

## Chapter XVIII

### THE BRIDE OF CHRIST

A number of years ago I wrote an article called *The Promise*. I have decided to include it in this chapter because it contains information that will be helpful in our study of *the Bride of Christ*. It is not a deviation from our subject, even though it was not written from the perspective of the study of prophecy. If you read *The Promise* with a receptive mind you will gain information that will enable you to understand who the bride of Christ will be. This information will help you to dispel the faulty claims of various denominations and sects under the canopy of Christianity that say they alone are the bride of Christ. Some of these do this with what seems to be rather convincing arguments, but these arguments cannot stand the test of the Scriptures, *rightly divided*. Thus in *The Promise* we read:

In the New Testament there are a number of times when various historical incidents, conditions, and blessings inherent in and fulfilled by the promise of the Person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ are referred to as *the promise*. This is a translation of the Greek word

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*epangellia*. In the twenty-six references listed below, all are singular and all are preceded by the definite article in the Greek text. Sometimes the article has been translated and sometimes it has not; but that these references are to historical incidents, conditions, and blessings which are associated with and find their fulfillment in the singular promise of the Person and work of Jesus Christ, I find evident.

As we examine these references it should also become evident to the reader that each promise has a direct connection with Jesus Christ and is therefore a part of a singular promise, even though on the surface it may appear to be one of many promises. For example, there are references to the Holy Spirit as the promise, but the gift of the Holy Spirit could not be given until Christ was glorified in His crucifixion, burial, and resurrection from the dead. Likewise there are references to eternal life as the promise, but this too finds its source in Jesus Christ. So whether it is the promise of the resurrection, or the deliverance of Israel from Egypt, or the promise of the birth of Isaac, or the promise that all of the families of the earth will be blessed through the seed of Abraham, each finds its fulfillment in, or for the purpose of bringing the Christ into the world to fulfill the promise of God.

Someone may possibly protest that the Holy Spirit was not given to the Old Testament saints to permanently indwell them, so how could the gift of the Holy Spirit be equated with salvation in Jesus Christ with Old Testament saints? It is true that the Holy Spirit was not given to them to permanently indwell them in their lifetimes, but we will see that He was given to them after Christ was glorified in fulfillment of the promise of God. The fact that few in this age are aware of the transaction which gave the promise of the Holy Spirit to them does not alter the fact

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of its New Testament authority. Thus the gift of the Holy Spirit is an essential part of the promise.

Paul wrote of the promise in his letter to the Ephesians when he described their relationship with God, both before and after their salvation:

Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; that at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from *the covenants of [the] promise*, having no hope, and without God in the world: but now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.

For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; and that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: and came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh. For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.

Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: in whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit. (Ephesians 2:11-22, emphasis mine)

We will not attempt an explanation of this portion of the Word of God at this time other than to point out that the many covenants of the Old Testament were all *covenants of the promise*. Therefore each of them had, or will have, their ultimate fulfillment in the Person and the work of the Lord Jesus Christ. Thus the promise of *the seed of the woman*, given to Adam in the judgment of the serpent, finds its end in Jesus Christ; and the preservation of Noah and his family from the flood preserved the lineage for *the seed of the woman*, as well as preserving a redeemable people through the lineage of each of Adam's sons; and the calling of Abraham out of Ur of the Chaldees and God's covenant with him confirmed the promise that had been previously made to Adam and

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Noah, that there would be a seed through whom all of the families of the earth would be blessed. And so it is with each successive covenant, whether it is the Abrahamic covenant confirmed to Isaac and Jacob, or the Mosaic covenant, or the Davidic, though individually given, all are inner-linked through the ultimate fulfillment of each in the Person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

This provides a common ground between Old and New Testament saints in the fact that through the Lord Jesus Christ we *both have access by one Spirit unto the Father. Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God* [this statement describes the redeemed of all ages]; *and are built upon the foundation of the apostles* [New Testament] *and prophets* [Old Testament], *Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: in whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit* (Ephesians 2:18-22, emphasis mine).

The following is a list of references to the promise: Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4; 2:33; 2:39 and Galatians 3:14 refer to the Holy Spirit as the promise; Acts 7:17 refers to the exodus as the promise; Acts 26:6 refers to the hope of the resurrection as the promise; Romans 4:13; 4:14; and 4:16 refer to the inheritance in Christ as the promise; Romans 4:20; Galatians 3:17 and 4:23 refers to the birth of Isaac as the promise; Romans 9:8 refers to those who are the children of the promise; Ephesians 1:13 calls the Spirit of God, *the Holy Spirit of the promise*; Ephesians 2:12 speaks of the covenants of the promise; Ephesians 3:6 speaks of the Gentiles as being *fellowheirs, and of the same body, as partakers of [the] promise*; Hebrews 6:15 and 6:17 refer to the Abrahamic covenant as the promise; Hebrews 9:15 refers to the eternal inheritance of the believer

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as the promise; Hebrews 10:36 refers to our salvation as the promise; Hebrews 11:9 refers to Israel as the land of the promise; Hebrews 11:39 refers to the results of the first advent of Christ as the promise; I John 2:25 refers to eternal life as the promise; and II Peter 3:4 and 3:9 refer to the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ as the promise.

These last two references do not present a problem respecting the use of this construction because the return of our Lord Jesus Christ provides the culmination of the promise, even our salvation, when we shall receive the redemption of our bodies. So as we are about to consider many of these references to the promise, and what it entails, we must consider a statement by the apostle Paul to the Romans: *Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you* (Romans 8:9-11).

These statements by Paul enable us to understand that the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit is essential to salvation because *if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his*. His presence is also essential to the resurrection from the dead. Therefore it was necessary at some point in time for the Old Testament saints to be given the Holy Spirit in order for God to fulfill His promise to them. We must never forget that *All Scripture is given by inspiration of God*; God cannot lie; He is Immutable; therefore when the Scriptures say *There is ... One Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all* this must be true of Old and New Testament saints alike. This can be seen in our Lord's proof

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of the resurrection to the Sadducees: *But as touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.*

Further, from the seventh chapter of the gospel of John, we know that the Holy Spirit could not be permanently given to them in the ages in which they lived because Christ was not yet glorified. So while the permanent presence of the Spirit of God was not a present-tense reality to the saints of the Old Testament, the promise of the Spirit was, nevertheless, their hope. Abraham looked for a city whose builder and maker was God, and Job knew that *though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God* (Job 19:26). Abraham and Job had the hope of the resurrection even though the truth of the indwelling Spirit and His quickening power for resurrection may have been hidden to them. Therefore: *these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made [complete]* (Hebrews 11:39-40, emphasis mine).

This statement does not mean that they were not saved. That would be a mockery of all that was written in the previous thirty-eight verses in the eleventh chapter of Hebrews. It means that they were not privileged to see the fulfillment of *the promise* in their lifetimes. Thus they died not having received *the promise* because *they without us should not be made perfect* (Hebrews 11:40). This means that they could not receive the Holy Spirit until we (in this age following the crucifixion, burial, and resurrection of the Lord) received the Holy Spirit because this is the age in which *the promise* was to be fulfilled. This is the age in which our Lord came to fulfill all that was written in the law, the prophets, and the Psalms concerning His first advent.

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Now with respect to the permanent indwelling of the Holy Spirit, John the Baptist said that Christ would baptize the Jews with the Holy Spirit, and our Lord promised the Jews, during the age of the law: *If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.) Many of the people therefore, when they heard this saying, said, Of a truth this is the Prophet (John 7:37-40).*

Thus the promise of the Spirit of God was an essential part of the promise of salvation, but as John explained, *the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.* Consequently after the crucifixion, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, Jesus told His disciples: *behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high (Luke 24:49, emphasis mine).*

The disciples of our Lord occupied the unique position of being a part of two different ages, the age of the law and what is called the age of grace. They were born as Jews under the covenant of the law and they were saved as Jews under the covenant of the law. Like those of that dispensation, the Spirit was with them, but He did not permanently indwell them. Then our Lord promised: *I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you (John 14:16-18, emphasis mine).*

At this point it is essential for us to remember that *God is not a respecter of persons.* So

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the promise to the disciples of the Lord must, of necessity, be a promise to those of similar circumstances (i.e., the Old Testament saints). Thus following His resurrection from the dead He told His disciples that they were to tarry in Jerusalem until they received the earnest of the Spirit; that is God's pledge, in the Person of the Holy Spirit, that He would fulfill all that had been promised to the fathers and to them. Thus Paul wrote:

That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him: in whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will: that we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ.

In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of *[the] promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption* [resurrection and glorification] of the purchased possession [Old and New Testament saints], unto the praise of his glory. (Ephesians 1:10-14, emphasis mine)

Our Lord also commanded them: *Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized* [i.e., with the Holy Spirit] *shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned* (Mark 16:15-16). So Jesus, before His ascension into Heaven: *being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me. For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence* (Acts 1:4-5, emphasis mine).

Thus our immutable Lord, having declared that faith and baptism with the Holy Spirit were essential to salvation, commanded that His disciples tarry in Jerusalem until they received this baptism; but this baptism was not just for them and believers of subsequent ages, it was also promised to the Old Testament saints. So when Christ was glorified, the disciples were given the

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Holy Spirit and so were the Old Testament saints when Christ led captivity captive and gave gifts unto men. This made the Old Testament saints to be complete in Him, because: *if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his* (Romans 8:9). Thus Paul wrote:

There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism [i. e., with the Holy Spirit], one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all. But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things [i. e., fill up a deficiency: by giving those whom He led out of Abraham's bosom into heaven the baptism of the Holy Spirit]). (Ephesians 4:4-10)

There is no conceivable reason why Paul should have related the event of Christ's leading *captivity captive* to the Ephesians (in context with the gifts of the Spirit) unless He was declaring that the Old Testament saints had received the gift of the Holy Spirit the same as the Ephesians. In his letter to the Colossians, Paul spoke of this transaction as a mystery that had been hidden, but was now made manifest to the saints (which must be those of both the Old and the New Testaments): *Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil the word of God; even the mystery which hath been hid from [times] and from [peoples], but now [was manifested] to his saints: to whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory: Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man [complete] in Christ Jesus: whereunto I also labour, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily* (Colossians 1:25-29, emphasis mine).

So, as we have already seen, the writer to the Hebrews told the redeemed Jews of the New

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Testament era that the Old Testament saints, some of whom were recorded in the eleventh chapter of Hebrews, could not be made perfect (i.e., complete) without us. Then to emphasize the fact that the redeemed Jews to whom he wrote were not under the law, but under a new covenant relationship provided by the Lord Jesus Christ, he wrote:

For ye are not come unto the mount [groping in darkness], and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest, and the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words; which voice they that heard intreated that the word should not be spoken to them any more: (For they could not endure that which was commanded, And if so much as a beast touch the mountain, it shall be stoned, or thrust through with a dart: and so terrible was the sight, that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake:) but ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn [i.e., to a gathering of the redeemed] which are written in heaven [i.e., in the Lamb's book of life], and to God the Judge of all, *and to the spirits of just men made perfect* [i.e., those who had been held in Paradise until Jesus led *captivity captive* and were then perfected by the baptism of the Holy Spirit], and to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel. (Hebrews 12:18-24. emphasis mine)

Therefore we must ask, who, at the time of the writing of the book of Hebrews, could *the spirits of just men made perfect* be if they were not Old Testament saints, whom Jesus led out of *captivity captive*? And who, at that same time, could the *general assembly* and residents of the *heavenly Jerusalem* be, if not the redeemed from all ages? While these are rhetorical questions and need not an answer, in order to really grasp the answer we may have to modify our thinking somewhat from former concepts.

Typically almost everyone under the canopy of Christianity refers to the body of Christ as the church. This is because the translators of our English Bible translated the Greek word *ekklesia*, *church*. However the word actually means *a called out assembly*. It could be an assembly for the Olympic games, or other sporting event, or an assemblage for any purpose. Our

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Lord said, *Upon this rock I will build my church*, thus distinguishing His assembly from any other type of assembly.

The fact that the translators used the word *church* for *ekklesia* tends to give us a bias when we read it in the Scriptures. Consequently we do not think of an assembly that our Lord has been calling out from the redemption of the first man, but we think of a building and its grounds, or we think of a New Testament organization. This is unfortunate because when we think of the body of Christ, we do not include the Old Testament saints in this body. Yet in Paul's argument in the second chapter of his letter to the Ephesians, he included them, and so did the apostle John in the book of the Revelation. If I were to ask, Who is the body of Christ or who is the bride of Christ? The answer from most professing Christians would be the church, with no thought of including any of the saints from Adam to Christ. Now consider the direct testimony of the apostle John:

And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me saying, *Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife*. And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal; and had a wall great and high, and had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, *which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel*: on the east three gates; on the north three gates; on the south three gates; and on the west three gates. *And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb*. And he that talked with me had a golden reed to measure the city, and the gates thereof, and the wall thereof.

And the city lieth foursquare, and the length is as large as the breadth: and he measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs. The length and the breadth and the height of it are equal. And he measured the wall thereof, an hundred and forty and four cubits, according to the measure of a man, that is, of the angel. And the building of the wall of it was of jasper: and the city was pure gold, like unto clear glass.

And the foundations of the wall of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones. The first foundation was jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, a chalcedony; the fourth, an emerald; the fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolite; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, a topaz; the tenth, a chrysoprasus; the eleventh,

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a jacinth; the twelfth, an amethyst. And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; every several gate was of one pearl: and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass.

And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it. And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof. *And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it:* and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it. And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there. And they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it. And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: *but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life.* (Revelation 21:9-27, emphasis mine)

Our consideration of the promise has forced us to rethink many of the doctrines which are a part of the doctrine of the church. Certain theologians like Scofield and Chafer have told us that the church's inheritance is separate and distinct from the inheritance of Israel. Many of them say that Israel's inheritance is strictly earthly and not heavenly, even though they will be a redeemed people. Yet, at the same time, they say that the church's inheritance is both earthly and heavenly (because the church will co-reign with Christ in the kingdom), and they speak of superior blessings for the church over Israel, which would make God a respecter of persons.

This concept was formulated in an attempt to establish the fact that the return of Israel to the land of Palestine and her restoration and Kingdom was not fulfilled in a spiritual sense by the church (which was taught in times past by the Roman Church and many Protestant Churches), but is a promise of God to Israel. Even so in establishing one truth, they have unwittingly shredded the promise for the saints of the Old Testament and have made them a sort of second class spiritual citizenry.

Some of these theories have a degree of truth associated with them and some not, but theological theories aside, we must acknowledge certain truths that have been revealed through

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our studies of the promise. First, the residents of the heavenly Jerusalem are those written in the Lamb's book of life. Second, the heavenly Jerusalem is the bride, the Lamb's wife. Third, the heavenly Jerusalem has twelve gates with the names of the twelve tribes of the nation of Israel inscribed thereon, which certainly suggests that redeemed Jews are residents of the city. Fourth, the heavenly Jerusalem has a wall with twelve foundations, which are named for the twelve apostles of the Lord, which tells us that the redeemed of this age are also residents of that city. Fifth, the apostle John tells us the ultimate state of those who are not residents of the heavenly Jerusalem: *And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire* (Revelation 20:15).

It cannot be any clearer than that. If a person's name is in the Lamb's book of life, he is a designated citizen of the heavenly Jerusalem, which is called, *the bride, the Lamb's wife*. There are no distinctions given for what age he has lived in. If he does not have his name in the Lamb's book of life, he will be cast into the lake of fire following the great white throne judgment. With this distinction, there is no place for the concept of a redeemed people not being a part of the bride of Christ, no matter what age they lived in.

So this brings us to the limited definition of the bride of Christ being solely the New Testament church. Consider this: If we think of the church as only that body of believers who were redeemed from the first advent of Christ to the end of the present age, we have a serious problem. What do we do with Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and the other Old Testament saints who according to this definition are not a part of the bride of Christ? If they are not a part of the bride, this would mean that their names are not written in the Lamb's book of life; and this, according

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to the twentieth chapter of the Revelation (20:15), would mean that they will be cast into the lake of fire at the end of the age; and this would make God a liar and the promise of God of none effect, which is an absolute impossibility. If, however, we see the bride as a called out assembly of believers from every age, recognizing that the Old Testament saints could not receive the Holy Spirit until Christ was glorified; and recognizing that *they, without us, could not be made perfect*; and recognizing that they, with us, were made perfect when Jesus led captivity captive and gave gifts unto men; then they, with us, are a part of the body of Christ; and they, with us, are living stones in the temple of God.

Now according to the promise in the fourteenth chapter of the gospel of John, believers are indwelt by the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, thus making their bodies a living temple. Consequently the temple that the Messiah is to build, according to the prophecy in Zechariah, has been being built with living stones, according to the testimony of Peter and Paul, from the first century until now. Thus we recognize that some of the materials for that temple were being gathered from the time of Adam until the first advent of Christ, but could not be a part of that temple until Jesus Christ, the Chief Cornerstone, was laid as the Foundation of the temple. Then they were made complete, by the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit, to be stones in that temple. Further, there are other stones that are being gathered in this age; and there are stones yet to be gathered after this age, during the great tribulation period; and the final stones will be gathered at the coming of our Lord, when Israel will look upon Him Whom they pierced and be saved. This will complete the heavenly Jerusalem. Then those who have their names in the Lamb's book of life will be assembled together in one body, the body of Christ, which we call the

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church, but is really *a called out assembly* of the saints and household of God.

Despite this evidence there will be those who because of traditional teaching will not want to accept this testimony. They will cling tenaciously to their former way of thinking. Some Baptists and others will insist that their particular denomination is the bride of Christ, offering one reason or another as proof. They will continue to argue against anyone but believers in this age being a part of the body of Christ. They will continue to use a statement made by John the Baptist (when he told the Jews he was not the Christ) as a proof text to show that John was not a part of the bride: *He that hath the bride is the bridegroom: but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice: this my joy therefore is fulfilled. He must increase, but I must decrease* (John 3:29-30). Consequently the limited bride people will say, *See, this proves that John was not a part of the bride, but was the friend of the bridegroom.* Actually all that this proves is that John was not the Christ. As to John's reference to the bride: at that time he was not a part of the bride because he was not permanently indwelt by the Holy Spirit, even though the Spirit had been upon him from before his birth. John, like the rest of the Old Testament saints, could not view himself as a member of the body of Christ during his lifetime because the body of Christ, like the temple, was not formed until Christ was glorified. Remember Jesus used the future tense when He said, *Upon this rock I will build my church...*

If those who have difficulties with these truths would read again the testimony of the apostle Paul in his letter to the Ephesians (without the preconceived notion that Paul was only speaking of Jews and Gentiles who make up the church in this present age), they will see that the

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body of Christ and the temple of the Lord are one and the same and are comprised of both Old and New Testament saints. This, after all, is the promise of God:

Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; that at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of *[the] promise*, having no hope, and without God in the world: but now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.

For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; and *that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross*, having slain the enmity thereby: and came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh.

*For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father. Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: in whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.* (Ephesians 2:11-22, emphasis mine)

Now that we have completed *The Promise* and know who the bride will be, we need to know when the marriage supper of the Lamb will take place. It should be obvious that the marriage supper of the Lamb cannot take place until the bride is complete, and the bride will not be complete until the coming of our Lord, when the Jews look upon Him Whom they pierced and believe and are saved. This in fact is when the marriage will take place. However many Christians have been taught that the marriage supper of the Lamb will take place in heaven, before the return of our Lord to this earth. The reason for this is the exclusion of Israel from the bride and the fact that the marriage supper is spoken of in the Revelation before the return of our Lord to this earth; but as we have seen so many times before, the order in which Scripture is written does not necessarily represent a chronological order of fulfillment:

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And after these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God: for true and righteous are his judgments: for he hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand. And again they said, Alleluia. And her smoke rose up for ever and ever.

And the four and twenty elders and the four beasts fell down and worshipped God that sat on the throne, saying, Amen; Alleluia. And a voice came out of the throne, saying, Praise our God, all ye his servants, and ye that fear him, both small and great. And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, *Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.*

Let 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. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb.* And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God. And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me, See thou do it not: I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.

And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself. And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God. And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.

And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God; that ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great.

And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army. And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone. And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh. (Revelation 19:1-21, emphasis mine)

## The Bride of Christ

We shall consider the marriage supper of the Lamb in detail in our next chapter, *Events Associated with the Second Coming*. However, it should be noted that in the above text, *the Lord God omnipotent reigneth* before the marriage supper of the Lamb, and before the description of the second coming of our Lord. Thus, once again, we have a display of things that are written together, or in sequence with one another, that are not necessarily fulfilled together or in sequence with one another.