

The Bride of Christ

One day Jesus Christ, the Bridegroom, will return and rapture His bride, the church. Christians are the bride of Christ. Christians should be making themselves ready for Christ's return. We do not know when He will return. **Today is the day we must be ready.** Today is our gift. Jesus actually spoke of His return for His bride when He said to His disciples, *"And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also"* (John 14:3). These are wonderful promises for us. Christ is preparing a place for us, and He has promised He will come again for us. We will then be with Him throughout eternity.

The bride of Christ is "engaged" and in a covenant relationship with her Bridegroom. The Bridegroom paid the ultimate price for His bride. He shed His precious blood that we might have the gift of eternal life. We have not been redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold, but with the precious blood of the unblemished and spotless Lamb of God (I Peter 1:18-19). Jesus paid the ransom that we might have eternal life. **JESUS CHRIST IS THE PASSOVER LAMB!**

Many times in the Bible, the church is called the bride or wife of God. Paul wrote, *"Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her; that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she should be holy and blameless"* (Ephesians 5:25-27). Our Lord Jesus wants His bride to be holy. We have been justified by grace through faith, and we are in the process of being sanctified – being made more holy. In His high priestly prayer to His Father, Jesus said, *"Sanctify them in the truth; Thy word is truth"* (John 17:17). We have been set apart, and He has called us to be holy in **all** our behavior (I Peter 1:15). We are here in this world to glorify His holy name and be pleasing to Him as we grow in holiness.

What is God's will for us? God's will for us is our sanctification (I Thessalonians 4:3). It is His Word of truth that sanctifies us. We must daily study His Word, growing in our knowledge of who He is. Study His Word, pray, and have fellowship with other believers as you wait for your beloved Bridegroom. Then one day Christ will present to Himself the church, His bride, in all her glory. There will be no external spot and no internal wrinkle after we have each stood before the Judgment Seat of Christ.

Paul was the spiritual father to the church at Corinth. He had a godly jealousy for them that they would cling to truth and not be deceived by false doctrine. He wrote, *"for I betrothed you to one husband, that to Christ I might present you as a pure virgin"* (II Corinthians 11:2).

We are living in the world, but we are not of the world. This is not our home. Christ could return for His bride at any time. We know not the day nor the hour of His return. As we await His return, we are to be preparing ourselves and making ourselves ready. We are individually responsible for how we live our lives. God has given us all things pertaining to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us (II Peter 1:3). We should be watching, waiting, and ready for His return.

As we watch and wait for our Bridegroom's return. We are to be good stewards. We are to be faithful with what God has given us which includes our time, talents, gifts and money. We are to be witnessing to others. We are to be doing kingdom work. Are you looking and longing for His return? It is imminent. **He is coming for His bride!**

How will He come for His bride? Paul wrote, *"For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and thus we shall always be with the Lord. Therefore comfort one another with these words"* (I Thessalonians 4:16-18). This is when we will receive our glorified bodies. *"We know that, when He appears, we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him just as He is. And everyone who has this hope fixed on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure"* (I John 3:2b-3).

Christ will come for His bride when we least expect it, so we must always be ready. That is what faith is all about. We daily walk by faith seeking His will, asking for His wisdom and discernment, and living each day in the light of eternity. We should be doing all that we do with the right motive – to bring glory to God.

Paul, a man of God, knew that after the rapture, he must stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ and give an account of all his deeds as a Christian, whether good or bad (II Corinthians 5:10). On that day, each believer's work will be revealed with fire. The fire will test the quality of all we have done as Christians (I Corinthians 3:10-15). Therefore, Paul pressed on toward the goal.

After we each stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ, then our marriage to the Lamb will take place. Oh, what a day that will be! *“Let us rejoice and be glad and give the glory to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb has come and His bride has made herself ready. And it was given to her to clothe herself in fine linen, bright and clean; for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints”* (Revelation 19:7-8). Of all the names of Jesus Christ in the Bible, the name Lamb is used to speak of the marriage of Christ to His bride. Ponder Revelation 19:7-8, and write a prayer thanking God for your redemption. Thank Him that His Beloved Son, the Lamb of God, shed His precious blood that your sins might be forgiven. Thank Him now for the gift of salvation and eternal life.

Continue to press on toward the goal. You have a living hope. Be holy. Keep your eyes fixed on Jesus and seek first His kingdom and His righteousness. Do all that you do for His glory. The Lamb of God is worthy.

He will return for His bride. Prepare yourself. Be ready. Be holy!

Some questions we must each honestly ask ourselves:

Do I really **know** Him?

Am I living a life that is pleasing to Him?

Am I daily growing in holiness?

How am I preparing myself for Christ's return?

If Jesus returned today for His bride, am I ready?

(Note: All scripture was taken from the New American Standard Bible.)