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

Marriage and the Bride.

(2013)

The Bible not only reveals God's eternal plans purposes and promises

But also shows how you can know God for yourself.

Teach it, don't demand it.

Although I believe my aim is pure and God's will perfect this document is still the product of a human man. As to such I neither claim special knowledge or perfect understanding.

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Marriage and the Bride.

Topics.

- Abraham a type of God and Isaac a type of Christ.
- A bride for a son.
- Paul gives a picture of Christ and the church.
- The beauty of marriage.
- The bride dressed for her husband.
- A new age is coming.

NOTE: this is not a doctrinal teaching it is a devotional encouragement that has taken some poetic licence. In the following verses Paul says to comfort one another with the reality that Christ is returning this is what this message is focused on.

1 Thess. 4:16-18 ----- ¹⁶the 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: ¹⁷Then 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. ¹⁸Wherefore *comfort one another with these words.*

This study looks at how the Gospel of Christ is woven into the story and language of the Bible concerning: -

Abraham ---- Abrahams' Servant ---- Isaac ---- Rebekah.

In Genesis chapter twenty-two God tells Abraham to take his only Son and sacrifice him, Abraham and Isaac go together to the place of sacrifice. Isaac carries the wood and asks his father, "Where is the lamb for the offering?" Abraham replies "God himself will provide a lamb for the offering." Abraham attempts to sacrifice Isaac, but the Angel of the Lord stops Abraham and God provides the offering himself (Gen. 22:6-8) (Gen. 22:1-13). Because Abraham obeyed and passed the LORD'S test he is given an amazing promise of a great inheritance. God tells Abraham He will multiply his seed as the stars of the heaven and as the sand which is upon the sea shore. Abraham's seed will possess the gate of his enemies, and in his seed all nations of the earth will be blessed (Gen. 22:15-18).

NOTE: Abraham had two sons, Ishmael and Isaac, but regarding prophecy Isaac is considered as Abrahams only Son, because he came by a promise, a miracle birth and by the woman Abraham loved. Now here is the glory of Scripture notice the similarity Christ also came by, a promise, a miracle birth and by a woman God loved and just as Isaac went carrying the wood of suffering to the place of his sacrifice, Jesus also went with his Father carrying the wood of his suffering to the place of his sacrifice. The New Testament Bible student's heart begins to soar at the excitement when they read Abrahams reply to his son, they see the prophetic message, of Christ in Abraham's answer, "God himself will provide a lamb for the offering" echoing the future Lamb of God without blemish the Lord Jesus Christ. There is also a similarity between the two fathers. God; Jesus Father knew he would raise up His only begotten Son, and the author of Hebrews tells us Abraham Isaacs father knew God was able to raise up his only begotten son Isaac (Heb. 11:17-19).

Even in the language of the Bible we see the devotion is the same between Isaac and Abraham as it is between Christ and God. Abraham and Isaac refer to each other as "My Son" and "My Father" echoing another Father Son relationship. God and Christ use the same devotional language toward each other.

God is very personal to Christ and Christ is very personal to God, they have a unique relationship. Similarly each individual Christian should have their own personal and unique bond and emotional relationship with the Father and the Son. The relationship is very similar to human friendship, we all have friends, but our relationship to each one of them is different, not necessarily different in love, but different in communication and emotional experience.

Abraham a Type of God and Isaac a Type of Christ.

In the story concerning Abraham and Isaac we see woven into the language Abraham as a type of God the Father and Isaac as a type of Christ. Just as Abraham loved his only son, but was willing to sacrifice him for God's greater glory and Isaac willing carried the wood to his place of sacrifice, God also willing sacrificed His only Son for our greater glory and Jesus willingly carried the cross, both Isaac and Jesus were willing to be obedient to their fathers will even unto death. Here is great faith, Abraham, Isaac and Jesus not only showed tremendous faith, but also remained faithful to God in the face of extreme emotional and physical suffering.

Peter wrote: -

- The tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honour at the revelation of Jesus Christ (1 Peter 1:7-8).

It is not the persecution, hardship or crisis that is of primary importance, but whether our faith will survive through it (1 Peter 1:7-8). This is because faith that is tested is like gold and silver because after surviving the furnace of fire produces treasure and jewels fit for the crown of a royal king.

Malachi wrote: -

- Those who feared the LORD spoke with one another. The LORD paid attention and heard them, and a *book of remembrance* was written before him of those who feared the LORD and esteemed his name (thought upon his name in KJV) *they shall be mine*, says the LORD of hosts, in the day when I make up *my treasured possession* (make up my Jewels in KJV) and I will spare them as a man spares his son who serves him (Malachi 3:16-17).

To the secular world it seems foolish to love and give praise and glory to someone a person has not seen especially when they are under extreme trials and difficulties, but they don't see or understand that they are not praising God for the struggle or difficulty, but because he has loved them and is still loving them, He has saved them and will make them His very own when He delivers them to a new eternal world without suffering or pain. Those without Christ cannot see the supernatural comfort of God's love that dwells in the human heart of those who belong to Jesus. It is this indwelling love of God that burst forth in quiet thankfulness or excited praise to the God who created us all.

Remember we are looking at the story of Abraham and Isaac prophetically not historically. Many Bible passages contain historical facts, but within the language is, often hidden, echoes of Christ or shadows of a greater events and in many passages the climax of Christ's return. Now the story of Abraham and Isaac becomes really exciting because Abraham who is a type or shadow of God sends his servant out to find a bride for his son Isaac who in this story is a type of Christ.

A Bride for a Son.

Abraham sends his servant to find a wife for his son (Gen. 24:4-5). The servant is not named (allowing him to be a type of the Holy Spirit). Some say it is Eliezer because he was the steward of Abraham's household (Gen. 15:2), but for the sake of symbolisms he is not named in these events or the story. When the Bible uses symbolism and often in prophecy the characters are not named so that the message can transcend time, a particular person or people and local events, this principle is especially true when referring to Christ in the Old Testament. The servant goes and he takes ten Camels with him, he see a woman he thinks would

be a beautiful bride for his masters son, but he is unsure so he prays that the woman will come to the well and offer to give him and his Camels a drink of water so that he will know she is the one God has chosen, his prayer is answered and Rebekah (the woman) comes out to collect water (Gen. 24:9-16). The Scriptures tell us Rebekah was a virgin and very fair to look upon, so she was a beautiful looking girl, she becomes a type of the church loved by the Son, beautiful, obedient and humble.

NOTE.

Don't make the mistake of limiting the church to only the established religious institutions, denominations or church buildings, they may be a part of the body of Christ but they are not the only part. There are many individual Christians in all countries of the world who meet in coffee bars, social outings and mostly their own homes to give thanks to Christ and share their discoveries of God's word and their spiritual experiences with Him. Many of these people are helping others and simply manifesting the reality of their faith to the people that come into their lives. God is not limited to any one pattern or organisation; He is far too creative for that. Jesus church is global and is manifested in a vast variety of ways across the face of the earth.

For further information concerning the church, see the title: -

- Church (The definition of a Church).

In, Various Topics (ON WEBSITE MENU).

In the following verses Paul gives a picture of Christ and the Church.

Ephesians 5:25-32 --- ²⁵Husbands, love your wives, even as *Christ also loved the church*, and gave himself for it ²⁶That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, ²⁷That 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*. ²⁸So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loves his wife loves himself. ²⁹For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but *nourisheth* and *cherisheth* it, even as *the Lord the church* ³⁰For we are *members of his body*, of *his flesh*, and of *his bones*. ³¹For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. ³²This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning *Christ and the church*.

From these verses we learn: -

- The church is made up of individuals who belong to Jesus. He loves, nourishes and cherishes them and gave himself for them, he is, washing, cleansing and making them holy.
- Those in Christ at this present time are spiritual members of his global worldwide body who will be become one glorious nation and royal government with Christ when he returns in glory.
- Christ will present those whose faith has survived the trials, troubles, hardships and testings to God without blemish when he returns.

The book of Revelation states: -

- Jesus Christ, the faithful witness who loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood has made us kings and priests unto God and his Father is coming in glory and every eye shall see him, and they also who pierced him and all kindreds of the earth (Revelation 1:5-7).

And in Revelation chapter five we are told that: -

- Christ was slain, and by his blood he redeemed a people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation and made them a kingdom and priests to God and they shall reign on the earth (Revelation 5:9-10).

In our story of symbolisms: Rebekah the bride (a type of the church), had an amazing servant's spirit she not only offered to give a servant a drink from her water jar, but also went and fetched water for his ten Camels until they were finished drinking (Gen. 24:15-20). Abraham's servant (a type of the Holy Spirit) takes Rebekah the future bride to Isaac the son (a type of Christ) and he is so taken by her beauty he runs out to meet her (Gen. 24:17-20).

Imagine for a moment; the excitement of Isaac's servant (type of Holy Spirit) he has found more than he ever expected in Rebekah, he loved his master and his son and would be so excited to take this beautiful woman back to Isaac. Rebekah was the answer to the servant's prayer, she was willing to go to Isaac, remember she has never seen Isaac she is only going on what Isaac's servant has told her about him (type of Holy Spirit and church being the Bride) (Gen. 24:21-26).

Rebekah follows the servant: Rebekah rose and followed the servant (Gen. 24:61) and he took Rebekah to Isaac and thanks God for not leaving Isaac destitute of a bride (Gen. 24:27). Similarly God will not leave Christ destitute of a bride, every faithful believer who belongs to Christ is referred to as the bride of Christ, there is a marriage coming for them all, a bride without blemish a groom without fault and a kingdom of glory justice, joy and peace (how absolutely beautiful is the Christian message and the Scriptures!).

But the wonder of the symbolism does not stop here. Isaac is in the fields he lifts up his eyes and sees in the distance a cloud of dust and knows the camels are coming, he knows his servant is returning with his bride. Rebekah lifts up her eyes, and sees Isaac in the distance, imagine the moment, the excitement (Gen. 24:62-64). This is a picture of Christ and the church, Christians are enormously excited about seeing Christ, but how many of us realise that he is also excited to see us.

The King James Bible says, Rebekah lighted off the camel, how beautifully feminine is the language, she covers her face with a veil and approaches Isaac, imagine Isaac excitement, Rebekah lifts her veil and Isaac was blown away at her beauty, this is how Christ sees all who put their trust and faith in him (Gen. 24:65) and endure through the troubles and hardships of life so that they can one-day be with him in his glorious Kingdom. Consider how little of the human population is focused on Christ? It is the faith and passion in the heart of those who are devoted to him and his heavenly Father that Christ sees and loves.

Isaac takes his glorious and faithful bride to wife just as Christ will take all those who put their trust and faith in him (Gen. 24:66-67). The end of the story finishes with the words, and Isaac loved her, this is a beautiful picture of Christ and the church. Remember the word church does not embrace everyone simply because they confess to be Christians, in most instances when the Bible uses the term church, it means those that belong to Christ and those who do the will of his Father.

The will of God in this context is, loving your neighbour as yourself in the New Testament it is called the royal law and simply means do-good to others. Those who use people, especially those who belong to Christ for their own selfish gain and greed, sexually, financially, emotionally or even spiritually are referred to by Christ himself as workers of iniquity and cast out from his eternal Kingdom (Matthew 7:21-23).

The Beauty of Marriage.

I have attended many marriages and have never yet seen one where the bride is in sorrow instead she is in extreme joy and struggles to contain her tears of happiness. At one wedding I attended, the bride was so happy when she saw the groom she danced and raised her arms toward the groom as an overwhelming expressions of happiness and laughter, it was absolutely beautiful, but at the same time the groom when his eyes saw his bride approaching could not hold back his tears of overwhelming joy and gladness.

Paul tells us marriage is a picture of Christ and the church, as much as the faithful will be overwhelmed at seeing the exalted Groom he will be overjoyed to receive them into the royal mansion he has prepared. The following verse show that being accepted as the bride it is not so much about overcoming every sinful aberration and dysfunction of our fallen corrupted human nature that we inherited from our

earthly father Adam, but enduring in faith. The church in God's eyes are those who continue to love his Son and faithfully follow him regardless of the difficulty of their circumstances and hardship of their life, God calls these Christians Jewels, precious stones and valuable pearls.

Revelation 19:7-8 ----- ⁷Let 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. ⁸And *to her was granted* that she should be arrayed in *fine linen*, clean and white: for the fine linen *is the righteousness of saints*.

Righteousness of the saints in this context embraces the following two things: -

1. The righteousness that God grants as a pure and free gift to every faithful brother and sister in Christ.
2. All the works that are done in love.

After being saved through faith in Christ the thing that most delights the heart of God is seeing His people love their neighbour as themselves. Jesus said these five words sum up all of God's commandments. In the New Testament it is called the royal law. After acknowledging God exists and loving His Son showing compassion, kindness, mercy, grace and forgiveness to others especially our brothers and sisters in Christ is the next most precious thing to God's heart.

NOTE: not everyone who confesses to know Christ is part of his church there are those in his present Kingdom who he calls wicked servants. They use Christ name and his Gospel for their own selfish gain and line their own greedy pockets with the wealth and riches of this world by making merchandise of those who do belong to the Lord. Nevertheless Jesus knows those who are his and those who are not and will reject those who use his message of grace, mercy, compassion and love for their own selfish gain from entering his eternal glorious Kingdom when he returns (Matthew 7:21-23).

The Bride Dressed for her Husband.

Revelation 21:2-4 ----- ²I John saw the *Holy City, New Jerusalem*, coming down from God out of heaven, *prepared as a bride adorned for her husband*. ³And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and *he will dwell with them*, and they shall be his people, and *God himself shall be with them*, and be their God. ⁴And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.

Isaac and Rebekah gave birth to Jacob, Jacob gave birth to twelve sons who became twelve tribes and the nation of Israel, through great suffering and trials Israel gave birth to Christ and Christ gives birth to the church which also becomes a great nation. The climax of the church is pictured as the twelve tribes of Israel being the foundation with the twelve apostles being the structure of the Holy City the New Jerusalem, together the faithful of the Old Testament and the faithful of the New Testament become the bride of Christ and the marriage gives birth to an entire new age.

A New Age is Coming.

Revelation 21:22-23 - ²²I saw no temple in the city, 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*.

These amazing echoes and types become even more wonderful, Rebekah is told she will be the mother of thousands and millions and possess the land of her enemies (Gen. 24:59-60). Prophetic of the church in the millennial reign of Christ ruling as King of kings and Lord of lords on earth with his glorified, immortal and eternal faithful brothers and sisters from the Old and New Testament.

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