unexpectedly and suddenly] as a thief in the night*.
- **Matthew 24:42** (AMP) *Watch therefore [give strict attention, be cautious and active]*, for you do not know in what kind of a day [whether a near or remote one] your Lord is coming.
- **Matthew 24:44** (AMP) *You also must be ready* therefore, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour when you do not expect Him.
- **Matthew 25:13** (AMP) Watch therefore [give strict attention and be cautious and active], for you know neither the day nor the hour when the Son of Man will come.

**Matthew 25:1-13**

**1 Thessalonians 4: 7,8**

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## WHAT DOES OUR FUTURE HOLD?

The Bridegroom will take His bride to be with Him. A trumpet will sound and all of heaven will rise to celebrate along with the bride, who will rise up in the air to meet Him, the bridegroom. There will be great celebration and joy with blasts of trumpets, singing and dancing.

- **1 Thes 4:16,17** For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a loud cry of summons, with the shout of an archangel, and with the *blast of the trumpet of God*. And those who have departed this life in Christ will rise first. 7 Then we, the living ones who remain [on the earth], *shall simultaneously be caught up along with [the resurrected dead] in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air*, and so always (through the eternity of the eternities) we shall *be with the Lord!*
- **1 Corinthians 15:52** (AMP) In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the [sound of the] last trumpet call. *For a trumpet will sound*, and the dead [in Christ] will be raised imperishable (free and immune from decay), and *we shall be changed (transformed)*.
- **Rev 19:6** Then I heard again what sounded like the shout of a vast crowd or the roar of mighty ocean waves or the crash of loud thunder: "Praise the Lord! For the Lord our God,[b] the Almighty, reigns. Let us be glad and rejoice, and let us give honour to him. For the time has come for *the wedding feast of the Lamb, and his bride has prepared herself. She has been given the finest of pure white linen to wear.*"

There will be a coronation. The Bride is veiled during coronation

- **Song of Solomon 4:1** NKJV [The Bridegroom Praises the Bride] [The Beloved] Behold, you are fair, my love! Behold, you are fair! *You have dove's eyes behind your veil*. Your hair is like a flock of goats, Going down from Mount Gilead.
- **1 Peter 5:4** and when the Chief Shepherd appears, *you will receive the crown of glory* that does not fade away.

# JESUS - Our returning Bridegroom

The marriage will be consummated. After being crowned, the groom and veiled bride will be escorted into marriage chamber to consummate the marriage. They become one and present themselves to the world, and to the heavens, as one. They rule together over their domain.

- **John 3:29** (AMP) He who has the bride is the bridegroom; *but the groomsman who stands by and listens to him rejoices greatly and heartily* on account of the bridegroom's voice. This then is my pleasure and joy, and it is now complete
- **1 Corinthians 6:19** (NKJV) Or do you not know that your *body is the temple of the Holy Spirit* who is in you, whom you have from God, *and you are not your own?*
- **1 Corinthians 3:16** (AMP) Do you not discern and understand that you [the whole church at Corinth] are *God's temple (His sanctuary)*, and that God's Spirit has His *permanent dwelling in you* [to be at home in you, collectively as a church and also individually]?
- **Ephesians 2:20 - 22** (AMP) You are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets with Christ Jesus Himself the chief Cornerstone.<sup>21</sup> *In Him the whole structure is joined (bound, welded) together harmoniously, and it continues to rise (grow, increase) into a holy temple in the Lord la sanctuary dedicated, consecrated, and sacred to the presence of the Lord*.<sup>22</sup> In Him [and in fellowship with one another] you yourselves also are being built up [into this structure] with the rest, to form a fixed abode (dwelling place) of God in (by, through) the Spirit.

# JESUS - Our returning Bridegroom

- **Revelation 21:9-11,27** (AMP) Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls filled with the seven final plagues (afflictions, calamities) came and spoke to me. He said, *Come with me! I will show you the bride, the Lamb's wife.* Then in the Spirit He conveyed me away to a vast and lofty mountain and exhibited to me the holy (hallowed, consecrated) *city of Jerusalem descending out of heaven from God.* Clothed in God's glory [in all its splendour and radiance]. The lustre of it resembled a rare and most precious jewel, like jasper, shining clear as crystal. I saw no temple in the city, for the Lord God Omnipotent [Himself] and the Lamb [Himself] are its temple.<sup>23</sup> And the city has no need of the sun nor of the moon to give light to it, *for the splendour and radiance (glory) of God illuminate it, and the Lamb is its lamp.* <sup>24</sup> The nations shall walk by its light and the rulers and leaders of the earth shall bring into it their glory.
- **Verse 27:** *But nothing that defiles or profanes or is unwashed shall ever enter it, nor anyone who commits abominations (unclean, detestable, morally repugnant things) or practices falsehood, but only those whose names are recorded in the Lamb's Book of Life.*
- **Revelation 22:14** (AMP) Blessed (happy and to be envied) are those who *cleanse their garments,* that they may have the authority and right to *[approach] the tree of life and to enter through the gates into the city.*

Jesus tabernacled among us in His tent of flesh, so He can raise in us as a tabernacle of spirit , all of us coming together as one "building", housing His presence and becoming the city of God, so that we can again go and tabernacle with Him (live with Him).

- **Mark 13: 26** And then they will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great (kingly) power and glory (majesty and splendour).
- **John 1:14** (AMP) And the Word (Christ) became flesh (human, incarnate) and tabernacled (*fixed His tent of flesh*, lived awhile) among us; and we [actually] saw His glory (His honour, His majesty), such glory as an only begotten son receives from his father, full of grace (favour, loving-kindness) and truth.

# JESUS - Our returning Bridegroom

## HOW DOES THE BRIDE PREPARE HERSELF?

There are two lies that we need to be aware of, and guard against:

Lie no 1 - the Lord Jesus wants to come for His bride and therefore He will get her ready.

Revelation 19:7 is clear that the bride prepares herself. She gets herself ready –

"Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his Bride has made herself ready;" (ESV)

Have you ever heard of a bridegroom preparing a bride for marriage? It's the bride who does it, because she is in love with her bridegroom. He has given you everything to prepare yourself and look like the bride He desires – that is grace – the ability to live holy, and the power to overcome all temptation.

Lie no 2 – if you are a Christian and said "yes" to the Lord Jesus to be your Savior, we are part of the bride

- Only if we are spotless
- Only if we are ready
- Only if we are consecrated ,set apart and living a holy life
- Only if we are living in the Spirit
- Only if we endure

Only if we are consecrated to the Lord in thoughts, deeds and in words. There is no more room for an unwatched tongue, judgment and pride in your heart, no love in your heart, biasness or partiality in your heart, unforgiveness, bitterness etc. are we worthy of the Bridegroom. Imagine a woman saying yes to a marriage proposal, but only if she's allowed to have other lovers as well. What man would want a bride that's compromised like that? How much more a bridegroom that paid the ultimate price for her?

# JESUS - Our returning Bridegroom

WHO IS THE BRIDE - AND WHAT DOES SHE LOOK LIKE ACCORDING TO THE WORD?

She is a remnant in the body of believers who is completely consecrated unto the Bridegroom, Jesus. Her heart belongs completely to Him and He is the highest love priority in her life. She has purified her heart of all spiritual adultery. She's one who got rid of anything that is more important than Jesus.

Consider Jesus' words in Matthew 10:37-39 "**37** Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. **38** And whoever does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me. **39** Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it."

She chooses God's will and Holy Spirit's voice over her own and will, just like Jesus, choose the will of the Father , over her own will. She copies the life of Jesus and she does not love the world.

Let's clarify what is the world is? Read 1 John 2:15-17

- **James 4:8** Come close to God and He will come close to you. [Recognize that you are] sinners, get your soiled hands clean; [realize that you have been disloyal] wavering individuals with divided interests, and *purify your hearts [of your spiritual adultery]*.
- **John 4:34** Jesus said to them, My food (nourishment) is *to do the will (pleasure) of Him Who sent Me* and to accomplish and completely finish His work.
- **John 5:30** I am able to do nothing from Myself [independently, of My own accord—but only as I am taught by God and as I get His orders]. Even as I hear, I judge [I decide as I am bidden to decide. As the voice comes to Me, so I give a decision], and My judgment is right (just, righteous), *because I do not seek or consult My own will [I have no desire to do what is pleasing to Myself, My own aim, My own purpose] but only the will and pleasure of the Father Who sent Me.*
- **Ephesians 5:1** Therefore be *imitators of God [copy Him and follow His example]*, as well-beloved children [imitate their father].

# JESUS - Our returning Bridegroom

She is obedient to His word, obeys instantly when she hears Holy Spirit and His voice. She is a bond slave to Christ because she continually surrenders to do His will.

- **James 4:4** You [are like] unfaithful wives *[having illicit love affairs with the world and breaking your marriage vow to God!]* Do you not know that *being the world's friend is being God's enemy?* So whoever chooses to be a friend of the world takes his stand as an enemy of God.
- **1 John 2:15-17** Do not love or cherish the world or the things that are in the world. If anyone loves the world, love for the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world—*the lust of the flesh [craving for sensual gratification] and the lust of the eyes [greedy longings of the mind] and the pride of life [assurance in one's own resources or in the stability of earthly things]*—these do not come from the Father but are from the world [itself]. And the world passes away and disappears, and with it the forbidden cravings (the passionate desires, the lust) of it; but *he who does the will of God and carries out His purposes in his life abides (remains) forever.*
- **John 15:19** (ESV) If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.
- **John 15:10** If you *keep My commandments* [if you continue to obey My instructions], you will abide in My love and live on in it, just as I have obeyed My Father's commandments and live on in His love.
- **Ecclesiastes 12:13** All has been heard; the end of the matter is: *Fear God [revere and worship Him, knowing that He is] and keep His commandments*, for this is the whole of man [the full, original purpose of his creation, the object of God's providence, the root of character, the foundation of all happiness, the adjustment to all inharmonious circumstances and conditions under the sun] and the whole [duty] for every man.
- **Luke 8:21** Jesus replied, "My mother and my brothers are all those *who hear God's word and obey it.*"

# JESUS - Our returning Bridegroom

- **Acts 7:39** (AMP) [And yet] our forefathers determined not to be subject to him [*refusing to listen to or obey him*]; but thrusting him aside they rejected him, and in their hearts yearned for and turned back to Egypt.
- **Romans 6:16** Do you not know that if you continually surrender yourselves to anyone to do his will, *you are the slaves of him whom you obey*, whether that be to sin, which leads to death, or to obedience which leads to righteousness (right doing and right standing with God)?
- **Psalms 27:8** (NLT) My heart has heard you say, "Come and talk with me." And my heart responds, "Lord, I am coming."
- **Romans 1:1** (NLT) [Greetings from Paul] This letter is from Paul, a *slave of Christ Jesus*, chosen by God to be an apostle and sent out to preach his Good News.

She loves and serves Him in complete abandonment of self, not legalistic or from a religious mindset, and not bound to self-righteousness. The bride is willing to die to self.

- **Matthew 16:24** Then Jesus said to His disciples, If anyone desires to be My disciple, *let him deny himself [disregard, lose sight of, and forget himself and his own interests]* and take up his cross and follow Me [*cleave steadfastly to Me, conform wholly to My example in living and, if need be, in dying, also*].
- **Matthew 16:25** For whoever is bent on saving his [*temporal*] life [*his comfort and security here*] shall lose it [*eternal life*]; and *whoever loses his life [his comfort and security here] for My sake* shall find it [*life everlasting*].
- **Mark 8:35** For whoever wants to save his [*higher, spiritual, eternal*] life, will lose it [*the [lower, natural, temporal] life which is lived only on earth*]; and *whoever gives up his life [which is lived only on earth] for My sake* and the Gospel's will save it [*his higher, spiritual life in the eternal kingdom of God*].

# JESUS - Our returning Bridegroom

She will obey Him because she loves Him. She expresses her love by obedience to His voice and will. She does not express love by saying "I love you Jesus" only. She shows her adoration by having her spirit, deeds and words show love for Him.

**John 14:15 (Amp)** If you [really] love Me, you will keep (obey) My commands.

She watch diligently over her heart. The preparation of the bride is all about the heart and having an undivided focus and posture of a heart turned toward Jesus. She has a tender , responsive heart towards Jesus and the Holy Spirit.

- **Proverbs 4:23** Keep and *guard your heart* with all vigilance and above all that you guard, for out of it flow the springs of life.
- **Ezekiel 11:19 (NLV)** And I will give them *singleness of heart* and put a new spirit within them. I will take away their stony, stubborn heart and give them *a tender, responsive heart*,
- **1 Peter 3:4-6 (AMP)** But let it be the inward adorning and *beauty of the hidden person of the heart*, with the incorruptible and unfading charm of a gentle and peaceful spirit, which [is not anxious or wrought up, but] is very precious in the sight of God.

# JESUS - Our returning Bridegroom

She fears God - loves what He loves and hates what He hates. If you do not fear Him (have a reverent respect and awe), you will sin and sin cannot come into His presence because it separates us from Him. She will fear God more than she fears the opinion of men.

- **Philippians 2:12** Therefore, my dear ones, as you have always obeyed [my suggestions], so now, not only [with the enthusiasm you would show] in my presence but much more because I am absent, work out (cultivate, carry out to the goal, and fully complete) your own *salvation with reverence and awe and trembling* (self-distrust, with serious caution, tenderness of conscience, watchfulness against temptation, timidly shrinking from whatever might offend God and discredit the name of Christ).
- **Exodus 20:20** And Moses said to the people, Fear not; for God has come to prove you, so *that the [reverential] fear of Him may be before you*, that you may not sin.
- **Proverbs 16:66** In mercy and truth Atonement is provided for iniquity; And by the *fear of the LORD one departs from evil*.
- **1 Peter 1:17** Since you call on a Father who judges each person's work impartially, live out your time as foreigners here in **reverent fear**.
- **Proverbs 1:7** The *reverent and worshipful fear of the Lord is the beginning and the principal and choice part of knowledge* [its starting point and its essence]; but fools despise skillful and godly Wisdom, instruction, and discipline
- **Acts 5:29 ( Amp )** Then Peter and the apostles replied, *We must obey God* rather than men
- **Leviticus 10:33** And Moses said to Aaron, "This is what the LORD spoke, saying:' By those who *come near Me, I must be regarded as holy*; And before all the people I must be glorified.' "So Aaron held his peace.

She lives by faith and knows that God is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

**Hebrews 11:6** But without faith it is impossible to please and be satisfactory to Him. For whoever would come near to God must [necessarily] *believe that God exists and that He is the rewarder of those who earnestly and diligently seek Him* [out].

# JESUS - Our returning Bridegroom

She is dressed in a spotless white robe. She is always listening for His call and is actively getting herself ready. She cleanses herself with the Word and the Fear of the Lord.

- *1 John 3: 3 And everyone who has this hope [resting] on Him cleanses (purifies) himself just as He is pure (chaste, undefiled, guiltless).*
- *John 15: 3 You are cleansed and pruned already, because of the word which I have given you [the teachings I have discussed with you].*

She makes sure she has oil in her lamp. She is filled and baptized in the Holy Spirit, who will remind her of what Jesus said and she instantly obeys His voice. She understands that her body is the temple and abode for Holy Spirit and that she is holy unto God. She is an overcomer. She overcomes the problems outlined in the letters to the seven churches in the book of Revelation.

- *Galatians 5:16 But I say, walk and live [habitually] in the [Holy] Spirit [responsive to and controlled and guided by the Spirit]; then you will certainly not gratify the cravings and desires of the flesh (of human nature without God).*
- *1 Corinthians 3:17 If anyone does hurt to God's temple or corrupts it [with false doctrines] or destroys it, God will do hurt to him and bring him to the corruption of death and destroy him. For the temple of God is holy (sacred to Him) and that [temple] you [the believing church and its individual believers] are.*
- *Rev 12 : 11 And they have overcome (conquered) him by means of the blood of the Lamb and by the utterance of their testimony, for they did not love and cling to life even when faced with death [holding their lives cheap till they had to die for their witnessing].*
- *2 Corinthians 2:14 But thanks be to God, Who in Christ always leads us in triumph [as trophies of Christ's victory] and through us spreads and makes evident the fragrance of the knowledge of God everywhere,*

# JESUS - Our returning Bridegroom

She understands the enormous price paid for her and that righteousness is not earned but a gift through grace. She knows that she cannot approach God with self-righteousness (sin), only on the righteousness of Jesus. She lives in intimate relationship with the Holy Spirit, never forgetting what Jesus did for her and often, as often as she can, she breaks bread with other believers and have communion with her Lord.

**Ezekiel 33:13** When I shall say to the [uncompromisingly] righteous that he shall surely live, and he trusts to his own righteousness [to save him] and commits iniquity (heinous sin), all his righteous deeds shall not be [seriously] remembered; but for his perversity and iniquity that he has committed he shall die.

## UNDERSTAND WHAT HAPPENED AT THE CROSS OF JESUS

Jesus would never tell us to do something if He has not provided the way to do it.

He saw us, loved us and desired to have us as His bride, but there was a problem - sin. It caused separation between a Holy God and unholy, sinful people. Jesus paid the bride price to our Father for our sin and by doing so, an exchange took place at the cross. He made a way for us to be the bride He desires. His price allowed us to come into His (and the Father's) presence again. If He expects us to be perfect, spotless and blameless, then the price He paid is the *key* for us to be that, because He said "It is finished"

The only way we can re-enter the presence of a holy God is by way of the sacrificial death of Jesus. Jesus died in our place...since only holiness can come into His presence, our sinful souls are exchanged in grace for His righteous soul and He becomes our righteousness. This happens by faith. God says it, and we accept and we believe it, because we cannot see it. It's a spiritual exchange.

Jesus offered Himself up as a sacrifice and this one sacrifice was sufficient to complete the work forever. This was because the sacrifice was so perfect that after Jesus did it, He could, unlike the priests that never sat down, go and sit at the right hand of the Father. Being seated shows that His work has been completed.

In the Old Testament, as well as in the New Testament we see that the only way to atone for sin is by death. Sin cannot stand in the presence of God. Sinful men cannot enter God's presence, unless the sin is atoned for. The blood of the sacrifice is used to purify the guilty, and purify everything that is defiled by the sin. Our appreciation of Jesus' sacrifice is progressive, we receive more and more revelation and it grows in us, as does the fruit of our salvation, but the sacrifice itself was perfected forever, once for all and for always.

Jesus Himself, through His death provided for every need, for time and eternity, in every area for the life of every person that trust and believe in Him. Jesus said "It is finished". The Greek word for "finish" is: *"tetelesti"* or *"Completely complete"* or *"perfectly perfect"*

# JESUS - Our returning Bridegroom

Jesus promised that "My grace is sufficient for you". Grace is not an excuse to sin. In fact, it's God's empowering presence that enables us to do what Truth and Holy Spirit demands of us.

- **Hebrews 10:4** (AMP) Because the blood of bulls and goats is *powerless to take sins away*.
- **Hebrews 10:1,2,3** (ESV) For since the law has but a shadow of the good things to come instead of the true form of these realities, it can never, by the same sacrifices that are continually offered every year, make perfect those who draw near. **2** Otherwise, would they not have ceased to be offered, since the worshipers, having once been cleansed, would no longer have any consciousness of sins? **3** But in these sacrifices there is a reminder of sins every year.
- **Hebrews 10:14** (ESV) For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified.

## COMING CLOSE TO GOD – BEING INTIMATE WITH HIM

Only through intimacy between a man and a woman, when they become one flesh, can a new life be conceived. The same way we can only bring forth spiritual life through intimacy in spirit (fellowship) with Jesus.

Our constant hearts cry should be to go with Him into the intimacy of the bridal tent, that He might know us and we might know Him. We bring third parties into our "marriage beds" i.e. TV, friends, work, idols, religion - anything that does not allow us to have intimacy with Jesus. We should remove them!

The way we get closer to Jesus, to be intimate with Him, is to come in His way, not our way. Just like in the Old Testament picture of the tabernacle, we need to "wash our hands", that is, repent of sin. We need to humble ourselves in His presence, in reverence, and in awe.

We also need the New Testament washing – immersing ourselves in the Word of God. We go into the holy of holies with the blood of Jesus covering your sin and with the righteous soul exchanged with Jesus in faith, understanding the exchange that was made.

We need to get to know Him...and honour Him for Who He is, and what His Word says He is. We cannot lean on our own skewed image of Him. Alone-time with the Lord must be a priority for us.

# JESUS - Our returning Bridegroom

We have to make having fellowship with Him and with the body, through communion and fellowship, a priority in our lives. The only way to recognize the voice of God is to become familiar with it. As we spend more and more time with Him, just listening quietly, we will begin to know the sound of His voice, so that we can recognize it anywhere.

- **1 Corinthians 4:15 (AMP)** After all, though you should have ten thousand teachers (guides to direct you) in Christ, yet you do not have many fathers. *For I became your father in Christ Jesus through the glad tidings (the Gospel).*
- **1 John 1:3 (AMP)** What we have seen and [ourselves] heard, we are also telling you, so that you too may [realize and *enjoy fellowship as partners and partakers with us.* And [this] *fellowship that we have [which is a [b]distinguishing mark of Christians]* is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ (the Messiah).
- **Galatians 4:19 (AMP)** My little children, for whom I am again suffering birth pangs *until Christ is completely and permanently formed (moulded) within you,*
- **John 10:14,15(AMP)** I am the Good Shepherd; and I *know and recognize My own, and My own know and recognize Me—* 15 Even as [truly as] the Father knows Me and I also know the Father—and I am giving My [very own] life and laying it down on behalf of the sheep.
- **James 4:8-10(AMP)** Come close to God and He will come close to you. [Recognize that you are] sinners, get your soiled hands clean; [realize that you have been disloyal] wavering individuals with divided interests, and *purify your hearts [of your spiritual adultery].* [As you draw near to God] be deeply penitent and grieve, even weep [over your disloyalty]. Let your laughter be turned to grief and your mirth to dejection and heartfelt shame [for your sins].

# JESUS - Our returning Bridegroom

## Epilogue: Come, Lord Jesus

We began at the beginning — with the Word, eternal and unchanging — and we have journeyed through the most beautiful story ever told. Not a story that belongs to history alone, but one you are written into, one that is still unfolding, and one that is rushing toward its glorious conclusion.

The Bridegroom has paid the price. He has made His declaration. He has gone to prepare a place. And the Holy Spirit — His gift to you, His voice in the waiting — is even now working within you, reminding you of everything He has promised, keeping your lamp trimmed and burning.

The question the Word leaves us with is not theological. It is deeply personal: *Will you be ready?*

Not simply ready in belief, but ready in the way a bride is ready — wholly consecrated, eyes fixed, heart undivided. The ancient bride did not wait passively. She prepared with purpose. She adorned herself. She listened for the trumpet. She refused every distraction that would have found her unprepared when the shout rang out: *Behold, the Bridegroom! Come out to meet Him!*

That cry is coming. The Father alone knows the hour, and not one moment before He is satisfied will the Son be released to come for His bride. But He is coming. And the bride He is coming for is not a bride who merely carries His name — she is one who carries His nature, having been washed in His Word, filled with His Spirit, and set apart by love rather than law.

This is not the end of your study. It is the beginning of your preparation.

May every page of Scripture you open from this day forward feel like a love letter — because it is. May every communion cup you lift remind you of a covenant that cannot be broken. May every whisper of the Holy Spirit find you listening, responsive, and quick to obey. And may the longing of your heart become the cry of the early Church, the cry of the Spirit, and the cry of every bride who has ever truly grasped what is coming:

*Even so — come, Lord Jesus. (Revelation 22:20)*