

God's Eternal Purpose—The Bride of Christ

I. INTRODUCTION

- A. **Today we celebrate Palm Sunday—the day that Jesus ride into Jerusalem riding on a donkey** (Lk. 19:28-40) Today is also the beginning of *Passion Week*—the last week of Jesus Christ's ministry before going to the cross. **It includes the Last Supper, Good Friday, and of course—Resurrection Sunday!** My prayer for you is that this will be the most significant year ever of these realities.

II. JESUS' INHERITANCE—HIS ETERNAL COMPANION

- A. **God's eternal purpose for His creation is to provide a family for Himself and a Bride for His Son as His eternal companion to reign with Him forever.** As we ponder the significance of this week, we realize that this is what life is all about—God's eternal purpose for us—that you and I are Jesus' inheritance as His eternal companion—and that we will rule and reign with Him throughout all of eternity.
- B. **Human history began in Eden with Adam and Eve joined as a bridegroom and bride** (Gen. 2:24). Natural history ends with a prepared Bride being presented to God's worthy Son (Rev. 19:7).
“Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, For the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready. And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints. Then he said to me, ‘write blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!’” (Rev. 19:7-9)
- C. **Jesus will return for a victorious Church who is empowered by understanding her bridal identity.** (Rev. 22:17) As sons of God, we are in the position to experience **God's throne** as heirs of His power (Rom. 8:17). As the Bride, we are in the position to experience **God's heart** (affections).
- D. **The generation in which the Lord returns will be the first time in history that the Spirit will universally emphasize the Church's spiritual identity as the Bride of Christ.** The Bridegroom message is about Jesus' emotions for us, His beauty, His commitments to us (to share His heart, home, throne, secrets, and beauty), and our response of wholehearted love and obedience to Him.
“He who has the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears Him, rejoices greatly because of the bridegroom's voice. Therefore, this joy of mine is fulfilled. He must increase, but I must decrease (John the Baptist)” (Jn. 3:29-30).
- E. **The inheritance that the Father promised Jesus is a people whom He fully possesses. I [the Father] will give You [Jesus], the nations for Your inheritance...** (Ps. 2:8). Paul prayed that the saints would understand the “riches of glory” of being God's inheritance. ***“That you may know...what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints...*** (Eph. 1:18).

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

- A. **Jesus deeply desires that His people be with Him forever: “Father, I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am”** (Jn. 17:24)

- B. Jesus spoke of His second coming in context to “being with His people” (Jn. 14:3; 1 Thes. 4:17).
³I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be. (Jn. 14:3)

IV. JESUS' INHERITANCE IS PEOPLE WHO FULLY LOVE HIM

- A. Jesus' inheritance is people who fully love Him. The saints will be equally yoked to Him in love.
³⁷“You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. ³⁸This is the first and great commandment.” (Mt. 22:37-38). “The LORD your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants, to love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul...” (Deut. 30:6)
- B. Jesus prayed that the Father's love for Jesus be imparted to those who love Him. This is who we are—those who love Jesus because He first loved us.
²⁶And I have declared to them Your name, and will declare it, that the love with which You [the Father] loved Me may be in them...” (Jn. 17:26)

V. THE GUIDING PRINCIPLE OF HIS BRIDAL INHERITANCE

- A. The guiding principle of God's inheritance for Jesus the bridegroom over history— has been to use His power and wisdom to select, train, and prepare a Bride to reign with Jesus—a prepared Bride for His worthy Son.
“And have made us kings and priests to our God; and we shall reign on the earth.” (Rev. 5:10)
- B. Many cannot see where history is headed or what purpose it accomplishes. They see no lasting goals for humanity or purpose for enduring hardship. This leaves them in despair. History is often interpreted through the lens of significant scientific breakthroughs, military crises, political developments, and economic trends. We interpret history through the lens of God preparing a Bride. In this we see a lasting purpose in our struggles.
- C. God has orchestrated natural history so that people may seek, grope (seek out) for, and find Jesus.
“He has made from one blood every nation...and has determined their preappointed times and the boundaries of their dwellings, ²⁷so that they should seek the Lord, in the hope that they might grope for Him and find Him [to walk in wholeheartedness]...” (Acts 17:26-27)
- D. Boundaries: Speaks of God determining the boundaries of each nation. Times: God determines the times in which each nation will rise and fall in power. Grope: He sets the time when national boundaries shift to cause people to grope for God (Ukraine/Russia conflict). Find: God's purpose is that people “find” Jesus and walk in wholeheartedness with Him.
- E. All things work for God's ultimate purpose in preparing a Bride as Jesus' inheritance. For all things are yours: “all are yours. ²³And you are Christ's, and Christ is God's” (1 Cor. 3:21-23)
“We know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose...” (Rom. 8:28)