

WCCC 2017
His Wife Has Made Herself Ready (1)
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When John saw the vision in the Book of Revelation, there was the Lamb in the center of everything. We also pray that during this conference the Lord will be right in the center of everything. Now I have been given the easy task of sharing on the marriage of the Lamb. Many young people become excited immediately when they hear about marriage. Indeed this is a very happy occasion. I do not know if you ever picture heaven being happy. But when we turn to Revelation 19, we see a happy heaven.

Revelation 19:1-9.

After these things I heard something like a loud voice of a great multitude in heaven, saying, "Hallelujah! Salvation and glory and power belong to our God; because His judgments are true and righteous; for He has judged the great harlot who was corrupting the earth with her immorality, and He has avenged the blood of His bond-servants on her." And a second time they said, "Hallelujah! Her smoke rises up forever and ever." And the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshiped God who sits on the throne saying, "Amen. Hallelujah!" And a voice came from the throne, saying, "Give praise to our God, all you His bond-servants, you who fear Him, the small and the great." Then I heard something like the voice of a great multitude and like the sound of many waters and the sound of mighty peals of thunder, saying, "Hallelujah! For the Lord our God, the Almighty, reigns. 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." It was given to her to clothe herself in fine linen, bright and clean; for the fine linen is the righteous act of the saints. Then he said to me, "Write, 'Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.'" And he said to me, "These are true words of God."

Let us have a word of prayer:

Lord, we have a long day today. There are many things to consider before You, and now we ask that You might lift us up by the Spirit like John to the heavenly

places and cause us to join in the gladness, the Hallelujahs, and the praises of what the Lord God has done. We will all say together looking at the Lamb ‘Hallelujah for the Lord God Almighty reigns!’ With the hosts of heaven we will rejoice, be glad, and give the glory to Him. Help us tonight as we consider this matter of the marriage of the Lamb. May Your Spirit encourage us to press on in preparation of the bride. We pray in the name of our Lord Jesus, Amen.

Here we see the first time in the Bible that Hallelujah is being shouted in heaven. In the Old Covenant, we see that Hallelujah was a command to praise the Lord for the children of God upon the earth. But here we find up in heaven they are singing Hallelujahs. They are rejoicing. They are glad. Heaven has been looking at the mystery upon the earth. They are now celebrating for three reasons:

1. The harlot has been thrown down. This false Babylon the harlot church has done damages upon the earth for centuries against the Lord Jesus. Now she is being thrown down forever and heaven said Hallelujah. They love the smell of her judgment rising up from the earth.
2. They sing Hallelujahs because the bondservants and martyrs have finally been avenged.
3. Now looking down on earth, they say Hallelujah because the marriage of the Lamb has come and the bride has made herself ready. This is indeed a happy day. The Lord has to take that harlot church away and avenged those who have been martyred before they can get on with the celebration.

All of heaven was looking down on the earth. What was happening on earth? Why were they in rebellion? Why was God’s name not being honored? But now the mystery is over and the Lord God is reigning. His righteousness, holiness, and love have been vindicated. All heaven is glad because up in heaven, they have been preparing for this marriage upon the earth. Now you all realize there are two marriages, two brides mentioned at the end of the Book of Revelation. This marriage has to do with the earth and its fulfillment of the millennium. This is a bride who has been prepared to sit on the throne with our Lord Jesus Christ over His kingdom here on earth for a thousand years. Everybody up in heaven says this is how it should be. The Lord reigns. Hallelujah.

Can you imagine the Apostle John's heart when he saw these events? There he was exiled and was going through persecution, and then he got swept up to heaven. He saw scrolls. He saw trumpets. He saw bowls. He saw all kinds of terrifying things. These all come to pass and now it is the marriage of the Lamb. This Apostle John was one of the first brothers who heard John the Baptist said 'There is the Lamb of God'. Now the Lamb of God is reigning on His throne and is getting married.

Then it talks about the bride. Then it goes on to say that everyone who has been blessed has been invited to the marriage feast. Even in heaven, just like the Chinese, they like a good wedding feast. Since I have become a dual citizenship of America and China, I have gone to many Chinese wedding feasts. It is amazing how many courses you can have. There has never been anything like it in heaven or on earth. Sometimes at the ceremony there are only fifty people and then at the banquet there would be two hundred people.

They are now celebrating in heaven. We know they are rejoicing because the marriage feast of the Lamb has come. The next phrase tells us that the bride has made herself ready. We have such a problem with brides being on time. Have you seen a Chinese wedding where the bride is on time? If we see that, we would say Hallelujah. I remember one time I was performing a wedding ceremony, and the bride arrived right on time. However, after they got out of the limo, the bride found out she forgot her veil. Do you know what they did? They cut part of the dress to make the veil. The bride is always late. Praise God the bride has made herself ready.

There is a brief moment in time when you take it in terms of eternity where Satan had not only rebelled but caused corruption and problems on the earth. But now through all those upheavals of histories, through all ups and downs, through all the temptations to worldliness, against all the forces of death and corruption in this fallen world, and against the condemnation of Satan himself, the bride has made herself ready. And because of the great grace of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit sanctifying and preparing her, she teaches heaven the song 'Amazing Grace'. Now the signal that the bride is ready was when the man-child was raptured up to the throne. This wedding feast and this marriage will begin the most beautiful era of the history of this earth. Brothers and sisters, you are not being prepared by

Jesus' salvation just for heaven. You are being prepared to live with Jesus and to reign with Him upon this earth for a thousand years with righteousness, holiness, love and truth. All that is good, noble and right will be taking place during that millennium. So are you ready for the thousand years? I hope you are not planning to skip the thousand years.

Now it is true Brother Wong said God will give you another test after a thousand year and you will pass. When the new heavens and the new earth are formed, the bride will come down from heaven including every blood bought children. Our Lord Jesus has set apart an inheritance just for you during the thousand years. You will discover why you were born and what you were meant to be. Your entire purpose will be fulfilled during that time. Tonight, we want to praise God that the bride has made herself ready.

Now in this preparation, I just want to use the story of Isaac and Rebekah from Genesis because they give us a picture of this great mystery of Christ and the church. In the story of Rebekah in Genesis 24, if I could I would like to underscore three parts.

1. Behind the whole chapter was the Father's persistent plan.
2. Through it all, we see the Holy Spirit's perfect preparation.
3. Regarding Rebekah, we see the surprise of her destiny for glory.

What we need is to be caught up by the Spirit to heaven to see the bride is prepared already. That was what John saw. In the mystery of the bride's preparation, it is already finished in heaven. The bride has made herself ready. It is here on earth that things are almost ready. Why would the Holy Spirit show John this picture of the bride having made herself ready? It is because on earth everything is almost prepared. So let us see this wonderful story.

Genesis 24:1-4 Now Abraham was old, advanced in age; and the Lord had blessed Abraham in every way. Abraham said to his servant, the oldest of his household, who had charge of all that he owned, 'Please place your hand under my thigh, and I will make you swear by the Lord, the God of heaven and the God of earth, that you shall not take a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I live, but you will go to my country and to my relatives, and take a wife for my son Isaac.'

Genesis 24:58 Then they called Rebekah and said to her, 'Will you go with this man'? And she said, 'I will go.'

Genesis 24: 63 – 76 Isaac went out to meditate in the field toward evening; and he lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, camels were coming. Rebekah lifted up her eyes, and when she saw Isaac she dismounted from the camel. She said to the servant, 'Who is that man walking in the field to meet us?' And the servant said, 'He is my master.' Then she took her veil and covered herself. The servant told Isaac all the things that he had done. Then Isaac brought her into his mother Sarah's tent, and he took Rebekah, and she became his wife, and he loved her; thus Isaac was comforted after his mother's death.

First, we want to look at what is behind the story and that is the Father's insistent purpose. It is an amazing fact that Genesis 24 is the longest chapter in that book. There are so many important stories in Genesis but this is the longest because it is describing what is behind the Father's purpose for His Son to have a bride. All of those sixty something verses is to show us something important. There is a spiritual point behind the story. It is that God the Father has a chosen specific bride for His chosen Son for His chosen purpose. Rebekah had no idea how stubborn Abraham was about this plan. Rebekah had no idea how much Isaac would love her. But love was behind this story. She was chosen in love. Praise God we are saved. It is still very hard to grasp that we have been chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world that we should be holy and blameless before Him in love. In this story of Abraham's stubborn persistence, we see behind it God's stubborn persistence. Long before Abraham ever saw the glory of God, in the darkness of Mesopotamia, God chose a family – Abraham's family from Shemmites living in Mesopotamia. God chose that family to bear the seed of His own Son Jesus Christ. Now we have no idea why He picked Terah, that is, Abraham's father's family. We know they were sinners. They had sin in their DNA. You notice in that family there was a lot of deceitfulness. You think of Jacob; how about Uncle Laban; and the sneakiness of Rebecca. There was DNA of sinfulness there. Anyway, God chose Abraham's family even with all those sins. We cannot imagine but there were some good things about that family. They were stubborn. They were steadfast. They were willing to take long trips by faith. Somehow their spirit could sense the holy presence of God.

As Genesis 24 opens, Abraham had this stubborn desire: I got to find a bride for Isaac. Twice it mentions that Abraham was very old. He was respected; even feared. He was very wealthy. He gave everything he had to Isaac. Why did Abraham insist that the servant tried to find the bride at that particular time? If you follow the sequence of Genesis carefully, you get a little clue. Genesis 22 is about the offering of his son Isaac upon the altar. This was speaking in type Isaac's obedience that brought him into sonship. There was Isaac, willing to be obedient even unto death. Now the father wanted to give him everything. The son had proven himself. The father said, 'He is my son. He needs glory'.

In Genesis 22 when the story ended and they met Jehovah Jireh, you find in verse 20 of chapter 22, Abraham got word that back at home, his brother, Nahor had eight sons. And Abraham thought of finding a bride for his son. If that was not enough, chapter 23 was all about Sarah's death. We find Isaac mourned in broken heart over the loss of his mother. Abraham said we must find the bride for Isaac. This is such a pretty picture of the love that the Father has for His Son who gave His life upon the cross. When He rose, God highly exalted Him and gave Him a name that is above every other name. Along with this exaltation of the Son, God the Father said His Son needed a bride. There are so many times in the New Testament that this exaltation of the Son was spoken of. In Ephesians 1:22-23, we read of the great power which He brought about in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and sat Him at His right hand in the heavenlies far above all rules and authority and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. And He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all. The bride is in the picture now. The fullness of Him who fills all and in all; is this not a wonderful definition of the bride? So we know the Lamb is sitting at the right hand of the Father; His name has been exalted. The enemy has been made His footstool. Every creature is bowing. Every tongue is confessing. Everything in heaven is prepared for the wedding. The angels are rehearsing that song. The feast is ready. The invitations have been sent out. Now the Lamb is waiting. Just like Abraham sent out his servant, the Father has sent out the Holy Spirit to gain a bride for His Son. All that was going behind the scene is the Father's persistent plan.

Now we look at the faithful servant who went out. This speaks to us of the Holy Spirit. Abraham's request to Eliezer was all but impossible unless God was arranging things behind the scene. The first thing he said, 'Find a bride for my son. I do not want a Canaanite. I do not want a Moabite. I want a bride from my own family.' Abraham had been out of contact with his family in Mesopotamia for more than a hundred years. He was asking his servant to go out five hundred miles and find the right girl. She had to be suitable. She had to be beautiful. She had to be part of the family, bone of my bone. What a task!

Of course, the servant went out under this oath. Even when he got there, the task was almost impossible. Once he found her, he had to convince Uncle Laban. Now this servant came out of nowhere with ten camels and a story. He talked about his master and his master's son and the fact that they were millionaires. But Laban had heard this kind of story before. Rebekah was his sister. She was a slave around the house. Now the decision still rested on Rebekah. From the story, we know that Rebekah pretty much had her way with Isaac. She was strong. She was stubborn. Could the servant convince Rebekah to leave her home, travel five hundred miles, and meet someone she has never seen and to marry him by faith? I do not think it was the gold that made Rebekah go. I believe it was the testimony that the servant gave of what was going on back home and of how God led him on his journey right to her. This is just a simple picture.

Now let us change it and think of the impossible mission that the Holy Spirit has. He has to make us the bride. First the Holy Spirit has to go out to us and convince us of sin, righteousness and judgment. How long did it take you to get saved? The Spirit has to work on you a long time. Did He not? He has to convict you of sin and you know what sin is. It is when you do not believe in the Lord Jesus that He is the Son of God and our Lord. It is sin when you do not believe in Him. Then He has to convince us what righteousness and judgment are. As we know, no one can be the bride of the Lamb who has not been purchased by His precious blood. Then the Holy Spirit has to take us and transfer us out of the bondage of darkness to the kingdom of His Son. What a transformation that has to be made from Babylon to Canaan; or as we sang tonight Immanuel's land.

Then the Holy Spirit has to work on our minds – to transform and renew our minds about holiness and about who Jesus is. Can you imagine how long it took for the Holy Spirit to show us the beauty of Jesus? How the Spirit has to work to show us the beauty of holiness, the beauty of submission, the beauty of obedience. All these things seem negative in the world.

In the early days of our walk, especially when we got discouraged, the Holy Spirit came to us and reminded us of the miraculous circumstance of how Jesus came to us and saved us. Then the Holy Spirit has to separate this bride from Babylon and get her all the way to Immanuel's land. You have a brother Laban also and that is your flesh and you do not want to be apart from your flesh. But for the sake of the Bridegroom, you come to the cross and accept the crucifixion of your flesh and walk in the Spirit towards the Bridegroom. Do you remember when you first got on the camel? You had a lot of your worldly goods along with you. How much can you carry of your worldly goods on the camel? The servant brought ten camels with him and probably nine of them were for Rebekah. But the closer she got to Isaac, the more she had to strip of the things that were important to her. How does the Holy Spirit keep us on the camel? Have you ever ridden on a camel? If you been to Israel, you probably have ridden a camel. One friend I know who went on one, promised he will never go on one again. You know the bride can fall off the camel. Temptations may come. The enemy may attack. There are mirages in the hot desert. Then the reason why most of us fall off the camel is that we fall asleep. That is one of the biggest problems the bride has in her preparation. She falls asleep. So day by day, the Holy Spirit has to get you back on the camel. If you fall off, He has to pick you back up. Every night by the campfire He tells you stories about your Bridegroom.

As they are traveling day by day, the bride needs to discover how to act. She has to be trained in holiness, righteousness, and love. The Holy Spirit has to work on our inward beauty. The Holy Spirit sanctifies us spirit, soul, and body. The cross is applied to our lives. He disciplines our lives. We have to learn this important lesson. The bride of the Lamb has to live by the Lamb's life and not hers. Has the Holy Spirit been working on you? Are you being prepared as the bride? Are you going through the desert on the camel? The Spirit will bring the bride to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.

That is where the story of Isaac and Rebekah gets a little strange for us because the bride's preparation for the Lamb is corporate. We are not just being prepared as individuals; we are being built together as a corporate bride for the Lamb. The Spirit joins us together – every tribe, nation, and tongue. This bride, corporately, is the fullness of Him who fills all and in all.

Now how can the Holy Spirit do that? Do you believe He can do that? Do you believe He can not only prepare your life but all of our lives to be the bride? How big is the bride going to be? An innumerable multitude all made ready by the Holy Spirit. How can He do this task? Now we learn the secret. Of course, the Spirit can do anything. But all that He does upon us has already been accomplished by the finished work of the Lamb. That is why we are the bride of the Lamb. It is the Lamb of God who died on the cross for the church. The church was born as the water and blood came out of His pierced side. With all the sanctification and preparation, the most important thing the Spirit does is to show to us the love the Lamb has for us.

I am sure most of you heard of the Moravians, who in 1700s had a revival of body life and of many things. I think they meditated on what it means to be in the Lamb of God more than any group of saints that I know. In the Moravian hymn books, there are hundreds of hymns on the Lamb of God. Count Zinzendorf always exhorted his people to hide in the wound of the Lamb. They sang a hymn. I will sing just four lines for you.

The Lamb, the husband of our souls
Still bears indeed His wounds and holes
Yet it is His bleeding wounded side
The chamber of the bride

You know your life is in this Lamb who loves you so? You know you are the bride if you love the Lord with all your heart. Have you been captured by the Lamb? Well that is the Holy Spirit's work.

Finally, we look at the bride's surprise that she was predestined for glory. Up to the day that Rebekah met the servant, she had no idea of her predestined life. Probably she did not know about Abraham or the greatness of Isaac or his offering

on Moriah or Abraham's urgent plan for her. She was just a simple shepherdess working in the field. She had no idea she was destined to bear the lineage of the King of kings and Lord of lords. Then came the day she received the call from the servant. The servant looked at her. She was beautiful. She was a virgin. If you are unmarried, you wear different clothes. She was hospitable. She had a servant's heart. She fed the camels. The servant was afraid to ask the question. Was she from the chosen family? But he asked Rebekah. She was from Abraham's family. He fell down and worshipped. He hugged and kissed her and gave her golden rings.

That is like us. We are saved and we have no idea of the purpose we are called for. We are glad that we got saved and that we are going to heaven one day. Now we should be good till we get there. We have been foreknown, called, justified, and glorified. Who would have thought such a thing?

Is it not true? Many Christians have no idea why they are saved. Here is this whole eternal purpose of God behind your being saved and you have little idea of it. It is a surprise. Did it surprise you? Did it help you to realize that we have a high calling?

My simple responsibility this time of sharing is to declare to you that the Lord is calling His church to be His bride now. The singular most important thing in your spiritual life now is to be prepared as the bride. Servants of the church of God I know have many plans, gospel plans and church plans. But none is more important than the bride being made ready. Look at all that is going on in Washington right now. There is a health cut thing and the tax cut thing. There is problem with the White House thing. The news just goes day and night. They are all insignificant compared to you being prepared as a bride. The churches in Revelation 2 and 3 heard the clear call to be the bride. But we see the tragedy that many are called but few are chosen.

The Lord Jesus right up to the moment when the rapture comes is going to be calling the whole church to come out and to be the bride. What is this mystery that many are called but few are chosen? How does the bride know she is chosen? She does not. She does not look at the mirror and say 'Ah I am one of the chosen. He got to choose me, I am so beautiful'. How do you know that the bride has been

chosen? It is because the attention has been drawn away from herself as she looks to the Lamb of God. Here is the proof that you are not only called but chosen. It is right here in Rebekah's story. She said, 'I will go.' That is what the bride says, 'I will go'.

Up in heaven in this vision, the bride has already made herself ready. Down here on earth, there is a correspondence to that preparedness in heaven.

- 1) She has forsaken all earthly idols and worldly treasures as she is captured by her first love
- 2) She will be on the way to the Lamb when the rapture comes. Maybe you say you are a brand-new Christian, how can I be prepared as the bride? It does not matter how long you have been a Christian. Are you on the way towards Him on the upward call? The bride here on earth is learning how to abide in the life of Christ. On earth she has learned to overcome spiritual warfare by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony and by laying down her life.
- 3) On earth she is weaving her life together with others who love the Lord in a garment that is ready for the marriage.

Brothers and sisters, the bride is ready in heaven. The bride is ready on earth. She is not perfect but she is on the way. There is no time left. She is ready now. It could be any moment. But wait there is time for one more. Are you absolutely ready to follow the Lamb wherever He goes? It will not be long now. Will you follow Him to the end? Will you be watching and praying? This may be just around the corner. The bride is ready. The rapture comes. The wedding takes place. There is nothing more that we need to have. Be ready tonight. Unless you understand the priority of being prepared as a bride, I do not think you will not be ready.

I take Paul's threefold statement and make it present tense for you and I. Are you running the race? Are you fighting the fight? Are you keeping the faith? Then there is stored up for you the crown of righteousness which the Lord will give to you and to all those who love His appearing. The reason the Lord wants us to see the revelation of the bride prepared in heaven is to draw us into that perfecting moment for the rapture. You may be a young person here tonight. I do not know how long your life will be. But you pursue the Lamb tonight and you will be ready

for Immanuel land and that one thousand years with your Bridegroom. Let us rejoice and be glad for the marriage of the Lamb is come and the bride has made herself ready.

Let us pray:

We rejoice, O Lord we rejoice. We rejoice to hear that the news is so close at hand. We rejoice that everything has been prepared. We rejoice there is a bride beyond our imagining even now, ready for the marriage of the Lamb. Turn the hearts of any who has fallen off the camel and have them get back on and head towards the Bridegroom. Encourage the hearts of those who have been traveling for many years and are still waiting for the Bridegroom to come. Renew our hearts to understand that this is Your highest priority in these last days. This we pray in the name of the Lamb. Amen.

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