

SIGNS OF A MATURE CHURCH Preparing for the Wedding

Text: Revelation 19:7-9

Key Word: Bride

Key Thought: Have You Separated Yourself from this World as God's Holy Bride?

I. SIGNIFICANCE IN THE BEGINNING

When Adam woke up at the dawn of civilization, he was immediately engulfed in a world designed just for him. Everything was perfect. The grass was vivid green. The trees were splendid in their foliage. The water was beautiful, teeming with every kind of fish and reptile. The birds were singing, adding their beautiful colours to the sunsets.

One thing though seemed to get his attention. Everything that moved seemed to come in two's . . .

The mare and the stallion
the bull and the cow
the goose and the gander

But there was no one for Adam. God recognized the need even before Adam did. Everything had been made good. In fact, man had been made "**very good.**" **Nothing had been made wrong but something was missing.**

"The Lord God said, 'It is not good for man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him.'"

Genesis 2:18

Man was made in the image of God and therefore needed close fellowship with someone.

"So the Lord God caused man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man's ribs and closed up the place with flesh."

Genesis 2:21

The Hebrew word that describes the rib being taken means He "**broke man off.**" That rib contained not only bone but also the muscle, sinew, and blood of Adam.

*"Then the Lord God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of man (**broke off man**), and he brought her to the man."*

Genesis 2:22

I. SIGNIFICANCE IN THE BEGINNING (Contd.)

Adam's response was priceless. The Bible leaves out all the astonishment on his face and probably most of what he said except for a few words,

"This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called woman, (Isha) for she was taken out of man (broken off)."

Genesis 2:23

Once God had made the lifetime partner for Adam He told of how He wanted the relationship to be. Remember that there were no fathers or mothers when God said this.

"For this reason will a man leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh."

Genesis 2:24

God so loved Adam that He gave up that distinctively limited relationship so Adam could love his wife intimately. The only "father" that Adam knew was God. The creation process became complete when Adam "*became one*" with his wife.

The word "*wife*" in the Hebrew is "*calah*" which means "*complete*." It's interesting to note that the word "*calah*" is used when Moses had finished building the tabernacle in Exodus 40:33.

Why was it that Adam needed a wife to make him complete? Was not man made perfect in the image of God? God alone existed before creation so He didn't need Adam & Eve. Everything was void before God spoke the worlds into existence.

*** A few years ago an experiment took place at McGill University dealing with sensory perception. They took a live ape and made it like a heart/lung machine. They also took a live chimpanzee and directed the blood from the ape into the body of the chimp.

In the midst of the experiment they **cut the optic nerve** - so the chimp would not see **cut the auditory nerve** - the chimp could not hear **cut the throat** - so the chimp could not taste **cut the head** - so the chimp could not touch

The chimp was still asleep and still alive. As the anesthetic wore off the little chimp woke up. Monitors were hooked up to him so they could watch the thinking process. (Contd.)

I. SIGNIFICANCE IN THE BEGINNING (Contd.)

Tried to see - but couldn't
tried to hear - but couldn't
tried to speak - but couldn't
tried to touch - but couldn't

The monitors went wild; lights were blinking all over. They had created a hell for the little chimp to live in. He could only think but had no way of communicating his thoughts or feelings with anyone around him. Hell will be full of those kinds of people today. ***

The reason why God made the planet with oxygen and air and atoms was for the ultimate purpose of providing a life support for Adam and Eve. **God loved Adam so much that He was willing to share him with Eve.** The word for "*wife*," "*callah*" comes from the root word "*unlonely*." **God's ultimate plan was to make a BRIDE (His Church) and put them in a Paradise forever.**

*** When I was in my teenage years I had the opportunity to work on a local farm. I learned a lot about the nature of animals. There was not an animal on that farm that was attractive to me. I wanted a wife, not an animal.

Now I could have gone into Cornwall and purchased a mannequin and brought it home. I then could have got a 100-giga byte computer installed into its head. I then could have purchased a coloured monitor and dust covers to protect it and teach it to walk and talk.

I could have got someone from an IT department to write programs so it would dress itself, clean the house and take tremendous care of me. I could even have it fine tuned it so it would speak nothing but kind words. I could then say "*Now I got a wife.*" I could boast how she makes delicious meat and potatoes. My problem would be that no mannequin could make me complete. **Love is not love if it must be programmed to perform.**

God did not make a mannequin out of Adam. He allowed Adam to choose whom he would love. **God is a God of love so much that He was willing to let Adam love ANOTHER.** One of the names of God is "*El Shaddai*." The word "*El*" means "*Almighty God*" and the "*shad*" means "*a female breast*" speaking of His ability to sustain us and offer us pleasure in Himself.

II. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE NEW COVENANT

Thousands of years later, Jesus, the second Adam was also put into a deep sleep to make His Bride "*issha*."

“The Church's One Foundation
is Jesus Christ her Lord
She is His new creation by water and the Word;
From Heaven He came and sought her
to be His Holy Bride;
With His own Blood He bought her,
And for her life He died.”

The Bible says,

*“The Lord Jesus, on the night He was betrayed,
took bread,
24. And when He had given thanks He broke it and
said, "This is my body, which is [broken] for you; do
this in remembrance of me.”*

I Corinthians 11:23,24

Jesus allowed His body to be broken to make His Bride. Not only was His body broken, but also His Blood was spilt. The meaning of what Jesus did becomes so vivid when we consider the events leading up to a Hebrew wedding. A Hebrew wedding is a process, not an event.

A young Hebrew man acquires a wife over a period of one to two years. Both parents meet together to make a deal. Once the deal is made, the marriage is also made. The husband would probably not see his wife for a year or two once the marriage is betrothed. Each parent exchanged information about their son or daughter.

The son would then begin to prepare the house for his bride. Also, the bride would prepare for her husband - learning to cook, keep house, be a mother, be taught about sexuality. She was not told when her husband would come to consummate their marriage. The father of the groom oversaw the completion of the house ensuring everything is in order.

*"In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were
not so, I would have told you. I am going to
prepare a place for you.
3. And if I go to prepare a place for you, I will
come back and take you to be with me that you
also may be where I am."*

John 14:2,3

II. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE NEW COVENANT (Contd.)

God took 6 days to create the entire universe but He has taken almost 2000 years to prepare to receive His Bride and award her with the home (abode) He has prepared.

The Bride has a duty to keep herself ready for her bridegroom. Paul wrote,

"I am jealous for you with a Godly jealousy. I promised you to one husband, to Christ, so that I might present you as a pure virgin to Him."

II Corinthians 11:2

"This is what the Lord Almighty says: I am very jealous for Zion; I am burning with jealousy for her."

Zechariah 8:2

The day came when the Bridegroom has totally prepared for His Bride. He sent his best man forward with many other men, usually in the night. A cry would go out into the street, **"The Bridegroom cometh!"** The townspeople would awake from their sleep because of the cry. They would quickly make their way carrying oiled torches to the home of the Bride's father.

They came to take the bride from **"nassa"** (her father's house), to take her to husband's **"choppa"** (home). She would finally meet her husband who espoused her two years before. Seven days of rejoicing would commence. At the end of the seven days, the Bride and Groom would go into the **"choppa" [or bridal chambers]** to consummate their marriage sexually. The marriage was consummated only after the bride left her father and mother and cleaved to her husband.

"Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ Himself? Shall I then take the members of Christ and unite with a prostitute? Never!

16. Do you not know that He who unites himself with a prostitute is one with her in body? For it is said, 'The two will become one flesh.'

17. but whoever is united with the Lord is one with Him in spirit."

I Corinthians 6:15-17

The married couple would go into the chamber and lay upon the bed that had a clean, white sheet, while the family waited outside the door. Jesus Christ wants us to enter the **"choppa" [or bridal chambers]** with Him to be alone with Him and to establish intimacy with Him.

II. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE NEW COVENANT (Contd.)

When the virgin bride was penetrated, an issue of blood was emitted and deposited on the white sheet where the marriage had been consummated. The Bridegroom took the sheet, opened the door and handed it to the best man. Rejoicing began. The parents of the bride would carefully fold the sheet and put it in a safe place as a permanent evidence that their daughter had been a virgin.

"In the same way after supper He took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant [blood letting] in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me."

I Corinthians 11:25

The New Covenant was consummated with the Blood of Jesus. It was the New Cutting on the white sheet. When Jesus died the purpose of the temple was made complete **"callah."** The veil that was made of fine linen (indicating purity), was torn from the top to the bottom. The blood had been shed and the marriage had been complete. **No one was allowed in the temple when Jesus shed His Blood.** It was a private act. **Once the blood was shed, anyone could enter to prove that Jesus was now married to His Bride.** We are the Bride of Christ. He has prepared a place for us. Doesn't everything appear insignificant in this world compared to the fact that we are the Bride of Christ?

We must be separated from the world to be able to marry Jesus. That's why anyone who partakes lightly of the emblems of the New Covenant, place themselves in the dangerous position of mocking the Body and Blood of Jesus. Jesus wants to have intimacy with His Bride in the "choppa."

Mennonite women still wear hats as their **"choppa"** signifying that they are entering into their closet to have intimacy with God. We don't make love in a public place. **The Church of Christ needs to enter the Bridal chamber.** Are you mature enough to separate yourself from less important things to give yourself in this full manner to the Bridegroom of your soul?

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Date: Sept 4/22

Place: FCA

Time: 10:30 Am

Song: "Draw Me Close" - Bb

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Preparing for the Wedding

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Key Thought: Have You Separated Yourself from this World as God's Holy Bride?

I. SIGNIFICANCE IN THE BEGINNING - *Genesis 2:18; Genesis 2:21; Genesis 2:22; Genesis 2:23; Genesis 2:24; Exodus 40:33*

II. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE NEW COVENANT - *I Corinthians 11:23,24; John 14:2,3; II Corinthians 11:2; Zechariah 8:2; I Corinthians 6:15-17; I Corinthians 11:25*

DRAW ME CLOSE

Key Bb Hebrews 10:22

**DRAW ME CLOSE TO YOU
NEVER LET ME GO
I LAY IT ALL DOWN AGAIN
TO HEAR YOU SAY
THAT I'M YOUR FRIEND**

**YOU ARE MY DESIRE
NO ONE ELSE WILL DO
'CAUSE NOTHING ELSE
COULD TAKE YOUR PLACE
TO FEEL THE WARMTH
OF YOUR EMBRACE
HELP ME FIND THE WAY
BRING ME BACK TO YOU**

CHORUS

***YOU'RE ALL I WANT
YOU'RE ALL I'VE EVER NEEDED
YOU'RE ALL I WANT
HELP ME KNOW YOU ARE NEAR***

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DRAW ME CLOSE

Key Bb Hebrews 10:22

Bb C Eb/G F/A F/A G/B Bb C
DRAW ME CLOSE TO YOU, NEVER LET ME GO
F/A G/B Eb/G F/A Gm Am
I LAY IT ALL DOWN AGAIN
Gm/F Am/G Eb F
TO HEAR YOU SAY THAT I'M YOUR FRIEND
Bb C Eb/G F/A F/A G/B Bb C
YOU ARE MY DESIRE NO ONE ELSE WILL DO
F/A G/B Eb/G F/A Gm Am
'CAUSE NOTHING ELSE COULD TAKE YOUR PLACE
Gm/F Am/G Eb F
TO FEEL THE WARMTH OF YOUR EMBRACE
Bb C Eb/G F/A Bb C
HELP ME FIND THE WAY BRING ME BACK TO YOU

CHORUS

Eb/G F/A Bb
F/A G/B C

C G/B F/A C G/B F/A G/B
Bb F/A Eb/G Bb F/A Eb/G F/A
YOU'RE ALL I WANT YOU'RE ALL I'VE EVER NEEDED

C G/B F/A F/A G/B C
Bb F/A Eb/G Eb/G F/A Bb
YOU'RE ALL I WANT HELP ME KNOW YOU ARE NEAR

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