

REVIVAL NEWS

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**** AUGUST 2019 **** AUGUST 2019 **** AUGUST 2019 ****

A GREAT MYSTERY

by Paul Galligan

“This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church” Ephesians 5:32. In speaking of marriage in **Ephesians 5:22-33**, Paul says that he is actually speaking of a great mystery: of Christ and His church. A mystery in the Bible is a great truth that is hidden (**1Cor.2:6-7**) and needs to be searched out.

The church is the body of Christ

In the New Testament, the church is the body of Christ (**Col.1:18**). The church is to reveal Messiah Jesus in the earth. Christ is the Head, and we are the body. In this study we will look at the mystery of Christ and the church, the divine marriage. Truly this is a great mystery, but like all mysteries in the word of God, it is to be searched out and understood. Paul says, *“we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the ages for our glory” (1Cor.2:7).*

The knowledge of the mysteries

It is necessary for the church to come to the knowledge of the mysteries because that is the only way that we will inherit the glory that God wants to reveal through the church. Amazingly Paul prays for us that *“the eyes of our understanding”* will be enlightened to know *“what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints” (Eph.1:18)*. God has invested in His saints. He wants us to understand that the inheritance of His glory is *“in the saints”*. Again, God’s plan is for His fullness to be revealed in His people, the saints, the members of His body, His bride church.

The creation of man – the beginning of the mystery

God said, *“Let Us make man in Our image according to Our likeness” (Gen.1:26)*. Then God *“created man in His image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them” (Gen.1:27)*.

In **Chapter 2** of **Genesis** we learn that the male was created first and *“YHWH God said, ‘It is not good that man should be alone; I will make a helper comparable to him’” (Gen.2:18)*. The man needed a wife; the first Adam, *“who is a type of Him who was to come” (Rom.5:14)*, needed a wife: a necessary counterpart, one comparable to him, a suitable partner so that together they could fulfil the divine purpose.

Genesis 2:21-22 reveals the miraculous way that God created the woman, *“and He brought her to the man” (v.22)*. Adam received the woman and said, *“This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man”*

(v.23). It is so interesting that Paul would quote from these words in **Ephesians 5:30** as referring to the relationship between Christ and the church. Then in **Ephesians 5:31** Paul fully quotes **Genesis 2:24**, but now in Ephesians the Scripture is referring to the second Adam and His bride.

A wife for the son

Genesis 24 is a wonderful story of the trusted servant of Abraham going to a far country to get a wife for Abraham's son, Isaac. This can be understood as an allegory that reveals much truth about God being committed to getting a wife for His Son.

A woman shall encompass a man

This is a quote from **Jeremiah 31:22** and it shows to us in prophetic context that God is committed to there being a divine marriage between God and His people and this is revealed in the New Testament as Christ and His church. In the quote, the man is Messiah [Christ] and the woman is the bride church, a corporate body. Or as Paul puts it in **Ephesians 4:13** "*a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ*".

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE BRIDE CHURCH – Ephesians 5:22-32

Ephesians 5:22-32 gives us a picture of the glorious church.

The glorious church is:

- **Saved v.23** – "*Christ is the Saviour of the body*". The church consists of many saved members. We are saved by faith and on the basis of our faith we are baptised into Christ (**Mark 16:16**). We are born again of the Spirit (**John 3:5**). And we are filled with the Holy Spirit (**Acts 2:38**).
- **Submitted v. 21-22&24** - In the church we are all to be submitted to one another "*in the fear of God*" (**Eph.5:21**). In the context of being married to the Lord, we are to be submissive to Him as our husbandman in all things (**v.22&24**). Our submission is to Christ the "*Head of the church*" (**v.23**).
- **Loved v.25** – There should be an atmosphere of love, knowing we are loved. The husband has laid down His life for her and has given everything for her, Christ "*gave Himself for her*". Being loved brings security, covering, nurture and protection.
- **Sanctified and cleansed v.26** – The word '*sanctified*' means to make holy, to purify, to consecrate, to venerate. This is what Christ is doing for the church. The word '*cleanse*' means to make clean, including from the defilement of sin. Something is consecrated by cleansing it. This verse tells us that Christ Himself is sanctifying and cleansing her [the church] "*with the washing of water by the word [Gr. 'rhema']*". This is the word that proceeds from the mouth of God (**Matt.4:4**); this is the word that engenders faith when we hear it (**Rom.10:17**).

- **Without spot or wrinkle, holy and without blemish v.27** – This is the church that is coming to perfection. This is the work of Jesus, the Bridegroom, who is preparing His church so that He can *“present her to Himself a glorious church”*. We are called from eternity to be part of this church, *“He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love”* (Eph.1:4). It is our destiny to be part of this bride church. Receiving the *“adoption as sons by Jesus Christ”* (Eph.1:5) is a core part of us becoming this glorious church. It is *“to the praise of the glory of His grace”* (Eph.1:6) that we should grow up in Christ as sons coming to glory (Heb.2:10).

- **Fully joined to Jesus v.30-31** – *“For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones”* (v.30), and *“For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife and the two shall become one flesh”* (Eph.5:31 quoting Gen.2:24). The two are to become one *“But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit”* (1Cor.6:17) – it is a spiritual joining; we are totally united with Jesus. **Romans.12:1** says that we are to make a sacrifice of our bodies. This church has to come out of *“all filthiness of the flesh and spirit”* (2Cor.7:1); this church is to leave where she has been involved and fully cleave to her husband. We are to be *“perfecting holiness in the fear of God”* (2Cor.7:1). Paul says *“For I am jealous for you with godly jealousy [intense desire, passionate commitment]. For I have betrothed you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ”* (2Cor.11:2).

- **A glorious church v.27** – Christ Himself is doing everything that is necessary to present to Himself *“a glorious church”*. **Psalm 45** gives us great insights into the presentation of this glorious bride church. The heading in the NKJV Spirit Filled Life Bible over this Psalm is **‘The Glories of Messiah and His Bride’**. The Psalm is first of all magnifying the King and it is worthwhile to note that **verses 6&7** are quoted in **Hebrews 1:8-9**, as referring to the Son. Then the Psalm begins to speak to the daughters (Ps.45:9). *“The royal daughter is all glorious within; her clothing is woven with gold. She shall be brought to the King in robes of many colours”* v.13-14. This quote is full of significance. The bride is *“all glorious within”*; her clothing is *“woven with gold”* - gold generally speaks of divinity; she shall be brought to the King *“in robes of many colours”*. We straightaway think of Joseph and his robe of many colours. In **2 Samuel 13:18** we learn *“the king’s virgin daughters wore such apparel”*. Then **verse 16** speaks of the generation of sons that will come forth. They shall be made *“princes in all the earth”* and Messiah’s great name will be *“remembered in all generations”*; therefore, the people shall praise you forever and ever (v.17).

The Great Mystery in Jeremiah

Jeremiah 23:5-6 *“Behold, the days are coming, says YHWH, that I will raise to David a Branch of righteousness; a King shall reign and prosper and execute judgement and righteousness in the earth. In His days Judah shall be saved, and Israel will dwell safely;*

now this His name by which He will be called THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS – YHWH Tsidkenu”.

Then in **Jeremiah 33:15-16** Jeremiah repeats this prophecy with one major change, that is, instead of “*He will be called*” the Scripture says, “*And this is the name by which she will be called THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS – YHWH Tsidkenu*”. The bride has taken her Husband’s name. This is speaking of Jesus and His church ruling and reigning in all the earth.

The Bride Church

In **Revelation 21:2** John declares “*Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God prepared as a bride adorned for her husband*”. Truly this is a great mystery! John sees in the vision the Bride being revealed. The final thing mentioned about her is the proclamation from heaven “*Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God*” v.3.

We see God has found a home in His Bride, His people. She now is found “*having the glory of God*” (v.11). She is one with her husband. He is in her, and His glory is manifest through her in all the earth.

Truly this is a great mystery!

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