

## ***Session 1 The Bride of Christ: God's Eternal Purpose***

### **I. JESUS' INHERITANCE: AN ETERNAL COMPANION**

- A. God's purpose for His creation is to provide a family for Himself and a Bride for His Son as His eternal companion to reign with Him forever.
- B. Human history began in Eden with Adam and Eve joined as a bridegroom and bride (Gen. 2:24). Natural history ends with a prepared Bride being presented to God's worthy Son (Rev. 19:7).  
***<sup>7</sup>For the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready. (Rev. 19:7)***
- C. Jesus will return for a victorious Church who is empowered by understanding her bridal identity.  
***<sup>17</sup>The Spirit and the Bride say, "Come!" (Rev. 22:17)***  
***<sup>16</sup>It shall be, in that day...that you will call Me [Jesus] "My Husband"... (Hos. 2:16)***
1. As sons of God, we are in the position to experience **God's throne** as heirs of His power (Rom. 8:17). As the Bride, we are in the position to experience **God's heart** (affections).
  2. Even as women are the sons of God, so men are the Bride of Christ. Both describe positions of privilege before God, rather than pointing to something intrinsically male or female. Experiencing the reality of the Bride of Christ by walking in intimacy with God does not undermine one's masculinity, but strengthens it—John the Baptist, the apostle John, etc.
  3. The generation the Lord returns will be the first time in history that the Spirit will universally emphasize the Church's spiritual identity as the Bride of Christ.
- D. The Bridegroom message is about Jesus' emotions for us, His beauty, His commitments to us (to share His heart, home, throne, secrets, and beauty), and our response of wholehearted love and obedience to Him. This message starts with experiencing Jesus' heart and affections for us.
- E. The inheritance that the Father promised Jesus is a people whom He fully possesses.  
***<sup>8</sup>I [the Father] will give You [Jesus], the nations for Your inheritance... (Ps. 2:8)***  
***<sup>9</sup>For the LORD's portion is His people; Jacob is the place of His inheritance. (Deut. 32:9)***
- F. Paul prayed that the saints would understand the "riches of glory" of being God's inheritance.  
***<sup>18</sup>...may know...what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints... (Eph. 1:18)***
- G. Our faithfulness or love for Jesus and people is the only thing that we will take from this age. The "currency" in eternity for the redeemed will be the love that we cultivated for Him in this age.  
***<sup>10</sup>For God is not unjust to forget your work and labor of love which you have shown toward His name, in that you have ministered to the saints... (Heb. 6:10)***

**II. JESUS HAS DEEP DESIRE TO BE CLOSE TO HIS PEOPLE (JN. 17:24)**

- A. Jesus deeply desires that His people be with Him forever (Jn. 17:24)  
*<sup>24</sup>Father, I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am... (Jn. 17:24)*  
*<sup>21</sup>To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne... (Rev. 3:21)*
- B. Jesus spoke of His second coming in context to “being with His people” (Jn. 14:3; 1 Thes. 4:17).  
*<sup>3</sup>I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be. (Jn. 14:3)*  
*<sup>16</sup>For the Lord Himself will descend...<sup>17</sup>We who are alive...shall be caught up [raptured]...  
to meet the Lord in the air. And thus, we shall always be with the Lord. (1 Thes. 4:16-17)*
- C. On Mt. Sinai, just before the Lord gave Moses the Ten Commandments, He instructed Moses and the 70 elders of Israel to eat a covenant meal with Him to experience fellowship with God—they were to see that He wanted a covenant relationship of love that obeyed His commands.  
*<sup>9</sup>Then Moses went up, also Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel,  
<sup>10</sup>and they saw the God of Israel... <sup>11</sup>So they saw God, and they ate and drank. (Ex. 24:9-11)*

**III. JESUS’ INHERITANCE IS PEOPLE WHO FULLY LOVE HIM**

- A. Jesus’ inheritance is people who fully love Him. The saints will be equally yoked to Him in love.  
*<sup>37</sup>“You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. <sup>38</sup>This is the first and great commandment.” (Mt. 22:37-38)*  
*<sup>6</sup>The LORD your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants, to love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul... (Deut. 30:6)*  
*<sup>14</sup>Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. (2 Cor. 6:14)*
- B. The redeemed will love Jesus with mature love by the Spirit (Eph. 4:13).  
*<sup>13</sup>...till we all come...to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ... (Eph. 4:13)*
- C. A primary purpose of the New Covenant is to empower people to love God (Ezek. 36:26-27)  
*<sup>26</sup>I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you...<sup>27</sup>I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes... (Ezek. 36:26-27)*  
*<sup>5</sup>...the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit... (Rom. 5:5)*
- D. Jesus prayed that the Father’s love for Jesus be imparted to the redeemed (Jn. 17:26).  
*<sup>26</sup>And I have declared to them Your name, and will declare it, that the love with which You [the Father] loved Me may be in them...” (Jn. 17:26)*

#### IV. THE GUIDING PRINCIPLE OF GOD’S LEADERSHIP

- A. The guiding principle of God’s leadership over history has been to use His power and wisdom to select, train, and prepare a Bride to reign with Jesus—a prepared Bride for His worthy Son.

*<sup>10</sup>And have made us kings and priests to our God; and we shall reign on the earth. (Rev. 5:10)*

1. Many cannot see where history is headed or what purpose it accomplishes. They see no lasting goals for humanity or purpose for enduring hardship. This leaves them in despair.
2. History is often interpreted through the lens of significant scientific breakthroughs, military crises, political developments, and economic trends. We interpret history through the lens of God preparing a Bride. In this we see a lasting purpose in our struggles.

- B. God has orchestrated natural history so that people may seek, grope for, and find Jesus.

*<sup>26</sup>He has made from one blood every nation...and has determined their preappointed times and the boundaries of their dwellings, <sup>27</sup>so that they should seek the Lord, in the hope that they might grope for Him and find Him [to walk in wholeheartedness]... (Acts 17:26-27)*

1. **Boundaries:** God determines the boundaries of each nation.
2. **Times:** God determines the times in which each nation will rise and fall in power.
3. **Grope:** He sets the time when national boundaries shift to cause people to grope for God.
4. **Find:** God’s purpose is that people “find” Jesus and walk in wholeheartedness with Him.

- C. All things work for God’s ultimate purpose in preparing a Bride as Jesus’ inheritance.

*<sup>21</sup>For all things are yours: <sup>22</sup>whether...the world or life or death, or things present or things to come—all are yours. <sup>23</sup>And you are Christ’s, and Christ is God’s. (1 Cor. 3:21-23)*

1. **Life:** The life of humans, angels, animals, and plants are all for the benefit of the Bride.
2. **Death:** The reality of death serves to develop the Bride in love.
3. **Things present:** Both blessing and challenges work together to train the Bride.
4. **Things to come:** The New Jerusalem and the end-of-the-age dynamics are for the Bride.
5. **You are Christ’s:** God gives all to the Bride because she belongs to Jesus.

- D. All things work together for good as God overrules all things for the highest good of the Bride.

*<sup>28</sup>We know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose... (Rom. 8:28)*