

Message Four

The Preparation of the Bride

Scripture Reading: Dan. 2:34-35; Joel 3:11; Eph. 5:25-27; 6:17-18; Rev. 19:7-9

I. The Lord's recovery is for the preparation of the bride of Christ, who is composed of all His overcomers—Rev. 19:7-9; cf. Gen. 2:22; Matt. 16:18:

- A. A bride is mainly for the wedding day, while a wife is for the entire life.
- B. The New Jerusalem will be the bride in the millennium for one thousand years, which is like one day (2 Pet. 3:8), and will be the wife in the new heaven and new earth for eternity, to the ages of the ages without end:
 - 1. All the overcomers will be the New Jerusalem as the bride of Christ for one thousand years in its initial and fresh stage—Rev. 19:7.
 - 2. Eventually, all of the believers will join the overcomers to consummate and complete the New Jerusalem in full as the wife of Christ in the new heaven and new earth for eternity—21:2, 9b.

II. The corporate Christ, Christ with His overcoming bride, will come as a stone to crush the aggregate of human government to bring in God's kingdom—Dan. 2:34-35; Joel 3:11; Rev. 19:11-21; cf. Gen. 1:26:

- A. Whereas Daniel 2 speaks of Christ coming as a stone cut out without hands, Revelation 19 speaks of Christ coming as the One who has His bride as His army.
- B. In Ephesians 5 and 6 we see the church as the bride and the warrior; in Revelation 19 we also have these two aspects of the church—Eph. 5:25-27; 6:10-20:
 - 1. On the day of His wedding, Christ will marry His bride, the overcomers, who have been fighting the battle against God's enemy for years—cf. Dan. 7:25; 6:10; Eph. 6:12.
 - 2. Before Christ descends to earth to deal with Antichrist and the totality of human government, He will have a wedding, uniting His overcomers to Himself as one entity—Rev. 19:7-9.
 - 3. After His wedding, He will come with His newly married bride to destroy Antichrist, who with his army will fight against God directly—vv. 11, 14:
 - a. The Lord Jesus, the Word of God, will slay Antichrist, the man of lawlessness, by the breath of His mouth—vv. 13-15; 2 Thes. 2:2-8.
 - b. Out of Christ's mouth proceeds a sharp sword, that with it He might smite the nations—Rev. 19:15a; cf. 1:16; 2:12, 16.
 - 4. After crushing the human government, God will have cleared up the entire universe; then the corporate Christ, Christ with His overcomers, will become a great mountain to fill the whole earth, making the whole earth God's kingdom—Dan. 2:35, 44; 7:22, 27; Rev. 11:15.

III. Apart from Ephesians 5, there is no way for the bride to be prepared, and hence no way for Revelation 19 to be fulfilled:

- A. Ephesians 5:25-27 reveals Christ in three stages—in the past Christ as our loving Redeemer died for our judicial redemption, in the present Christ as the

sanctifying life-giving Spirit is saturating us for our organic salvation, and in the future Christ as the holy Bridegroom will present us to Himself for His marriage.

- B. Ephesians 5:27 reveals the beauty of the bride, saying that Christ will “present the church to Himself glorious, not having spot or wrinkle or any such things, but that she would be holy and without blemish”:
1. As the bride, the church needs beauty; the beauty in Ephesians 5 is for the presentation of the bride.
 2. The beauty of the bride comes from the very Christ who is wrought into the church and who is then expressed through the church.
 3. The church is being beautified through the process of sanctification by Christ as the life-giving Spirit cleansing us by the washing of the water in the word—v. 26:
 - a. The cleansing by the washing of the water of life is in the word of Christ; this indicates that in the word of Christ is the water of life.
 - b. The Greek word rendered “word” in verse 26 is not *logos*, the constant word, but *rhema*, which denotes the instant word, the word the Lord presently speaks to us.
 - c. Christ’s speaking is the Spirit; it is the very presence of the life-giving Spirit—John 6:63; Eph. 6:17.
 - d. The indwelling Christ as the life-giving Spirit is always speaking an instant, present, living word to metabolically cleanse away the old and replace it with the new, causing an inward transformation.
 - e. Through such a washing process, we are saturated with Christ and transformed by Christ to be His holy, beautiful, God-expressing bride, a bride without blemish or imperfection—Rev. 19:7; cf. S. S. 6:13; 8:13-14.

IV. Ephesians 6 and Revelation 19 reveal that the church as the bride must also be a warrior to defeat God’s enemy:

- A. Spiritual warfare is a matter of the Body; we are a corporate army fighting the battle for God’s interest on earth—17:14; 19:14; cf. 2 Tim. 2:4.
- B. In Ephesians 5 the word is for nourishment that leads to the beautifying of the bride, but in Ephesians 6 the word is for killing that enables the church as the corporate warrior to engage in spiritual warfare—vv. 17-18:
1. The killing word deals with the enemy; we should pray-read the word to experience the sword as the killing instrument.
 2. Since the enemy has injected himself into our being, what we need is for the killing power of the word to be applied to us to deal with the elements of the enemy within us:
 - a. The most difficult foe is the self; the self is our worst enemy and the enemy of the Body—Matt. 16:24.
 - b. As we pray-read the word, the battle is raging as the negative elements in our being are slain; eventually, the self, the worst foe of all, will be put to death.
 - c. Through the killing word, the adversary within us is slain; let us kill the adversary by pray-reading the word.