

God's Three End Time Purposes (Part 5)



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by Derek Prince

All right, we come now to the third and final development that has to take place. That is the preparation of the church of Jesus Christ to be the bride of Christ. We'll turn, first of all, to Revelation 19:6–8.

> "And I heard, as it were, the voice of a great multitude as the sound of many waters, and as the sound of mighty thunderings, saying, 'Alleluia, for the Lord God omnipotent reigns. 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.'"

That's the church.

> "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."

I want you to notice that when the time of the marriage supper comes, the bride will not be making herself ready. She will have made herself ready. In other words, now is the time of preparation. When the event comes it will be too late to start preparing then. The bride has made herself ready.

If you are not preparing I don't see how you can be possibly ready. If you're not even aware that you have to prepare, how can you possibly be ready? It's something that requires a lot of preparation. What are the requirements for the bride to get ready? I want to offer you very briefly three.

Number one, total loyalty to Jesus, a heart relationship. Not merely a doctrinal relationship or an intellectual relationship but a heart relationship. A heart which gives Jesus first place and will not share it with any other.

Let me read 2 Corinthians 11, just two verses. Paul is writing to the Corinthian church and he says in verses 2:

> "For I am jealous for you with Godly jealousy, for I have betrothed you to one husband that I may present you as

> a chaste virgin to Christ."

Now, betrothal was somewhat like engagement but in Biblical culture it was totally binding. It was as binding as marriage. It was not something you could break. But, it was not the consummation of the marriage. He says as a chaste virgin. If you turn to 1 Corinthians 6 you find out what kind of people belonged to the church in Corinth. In verse 9 and following Paul says:

> "Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God."

You need to bear that in mind. You can call it premarital sex if you like but if you practice it you cannot enter the kingdom of God. It rules you out unless you repent and change your lifestyle.

Then, Paul says:

> "Such were some of you..."

Think of that. He says, "I have betrothed you as a chaste virgin to Christ." What a testimony to the power of the blood of Jesus. They were the lowest of the low and yet through faith in Jesus and the power of His blood Paul could refer to them as a chaste virgin. He said, "That's how I'm betrothed to Christ."

Now he said, "My great concern is that you remain faithful to your commitment to the bridegroom until the marriage ceremony." He says in the next verse:

> "But I fear lest somehow as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your mind may be corrupted from the simplicity and sincerity that is in Christ."

So that's the danger that faces us between the time of betrothal and the celebration of the marriage supper, is that our minds may be corrupted from the simplicity and sincerity which is in Jesus Christ.

Well, I have to say that I see that happening to multitudes of believers. One of the factors is what they call New Age teaching which has infiltrated a great deal of the church and corrupts our minds from the simplicity and purity that is in Christ Jesus.

Another is a whole lot of theology. Personally I'm not really in favor of theology. I believe in the study of the Bible but when people become too preoccupied with intellectual understanding and achievement they usually lose their faith. So, we are warned to maintain the simplicity and sincerity and purity of our faith in Christ.

Alright, the second requirement of a bride is a heartfelt yearning for the return of the bridegroom. If we turn to Hebrews 9:28 it says:

> "So Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many; to those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time apart from sin for salvation."

To whom will He appear? To those who eagerly wait for Him. Those who are on the tip toe of expectancy. He will not appear to other for salvation. That's very simple logic. The bride's first concern is to be ready for the bridegroom's return, eagerly awaiting Him.

So, let me ask you, are you yearning, are you longing for the return of the bridegroom? Are you eagerly waiting, not just waiting, but eagerly waiting?

The third condition is to have the proper clothing. Everybody knows that for the bride, her attire is one of the most important features. And you see, it says:

> "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."

In other words, for your bridal attire you're going to have a record of righteous acts. It's the things you have done for the Lord that will become your attire. Now be honest, some of you at the moment don't have more material than will make a bikini. You need to change. We are going to be clothed in what we've done for the Lord.

If you turn back in Revelation to chapters 2 and 3, we don't need to turn there, to the messages to the seven churches, there's one thing that Jesus says to every church. Do you know what it is? "I know your works. I know what you're doing." He doesn't say, "I know your doctrinal statement, your denominational position, your theological background." He says, "I know what you're doing." And that's what's going to provide your marriage garment. It's not going to be doctrine,

it's going to be things you've done.

And it's not always easy to serve the Lord, sometimes the pressures are great. But next time you're really honestly serving the Lord and you feel all these pressures coming against you—and I want you to know they come against Ruth and me just as much as against anybody else. Just bear in mind it's all part of providing your marriage garment. You'll feel different about it then.

So, let's just go back very briefly over the three purposes of God that have to be fulfilled.

First of all, the gospel has to be proclaimed to all nations. I believe that's a responsibility of the entire church. I don't believe any Christian is exempt from responsibility in that area.

Secondly, before the age can close Israel has to be restored first to their land and second to their God. And bear in mind the purpose of restoring them to their land is to restore them to their God. In Ezekiel 36 God says:

> "You shall dwell in your own land and you shall be my people and I will be your God."

That's the ultimate purpose. All the rest, all the political, military negotiations and interchanges, it's all just part of the process.

And the third condition is the preparation of the bride: loyalty to Jesus, heartfelt yearning and righteous acts.

I invite each of you to consider how far you really are aligned with the purposes of God. The next time you pray "thy kingdom come," bear in mind that that's a commitment to be aligned with what's involved in the coming of the kingdom.

All right? Amen? Okay. Thank you for the privilege and opportunity of speaking.

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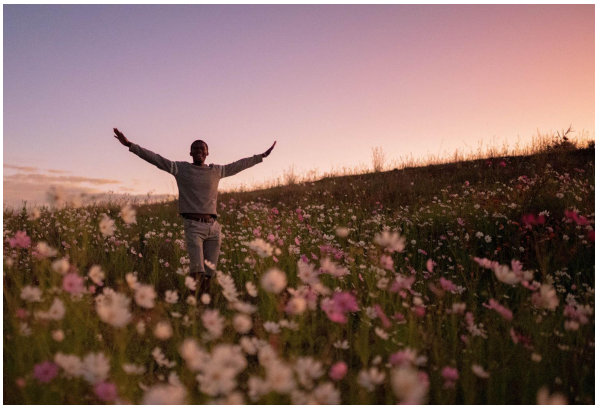

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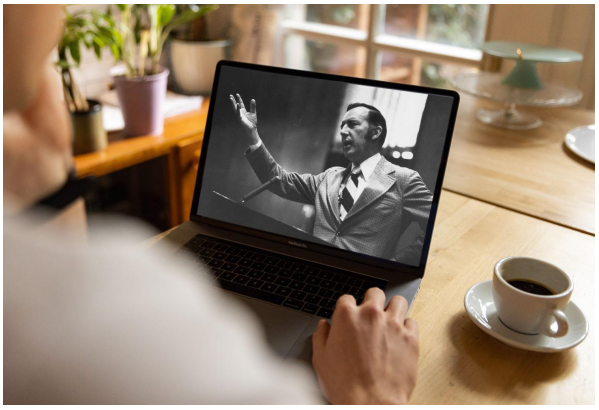

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