



Psalms 78:2-4

I will open my mouth in a parable, I will utter dark sayings of old... We will not conceal them.

Parables Bookshelf - Series 1.2.1

This issue of PARABLES BOOKSHELF introduces the book *The Remnant Bride*.

A common misconception among Christians today is that the entire body of Christ will be included in the Bride of Christ. God has shown us in the parables of Scripture, as well as in plain speech, that this is not so.

Consider Adam, the first man. God formed a bride for Adam out of a remnant portion of his body. Christ is referred to by the apostle Paul as “the second Adam” and “the last Adam.”

The church is the body of Christ. A bride will also be formed for the Last Adam out of a remnant portion of His body.

This may seem to be a minor topic to build a book around, but in truth, the concept of God rewarding each man according to his individual life is a very important concept that needs to be restored to the church today.

When all Christians believe they will receive the same reward, whether they live a life of devotion to Christ, or a life of careless ease, they will tend toward complacency. The church today has become mediocre. Most professing believers are lukewarm in their commitment to Christ, for they have lost the understanding that there will be vast differences in the resurrection of the dead.

The apostle Paul wrote that not all who run a race win the prize. Only those who compete according to the rules and strive for the mastery will win the victor’s crown. If you see the truth of this, and discern the exceedingly high prize that only a remnant will receive, then perhaps you will be encouraged to apply a greater diligence to the race you are running.

It is my hope that this book might be used to stir you up to a more fervent pursuit of Christ and the inheritance that will be the portion of those who overcome sin, Satan, and the world.

Food for Thought

“When life knocks you on your knees, your in the perfect position to pray!”

Anonymous

“If you are not as close to God as you used to be, who moved?”

Anonymous

Scripture Memory

1 John 1:9

If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Parables Newsletter

- Series 1.2.1
- *The Remnant Bride*
- Foreword; Introduction;
- Chapters 1-5

The Remnant Bride

Foreword

A word of explanation is necessary at the start of this book. In this work you will find this writer using names in reference to God the Father and God the Son that are more faithful to their Hebrew original than the names and titles generally in use by the church today. The name Yah, or Yahweh, will be found in reference to God the Father, and the name Yahshua will be utilized when speaking of the Son.

This usage is not intended to be divisive, nor does it serve as a renunciation of the usage of titles such as Lord or God. Neither is it a condemnation of

Whenever the word hallelujah is uttered, the speaker is literally exclaiming "Praise Yah."

those who choose to call the Son of God Jesus. My intent as a teacher of the Bible is simply to illuminate and instruct. There is great meaning in the Hebrew names of the Fa-

ther and the Son, and these names are directly related to one another, as well as bearing many significant relationships to other historic figures from the Bible, some of whom serves as types and shadows of the Son of God.

For example, Joshua, the Israelite leader who led the people of God across the Jordan and into battle to take possession of the land of Canaan bears the same name as the Messiah. They both were called Yahshua. The Son of God also began His ministry at the Jordan River as He was baptized by John. Both men labored to establish a kingdom dedicated to Yahweh, the first external and natural, the latter internal and spiritual.

Yah is the name used in reference to the Father on forty-nine separate occasions in the Old Testament. Most Christians have utilized this name of God without knowing that they were doing so. Whenever the word *hallelujah* is uttered, the speaker is literally exclaiming "Praise Yah," for this is the meaning of the Hebrew word from which it is derived. The longer name Yahweh is found an additional 6,828 times.

The name of the Son is likewise significant, for Yahshua is understood to mean "Yah's Salvation." The Gospel writer indicates that this is the meaning of the name given to the Savior at His birth.

Matthew 1:21

"And she will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Yahshua, for it is He who will save His people from their sins."

It has been the practice of this writer for many years to use these names, which more clearly represent their Hebrew originals. It is my hope that their employment in this book might aid the reader by bringing forth light on relationships that are obscured, as well as promoting an increased intimacy with God the Father by calling Him by His memorial name, instead of a title which men have substituted.

Introduction

The Lord Yahshua the Messiah is soon to return for His Bride; a Bride that has been prepared; a Bride that is suitable for Him. The conception in the minds of much of the church is that this Bride will consist of all believers. It is believed by many that the Bride will encompass the entire Body of Christ. Is this an accurate conception? I am convinced that it is not.

One does not have to look any further than the opening chapters of Genesis to begin to discern the truth of who the Bride is and where she will come from. In the first chapter of the Bible we are told that God created man, fashioning him after His own image. God declared that it was not good that this first man (Adam) should remain alone, so a suitable helper was sought for him. This helper was to become the very first bride, and she would be a model, or type, of a later bride who would come forth. This later bride would be the Bride of Christ.

The second chapter of Genesis gives a very clear description of the creation of Adam's bride Eve. God saw fit to tell us exactly how she was formed and where the material was found from which she would be fashioned. We are told that Adam was

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formed of the dust of the ground, but this was not so with Adam's bride. Adam's bride was fashioned from a *remnant* portion of his own body. We find this described in the following scripture.

21 So Yahweh God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; then He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh at that place.

22 And Yahweh God fashioned into a woman the rib which He had taken from the man, and brought her to the man.

23 And the man 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."

Genesis 2:21-23

God fashioned a bride for Adam out of a portion, a remnant, taken from his own body. Eve was not formed from Adam's whole body. She was indeed bone of his bones and flesh of his flesh, but it was from a remnant portion of his body that she was formed. In this description we have been given an illustration of how a Bride will also be fashioned for the last Adam, Yahshua the Messiah (1 Corinthians 15:45).

How do we know that this first bride was a type of the Bride of Christ? The scriptures reveal a very clear correlation between Adam's bride and Christ's Bride. Immediately after we are given details of the creation of Eve we are told "For this cause a man shall leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and they shall become one flesh" (Genesis 2:24). This verse is quoted in the New Testament as the apostle Paul speaks of the mystery of Christ and His Bride.

31 For this cause a man shall leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and the two shall become one flesh.

32 This mystery is great; but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church.

Ephesians 5:31-32

The scriptures also present a strong parallel between Adam and Yahshua. The first Adam is presented as a type of Christ, who is called "the last Adam." It is fitting then that the bride of the first Adam should be a type of the Bride of the last Adam, Yahshua the Messiah.

45 So also it is written, "The first man, Adam, became a living soul." The last Adam [Yahshua] became a life-giving spirit.

46 However, the spiritual is not first, but the natural; then the spiritual.

47 The first man is from the earth, earthy; the second man is from heaven.

48 As is the earthy, so also are those who are earthy; and as is the heavenly, so also are those who are heavenly.

49 And just as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.

1 Corinthians 15:45-49

God created a bride for the first Adam from a rib taken from Adam's body. In similar fashion He is even now creating a Bride for the last Adam, Yahshua the Messiah. This Bride is not Christ's entire body, even as Eve was not fashioned from Adam's entire body. The Bride of Christ will be fashioned from a remnant of Christ's body. This remnant will be a choice part, for being included in the Bride of Yahshua is a position of great honor.

The Bride of Christ will be fashioned from a remnant of Christ's body.

As will be shown in this book, honor and reward are at the heart of the matter of determining who from among Christ's body will be a part of the Bride and who will not. God does not bestow honor lightly. One must be worthy to receive the honor of the Father. Salvation is a free gift, but reward and honor are according to our deeds.

The Remnant Bride

"Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to render to every man according to what he has done."

Revelation 22:12

To be a part of the Bride of Christ is to receive the highest honor. The Bride is given intimate access to the Bridegroom; the two will become one.

To be a part of the Bride of Christ is to receive the highest honor.

This honor, however, is not given freely. It is reserved for those whose hearts beat with a passion for the Lord Yahshua the Messiah. It is reserved for those who

have allowed the work of the cross to bring a cleansing and separation in their lives, removing that which is fleshly.

We are taught in God's word that access to the presence of God and to His most holy things is based upon the worthiness of the individual. The Old Testament Levitical priesthood was a type of the kingdom of priests that the body of Christ is today. In Ezekiel God made a distinction among these priests, as to who could come into His presence and who could not. Access to His presence is a great honor, reserved for those who have kept themselves pure and free of idols.

Today the body of Christ consists entirely of priests (Revelation 1:6). Some will be granted access to God's most holy things, and some will not. Some will have access to God's presence, and some will not. Some will be accorded the intimacy and honor of being a part of the Bride, and some will not. The following words spoken to the Levitical priests will be applied to those within today's kingdom of priests who have not cleansed themselves from the impurities of the flesh and the world.

13 "And they shall not come near to Me to serve as a priest to Me, nor come near to any of My holy things, to the things that are most holy; but they shall bear their shame and

their abominations which they have committed.

14 "Yet I will appoint them to keep charge of the house, of all its service, and of all that shall be done in it.

Ezekiel 44:13, 14

How tragic to be a priest in the kingdom of God, yet not be allowed access to God's presence or His holy things. This will be the portion of much of the church. However, there is a remnant who will allow God to purify and refine them; a remnant that is passionate for Yahshua and shuns the world and its idols. Of them it will be said:

15 "But the Levitical priests, the sons of Zadok, who kept charge of My sanctuary when the sons of Israel went astray from Me, shall come near to Me to minister to Me; and they shall stand before Me...

16 "They shall enter My sanctuary; they shall come near to My table to minister to Me and keep My charge.

Ezekiel 44:15, 16

Yes, being a part of the Bride is an honor accorded to a choice remnant. These will have access to the presence of God for all eternity. Many who are at ease in Zion will find much to grieve about when they stand before the King. "There will be weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth" (Matthew 22:13).

Some might be concerned that a message of performance is being taught in this book. After so much has been written and preached about grace in recent years, many will undoubtedly be sensitive to anything that has the appearance of works in it. Works, however, are a valid concept in scripture. Many in teaching grace have climbed out of the ditch of legalism, and bondage to performance, only to fall headlong into the ditch on the opposite side of the road that is marked by license and care-less living.

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Salvation (spirit salvation; "that which is born of the Spirit is spirit" John 3:6) is by faith in Yahshua the Messiah. This faith is given to us by God. There is nothing a believer can do to add to this salvation. Christ's work on the cross was perfect. There is nothing lacking to His finished work in destroying the power of sin and the bondage to which it had us enslaved. Paul told the Galatian believers that if they tried to add to this salvation by keeping the Law, or by adhering to someone's list of rules and regulations; if performance entered into the salvation of their spirit, then Christ had in actuality become of no effect to them. Yahshua's death was needless (Galatians 2:21).

There is a whole realm of work outside of spirit salvation, however. This is the area of fruit bearing. Yahshua said that we are to bear much fruit and thereby glorify His Father (John 15:8). Whether we bear little fruit, or much fruit, we are still children of God, but it is to our benefit to bear much fruit. When Yahshua returns with His reward in His hand, it will be rendered "to every man according to what he has done."

Some in teaching the grace of God have erred in negating the importance of works and obedience in the life of the saint. Yahshua has not lessened the importance He attaches to these things. In the letters to the seven churches in the book of Revelation, Yahshua begins each one by stating "I know your works." He does not say "I know your faith", or "I know your heart." In truth, our heart and our faith are revealed in our works, and apart from our works there is no other way for them to be revealed. This is why Yahshua states that a tree is known by its fruit (Matthew 12:33). It is not trees that Yahshua is interested in, but people.

My hope for you as you read this book is that you might be provided with some encouragement to more passionately pursue Yahshua the Messiah. Much of the current teaching of the church actually does much to discourage a sold out life to Christ. By neglecting the teaching of personal reward, or by teaching falsehoods such as that which asserts all believers will share the same honor and glory for eternity, the body has been lulled into complacency. After confessing Christ as Savior and Lord

there seems to be little else that many Christians are encouraged to seek.

Being born of the Spirit is but the beginning. This salvation corresponds to the Outer Court of the Tabernacle. The true glory is where the presence of God is found. This is in the Most Holy Place. Only those who have been purified and refined can enter into the Most Holy Place. Only those who have allowed the working of the cross to put to death the deeds of the flesh can abide in the presence of God. This is the calling of the Bride of Christ.

If you have a passion for the Lord Yahshua the Messiah, if you long to know what the Father is looking for in fashioning a Bride for His Son, then this book is for you. May you be challenged by these words and may your heart be stirred with a more passionate pursuit of the One who is pursuing you.

The Bride and the Butterfly

Look again at the cover of this book. Note how distinctly different the caterpillar and the butterfly are in appearance. They would seem to not be related in any way, yet they are one and the same creature. An awesome transformation takes place in the life of this amazing insect. The transformation is so radical and complete that this insect has two different names. At one period of its existence it is called a caterpillar. At another, it is called a butterfly.

By neglecting the teaching of personal reward..., the body has been lulled into complacency.

In the same way, God has changed the names of men and women whom He has transfigured. Abram became Abraham. Sarai became Sarah. Jacob became Israel. Cephas became Peter. Their names were changed after they were transfigured by an encounter with God.

In these last days before the return of Christ,

The Remnant Bride

there is another amazing transfiguration which must take place. A Bride will be fashioned and formed; a Bride that is radiant; a Bride without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. This Bride will be awesome to behold. She will be a fit Bride for the Son of God.

The metamorphosis that must take place in order for the Bride to be revealed is no less radical than that of the caterpillar into a butterfly. The world will see the change and stand in awe. The Holy Spirit, even now, is at work to call forth a Bride out of the church, to wash her, to transform her, to make her ready.

Some who read of this transformation will be incredulous. They will look at the caterpillar that the church now resembles and balk at the prospect of a butterfly coming forth from her. Some will believe it is merely wishful thinking. Others will believe the timing is off; they will believe that the church will be transformed, but only after the saints get to heaven.

There will be those, however, who read and believe. There will be those who, being washed by the water of the word, find faith arising in their hearts. They will allow the transforming work of God's Spirit to perform miracles in their lives. It is these who will receive a new name. They will be called "the Bride of Christ."

It is appropriate that these receive a new name. They are in actuality a whole new type of creature. They will be as different from the mass of nominal church goers and half-hearted confessors of Christ as the butterfly is different from the caterpillar. They will not be content to remain in the Outer Court of the Tabernacle, satisfied with salvation and a promise of heaven. These will have a passion for knowing intimately the One who gave all for them.

It is this passion that will hold these faithful ones to the path of transformation. The path is dif-

ficult and comes at great cost, but the end is glorious and promises an assured habitation with the Son of God.

There is an in-between stage that occurs as a caterpillar begins the process of becoming a butterfly. This stage is most vital. The caterpillar will never become a butterfly without this period of its existence. The caterpillar spins a cocoon around itself. This cocoon becomes a hidden chamber where the miracle of metamorphosis occurs, out of sight.

There doesn't appear to be much activity in the cocoon. Caterpillars appear active. Butterflies appear active. But the cocoon seems to be lifeless. It appears as a sarcophagus of death. Those who desire the appearance of constant activity will not eagerly enter into the cocoon. Those who seek comfort above conformity to Christ, or who live for the opinions of men, will not willingly enter into this place. It is uncomfortable, confining, and does not make sense to the world, nor does much of the church understand its function. For these reasons, and others, many will shun this place of death and they will forfeit the greater glory and resurrection life that can be attained by no other way.

For the remnant portion of the Body of Christ who will follow wherever their Savior leads there is a cocoon stage, a death process, that they must submit to. This stage is vital and cannot be skipped over. It correlates to the wilderness portion of the trip from Egypt to the promised land of Israel. God will lead all of His children through this part of the journey, but few appreciate its significance. Some will not survive this part of the journey. Some will want to turn back. It is here that transformation takes place. It is here that flesh is stripped away and a spiritual being arises.

As with the butterfly, the Bride of Christ will be prepared in a hidden chamber. Her transformation will be veiled from the eyes of the world, and from much of the church, as well. These will see her emerge and will wonder at the miracle that has taken place. But even in knowing, many will not submit to the process required for the glory of God

Parables Bookshelf

to be revealed in them.

Our Savior's invitation is to come and die; die to the flesh, die to self, die to the soulish powers of life. This death is not an end. It is a glorious beginning. After death comes resurrection life. After shedding the fleshly form of the caterpillar, the glorious butterfly emerges. What then will be the form of those children of God who allow the same process to work in them?

Their end will be glory.

The Bride as Seen in Esther

The Bible is full of images of brides. These images were given to provide understanding of the ultimate bride, which is the Bride of Christ. In the book of Esther we read of a bride that was prepared for a king. Even so, the Bride of Christ is being prepared for her King.

The events of the book of Esther take place within the empire of the Medes and the Persians during the time of Israel and Judah's exile. King Ahasuerus was a Mede. He was also known by the Greek form of his name, Xerxes. He reigned from 486 to 465 B.C..

In the third year of his reign he gave a banquet and "displayed the riches of his royal glory and the splendor of his great majesty for many days..." (Esther 1:4). On the seventh day of his great banquet he commanded his eunuchs "to bring Queen Vashti before the king with her royal crown in order to display her beauty to the people and the princes, for she was beautiful" (Esther 1:11).

The timing is important to note here. It was on the seventh day of the great banquet that the queen was commanded to come forth. We are told in scripture, "But do not let this one fact escape your notice, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day" (II Peter 3:8). The world since Adam has experienced 6,000 years; 4,000 before Christ, and 2,000 since His birth. This equates to 6 days. We are just

entering into the 7th millennium, or the 7th day.

King Ahasuerus, in this illustration, is a type of Yahshua the Messiah, the King of Kings. On the 7th day Yahshua will summon His Queen to come before Him, but because she does not revere Him as Lord, she will refuse to answer His summons, presented by His eunuchs (which equate to God's ministers or to the seven spirits of God).

12 But Queen Vashti refused to come at the king's command delivered by the eunuchs. Then the king became very angry and his wrath burned within him.

13 Then the king said to the wise men who understood the times...

15 "According to law, what is to be done with Queen Vashti, because she did not obey the command of King Ahasuerus delivered by the eunuchs?"

Esther 1:12, 13, 15

Even so, let the wise men and women of our day, who discern the times, realize that this same event is being played out. Notice what was determined to be done to Queen Vashti due to her failure to revere King Ahasuerus as her lord and to respond in obedience to his summons.

The Bible is full of images of brides.

"If it pleases the king, let a royal edict be issued by him and let it be written in the laws of Persia and Media so that it cannot be repealed, that Vashti should come no more into the presence of King Ahasuerus, and let the king give her royal position to another who is more worthy than she."

Esther 1:19

Due to disobedience, Vashti was no longer per-

The Remnant Bride

mitted to enter the presence of the king. Much of the body of Christ today also is failing in obedience to their King and they will be excluded from the honor of entering His presence. "Another who is more worthy" will be accorded this honor.

For all those saints who have been falsely taught that salvation by faith affords them all of the honor of heaven and access to God's presence, as well as access to all of God's most holy things, this is a wake-up call. It is those who are worthy who will be granted such honor.

Salvation is a loosing from the bondage to sin that we should forevermore become slaves to righteousness.

It does not say that Vashti was killed, or cast out. She was simply stripped of her honor. How terrible to be betrothed to the king, yet denied access to his presence. Shame due to her folly followed her for the rest of her life. What tremendous grief she must have felt when her royal position was given to another. Many in the body of Christ are making the same error today. Shame and grief will be their portion as well.

Much of the body of Christ has been presented with a distorted view of God's desire for them. They have been taught that expressing faith in Yahshua the Messiah to attain salvation is the pinnacle of what is set before them. Unknown to much of the church, salvation is only the beginning, it is not the end. Salvation is a loosing from the bondage to sin that we should forevermore become slaves to righteousness (Romans 6). We were formerly conformed to the ways of a fallen and sinful world, now we are to be conformed to the image of Christ (Romans 8:29). This conforming comes as a process. Salvation is but the first step in this process.

Many saints today, having confessed faith in Christ, are then assured by others that they can now continue on to pursue personal happiness much as they did before salvation. They are even taught that God will be there to help them achieve the selfish longings of their hearts. The Lordship of Christ is overlooked, or given very minimal attention. Such saints ultimately fall into the pattern of

Queen Vashti. They love the honor of being wed to the King, but they see the King as existing to meet their needs. Obedience is foreign to them. They obey only when God's desire for them coincides with their own desire.

When Yahshua calls those who have been betrothed to Him to respond in obedience in this hour, many will refuse. Yahshua will then respond as King Ahasuerus; He will restrict access to His presence to the disobedient ones. He will then search for another who is more worthy to be His Bride. This obedient Bride will be given honor and afforded access to His presence.

We are told that after the anger of King Ahasuerus subsided that he remembered his queen. He could not repeal the royal edict, so his advisers counseled him to have a new queen sought out. Beautiful virgins from all over his kingdom were gathered to his capitol and they were placed under the care of Hegai, the eunuch in charge of the king's harem. Hegai was charged with the responsibility of preparing these chosen ones to meet the king. Esther was among those picked for consideration to become the bride of Ahasuerus.

Once selected, these beautiful young virgins were not immediately ready to go into the king's chamber. A preparation process was required first. For these young women the process lasted an entire year.

for the days of their beautification were completed as follows: six months with oil of myrrh and six months with spices and the cosmetics for women--

Esther 2:12

It was only after the virgin went through a year of preparation that she was ready to be presented to the king. The first six months of this process was marked by the pronounced usage of oil of myrrh. Myrrh should be recognized by most believers as a spice that was used in preparing bodies for burial. After Christ's crucifixion we are told that His body was prepared for burial and myrrh is especially

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mentioned.

I think it is significant in the description of this event found in the book of John that it repeatedly states that Christ's *body* was taken away and prepared. The Bride is a remnant portion of the body of Christ, and, as is seen in the book of Esther, a preparation with oil of myrrh is an important part of her being made ready.

38 And after these things Joseph of Arimathea, being a disciple of Yahshua, but a secret one, for fear of the Jews, asked Pilate that he might take away the body of Yahshua; and Pilate granted permission. He came therefore, and took away His body.

39 And Nicodemus came also, who had first come to Him by night; bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds weight.

40 And so they took the body of Yahshua, and bound it in linen wrappings with the spices, as is the burial custom of the Jews.

John 19:38 - 40

Myrrh, for the virgin bride candidates of the king, represented death as well. The one chosen to be the bride of the king was to live for the king's pleasure. She was to respond to his summons with quick obedience. No longer was her life her own, she belonged to another. Essentially, she was to die to her own life. In the same way the scriptures tell those betrothed to Christ that they are no longer their own, "For you have been bought with a price" (1 Corinthians 6:20).

Death is the first step of preparation that those who would become the Bride of Christ must go through. Salvation is not an end. It is a beginning. Our salvation was purchased with the blood of Yahshua. The purchase price was exceedingly high, but it was paid. We are now no longer our own. We must die to our own desires, goals, and ambitions. Christ's life must become our life, His will our will, His desires our desires.

This death process doesn't come all at once, nor in a single moment of time. The flesh's desire to seek after self is firmly entrenched in our being. It takes considerable time just to identify all of the ways in which we have sought our own welfare. Some forms of selfishness are very subtle. The scriptures teach us that even our righteousness, that which we deem to be good, is as filthy rags in God's sight (Isaiah 64:6).

It is in this death process that obedience is learned and an end of personal initiative is brought forth. This time of preparation is designed to produce a suitable and compatible Bride for Christ. She must become like Him, conformed to His image.

Death to personal initiative was a characteristic of Yahshua. It was exemplified in His words at Gethsemane, "Nevertheless, not My will, but Thy will be done" (Luke 22:42). This was a characteristic which Vashti lacked, and it cost her that which was most precious to her. It is appropriate that this failure was the first thing addressed among those who would contend for the opportunity to replace Vashti. It will likewise be the foremost issue addressed among those who are called to be the Bride of Christ.

Death to personal initiative was a characteristic of Yahshua.

In the story of King Ahasuerus' search for a suitable bride, we see some profound truths that are equally applicable to the Bride of Christ. The king's first bride was rejected due to a failure of obedience. A more worthy bride was then chosen to replace the one who had disqualified herself. Those called to betrothal to Christ need to take this lesson to heart. As we will see in subsequent chapters, many are called, but few are chosen. Esther distinguished herself by her obedience. She listened to the voice of the king's eunuch who was given charge over her, to prepare her, and she found favor in the eyes of the king.

The Bride's Eunuch Ministers

The Remnant Bride

This book is primarily focused upon the Bride of Christ, but it is prudent to take a brief look at those who are called as ministers to prepare the Bride.

It would be inappropriate to have a mature head attached to an immature body.

The way in which these ministers perform their service will greatly impact the preparation of the Bride. The book of Esther contains a type of these last days ministers. They are represented by

Hegai, who was an eunuch in the service of King Ahasuerus.

Hegai's responsibilities were very similar to the description given to those ministers whom Yahshua gave to the body of Christ to bring her to maturity and fulness of stature.

11 And [Yahshua] gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers,

12 for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ;

13 until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fulness of Christ.

Ephesians 4:11-13

We see here that God's ministers are equippers and are called to a work of building up, or preparing the body of Christ. This was Hegai's duty as well. Hegai was charged with preparing the young virgins to meet the king in a most intimate manner. He was to equip them with the manners, behavior, and mindset of those called to intimacy with the king. The Apostle Paul recognized this calling on his life.

For I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy; for I betrothed you to one husband, that to Christ I might present you as a pure virgin.

II Corinthians 11:2

Paul was an apostle, and he states that Christ gave apostles, as well as the other ministers mentioned, to perform a function in preparing the body of Christ to fulfill its calling and to come to maturity and the fulness of the stature of Christ. This calling on the body is too easily glanced over, so it won't hurt to restate it. The body of Christ is called to attain to the fulness of the stature that belongs to Yahshua the Messiah. When one considers that Yahshua is the Head of the body, it makes sense to assert that the body is to attain to His fulness. The Head and the body are to be a perfect match for one another. It would be inappropriate to have a mature head attached to an immature body.

What must be the qualifications and character of these ministers whom Yahshua has given to bring forth this maturity? Imagine, these ministers are called to equip and build up the body so that it is an equitable match for the Head. What a tremendous responsibility. Indeed, apart from the grace of God, it is an impossible task to be charged with.

However, as awesome as the calling is upon the minister, the body has an even greater calling. For she is to "grow up in all aspects into Him, who is the head, even Christ" (Ephesians 4:15). It has somehow become overlooked in this passage, and in the exercise of the responsibilities of ministers toward the body, that the minister is really not the important one in this relationship. The minister is merely a servant of God who is given duties in regard to the body. It is the body that is the true focus. This becomes apparent when we look back at Hegai's role in regard to the virgins he was entrusted to oversee and prepare.

King Ahasuerus desired a bride, even as Yahshua desires a Bride. He wanted a queen that was suited to himself. This is true of Yahshua as well. He desired a beautiful, purified virgin who would respond in obedience to him. The parallel between Christ and His Bride is easily seen here.

The eunuch was a minister of the king charged with the responsibility of preparing this bride for him. The eunuch was not the focus of the king's desire, the bride was. The eunuch's ministry and

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calling existed only as long as there were virgins to be made ready to meet the king. The eunuch served the king, but he did so by serving the young virgins being prepared for the king. In a very real sense, the eunuch's calling was inferior to the virgins' calling. It was a much greater honor to be the bride of the king than to be an eunuch minister who filled the temporary position of preparing the virgin to be a bride. Paul gave voice to this understanding in the following verse:

We are fools for Christ's sake, but you are prudent in Christ; we are weak, but you are strong; you are distinguished, but we are without honor.

I Corinthians 4:10

Again, the clarity of the calling of ministers is brought forth as we consider that the king was pinning away in his heart for a bride. After Vashti was removed, it is said that the king forgot his anger and he began to long once more for a bride. The king's desire for a bride had nothing to do with a desire to see more ministers prancing around the palace. On the contrary, the ministers existed because the king desired to have a bride that was suitable for him. The king did not wish to see the eunuch paraded around in finery, he wanted to see the bride adorned. The eunuch was not the focus. The bride was the focus.

This is certainly clear enough when it is related to kings and brides of days gone by, but somehow it has become muddled and confused in the present day kingdom of God. To look at things today, an observer would have to conclude that the ministers are the very most important thing and those they "serve" are of lesser import. However, this is a perversion of God's design.

Like the eunuch, the ministers' role is to prepare the Bride of Christ for intimacy with the King. The minister is given his charge because he knows what is pleasing to the king and what is not. He is to communicate this understanding to the virgin Bride. He is not to flaunt his role, or elevate his

calling in an unseemly manner. He is not to appear superior to the other members of the body. He is called to be a servant.

The minister is especially to guard against any abnormal affection or attraction between himself and the Bride of Christ. He is to be as an eunuch in regard to the Bride. He is not to seek fulfillment through attracting the Bride's affection to himself. He is to direct all of the Bride's passion toward Yahshua the Messiah. To fail in this in the least way is to place oneself on dangerous ground for the Bride belongs to God and His name is Jealous (Exodus 34:14). Yahshua said,

The ministers' role is to prepare the Bride of Christ for intimacy with the King.

"For there are eunuchs who were born that way from their mother's womb; and there are eunuchs who were made eunuchs by men; and there are also eunuchs who made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven."

Matthew 19:12

The minister belongs to the latter group. As he fulfills his calling to the Bride of Christ, he is to comport himself as an eunuch. He is not to lay hands on the Bride in an unholy manner, nor is he to be attracted to her, or to receive her affection to himself.

Today this happens all too often. Unfortunately, our current Christian religious system is constructed in such a way that the minister and the Bride are thrust into a detrimental symbiotic relationship with each other. It is not uncommon to hear of ministers having affairs with members of the bodies they are called to minister unto. Yet, these outward and visible trespasses are merely the tip of the iceberg. For every minister that commits adultery with a member of the body, there are a thousand more who have emotional and soul ties between themselves and those they minister to that are immoral and which are considered as adulterous in God's sight.

The Remnant Bride

In the last 2000 years the body of Christ and her ministers have deviated from the callings placed upon them. Peter proclaimed to the body of Christ, "But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light" (I Peter 2:9). Somehow, we have changed this to mean that the ministers are a royal priesthood, and the body is a sub-class we call laity. The ministers "proclaim the excellencies" of God, and the body listens to them do it week by week.

This was not God's purpose at all. God did not establish a laity in the body of Christ, nor did He establish a cadre of ministers who are superior to the rest of the body. The ministers are servants. They are to bring the body to the fulness of the stature of Christ. History clearly shows how we ar-

Being a disciple calls for a much purer devotion than calling oneself a layperson.

rived where we are at now. Satan was the architect of the deception and the fleshliness of man was the motivating force that caused the church to adopt current

forms. The error of the clergy/laity division was established largely due to two forces that both arise out of the flesh. There are some men who are driven by a desire to hold positions of honor and preeminence, and there are others who have found the requirements of discipleship too demanding and who have sought a way to lessen the demands upon themselves.

The first group finds their flesh gratified though the false classification of clergy, and the latter finds theirs fulfilled in the equally false and less rigorous classification of laity. The two have formed a symbiotic relationship that fulfills the fleshly desires of both groups. This arrangement works so well that it has remained in place for centuries and has withstood such threats to it as The Reformation and an assortment of revivals. This arrangement, however, is not according to God's design. It keeps the Bride in a state of perpetual immaturity to the dissatisfaction of Christ.

Two things must occur to correct this error. Those who are true ministers of Christ must adopt the mindset of John the Baptist saying, "I must decrease that the body of Christ might increase." Those who are among the body must rise to the calling upon their lives and embrace the rigors of true discipleship. Yes, being a disciple calls for a much purer devotion than calling oneself a layperson, but the rewards are such that Paul said, "For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us" (Romans 8:18).

The minister is not to obscure the calling of the Bride, he is to clarify it. God's true ministers are given their positions because they themselves have walked in intimacy with the Father and they have been given an understanding of what the Father seeks as He prepares a Bride for His Son. Though the minister is a servant, he is also accorded honor. God always gives honor with responsibility. A servant who is faithfully discharging his duties is to be accorded great honor and those who receive of his ministry are to honor him in the sphere of his duties.

It was clearly recorded for our benefit that Esther listened to the voice of Hegai, the king's minister, and she responded to his words. We are told that when the virgins were presented to the king following their year of preparation, they could take anything in with them that they desired. It was to their benefit, however, to listen to the advice of the eunuch in this matter. Not all did so. Not all were found pleasing to the king. Only one delighted him so much that he made her his queen.

15 Now when the turn of Esther... came to go in to the king, she did not request anything except what Hegai, the king's eunuch who was in charge of the women, advised. And Esther found favor in the eyes of all who saw her.

17 And the king loved Esther more than all the women, and she found favor and kindness with him more than all the virgins, so that he set the royal crown on her head and

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made her queen.
Esther 2:15, 17

Esther listened to the voice of Hegai. The king had appointed Hegai to his task for good reason. He knew what was pleasing to the king. His advice was to be taken seriously. To ignore his voice was to risk the king's displeasure.

The Bride of Christ must likewise be attentive to the voice of God's eunuch ministers. They will be given understanding of what is pleasing to the King. They will be entrusted with the wisdom to discern the qualities that the Bridegroom seeks in His Bride. The author of the book of Hebrews writes:

Obey your leaders, and submit to them for they keep watch over your souls, as those who will give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with grief, for this would be unprofitable for you.
Hebrews 13:17

Not all of those who are called to meet the Bridegroom will be as attentive to this instruction as Esther was to Hegai, nor will all ministers be as faithful to discharge their duties as Hegai was. This calls for discernment among those who hear the call to intimacy with Christ. It is certain that a refining will come to both the Bride and the ministers assigned to her. Yahshua is zealous for His Bride. Woe to those ministers who have been stealing the Bride's affection and who have touched her in an unholy manner. Among both ministers and the Bride it will be true that "many are called, but few are chosen."

Many are Called, but Few are Chosen

How awful it would be to receive a summons to the wedding feast of a great king's son, only to be singled out upon arrival for not being appropriately dressed. To have the attention of all upon you in such a situation would be embarrassing beyond measure. However, to then be seized as a tres-

passer, bound hand and foot, and cast out of this elect gathering would be devastating. It would truly be a place of weeping and gnashing of teeth.

This is a situation that we would all like to avoid. However, if I am correct, it will be the fate of a large portion of the church. The following passage gives us an indication of the fate that awaits many.

Among both ministers and the Bride it will be true that "many are called, but few are chosen."

- 1 And Yahshua answered and spoke to them again in parables, saying,
- 2 "The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king, who gave a wedding feast for his son.
- 3 "And he sent out his slaves to call those who had been invited to the wedding feast, and they were unwilling to come.
- 4 "Again he sent out other slaves saying, "Behold, I have prepared my dinner; my oxen and my fattened livestock are all butchered and everything is ready; come to the wedding feast."
- 5 "But they paid no attention and went their way, one to his own farm, another to his business,
- 6 and the rest seized his slaves and mistreated them and killed them.
- 7 "But the king was enraged and sent his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and set their city on fire.
- 8 "Then he said to his slaves, "The wedding is ready, but those who were invited were not worthy.
- 9 'Go therefore to the main highways, and as many as you find there, invite to the wedding feast.'
- 10 "And those slaves went out into the streets, and gathered together all

The Remnant Bride

they found, both evil and good; and the wedding hall was filled with dinner guests.

11 "But when the king came in to look over the dinner guests, he saw there a man not dressed in wedding clothes,

12 and he said to him, 'Friend, how did you come in here without wedding clothes?' And he was speechless.

13 "Then the king said to the servants, 'Bind him hand and foot, and cast him into the outer darkness; in that place there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'

14 "For many are called, but few are chosen."

Matthew 22:1-14

The "king" in this passage clearly refers to God the Father. He is giving a wedding feast for "his son," Yahshua the Messiah. He sends his servants out to announce the feast and to invite the guests to come. The servants are God's prophets, and the guests, referred to here, represent Israel.

Israel, however, does not respond, so the king sends more servants out with a more explicit and emphatic message. Again, his servants are met with

Many preachers of the word of God have difficulty describing any of God's children as being wicked.

indifference. Many of those invited are caught up in their own pursuits and are aloof to the king and his invitation. Some are even more wicked and take the king's mes-

sengers and abuse them and kill some.

The king is infuriated at this. In response He sends out his armies, destroys the murderers and sets their city on fire. The city is clearly referring to Jerusalem and her inhabitants.

37 "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, the way a hen gathers her

chicks under her wings, and you were unwilling.

38 "Behold, your house is being left to you desolate!

Matthew 23:37-38

The guests that have been twice invited are now deemed to be unworthy, so the king sends his servants out to the main highways to find guests to fill his wedding hall. This indicates that the gentiles throughout the whole world are now being invited.

The king's servants bring in those both evil and good. Some have asserted that this refers to the lost and the saved. Many preachers and teachers of the word of God have difficulty describing any of God's children as being wicked. God, however, reveals no such difficulty in calling a spade a spade. A look at the following parable will make it clear that there are both evil and good, worthy and unworthy in the household of God.

42 And the Lord said, "Who then is the faithful and sensible steward, whom his master will put in charge of his servants, to give them their rations at the proper time?"

43 "Blessed is that slave whom his master finds so doing when he comes.

44 "Truly I say to you, that he will put him in charge of all his possessions.

45 "But if that slave says in his heart, 'My master will be a long time in coming,' and begins to beat the slaves, both men and women, and to eat and drink and get drunk;

46 the master of that slave will come on a day when he does not expect him, and at an hour he does not know, and will cut him in pieces, and assign him a place with the unbelievers.

47 "And that slave who knew his master's will and did not get ready or act in accord with his will, shall receive many lashes,

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48 but the one who did not know it, and committed deeds worthy of a flogging, will receive but few. And from everyone who has been given much shall much be required; and to whom they entrusted much, of him they will ask all the more.
Luke 12:42-48

We see from this parable that there are servants in God's house that are wicked or evil, as well as those who are faithful. These are both members of God's house, the church. Likewise, those brought into the wedding feast are all from God's house. Some, however, are not as worthy as others.

Returning to the wedding feast, we see that the wedding hall has been filled. It has been filled with members from the household of God. The king then comes in to look over the guests and finds one without a wedding garment. This saint does not have on a robe of worthiness.

4 "But you have a few people in Sardis who have not soiled their garments; and they will walk with Me in white; for they are worthy.
5 He who overcomes shall thus be clothed in white garments."
Revelation 3:4-5

As indicated in the preceding scripture, the garment indicates worthiness. To not have one reveals that the person has been accounted to be not worthy. The king's question to the unprepared guest could actually be expressed in this way, "How did you come to be here at the wedding feast of my son, seeing that you are unworthy to be here?" The guest is speechless. There is no defense for his lack of preparation. He is hastily removed from the wedding feast.

Surprisingly, at the end of Christ's parable, we are told that what happened to this man is not a rare occurrence. To the contrary, we are told, "*For many are called, but few are chosen.*" It is the remnant that are chosen, that are accounted worthy to be at the wedding feast.

A further note that must be mentioned from this parable is that the unworthy guest was apparently unaware of his plight. His judgment came upon him quickly. He was deceived in thinking that he was appropriately arrayed, when he was not. It is a similar deception, a lack of awareness, and a state of slumber that is preventing the majority of Christians today from realizing that they are in the same peril.

The Remnant Bride

A deception has been foisted upon the church. The deception says that all Christians are equal before the Father. They will all share the same resurrection, the same reward, the same destiny. This is entirely untrue. Many have confused spirit salvation, which is given freely and in the same measure to all who believe, with reward.

The deception says that all Christians are equal before the Father.

Being born of the Spirit is a free gift. It is a gift given equally to all who trust in Christ Yahshua for the forgiveness of their sins. It matters not how long you have trusted in Him, nor how faithfully you have walked before Him. This salvation is a free gift to those who believe. This is the subject of the following parable of Christ.

1 "For the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard.

2 "And when he had agreed with the laborers for a denarius for the day, he sent them into his vineyard.

3 "And he went out about the third hour and saw others standing idle in the market place;

4 and to those he said, 'You too go into the vineyard, and whatever is right I will give you.' And so they

The Remnant Bride

went.

5 "Again he went out about the sixth and the ninth hour, and did the same thing.

6 "And about the eleventh hour he went out, and found others standing; and he said to them, 'Why have you been standing here idle all day long?'

7 "They said to him, 'Because no one hired us.' He said to them, 'You too go into the vineyard.'

8 "And when evening had come, the owner of the vineyard said to his foreman, 'Call the laborers and pay them their wages, beginning with the last group to the first.'

9 "And when those hired about the eleventh hour came, each one received a denarius.

10 "And when those hired first came, they thought that they would receive more; and they also received each one a denarius.

11 "And when they received it, they grumbled at the landowner,

12 saying, 'These last men have worked only one hour, and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden and the scorching heat of the day.'

13 "But he answered and said to one of them, 'Friend, I am doing you no wrong; did you not agree with me for a denarius?'

14 'Take what is yours and go your way, but I wish to give to this last man the same as to you.'

15 'Is it not lawful for me to do what I wish with what is my own? Or is your eye envious because I am generous?'

16 "Thus the last shall be first, and the first last."

Matthew 20:1-16

The pay that all receive equally is the salvation

of which we speak. Whether one lives his whole life in obedience to Christ, or whether one comes to trust Him while on his death bed, the pay is the same. Salvation belongs to the Lord and He can dispense it as He wishes. There is no basis for complaint concerning this.

8 For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God;

9 not as a result of works, that no one should boast.

Ephesians 2:8-9

In the area of reward, however, there is a great variation between what different believer's will receive.

"Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to render to every man according to what he has done.

Revelation 22:12

Not all saints walk with the same degree of faithfulness and worthiness before the Father. Their reward will therefore be different. The apostle Paul tells us that each man's work will be tested with fire. The quality, or worthiness, of each man's work will be revealed.

10 According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder I laid a foundation, and another is building upon it. But let each man be careful how he builds upon it.

11 For no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Yahshua the Messiah.

12 Now if any man builds upon the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw,

13 each man's work will become evident; for the day will show it, because it is to be revealed with fire;

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and the fire itself will test the quality of each man's work.

14 If any man's work which he has built upon it remains, he shall receive a reward.

15 If any man's work is burned up, he shall suffer loss; but he himself shall be saved, yet so as through fire.

I Corinthians 3:10-15

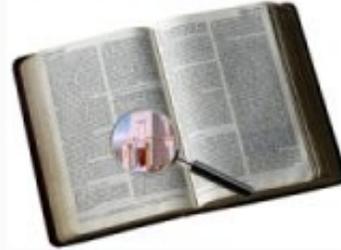
It seems that Christians today have given little thought to the issue of reward. There are many who live carelessly, pursuing the things of the carnal nature. Many believe that salvation is enough, that having obtained it, there is nothing else that God requires of them. They therefore walk in oblivion, ignorant of God's voice and His desire for them.

Consider again the parable of the stewards from Luke 12:42-48. The Lord indicates that there are some who will be found faithful and waiting. These are called blessed. Additionally, there are those who will say in their heart that the master delays and they will begin to carouse and act wickedly, mistreating others. These will be cut to pieces and assigned a portion with the unbelievers.

There is another group, however. This group is those who were ignorant of their master's will. They did things worthy of a flogging, but they received fewer stripes because they were unaware of their master's will.

Without a doubt, it is desirable to be among those who are faithful. It is better to receive praise and reward than a reprimand and stripes. Many will suffer loss, whether their disobedience springs from wicked carnality or ignorance of God's will. As we will see, this loss extends even to whether the saints of God will be counted worthy to be among those who are called the Bride of Christ.

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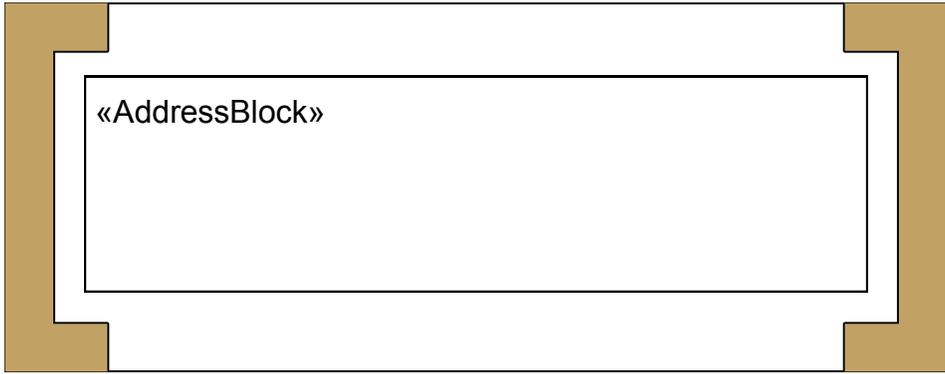
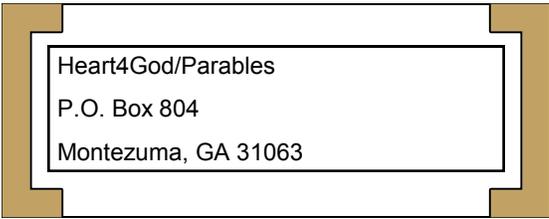
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PARABLES PRECEPT—The Hebrew Alphabet



(Image source: Ancient Hebrew Resource Center’s Website)

The Hebrew letter pictured above is Hey. The depiction of this character in Paleo-Hebrew is that of a man with his arms raised. I can envision a man trying to get someone’s attention. Perhaps he is jumping around and shouting out “HEY!”

Many of the words formed with this letter have led some linguists to believe that it was intended to depict a man who is looking intently at an object. We might define this charac-

ter as meaning “Look.”

We can see this association in the Hebrew word for “behold.” It is written with the letters Hey and Aleph.



Remember, the ox-head symbolizes power, or strength. When we combine this with an image meaning “look” we get “Behold” which is to draw attention to something important.

The word for love is also very interesting. It would be spelled Aleph, Hey, Beyt.



Do you remember that the letter Beyt is an image of a tent? The tent is where the family would dwell. Combining these symbols we have the message, “to look strongly at one’s family.” This is love.

This letter became our English letter E. Can you see the letter E in the upraised arms of the man? Simply rotate him 90 degrees to the right and you will see the letter E.

Look at the Middle Semitic representation above. Remember, the Greeks adopted this alphabet, and it was passed to the Romans. Because the Greeks write left to right as we do, they reversed the letters, turning them completely around.