

# Session 5: The Bride in Revelation—Part 3

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## I. Concluding our Discussion of the Bride in Revelation

- a. This session concludes our examination of the various bridal passages in the book of Revelation. Thus far in our study, we have analyzed Revelation 2-3, Revelation 12-14, and Revelation 19:7-9 to determine what these passages tell us about Christ's bride. In this session, we conclude our study of the bride in the book of Revelation by exploring several more sections of the book: Rev. 17:14, Rev. 19:11-21, and Rev. 21-22.
- b. Before we delve into these passages, it will once again be helpful to review our position on overcomers and on the bride. The idea of the overcomer is of critical importance to our discussion in all three of our sessions about Revelation. As we have previously stated, we hold to the *Eternal Rewards View* of the overcomer. Quoting from Session 3, the following explains this view as it relates to Revelation 2-3,

The Eternal Rewards View is the view to which we hold and it rightly teaches that every believer must overcome the specific issues that Jesus highlighted in His messages to the seven churches of Revelation if they want to receive the specific eternal rewards listed in Revelation 2-3. This view teaches that believers are not automatically overcomers because of their faith in Jesus Christ and that they have not fully overcome by their lifelong perseverance in their faith unless they have also overcome the issues highlighted in Revelation 2-3. Instead, it teaches that the believer is called to overcome or conquer the specific issues raised in Jesus' seven messages and, by so doing, they receive the specific promises highlighted for those who overcome.

- c. Another important point of review is to state once again our position on the bride. We believe that whereas every born again believer is betrothed as a bride for Christ at the moment of being born again (and as such is referred to as Christ's bride), it is the bride who makes herself ready who will become the eternal wife of Christ. Stated differently, becoming the eternal wife of Christ is a reward granted at the judgment seat of Christ to the believer who has made himself or herself ready as a wife for Christ. This is a very important point and is so little understood by the majority of the church. *As we said earlier, it is very important that forerunners not only hold to this view but that they also are able to support why they hold this view.* So, as one called as a forerunner, please take the time to study these passages, and understand what they teach.

## II. Revelation 19:11-21 and Revelation 17:14

1. Let's now delve into what we call the great bridal processional recorded in Revelation 19:11-21 and Revelation 17:14.

- a. We begin by looking at Revelation 19:11-21. It reads as follows,

And I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse, and He who sat on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and wages war. His eyes are a flame of fire, and on His head are many diadems; and He has a name written on Him which no one knows except Himself. He is clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God. And the armies which are in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, were following Him on white horses. From

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His mouth comes a sharp sword, so that with it He may strike down the nations, and He will rule them with a rod of iron; and He treads the wine press of the fierce wrath of God, the Almighty. And on His robe and on His thigh He has a name written, "KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS." Then I saw an angel standing in the sun, and he cried out with a loud voice, saying to all the birds which fly in midheaven, "Come, assemble for the great supper of God, so that you may eat the flesh of kings and the flesh of commanders and the flesh of mighty men and the flesh of horses and of those who sit on them and the flesh of all men, both free men and slaves, and small and great." And I saw the beast and the kings of the earth and their armies assembled to make war against Him who sat on the horse and against His army. And the beast was seized, and with him the false prophet who performed the signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image; these two were thrown alive into the lake of fire which burns with brimstone. And the rest were killed with the sword which came from the mouth of Him who sat on the horse, and all the birds were filled with their flesh (Rev. 19:11-21).

- b. Our goal in examining this passage is to observe what the passage teaches about Christ and His bride. Putting this passage in context, Revelation 19:7-9 records that the bride has made herself ready and is clothed in fine linen, bright and clean. The bride made ready concludes the church age and initiates the second coming of Christ—the events recorded in the above passage. As this passage indicates, heaven opens and the glorified Christ riding on a white horse comes to earth, defeats the beast, the false prophet, and the kings of the earth. The beast and the false prophet are thrown alive into the lake of fire and the rest are killed with the sword coming from the mouth of Christ.

### 2. This passage records Christ's great end-time processional as He returns to earth to establish His throne in Jerusalem.

- a. When the bride is made ready in full measure, Christ will return. The heavens will open, He will gather His people from the four winds, and return. He will defeat His enemies vanquishing them from the earth and once again enter the gates of Jerusalem where He will establish His throne and rule the earth from there.
- b. As Christ returns, he will lead a great processional as conquering King and loving Bridegroom ultimately taking His rightful place on the Davidic throne. For most of my Christian life, I have had the idea that Christ would return and immediately go into the city of Jerusalem. I had no perspective of a processional in which Christ leads His armies in victory. Recently, I have begun to see that Christ's return is much more of a triumphant march than I had ever thought. I am not sure of the extent of the route, but the scriptures give us some indication of the extent of this victory march. For example, Zechariah tells us He stands on the Mount of Olives,

In that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which is in front of Jerusalem on the east; and the Mount of Olives will be split in its middle from east to west by a very large valley, so that half of the mountain will move toward the north and the other half toward the south (Zech. 14:4).

- c. Revelation 16:16 tells us that the battle with the antichrist and the kings of the earth will occur at the place we commonly call Armageddon. Armageddon means the hill or city of Megiddo and is located in the valley of Jezreel.<sup>i</sup> This battle site is approximately 90 kilometers from Jerusalem.<sup>ii</sup>

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- d. We also know from Isaiah’s prophetic writings about Christ’s second coming that the Lord comes from Bozrah in Edom, “Who is this who comes from Edom, with garments of glowing colors from Bozrah, this One who is majestic in His apparel, marching in the greatness of His strength? ‘It is I who speak in righteousness, mighty to save’” (Isa. 63:1). In Isaiah’s day, Edom was land bordering ancient Israel in what is now southwestern Jordan between the Dead Sea and the Gulf of Aqaba.<sup>iii</sup>
- e. Speaking of Jesus’ great end-time processional, Joel Richardson in his book *Sinai to Zion* quotes several Old Testament passages (Isa. 19:1; Nu. 24:5, 7-8; Isa. 11:15; and Zech. 10:10-11) to support his position that Christ even includes Egypt in His second coming processional.<sup>iv</sup>
- f. We can conclude from these few clues that Christ in His return will lead a processional through the land in and around Israel. I am not sure about the exact journey the Lord will take in His triumphant entry, but from the scriptures I know that He leads a mighty processional that begins with victory in battle and ends with Christ and His bride entering the gates of Jerusalem where Christ will set up His throne. Let’s now look deeper at Christ’s second coming processional.

### 3. Christ’s second coming processional is that of the conquering King.

- a. Christ’s end-time processional will be twofold in purpose. First, it is the triumphant march of a conquering king returning to his home so as to once again sit upon his throne. As exciting as that is, it is more than that; it is also the processional of the Bridegroom King coming with his bride to the house He has prepared to consummate their marriage and to celebrate the wedding feast.
- b. As conquering king, Revelation 19:16 records this about Christ, “And on His robe and on His thigh He has a name written, ‘KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS’”. The processional begins with the defeat of the antichrist, the false prophet, and the kings of the earth,

And I saw the beast and the kings of the earth and their armies assembled to make war against Him who sat on the horse and against His army. And the beast was seized, and with him the false prophet who performed the signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image; these two were thrown alive into the lake of fire which burns with brimstone. And the rest were killed with the sword which came from the mouth of Him who sat on the horse, and all the birds were filled with their flesh (Rev. 19:19-21).

- c. Throughout His victory march, Jesus will slay His enemies as He encounters them. This will continue throughout the procession but will culminate in the battle of Armageddon, where the beast, the false prophet, and the bulk of their armies will be destroyed. Along the journey, all Israel will look upon the One they have pierced and will be saved.
- d. Joel Richardson offers a powerful description of the concluding phase of Jesus’ second coming.

As Jesus reaches Jerusalem, the ultimate triumphant entry into the city will ensue. In similar fashion to the first triumphal entry, the singing, worship and jubilant celebration will reach a glorious crescendo as the mighty procession enters Zion. The gates of Jerusalem will open for the coming of the long awaited Messiah.<sup>v</sup> After arriving in Jerusalem, the glorious ceremonies fulfilling thousands of years of ancient prophecies, will begin. Jesus will take His place as the rightful King Messiah on the throne of His father David.<sup>vi</sup>

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- e. John Walvoord, in his commentary on Revelation, includes this quote that pictures much of what this triumphant entry will be like,

[The triumphant entry] follows the pattern of a Roman triumphal procession. When a general returned from a successful campaign, he and his legions were granted the right to parade up the Via Sacra, the main street of Rome that led from the Forum to the Temple of Jupiter on the Capitoline Hill. Mounted on a white horse, the general rode at the head of his troops, followed by the wagonloads of booty that he had taken from the conquered nation.<sup>vii</sup>

- f. Thus, first of all Jesus' triumphant entry is that of a conquering King.

### 4. The processional is also that of Christ, our Bridegroom King, coming to take His bride to the wedding ceremony and the marriage supper of the Lamb.

- a. If you will recall from Session 2, we listed 7 steps in an ancient Jewish wedding. In presenting these 7 steps, we made the point that Christ's first coming, the church age, and His second coming will track these same 7 steps. The fourth step in the 7 step process is the wedding processional.
- b. To refresh our memory, the following is a summary of this step from Session 2:

As the approximately year-long betrothal period came to an end, the bride would wait with great expectation for the coming of her bridegroom. Since the actual wedding day and hour was a surprise to the bride, the bride and her attendants would anxiously wait for the groom's arrival. The bridal party would keep their lamps burning just in case the wedding would take place that day or evening. When the wedding day finally arrived, the bridegroom would dress himself in festive garments, wearing a crown of gold, silver, or flowers. He along with the friend of the bridegroom and other members of the groom's wedding party would travel to the bride's home to take her to the house he had prepared for her for the marriage ceremony.

So that the bride would know that the day of her wedding had arrived, the virgins in the village would be outside waiting along the way in the evening with their oil lamps lit, until the loud cry, "Behold the bridegroom comes, go out to meet him," and they would meet him and *proceed with him* to the entrance to the family home of the bride. The procession would begin at the bride's house and proceed to the house of the bridegroom. It began with great celebration. *The bridegroom, the bride, the friend of the bridegroom, the virgins, musicians, and many other friends and relatives would walk and dance, and toss flowers, and sing songs, with "every demonstration of joy and gladness."* The bride was crowned and carried by the crowd on a piece of furniture through the streets to the bridegroom's house. Once the couple reached the groom's home at which the huppah awaited, the actual wedding ceremony took place.

- c. When the heavens open and Christ returns, He will gather His bride from the four winds and lead her in a grand processional to and through the earth ultimately ending in Jerusalem where Christ will be enthroned on David's throne, the marriage of the Lamb will take place, and the marriage supper will commence.
- d. This processional will not only be a victory march for the conquering King, it will also be a great celebration as finally the Bridegroom and the betrothed bride are together to live as one throughout the eternal ages. It will be a wonderful time of celebration with singing, dancing, rejoicing, and joyful shouting. King David bringing the ark of the covenant from the house of Obed-edom to Zion serves

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as a beautiful type and shadow of the celebration that will accompany this grand processional. Note the following description of David leading the processional accompanying the return of the ark to its rightful place,

Now David was clothed with a robe of fine linen with all the Levites who were carrying the ark, and the singers and Chenaniah the leader of the singing with the singers. David also wore an ephod of linen. Thus all Israel brought up the ark of the covenant of the Lord with shouting, and with sound of the horn, with trumpets, with loud-sounding cymbals, with harps and lyres (1 Chron. 15:27-28).

- e. Now that we have some understanding of the great end-time processional, let's next examine who will be with Christ in this grand event. In other words, who are the armies who are following Him in His second coming.

### 5. The armies accompanying Christ include angels.

- a. Let's look next at who accompanies Christ in His great processional. The passage includes these words, "And the armies which are in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, were following Him on white horses" (Rev. 19:14). As we see, the armies which accompany Christ are clothed in fine linen, white and clean. So who comprises these armies which are clothed in this way. We know from the words of Jesus Himself that this army includes a myriad of angels,

For the Son of Man is going to come in the glory of His Father *with His angels*, and WILL THEN REPAY EVERY MAN ACCORDING TO HIS DEEDS (Mt.16:27).

And then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the SON OF MAN COMING ON THE CLOUDS OF THE SKY with power and great glory. And He will send forth His angels with A GREAT TRUMPET and THEY WILL GATHER TOGETHER His elect from the four winds, from one end of the sky to the other (Mt. 24:30-31).

But when the Son of Man comes in His glory, and *all the angels* with Him, then He will sit on His glorious throne (Mt. 25:31).

For after all it is only just for God to repay with affliction those who afflict you, and to give relief to you who are afflicted and to us as well when the Lord Jesus will be revealed from heaven *with His mighty angels* in flaming fire, dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. These will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power, when He comes to be glorified in His saints on that day, and to be marveled at among all who have believed — for our testimony to you was believed (2 Thess. 1:6-10).

- b. From these passages, we see that Christ is accompanied by His mighty angels.

### 6. The armies also include resurrected saints.

- a. Those accompanying Christ at His coming are not only angels, but also believers. The scriptures include these passages that confirm the fact that the saints of God are part of this great battle and victory march,

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And He will send forth His angels with A GREAT TRUMPET and THEY WILL GATHER TOGETHER His elect from the four winds, from one end of the sky to the other (Mt. 24:31).

For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord. (1 Thess. 4:16-17).

### 7. The saints in this victorious army is the bride made ready.

- a. Revelation 19:14 gives us a great clue as to who the saints are who accompany Christ on His second coming processional. It reads, “And the armies which are in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, were following Him on white horses” (Rev. 19:14). Of course, we know from the last session that the bride made ready is clothed “in fine linen, bright and clean; for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints” (Rev. 19:8).
- b. Comparing Revelation 19:14 to Revelation 19:8, “fine linen” and “clean” are identical words in the Greek in both passages. The word “bright” in Revelation 19:8 and “white” in Revelation 19:14 are actually different words in the Greek; however, they have essentially the same meaning. In Session 4, we defined “bright” as follows:

The Greek word used for “bright” is *lampron*. The word is used here of white objects that shine in great brilliance. Other words used to describe this word are radiant, splendid, magnificent.<sup>viii</sup>

Thomas writes this about this Greek word, “The adjective *lampron* is the color or lack of it that represents radiant whiteness as indicative of divine glory.”<sup>ix</sup>

- c. Therefore, even though the words are different, the meaning of the two words are the same.
- d. Continuing to look at our premise that the army includes the bride made ready, let’s look next at Revelation 17:12-14 as this passage adds more insight as to who are the believers accompanying Christ. This passage which speaks of the battles that will ensue as Christ returns reads,

The ten horns which you saw are ten kings who have not yet received a kingdom, but they receive authority as kings with the beast for one hour. These have one purpose, and they give their power and authority to the beast. These will wage war against the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them, because He is Lord of lords and King of kings, and those who are with Him are the called and chosen and faithful (Rev. 17:12-14).

- e. As this passage indicates, it is not the entire body of Christ who will accompany Christ on His great processional; rather, it is the called, chosen, and faithful (Rev. 17:14). Before we dig into the idea of the called, chosen, and faithful, some might question if the war of Revelation 17:14 is the same battle as that of Revelation 19:11-21. Commenting on Revelation 17:14, Robert Thomas in his commentary on Revelation writes,

The conflict anticipated in this parenthetical statement is “the battle of the great day of God Almighty” (16:14). As supporters of the beast, they must wage war with the Lamb as He returns to earth. This is the same battle [*the battle of Rev. 17:14*] that 19:19-21 describes in its chronological setting in the prophecy.<sup>x</sup>

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- f. So, we see Revelation 17:14 refers to the same battle referred to in Revelation 19:11-21 that takes place at Christ' second coming.
8. The definitions of the Greek words used here will help us understand who the called, chosen, and faithful are in Revelation 17:14.
- a. To understand who the “called, chosen, and faithful” are, let’s look at the definition of the Greek words for them. This will be very helpful to determine who these saints are. The Greek word for *called* is *kletos*. Strong’s concordance defines this word as invited, appointed, or a saint.<sup>xi</sup> Abbott-Smith Manual Greek Lexicon of the New Testament adds “called or invited as to a banquet”.<sup>xii</sup> As just indicated, Strong’s Concordance indicates that one meaning of the word and one way it is used is as *appointed*. It is important to note that when the meaning of the word is “appointed”, it refers to a calling as a ministerial calling such as in Romans 1:1, “Paul, a bond-servant of Christ Jesus, called [appointed] as an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God.” The word is used also as “called as a saint” as it appears in Romans 1:7, “...to all who are beloved of God in Rome, called as saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.”
- b. Here, the word should be defined *as being invited to an event* like it is used in Matthew 22:14, “For many are called [to the marriage supper of the Lamb], but few are chosen.” Therefore, referring to Revelation 17:14, the event in this case is “the war of the great day of God, the Almighty” (Rev. 16:14); and, furthermore, the great processional of Revelation 19:11-21. Therefore, accompanying Christ on His great processional are the called, that is, those who are invited.
- c. Let’s next look at the word *chosen*. The Greek word translated *chosen* here is *eklektos*. Strong’s Concordance defines this word as select or favorite.<sup>xiii</sup> Vine’s Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words states that this word comes from *ek* meaning “from” and *lego* meaning “to gather or pick out” and thus defines the word as “picked out or chosen from a larger group”.<sup>xiv</sup> The Theological Dictionary of the New Testament by Gerhard Kittel states this about how this word is used in the Greek translation of the Old Testament, “In the LXX [Septuagint] the general meaning is for choice products, e. g., plants, animals or minerals. With reference to persons we find it for select troops.”<sup>xv</sup> The Expository Dictionary of Bible Words by Lawrence Richards offers this, “The words in this word group [the group in which chosen is found] are common in the Greek language. They imply options from which one can choose.”<sup>xvi</sup>
- d. Summarizing these various definitions, the chosen are those selected from the group which was invited—but a smaller number than those invited. This is consistent with Jesus’ statement that many are called but few are chosen (Mt. 22:14).
- e. Finally, let’s explain the Greek word translated *faithful*. The Greek word is *pistoi* and is defined in Strong’s concordance as trustworthy or trustful.<sup>xvii</sup> Thayers Greek Lexicon adds this important explanation, “...of persons who show themselves faithful in the transaction of business, the execution of commands, or the discharge of official duties.”<sup>xviii</sup> Robert Thomas in his commentary on Revelation offers a good summary of the meaning of this word in the context of Revelation 17:14. He writes, “Faithful indicates the fulfillment of the human response by this select group.”<sup>xix</sup>
- f. Therefore, the faithful refers to those who act upon the invitation in obedience, and remain faithful in obedience until the end.

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9. Let's now apply these definitions to which saints accompany Christ on His end-time processional.
- a. To do this, we must once again connect those invited to this last day battle as described in Revelation 17:14 to the other passages we are considering in Revelation (Revelation 2-3; 19:7-9; and 19:14).
  - b. Our interpretation is that those invited to accompany Christ in His end-time battle with the beast, false prophet, and kings of the earth and on His triumphant processional are the saints of God throughout history and those alive at His coming. However, the invitation is more specific than just a general invitation to the church throughout history. The reason for this is that the *called* refers to an invitation issued to the global church throughout history and alive in our day to overcome the enemy in the specific issues described in Revelation 2-3. In other words, the invitation—that is, the called—is an invitation for the church to make itself ready for the end times and eternity so as to be clothed in fine linen, bright and clean.
  - c. With that as the invitation, the *chosen* refers to those who are selected from among the entirety of the church who had been invited. Those selected are those who have responded positively throughout history and those who positively respond in the end times to the invitation to overcome. They are the ones who appropriate God's grace to overcome both in a general way and in the specific issues highlighted in the messages to the 7 churches. They are chosen or selected because they overcome by the blood of the Lamb, the word of their testimony, and the fact they surrendered their life even unto death in order to be an overcomer.
  - d. The faithful describes another very important feature of this select group who will be a part of Christ's second coming processional. Those accompanying Christ will have been faithful unto the end. If you will recall from Jesus' messages to the 7 churches, to Smyrna Jesus told them to "be faithful unto death" (Rev. 2:10). To Philadelphia, He said to keep His word and not to deny His name. In other words, they were invited to be faithful until the end even though the pressures were and will be great against them doing so. Those who respond positively to Christ's invitation and remains faithful until the end will be included in Christ's end-time army.
  - e. Because of their actions, this select group of the called, chosen and faithful will be clothed in fine linen, brilliantly white and clean and will be selected to be a part of the army who will accompany Christ on His second coming processional.
  - f. Let's next look at the bride in Revelation chapter 21 and 22.

### III. Revelation 21-22

1. At the end of the millennial kingdom age, a new heaven and new earth will be created.
  - a. Concluding our study of the bride in the book of Revelation, we will now look at the bride in Revelation chapters 21-22. The preceding section offered us a glimpse of the bride accompanying

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Christ on His second coming processional at the end of the church age as He defeats His enemies and takes His place on His throne in Jerusalem. Even though only one chapter later, a thousand years will pass before we see the bride in Revelation 21-22.

- b. Revelation 21-22 begin with these words,

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer any sea. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband (Rev. 21:1-2).

- c. As you note, these chapters begin with the creation of a new heaven and new earth and the new Jerusalem coming down out of heaven. Let's first establish the context for the creation of the new heaven, new earth, and new Jerusalem. As we discussed in previous sections, the Lord will return to earth at His second coming and defeat the antichrist and his army. His great victory processional will end with Christ taking His position as King of kings and Lord of lords on His throne in Jerusalem. After taking His throne in Jerusalem, Christ will rule the earth along with His overcoming saints for 1,000 years. During this time, the nations will be judged, those who opposed Christ will be removed from the earth, the earth will be restored from the devastation of end time judgments, and the nations and peoples of the nations will be brought fully under the Lordship of Christ.
- d. At the end of the 1,000 years, Christ will deliver the restored kingdom to the heavenly Father (1 Cor. 15:24). Toward the end of the 1,000-year reign of Christ, Satan will be released for a short period from prison in an attempt to deceive the nations. He will be defeated and the great white throne judgment will commence. In this judgment, anyone whose name is not written in the book of life will be thrown into the lake of fire. You can read about all of this in Revelation 20.
- e. In the context of these events, the apostle John wrote an interesting statement about what will take place at the great white throne judgment. He wrote, "Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat upon it [*the heavenly Father*], from whose presence [*face*] earth and heaven fled away, and no place was found for them" (Rev. 20:11). As with many issues in the scriptures, there is some disagreement about the meaning of this statement. Some believe the statement refers to the renewal of the heavens and earth; on the other hand, many commentators hold to the view that we believe—that is, the old heaven and earth will be completely replaced by a new heaven and new earth.
- f. Recognizing that we are looking far into the future and could be wrong, our opinion of why the new heaven and earth are needed is that the old order was irreparably corrupted by sin, and, as a result, for the curse of sin to be completely removed as stated in Revelation 22:3, a new heaven and earth will be required. The consequences of Satan's fall in heaven and the centuries of sin on the earth will require a new heaven and new earth. The 1,000-year reign of Christ will restore the nations and the people who are allowed to enter the millennial kingdom and thus allow them to enter the eternal ages; however, heaven and earth themselves must also be replaced with a new heaven and earth fulfilling what Peter wrote, "But according to His promise we are looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells (2 Peter 3:13).
- g. At this point in the future, sin will have been completely removed from the earth, the curse will be no more, and righteousness will fill the heavens, the earth, and the people of the earth. God's work of bringing His creation into the eternal order will be finished as Revelation 21:6 states, "Then He

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said to me, 'It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end...' The new order will once again allow the Father and the Son to tabernacle freely with their people.

### 2. The new Jerusalem, the bride-city, will be the focal point of the new heaven and earth.

- a. John then saw the new Jerusalem coming down out of heaven, "And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband" (Rev. 21:2). In God's new order, the new Jerusalem will be the focal point. As you will notice the majority of the text in chapters 21-22 describe the new Jerusalem, its beauty and splendor and how the Father and Son will dwell there in fulness.
- b. Although there are many wonderful truths we could discuss here--since we are discussing the bride in the book of Revelation--we will focus on the point that the new Jerusalem is not only a city, it is also the bride made ready. As Revelation 21:2 tells us, the new Jerusalem is "made ready as a bride adorned for her husband". The Greek word for bride here is *numphe*. We stated this about *numphe* in Session 4: *numphe* is used to describe a bride or a young wife and is probably connected with the Latin *nubo*, which means "to veil" since the bride was often led veiled from her home to meet her bridegroom. Thayer's Greek Lexicon defines this word as "a betrothed bride or a young wife." You might be questioning why John chose *numphe* in this verse rather than *gune*, which connotes a wife in a consummated relationship. My interpretation is that even though the bride was made ready a thousand years earlier, her coming down out of heaven is a beautiful picture of her descending in God's new order as a bride *beautifully adorned for her husband*, that is, much like a bride in all of her splendor and beauty would be on her wedding day.
- c. Even though *numphe* was used to describe the bride in Revelation 21:2, the bride who comprises the new Jerusalem is most definitely the wife of Christ made ready. How do we know? We know because Revelation 21:9 states this, "Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues came and spoke with me, saying, 'Come here, I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb'" (Rev. 21:9). In this verse, the word translated bride is *numphe* and the word translated wife is *gune*. Therefore, we see that John is referring to the new Jerusalem as the eternal wife of the Lamb that was described in Revelation 19:7-8 as the wife who made herself ready during the church age.

### 3. As we read through the text of Revelation 21-22, we discover several key features of the bridal city that give us a great desire to dwell there.

- a. The new Jerusalem is both a city and the bride made ready. Most definitely it is a city as it has walls, gates, and streets, and the kings of the earth can enter into it to give honor and tribute to the Lord. The Father and Son dwell in it and illumine it to the point that there is no night; in fact, there will be no need for the sun because the Lord will be the light.
- b. But the new Jerusalem is also the bride made ready, the eternal wife of the Lamb. How the new Jerusalem can be both is most definitely a mystery, but the scriptures make this point very clearly. There are several key features of the new Jerusalem that make it a place that we in the church age want to pursue with great passion. We list seven features of the bridal city available in the greatest

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measure to the wife of the Lamb—each being wonderful blessings that will be the bride’s for all eternity.

- c. First, the bride will dwell in the new Jerusalem. The new Jerusalem will be her home, the home that she has inherited. Everyone in the new heaven and new earth will be allowed to enter the new Jerusalem (Rev. 21:24, 26-27); but the bride made ready will inherit the new Jerusalem as her permanent home. Just like Jesus’ promise to the church at Philadelphia, “He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he will not go out from it anymore; and I will write on him the name of My God, and the name of the city of My God, the new Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God, and My new name” (Rev. 3:12).
- d. Second, the bride will live in close proximity and great intimacy with the Godhead. Revelation 22:3-4 states this, “There will no longer be any curse; and the throne of God [*the Father*] and of the Lamb will be in it [*the new Jerusalem*], and His bond-servants will serve Him; they will see His face, and His name will be on their foreheads” (Rev. 22:3-4). The bride will live in the new Jerusalem where the throne of the Father and Son is and will be able to see their faces. The Lord will walk among His people in great intimacy and fellowship as He did in the garden of Eden before the fall. In fact, there will be a union between the Godhead and the bride so that they truly become one much like what the apostle John wrote in John 1:18 about Christ and the Father being as one, “...the only begotten God who is in the bosom of the Father...”. It will be much like the bride abiding with Christ in the bosom of the Father in full union.
- e. Third, the bridal city will be glorious in its splendor. Speaking of the new Jerusalem, Revelation 21:11 records these words, “...having the glory of God. Her brilliance was like a very costly stone, as a stone of crystal-clear jasper.” The divine glory of the Lord abiding in the city will make it brilliant in its glory.
- f. Walls of jasper, the city filled with gold, and the glory of the Lord being its light. The great beauty of the bridal city is far beyond our ability to comprehend. Even so, knowing the splendor of this eternal city, the bride made ready will live in the midst of its majestic beauty.
- g. Fourth, the new Jerusalem will be the holy of holies of the new heaven and earth. Revelation 21:16 reads, “The city is laid out as a square, and its length is as great as the width; and he measured the city with the rod, fifteen hundred miles; its length and width and height are equal” (Rev. 21:16). The city, laid out as a perfect cube, follows the layout of the holy of holies in the tabernacle of Moses and Solomon’s temple. Robert Thomas in his commentary on Revelation writes these words, “[*the length, height, and width*] shows that the shape of the city is that of a perfect cube just like the cube shaped Holy of Holies in Solomon’s temple.”<sup>xx</sup> In Old Testament days, the holy of holies was the place where the glory of God rested, and it will be the place throughout eternity where God’s glory will be the greatest—and the bride will live in the midst of this wonderful presence of God.
- h. Fifth, the wife of the Lamb will serve Him forever from the place of intimacy. From these words we previously quoted, “There will no longer be any curse; and the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and *His bond-servants will serve Him*; they will see His face, and His name will be on their foreheads” (Rev. 22:3-4). Just like the Zadok priests ministered to the Lord during the millennial reign of Christ, the wife of Christ will serve Him by ministering to Him as their primary role. They will also serve Him in ministry as well. The prophet Isaiah wrote these words about Christ, “There will be no end to the increase of His government or of peace, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness from then on and forevermore. The

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zeal of the Lord of hosts will accomplish this” (Isa. 9:7). Although I can’t prove this, my sensing is that the new heaven and new earth and especially the new Jerusalem will be in a manner of speaking a mission base much like the church at Antioch was for the apostle Paul’s missionary journeys. From this base the bride made ready will serve the Lord in partnership with Him as He expands His government forever from age to age throughout the vastness of His creation.

- i. Sixth, they will see the face of the Father (Rev. 22:4). Because of the great holiness of the Godhead, the Father could not in the old order fellowship with His creation face to face. But now, the people in the new earth will be able to see the Father’s face. The Father and Son will walk among their people in glorious fellowship once again.
- j. Seventh, the fullness of sonship will be realized by those who have overcome. Revelation 21:7 states this, “He who overcomes will inherit these things, and I will be his God and he will be My son”. The bride made ready will also be a mature son for the Father. The Greek word for son here is *huios* which we have dealt with in great detail in other Lifeschool classes. The word here suggests that those who have overcome have matured to the point that they can receive the full inheritance of the Father as a mature son. The bride made ready is not only the eternal wife of Christ but also a mature son for the Father capable of handling His inheritance.
- k. Summarizing, the bride made ready will inherit the bridal city as an eternal dwelling place and live forever in great intimacy with her Bridegroom King. The bride made ready will be the people who will inherit and live in the new Jerusalem. Every born again believer will live forever on the new earth, but the wife of the Lamb who made herself ready during the church age will inherit the new Jerusalem just as was promised to the church at Philadelphia and as noted in Revelation 21:9. The bride who during her life makes herself ready will be the eternal wife of Christ and inherit the new Jerusalem.

### 4. Before closing this session, it is important that we address a passage in this section of scripture that might lead to confusion if not discussed.

- a. Revelation 21:7-8 reads as follows,

He who overcomes will inherit these things, and I will be his God and he will be My son. But for the cowardly and unbelieving and abominable and murderers and immoral persons and sorcerers and idolaters and all liars, their part will be in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death (Rev. 21:7-8).

- b. Revelation 21:7 and 21:8 present a strong contrast of eternal destinies. It is important that we take a moment to address this contrast in that it almost seems that there are only two options—the new Jerusalem or the lake of fire. As we initially look at this passage, it does appear that there are only two options for a person—the new Jerusalem or the lake of fire. But I interpret this passage differently. My interpretation is as follows. Just like in the rest of the book of Revelation, the Lord is attempting to encourage believers to overcome. To overcome so as to be able to stand strong in the pressures of the end times and also to stand against the associated opposition and persecution that will accompany those days. In addition, the Lord is presenting incentives for overcoming, that is, promises of the great rewards listed in Revelation 2-3 for those who do overcome. Therefore, in Revelation 21:7, the Lord is again exhorting believers who live during the church age and face what will be coming in the end times to overcome. He is saying that if they do overcome and not fall

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away, they will become a mature son for the Father and an eternal wife for the Son. Therefore, He is giving them great hope of the future that awaits them if they do in fact overcome.

- c. In contrast to this exhortation, the Lord is stating that those who continue in sin or fall away in end-time pressures will be cast into the lake of fire. He is not saying there are only two options—fully overcome or experience the lake of fire. Instead, He is encouraging *those who live during the church age* to pursue an overcoming lifestyle because the rewards are very great. Moreover, he is warning that if they fall away they will end up in the lake of fire. Let me offer some support for this. I quote Robert Thomas from his comments on Revelation 21:8, “The word “cowardly” or “fearful” comes from *deido* (I fear). It refers to those who repudiate their faith in Christ when faced with persecution and opposition.<sup>xxi</sup> Thomas continues with explaining the other words in Revelation 21:8: he says that *abominable* refers to those who have been defiled, particularly through the worship of the beast.<sup>xxii</sup> He also offers insight into the word translated *liars*. He says these are those who lie in their denial of Christ.<sup>xxiii</sup> In other words, when presented with persecution or even martyrdom for being a Christian, they deny Christ by saying they are not a Christian when in fact they are a Christian. Furthermore, if you dig into each of the traits on the list recorded in Revelation 21:8, you note that in the context of end time pressures murderers are those who don’t stand against the martyrdom of the saints, and, therefore, in a sense have participated in the murders; immoral persons and sorcerers and idolaters—those are traits of those who follow the harlot of Revelation 17-18.
- d. Therefore, my view on these two verses is that they are not intended to identify only two options of eternity—the new Jerusalem or the lake of fire. If one takes the position that either one overcomes or goes to the lake of fire, then they are taking the position about overcomers that we called the Loss of Salvation View. As a reminder, our notes from Session 3 state the following about this view,

The loss of salvation view teaches that believers are exhorted to faithfulness to avoid losing their salvation. In this view, failing to overcome is synonymous with losing one’s salvation. This view implies that we must overcome all spiritual immaturity to avoid losing our salvation. This implies that only mature believers are saved. The diligent workers in Ephesus who lacked fresh love for Jesus would have lost their salvation if dying before faithfully renewing their first love.<sup>xxiv</sup>

- e. Instead, these verses are exhortations to pursue with passion being an overcomer so as to receive the full reward of the new Jerusalem which is promised to the bride who make herself ready. At the same time, the passage presents a warning to those who would shrink back to follow the antichrist and the harlot out of fear or lukewarmness, cautioning them that to do so will lead them to the lake of fire. Therefore, these verses do not exclude the fact that there are lower places of eternal reward in the new heaven and new earth than the new Jerusalem.

### 5. The final reference to the bride in the book of Revelation expresses the bride’s desire for Christ to return.

- a. Revelation 22:17 reads, “The Spirit and the bride say, ‘Come.’” The Greek word for bride here is *numphe* which as we know is the betrothed bride. At the close of the book, John has been given a panoramic vision of what will transpire when Christ returns. He has seen the prophesied horrors of the judgments and the wrath of God on evil. He has seen the splendor of the new Jerusalem—all while he is imprisoned on the island of Patmos for his faith.

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- b. With great desire for the Lord to return, he expresses the attitude that should be in us all as the betrothed bride of Christ---come Lord Jesus! Come so we can be eternally together and celebrate the marriage supper of the Lamb and dwell together in wonderful intimacy in the new Jerusalem.
- c. So we join with the saints throughout history and say—Come Lord Jesus!

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<sup>i</sup> Armageddon, Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary, Copyright © 1986, Thomas Nelson Publishers.

<sup>ii</sup> <https://www.armageddononline.org/how-far-is-armageddon-from-jerusalem/>

<sup>iii</sup> <https://www.britannica.com/place/Edom>

<sup>iv</sup> Joel Richardson, *Sinai to Zion*, Winepress Media, Leawood, Kansas, 2020, p. 276-278.

<sup>v</sup> *Ibid*, p. 296.

<sup>vi</sup> *Ibid*. p. 297.

<sup>vii</sup> John Walvoord, *The Revelation of Jesus Christ*, Moody Press, Chicago, 1966, p. 274.

<sup>viii</sup> Lampron, Thayer's Greek Lexicon, Electronic Database. Copyright © 2000, 2003, 2006 by Biblesoft, Inc. All rights reserved.

<sup>ix</sup> Thomas, p. 370.

<sup>x</sup> Robert Thomas, *Revelation 8-22, An Exegetical Commentary*, Moody Press, Chicago, 1995, p. 302.

<sup>xi</sup> NT: 2822, Biblesoft's New Exhaustive Strong's Numbers and Concordance with Expanded Greek-Hebrew Dictionary. Copyright © 1994, 2003, 2006, 2010 Biblesoft, Inc. and International Bible Translators, Inc.

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<sup>xiv</sup> NT:1588, Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words, Copyright © 1985, Thomas Nelson Publishers.

<sup>xv</sup> Gerhard Kittel, *The Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, William Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, MI, 1985, p. 521.

<sup>xvi</sup> Lawrence Richards, *The Expository Dictionary of Bible Words*, Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, MI, 1985, p.160.

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<sup>xix</sup> Thomas, p. 303.

<sup>xx</sup> *Ibid*, p. 467.

<sup>xxi</sup> *Ibid*, p. 450.

<sup>xxii</sup> *Ibid*, p. 451.

<sup>xxiii</sup> *Ibid*, p. 452.

<sup>xxiv</sup> Bickle, *The Seven Churches of Revelation (Rev. 2-3)*.