

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES

"Teaching the things concerning the kingdom of God..."

FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE

Part 134

THE WOMAN AND THE MANCHILD

"And there appeared a *great wonder in heaven*; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars" (Rev. 12:1).

Many Christians today are concerned with what they call the "signs of the times" or the outward "signs" of certain events in the world which they suppose fulfill particular prophecies of scripture and point to the end of the world, the end of the age, or the so-called second coming of Christ. While we do not deny that we are living in a transition of ages, the fact is these precious people have no understanding whatever of what God is doing in this significant hour for they are looking at the *wrong signs*! Even God's elect must beware lest the political, economic, military, geophysical, and even religious upheavals occurring throughout the world distract our attention from what the Spirit is saying to the body of Christ, and from receiving from the Father His instructions concerning His great plan and purpose in this new day of the Lord.

Jesus once told His audience that when they saw a cloud rising in the west, they knew a shower was coming, and that when the south wind blew they knew they could expect a heat wave. "*You hypocrites!*" He said, "*You know how to interpret the appearance of earth and sky; but why do you not know how to interpret the present time?*" (Lk. 12:54-56). They could predict the weather with accuracy but failed to recognize HIM who had come from heaven to usher them into God's kingdom! You see, my beloved, the scribes and Pharisees were able to interpret natural, outward, earthly signs, but had no comprehension at all of *spiritual, divine, heavenly signs*! There are vast multitudes of the Lord's people today who, sad to say, are no different than those scribes and Pharisees in that far-off day of blindness and unbelief. Like them, they are looking at the wrong signs in an effort to discern the times! Therefore they speak of earthly signs and miss the revelation of Jesus Christ!

Many a sermon has been preached on the *signs of the times* and practically none of them have taken note of the fact that in the whole book of Revelation the word "sign" (wonder) is used only three times. In each case the sign is "in heaven" — in the realm of the spirit! Not once is there a sign given *on earth* to indicate where we are in God's great program of the ages! I

remember when I was a child in the Pentecostal Church, they always spoke about going to heaven as “somewhere” out beyond the blue, but in due time I began to question that, because the heavenly realm is the spiritual dimension where God lives as eternal, omnipresent spirit. It’s not on some far away “isle of somewhere,” wearing a white night gown and playing a harp! It’s where our heavenly Father dwells *as spirit*, and He longs for you and me to be joined together with Him and to dwell in His presence, and hear Him speak to us and send us forth in the power of His Spirit until the whole world shakes and is transformed by the presence of our God. Heaven is nought but the omnipresent realm of the spirit which upholds all things and fills all things. It is all about us just as the air is all about us and in our lungs and permeating every cell of our body. It is a higher realm than the physical world of matter, but it is not a far-off place. It is a dimension of life, glory, authority, holiness, wisdom, knowledge, and power which transcends every natural, earthly, and physical thing. The “signs” given us in the book of Revelation are *all* in heaven, in the spiritual world, and that is why they can be seen and interpreted *only* in the spirit and by the spirit! Can we not see by this that all who are looking at wars, famines, earthquakes, tsunamis, pestilences, worldly rulers and empires, and a thousand more *carnal, earthly things* are beholding there no vision whatever of the time in which we live in the purposes of God!

In Matthew chapter twenty-four Jesus did indeed give His disciples some outward, earthly signs that would point to the fall of Jerusalem, the destruction of the temple, and the dispersion of the Jewish people in A.D. 70. But those were all *earthly things*! The old, outward, fleshly, natural city, temple, sacrifices, priesthood, law, and national identity were passing away. But I do not hesitate to tell you that Matthew chapter twenty-four and the book of Revelation are *not sequels*! They are not parallel prophecies! They are not about the same events! They are not addressed to the same people! And their climax and consummation are diametrically opposite! The former is now history in the natural world; the latter is an on-going unfolding in the spiritual world! Matthew chapter twenty-four prophesies the end of the old Jewish economy, which happened in A.D. 70 when the Roman general Titus besieged, destroyed, and burned the city of Jerusalem. When his fury was finished Jerusalem appeared as a plowed field and the words of Jesus were literally fulfilled, “*There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down*” (Mat. 24:2). The book of Revelation, on the other hand, is addressed to the church, the body of Christ; it prophesies of the glorification of the church and the manifestation of the sons of God which will result in the salvation of all nations, and the deliverance of the whole creation from the bondage of corruption! It brings the triumph of the kingdom of God in all realms forevermore!

In the spiritual realm something spectacular is taking place! This is not up in the sky somewhere, not out beyond the Milky Way — this great sign is in the heaven of the Spirit of the Lord! John describes it as a “GREAT” wonder, which means a particular, out-of-the-ordinary, important, significant, consequential, momentous, imposing, sublime, remarkable, and preeminent picture, appearing in very vivid colors, is here being displayed, not only to John, but to us as well — *a woman appears in heaven*! At the very beginning, then, we are cautioned not to take this woman as a real character. She is a sign, a “*great sign*.” She is a symbolic or prophetic woman and stands for a people of great glory, significance, and importance.

With anointed eye and with unsaddled foot we approach to behold this great sight. What John sees is called a “wonder” in the King James Bible. This is from the Greek

word *semeion* which means a “sign.” A “wonder,” on the one hand, is something that arrests, surprises, amazes, and astonishes. A wonder is something unexpected, unprepared for, unprecedented, and surpassing all our experience. A “sign,” on the other hand, is a symbol or prophecy of the reality it represents. The purpose of a sign is to call attention to a person or a thing as special or supernatural. It has regard to the *significance* of the work wrought as represented by the vision which stands for it. And by calling it a “sign” John reveals clearly that in the chapter before us we must not expect a literal description of something real in the form in which he sees it, but symbolism, and we must get beyond the outward symbol to the deeper reality for which it stands. Thus, the vision must be understood in its *spiritual meaning*. Actually, there is no one who makes the mistake of taking this chapter in the literal sense so that the woman is a woman clothed with the real and literal sun and with the real moon under her feet. But few ever plumb its depths by the spirit of wisdom and revelation from God to discern the true and deep *spiritual reality* to which it points!

The first sign which John beholds in heaven, or in the spiritual realm of God, is that of a woman. She is of great and glorious appearance, for she is arrayed with the glorious light of the Aegean sun as her magnificent dress, she is standing upon the moon, and we are instructed that she is of royal rank, for on her head she wears a crown of twelve stars. What a picture! And how wonderful in its meaning!

On the one hand, this woman as to her appearance is mighty and glorious, of such a majestic nature that even the heavenly bodies of light serve to add to her splendor. On the other hand, it must also be said that with all her glory she has not yet reached the purpose of her existence and is not perfectly happy, blessed, and fulfilled. For she is described as being pregnant and in pain and travail of birth. She lives in the expectation of motherhood, and that of a very special and powerful son, and it is clear that she is about to be delivered. A woman, therefore, of high spiritual stature, clothed with the glory of the sun of righteousness and crowned with the power and dominion of divine illumination, but a woman also at the same time in distress and in helpless condition — such a woman is that described by John.

Let us meditate briefly on this thought of “woman.” A dear sister in Christ has shared the following penetrating words. “Doubtless there is a mystery in the epistles of the apostle Paul, when he writes about women and their place in the church. He forbids women to speak in the churches. They are commanded to be silent, and if they would learn anything, let them ask their husbands at home, for it is a shame for women to speak in the church (I Cor. 14:34-35). All scripture is profitable for doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness. If these instructions are simply explained as pertaining to ancient customs and conditions, when most women were uneducated and unlearned, we must admit that they have *no value* to us today.

“If women must learn from their husbands, what of unmarried, or widows, or those whose natural husbands know nothing of spiritual things? We must go deeper to find *what husband* is meant! Is not the believer, *whether male or female*, espoused to Christ? (II Cor. 11:2). Again, in I Timothy 2:11-12, Paul suffers not a woman to *teach* but to learn in *silence*, with all subjection. If this were followed to the letter, the church would be robbed of some splendid and anointed female teachers and ministries. Besides, this conflicts with Galatians 3:28, where no more distinction or preference is to be shown between male and female than between Jew and Greek, or between slave

and free. If the Greek or slave be free to speak, why should the female be forbidden? And the scriptures are plain that the churches had *prophetesses* who spoke the very word of the Lord to the saints!

“But Paul makes a strange and even more startling statement in I Timothy 2:15 wherein he makes the *salvation* of a woman *dependent upon her bearing a child!* That is, IF we must accept it in the *literal* sense of the word. Some have interpreted this verse to mean that expectant mothers are assured physical safety in bringing children into the world, if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety. This has apparently not proven true. Rachel died in giving birth to Benjamin. Many faithful mothers in both Old Testament times and New Testament times, as well as in our own day, lost their lives as a result of childbirth. Can we not see that the **CHILDBEARING** which the Spirit in Paul was speaking about, the childbearing that **BRINGS SALVATION**, is **NOT NATURAL CHILDBEARING!**

“Rotherham reads, ‘She shall be *saved*: however *through means* of childbearing.’ Fenton reads, ‘She will be *saved because of THE childbearing.*’ The Diaglott and Clementson both read, ‘...through **THE** childbearing.’ Out of nine translations I have examined seven support the thought of salvation *through, because of, and by means of*, childbearing. Four of them definitely define it as ‘**THE**’ childbearing. The long hidden mystery is *Christ in you*, the hope of glory (Col. 1:26-27). May I submit that ‘Christ in you’ is *THE child*, the holy seed, begotten of the Father by the word of truth (James 1:18). Many suppose that when Paul speaks of the woman being ‘saved’ by ‘childbearing’ he is speaking naturally and physically. But more often Paul spoke allegorically of *spiritual realities*, using natural things as the picture or symbol. Thus he says, ‘*My little children of whom I travail in birth again, until **CHRIST BE FORMED IN YOU***’ (Gal. 4:19). Every believer, whether male or female, must have formed in them and brought to birth, the new man, the Christ! This is the hope of the groaning creation and the ‘salvation’ of the ‘woman’ who bears the manchild!”

WHO IS THE WOMAN?

Now who is represented by the woman John sees?

It is not hard to understand what is meant by the symbol of the “woman” — almost immediately we recognize her as the true church, the body of Christ. This is not a reference to any or all of the various religious systems and organizations of man which *call* themselves “the church.” The church — from the Greek *ekklesia* — means simply “called out.” It is composed of those who by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost have been called out of this world’s system, to become a part of the new creation species of which Jesus Christ is the Head. “For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body” (I Cor. 12:13). The body of Christ is a *living organism*, and the life of each member of that body is the one and selfsame Spirit. God has separated each member unto Himself and has placed each member in the body as it has pleased Him. Whatever our place, position, and function may be in the body, the calling is **HIS**. There are many levels of development, expression, and function, but all make up one glorious multi-faceted manifestation of the indwelling spirit of life.

The woman is the *virgin church*. We know this “wonder” or “sign” indicates a marvelous development in the church realm, because the church has not been who she is supposed to be nor has she done what she was called to do. This woman is in the supernatural realm, she is a supernatural woman in a supernatural state of being. The fact that she is a “sign” signifies that she is not the whole church — she is something unique, remarkable, out of the ordinary, phenomenal, incredible — something supernatural in the heavens of the Spirit of the Lord! She is moving in the highest realms of the Spirit! This is a truly *spiritual church* as contrasted with those to whom the apostle wrote, “*I could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal*” (I Cor. 3:1). This woman speaks of a people with a revelation and an indwelling life, who is about to come forth into the reality and power of that revelation and life. She is a people of God that is not content to just see a revelation, but yearn for, long for, and travail for that revelation to come forth into full manifestation.

As God continues to deal in this hour with a people, to bring them into His fullness, there are some questions which arise concerning definitions and application of terms which the Spirit of God is bringing forth as He speaks to His elect. Two of the terms which the Spirit is emphasizing are ***brideship*** and ***sonship***. Some become confused by these terms and wonder whether there is a difference between the two — or whether the bride and the sons are the one and same company of people. If we have ears to hear what the Spirit is saying there need be no confusion at all. God wants us to UNDERSTAND!

It should not take much reflection to reach the conclusion that a bride and a son are *not* the same! If you are a married man with a family, think! Are your wife and your son the same? Though it is evident that they are two distinct persons, what is it that really makes the difference? You may answer, “Well, one is female and the other is male.” True, but that is still not the basic difference! A member of your family may be female and yet *not* be your wife. She could be your daughter, your sister, or your mother. Likewise, a male member of your family may be someone other than your son. So, while it is true that a wife is always feminine and a son is always masculine, the primary difference is one of RELATIONSHIP — the *way* in which each is ***related*** to you. In like manner, through the new birth we have become consciously aware of our identity in the God Family — the very universal family which IS GOD! And being birthed into the God Family we are now ***related to God***, we have entered into a ***family relationship*** with our heavenly Father in His very own life-form and species!

One can enter God’s family only by birth. Jesus said, “*Except a man be born again...he cannot enter into the kingdom of God*” (Jn. 3:3,5). “*But to as many as did receive Him, He gave the authority, power, privilege, right to become the children of God...who owe their birth neither to bloods, nor to the will of the flesh, nor to the will of man, but to God — they are **born of God!***” (Jn. 1:12-13, Amplified). Newborn babes in Christ, and all children who have not grown up into spiritual maturity, are always referred to simply as the “children” of God without reference to gender or sex. “*Consider the incredible love that the Father has shown us in allowing us to be called **children of God** — and that is not just what we are called, but what we **are**. Here and now, my dear friends, we **are** God’s children. We don’t know what we shall become in the future (when we are mature). We only know that when He appears (revealed in us) **we shall be like Him**, for we shall see Him as He is*” (I Jn. 3:1-3, Phillips translation). So you see, precious friend of mine, in our spiritual infancy and immaturity God does not call us either His ***sons*** or His ***wife*** but

His **children!** A study of the various Greek words for children and sons is most helpful in understanding this truth. “Children” is our first relationship to God in His family. We *are* His children. And what we are ultimately destined to be has not yet come into view or become reality — until we pass through and beyond our spiritual adolescence!

I cannot emphasize too strongly the importance of this truth of relationships. Each of us is related to a great many people in a variety of ways. To my wife I am a husband. To my sons and my daughter I am a father. To my father I am a son. To my siblings I am a brother. To many I am a friend. To others I am an uncle, nephew, or cousin. Obviously, this does not make me more than one person! I remain but one individual, but in my relationships to others I play different roles. The Lord Jesus is spoken of in scripture as our Father, Brother, Husband, Friend, Master, King, High Priest, Judge, etc. All such names and titles are but designations of offices held, of particular relationships Christ has to us, or we have to one another. And yet each is, in a sense, like a DIFFERENT PERSON in each unique relationship!

There are so many profound and beautiful ties between Jesus and the elect, which are shadowed forth in the tender relationships between Adam and Eve in that long ago beginning; for Adam was in reality both father and mother to Eve, and then she was not only his child, but his sister as well, and also his wife. The same person can stand in varied relationships, wearing, as it were, different hats, while remaining the same person. All the right and natural relationships in which human beings stand to each other are meant to reveal something in God — some relation in which He stands to us. He is as a King to His subjects, giving them laws and governing them for their good. He is as a Father to His children, providing for their needs, training and disciplining them in love to become mature members of the Family of Elohim. But there is something, if one may say so, deeper even than this — something that corresponds to the tenderness of a mother, especially in her gentle power of comforting the weary and wounded spirit of her child. Isaiah cried out in the spirit of wisdom and revelation declaring, *“For thus says the Lord, Behold, I will extend peace to her like a river, and the glory of the nations like an overflowing stream; then **you shall be nursed**, you shall be **carried on her hip**, and be trotted on **God’s maternal knees**. As one whom **his mother comforts**, so will I comfort you”* (Isa. 66:12-13, Amplified).

The word “one” in the passage above is in the Hebrew “a man.” And the prophet is not thinking of a little child, but of the grown man. His words are, in the original, *“As A MAN whom his mother comforts, so will I comfort you.”* The feminine name of God is *El Shadai* meaning “the breasted — a woman’s breast” and indicates the One who out of maternal bountifulness is the shedder-forth of blessings, comfort, nourishment, and life. There is something in God which corresponds to that power of the tender mother-comfort, something of which, indeed, earthly mother-comfort is only the shadow, the earthly reflection. Ah — the motherhood of God! Consider the wonder of it! And when we get a clear spiritual discernment of these multiplied relationships of God to us, it breaks us into perfect abandonment to Him, and draws us like the resistless tide of a sucking whirlpool, down into the fathomless gulf of His love and all-sufficiency!

Children are children. Children are not **sons** in the scriptural sense, for sons is from the Greek *huios* meaning a mature son, one who has grown up into the nature and authority of the Father. A girl, as long as she is a child, is neither prepared for or capable of fulfilling the role of

a *wife*. In order to enter into marriage a young girl must pass through years of physical, mental, and emotional development. Finally, upon becoming mature in all these areas, she is fitted for marriage and her role as a wife. And so is it in God's family! The term "child" describes the believer in his walk of immaturity in God. But as one begins to grow up into *spiritual maturity* it is then that the truly feminine and masculine aspects of his or her relationship to God begin to form and become manifest. "*Vive la difference!*" someone once said. And starting from early childhood we all begin to notice there is indeed a difference. We become increasingly aware of it as we grow up. But it is only as fully developed adults that the true power, potential, and purpose of the feminine and the masculine attributes find their fulfillment.

As God becomes so many things to us, even Mother, so must we become many things to Him. When God created man male and female *in His image* He revealed the great truth that He is Himself male and female in His attributes and nature. In spiritual maturity we enter into relationship with God in all the facets of His nature. We may truly become the bride of Christ and the sons of the Father and many other things as well. A dear friend has expressed it so succinctly: "Sonship has a power — the power of knowledge, authority, and what might be called heroic deeds; but brideship has a power, also — the power to submit, to lay down one's will, to yield to another. Sons have the power to be strong; the bride has the power to be tender. While it was the masculine nature of Christ that gave Jesus such resolve to face the cross, to set His face as a flint toward Jerusalem, for example, it was the feminine nature of Christ which could say, 'No man can take my life from me; I lay it down willingly. I have power to lay it down (feminine), and I have power to take it up again (masculine).' Both aspects at work in the same man; both aspects at work in the same body of believers; both aspects at work to fulfill the purposes of God!"

The bride relationship bears the feminine nature whereas the son relationship bears the characteristics of the masculine. Aggressiveness, boldness, strength, valor, authority, power, and dominion are among the traits of the masculine sex. Hence the Lord says to the overcomer, "*He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son. To him will I give power over the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron. To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in His throne*" (Rev. 21:7; 2:26-27; 3:21). Clearly the full overcomers are identified as *the sons of God with power and authority!*

Modesty, gentleness, tenderness, love, sensitiveness, and dependence are attributes of the feminine sex. Spiritually, these are the characteristics of the bride of Christ, as the apostle says, "*Wives, be subject — be submissive and adapt yourselves — to your own husbands as a service to the Lord. For the husband is head of the wife as Christ is the Head of the church, Himself the saviour of His body. As the church is subject to Christ, so let wives also be subject in everything to their husbands. Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her, so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the Word, that He might present the church to Himself in glorious splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such things — that she might be holy and faultless. So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church*" (Eph. 5:22-28,32).

Can we not see by this that brideship bespeaks the spiritually feminine relationship of intimate love and reverent submission to Christ, whereas sonship embodies the spiritually masculine characteristics of strength, authority, power, and dominion to rule and reign over all things. Ah, beloved, let us never become so over-balanced in our zeal to become sons of God that we circumvent the marvelous reality of brideship! The simple yet sublime truth is just this — **THE WAY TO SONSHIP IS BRIDESHIP!** This is why the Spirit has given us in the Revelation the example of the glorious sun-clad woman giving birth to a remarkable manchild who is to rule all nations with a rod of iron. It is the inworking of brideship that *births* the realm of sonship! No woman, no son! Jesus said, “*I am the **way**...no man **cometh unto the Father** but by me.*” Dear man of God; dear woman of God; your relationship to Christ as a bride will forerun your relationship to the Father as a son. Brideship is the harbinger of sonship! It is through intimacy of fellowship and vital union with Christ, made **ONE IN HIM IN LOVE**, that we are initiated into that illustrious glory of strength and dominion over all things as sons of God. This is a true and inviolable principle in God that I pray no earnest saint of God who reads these lines will miss!

Any man can come to know something of the acts and ways of God, but only those born from above, who also *follow on to know* the Lord, can ever come to know Him in the most wonderfully personal and intimate manner. The depth of “knowing” Him is like the intimate relationship of a man with his beloved wife, in which love he seeks to reproduce after his own kind. In fact this is precisely the way in which the scriptures often make use of the word “know” — to describe the giving and receiving of seed in the act of love. For example, we read in Genesis 4:1, “*And Adam **KNEW** Eve his wife; and she conceived, and bare Cain.*” This statement does not mean that Adam was able to recognize his wife as she walked about the house! Oh, no! “**KNOWING**,” in the sense of recognition, does not beget children! When Adam **KNEW** His wife he explored her emotional and physical being, and she **KNEW** him in return on a personal and intimate level that words could never communicate. Only by the experience of the sexual relationship does man know woman in this sense, and she him.

May the blessed Spirit of God help us to understand that it is only in that exquisite relationship where the believing heart completely yields itself to the spirit, to the presence, the mind, and the will of God, where the believer proves by his wholehearted response that he totally and truly loves the Lord, that he ***knows*** and is ***known*** of God. This is the basis for Israel as a people being given the name “wife of Yahweh,” and the chosen ones of this age the intimate title “the bride of Christ.” As husband and wife, by means of the act of “knowing” become *one flesh*, so Christ and the believer, by the spiritual act of “knowing” become *one spirit*. “*He which is joined (in union) with an harlot is **one body**...but He that is joined unto the Lord is **one spirit***” (I Cor. 6:16-17). The intimate relation and ecstasy here portrayed are not found in the lives of any but those who are following the Lamb whithersoever He goeth.

While we write much in these pages of the glorious truth of sonship, we want to contemplate in our meditations at this time what it means to be the bride of Christ. If you have never really fallen in love with the Christ of God — and made Him your Head and absolute Lord — don’t ever expect to be manifest as a son! If you are not truly *virgin* in your desires toward the Lord; if you are not walking in the spirit, keeping yourself *unto Him* and *unto Him alone*; if you have not truly forsaken the company of the wanton harlots of Mystery Babylon, the carnal religious systems of man *called* the church; if you have not renounced the

schemes, plans, and ambitions of the carnal mind nor abandoned your love of the world and the desires of the flesh — you cannot expect to be birthed into that illustrious company of the sons of God who shall set creation free from bondage and corruption. If you have any other love before Him, any other master that rules your life, any other lordship that dictates your actions, any hidden and “reserved” areas of your life, then you have not yet learned **HOW TO BE A BRIDE** to Christ! One must first *bow* in feminine love and submission to Jesus Christ the Lord — as a wife — before he can pass beyond, birthed to stand tall and erect in the majesty and splendor of sonship! It’s just that simple. There **IS NO OTHER WAY!** The glorious woman must give birth to the manchild!

Only the blessed Holy Spirit can teach us how to truly **BE** a bride. As I have pointed out, the key to being a wife is love and submission. We are prone to think of submission in such a carnal way. The term conjures up images of the husband ruling, bossing, lording it over, barking commands to his wife while the little woman, intimidated, coweringly complies with his every demand. But true, godly submission is the *love* of a woman that is so pure and intense that she wants to yield herself to the high desires of her husband — a woman so in love with her man that it transcends infatuation — her submission becomes a willing and loving laying down of her own life until she no longer has a life because **HER LIFE IS SURRENDERED TO ANOTHER!** Her cry becomes, “I no longer want my life...I want to *share yours*.” Oh! many of us know so little of **HOW TO BE A BRIDE!**

I think I understand why so often men fall in love with their secretaries and leave their wives. A secretary is *totally devoted* to the man by whom she is employed. His every wish is her desire; and a good secretary even anticipates his needs before they arise. Men are always impressed by such devotion in a woman. She has no goals of her own. Her only priority is to meet his needs. And, my beloved, when once we enter into the bride relationship to Christ we lay down our own name, our own identity, and take upon us a new nature. In the feminine aspect of this nature we learn to yield — obey — this is the action of our will, giving our will over to become aligned with His will. Submission is more than blind obedience to demands laid upon us, it is the loving surrender of the will, otherwise one will soon revolt and try to throw off the yoke, or find a way of escape.

LOVE! Ah, this is the key. There is a call to love Him so passionately, that everything else appears as hatred in comparison. When we are mere children, we love Him out of a childish, immature love. We love Him primarily for what He *gives us*. When you hear someone testify, “I love the Lord *because* He saved me,” or, “I love the Lord *because* He healed me,” or, “I love the Lord *because* He has done such great things for me, He answers my prayers and supplies all my needs,” you know that you listen to the testimony of a *child*, imperfect in love. Everything centers in *them* and what *they* get out of it. That kind of talk is like the girl who married a rich man and said, “I love John because he provides me with a beach house, a new Mercedes, beautiful diamonds, a mink coat, vacations around the world, and a \$1000.00 a week allowance!” Obviously, she loves John **ONLY FOR HIS MONEY!** Should John lose his wealth her love would soon wither and die. And many immature believers, the little “children” of God, profess to love God out of these same base and selfish motives! But a true wife loves her husband for **WHO AND WHAT HE IS!** When a wife really loves her husband, she loves him just as much if they are poor and have nothing. As God brings forth a people into brideship to Christ, this

people is coming to love our Lord Jesus Christ for WHO HE IS and not because of the blessings and benefits received from His loving hands. Children are always excited about the *gifts*, but the bride is excited about the *GIVER*!

Do we really love Him, or are we merely using Him? Methinks that the *prosperity* crowd today are primarily *using Him*! Do we know what it means to enter into His lovely presence, asking nothing, reaching out to Him in the beauty of His holiness and with gratitude and thanksgiving for loving us so completely. Haven't we become very selfish sometimes and ego-centric in our prayers? We will pray to save America from judgment. "Spare us, don't judge us," we cry. "Give us, meet us, help us, deliver us, protect us, bless us, prosper us, use us," — and that may all be good in its place, but the focus is still on US. Even in our work for Him we become selfish. We want Him to bless our service to Him to prove our faith is genuine. We want to be considered diligent, capable, successful — as a sign of His blessing upon us. But the bride wants none of this. She prefers to be shut up alone with her Lover! The claims of the Bridegroom are paramount upon the bride — she loves Him, not for His gifts, not for what He can do for her or make of her, but for HIMSELF! "*For I am jealous over you with a godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a **chaste virgin** to Christ*" (II Cor. 11:2). To be a virgin means to be pure, undefiled, and separated unto our Lord. God is creating the desire in a people in this hour to be truly *virgin* in their desires toward Him!

The question is arising in some minds: "What company am I in? Which am I apprehended to — brideship or sonship? Am I destined to be of the sun-clad woman company, or a member of the manchild? Which should I *desire* to be? Can I be *both*? Is there really a difference — a separation — between the two?

Ah, my beloved, we have had such a veil over our minds! May the blessed spirit of truth quicken the understanding of all who read these lines to see and discern that what the revelation of God teaches us is just this: The *woman* gives birth to the *manchild* — **THE WAY TO SONSHIP IS BRIDESHIP!** It is the relationship of brideship that births the reality of sonship. That is the great *sign* John saw in heaven, a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars; *she is with child*, crying, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered! One must fall madly, fiercely, intensely in love with the Lord Jesus, making Him Head and absolute Lord, keeping oneself from all others, unto Him and Him alone, entering the secret chamber of His loves, reserving nothing unto oneself. We first *bow* in feminine love and submission before we are birthed to stand tall in the majesty of sonship to God. There is NO OTHER WAY!

Union with Christ is most assuredly *not* a physical union! It is a spiritual union, joined to the Lord in *one spirit*. Being a spiritual union, it does not necessitate by any means the *physical presence of the man Jesus* coming as the Bridegroom. Many believers entertain the mistaken notion that the marriage of the Lamb portrayed in chapter nineteen of the Revelation can only take place after Jesus has physically come back to earth. Gaze not, my brother, my sister, into the sky to behold Him coming down through the clouds. I tell you the truth when I say that you will never see the Bridegroom riding upon a cloud should you stare into the heavens through long millenniums to come! Just as a physical man joined to a physical harlot is *one flesh*, so the Lord's

new creation spiritual people joined to the Lord who is *the Spirit* are *one spirit*. It has nothing to do with either Jesus or us as flesh and blood people! Surely the song of the bride is this:

Shut in with God *in the secret place*,

There *in the spirit* beholding *His face*;

Gaining new power to run in the race,

I love to be shut in with God!

The woman with the crown of twelve stars is a great sign in heaven. This woman is surpassingly glorious before her child is born. I write these things, holy brethren, because to me the truth is so very evident that the manifestation of the glory and power of God upon this virgin bride of Christ ***precedes the manifestation of the sons of God***. The woman is manifested in great glory in the heavenly sphere, although it is quite evident that she is right here on earth at the time. Paul spoke of the wonder of this woman in heaven in these words, "*To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God*" (Eph. 3:10). We have rejoiced to see that she is clothed with the sun and has conquered the moon, but let us take into further consideration that her head is crowned with twelve stars and she is crowned ***before*** her son comes to birth, not afterwards. She has a great authority given her ***before*** the manchild is born, and she is a glorious church without spot or wrinkle, and her dominion is not given because her child is born as the manifest sons of God, but is given her of God ***before*** the sons are manifested, while they are still hidden in the womb. There shall be manifested great anointing, power, and glory upon God's true virgin church ere the sons of God arise to reign and restore all things back into the life of God again. Aren't you glad!

[To be continued...](#)
EBY

J. PRESTON