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God, through His Son Jesus, provides eternal grace for our failures and human limitations.

The Bridegroom and the Bride

And the

Wedding Feast.

(In the Old and New Testament).

(2013)

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The Bridegroom, the Bride and the Wedding Feast.

Topics.

- A bridegroom with a beautiful headdress and a bride with her jewels.
- The bridegroom rejoices over the bride.
- The voice of the bridegroom and the bride will not be heard in Jerusalem.
- Let the bridegroom leave his room, and the bride her chamber.
- Can the wedding guests mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them?
- A king invites a guest to a wedding feast for his son.
- Many are called but few are chosen.
- Ten virgins go out to meet the bridegroom.
- Be like workers waiting for their master to return from a wedding feast.
- Jesus turns the water into wine at a bridegroom's wedding.
- The friend of the bridegroom rejoices at the bridegroom's voice.
- The voice of bridegroom and bride will be heard in Babylon no-more.

INTRODUCTION: in this study we are not focusing on the glorious prophetic detail of the prophecies contained within many of the chapters and the Scriptures we are looking at, but simply on the things concerning the Bridegroom and the Bride. The following are all the Old Testament Scriptures that talk about the Bride and the Bridegroom.

Old Testament

A Bridegroom with a Beautiful Headdress and a Bride with her Jewels.

Isaiah 61:10 ----- ¹⁰I will greatly rejoice in the LORD; my soul shall exult in my God, for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation; he has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a *bridegroom* decks himself like a *priest* with a beautiful headdress, and as a *bride* adorns herself with her jewels.

Here Isaiah likens the garments of salvation (i.e., forgiveness of sin, God's grace, mercy and God's gift of righteousness that leads to eternal life) to a Bridegroom who dresses himself like an Old Testament priest clothed in his glorious priestly garments and headdress and to a bride who adorns herself with precious Jewels. This beautiful exultant, jubilant and triumphant attitude of Isaiah expresses the heartfelt praise of every faithful brother and sister in Christ since they know like Isaiah that their salvation and their righteousness that leads to eternal life is a pure and free gift from God to all who by faith trust in the Lord Jesus Christ and God's grace to be saved and not in their own works, self-effort or their own self-righteousness.

The Bridegroom Rejoices Over the Bride.

Isaiah 62:5 ----- ⁵For as a young man marries a young woman, so shall your (Jerusalem) sons (the redeemed) marry you and as the *bridegroom* rejoices over the *bride* so shall your God rejoice over you.

These prophetic words of Isaiah shine a glorious spotlight on a wonderful truth that is often overlooked. What is that some might ask? Simply this; God rejoices over us. If you have ever been to a wedding you will understand the majestic beauty and glory of Isaiah's words. I attended a wedding that was held at a magnificent dam surrounded by vividly coloured trees.

The brilliant shade of green grass and the sparking water of the dam acted as a magnificent backdrop while the groom and guests all waited in excited anticipation for the Bride to appear. Eventually the chatter of the invited guest was broken as the wedding music began and there she was, the Bride radiant, pure, innocent her white dress with its lacy train caressed the fresh green grass as she came closer to her first real love.

I turned and glanced at the Groom and noticed the struggle he had to hold back his joyful tears from filling his eyes like a river overflowing its banks as he saw the beauty and radiance of his Bride approaching him with her smile of grace, and charity and her obvious affection and tender compassion she had for the man she loved at first sight. Just as I was touched by the splendour and glory of the appearance of my friends' Bride, Isaiah is touched in his vision by the same overwhelming wonder as he sees the glorious beauty of the earthy city Jerusalem restored as a Bride adorned for her husband.

We often think of how much we love the Lord and how great our rejoicing will be on that day when we see him face to face, but just as the Groom at this wedding was overwhelmed with inexpressible joy when he saw the woman who had so faithfully committed her life to him, Jesus our Groom will also be as excited and thrilled when he sees the radiance and beauty of his Bride as she approaches him, knowing she has patiently endured life's many trials and testings to be with him in ETERNITY.

NOTE: in this context the restored city of Jerusalem is a symbol of all the faithful in the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Voice of the Bridegroom and the Bride will not be Heard in Jerusalem.

Jeremiah 7:34 ----- ³⁴I will silence in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem the voice of mirth and the voice of gladness, the voice of the *Bridegroom* and the voice of the *Bride* for the land shall become a waste.

Jeremiah in chapter sixteen and chapter twenty-five makes the same statement.

- The God of Israel says: "Behold, I will silence in Jerusalem before your eyes and in your days, the voice of mirth and the voice of gladness, the voice of the Bridegroom and the voice of the Bride (Jer. 16:9).
- The LORD will banish from the people of Judah the voice of mirth and the voice of gladness, the voice of the Bridegroom and the voice of the Bride. The grinding of the millstones and the light of the lamp (Jer. 25:10).

Mirth: means to be bright and cheerful it carries the idea of greatly rejoicing.

The voice of the Bride in this context refers to the redeemed of Israel and the voice of the Bridegroom is the inspired word of God that is spoken through the prophets. God is saying through the prophet Jeremiah that the sound of the redeemed rejoicing and the sound of the word of the prophets will not be heard in the cities of Judah and streets of Jerusalem.

This is because God's people Israel had hardened their hearts to the voice of the Bridegroom and had fallen so far away from their original calling that God is about to use as His servant Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon and his mighty and cruel armies to bring judgment on the city of Jerusalem and the land of Judah. Babylon's armies invaded the land of Israel, burned the people's houses, destroyed their farms and the city of Jerusalem and pillaged the treasures of the temple of God and took the people captive to Babylon for seventy years, bringing to pass these prophetic words Jeremiah had spoken.

This chapter also echoes another Bridegroom and another Bride in a future age when the sound of joy and gladness and the voice of the Bridegroom and the voice of the Bride will be removed, but this time the Bridegroom is the Lord Jesus Christ and the Bride are all those who by faith belong to him. A time is coming when their call to salvation will no longer be heard amongst the deceptive and corrupt religious systems of the world and the oppressive world system of money and trade. For further information see: -

- Jeremiah chapter 7 in, Commentary NT (ON WEBSITE MENU).

The voice of the Bridegroom and the Bride will be heard in Jerusalem.

Jeremiah 33:10-11 --- ¹⁰Thus says the LORD: In this place (Jerusalem) of which you (the people of Israel) say, 'It is a waste without man or beast,' in the cities of Judah and the streets of Jerusalem that are desolate, without man or inhabitant or beast, there shall be heard again ¹¹the voice of mirth and the voice of gladness, the *voice of the Bridegroom* and the *voice of the Bride* the voices of those who sing, as they bring thank offerings to the house of the LORD.

Mirth: means to be bright and cheerful it carries the idea of greatly rejoicing.

The Bridegroom: refers to God and His voice speaking through the prophets.

The Bride: is the joyful voice of God's people rejoicing.

God is the Bridegroom who through the true prophets came to the people of Judah being the Bride. God through the prophet Jeremiah is now encouraging the people of Israel by telling them that the sound of rejoicing, laughter, happiness, enjoyment and gladness and the word of the prophets will again be heard in the cities of Judah and streets of Jerusalem. After Israel's seventy-years in captivity to Babylon, Cyrus King of Media Persia conquered the empire of Babylon and gave the people of Israel written permission to return to their beloved homeland. Under Zerubbabel, Ezra and Nehemiah they triumphantly returned with songs of praises and great rejoicing to rebuild their houses, their cities, Jerusalem and the temple of God.

Multitudes of scattered Jews returned from the nations they had fled to when escaping from the cruel armies of Assyria and Babylon and many who had established their families during the seventy year captivity uprooted their homes and excitedly returned to their homeland. After the temple of God was rebuilt and their faith was again established a time of peace and safety prevailed for the people of Israel. Jerusalem prospered, nations spoke well of the city, Kings sat on David's throne and priests stood in the presence of God and as a result of this the sound of rejoicing, laughter, happiness, enjoyment and gladness was again heard in the streets of Jerusalem and the land of Judah.

NOTE: even though Israel never again turned to idols and pagan gods after their seventy years in captivity to Babylon, their time of peace and prosperity came to an end. During their time of great abundance and prosperity their kings, the religious leaders and those in authority became greedy for the riches of this world and for power control and fame (the sense of being someone important) all of these craving of the flesh (self, ego and pride) became their gradual downfall. They began to ignore the poor and pervert justice they oppressed the less fortunate for their own financial gain and eventually turned from the things God valued to enhance their own wealth and power.

Though this prophecy of Jeremiah is focused upon Israel and Babylon it only pauses there for a moment in time and then takes up wings and soars through time and history to a future age and its perfect fulfilment which is the return of the Lord Jesus Christ, the true Bridegroom, the true King and the true Priest of the LORD.

For further information of this most glorious prophecy see: -

- Jeremiah chapter 33 in, Commentary NT (ON WEBSITE MENU).

Lament for the Bridegroom of Her Youth.

Joel 1:8 -----⁸Lament like a virgin wearing sackcloth for the bridegroom of her youth

The focus of this chapter is the Day of the LORD.

Wearing sackcloth: was a symbol of humbleness, it carried the idea of a person completely humbling themselves in deep heartfelt sorrow before the LORD.

Lament for the bridegroom her youth: means, mourn grievously as a woman who has lost her husband who she deeply loved and to whom she has been married in her youth. Since the word virgin here can refer to a young woman the call to, lament like a virgin for the bridegroom of her youth can refer to the following two women: -

1. A woman whose husband she deeply loved and to whom she married in her youth has been snatched away by an untimely death.
2. A young woman in her courting days whose future husband was taken by an untimely death.

It is not important which of these two is right, because the woman in both circumstance would be deeply sorrowful and deeply yearn for the man they had loved and lost. It is this deep and bitter sorrow that is important to what Jeremiah is saying, because it is with this same deep and bitter sorrow he is calling Israel to humble themselves before the LORD their God, because by their idolatry and gross sin they had lost Him who was a Husband to them. God Almighty having espoused the people to Himself was the Husband of Israel. So long as the people did not through idolatry and other gross sins depart from God they were counted as his spouse.

This is why Jeremiah addresses the congregation of Israel, as one espoused to God and calls them to lament and wail that God has forsaken them (because of their idolatry and gross sin) with the bitterest of sorrows and the same deep heartfelt passion a young woman in her courting days would yearn for the future husband that she had lost by an untimely death.

The Day of the LORD, Jerusalem and Babylon: the Day of the LORD in this chapter refers to Babylon's impending invasion of Jerusalem and the land of Judah. This chapter shows us that the LORD uses secular nations, kings, and people to achieve His plans and purposes, sometimes to bless and other times to bring judgment.

Joel is warning Israel that the Day of the LORD is coming and is near so he is calling the Bridegroom (the priests, the ministers of the altar, the elders) and the Bride (all the inhabitants of Jerusalem and the surrounding land of Judah) to come out together and call a solemn assembly and to lament (i.e., repent) and ask the LORD to spare them, because God is about to use the armies of Babylon (the locusts) to besiege the city of Jerusalem because of their gross sin. Sadly the people did not heed Joel's warning of impending doom and after almost two years of Babylon besieging Jerusalem, the people were without food and the inhabitants of the city were taken captive for seventy years, Jerusalem was destroyed and the temple of God pillaged.

(See Jeremiah chapters 50, 51, 52).

Israel and Judah went into captivity to Babylon as two rebellious nations who had turned from God to idols and who were even sacrificing their own children to pagan gods. While in captivity God moulded them like a master potter moulds a beautiful clay jar. They went into Babylon as two unfaithful nations and seventy-years later God brought them back under Ezra and Nehemiah to their beloved city Jerusalem united as one nation faithful to only one God, the LORD their God, the God of Abraham Isaac and Jacob (Israel never turned to pagan gods again or divided). Joel's message in this chapter carries with it a majestic and glorious echo of a future day when God will intervene in the history of the world once again and judge not only Judah, but the entire world.

For further information of this spectacular prophecy see: -

- Joel chapter 1 in, Commentary NT (ON WEBSITE MENU).

Let the Bridegroom Leave His Room, and the Bride Her Chamber.

Joel 2:16-17 ----- 16gather the people. Consecrate the congregation; assemble the elders; gather the children, even nursing infants. Let the *bridegroom* leave his room, and the *bride* her chamber
17Between the vestibule and the altar let the priests, the ministers of the LORD, weep and say, "Spare your people, O LORD, and make not your heritage a reproach, a byword among the nations. Why should they say among the peoples, 'Where is their God?'"

Joel calls the inhabitants of Jerusalem and the people of Judah to gather together and set themselves apart for God and to forsake their evil and make themselves clean. Then he says, "Let the bridegroom come out of his chamber and the bride out of her closet." The Priest's had access to the inner most place of the temple of God (the Holy Place) whereas the congregation never did. Chamber in this context carries the idea of the private or inner most-place therefore the bridegroom refers to the priests, while the bride refers to the congregation. Joel is basically telling the priest and the congregation to gather together at the altar, repent and re-dedicate themselves to God, then have the priests pray that God would spare the nation from the impending destruction and doom that Joel in his vision sees coming upon Jerusalem and the land of Judah.

The following verses: -

- Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory, for the *marriage* of the Lamb has come, and his *bride* has made herself ready (Rev. 19:1-21).
- While they (the foolish) were going to buy, the *bridegroom* came, and those who were ready went in with him to the *marriage feast*, and the door was shut (Matt. 25:10).

Show that Joel's vision may also carry a faint echo to the church (the true Bride), warning her to make herself ready for when Christ (the true Bridegroom) returns out of his chamber (heaven) to gather together all who believe in his name and faithfully follow him.

For further information of this spectacular prophecy see: -

- Joel chapter 2 in, Commentary NT (ON WEBSITE MENU).

New Testament

The Bridegroom, the Bride and the Wedding Feast.

Following are all the New Testament Scriptures that talk about the Bride, the Bridegroom and the Wedding Feast.

Can the Wedding Guests Mourn as Long as the Bridegroom is With Them?

Matthew 9:15 ----- 15Jesus said to them (the disciples of John) "Can the *wedding guests* mourn as long as the *bridegroom* is with them? The days will come when the *bridegroom* is taken away from them then they will fast. This parable is also in (Mark 2:15-20) (Luke 5:29-35).

Jesus is at a table with his disciples eating with many tax collectors and sinners and some Pharisees asked Jesus disciples, "Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?" Jesus heard the Pharisees question and says, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick." Then the disciples of John the Baptist asked Jesus, "Why do we and the Pharisees fast, but your disciples do not fast?" And Jesus said to them, "Can the wedding guests mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them? The days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast" (Matt. 9:10-15).

When a man and woman marry the wedding guests are all those who have been invited to the wedding and who have accepted the wedding invitation, likewise the wedding guest of Jesus the Bridegroom embraces every sinner (Jew and Gentile) who hears God inviting them into His Kingdom through the Gospel and by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ accept the invitation.

Jesus the Bridegroom was taken away from the wedding guests by the soldiers who were under the religious leaders of his generation (the chief priests, Pharisees and scribes) and by the Romans who at the enticement of the religious leaders not only mocked him, but brutally and cruelly nailed him to the cross of Calvary as a common criminal. Jesus surrendered his life to his enemies so that even the lowliest of sinners can be invited to this glorious wedding feast.

A King invites a Guest to a Wedding Feast for His Son.

Matthew 22:1-14 ----- ¹Again Jesus spoke to them in parables, saying, ²"The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a *wedding feast for his son*, ³and sent his servants to call those who were *invited to the wedding feast*, but they would not come. ⁴Again he sent other servants, saying, 'Tell those who are *invited*, See, I have prepared my dinner, my oxen and my fat calves have been slaughtered, and everything is ready. Come to the *wedding feast*, ⁵But they paid no attention and went off, one to his farm, another to his business, ⁶while the rest seized his servants, treated them shamefully, and killed them. ⁷The king was angry, and he sent his troops and destroyed those murderers and burned their city. ⁸Then he said to his servants, 'The *wedding feast* is ready, but those *invited* were not worthy. ⁹Go therefore to the main roads and *invite to the wedding feast* as many as you find.' ¹⁰And those servants went out into the roads and gathered all whom they found, both *bad and good*. So the *wedding hall* was filled with guests. ¹¹"But when the king came in to look at the guests, he saw there a man who had no *wedding garment*. ¹²And he said to him, 'Friend, how did you get in here without a *wedding garment*? And he was speechless. ¹³Then the king said to the attendants, 'Bind him hand and foot and cast him into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.' ¹⁴For many are called, but few are chosen."

The symbolism of this parable: -

The king: is God.

The son: is Jesus Christ.

The servants: are the Old Testament prophets that witnessed to Israel.

The other servants: are the New Testament apostles that witnessed to Israel.

The wedding feast: embraces the return of Christ.

The wedding hall: is the Kingdom of God in the millennial age.

The story of the parable: Jesus is speaking this parable to the religious leaders of his day (the chief priests and scribes) it is basically a brilliant overview of the New Testament from its beginning to the return of the Lord Jesus Christ. The story presents God as a King who has prepared a wedding for his Son and has sent his servants (the apostles) to invite the people of Israel to it, but they paid no attention and went about doing their own thing and even worse seized God's servants (the apostles) and killed them.

So the king (God) was angry, and he sent his troops and destroyed the murderous religious leaders and the city Jerusalem was burned (v1-7). (Rome did this in 70 AD). Then God sent other servants referring to those who had accepted the invitation to the wedding feast (i.e., the Kingdom of God in the millennial age) to invite those on the roads (the Gentiles) (good and bad) to the wedding feast which means the Kingdom of God will be filled with both good and bad (Jews and Gentiles) at the end of this age and the beginning of the next (v8-10).

No wedding garment (v11-12) remember Jesus is telling this parable to the chief priests, Pharisees and scribes who believed they were right with God because they kept all the religious ceremonies, attended the meetings and kept the Sabbaths etc., rather than trusting in the saving work of Christ. In this parable Jesus is the wedding garment of righteousness without Christ those confessing to believe in God stand naked before him, meaning they stand in their own righteousness which God says is as filthy rags meaning they have no covering for their sin (Isaiah 64:6).

Having no wedding garment refers to those who outwardly appear to be in the Kingdom of God, but instead of having faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and trusting in God's grace for salvation they are trusting in the service and ministry they do for God and their own religious efforts (i.e. attending church and Bible meetings, reading and memorising Scriptures, and good deeds etc.), though all these things are good in themselves they have no power to deliver a person from death and save them to eternal life. Faith in Christ is the only path to salvation; service and ministry should simply be the outward manifestation of a person's salvation and not the way to it.

Outer darkness (13): those without a wedding garment are cast into a place called outer darkness where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Outer darkness in this context carries the idea of being in the extreme opposite to light, it implies that people instead of being in the light will be in darkness, meaning someplace outside the Kingdom of God and separated from God. Maybe outer darkness refers to those who thought they would be in the Kingdom, but instead find themselves dwelling amongst the nations describe in the following verses that are pictured living on earth during the glorious millennial age of Christ, but apart from him and outside of the majestic New City of Jerusalem.

Outer darkness is certainly an apt description of living outside of the New and Holy city of Jerusalem when its light is contrasted to the darkness of the nations. There will be enormous grief and sorrow because these particular sons of the Kingdom thought they would be accepted into the glorious city of the New Jerusalem to be established on earth with the Lord Jesus Christ as its King, but are rejected.

- Those who overcome sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, "Great and amazing are your deeds, O Lord God the Almighty! Just and true are your ways, '*O King of the nations!*'" ⁴Who will not fear, O Lord, and glorify your name? For you alone are holy. *All nations will come* and worship you, for your righteous acts have been revealed" (Rev. 15:3-4).
- I saw no temple in the city (of Jerusalem's), for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb. ²³And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and its lamp is the Lamb. ²⁴By its light will the *nations walk*, and the *kings of the earth* will bring their glory into it, ²⁵and its gates will never be shut by day—and there will be no night there. ²⁶They (kings of the earth) will bring into it the glory and the honour of *the nations* (Rev. 21:24-26).
- Through the middle of the street of the city (Jerusalem); also, on either side of the river, the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month. The leaves of the tree were for the *healing of the nations* (Rev. 22:2).
- Night will be no more. They will need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever (Rev. 22:5).

Many are Called, But Few are Chosen (v14).

- Called means invited.
- Chosen means Selected.

A Hollywood movie titled, "The Right Stuff" depicted this verse very well, in the movie NASA was training about five-hundred astronauts to fly to the moon, at the end of the long, hard and very vigorous training period it was time to select those who had qualified. The movie ended with the final five selected walking in their space uniforms toward the American President in the White House, as they

approached the president the words "Many are called but few are chosen" were quoted. In the context of Jesus parable it means, many hear the Gospel, but only a few respond to its call and even less endure the trials and tribulations of life and remain in faith to the end. It means that those who do respond to the Gospel are chosen.

The practical application: this parable of Jesus is teaching that: -

- God has been inviting people to a wedding feast since time began.
- Both bad and good people are invited to the wedding feast.
- Eventually the Kingdom of God is full of guests (good and bad) (symbolized by the wedding hall).
- God examines the guests and those without a wedding garment (righteous that comes through faith in Christ) are cast out.
- Many who think they are saved will be rejected

NOTICE.

Jesus in this parable uses the word invited clearly showing that God does not impose or force His will or His word onto anyone, He invites and always leaves those who receive the invitation free to respond in whatever way they freely chose. This is the attitude and mindset every faithful brother and sister should all have when proclaiming the Good News of the Gospel or sharing their faith.

Ten Virgins Go Out to Meet the Bridegroom.

Matthew 25:1-13 ----- ¹The kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went to meet the *bridegroom*. ²Five of them were foolish, and five were wise. ³For when the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them, ⁴but the wise took flasks of oil with their lamps. ⁵As the *bridegroom* was delayed, they all became drowsy and slept. ⁶But at midnight there was a cry, 'Here is the *bridegroom*! Come out to meet him.' ⁷Then all those virgins rose and trimmed their lamps. ⁸And the foolish said to the wise, 'Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.' ⁹But the wise answered, saying, 'Since there will not be enough for us and for you, go rather to the dealers and buy for yourselves.' ¹⁰And while they were going to buy, the *bridegroom* came and those who were ready *went in with him to the marriage feast* and the door was shut. ¹¹Afterward the other virgins came also, saying, 'Lord, lord, open to us.' ¹²But he answered, 'Truly, I say to you I do not know you.' ¹³Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour.

Lamps: are, a symbol of deeds that evidence a person's faith in the Lord, the wise had an abundance of outward deeds that evidenced their faith in the Lord, whereas the foolish had nothing.

Oil: was the fuel that kept the flame burning so the lamp would give out light, therefore the oil is a symbol of the Holy Spirit and God's indwelling word.

Flasks: are a symbol of abundance, the wise had extra containers of oil for their lamps, symbolising that they were full of the Holy Spirit, the Lord's word and the fruits of the Spirit.

Being ready: means aiming to live in a manner that bring honour to God and a good testimony to the Lord Jesus Christ it means remaining in the faith regardless of the troubles and hardships of life and showing other compassion and kindness treating people with decency and respect.

Not being ready: embraces the idea of living completely for self and being indifferent to how our lifestyle reflects upon God and the good name of the Lord Jesus Christ, it is being lukewarm in mind, thought and heart toward God.

This parable is teaching us that Jesus will return to collect the faithful who belong to him and take them to the marriage feast and once he has collected the redeemed, the door is shut to the marriage feast. The parable clearly shows that not all who confess to believe in Jesus are given entry to the marriage feast.

The wise servants: had the indwelling Holy Spirit and manifested the fruits of the Spirit (i.e. kindness, grace, mercy, etc.), toward others, they were full of gratitude, passion and excitement regarding their spiritual life and relationship with the Lord. They were committed to the things that God considers important and passionate about living their lives before God and with the Lord Jesus Christ.

The foolish servants: confessed to believed, but were indifferent to the things that God considers important. They in contrast to the wise showed no care, interest or concern for God's Kingdom, had no interest in building their lives on the Lord Jesus Christ and the things of God and inwardly lacked the fruits of the Spirit and any passion for the things of the Lord and therefore had nothing that evidenced their confession of faith and relationship to Christ.

In the following parable of the, "Sheep and the Goats" Jesus said: -

- Whoever gives food, drink and clothing to the poor and treats those they don't know with kindness and whoever cares for the sick and visit those who are in prison because of their faith in the Lord it is the same as if they were doing it for the Lord himself and he will say to them "Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world" (v34-40).

From these words of Jesus we can conclude that the wise servants were treating other humans with respect and decency especially the poor and those who were less fortunate than themselves. They were living according to the royal law (James 2:8) love your neighbour as yourself (Matt. 22:37-39) (Mark 12:28-31) meaning do not deliberately do harm to other humans. No sane person deliberately does things to inflict pain on themselves, loving others as you love yourself is not about feeling some warm and fuzzy emotion towards others, it is about not hurting others as you would not hurt yourself. The thing God hates the most is when we do harm to another person, physically, financially, verbally, sexually, emotionally or spiritually and the thing God loves the most is when we do good to others. From this we can be confident the wise servants were others centred while the foolish were self-centred and self-serving.

Go rather to the dealers and buy for yourselves: (v9) does not mean people can earn their salvation by self-effort and good deeds. Jesus is pointing out that no-one is able to redeem another person to eternal life. The statement "Go buy for yourselves" means make the effort yourself to find the Lord and enter into an intimate relationship with him, everyone must seek ask and knock for themselves. Many people confess to believe in the Lord, but live their lives indifferent to his word and the things that are important to him. Though the foolish confessed to believe in the Lord, they lived their lives solely focused on and for themselves; their own pleasure and their own gain and did nothing to affect or extend the Kingdom of God in any way.

The principal: that this parable is teaching is that everyone who confesses to believe in Christ should always live with a constant desire to bring a good testimony to the Lord's name so that they will be always ready for his return, because no-one knows when they will die or when that day will be so they should live as though Jesus was going to return tomorrow so that they will always be ready for his return.

NOTE: Since this parable says the wise went in with the bridegroom to the marriage feast it is not absolutely clear whether the marriage feast is immediately upon Jesus return or at the end of his millennial reign as King of kings and Lord of lords since John in his heavenly vision in the book of Revelation sees at the end of Christ glorious millennial reign God Himself and the New Jerusalem prepared as a bride descending from heaven to earth and tells us God is ALL in ALL and this is when ETERNITY in all its majestic royal fullness and glory begins.

Be like Workers Waiting for their Master to Return from a Wedding Feast.

Luke 12:35-38 ----- ³⁵Stay dressed for action and keep your lamps burning, ³⁶and be like men who are waiting for their master to come home from the *wedding feast*, so that they may open the door to him at once when he comes and knocks. ³⁷Blessed are those servants whom the master finds awake when he comes. Truly, I say to you, he will dress himself for service and have them recline at table, and *he will come and serve them*. ³⁸If he comes in the second watch, or in the third, and finds them awake, blessed are those servants!

Since no-one knows when the Lord will return in glory every brother and sister in Christ is called to be like faithful servants who do those things that benefits the masters Kingdom and brings a good testimony to his name while they wait for their master to return so that when he does return they are always ready to welcome him. The following words of Jesus truly reveal the humbleness and glory of the eternal Shepherd every faithful brother and sister in Christ follows.

Jesus said: -

- When he returns he will dress himself and then serve those servants who have been faithful and seeking the Kingdom of God (v37).

How humbling and beautiful are these words of the Lord Jesus Christ, truly he sees those who love him as his brothers and sisters, Jesus is the true Shepherd of the flock; he does not exalt himself above those who are faithful to him but rather happily serves them as they have served him.

Do Not Sit in a Place of Honour at a Wedding.

Luke 14:8 ----- ⁸When you are invited by someone to a *wedding feast*, do not sit down in a place of honour, lest someone more distinguished than you be invited by him,

This is a principle not only applies to those in the Kingdom of God, but also applies to the secular world. It is never wise to take the place of honour (the best seat) unless you are given it, because if someone comes into the room more well-known, more renowned, more prominent or more celebrated and you are asked to give up your seat for them not only will you be humbled in the eyes of your peers, but you will feel humiliated that you have exalted yourself to the highest place of honour, whereas if you take the place of less importance and are invited to move to a greater position of honour you will be respected honoured and admired.

Jesus said: -

- Whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted (Matt. 23:12) (Luke 14:11) (Luke 18:14).

Those who exalt themselves and stand in pride refusing to accept the Good News of the Gospel of Christ and deny God's existence will be humbled at the judgment seat of Christ. It will not matter whether they are kings of countries or presidents of nations, enormously famous or extremely successful, rich and wealthy they will be humbled, contrasted to those who accept Christ acknowledge God and are faithful to his ways, being exalted to eternal glory and everlasting life when Christ returns no no-matter how poor or lowly they might be in this present mortal life.

Pride is the enemy of God contrasted to humbleness which is the friend and delight of God.

Jesus Turns the Water into Wine at a Bridegroom's Wedding.

John 2:9-11 ----- ⁹When the master of the *wedding feast* tasted the water now become wine, and did not know where it came from (though the servants who had drawn the water knew), the master of the *feast called the bridegroom* ¹⁰and said to him, "Everyone serves the good wine first, and

when people have drunk freely, then the poor wine. But you (the bridegroom) have kept the good wine until now." ¹¹This, the first of his signs, Jesus did at Cana in Galilee, and manifested his glory. And his disciples believed in him.

While Mary and Jesus are attending a wedding of their friends Mary notices that they have run out of wine. It would be enormously embarrassing for the bridegroom and the bride to run out of wine for their guests at their own wedding feast. Mary understands this and even though Jesus has not done a miracle she seems to have confidence that he would somehow be able to provide more wine. Jesus seems almost reluctant to perform the miracle, maybe he didn't want to take the focus off the married couple since it was their precious day.

Jesus would know that if he did a spectacular miracle all eyes would suddenly be turned upon him and the conversation would be all about him, but being full of compassion and wisdom he solves the problem by turning the water to wine as discreetly as possible which protects the couple from embarrassment and stops the guests from suddenly focussing on him and robbing the couple from the joy of their day. It appears only the disciples realised that Jesus had turned the water to wine. This miracle manifested Christ's glory to them and caused them to believe on him (v11).

The symbolism's contained in the story: six is the number of man and the first man came from the dust of the earth (clay) which means that the six clay jars of water can be seen as a symbol of people without the indwelling Holy Spirit, the jars are filled at the word of the Lord to overflowing and with the best wine, a symbol of a person being filled with joy and eternal life when they respond to the words of Christ (i.e., the Good News of the Gospel). The master of the feast said, "The bridegroom saved the best for last." It is appropriate that this was the first miracle that Jesus did since the first wine can be seen as a symbol of the Old Covenant and the Law of Moses while the last wine (the best) can be viewed as a symbol of the New Covenant and Grace.

The clay jars were emptied of the first wine symbolising the fact that the Old Covenant and the Law did not change or satisfy the human heart whereas filling the jars up with new wine (the best wine) symbolises the New Covenant of grace (i.e., believing the Good News of the Gospel of grace and accepting and believing in the Lord Jesus Christ.

NOTE.

Some teachers in Christian circles say that this wine would not be alcoholic, they reason that Jesus would not provide so much alcohol for people to drink, but drinking alcohol is not a sin, certainly the Bible clearly warns against drinking an excess of alcohol because of the things a person may do while heavily influenced by too much alcohol which they wouldn't do if they were in their right mind.

But consider the following, if the twenty or thirty gallons is averaged out to twenty-five gallons which equals about a one-hundred and ten litres and it was estimated that each person drank 500mls (3 glasses) over the course of the day then there would be approximately two hundred and twenty people at the wedding this is not an enormous number of people since during the time of Christ it was not uncommon to invite almost the entire village to a wedding of Israel.

The Friend of the Bridegroom Rejoices at the Bridegroom's Voice.

John 3:29 ----- ²⁹The one who has the *bride* is the *bridegroom*. The friend of the *bridegroom* who stands and hears him rejoices greatly at the *bridegroom's voice*. Therefore this joy of mine is now complete.

A Jew raises the question of purification with some of John's disciples, because under the Old Covenant and the law only the Levitical priesthood had authority to perform the rights of purification (cleansing). John's disciples accepted John to be a prophet, but it seems after this discussion they are confused as to what authority Jesus and his disciple have to be baptising people so they go to John and he tells them about a bridegroom, a bride and a friend of the bridegroom.

The bridegroom: is the Lord Jesus Christ.

The bride: are all those who belong to him.

The friend of the bridegroom: is John the Baptist.

In a natural wedding the bridegroom has the bride and his friends are thrilled that he has found the woman of his dreams so not only is the bridegroom's joy complete but so is his friends so they celebrate the event together (thus the wedding feast). John is saying being a friend of the Lord Jesus Christ and seeing his bride that John has prepared coming to him is his overwhelming joy and completes his ministry.

NOTE: this does not mean that John will not be part of the bridal party at the great marriage feast of the Lamb when Christ returns as King of kings and Lord of lords to establish God's Kingdom of righteousness, justice, joy and peace on earth (Matt. 25:10) (Rev. 19:7). John is simply using a natural story to show his disciples that his ministry is now complete and must decrease, but his friend's ministry is just beginning and will continue to increase at a rapid rate.

The Voice of Bridegroom and Bride will Be Heard in Babylon No-More.

Revelation 18:23 ----- ²³the light of a lamp will shine in you (Babylon) no more, and the voice of *bridegroom* and *bride* will be heard in you no more, for your merchants were the great ones of the earth, and all nations were deceived by your sorcery.

Prior to this verse we are told: -

1. God will judge Babylon for the sake of the apostles, the prophets and the faithful who followed Christ because their blood was found in Babylon.
2. There will be plagues, death and famine and in a single hour all Babylon's wealth will be laid waste.

John in this amazing vision sees that the great ones of Babylon and of the nations are the merchants of the earth (i.e., those who control the global system of finance and of trading, banking, interest and the global credit system) and that all the people of the earth were deceived by the sorcery of those who control this global system. Then we are told that the light of God, the voice of Christ (the Bridegroom) and the voice of the faithful (the Bride) will be heard no more in Babylon because all the nations of the world were deceived by Babylon's sorcery. The word sorcery comes from the Greek word (pharmakeia) (pharmacy) it can refer to all of the following: -

- Medication, medicine and by extension a drug, or spell-giving potion, (i.e., a druggist, pharmacist or poisoner) today this would be one who pushes or sells mind altering drugs.
- To those who by charm captivate or puts somebody under a spell.
- A scientist or wise man who predicts what is going to happen in the future.
- To those devoted to the practice of religion or to occult rituals or processes designed to influence or control the course of nature, to dominate others or circumstances (especially by tapping into forces unseen).
- To those who practice the art of forecasting the future (divination) with a view to avoiding its perils and pitfalls.
- To those who use their authority and power (especially religious power) to conquer the common or depressed class of people for their own agendas, goals and for selfish purposes.
- To those who control and influence the masses by doing things in secret.

The underlying spirit of all of these is trickery, deception and superstition, this clearly show why the Bible is against all forms of sorcery and wizardry, but sadly much of the world's religions and global governments are founded and survive on these very things. This is why a day is approaching when God will bring judgment on our Babylonian global world system.

Babylon and the World System of Money.

The Babylonians were money-lenders not only out of dedicated policy but with fervour, zest, and relish. Following is one of their proverbs that expresses this outlook very clearly: -

- The giving of a loan is like making love; the returning of a loan is like having a son born.

They were a breed of happy, proud, heartless and ruthless moneylenders. Their whole world of business moved in terms of credit and financing, and their whole concept of social control and of imperialism rested on usury. It is not surprising that Babylon the Great, the harlot, is the type in Revelation of the One-World Order which shall seduce all nations. For biblical economy, loans are not the basis of normal operation as with Babylon, but of abnormal circumstances. As such, and definitely as such, they have their place, but they operate in terms of absolute understanding as well as clear, definite and obvious restrictions.

The following are the two kinds of loans in the Bible that were recognized: -

1. To the believer without usury, but with security.
2. To the unbeliever, with usury and security.

In both instances the security is the something real, it is a tangible asset, in goods or in money that is transferred and involves only the two parties involved to the contract. Modern banking however, is radically different. Banks create money by an official authorization and by one party simply recording a loan and a deposit on their books.

The consequence of defaulting on this type of loan is not like the personal and limited action of a biblical loan, but inflation it results in the decreasing of the prior relationship of the money value to the value of the total goods and services and results in a decreasing of all money value.

Loans such as this means an element of robbery has occurred because such a system reduces the value of all other money previously in existence. Modern central banking (i.e. the Federal Reserve System) is modern applications of the old Babylonian principles and is equally seductive in helping to bring about the lure of the "Dream of Empire."

The Federal Reserve System: prior to the introduction of central banking, the ability to create money by an official authorization was relatively limited, and it depended in large measure on the confidence of the individuals in the local bank. Today, the instrument of control has passed to the Federal Reserve System, its directors and stockholders, the Treasury Department, the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, and other agencies who are engaged in manipulating the money supply.

Biblical law: is hostile to a money system that is based on credit, because it creates an abnormal and oppressive lifestyle of debt for a country or individual who lives by it. The Babylonian system of economics today is anti-biblical and as such will incur the wrath of God whose advance judgment Scripture proclaims that the merchants of the earth have grown rich from the power of Babylon's luxurious living (Rev. 18:3). In the book of Revelation is written, "Babylon the Great is fallen is fallen and the merchants of the earth shall weep and mourn over her fall because no one buys her gold, silver, jewels, pearls and fine linen anymore (Revelation 18:2, 11-12).

The groom, Jesus and the bride: the following verses show that the Lord Jesus Christ is the Groom and all faithful believers who belong to him (and collectively the faithful church) are the Bride.

- Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready (Rev. 19:7).
- I (John) saw the holy city, New Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband (Rev. 21:2).
- Then came one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues and spoke to me, saying, "Come, I will show you the bride the wife of the Lamb" (Rev. 21:9).

These verses show that all the faithful in Christ are bride and wife of the Lord Jesus Christ (the Groom), some may ask why? Simply this; a man only takes a woman who has proven her love and faithfulness to him for his bride and for his wife. Likewise the Lord Jesus Christ will only take those who have loved and been faithful to him as his bride and his wife.

The Voice of the Spirit and the Voice of the Bride.

Revelation 22:17 ----- 17 The Spirit and the Bride say, "Come." And let the one who hears say, "Come." And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who desires take the water of life without price.

This means that the call of God's Spirit, the call of Christ's Spirit and the call of all who have responded in faith to the Good News of the Gospel and who know the love and grace of God to the lost is, "Come, everyone come to the Lord Jesus Christ and be saved to eternal life and everlasting glory."

For further information concerning New Jerusalem, see the title: -

- A New Heaven, a New Earth and the Holy City Jerusalem Prepared as a Bride (Revelation 21) in, Resurrection (on website menu).

NOTE: never limit the church to only the established denominations, institutions and church buildings, they may be part of the worldwide body of Christ, but they are not the only part. The body of Christ is global and within this family of God are multitudes of small groups, families and friends meeting at picnics, coffee bars and their homes etc., to fellowship and praise the name of Jesus.

The early church in the New Testament had no buildings, they met wherever they could. Sometimes it was on a hill, other time by the riverside or at the seaside, but mostly in their homes. The church is the believers not bricks and mortar buildings so wherever believers are gathered to fellowship, for that moment they are the church not matter where they are and no matter what day they are gathered together in Christ's name.

End