

## **THE FUNCTION OF THE BRIDE**

The position of the bride of Christ in the creation of God and Her eternal destiny in the eternal Kingdom is the focus of the revelation of the New Jerusalem. We can see her perfection, her transparency and eternal beauty because the New Jerusalem IS the bride. It is also clear that Jesus Christ specifically gave Himself on Calvary to perfect this “church” to present to Himself, full grown, without spot or wrinkle, holy and blameless.

Mt Zion also speaks to us of the bride of Christ in her ruling with Christ role in eternity. The New Jerusalem speaks to us of the perfection of the bride and the dwelling place of God and God , Himself, being the temple where the saints dwell, worship and function. Since the New Covenant saint has been called to be a priesthood of royalty or as kings and priests they have a dual calling. The sitting with Him on His throne speaks of our kingly function and the temple speaks of our priestly function. Offering up sacrifices to God also speaks of our priestly role. Of course all “earthly and natural sacrifices” will have been done away with but the sacrifice of praise and true worship in spirit and truth will always be valid.

In this study we want to focus upon the function of the (potential ) bride today in the church on earth. Since the church is in on the job training now to rule with Christ as His bride and wife eternally, her function on earth now is critical. Those who are too busy to be trained here will suffer eternal loss. Another aspect of the training here is the transformation from the old life that is “forgiven” but not yet changed into His likeness. Too much of the natural life (psuche) will seriously hinder us from our spiritual function in which we will be trained. The more we are living by His Life the more inner change and growth takes place.

It is clear that growth cannot be accurately measured by the number of doctrines we learn or the amount of knowledge we achieve. Spiritual growth is measured by the spiritual life we have received from Him. This is the Zoe Life that IS Christ in us. This is the Life that comes into us as the sperma of God when we are born again. This “sperma” is the living and abiding word of God. It is also called the Spirit of Christ or the Spirit of His Son. The same “sperma” that was impregnated into Mary to develop into the Man Christ Jesus also comes into us. The growth of that “sperma” was the incarnation of God in a human body.

God’s goal for the church is the incarnation of Christ IN His body now on earth. For that reason God begins by infusing the “sperma” of God which is the living and abiding Word of God into each of us individually. Then individual “members” are assembled into a local body called the church. The corporate church is said to be the fullness of Him that fills all in all. In other words this church is the manifestation of Christ.

Jesus said if you have seen Me you have seen the Father because He was the manifestation of the Father on earth. Hopefully we will be able to say if you have seen me you have seen Christ, at least if we see His fulness we will see the “corporate Christ”. A “body with many members”.

This is important to see clearly because the “bride” is a corporate group made up of many individual members. As each of us has one body made up of many members so also is Christ’s body. It is ONE BODY made up of many members. This “one body” built, perfected and full grown is what will be presented to Christ as His bride in the “glorious presentation” in Rev 19.

But that is then and this is now. How do we get from here to there? The process of growing up in all

things into Christ is the working out of the “Christian life”. The daily growth is the normal Christian life. That involves putting off of the old and the putting on of the new.

COL 3:5 Therefore consider the members of your earthly body as dead to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed, which amounts to idolatry. [6] For it is on account of these things that the wrath of God will come, [7] and in them you also once walked, when you were living in them. [8] **But now you also, put them all aside: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and abusive speech from your mouth.** [9] **Do not lie to one another, since you laid aside the old self with its evil practices,** [10] and have *put on the new self who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him*

COL 3:12 And so, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, **put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience; [13] bearing with one another, and forgiving each other,** whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you. [14] And **beyond all these things put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity.**

Even a casual reading of scripture should convince us that forgiveness of sins is just that. It is a wonderful beginning but the working out of the Christian life and entering into full salvation is quite another. A radical change must follow forgiveness of sins. Old things MUST pass away and all new things MUST come for the maturing of the church. Out of the church God will choose a bride for Christ who has grown to His measure and stature.

We might think all this will happen outside of our function because of the inner working of God as He rebuilds the inner man. However, much of the growth, transformation, rectification and sanctification takes place as we begin to function within our calling in the church. God only completes some of His work as we function with other “members of His body.” The lone ranger will suffer eternal loss because his old nature could only work alone and therefore didn’t have other members to expose his defects so he could ask God to heal and remove them. For that reason his new nature does not develop into Christlikeness.

While forgiveness of sins come to us by faith, the Christian growth comes to us by faithfulness! Not just in attending meeting but in fulfilling our calling within the body. The problem is that God has “called us” in one body. COL 3: 14 beyond all these things put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity. [15] And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed **you were called in one body;** and be thankful.

Since this Christian life is on the job training for our eternal calling it is our function within the body that is God’s method of training us. If we are too busy to be trained we are too busy to fulfill God’s purpose! The fact is that after we have peached to others, we ourselves can still be disqualified.