

# THE BRIDE



REV. WALLACE HEFLIN

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**Rev. Wallace H. Heflin, Jr.**

The Bride

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## **Dedication**

I want to dedicate this book to my mother, Rev. Edith Ward Heflin, D.Div. She has been an ordained minister and Bible teacher for more than fifty years. Her love for the Scriptures and prophetic books which tell of Heaven and things to come instilled within my heart a great desire to be a part of the Bride of Christ. Her life and ministry have challenged hundreds of other people to full-time service for the Lord as well.

*And Isaac intreated the LORD for his wife, because she was barren: and the LORD was intreated of him, and Rebekah his wife conceived. And the children struggled together within her; and she said, If it be so, why am I thus? And she went to inquire of the LORD.*

*And the LORD said unto her, Two nations are in thy womb, and two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels; and the one people shall be stronger than the other people; and the elder shall serve the younger.*

*And when her days to be delivered were fulfilled, behold, there were twins in her womb. And the first came out red, all over like an hairy garment; and they called his name Esau. And after that came his brother out, and his hand took hold on Esau's heel; and his name was called Jacob: and Isaac was threescore years old when she bare them.*

*And the boys grew: and Esau was a cunning hunter, a man of the field; and Jacob was a plain man, dwelling in tents. And Isaac loved Esau, because he did eat of his venison: but Rebekah loved Jacob.*

*And Jacob sod pottage: and Esau came from the field, and he was faint: and Esau said to Jacob, Feed me, I pray thee, with that same red pottage; for I am faint: therefore was his name called Edom.*

*And Jacob said, Sell me this day thy birthright.*

*And Esau said, Behold, I am at the point to die: and what profit shall this birthright do to me?*

*And Jacob said, Swear to me this day; and he swore unto him: and he sold his birthright unto Jacob.*

*Then Jacob gave Esau bread and pottage of lentiles; and he did eat and drink, and rose up, and went his way: thus Esau despised his birthright. Genesis25:21-34*

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LET US BE GLAD AND REJOICE, AND GIVE HONOUR TO HIM: FOR THE MARRIAGE OF THE LAMB IS COME, AND HIS WIFE HATH MADE HERSELF READY. AND TO HER WAS GRANTED THAT SHE SHOULD BE ARRAYED IN FINE LINEN, CLEAN AND WHITE: FOR THE FINE LINEN IS THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF SAINTS. AND HE SAITH UNTO ME, WRITE, BLESSED ARE THEY WHICH ARE CALLED UNTO THE MARRIAGE SUPPER OF THE LAMB. AND HE SAITH UNTO ME, THESE ARE THE TRUE SAYINGS OF GOD.

—REVELATION 19:7-9







## **Introduction**

Genesis 24 contains a beautiful story of the search for a proper bride for Isaac. Abraham (a type of our heavenly Father) commissioned his faithful servant, Eliezer (a type of the Holy Ghost), to travel to the land of his people to bring back a bride for Isaac (a type of Jesus).

There are so many wonderful lessons to be learned from this passage, many of them important to us as we near the time when the Bride of Christ will be forever united with our heavenly Bridegroom. I feel very strongly about this message, perhaps because of my background.

I was born during the Great Depression to parents who were both ordained Pentecostal preachers. They had little to give me, as far as this world's goods are concerned, but they gave me something far more valuable—a rich heritage in the things of God.

I didn't realize that I was rich while I was growing up. What I saw, instead, were the personal sacrifices of my parents, who regularly gave of themselves and of everything they had to meet the needs of

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others. And we had very little to show for it. They were certainly not paid what they were worth. It seemed to me, therefore, that the sacrifices they made far outweighed the benefits we received. That is because I was on the outside looking in. Later in life, when I came into the fold and began serving the Lord myself, I realized how very rich we had been in those days. In fact, I think we somehow have less now than we had before.

Although the majority of the Christians I knew in those days were fairly poor in goods and money, they seemed to have a great joy and an air of expectancy for the future. They lived every moment in hope of being momentarily caught up out of the problems of this life to meet the Lord in the air. They believed in the imminent Rapture of the Church. Because of that hope, the believers of my youth endeavored to live a life separated from the world, what they called “the sanctified life” or “the holy life.” They wanted to be counted worthy to become part of the Bride of Christ.

I sometimes wonder what happened to that air of expectancy I noticed among the saints of the previous generation and have come to the conclusion that it has faded due to the decline in emphasis, over the

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last fifty years or so, on the message of sanctification and holiness, the life of separation from the world. In most circles, this message (which demanded much of the saints) has been watered down. Such teachings are rarely mentioned from some pulpits and never from others, for fear of offending some of those who regularly attend the services. There is very little knowledge these days, among believers in general, about the scriptural qualifications for being part of the Bride of Christ. Over the years, therefore, I have felt the burden of periodically preaching on these truths.

There are some themes that I preach once and seldom preach again, while there are other themes that I feel led to repeat again and again. These are principles that need to be proclaimed often, perhaps because they are foundational to our Christian faith or because few are preaching them these days (and some are actually preaching something contrary). The Bride of Christ being prepared for the marriage of the Lamb is just such a theme.

As time quickly passes and we near the Second Coming of Jesus, we need to know who the Bride is and what is required to be part of her. This is why I have preached consistently over the years about

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what the Church is and what the Bride is and why, after many years of preaching these truths, I am finally putting this message into print so that people all over the world can benefit from it.

I want to begin with the Church: what is it and who is part of it? Then we will deal with the Bride: who or what she is and who can be part of her. We will examine the role of the Holy Ghost in securing and preparing a proper bride for Christ. And, finally, we will examine the events that are about to take place on the earth, how we can each be ready for them, and what we must do to speed them along.

I feel a sense of urgency as I do this, and my prayer is that all who read these pages may take the necessary steps to insure that they are part of *The Bride*.

*Rev. Wallace H. Heflin  
Ashland, Virginia*

**PART I**

**THE CHURCH,  
WHAT IS IT?**

*And Abraham was old, and well stricken in age: and the LORD had blessed Abraham in all things. And Abraham said unto his eldest servant of his house, that ruled over all that he had, Put, I pray thee, thy hand under my thigh: and I will make thee swear by the LORD, the God of heaven, and the God of the earth, that thou shalt not take a wife unto my son of the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I dwell: but thou shalt go unto my country, and to my kindred, and take a wife unto my son Isaac.*

*And the servant said unto him, Peradventure the woman will not be willing to follow me unto this land: must I needs bring thy son again unto the land from whence thou camest?*

*And Abraham said unto him, Beware thou that thou bring not my son thither again. The LORD God of heaven, which took me from my father's house, and from the land of my kindred, and which spake unto me, and that sware unto me, saying, Unto thy seed will I give this land; he shall send his angel before thee, and thou shalt take a wife unto my son from thence. And if the woman will not be willing to follow thee, then thou shalt be clear from this my oath: only bring not my son thither again. And the servant put his hand under the thigh of Abraham his master, and sware to him concerning that matter.*

*And the servant took ten camels of the camels of his master, and departed; for all the goods of his master were in his hand: and he arose, and went to Mesopotamia, unto the city of Nahor.*

—Genesis 24:1-10



## CHAPTER 1

# **The Church: What It Isn't**

*For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles, if ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward: how that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words, Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ) which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; that the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel: whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power. Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; and to make all men*



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*see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: to the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God.*

Ephesians 3:1-10

There are eleven “mysteries” in the Bible, eight of them declared by the apostle Paul, two by John, and one by Jesus. Paul, writing to the Ephesians, speaks of a mystery “*hid since ages past,*” that God would take the Jew and Gentile and join the two to form the Body known as the Church. What a wonderful mystery! But what is the Church?

When we use the word *church* some people think of every building that has a steeple on it or every building that has a church sign above the door. Others think about the many organizations that have what they call a “minister” in charge. What Jesus meant by *the Church* is something very different.

Sometimes, in order to see what something is, we first have to see what it is not. So, let us first examine what the Church is not.

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## **The Church Is Not Spiritual Israel**

The Church is not spiritual Israel. You will not find the word *church* in the Old Testament. The Church is strictly a New Testament concept. It was hidden from the Old Testament prophets, a mystery that would be revealed at a later time.

When we try to make the Church Israel, we quickly encounter contradictions and confusion in the Word of God. I am a believer in Christ and am, therefore, part of the Church. I am not part of Israel. Israel is Israel, and the Church is the Church. God has proclaimed certain blessings for the nation of Israel, and He has proclaimed certain blessing for the Church. The two entities and their corresponding blessings are not the same. They are, in fact, quite different, and when we use the two terms interchangeably, we cause confusion.

Making the Church spiritual Israel has another bad effect. It robs us of a burden for the Jewish people. Those Christians who feel nothing but disdain for Jews are caught up in the belief that Jews have failed and that we, as Christians, have replaced them and that we (and not Israel) are heirs to all the promises given by God to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

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Some might be surprised to know that there are many groups who believe this, and these groups have no love for Israel and for Israelis, for they believe that the Jews are just “reaping what they sowed” when they killed Jesus. “They had their chance,” they say, “and because Israel rejected Jesus, God has rejected Israel and taken on the Church in Israel’s place.” The anti-Semitic views of small groups of people all over the world are supported by churches and ministers. Even Hitler was thought by many to be a good Christian and to have the proper attitude about the Jewish people.

Some of the churches that hold these erroneous beliefs are surprisingly sound in other ways. They get souls saved. They preach a good Gospel message. They teach their members to worship the Lord. Some of them even believe in signs and wonders and practice them. Still, they harbor these racist concepts about Israel and about Jews in general. The fact that Israel has been a hard place for the Gospel only seems to strengthen the notion these people have that the Jewish people are under a curse from God.

Most of the groups who believe this way have no desire to ever visit Israel, and few of them ever offer a prayer for the nation of Israel or its people. May

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God help us! No wonder the Jews have been afraid of Christians in recent centuries.

The New Testament does not teach hatred for the Jewish people, and people all over the world who genuinely love Jesus also love Israel, pray for Israel, and bless Israel in every way they can. A visit to Israel is their dream.

There is something genuinely wrong with people who have no desire to even visit the land that Jesus loved and wept over. They are deluded. We are not spiritual Israel. Israel is Israel, and the Church is the Church.

There are preachers in my own city who insist that God has no interest in “a piece of Real Estate in the Middle East,” that the Temple in Jerusalem will never be rebuilt, and that God has “finished with the Jewish people.” If I believed that I would have to cut many sections out of my Bible, even from the New Testament. Romans 9, 10 and 11, for example, would have to go:

*For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh: who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the*

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*covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen.*

**Romans 9:3-5**

*I say then, Hath God cast away his people? God forbid. For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew. Wot ye not what the scripture saith of Elias? how he maketh intercession to God against Israel, saying, Lord, they have killed thy prophets, and digged down thine altars; and I am left alone, and they seek my life. But what saith the answer of God unto him? I have reserved to myself seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee to the image of Baal. Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace.*

**Romans 11:1-5**

*And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: for this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take*

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*away their sins. As concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sakes: but as touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers' sakes.*

Romans 11:26-28

We cannot cut these passages from the Bible. There is a blessed body known as Israel and another blessed body known as the Church. They are not the same body but two different bodies. The one cannot replace the other. They both have a unique and important place in God's plan for the ages. The Church has not replaced Israel in God's economy, and Israel cannot replace the Church. Believing anything else engenders confusion.

There is yet another evil perpetrated by the doctrinal error of making the Church spiritual Israel. When we believe that we are spiritual Israel, we must accept the judgments as well as the blessings pronounced upon the Jews. This leads men to conclude that we will go through the period known as "The Great Tribulation," a time of judgment upon God's enemies. Unsaved Jews will pass through the entire Tribulation period. There are many passages that assign the Tribulation period to the Jewish people:

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*Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy.*

Daniel 9:24

*Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob's trouble, but he shall be saved out of it.*

Jeremiah 30:7

*And I will cause you to pass under the rod, and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant.*

Ezekiel 20:37

*Son of man, the house of Israel is to me become dross: all they are brass, and tin, and iron, and lead, in the midst of the furnace; they are even the dross of silver.*

Ezekiel 22:18

*For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.*

Matthew 24:21

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This entire 24th chapter of Matthew is written to Jews who will go through the Tribulation period and not to the members of the Church, which was not yet formed. The Church came into being only after the Day of Pentecost when Jesus had already gone back to Heaven.

When we examine the Scriptures carefully, we quickly realize that we are not destined for that hour of judgment.

*Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man.*                      Luke 21:36

The Tribulation is, then, an Old Testament teaching. It is not a time intended for the believers in Jesus. We are not destined for judgement. We can be counted "*worthy to escape all these things.*"

Can you imagine the Lord putting His Bride through the Tribulation? Is that any way to show your love? The rocks will fall upon the people, and water will turn to blood, and the heat will bake the flesh until it cracks open, and the animals they have loved and petted will become vicious and eat them,



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and they will have to flee for their lives unto the dens and caves. Hail stones that weigh 108 pounds will fall from the sky, and the sun and moon will be displaced from their orbit, causing all sorts of natural disasters. And the Lord is going to say, "I love you so much that I did all this just for you"? I don't believe it, even for a moment, for it is not in keeping with God's loving character.

We are instructed, as men, to love our wives, "*as Christ loved the Church.*"

*Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it.*

Ephesians 5:25

Jesus gave His life for the Church. And if He has paid the price of suffering and agony for us, why should we have to go through that? We don't, because the Church is not spiritual Israel.

## **The Church Is Not the Organizational Church As We Know It Today**

Not every member of the organizational church is part of the true Church, for in the organizational

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church we have a little bit of everything. We have all extremes of doctrinal positions and experiences. We have the liberals, the moderates and the conservatives, and everything in between. We have those who no longer believe in the virgin birth of Jesus; we have those who scoff at the idea that God can do miracles in our time; and we have many who scorn the idea of the power of the blood of Jesus.

The organizational church is represented by the National Council of Churches and by the World Council of Churches, and not much that is done by those two large bodies bears any resemblance to the Gospel which Jesus taught. These organizations have become conduits for political extremism, and most of what they support is ungodly.

For a long period of time, a Russian was head of the World Council of Churches. He declared that he did not reverence Christ as the Redeemer of the World but as the Great Revolutionary. He removed funds from missions programs and authorized their use in revolutionary causes, causes that killed Christian missionaries in some places.

How can you love Jesus and deny His deity, deny His power, and deny His uniqueness? If He was just a man, as other men, just a great teacher, just a great

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organizer, or just a great leader of men, then we are all lost, for our salvation is based on His power as the Son of the Living God and on the promises given to us through His written Word. If those promises are only the rantings of unstable men (and not of true prophets), we are all lost.

People who do not recognize Jesus as Lord cannot possibly be part of the Church. People who revere every god equally cannot be part of the Lord of Lords and King of Kings. The IRS may recognize as a “church” any group that meets for religious purposes, but God doesn’t recognize us as members of His Church unless we are on His side. He formed the Church for the purpose of reaching out to the whole world with the message of life in Christ. He formed the Church for the purpose of nurturing His little ones and gifting and teaching them until they rise up as spiritual giants to conquer every enemy. Any organization that is not fulfilling that vision has no right to claim that it is part of what God is doing.

Being religious does not make you part of God’s Church. In fact, the religious have always opposed what God is doing. Organized religion is often a tool of evil men, a means to their goal of controlling people and building their own kingdom on earth.

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Any group that refuses to recognize the necessity of being born again is not related to Christ. He came forth from the dead to offer new life to those who would accept His lordship.

Any group that pokes fun at the efficacy of His sacrifice on Calvary has no part of Him. Many groups seem to find pleasure in ridiculing the effectiveness of the blood of Jesus and mocking those who have such a “bloody” religion. These are Antichrist groups. They are not part of the Church of Jesus Christ.

Any group that rejects God’s Word, the Holy Bible, as the road map He has left us to follow cannot inherit His blessings. He has, in fact, pronounced cursings upon them (see Revelation 22:19). We don’t need a new Bible, as many are suggesting; we need submission to the old one. The Bible is not sexist, as some are claiming. We don’t need a revision that eliminates elitism because God is “*no respecter of persons*” (Acts 10:34). We need people who will submit their stubborn wills to the Almighty and allow Him to change them.

As I said, missionary dollars channeled through the World Council of Churches have found their way into the coffers of the world’s most violent ter-

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rorist groups. What a sacrilege! Jesus did not call us to finance guerrilla warfare. He called us to set men and women free in the Spirit. Men who would take money given sacrificially to God and use it for such wicked ends are not part of the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ.

God is reaching out to every organizational church, and there are some people to be found in each of them who genuinely love Him and are hungry for His goodness. God is saving them and filling them with His Spirit. As a whole, however, the organizational church is not the same as *the Church*, and we must not confuse the two.

The Church is a mystery. It is the invisible body of believers, those who have their names written in the Lamb's Book of Life, those who have been washed in the blood of Jesus and made new creatures. This Church is made up of representatives of every race, every language, every background, and every level of achievement in life. This is an exclusive body, with strict rules of membership. That's what the Church is.



## CHAPTER 2

# **It Is a Holy (Sanctified) Church**

*Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. Ephesians 5:25-27*

The sacrifice of Christ for the Church had a purpose: “that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of the water by the word” and “that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.” What a powerful truth!

The church we know today is anything but sanctified, anything but cleansed, anything but glorious. It is full of spots, wrinkles, and such things. It is

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not holy, as Jesus said it should be. It is not without blemish, as He desires.

The church we know has become mixed with the world, diluted, and there is nothing God hates more than mixtures or dilutions. He says:

*So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue you out of my mouth.*

Revelation 3:16

God wants a people who will be separated from the world and who will not be entangled with the things of the world. He is looking for a people who will be willing to live a separated life.

These are not popular themes in the church these days. People are asking: "Why be hung up on holiness? Why bring people into bondage? Why is it necessary to set standards of conduct and speech and dress? Why can't we just let each individual decide for himself or herself how he or she wants to live? Why do we have to cram our ideals down the throats of others?"

My answer is simple: holiness must be preached because God is a holy God who desires a holy people. He is searching for a worthy Bride for His

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Son. That sets a high standard, a standard which we have no right to lower. Christ is our example, and we are to be *"like him"* (1 John 3:2). If we don't teach people what is right and wrong, what pleases God and what doesn't, how can we blame them if they don't come up to His standard?

Would we just place a new factory worker before a complicated machine and say, "Let him run it as he sees fit. I don't want to cram my beliefs down his throat"? No! And we can't do that with the little ones God has entrusted into our hands either. They must be properly instructed.

The holiness message of the past has not become outdated. Complete consecration to Christ and to His principles will still get us to Heaven and will still make us part of the Body of Christ. The Scriptures are clear:

*Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.*

Hebrews 12:14

If *"no man"* can *"see the Lord"* without *"holiness,"* why should we be silent in this regard? We cannot, and we must not.



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If Jesus died for this very thing, it certainly merits our attention. If this was the purpose of His sacrifice, it is certainly a worthy subject for teaching and preaching. We must teach our little ones that if they expect to be part of His Body, they must meet His requirements.

The natural body reacts violently to impurities in its system, throwing them off at the earliest possible moment, rejecting things that are not good for it. Fever does this. We consider fever to be a bad thing, but it simply shows that the body is fighting off something harmful, something that should not be there in the first place.

God has declared that we must be cleansed and be made Christ-like if we are to be part of His program. Paul wrote to the Thessalonians:

*For this is the will of God, even your sanctification.*  
1 Thessalonians 4:3

The best definition of *sanctification* is “grown up,” and it is only when the Body has “grown up into him in all things” and stands “in the fullness of the measure of the stature of Christ being fitly joined together with every joint supplying what is required” that the Church

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will be able to complete the work the Father has entrusted into our hands. We must strive for sanctification, for it is the will of God.

Sanctification requires separation from the world.

*Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you.*

2 Corinthians 6:17

What will happen to those who have compromised with the world, lowered their standards and are now teaching others that it is acceptable Christian behavior to look and act like the world? I believe they will go through the Tribulation period in order to be perfected. Many of them are saying that they have received a revelation that they will go through part or all of the Great Tribulation, and I am beginning to believe them. They are so cold and indifferent in their experience, have such a poor testimony for Christ, and have made such compromises with the world. Surely God cannot give these people immediate entrance to Heaven. They will need time to get perfected.

I hope going through the Tribulation period works for them, but it isn't necessary, and it isn't

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God's perfect will for His people. He has given His fivefold ministry to the Church to perfect His Body NOW, that it may be "*a glorious Church without spot or wrinkle, holy and without blemish*" NOW.

Those who believe that you can be Spirit-filled and demon possessed at the same time will surely not be ready for the Rapture. If the blood of Jesus is not strong enough to keep them from the forces of the devil, their sins will be a weight about their ankles, keeping them from going up when Jesus appears to call forth His Church. Paul taught:

*But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.*

Romans 8:11

Get ready, Church. Whatever it takes, we must become sanctified, for only when that perfection and fullness is wrought can His Body, the Church, bring forth the Bride of Christ and get ready for the marriage of the Lamb.

The means that God uses to perfect us are the ministries He has placed in the Church.

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*And he gave some apostles; and some, prophets, and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry for the edifying of the body of Christ: till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ: that we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; but speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: from whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.*

Ephesians 4:11-16

God's will for His Body is that each member come "in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ." To this end, He has placed a

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fivefold ministry in the Church, and each part of that fivefold ministry functions in a different capacity to prepare the people of God, to fill the Body of Christ with His Glory and His authority and to cause lives to measure up to the standards and qualifications He has set for us.

Wherever there is an existing body of believers, God wants these ministries to be in operation. There is a great need these days, in many spiritual circles, for Spirit-filled individuals to fill the vacuum of leadership. God is looking for those who will make themselves available to the Holy Ghost anointing, people who will depend on God's Spirit to make them capable of filling these offices. It is only through such people that the needs of the Body can be met.

*Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular. And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.*

1 Corinthians 12:27-28

Most Christians believe the apostolic ministry is no longer in existence, but if God set that ministry

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in the Church, and the Church hasn't ceased to exist, then that ministry hasn't ceased to exist either.

The office of the apostle encompasses the ministries of the prophet, the evangelist, the pastor and teacher. An apostle has the ability to go into new areas and establish churches and carries the responsibility of those churches and their spiritual welfare. Because of the intensity of his responsibility, the apostle should have all of the gifts of the Spirit operating in his ministry.

Prophets were sent by God down through the ages to the nations. Elijah and Elisha and Isaiah and Jeremiah were some of the familiar prophets sent to the people of Israel. Prophets declare a message that God has given them for a particular individual, for a family, for a community, or for a nation. When they speak, it is with such authority that kings tremble.

King Zedekiah was so enraged by the word that Jeremiah was proclaiming that he had him put into a pit, a cistern, and fed him only bread and water. He thought that would change the prophet's tune. When he came later and asked, "Is there a word from the Lord?" Jeremiah answered, "It's the same word that I gave you before." A prophet cannot change his message, for it is not his own. He is only a spokes-

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person for the Lord and must declare with boldness exactly what the Lord has given him.

A prophet needs more than the gift of prophecy. He needs the gift known as a word of knowledge and the gift known as a word of wisdom. Most prophets have the gift of discerning of spirits and the gift of faith. When a prophet is sent by God to a church, it is to set the church in order and, because of that, his ministry is elevated above that of pastor and evangelist.

The evangelist should have the gift of a word of knowledge, as well as a prophetic ministry and a healing ministry. He is sent to a congregation to break open situations that a pastor has not been able to handle. The Holy Ghost anoints him to see difficult conditions in the church, conditions that he can target and break open. After he is gone, a caring pastor must be there to pour oil on the wounds and to continue to bring the church into the fullness God wants in His Body.

A good evangelist never opens up more than the pastor can handle. By inviting the evangelist, the pastor has given his people into the hands of the evangelist and has given the evangelist free reign to deal with the people as he is led. The evangelist,

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however, should always be able to turn back to the pastor a more vibrant congregation than was entrusted to him. The pastor should also be revitalized through the evangelistic ministry.

The pastor has a great responsibility. The Lord has placed sheep in his care, and he must see to it that no wolves get in to devour his flock. To govern well his flock, every pastor needs the gift of governments. No church can function without someone having spiritual insight and leadership sufficient to govern the House of God. Without that supernatural insight, confusion reigns over that house.

The teacher may not be as fiery as the evangelist, but he complements the other ministries. He is very patient and goes over and over the Word until it has sunk deep within the hearts of the listeners, until everyone has grasped its meaning.

All of the ministries should support and supplement each other. Every member of the Body has something to offer to the other members, and we don't have to be apostles or evangelists to make a positive contribution to the welfare of the whole Body.

Everyone would like to have a pulpit ministry, a visible position of authority, but there is a great need



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in the Body for those who are willing to help when and where they are needed. There will always be a place for those who are willing to serve.

In most congregations, one or more of the major ministries has been elevated and the others excluded. This is to the disadvantage of the members because they cannot be perfected without the benefit of all the various ministries. And God does want us each to grow up. Paul said:

*Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is. Ephesians 5:17*

Sometimes we resent God's attempts to perfect us. We resent those who point out our failures. We resent their "stepping on our toes." But why did God put them there in the first place if they cannot lift us higher in the things of the Spirit? Don't be resentful when God puts His finger on your life. Yield to Him gratefully. He is doing something beautiful in your life, getting you ready to be part of *The Bride*.



## CHAPTER 3

# It's a Powerful Church

*But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.* Acts 1:8

The Church was born on the Day of Pentecost after Jesus had gone back to Heaven. Pentecost was the fulfillment of His promise of power to the believer.

Christ is the Head of the Church He formed on the Day of Pentecost, and the purpose of His power in us is to make us like the Head, to conform us to His own image. He promised that when we had received His power we would do the works that He had done.

*Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on me, the works that I do he shall do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father.* John 14:12

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We can now do the works that Jesus did because of the power of the Holy Ghost in us. The Holy Ghost works in each of us to make us like Jesus, an extension of His hands, His feet, His ears, His mouth, and His eyes. That is what the Body of Christ is all about. The purpose of the Body is not to magnify itself but to magnify the name of Jesus and to show forth the same power that He demonstrated while He was on the earth.

Within days after their experience at Pentecost, it was evident that the disciples had something new and different. One morning Peter and John were on their way to the Temple to pray when a lame man called out to them to help him. Peter said to the man, *“Silver and gold have I none.”* He had left his fishing nets in Galilee and was no longer gainfully employed (in the eyes of the world), but he did have something. *“Such as I have give I unto thee,”* he said, *“in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk”* (Acts 3:6). Peter took the lame man by the hand and lifted him up. When he did, a miracle took place. *“Immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength.”*

The church of today cannot say, *“Silver and gold have I none.”* The leaders of many churches, even

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Pentecostal denominations, are proud of the amount of savings certificates they have on deposit and how many stock investments they have. The church of the twentieth century is rich. Most churches would have to say: "Silver and gold we now have, but we no longer have God's power."

Peter said, "Such as I have give I thee." The Church, the true Church of the Lord Jesus Christ, still has something to offer the world. It is not a powerless church. It has the same manifestations of power that were in evidence among first century believers. The Church of the Living God is a powerful Church, and we, as members of that Church, must be powerful members.

That first church grew rapidly, not because it gave away bicycles or baseball bats or foot-long hot dogs. They didn't need bingo parties and suppers to get the work of the Lord done. They exercised the raw power of the Holy Ghost in their lives on a daily basis and in various ways. Jesus had said to the disciples:

*Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead,  
cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely  
give.*

Matthew 10:8

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Now, after the Day of Pentecost, they did this everywhere they went. They did all the same miracles Jesus had done and did them to His honor and glory. The Church of the Lord Jesus Christ has something to give, and it demonstrates its faith in God through giving. Each individual member has something to give. Each one of us can boldly say, as the apostles did, "Such as I have give I thee."

The disciples were commissioned to demonstrate God's power, not just in Jerusalem, but everywhere they went.

*And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.*

Matthew 28:18-20

When you have Holy Ghost power, it doesn't make any difference how you feel. You are just as anointed when you wake up in the morning as you

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were when you were shouting the victory and praising God in the service the night before. The anointing does not depend on how one feels but on what one believes. A believer can be tired or even sick themselves and still bring deliverance to someone else. This is scriptural, for in James 5:16 the Word says, "*Pray one for another, that ye may be healed.*" The power and authority of God dwells in every one of the members of the Body.

The powerful and giving first-century Church became a going Church. And, since the Day of Pentecost, the Church has been literally "on the go." Two thirds of the name of God is "GO." He wants His people to go, to go everywhere men and women can be found and share with them His love. If we have grown lethargic and have stopped going and doing and telling and blessing, we must shake ourselves and remember the power entrusted to us and the commission given to us by Jesus Himself. God's Church is a powerful church, a giving church and a going church, a church which is preparing men and women to be part of *The Bride*.





## CHAPTER 4

# **It Is a Spirit-Filled Church**

*For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. For the body is not one member, but many. If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling? But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him. And if they were all one member, where were the body? But now are they many members, yet but one body.*

1 Corinthians 12:12-20



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This is a familiar passage to those of us who are Pentecostals because the earlier verses of the chapter speak of the gifts of the Spirit. The passage goes on, however, to give us important insights into the makeup of the Body of Christ and the work of the Holy Ghost in forming that Body. It is the Spirit of God that initiates our entrance into the Body of Christ, and we gain membership into that Body only through the working of God's Spirit, no other way.

You can't buy your way into the Church. Membership in this Body is not for sale and cannot be realized just by paying your dues. You might join an organized church by walking down the aisle on Sunday morning and shaking the preacher's hand or by simply signing a card, but the only way you can get into Christ's Body is through a sovereign work of the Holy Ghost. There is no other way.

Even Old Testament saints were not privileged to be part of this illustrious Body of believers. This truth may shock some people, but Abraham, David, Jeremiah, and other Old Testament saints are not a part of the Body of Christ. Even John the Baptist is not part of the Body. Jesus said of him:

*Verily I say unto you, Among them that are*

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*born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.* Matthew 11:11

We are living in a new dispensation, a new age, the dispensation of the Holy Ghost. Those Old Testament prophets had a lot of power, and they have a special place reserved at the Lord's side, but you can have even more power than they had in their time. What a privileged people we are!

Our initiation into the Body by the Spirit, however, should not be considered an end. It is only the beginning of a glorious life in the Spirit. And God wants every part of His Body to be totally filled with His Spirit. Why, then, do so many resist the infilling of the Spirit of God with the evidence of speaking in other tongues?

Some think this experience is unnecessary, but God has given us His Spirit to make us overcomers in this world and to prepare us for the world to come. We must not, therefore, take it lightly. Submitting to His authority requires that we accept His total will for our lives.

*And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead;*

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*that in all things he might have the preeminence.* Colossians 1:18

The Church could not have existed before Christ gave His life. He is the Head of the Church, and the Head controls the movements of the rest of the Body. The Head causes movement in the arms and the legs and hands and the feet and the tongue. He is in charge.

And, if the Head is Spirit-filled, then the rest of the Body should be Spirit-filled as well. If the Head is Spirit-filled, the smallest toe should also be Spirit-filled. The right arm should be Spirit-filled, and the right shoulder should be Spirit-filled.

Paul taught that the foot is just as much a part of the body as the hand. We don't lay our feet on people, like we do with our hands, but our feet must be just as anointed as our hands are. God told Joshua:

*Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto you, as I said unto Moses.* Joshua 1:3

The soles of the feet of the members of the Body of Christ should be anointed to claim territory for

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God. The feet must be anointed because the Head is anointed. And God's will is for every part of His Body to have the same anointing. Jesus does not want any schism (division) in His Body.

*That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another.*                      1 Corinthians 12:25

God wants every part of His Body to be equally anointed, equally filled with His Spirit. So this experience in the Holy Ghost is not just for Pentecostals. In the Methodist Church, the Baptist Church, the Presbyterian Church, and the Catholic Church—in every major denomination, in fact—there are people who have been baptized in the Holy Ghost. Just because they happen to be Baptist or Methodist or Presbyterian or Catholic does not exclude them. God wants us all to be filled with His Spirit.

God is reaching into all denominations and baptizing believers in the Holy Ghost, bringing them into the fullness of His Spirit. Everyone can be a part of this great movement. Everyone can taste of these glorious benefits.

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In the last thirty years God has sent a move of His Spirit that, in some circles, has been called “the Charismatic Movement,” while others have called it “the Full Gospel Movement” Whatever you call it, God has been reaching into every denomination and sending forth the manifestations of His glory and power so that men and women could get a taste of His goodness and desire to be totally filled with His power.

This is God’s will for the Church. The Church was born on the Day of Pentecost, and the charter membership consisted of one hundred and twenty men and women who were commissioned by Jesus. He had said to them:

*Tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem until ye be endued with power from on high.*

Luke 24:49

When the Day of Pentecost arrived, these men and women received the power they needed.

*And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.*

Acts 2:4

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Every one of those one hundred and twenty believers spoke in tongues that day, and God wants each of His little ones to have the same experience today. The first church was a Spirit-filled church, and the church of this final age must be a Spirit-filled church as well.

Every one of the churches that Paul established and to whom he later wrote were Spirit-filled churches: Thessalonica, Galatia, Colosse, Ephesus. Every one of those churches experienced speaking in tongues. They were baptized in the Holy Ghost because this was God's order for the Church. And God hasn't changed His mind in the closing days of the twentieth century.

The Church in Ephesus was a Spirit-filled church. The Church in Thessalonica was a Spirit-filled church. The Church in Corinth was a Spirit-filled Church. The Church in Colosse was a Spirit-filled church. The Church in Galatia was a Spirit-filled church. Every single one of the New Testament epistles was written to a Spirit-filled church. The whole Bible, in fact, was written to a Spirit-filled people, for it is a Spirit Book.

*But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto*

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*him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.* 1 Corinthians 2:14

It is only when we allow the Holy Ghost to be our Teacher and our Revealer of Secrets that we understand fully the truths of God's Word. Only the Spirit can unfold God's mysteries to us. So, why not be filled with His Spirit?

Some years ago a minister said to me, "I have read Corinthians on my knees, and I don't see any place where Paul said that you had to speak in tongues to have the Holy Ghost." Well, of course not! Paul wrote to the people at the Church of Corinth to correct their excesses, so he only talked about the things they were doing. He didn't need to say, "You should speak in tongues," because they were already speaking in tongues.

Some believe that speaking in tongues is sensationalism. They don't think you should get emotional about your religion. But how can you help but be emotional when God is moving and working in you and through you?

At the birth of the Church, the Holy Ghost descended and the emotional senses of the believers were baptized in the Holy Ghost. They heard and

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felt the rushing mighty wind. They felt the fire of the Holy Ghost. They saw the “*cloven tongues like as of fire.*” And they all spoke with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance. Some contend that we should not get emotional, but the baptism of the Holy Ghost does not rid us of emotion. It only heightens the sensitivity of our emotions and harnesses them to be used for God. We need this power of God in our lives.

Many churches have signs that say “New Testament Church,” and yet they preach against speaking in tongues and the Baptism of the Holy Ghost. Any New Testament Church should be patterned after the Church of Acts 2. The believers at Pentecost were so filled with the Holy Spirit that they were like drunken men. They rejoiced so exuberantly before God that Peter was compelled to explain to the crowd that the disciples were not drunk as they appeared to be. We have a term for that type of conduct: being *drunk in the Spirit*, and it still happens today to those who are willing and eager to be filled with the Spirit of God.

Among the believers baptized with the Holy Ghost on the Day of Pentecost were women (see Acts 1:14). Despite that fact, some churches don't believe



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in giving women a place in ministry. While it is true that the Bible says for women not to usurp authority over the man (see 1 Timothy 2:12), it is also true that most of the passages used to justify such restrictions had a limited application in a specific cultural setting and are no longer valid today.

In some cultures, it is still true that women sit on one side of the church and the men on the other. If those women are uneducated, as they are in many places, it is not unusual for them to be asking their husband to explain something to them. And this can be disruptive. It was to this limited cultural setting that Paul spoke when he said:

*Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the lath. And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church.*

1 Corinthians 14:34-35

No scripture prevents women from standing to prophesy. Philip had four daughters who prophesied (see Acts 21:9). So Paul could not have been

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saying that women were never permitted to speak in church.

It is true that when Jesus called His twelve disciples they were all men. When the work got too big for those twelve, He called seventy, and they were all men as well. The reason, again, is cultural. The Jews would not have received from a woman.

When Jesus was ready to go back to Heaven, He was about to change the tempo and the scope of the ministry. The Church would reach out, not just to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, as the disciples had done. Now they would go *“into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature”* (Mark 16:15). Women could now have a part in that outreach to the nations, so God also filled women on the Day of Pentecost. And He is still filling and using women today.

Jesus offers His Spirit to all.

*In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him*

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*should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)*

John 7:37-39

Are you thirsty? If you want to, you may come and drink of the waters of life freely.

On the Day of Pentecost a powerful organism was born, and since that time, every believer who has genuinely opened to God has received the Baptism of the Holy Ghost (with the initial evidence of speaking with other tongues as the Spirit gives utterance). This is an important experience that every believer should have.

Some denominations want to baptize their new believers immediately in water. If you get saved in the morning, they want you to be baptized that night. Their reasoning is that you are “baptized into” the body. But they are mistaken. It is not the water baptism that makes us part of the Body of Christ; it is the Spirit’s intervention that does that mystical work.

Water baptism is a symbolic act that shows the world that we have left the old life and been resurrected by God into a new life. Paul taught that baptism signifies burial and the act of rising out of the water signifies rising to “*walk in newness of life.*”

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*Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.*

Romans 6:4

The teaching of 1 Corinthians 12 has nothing to do with water baptism. This chapter is all about the gifts and manifestations of the Spirit. It is about the variety of gifts given to the various members of the Body of Christ. And it declares the importance of the work of the Spirit in initiating our entrance into the Body of Christ and of taking us on toward perfection in the power of God's Spirit. As we shall see in the next section, it is from His Spirit-filled Church that God will bring forth *The Bride*.



## **PART II**

# **THE BRIDE OF CHRIST, WHO OR WHAT IS SHE?**

*And he made his camels to kneel down without the city by a well of water at the time of the evening, even the time that women go out to draw water.*

*And he said O LORD God of my master Abraham, I pray thee, send me good speed this day, and shew kindness unto my master Abraham. Behold, I stand here by the well of water; and the daughters of the men of the city come out to draw water: and let it come to pass, that the damsel to whom I shall say, Let down thy pitcher, I pray thee, that I may drink; and she shall say, Drink, and I will give thy camels drink also: let the same be she that thou hast appointed for thy servant Isaac; and thereby shall I know that thou hast shewed kindness unto my master.*

*And it came to pass, before he had done speaking, that, behold, Rebekah came out, who was born to Bethuel, son of Milcah, the wife of Nahor, Abraham's brother, with her pitcher upon her shoulder. And the damsel was very fair to look upon, a virgin, neither had any man known her: and she went down to the well, and filled her pitcher, and came up.*

*And the servant ran to meet her, and said, Let me, I pray thee, drink a little water of thy pitcher.*

*And she said, Drink, my lord: and she hastened, and let down her pitcher upon her hand, and gave him drink.*

*And when she had done giving him drink, she said, I*

*will draw water for thy camels also, until they have done drinking. And she hasted, and emptied her pitcher into the trough, and ran again unto the well to draw water, and drew for all his camels. And the man wondering at her held his peace, to wit whether the LORD had made his journey prosperous or not.*

*And it came to pass, as the camels had done drinking, that the man took a golden earring of half a shekel weight, and two bracelets for her hands of ten shekels weight of gold; and said, Whose daughter art thou? tell me, I pray thee: is there room in thy father's house for us to lodge in?*

*And she said unto him, I am the daughter of Bethuel the son of Milcah, which she bare unto Nahor. She said moreover unto him, We have both straw and provender enough, and room to lodge in.*

*And the man bowed down his head, and worshipped the LORD. And he said, Blessed be the LORD God of my master Abraham, who hath not left destitute my master of his mercy and his truth: I being in the way, the LORD led me to the house of my master's brethren.*

*And the damsel ran, and told them of her mother's house these things. And Rebekah had a brother, and his name was Laban: and Laban ran out unto the man, unto the well. And it came to pass, when he saw the earring and bracelets upon his sister's hands, and when he heard the*



*words of Rebekah his sister, saying, Thus spake the man unto me; that he came unto the man; and, behold, he stood by the camels at the well. And he said, Come in, thou blessed of the LORD; wherefore standest thou without? for I have prepared the house, and room for the camels. And the man came into the house: and he ungirded his camels, and gave straw and provender for the camels, and water to wash his feet, and the men's feet that were with him.*

—Genesis 24:11-32



## CHAPTER 5

# **The Bride of Christ: What She Isn't**

*And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife.*

Revelation 21:9

To understand who or what the Bride of Christ is, we might, again, benefit first by seeing what she isn't. If we can eliminate some of the common misconceptions about her, we can clear the air and more easily arrive at the truth.

## **The Bride of Christ Is Not Israel**

Probably the greatest misconception about the Bride is that she is Israel. But just as the Church is not spiritual Israel, Israel is not the Bride of Christ.

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Israel cannot be the Bride of Christ because God the Father is married to Israel.

*For thy Maker is thine husband; the Lord of hosts is his name; and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel; the God of the whole earth shall he be called. For the LORD hath called thee as a woman forsaken and grieved in spirit, and a wife of youth, when thou wast refused, saith thy God.*

Isaiah 54:5-6

*Turn, O backsliding children, saith the LORD; for I am married unto you: and I will take you one of a city, and two of a family, and I will bring you to Zion.*

Jeremiah 3:14

The entire book of Hosea speaks of Israel's backsliding and her adulterous condition:

*The beginning of the word of the LORD by Hosea. And the LORD said to Hosea, Go, take unto thee a wife of whoredoms and children of whoredoms: for the land hath committed great whoredom, departing from the LORD.*

Hosea 1:2

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The adulterous wife of the Father cannot be the Bride of Jesus, for the Scriptures say that He will be married to a virgin and that she will be a Gentile Bride. While God the Father has chosen to identify with the Jewish people, the Bride of Christ will be made up of both Jew and Greek, male and female, bond and free. The Bride will have representatives from every nation on the earth. It will have representatives from every Christian denomination: Methodists, Baptists, Presbyterians, Episcopalians, Anglicans, Catholics, Congregationalists, and Pentecostals. No group that loves Him will be excluded.

Don't ever think that you are the only one who loves Jesus. He has His people everywhere, in every city, and in every nation upon every continent. He has His people in Cairo and Bombay, Sidney and Hong Kong, Tokyo and Moscow. Everywhere you can imagine God has those who have not yet bowed their knees in compromise to the idols of this world. He has those who are:

*Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.*

Titus 2:13

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Joseph was a type of Christ, and he married a Gentile woman. Moses was a type of Christ, and he also married a Gentile woman. Israel is not the Bride of Christ.

## The Bride of Christ Will Not Be Made Up of Every Member of the Church

The general consensus among those who accept that the Bride of Christ will be made up of both Jew and Gentile is that she will be basically the same as the Church. They consider the term *the Bride* to be just another name for the Church. Some of them believe that the Church will be joined in a special way to Christ in the future, while others believe that we are already joined to Christ.

For many years I, too, accepted the idea that every member of the Church would be part of the Bride, but my thinking changed in that regard. As I have searched the Scriptures concerning the special Bride Christ seeks, I have come to the conclusion that she will be made up of a very select group from within the Church and that not every member of the Church will be part of the Bride.

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Could God show favoritism to a select few? some would ask. Of course! A Bride who will be joined to Him for eternity must be very special.

While Jesus was here on the earth, He only chose twelve disciples. Of those, He had a small group that formed a closer circle: Peter, James and John. Because the three of them had greater faith and a closer relationship to the Lord, they saw more than the other disciples were privileged to see. And of the three, John had an even more special place at Jesus' side, even resting his head on Jesus' breast.

*Then Peter, turning about, seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved following; which also leaned on his breast at supper, and said, Lord, which is he that betrayeth thee?*                      John 21:20

Could it be possible that Jesus loved John more than He loved the other disciples? No! It was the other way around. John loved Jesus more than the other disciples did, and that's why he was closer to the Master.

John's gospel is different from the other three, looking at things from a different perspective. His was a spiritual account, something that no Bible

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scholar has ever contested. It was John who pointed to Jesus as the Bread of Life. It was John who told us that He was the Way, the Truth and the Life. It was John who revealed Jesus as the Door. And who can doubt that John's special insight and depth of revelation was the result of his special relationship with Jesus?

It was John who saw Heaven opened on the Isle of Patmos and received the Revelation of the mystery of the Bride, the New Jerusalem, and many other heavenly things to come. Was God showing favoritism to John? No, He was responding to John's special love for Him.

Not everyone who is saved will rise at the sound of the trumpet. When I first heard my mother say that, I was shocked and couldn't believe what I was hearing.

"Don't you preach," she asked, "that if you fail to pay your tithes you are robbing God?"

"I do," I answered.

"And don't you preach that no thief will enter Heaven?" she asked.

"That's right," I admitted.

I began to see her drift. There is a fine line. If a man will rob God, what is stopping him from rob-

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bing his fellowman? If you withhold from God, you will take from anyone, and not everyone who says, "Lord, Lord" will enter into the Kingdom.

*Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.*

Matthew 7:21

There were divisions in Israel. When God allowed the nation of Israel to go into captivity, not all of them were backslidden. Although the people, as a whole, had indeed backslidden, there were still some Daniels among them who were ready to face the lions. There were still some Hebrew children who were willing to face the fiery furnaces. And there were almost certainly hundreds of others who had still not lost their love for God. There was a faithful Israel inside the backslidden Israel.

Just as there are various levels of anointing and various depths of ministry, saints have very different depths of commitment to God. And the Bride must be made up of the best of the best. Nothing less will do for our Lord Jesus.



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When Abraham called his servant and commissioned him to find a suitable bride, Eliezer had one concern: what if the woman would not be willing to come with him?

*Peradventure the woman will not be willing to follow me unto this land: must I needs bring thy son again unto the land from whence thou camest?*

Genesis 24:5

Abraham answered:

*The LORD God of heaven, which took me from my father's house, and from the land of my kindred, and which spake unto me, and that sware unto me, saying, Unto thy seed will I give this land; he shall send his angel before thee, and thou shalt take a wife unto my son from thence. If the woman will not be willing to follow thee, then thou shalt be clear from this my oath.*

Genesis 4:6-8

What else could Abraham say? Isaac did not want a wife he had to keep tied up all the time. He didn't want a woman who resented being with him and

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who would rather be somewhere else doing something else with someone else.

The fact that Eliezer asked the question shows that he was aware that the woman he chose might be too involved in the affairs of her own country and kindred and might refuse to follow him back to his land. That was a definite possibility. Women, after all, have a mind of their own—just as men do. She could choose not to go, for some reason.

This is the challenge we are facing in the Church today. We have lived in blessing and prosperity so long that many people are getting far too comfortable down here. They don't want to think of Heaven or eternity. They like what they have. Many have become so attached to the world they don't want to leave it.

Preachers like it so well here that some of them are beginning to preach that the Church will go part way through the Great Tribulation, while others are preaching that the Church will stay through the entire Tribulation period. Others believe that we will never leave here, that we are establishing God's righteous Kingdom right here on earth and that things will now get better and better.

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Some Pentecostals have built such a large kingdom on this earth that the thought of leaving it all behind is a painful one for them.

And what can God say to all this? He cannot force us to live with Him if we don't want to. If we want to stay behind, He will let us stay.

Personally, I have noticed that when people insist on these doctrines of staying behind during the great wedding celebration in Heaven, the anointing lifts from their lives. This wedding is important to God. He has prepared for it for a very long time. To reject His invitation is a great insult. He can't force us to attend or to participate. And, if we choose not to go, the Holy Ghost is relieved of all responsibility. It is a personal decision.

Twice Abraham told Eliezer that whatever he did he was not to take Isaac back to the land.

*And Abraham said unto him, Beware thou that thou bring not my son thither again.*

Genesis 24:6

*And if the woman will not be willing to follow thee, then thou shalt be clear from this my oath: only bring not my son thither again.* Genesis 24:8

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Even if the woman would not come to him, Isaac could not go back to that land. He would find a willing mate elsewhere or simply do without. He could not compromise on this point.

When I prayed about that, God showed me why He felt so strongly about it. He told me:

“I sent My Son to earth once, and He was despised and rejected of men. They laughed at Him, mocked Him and tormented Him.

*He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not.*                      Isaiah 53:3

“Men refused the message My Son came to bring. They even stoned Him.

*He came unto his own and his own received him not.*    John 1:11

“At the end of Jesus’ time on earth, men mocked Him, blindfolding Him and slapping His face to see if He could discern who had done it. They stripped

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Him of His garments, plaited a crown of thorns and put it on His head. They nailed Him to that cruel cross. They pierced His side. Naked and alone, He hung there before them, as they passed by scoffing:

*If thou be the son of God come down from the cross.* Matthew 27:40

“Don’t expect My Son to return to the earth for His Bride. This earth is not worthy of Him. His Bride will come to Him or He will choose another.”

The Father is saying even now to the Holy Ghost, “Do not take My Son again to earth. Those who desire to spend eternity with Him must come up to His world.” And not everyone is willing or ready to do that.

We cannot become the Bride of Christ and insist on living here on this earth. We must leave here and join Him in Heaven. He will not stoop to our level. We must rise to meet Him or we cannot be part of His Bride.

If you don’t want to leave here, just make yourself as comfortable as possible and stay right where you are. But please excuse the rest of us; we have a higher

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calling. We long to be united with the Bridegroom. We are determined not to be sidetracked by any of the new doctrines floating around us and consider them to be just a trick to turn our attention away from our most important task—preparations for the wedding.

As Eve was to be Adam's bride, and God took her from his body, so the Bride of Christ will come forth from the Body of Christ.

*So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.*                      Genesis 1:27

Adam called this creature *Woman* because she was taken out of man.

*This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh. She shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of man.*                      Genesis 2:23

Inside of Adam there was an Eve, and inside of the Body of Christ is His Bride. Just as out of the side of Adam, blood must have poured when God put him to sleep and brought forth Eve (the Scriptures do not

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say this, but we must assume it), so blood flowed out of the side of Jesus when He was pierced by the sword. It is the blood that washes and redeems the lives of men and women that they might become His Bride. As Eve was the bride Adam needed, you and I have the privilege of forming the Bride Jesus has been patiently waiting for all this time.

Not every believer will be part of the Bride of Christ. Not everyone wants to be, not every is believing to be, and not everyone is preparing to be. In the following chapters, we want to examine some of the prerequisites necessary for participation in *The Bride*, as we see her getting herself ready for her marriage to the Lamb.



## CHAPTER 6

# **She Is a Pure Bride**

*And the damsel was very fair to look upon, a virgin, neither had any man known her.*

Genesis 24:16

Eliezer set out on his journey back to the land from which Abraham had come, taking with him other servants and camels laden with gifts. We know nothing of the details of his journey, but we know that when he arrived at his destination, the first place he stopped was the local well. When he reached the well, it seems, he was expecting something to happen. He was expecting to meet someone, and he prayed that he might meet just the right person.

*Let it come to pass, that the damsel to whom I shall say, Let down thy pitcher, I pray thee, that I may drink; and she shall say, Drink, and I will give thy camels drink also: let the same be she that thou hast appointed to thy servant*



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*Isaac; and thereby shall I know that thou hast shewed kindness unto my master.*

Genesis 24:14

It's interesting to me that Eliezer went to the well to look for a bride. Jesus often spoke of the water as representing life. He said to those who attended the feast in Jerusalem, *"If any man thirst, let him come to me, and drink"* (John 7:37). He is looking for those who frequent the well, and those who make up the Bride will always be thirsty for more. They will always be found sitting at His feet, seeking more of the living water that only He can supply.

Before Eliezer even finished his prayer, a damsel appeared. She was fair to look upon and a virgin. The Bride of Jesus Christ will be radiant, having the glory of the presence of the Lord shining from her face, and she will be a virgin.

Virginity is a symbol of purity, and God is looking for a pure, wholesome, righteous people. Not every "Ahab and Jezebel" who profess to be Christians and to be born again will be part of the Bride of Jesus Christ. This Bride will be made up of a select group, and the closer we get to Heaven the more selective the process will become.

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In the book of Esther, we find a description of the purification process through which such a bride would pass. It was very stringent.

*Now when every maid's turn was come to go in to king Ahasuerus, after that she had been twelve months, according to the manner of the women, (for so were the days of purifications accomplished, to wit, six months with oil of myrrh, and six months with sweet odours, and with other things for the purifying of the women;) then thus came every maiden unto the king; whatsoever she desired was given her to go with her out of the house of the women unto the king's house. In the evening she went, and on the morrow she returned into the second house of the women, to the custody of Shaashgaz, the king's chamberlain, which kept the concubines: she came in unto the king no more, except the king delighted in her, and that she were called by name.*

Esther 2:12-14

Esther had prepared well and found favor in the king's sight.

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*Now when the turn of Esther, the daughter of Abihail the uncle of Mordecai, who had taken her for his daughter, was come to go in unto the king, she required nothing but what Hegai the king's chamberlain, the keeper of the women, appointed. And Esther obtained favour in the sight of all them that looked upon her.*

*And the king loved Esther above all the women, and she obtained grace and favour in his sight more than all the virgins; so that he set the royal crown upon her head, and made her queen instead of Vashti.* Esther 2:15 and 17

Esther could have had anything she needed or desired to make her more appealing to the king, but she listened to the wise counsel of Hegai (a type of the Holy Ghost) and followed all of his suggestions, and she not only pleased the king and was selected queen above all the other virgins, but she also “*obtained favour in the sight of all them that looked upon her.*”

There is a process of purification that we must go through in these days to get ready for our Heavenly Bridegroom. Therefore, we must listen carefully to the counsel of the Holy Ghost, for He knows just

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what is needed to make us ready to appear before our Lord.

In these days, just before the coming of the Lord, the Philadelphia Church, made up of those who have kept the Word of God and have not denied His name (see Revelation 3:8), is in the world alongside the Laodicean Church. The Laodiceans, as revealed to John in his Revelation, were those who say, *“I am rich, and increased in goods, and have need of nothing”* (Revelation 3:17). But the Lord said to them, *“Thou knowest not that thou art wretched and miserable, and poor and blind and naked. I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see”* (Revelation 3:17-18).

Sometimes the Laodicean Church is more visible than the Philadelphia Church. But, to the Church of Philadelphia, God said, *“Behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength”* (Revelation 3:8). God will strengthen those who are still trying to maintain their standards of righteousness and are holding on to the light that He has given them. He will provide all that they need, for He holds the key to every closed door. He can

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open what no other can open. All that He demands of us is a pure heart.

The Laodiceans, He said, were “*neither cold nor hot*” (Revelation 3:15). He is looking for a people passionately in love with Him and willing to do whatever is necessary to please Him.

This is a narrow way, but it is the way that God has chosen. He has said that we will be without spot or wrinkle. Someone has said that you get spots on your clothing when you get careless, and you get wrinkles in your clothing because you are sitting down too long. God wants a people who are not only up and busy, but who are also careful to do His will.

We never have any trouble discerning who the bride is at a wedding. She is distinctive. She stands out among the crowd. She is unmistakable. The reason she is so easy to detect is that she has the appearance of a bride. She is dressed like a bride. She is adorned like a bride. She has prepared herself for the wedding.

There is a proper appearance for a bride. There is a proper way for a bride to conduct herself. There is a proper way for a bride to speak. When we start acting like the Bride, people will notice. Because we are different, we may suffer the insults of men

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down here, but we know that a glorious heavenly city awaits us.

The Church must be without spot or wrinkle, and the Bride must be holy and without blemish. There is a price to pay, and there are sacrifices to be made to attain to this position. Not many are willing to pay that price and, sad to say, many more have never heard that it is necessary.

Let us stir ourselves and prepare for the marriage of the Lamb, as *The Bride*.





## CHAPTER 7

# **She Is a Working Bride**

*And she said, Drink, my lord: and she hasted, and let down her pitcher upon her hand, and gave him drink.*

*And when she had done giving him drink, she said, I will draw water for thy camels also, until they have done drinking. And she hasted, and emptied her pitcher into the trough, and ran again unto the well to draw water, and drew for all his camels.*                      Genesis 24:18-20

When Eliezer asked the woman for water, her response was surprising: “*I will draw water for thy camels, also, until they have done drinking.*” Then, she *hasted* and *ran* to draw the water he needed. Eliezer immediately recognized a woman who was willing to do more than was required of her, more than her fair share of work.

I don't know exactly how much one camel can drink, but once, when we were visiting Bethany,



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someone gave a camel forty-three ten-ounce bottles of Pepsi Cola near the Tomb of Lazarus, and he drank them all down, one right after the other. I am told that camels can drink many gallons of water at a time and that they can then cross vast desert stretches without the need for additional water. Whatever the case, Eliezer had ten thirsty camels in his caravan, and drawing water for ten camels is a big task.

But Rebekah didn't ask, "How long will this take me? How much can these camels drink?" She made no stipulations or requirements of Eliezer. "I will do it," she said. That was all. And she ran to get started .

Rebekah didn't have a pump that day. She had to bring up all that water by hand. But she didn't mind the heat of the day or the time it took. She offered no complaint at all.

No doubt Rebekah had maids whom she could have called to do the work for her, but she chose to do it herself. She enjoyed working. That blesses me. We need some Rebekahs in the Church today. Too many of our people are willing to sit back and let someone else do all the work. Too many are constantly shifting responsibility away from themselves.

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It seems that some will do anything to get out of working for God. They work hard to avoid work. My, what they are missing!

While it is true that our salvation is not by works (see Titus 3:5), it is also true that God is looking for a people who are willing to work for Him, a people who count it a joy to do His bidding and who volunteer for the hard tasks. If you love God, you can't sit back and do nothing. Jesus said:

*If ye love me, keep my commandments.*

John 14:15

*If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.*

John 14:23

*Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.*

John 15:16

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Our love is revealed by doing something, by keeping God's commandments, by working for Him. James made it very clear.

*Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works. Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble. But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead? James 2:17-20*

If you really love Jesus, you will get excited about Him and start doing something for Him. Those who love Him are out in the highways and byways of life, reaching out to those for whom Christ died. And, for them, it is never too late, never too hot or too cold, and never too far. They delight in giving of themselves for the Lord's sake.

Those who don't care to do God's work are in trouble with Him. Jesus said:

*And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not*

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*forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into  
the fire.* Matthew 3:10

There are many who love to be seen, so they are ready to accept the “pulpit” ministries. But God has called us to work wherever He needs us at the moment. Find your assigned place in the vineyard and start reaping.

We are also instructed of the Lord to pray for more laborers.

*Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that  
he will send forth labourers into his harvest.*

Matthew 9:38

But many are praying for others to do something, when they need to roll up their sleeves and do it themselves. If you want to be part of what God is doing in these last days, you must lose your fear of getting your hands dirty, and you must get out into the field and work.

Someone said jokingly, “Everyone in the church is willing. Ten per cent of the people are willing to work, and ninety per cent of the people are willing to sit back and let them do it.” It’s sad but true.

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That is not the kind of willingness God is looking for. He wants those to whom work is their daily bread. They would rather work than eat.

To each of the churches of Revelation, Jesus said:

*I know thy works ... .*

Revelation 2:2, 9, 13, 19, 3:1, 8 and 15

You cannot possibly please God if you are not living a life full of good works. And although salvation is not dependent upon our works, a life void of good works is not a life that glorifies Christ, in any sense of the word.

Jesus was a soul-winner, and He expects each of us to be soul-winners. Some can win the lost by ones and twos, and others can win the lost by the hundreds and thousands. The numbers are not the most important thing. God is looking for willingness and obedience. The rest is up to Him.

Get busy for God. Start telling others around you what God is doing. Help to spread the Good News of the Gospel.

Rebekah's willingness to work was a sign to Eliezer, and your willingness to work will go far to signify to God that you are serious about His will for your life.

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Think of the blessing Rebekah would have missed if she had not gone to the well for herself that day. Many will miss the blessing of being in the Bride because they are not found faithful in the work God has called them to do. She is a working bride.

Rebekah put the need of this stranger and even of his animals ahead of her own comfort. Some are willing to work for certain people, but not for others. Jesus said:

*And the King shall answer and say unto them,  
Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done  
it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye  
have done it unto me.*                      Matthew 25:40

The Bride of Christ will be made up of people who think of themselves last and are willing to do whatever task the Lord assigns to them, in whatever part of the field, and to work with those whom God chooses.

Much of what I know about work I learned from my father. He was a worker. He rose early every morning and went to bed late every night and kept busy for God in between.

Some people work for God when they are young. Then, later in life, they lose that desire. But Dad

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never lost his desire to work. He was still working the day he died. He was ready to put his hand to the labor wherever he found something to do for the Kingdom, and he taught us to do the same.

After I had joined him in the ministry, we would work all day improving the camp facilities and then travel long distances at night to services to minister. We arrived home very late at night (past midnight was not unusual), and then we would get up early the next morning and start again—and think nothing of it. That was our life.

Dad was always looking for young men and women who could help him pastor the various churches he and my mother had founded, but he had a hard time finding people who would put their whole heart into the work as he was accustomed to doing. He had a test for anyone who came around looking for a job to determine if he or she was suited for it. He would suggest that they preach at our church at Callao, Virginia. It was an hour and a half away by car.

Some young preacher would take him up on it and would get very excited and seem very eager to get started, but invariably they were impressed by the long car ride home after church each night. At that time of the night, nothing was open. There

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was no place to stop for ice cream, no place to get a Coca Cola. Not even a gas station stayed open that late in those days.

“Do you have to drive this every night?” they would ask. “This is a long ride.” And after they got home to our place, they still had half an hour drive to their own home (since most of them were from the Richmond, Virginia area), and that bothered them.

What they didn’t know was that my father was looking for faithful workers. He might have turned the church over to them. But when they complained about the long ride and the long hours, he quickly struck them off his list of possible candidates for the ministry. He needed willing workers.

On one of my trips to Australia, I preached 28 times in 17 days. And I wouldn’t have it any other way. That’s the life we learned from my father, and I believe that is one of the most important qualities God is looking for in His people today. If anything will keep you out of the Bride, it is laziness.

There is much to be done. Let us be about our Father’s business. God has not called us to take life easy. He has not called us to slack off in our commitment. He has called us to chase the devil out of situations and set men and women free.



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Our works will be tried by fire.

*Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. 1 Corinthians 3:12-13*

We will be judged by our works, and our rewards will be according to our works.

*And all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you ACCORDING TO YOUR WORKS.*

Revelation 2:23, Emphasis Mine

In the natural, we give the most difficult jobs to our best workers. It is not because we want to overload them. It is because we know they will do a good job for us. I believe that the Lord gives His choice positions to those who display their willingness to work for Him whenever and wherever.

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When we love the Lord, we are not motivated by crowds, by the applause of men, or by thoughts of monetary reward, but by His will for our lives. You may not be a dynamic preacher or a greatly talented person in the natural, but if you will place yourself in the hands of God, He will surely use you. He is even now searching for willing workers.

The reason many of our camp people travel so much around the world preaching is that they are such great workers. God rewards faithful workers. It is a key element to being part of *The Bride* and preparing to participate in the marriage of the Lamb.





## CHAPTER 8

### **She Is a Gifted Bride**

*And it came to pass, as the camels had done drinking, that the man took a golden earring of half a shekel weight, and two Bracelets for her hands of ten shekels weight of gold; and said, Whose daughter art thou? tell me, I pray thee: is there room in thy father's house for us to lodge in?*

*And she said unto him, I am the daughter of Bethuel the son of Milcah, which she bare unto Nahor. She said moreover unto him, We have both straw and provender enough, and room to lodge in. And the damsel ran, and told them of her mother's house these things.*

*And Rebekah had a brother, and his name was Laban: and Laban ran out unto the man, unto the well. And it came to pass, when he saw the earring and bracelets upon his sister's hands, and when he heard the words of Rebekah his sister, saying, Thus spake the man unto me; that*

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*he came unto the man; and, behold, he stood by the camels at the well. And he said, Come in, thou blessed of the LORD; wherefore standest thou without? for I have prepared the house, and room for the camels.*

*And the man came into the house: and he ungirded his camels, and gave straw and provender for the camels, and water to wash his feet, and the men's feet that were with him.*

Genesis 24:22-32

After Rebekah had watered the camels, Eliezer began to talk with her in greater detail. When she told him of her family, he became excited because this was the family of Abraham, the family he had come so far in search of. The bride could not come from any other source. She must be part of this group, and he had found it.

Immediately, Eliezer began to give Rebekah gifts. He had come laden down with good things. No commitment had been made yet, the wedding had not yet taken place, the vows had not yet been spoken, the two had not been lawfully joined, yet Eliezer had good things to share with the prospective bride.

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He didn't give all that he had, but reserved some for a future time. His gifts to her were many, and he still had plenty left over.

God has placed His gifts in the Church today as a token of what is to come. The nine gifts of the Spirit are His love gifts to the Bride, and we should be excited about them. We should appreciate them. We should display them and put them to work. These gifts reflect on the Giver. They are the Grooms preliminary gifts to His Bride and speak of His greatness, His goodness, His kindness, and His generosity.

When Laban saw the gifts, he got excited too. And that is an important point. We must be faithful to declare the goodness of God in our lives, to allow men and women to see the richness of the gifts from our Heavenly Bridegroom. When the gifts of the Holy Ghost flow in us, it brings excitement to the lives of other people and draws them to the feet of Jesus. Rebekah ran home excitedly and showed her gifts to everyone, and we should do the same.

She showed the gifts, not as a means of drawing attention to herself, but to glorify and honor her benefactor. The gifts of the Spirit are never used to draw attention to us as individuals. They should

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always bring glory and honor to Jesus. The gifts that others see in you should make them desire what you have.

Your liberty will provoke a desire in others to be free. Your anointing will provoke others to seek an anointing. Your power will provoke others to seek the power of God. Your wisdom will stir others to call upon the Source of all wisdom. His gifts will speak of His goodness.

Can you imagine Rebekah refusing the gifts that were offered to her? I can't imagine it. Yet, many people who call themselves Christians reject the miraculous gifts of God, feeling that having such gifts demeans them, lowers their standard, or ruins their reputation. What an insult to our Lord! How can those who reject the gifts offered to us by our Heavenly Bridegroom still expect to be part of His Bride?

Let none of us be guilty of either refusing to accept God's gifts or of not showing them willingly and joyfully to others. While we have sat back in fear and trembling, afraid to exercise the miraculous gifts of the Spirit, the devil has developed counterfeits and is using them to lull the world to sleep in his bosom. Clairvoyance, mental telepathy, hypnosis,

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palm-reading, the flood of psychics that have hit America in recent years, and all the rest of it are just poor substitutes, poor imitations of the good things God has placed within our hands.

Why should we sit back and allow the enemy to use these imitations to deceive the nations? God has placed power in our hand, power in our voices, power in our spirits. Let us rise up and use that power to the glory of God and to the furtherance of His Kingdom. Get busy showing your gifts.

These gifts were not just for anyone. They were not just for any family. They were not just for any maiden. They were destined expressly for the one who would be found worthy of becoming the bride of Abraham's son.

When Eliezer had presented his gifts, he asked Rebekah if he might accompany her to her home. He must see that her home life was acceptable, that she was what she appeared to be.

When her answer was affirmative—*“There's room for you and your animals as well”*—Eliezer was overcome with thanksgiving to God and bowed down to worship. He was happy to have been led directly to what he believed was the right woman, he was happy that she was a pure bride, he was happy that



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she was a working bride, and he was even more happy that she was not ashamed or afraid to take him home with her. That was very meaningful.

First, it showed that Rebekah had nothing to hide, nothing at home to be ashamed of. Many Christians live a double life. They are one type of person in church and another, very different, type of person at home. They have their religious life, their family life and their business life, and they keep them all separate. But we simply can't afford to do that. Our spiritual life must affect everything we do, and the Holy Ghost must be welcome in every part of our lives.

Some people want the Holy Ghost as long as they are in church, but when they go out the door they want to hang Him up like they hang up their choir robe and then put Him back on the next time they come to church. He has no room in their house, in their business, or in their private life. We cannot expect the Holy Ghost to wait for us in the church until next Sunday, so that we can pick up where we left off last week. It is time to stop playing church and to make the Holy Ghost part of everything that we do.

The Bride of Christ will be made up of those who take the Holy Ghost with them anywhere and every-

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where. His Bride desires the presence of her Lord, and if there are places He is not welcome, she does not go there either.

A popular singer in Australia professes to be Spirit-filled. He made a public statement that "Jesus will go with you wherever you go, but some of the places I go I would rather He didn't go with me." Then he said, "After I leave some of the places I perform, I am not sure He is still with me, and I have to search for Him anew." What a dangerous way to live! One of these days, when we are not sure that God is with us (because something we have done has separated us from Him, however temporarily), the trumpet may sound, and it will be too late to seek Him.

A good rule for all of us to follow is this: if the Spirit of God is not welcome in a place, stay away from that place. No good can come of your being there. Take God's Spirit with you everywhere you go or stay home. The presence of God the Holy Spirit is not just for the church. It is for the office, for the school, for the factory, and for the home. Don't go anywhere where you cannot let your light shine. If Jesus is not welcome in a place, then you are not welcome in that place either. If Jesus is not wanted there, then you are also not wanted there.

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If you are living as you should for God, your unsaved relatives may not be happy to see you. They may feel very uncomfortable in your presence. They may not like you talking about the real meaning of Christmas. You might interrupt their eggnog party. They might have to hide their bottles.

If you have been ashamed of your experience and have not let your light shine for Jesus, the unsaved may let you sit there and think nothing of it. They will let you inhale their smoke and listen to their filthy talk, and they will even pass the bottle your way. If you are ashamed of what you have, you can sit in their presence, inhaling their smoke and listening to their smutty conversations, and think nothing of it. Those of us who love Jesus can't do that.

One Sunday after church I went to visit a sinner family. When I entered the house the family was gathered around the kitchen table finishing up their Sunday meal. I noticed some wine glasses but didn't think anything of it because that is what sinners do.

But as I was standing, talking to them, the father's foot accidentally kicked a bottle that was on the floor under the table and it rolled out into plain view. They were very embarrassed when I saw it,

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and I thank God that they were embarrassed. Thank God my testimony meant something to that family. Thank God they respected my stand enough to take the liquor bottle off the table and put it on the floor to hide them.

*"Let your light so shine."* Never be ashamed of Jesus. I don't mean that you have to preach to everyone you meet. You don't have to cram religion down everyone's throat. Sometimes, at Christmas time, for instance, sinners are expecting us to preach to them and they dread seeing us. But you can talk about other things and still let the love of God shine forth through you, so much that when you get ready to go, the sinners will grab your hat and coat and help you out the door. Your very presence makes them miserable. Don't be offended by that. That's the way it should be. Thank God for His presence in your life.

Welcome the Holy Ghost into your home. Make provision for the things of God in your life. Make room for Jesus in your inn. The greatest treasure you have in your life outside of your salvation is the Holy Ghost. Treasure it. Guard it. Know its value, and don't let it slip away from you, whatever you do.

David knew this truth. He prayed:

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*Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy spirit from me.*      Psalm 51:11

The Holy Spirit is easily grieved.

*And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.*

Ephesians 4:30

The Holy Spirit is also easy to be entreated.

*But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.*      James 3:17

Let us welcome God's Spirit into our midst and make sure that He is welcome everywhere we go.

In 1973, when Mother and I first visited the church of Paul Yonggi Cho in Seoul, South Korea, we saw why it had become the largest church in the world (now with more than 600,000 members). At the beginning of the service he asked everyone to stand and said, "Let us now welcome the presence of the Holy Spirit." The church

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that welcomes the Holy Spirit can't help but be blessed.

The Spirit of God is only waiting for our invitation, and His presence makes all the difference.

Rebekah's act of welcoming Eliezer to her home was also important because it showed that she was an accommodating and hospitable person. She was the type that would not have allowed Eliezer to stay in some local inn. She insisted that he come with her. There was plenty, she said, for him, his party, and his animals. And she was willing to share it. So, Eliezer went home with her.

Let the Holy Ghost dwell with you and in you, preparing you to be part of *The Bride* on that great day.





## CHAPTER 9

# **She Is a Spirit-Filled Bride**

*Be ye not unequally yoked together... .*

2 Corinthians 6:14

I am aware that this verse refers to being unequally yoked together with unbelievers, but I am just as sure that it applies to marrying a person who is not filled with the Spirit. Being filled with the Spirit brings you into another world. It lifts you up onto a different level. And mixing Spirit-filled and non-Spirit-filled is like mixing day and night. Day is day, and night is night, and the two don't mix.

The command not to be unequally yoked in marriage was not just Paul's novel idea; it was from the Lord. He knew what was best for men and women. What, then, would we think of the Lord disobeying His own command? What would we think of Him not practicing what He preaches? He would never marry a bride who was not like Him. He is Spirit-filled, and His Bride must also be Spirit-filled.



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Since God took Eve from Adam, she was what Adam was, and since the Bride of Christ is taken from His Body, she is what He is. He is Spirit-filled, and His Bride will be Spirit-filled too.

When Abraham felt that it was time for Isaac to have a bride and decided to send someone in search of the proper woman, he was dead serious about the matter. First, he did not send just anyone on this mission. He chose his most faithful and trusted servant, Eliezer, a man who ruled over all that he had.

Secondly, Abraham made Eliezer swear an oath that he would carry out his orders to the letter. The woman must not be from among the Canaanites, the heathen, the unbelievers. She was to be of the same family. Isaac needed a compatible wife, a woman like himself.

*But thou shalt go unto my country, and to my kindred, and take a wife unto my son Isaac.*

Genesis 24:4

The Church is the family of God, and the Bride of Christ must come out of that Church. The Holy Ghost is assigned to search among the members of the Church to find those who will make up the Bride.

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Only those who have been filled with the Spirit will be considered.

Just because you have spoken in tongues is no guarantee that you will be part of the Bride of Christ. Some people accept speaking in tongues as the ultimate, the goal of their experience, not just a beginning of learning and growing. "Praise God," they say, "I got my tongue." And that's all they are interested in. But speaking in tongues is just the beginning of moving in the Holy Ghost. It is the key that unlocks to you many greater things in God.

If someone gave you the key to a \$100,000 home, would you stay outside and tell everyone, "Praise God, I got my key"? The key is important because you can't get in the house without it, but the key is not an end in itself. It only opens the house. And speaking in tongues is only a means to a greater goal God has set before us.

Speaking in tongues is the initial evidence that the Holy Ghost has come to live in us, but speaking in tongues is not the Holy Ghost. It is only the evidence of His presence.

Studies show that hundreds of millions of people have received the baptism of the Holy Ghost in recent years and spoken in tongues, but some speak a

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few words in tongues and are satisfied. They don't stay in the Spirit long enough to get the power and the access to God that comes with those tongues.

Speaking in tongues alone does not give you power to be witnesses for God. It is the Holy Ghost working in you that gives you power to be witnesses. Speaking in tongues alone does not give you power to heal the sick. The Holy Ghost working in you gives you power to heal the sick.

So, not everyone who speaks in tongues will become part of the Bride of Christ. Some people spoke in tongues five years ago and have never done it again. They have never contended for the power of the Holy Ghost, have never showed enthusiasm about their experience in the Lord, and have never become soul-winners. These people who have been unwilling to be unpopular and to pay a price for God have become little more than a statistic. They received and that was the end of it.

Being baptized in the Holy Ghost and speaking in tongues is no guarantee of entrance into the Bride. It is a good start, but in order to actually gain entrance into the Bride, there must be a willingness to surrender fully to the Lord, a complete dedication to His will for your life, and a sincere submission to the

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Spirit's work of perfecting and preparing the Bride.

One thing is for sure: we cannot point our fingers at the Holy Ghost and say that He has not been faithful. God the Father has given the Holy Ghost the responsibility of perfecting the Bride, and He is doing His work everywhere that men and women will yield to Him. He is sifting out the chaff from the wheat.

*For many are called, but few are chosen.*

Matthew 22:14

We are very conscious these days of avoiding discrimination, of opening everything to everybody of not limiting the rights of anyone. But God does not hesitate to make membership in the Bride of Christ exclusive. He has opened it to everyone, but not everyone will meet the standards and requirements. His Bride must be Spirit-filled. Let Him fill you today and get you ready to be part of *The Bride*.



**PART III**

**THE WORK OF THE  
HOLY GHOST IN  
SELECTING AND  
PREPARING A BRIDE**

*And there was set meat before him to eat: but he said, I will not eat, until I have told mine errand.*

*And he said, Speak on.*

*And he said, I am Abraham's servant. And the LORD hath blessed my master greatly; and he is become great: and he hath given him flocks, and herds, and silver, and gold, and menservants, and maidservants, and camels, and asses.*

*And Sarah my master's wife bare a son to my master when she was old: and unto him hath he given all that he hath.*

*And my master made me swear, saying, Thou shalt not take a wife to my son of the daughters of the Canaanites, in whose land I dwell: but thou shalt go unto my father's house, and to my kindred, and take a wife unto my son.*

*And I said unto my master, Peradventure the woman will not follow me.*

*And he said unto me, The LORD, before whom I walk, will send his angel with thee, and prosper thy way; and thou shalt take a wife for my son of my kindred, and of my father's house: then shalt thou be clear from this my oath, when thou comest to my kindred; and if they give not thee one, thou shalt be clear from my oath.*

*And I came this day unto the well, and said, O LORD God of my master Abraham, if now thou do prosper my way which I go: behold, I stand by the well of water; and it shall come to pass, that when the virgin cometh forth*

*to draw water, and I say to her, Give me, I pray thee, a little water of thy pitcher to drink; and she say to me, Both drink thou, and I will also draw for thy camels: let the same be the woman whom the LORD hath appointed out for my master's son.*

*And before I had done speaking in mine heart, behold, Rebekah came forth with her pitcher on her shoulder; and she went down unto the well, and drew water: and I said unto her, Let me drink, I pray thee.*

*And she made haste, and let down her pitcher from her shoulder, and said, Drink, and I will give thy camels drink also: so I drank, and she made the camels drink also.*

*And I asked her, and said, Whose daughter art thou?*

*And she said, the daughter of Bethuel, Nahor's son, whom Milcah bare unto him: and I put the earring upon her face, and the bracelets upon her hands. And I bowed down my head, and worshipped the LORD, and blessed the LORD God of my master Abraham, which had led me in the right way to take my master's brother's daughter unto his son. And now if ye will deal kindly and truly with my master, tell me: and if not, tell me; that I may turn to the right hand, or to the left.*

*Then Laban and Bethuel answered and said, The thing proceedeth from the LORD: we cannot speak unto thee bad or good. Behold, Rebekah is before thee, take her, and go,*



*and let her be thy master's son's wife, as the LORD hath spoken.*

*And it came to pass, that, when Abraham's servant heard their words, he worshipped the LORD, bowing himself to the earth. And the servant brought forth jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment, and gave them to Rebekah: he gave also to her brother and to her mother precious things. And they did eat and drink, he and the men that were with him, and tarried all night; and they rose up in the morning, and he said, Send me away unto my master. And her brother and her mother said, Let the damsel abide with us a few days, at the least ten; after that she shall go. And he said unto them, Hinder me not, seeing the LORD hath prospered my way; send me away that I may go to my master.*

*And they said, We will call the damsel, and enquire at her mouth. And they called Rebekah, and said unto her, Wilt thou go with this man? And she said, I will go.*

*And they sent away Rebekah their sister, and her nurse, and Abraham's servant, and his men. And they blessed Rebekah, and said unto her, Thou art our sister, be thou the mother of thousands of millions, and let thy seed possess the gate of those which hate them.*

—Genesis 24:33-60



## CHAPTER 10

# **Eliezer Was Faithful To His Mission**

*And there was set meat before him to eat: but he said, I will not eat, until I have told mine errand. And he said, Speak on. Genesis 24:33*

The Holy Ghost has so many responsibilities that it is difficult to single out one of them as *the* responsibility, or even *the greatest* responsibility of the Holy Ghost. This is the dispensation of the Spirit of God, and He is the Vicar of God upon the earth. Everything that God does He does through the Holy Ghost.

It is the Holy Ghost that convicts sinners of their need of Christ. It is the Holy Ghost that draws men to Christ and works in them the redemptive miracle of new birth. It is the Holy Ghost who is the Giver of all spiritual understanding. It is the Holy Ghost who endues the servants of God with power and

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authority. It is the Holy Ghost who unites believers in one Body. It is the Holy Ghost who sanctifies us. It is the Holy Ghost who distributes the spiritual gifts. It is the Holy Ghost who directs us in all that we do.

But I think I am on solid ground in saying that the most important work of the Holy Ghost during the past two thousand years has been to prepare a suitable Bride for Christ. He has been faithful to that work so that none can find fault with Him.

It is easy to see the failure of individual men and women. It is easy to see the failure of the institutional church. It is easy to see the failure of Christian leadership, but none can point a finger at the Holy Ghost. He has been faithful to His responsibility.

Like Eliezer, the Holy Ghost is not easily sidetracked, not easily discouraged, and does not easily relinquish victory. He presses on with His most urgent task. Eliezer refused to do anything else until he had fulfilled His mission.

Eliezer could not even eat before he had made clear his mission. This is so significant because, in much of the world (including the Middle East), the polite thing to do is to leave all business until after you have eaten. But this matter was too important. It couldn't wait for niceties and politeness. It had to

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be settled. Eliezer had to have an answer. Then he could eat.

The Holy Ghost is asking the Church today, “Will you get busy producing a Bride for me to take home to My Master’s Son or will I have to turn from you and look elsewhere?” This is an urgent question that demands an urgent answer.

The Bible shows us that Eliezer declared all. He told who he was, who his master was, how his master had been blessed of God, about the miracle son, Isaac, and about the commission he had received from his master to find a suitable bride for Isaac. He told about his journey, about arriving at the well, what he prayed, and how his prayer was miraculously answered. He told how he had worshiped God when he learned that Rebekah was of the family he sought. He declared all. Jesus said:

*All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he [the Holy Ghost] shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you.*

John 16:15

Eliezer’s thoroughness in recounting the miracles of his mission led Rebekah’s family to respond:

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*The thing proceedeth from the LORD.*

Genesis 24:50

This is the response the Holy Ghost is seeking from us today, recognizing what it is that God is doing and responding favorably to His wooing.

Rebekah's family was moved to do the right thing by Eliezer's presentation. Without any further ado, they agreed to Rebekah's marriage to Isaac.

*Behold, Rebekah is before thee, take her, and go, and let her be thy master's son's wife, as the LORD hath spoken.*

Genesis 24:51

This response provoked another round of worship from Eliezer.

*And it came to pass, that, when Abraham's servant heard their words, he worshipped the LORD, bowing himself to the earth.*

Genesis 24:52

At this point, Eliezer opened the treasures he had brought and began another round of gift-giving. This time he had gifts for the whole family. When

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the Bride of Christ is adorned with the gifts the Holy Ghost has given her, all those around her will be blessed.

*And the servant brought forth jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment, and gave them to Rebekah: he gave also to her brother and to her mother precious things. Genesis 24:53*

Our Father never runs out of gifts for us. He has an endless storehouse of treasures which He delights in bestowing upon those who love Him.

It is impossible to say too much about the faithfulness of the Holy Ghost. When everything is said and done, when the last trumpet has sounded and when men and women have made their final decisions about eternity, none will be able to point a finger at the Holy Ghost and say that He failed in His mission. He has been totally faithful to that mission, He has declared all, and He has been more than generous with the whole family. Praise God for the faithfulness of the Holy Ghost in preparing us to be part of *The Bride!*





## CHAPTER 11

# **Eliezer Imparted a Sense of Urgency**

*And they did eat and drink, he and the men that were with him, and tarried all night; and they rose up in the morning, and he said, Send me away unto my master.*

*And her brother and her mother said, Let the damsel abide with us a few days, at the least ten; after that she shall go.*

*And he said unto them, Hinder me not, seeing the LORD hath prospered my way; send me away that I may go to my master. Genesis 24:54-56*

Everything that had happened that first day came suddenly and unexpectedly to Rebekah and her family. It might be reasonable to think that they were entitled to some time to catch their breath, some time to think things over, some time to weigh all the pros and cons. But it was not to be.



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When Eliezer appeared the next morning, he felt a sense of urgency to depart immediately. He had a mission to perform. He had a work to be accomplished. There was no time to be wasted.

Eliezer had traveled a long distance and could have been forgiven if he had taken advantage of the opportunity to rest and recover his strength. But he did not. He could not relax. He could not wait for another day. His mission was too urgent. He must leave now.

I understand just how Eliezer felt. For some years now I have been feeling a great sense of urgency in my spirit, an urgency that will not let me rest. The hour is late, and the consequences of our actions (or our inaction, whatever the case) are great. We must do all that we can while there is time.

I am sure that many of you who are reading these pages will be able to identify with this sense of urgency because you are feeling it too. The Spirit of God is stirring something inside of us that causes us not to sit too long in one place. It causes us to cancel vacations and other personal plans and to do unusual things. It causes us to rise up in the night, pack our bags, and rush off to some unknown corner of the world. The time is short. The Bride must be ready.

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The trumpet will soon sound, announcing the coming of the Bride Groom for His Bride.

The urgency of the Holy Ghost pulls our attention ever heavenward. While the world struggles to lure us aside into complacency, the Spirit of God will not permit it. He constantly urges us onward and upward.

The urgency which Eliezer felt was contagious. When Rebekah was called, her parents were startled to find that she felt the same urgency Eliezer did to depart immediately. They pleaded with her to be reasonable, to think of her family and her obligations to them. They pleaded for just a few more days, just a few more hours, just a few more moments. But she was adamant. She must depart now. The excitement she felt to see her bridegroom would not allow her to linger even for a little while. She just had to see him.

Nothing else mattered now. Everything else would have to wait. If her parents were offended, they would have to be offended. If her brother was angry, he would have to be angry. Nothing could be allowed to hinder her now. She had one desire and only one, to be with Isaac, her betrothed.

She had never seen the man, but something mystical had happened in her heart. The strangely

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warming presence of the servant, the news of God's favor upon the father, and the miracles that had brought her to this decision all reinforced her passion to see him. She had never seen him, but she loved him passionately nevertheless.

It could not have been easy for a young lady to think of leaving home, of traveling with a stranger and of facing marriage and all that it represented to a man she had never laid eyes on. It probably didn't make sense to anyone but Eliezer and Rebekah, but she was determined.

Some suggest that the urgency we feel is only a result of weariness from the battle and a desire to escape the darkness of this world. How wrong they are! We are not tired of living. We are not trying to escape some coming persecution. We are willing to face anything for Christ.

We feel that we must urgently depart because we have a longing to see Jesus. When we love Him, just the thought of being with Him, of looking upon His face, of speaking with Him face to face, draws us ever upward. We can never be totally comfortable down here. We are constantly homesick for Heaven. We long to fulfill our destiny, which is to be united with Him in eternity.

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And the truth is that Jesus is more anxious to receive us than we are to receive Him. He has, therefore, commissioned the Holy Ghost to place an urgency within us. Let us not suppress what we feel. This heavenward pull must not be denied.

When the trumpet sounds, the Holy Ghost will no longer be present in the earth as a saving agent. And, as a consequence, during the Tribulation period, no one will be filled with the Holy Ghost. The dispensation of the Spirit is quickly drawing to a close, and He is anxious to go home.

If we don't love Jesus, nothing can keep us from being drawn down into the mire of the world around us. Love for Him is the only force great enough to preserve us, great enough to lift us up to Him.

If you don't care whether or not you go, you won't go. There are many reasons to stay behind, many reasons to do something else. If you don't care whether you see Him or not, you won't see Him. If there is no love, no pull, no tug within your soul to see Him, you won't see Him. It's that simple.

He is coming for those who "*look for him.*"

*Unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.*

Hebrews 9:28

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When you have a desire to see Jesus, when there exists within you a longing for His presence, you will do whatever is necessary to lay aside the things that hinder you from being His Bride, and you will make yourself ready. If that longing is always fresh within you, you will keep getting ready until that day arrives. The Scriptures say:

*And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself even as he is pure.*

1 John 3:3

If you want to see Jesus, you will take advantage of every opportunity to lay aside the weights and sins that hold you back from going.

*Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us.*

Hebrews 12:1

Don't miss it. Be there. Rebekah was ready and eager to depart, for she, too, had a sense of

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urgency. I challenge you today to allow the Holy Ghost to place within your soul a new sense of urgency to prepare to be part of *The Bride*.





## CHAPTER 12

# **Eliezer Was a Perfect Gentleman**

*And they said, We will call the damsel, and inquire at her mouth. And they called Rebekah, and said unto her, Wilt thou go with this man? And she said, I will go.      Genesis 24:57-58*

The final decision had to rest with Rebekah. No one could force her to go. Eliezer could not take her captive. What type of bride would she have been if she had gone against her will? Isaac needed someone who loved him and wanted to be with him.

The revered tradition of the Middle East was for parents to make plans for their daughter's wedding or wait to see which male of the community would offer more for her. But this time was different. The parents were convinced that this thing was God's doing. They recognized that this was such an unusual case that they had to leave the final decision with Rebekah.



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Eliezer was ready to go, but it didn't depend on him. Rebekah had the last word.

She hadn't had much time to think this thing over. She had only met Eliezer the day before, but when her family called her to ask her what she would do, she replied simply, "*I will go.*"

I can just imagine the joy Eliezer felt at that moment. He had found a willing bride, and willingness is everything. Talent is wonderful, beauty is to be desired, but willingness is everything.

The forces of this world are consciously at work to cause the Bride of Christ to delay or cancel her departure. Every imaginable attraction is being presented, every conceivable excuse to lure her aside and cause her to miss that fateful day. But the Holy Ghost has a mission to fulfill, and He will not be easily denied. He is asking each of us, "Wilt thou go with this Man?"

The choice is ours. God has been preparing for us the most gala event imaginable and an eternity of joy with our Heavenly Bridegroom, but He cannot force us to go. Each of us must finally decide if we are willing to submit our future to a mysterious bridegroom from a strange land.

The Holy Ghost has been revealing the Lord to the Church. Many have heard the Gospel preached,

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the Good News about Him, and they have a desire to believe in Him. Until now, however, many are reluctant to make the dedication that would set them apart for Him, the decision that would separate them exclusively for His service.

As we get nearer to the time of our departure, our Bridegroom is revealing more and more about Himself to us and more and more about His home. The revelations being received these days about Heaven and the angels are all part of His effort to prepare us to meet Him.

Yet, until today, the Holy Ghost is a perfect gentleman, patiently awaiting our response to His question: "Wilt thou go with this Man?" Answer yes today to the wooing of the Spirit of God and prepare yourself to be part of *The Bride*.



## **PART IV**

# **WHAT'S NEXT?**

*And Rebekah arose, and her damsels, and they rode upon the camels, and followed the man: and the servant took Rebekah, and went his way.*

*And Isaac came from the way of the well Lahairoi; for he dwelt in the south country.*

*And Isaac went out to meditate in the field at the eventide: and he lifted up his eyes, and saw, and, behold, the camels were coming. And Rebekah lifted up her eyes, and when she saw Isaac, she lighted off the camel. For she had said unto the servant, What man is this that walketh in the field to meet us? And the servant had said, It is my master: therefore she took a vail, and covered herself.*

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

—Genesis 24:63



## CHAPTER 13

# Rebekah Arose

*And Rebekah arose, and her damsels, and they rode upon the camels, and followed the man: and the servant took Rebekah, and went his way.*

Genesis 24:61

*“Rebekah arose!”* What a powerful statement. It’s time, Church. We have a journey to make.

It was *“the camels”* that took Rebekah to her beloved, and those camels represent the Word of God. It is the Word that carries us to God’s blessings, and it is our love of the Word and our obedience to the Word that will prepare us to meet Him and be joined to Him. Just like the camels of Eliezer’s ancient caravan, the Word will carry us to the presence of God. It will get us to Heaven.

The journey that Rebekah had to undertake to get to her beloved had a purpose. She was so excited about meeting Isaac, so eager to be his, that it must have been agony for her to have to travel so far. As

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time passed and she did not see her bridegroom, she must have grown ever more anxious. But she also must have realized that she had a lot to do before reaching her destination and that she needed to “redeem the time.”

As the party moved along the desert trails (at camel pace), I believe that Rebekah and the ladies who accompanied her were busily preparing for the wedding. Everything had happened so suddenly! Now, they must hurry to have everything ready. The entire wedding party needed proper garments, and Eliezer had much to teach them all about the proper protocol and etiquette for the coming events.

We can't wait until the day of the wedding to start putting on our wedding garments. They might not fit and might need alteration. That has to be done in advance of the wedding. You can't risk being late to the main event.

It used to bother me when I had to go for a fitting before performing an important wedding. After all, I knew my shirt size and sleeve length. I knew the inseam measurement and the waist size of my pants. I knew what size shoes I wear. I didn't understand why I couldn't just give those measurements over

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the telephone and let the rental agency have clothes and shoes in my size waiting for me.

One day, when this came up again, I said to the agent, "I just don't have time to come all the way in there just to get measured. Give me a size 42 coat, with 36 inch waist on the pants and a 29 1/2 inch inseam. For the shirt, give me 16 1/2 neck with a 34 or 35 inch sleeve length. Give me size 10 1/2 shoes. And I'm done. What's wrong with that?"

"Listen," the man answered, a little exasperated. "If you are going to wear my tuxedo, you will be a walking advertisement for my rental agency. Which means that if you are going to wear my tuxedo, you are going to try it on and be sure everything fits. So, when can we expect you for the fitting?"

I grudgingly went in, and, sure enough, when I put the outfit on, it had to be altered a little so that it was just right. Can you imagine going into Heaven's Cathedral with baggy pants or tight-fitting shoes?

The ladies are more particular in this regard than most of us men. They take their dresses in a little here and let them out a little there, until they fit just right. They know that a wedding is much too important to be spoiled by the lack of a proper garment.



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Heavenly wedding garments are being given out now. Get ready!

A friend of ours who often speaks about the coming of the Lord was preaching many years ago in Pittsburgh, and every time he would refer to the coming of the Lord he would start shouting and dancing. He would eventually calm down, but if he began talking about the Second Coming again, his unusual behavior would begin all over again. A good German sister who was present went home that night rather puzzled about the matter. She said, "Lord, I know he's a good man, but why does he act like that when he talks about Your coming?" And the Lord gave her a wonderful revelation that I have never forgotten. He said, "These are the days in which the wedding garments are being given out." That's enough to make anyone get excited.

Get your wedding garment ready. The Bride, particularly, must be "*clothed in white linen, which is the righteousness of the saint.*" Praise God!

In these days, as we travel on our journey from Earth to Glory, the Holy Ghost is outfitting the wedding party, getting us all ready for Heaven, and He is teaching us the heavenly protocol. He is also dealing with our unseemly habits, gently nudging us this

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way and that, so that when we arrive, we might be pleasing to our Master. Jesus' approval and pleasure should be uppermost in each of our minds. We are preparing to spend eternity with Him, and we must learn what pleases Him.

So few words are used here to describe the journey that one might think that it was short or void of meaning. Nothing could be more misleading. Not only did Rebekah need to make sure that every member of the wedding party was properly outfitted and properly rehearsed, so as to know what was expected at the time of the wedding, she had to make elaborate preparations herself. As we have seen, a bride had to be ceremonially pure when her wedding day arrived.

If we think only of the hardships of the journey, if we consider only the arduous preparations that must be made, we might be discouraged. But when a young lady is preparing for her wedding, she thinks of the joys of married life with the one she loves. The preparations are many, time-consuming, and tiring at times, but she knows that it will all be worth it the day she finally stands with him at the altar and hears his vows of eternal love.

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Rebekah could not be expected to worry about how she would exist on the journey to meet Isaac. That was Eliezer's responsibility. He had to provide for her and her party, and he carried enough supplies with him to ensure her welfare.

In the same way, provision has been made for us. The Bride of Christ has begun a journey to the Kingdom of Her Bridegroom, and Jesus said:

*But seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.*

Matthew 6:33

When the Holy Ghost came into the Body on the Day of Pentecost, He encompassed "*all these things.*" And therefore we have nothing to fear. He will supply our every need on our journey.

Christ is ever mindful of the needs of His Bride and has commissioned the Holy Ghost to supply for us. He offers the gift of the word of wisdom for our guidance, the word of knowledge for our reassurance, faith to believe Him for all things, healing for our health, the working of miracles for any situation that might arise beyond our control, prophecy for our encouragement, discerning of spirits for our

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protection from enemies, divers kinds of tongues and interpretation of tongues that we might communicate with Him and He with us. We can say with David, *"I shall not want."*

When the Bride of Christ catches the vision of all that has been appropriated for her as Christ's chosen one, she becomes eager for the journey and doesn't even notice the sacrifices along the way. That is why Satan is trying to keep us blinded to the revelation of the heavenly things. He is constantly putting out in front of us his gaudy "things" in an effort to distract us. We must push him out of the way and continue following the Holy Ghost on our journey, for we can only behold the glory of our Lord if we keep our eye single to the final purpose for our lives. That purpose is to be united eternally with the Lamb. Let us arise and go.

As she journeyed, Rebekah was accompanied by her nurse and other *"damsels."* To me, these represent those who are saved and who will serve in some capacity at the wedding (as attendants, as maid of honor, as brides maids, as flower girls, as best man, as ring bearer, as musicians, as singers, as ushers and as guests), but they are not part of the Bride.

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I see nothing wrong in making these natural comparisons. Paul compared the natural man with the spiritual man.

*It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.*                      1 Corinthians 15:44

In the same manner, the heavenly Wedding may be compared with an earthly wedding. Just as there are attendants at the earthly wedding, there will be attendants at the heavenly wedding. The nurse that Rebekah took with her, then, is a type of those who will accompany the Bride but will not be part of the Bride. In any wedding, many participate, but there is only one bride. I believe that everyone who is saved and ready will go up in the Rapture, but I believe only a chosen few will be part of the Bride.

John's Gospel seems to confirm this when he speaks of "*the friend of the bridegroom*" (John 3:29).

We are saved when we "*believe on his name.*"

*But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name.*                      John 1:12

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Everyone who is saved and ready at the sound of the trumpet will rise. Some will be saved but not ready, and they will be left behind. The saved who are ready will rise when the trumpet sounds.

Those who are not looking for Jesus to return will be caught off guard. And many of them will be left behind to go through the Tribulation period to be refined and perfected. Only then will they be counted worthy to enter in.

Get ready to rise! Get ready to travel. Hold very lightly to the things of this world. The time is late. Our Heavenly Bridegroom is anxiously awaiting our coming.

Imagine, Rebekah was going to a land she knew nothing about. She knew only what Eliezer was able to tell her in that short period of time. But the nearer she got, the more she was able to feel the heartbeat of the waiting groom.

We know very little about Heaven, but we know it will be wonderful because Jesus will be there. And as the Bride approaches His land, she is sensing ever more strongly the heartbeat of her Lord.

When a man is courting a woman, he tells her some things about himself, but when he determines that she is the one who will be his bride, he tells her

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more and more about himself and about the place where he will be taking her to live. And so it is with the Lord. He is revealing more and more of Himself and of the heavenly home to those who are preparing themselves to spend eternity there with Him.

Hear His call today to get ready to be part of *The Bride*.



## CHAPTER 14

# The Wedding Day

*And Isaac came from the way of the well Lahairoi; for he dwelt in the south country. And Isaac went out to meditate in the field at the eventide: and he lifted up his eyes, and saw, and, behold, the camels were coming. And Rebekah lifted up her eyes, and when she saw Isaac, she lighted off the camel. For she had said unto the servant, What man is this that walketh in the field to meet us?*

*And the servant had said, It is my master: therefore she took a vail, and covered herself. And the servant told Isaac all things that he had done. And Isaac brought her into his mother Sarah's tent, and took Rebekah, and she became his wife; and he loved her: and Isaac was comforted after his mother's death.*                      Genesis 24:62-67

The closer the caravan came to Isaac's homeland the more excited Rebekah became, her eyes searching



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the road ahead for the appearance of her man. She could think of nothing else. Finally, late one evening, after a long day's travel, her constant observations were rewarded, for far ahead she spied the form of a man walking in the field, and something about the way the man constantly searched the horizon told her that it was her beloved, eagerly awaiting her arrival.

"Who is that man?" she asked Eliezer, knowing what the reply must surely be.

"Yes, that is my master," he replied.

And, with that, Rebekah was off of her camel and running through the fields toward Isaac.

In the same instant that she recognized him, Isaac saw her too and ran anxiously to meet her.

What a scene! No Hollywood producer could do it justice. Isaac's heart leaped within him as he set out running across the fields toward his bride, and tears of joy coursed down Rebekah's face as she ran into the arms of her groom. It was as if she had known him all her life.

When Isaac saw Rebekah approaching, it was the first time he had laid eyes on her. Yet he knew her instinctively and was drawn to her.

When Rebekah *"lifted up her eyes and ... saw Isaac,"* it was the very first time her eyes had fallen on him.

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Yet she knew him instinctively and “*lighted off the camel*” to run to him.

Jesus is going to start toward us from Heaven, and we are going to start toward Him from Earth, and we will meet Him in the air between Heaven and Earth. It won't be long now. He is poised as an Olympic diver, over the balconies of Heaven, just waiting for the starting signal. What an exciting time we are living in!

The Rapture of the Church is not an escape-all to get us out of the troubles we have on the earth. It is God's means of getting us to the wedding.

Everyone is excited and joyful when a wedding is about to take place. Jeremiah refers to the absence of “*the voices*” of the bride and bridegroom to denote abject desolation in a land where they are no longer heard. When he speaks of the restoration of the nation of Israel, he speaks of the bridal voices being heard once again, a sign to everyone in the land that all is well. Weddings are important events in any culture, and we are preparing for the most important wedding in history.

It was “*evening time*” when Rebekah arrived, and we, too, are living in the evening of time. It is almost time for the wedding. The signs are everywhere.

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They all point to the soon return of Jesus to meet His Bride. Paul described so beautifully what will transpire:

*For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words.*

1 Thessalonians 4:16-18

Jesus is not coming back to this earth for His Bride, so she must be ready to meet Him in the air.

That “*shout*” signifies the excitement of the Lord as He begins to run toward us. At the same time, we will begin moving under the power of the Holy Ghost toward Him. Through the power of the Holy Ghost, we will overcome the gravitational pull of the earth and rise to meet Him. “*And so shall we ever be with the Lord.*” What a glorious promise!

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## **Five Major Events**

Our departure will signal the beginning of God's judgments upon the earth in the seven-year-long Great Tribulation. During that time, and while we are with the Lord in Heaven, five major events will take place, events that those who have changed their theology concerning things to come have difficulty fitting into God's calendar.

The first great event will be the wedding itself.

What an event! Talk about preparation! The Holy Ghost has been working on this one for two thousand years. This is the most well-thought-out and prepared-for wedding in history. Can you imagine how glorious it will be?

One of the things I am particularly looking forward to is the special music that will be presented at the Marriage of the Lamb. I love good music, and if the good music of the earth is glorious, how much more glorious must Heaven's best music be! I can't quite imagine it. Heaven's choirs and Heaven's orchestras will be united on that great day to honor the Son of the Living God and His chosen Bride.

When a heavenly host of angels appeared over Bethlehem and pronounced, "*good will toward all*

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*men,*” that was just a small choir, just a preliminary appearance. When all the hosts of Heaven unite to sing the Celestial Wedding Procession, it will be of such magnitude that it will surpass anything we can presently imagine. And we won’t want it to end. What a gala event!

We were blessed, as we grew up, to be taken to Washington, D.C. to the inauguration of each of our presidents. Dad’s birthday was the 20th of January and, since the inauguration day fell on the 20th or 21st, he considered it his birthday celebration. He said they were doing all that just for him.

We didn’t want to miss anything, so we always tried to arrive early to get a good spot along Pennsylvania Avenue. And, because we were early, we saw a lot of last-minute preparations going on along the avenue. Everything had to be just “so so” for the inauguration of the president. That all made a lasting impression on us, one that we will never forget.

I believe that there is a flurry of activity in Heaven right now. Angels are rushing about, finishing up the last minute preparations for that great day. And what a time it will be! The angels will all be present, arrayed in their finest. The saints of all ages will be there. The prophets will be there. All of those who

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have loved God throughout the ages will be present as the Bride presents herself.

How many will there be? I am convinced that there will be more in Heaven than in Hell. If the devil has more people in Hell than Jesus has in Heaven, then he has won. I have read the last chapter of the book, and he doesn't win anything at all. He is the greatest loser of all times.

Since *Roe v. Wade* was enacted, more than 24 million babies have been killed in America alone, and every one of them is in Heaven. Large numbers of children still die in childbirth around the world and in infancy, and all of them are in Heaven.

Let the devil do what he may, God will win in the long run. And together we will rejoice in the presence of Almighty God. What a time! What a time!

Get ready! Get ready! Don't delay any longer. The hour is late, and the Bride must make herself ready. Heaven's bleachers are being prepared. The Royal Band has tuned its instruments. The streets are being decorated in festive mood, and soon we will march down those streets in the greatest celebration the world has ever known, the Wedding of the Lamb.

The second great event will be the wedding feast. With every wedding there is a feast, and this wed-

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ding of all weddings will have the feast of all feasts. In some countries, the feast goes on for days. I am told that in Poland it is not unusual to feast for seven days. But that's nothing. The heavenly feast will go on for seven years. If you love to eat, you will feel right at home at Heaven's table.

The third great event to take place during the Tribulation Period will be the heavenly communion service. Before His crucifixion, Jesus said in the upper room:

*For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom.*

Matthew 26:28-29

What a glorious time it will be as we celebrate with Him the remembrance of His sacrifice that has redeemed us and made us worthy to dwell in His presence!

The fourth great event to take place will be the receiving of our rewards at Heaven's Awards Ceremony. There are many crowns awaiting us, many

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rewards for our sacrifices and our labors. No good work will go unrecognized or unrewarded. Heaven's record books are well-kept, and nothing will be overlooked or forgotten.

The Scriptures declare:

*For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works.*

Matthew 16:27

*And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.*

Revelation 22:12

It is possible that the rewards will be given in connection with the wedding feast, Heaven's Awards Banquet. Whatever the case, they will definitely be given without fail.

The fifth great event to take place when we are in the Lord's presence will be His crowning. In that day, we will all recognize that without Him we would have been worthy of nothing, and we will cast our crowns at His feet. Together, we will crown Him King of Kings and Lord of Lords FOREVER.



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At some point, toward the end of the seven years of feasting, we will join our Heavenly Bridegroom on a foray back to earth. He will mount His glorious white stallion and, if there is room, Wallace Heflin will be right behind Him. Jude remembered the prophecy of Enoch concerning that event:

*And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the LORD cometh with ten thousands of his saints, Jude 1:14*

I am determined to be one of those thousands who accompany the Lord on that glorious day. Will you be among that number? If you don't go up, you can't come down with Him. Under His leadership, we will restore order to the earth and set up His earthly kingdom.

While we are rejoicing in the presence of God, terrible judgments will be poured out upon the earth. All emphasis is mine:

*Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his JUDGMENT is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.*

Revelation 14:7

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*Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy: for all nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy JUDGMENTS are made manifest.*

Revelation 15:4

*And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither; I will shew unto thee the JUDGMENT of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters.*

Revelation 17:1

*Standing afar off for the fear of her torment, saying, Alas, alas, that great city Babylon, that mighty city! for in one hour is thy JUDGMENT come.*

Revelation 18:10

These judgments will serve two purposes: (1) To punish the enemies of our God, and (2) To bring more men and women to the feet of Jesus. Multitudes of people will be saved during the time of the Tribulation, and we have always felt that our campground in Ashland, Virginia, would be overrun during that period by people seeking God. When the last trumpet sounds and the Church departs, many

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will come to camp seeking refuge and seeking salvation. Preachers who have once known the ways of God but who are now backslidden will realize their error and come back to God. Many have allowed the things of the world to overcome their spirits and have become cold and indifferent to the things of God, joining forces with the world. At the Rapture, they will know and understand what has happened and will go somewhere where men are seeking God. Churches everywhere will be filled.

Talk about revival! It's coming. During the weeks just after the Rapture, the world will experience the greatest revival in history. And we will be looking down upon it all. People will be beating down the doors of the churches, with tears of anguish and distress, trying to get in to find Jesus as their personal Savior.

## Life in the New Jerusalem

God has prepared a special city for His Bride, called in the Scriptures, "*the Bride's city*." It is also called The New Jerusalem and is the only heavenly city mentioned in the Bible. After we have set up God's Kingdom, during the daytime we will work as part of the great righteous administration of God's

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universe, and during the evening we will return to our glorious city to bask in the presence of our Heavenly Bridegroom.

The city will be suspended in the air 1,500 miles over the actual city of Jerusalem, and it is 1,500 miles square, that is it stretches for 1,500 miles North, South, East and West and is also 1,500 miles high. There are 125 miles between the first and second floors, so you won't have to worry about disturbing your neighbor. We can't imagine it, for it will be another world.

The city has twelve gates made of solid pearls, four gates on each side. That lets me know that I won't stop traveling when I reach Heaven. I will be able to go in and out and visit all the places God has created.

There is a crystal clear river flowing right in front of your mansion. And what a time we will have on those streets of gold! It is worth whatever price is necessary to be part of the Bride of Christ.

If such a magnificent city is being prepared for us, what do we care when men laugh at us for paying the price to become part of the Bride. Let them laugh. Let them call us "peculiar," "strange," or "fanatical." They're right, we are peculiar. We have chosen not

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to look like the world, not to talk like the world, and not to act like the world. But we don't do all this just for the sake of being different; we do it because we have been in the presence of the living God, and we cannot and must not hide that fact.

Those who loved and followed Jesus while He was with them on earth were saddened and dismayed when He spoke of returning to His Father. He comforted them with these words:

*Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also. John 14:1-3*

He said there were already many mansions in His Father's house, but He was going to prepare a special place for those who wanted to be with Him and that He would come again and take them with Him. He was speaking of the Bride, and He has kept His promise. An entire city awaits us.

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Modernists have changed that translation of John 14:1 from “*many mansions*” to “*many rooms*.” Before he died, my father said, “If Heaven is going to be like Grace Street [an area of Richmond crowded with rooming houses], then I don’t want to go there. It’s so crowded on Grace Street that you can smell the bacon cooking next door and hear all the arguments. I believe in a better place.”

He was right. We are not going to a place of “many rooms” but a place of “many mansions.” Our only problem is in describing it because our human vocabulary is too limited to do it justice. It will be too glorious for words. And Christ has gone to prepare it for us.

Most of the known world has had an opportunity, at some time or other, to see a televised space shot. To see that huge rocket lift off is a thrill that no one ever forgets. God has shown me that inside everyone of us is a Holy Ghost igniter. When the trumpet sounds, the Holy Ghost will set off that spark within each of us who is prepared, and we will go sailing through the air to land on one of those twelve floors of Heaven.

What floor you land on may depend on the power charge you have at the time. Some may only make

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it to the first floor. Others may get to the 2nd or 3rd levels, and still others to the 5th, 6th and 7th floors. Some might hit the 10th, 11th or 12th floors. None will be able to blame another, in that day, for the level they attain. You will go as far as the Holy Ghost power inside you will take you.

Not only has God prepared a special city for us; He has prepared a special place for us at His side.

When Jesus was here on earth, the mother of James and John came to Him one day and said, "I want You to do me a favor. When You come into Your Kingdom, I want one of my sons to sit on Your right hand and the other son to sit on Your left."

*Then came to him the mother of Zebedee's children with her sons, worshipping him, and desiring a certain thing of him. And he said unto her, What wilt thou? She saith unto him, Grant that these my two sons may sit, the one on thy right hand, and the other on the left, in thy kingdom.*

Matthew 20:20-21

The answer Jesus gave Zebedee's wife and children is very revealing.

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*Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of and to be baptized with the baptism that Jam baptized with?*

*They say unto him, We are able.*

*And he saith unto them, Ye shall drink indeed of my cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with: but to sit on my right hand, and on my left, is not mine to give, but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of my Father.*

Matthew 20:22-23

When Jesus said, “to them for whom it is prepared of my Father,” He was talking about the Bride. The Father has prepared a special place for us at Jesus’ side.

When that fateful day arrives and God asks, “Who giveth this woman to be wedded unto this Man?” the Holy Ghost will respond, “I do,” and then He will step back and present us to Jesus, Our Heavenly Bridegroom. What a glorious day that will be! Why? Because those of us who have prepared will become the Bride of Christ and will sit with Him in His throne FOREVER AND EVER!







## CHAPTER 15

# **What We Must Do to Prepare for That Day**

*For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle?*

1 Corinthians 4:8

Many of those who love the Lord and know about His coming are not prepared for it, and it's not their fault. The church, to whom the Lord delegated the responsibility of sounding the alarm, has failed her commission. Many are afraid to speak of these things because of the confusion and indecision that abound among Christians on this subject in these days. Others are not proclaiming these truths because they know that people don't like to hear about the separation from the world that Christ's coming demands. Whatever the case, the word is not going forth as it once did.

The greatest event of all time is about to take place. For a few chosen ones, it will be the most

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glorious event of their lifetime, but for most of the world, it will be the most tragic event of all times. And, since most of the people of the world are not even aware of this impending event, they are totally unprepared for it. Herein lies great tragedy, and the church is to blame.

Paul warned the church about giving forth "*an uncertain sound.*" When there is a failure to produce a clear call, no man is sure if and when he needs to get ready. And, under these circumstances, Paul said, "Who shall prepare himself?"

During the early years of this century, when the Pentecostal experience was restored to the Church through a great Holy Ghost outpouring, people lived in great excitement, expecting momentarily the Lord's coming. This produced in their hearts a "*great hope*" for tomorrow and caused them to work toward being ready to go when the Lord comes.

Not only were the saints looking for Him, but they were heeding His admonition to "*watch and pray*" and be found "*worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man*" (Luke 21:36). To them, the Rapture had a dual purpose. It gave them the hope of escaping the Great Tribulation and the hope of being united with the Lord in the air,

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of being with Him forever. This made them willing to make whatever sacrifice was required of them to maintain the necessary standards of holiness in their personal lives.

They could say, with John:

*Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not.*

*Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself even as he is pure.*

1 John 3:1-3

The world didn't understand them, and they were frequently mocked and persecuted. But that made no difference to them because the Lord had warned them that it would be so. They were ready for it. They went busily on their way, purifying themselves in preparation for the great event.

As we have seen, many think they will have time after the Tribulation starts to prepare themselves, so

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they have stopped working to purify their lives. The great majority of churches today believe and teach that it is no longer necessary to live a life separated from the world. To the contrary, believers think that they must compromise their standards in order to win the world. After all, if we are planning to stay here, we have to learn how to prosper and get along in this world.

But just because men have changed their minds about end-time events doesn't mean that God has changed. He is still looking for a people who will turn their backs on the world and prepare to leave here, to be joined to Him. He is still looking for those who are willing to live holy, act holy, dress holy, talk holy and be holy. The tragedy of our times is that people who meet these criteria are not only looked down upon by the world, but are also looked down upon by much of the church.

The true Bride knows instinctively that her Bridegroom is coming very soon, but everyone should know it. Before He went away, Jesus said:

*Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come.*

*Therefore be ye also ready; for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of Man cometh.*

Matthew 24:42 and 44

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Paul wrote to the Thessalonians:

*Those who are wise are prepared at all times,  
for He said, The day of the Lord so cometh as a  
thief in the night.*      1 Thessalonians 5:2

Are you among “*those who are wise*”?

What type of church does the Lord want to find when He comes? On the Day of Pentecost the Church was born in fire. We have every reason to believe, therefore, that the Church must also depart in the fire.

Elijah is a type of that Church. When God took him home, He took him by fire. He and Elisha were walking together, and Elisha saw a chariot of fire and horses of fire. These “*parted them both asunder,*” and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into Heaven.

When Moses and Elijah came down to Mount Tabor and discussed the coming death of Jesus, Moses represented the Law, and Elijah represented the prophets. Also Moses represented those who died in Jesus and were taken up to Heaven, while Elijah represented those who will go up alive at the Rapture of the Church. Those who are ready will be translated as Elijah was, and he went up in the fire.

## Jacob and Esau, Birthright and Blessing

Jesus is the only person to experience both death and, after His resurrection, translation. He said:

*I am he that liveth, and was dead; behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen.* Revelation 1:18

Jesus rose again to represent the saints who have died in the Lord. He is “*the first fruits of those that slept,*” but He also represents the rest of us who will rise in the Rapture and meet Him in the air. When He comes in the air, all those who have been redeemed by the blood of the Lamb and remain will rise to meet Him, even if they are not part of the Bride. Those who are not looking for Him, however, will be surprised by His coming and will have to go through the Tribulation period that they may be refined and perfected.

Let us prepare ourselves quickly. Eve could not be brought forth until Adam longed so for a helpmeet that he was willing to subject himself to the deep sleep and piercing of his side necessary to bring her forth.

Jesus could not be born until God found in Mary the character qualified to be the mother of His Son. Jesus has been obedient unto death and the pierc-

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ing of His side and He longs for His Bride. God is looking to His Body, the Church, to move into the position He specified for her completion, when He said, as we have seen:

*But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: from whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.*

Ephesians 4:15-16

Only when the Church reaches this desired maturity will it possess the desired characteristics from which the Holy Ghost can bring forth the Bride of Christ. Those who have become too comfortable down here, who love their house too much, who love their car too much, who love their clothes too much, will simply have to stay behind. If Rebekah did not wish to go, Eliezer could not force her.

Of the many qualities Jesus requires of His Bride, none could be more important than worship. One



## Jacob and Esau, Birthright and Blessing

day, as Jesus and His disciples were traveling toward Jerusalem, He told them that He needed to go through Samaria. That surprised them because the Jews were not on good terms with the Samaritans. But Jesus insisted.

When they reached Samaria, they stopped by an old well, and Jesus rested by the well while the disciples went into town to buy something to eat. There, at the well of Samaria, Jesus met a woman. He said to her, "*Give me to drink*" (John 4:7). This surprised her, coming from a Jew, because of the poor relationship her people had with the Jews at that time.

Jesus took the opportunity to show this woman that His love is for everyone, that His arms are extended to every nation and to every people. He began to tell her about the water that He could give. She was perplexed and could not understand how He could give water when He apparently had nothing with which to draw it. When He told her that the water He gives satisfies so that those who drink it never thirst again, she began to desire it and asked Him to give her some of that water.

Jesus said to her, "*Go, call thy husband, and come hither*" (John 4:16). She answered that she had no husband. Jesus said unto her, "*Thou hast well said, I*

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*have no husband: for thou hast had five husbands; and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband: in that saidst thou truly” (John 4:17-18).*

When Jesus thus revealed this woman’s past, she recognized that He was a prophet of God and immediately turned her attention to worship. Then Jesus taught her about true worship. He said:

*The hour cometh, and now is when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.*

John 4:23-24

If this woman had been insincere with the Lord, if she had lied about her past or about her present lifestyle, she might have gone away and never learned the truth about worship. If she had been offended by Jesus’ prying into her personal affairs and been unwilling to change her way of living to please Him, she might have never received His living water. Only those who genuinely open their hearts to God in truth can truly worship Him, and “*the Father seeketh such to worship him.*”

## Jacob and Esau, Birthright and Blessing

*But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.*

John 3:21

Those who are in the Bride of Christ will be willing to have their deeds tested to see that they have the light of truth in their lives. There cannot be true worship where there are hidden deeds. Hidden deeds produce a darkness in the spirit. Only those who are free of sin and are able to worship God in spirit and in truth will be eligible.

The Holy Ghost is presently working in the lives of those who will submit to His wooing to bring them into truth, to bring their deeds to light, to prove them so that they might be worthy to be in the Bride.

The woman at the well was, perhaps, a most unlikely candidate to receive a revelation about true worship, but Jesus saw within her a truthful heart, and everyone who makes up a part of His Bride will have a heart in which He can trust.

Worship is important to the Bride. The joy of the Lord received through worship gives the Bride strength to do the Lord's work on the earth, and that same joy seen in her life gives others a desire to know the Lord.

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It is to be expected, then, that where the Lord finds true worship, there He will manifest His power through the gifts of the Spirit. And these gifts bring revelation of the Lord and His goodness to the worshipping Bride. Preaching and teaching often impart nothing more than head knowledge, but through worship in the Spirit, God gives us Spirit knowledge. When little time is allotted in our services for heart worship, we should not be surprised that there is little or no revelation as well.

The woman at the well quickly ran to tell others about the Man she had met, leaving her valuable waterpot to its fate. When we get excited about the Bridegroom, we want to tell everyone around us about Him. It is not normal for a Christian to be ashamed to testify about Jesus. Love takes away all fear, all hesitation, and all reticence. When we truly love Him, we want to talk about Him and we don't worry what others might think. We have seen something wonderful in our Bridegroom, and we want others to see it as well.

Do you feel that excitement in your soul? Are you preparing for that wonderful day? You should be, for the trumpet will soon sound, and we will all be called to the marriage.

## Jacob and Esau, Birthright and Blessing

All of Heaven is ready, and the angels are anxiously waiting to ring the bells that the ceremonies might begin, but they must wait a little longer while the Bride makes herself ready.

Traditionally, it is the bride, not the groom, who sets the time for her wedding. And so it is with the Church. When the Bride is ready, the ceremonies will commence. Jesus has been waiting for a very long time for His Bride to put on her adornment and make herself ready. He is now anxious for events to get under way.

The last call is going forth. Will you accept that blessed invitation to participate in the marriage of the Lamb and to be part of *The Bride*?

LET US BE GLAD AND REJOICE, AND GIVE HONOUR TO HIM: FOR THE MARRIAGE OF THE LAMB IS COME, AND HIS WIFE HATH MADE HERSELF READY. AND TO HER WAS GRANTED THAT SHE SHOULD BE ARRAYED IN FINE LINEN, CLEAN AND WHITE: FOR THE FINE LINEN IS THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF SAINTS. AND HE SAITH UNTO ME, WRITE, BLESSED ARE THEY WHICH ARE CALLED UNTO THE MARRIAGE SUPPER OF THE LAMB. AND HE SAITH UNTO ME, THESE ARE THE TRUE SAYINGS OF GOD.

—REVELATION 19:7-9



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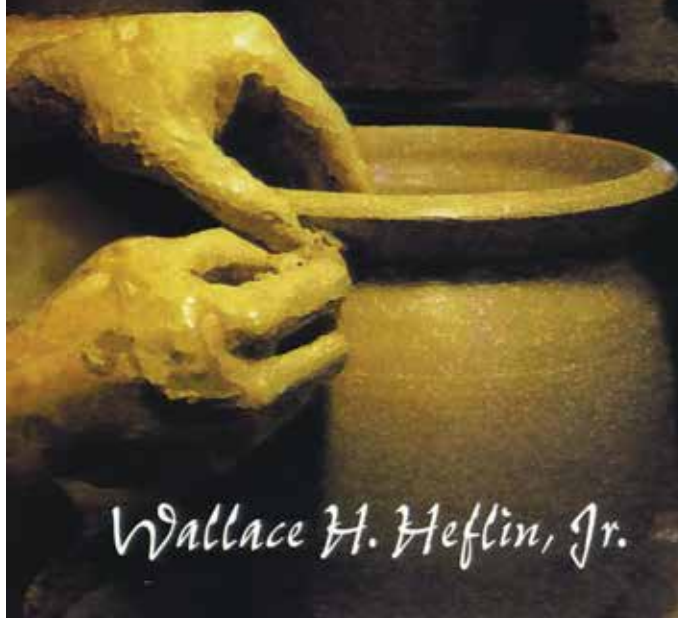
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