

Fountaingate Christian Foundation presents...

**The
King's
Table**

**Series
God's Magnificent Goal**

***Sending the Word of God to the
Ends of the Earth***

A Personal Letter to You

Dear Friend,

To realize the wonder of God's eternal purpose for mankind and for each of us individually is both awe-inspiring and challenging. It fills us with adoration and worship to the Lord and sets the focus of the whole purpose for our life down here on earth.

We trust this series of studies on "God's Magnificent Goal" will bring you, as it has us, to see the meaning and purpose of your life from God's perspective. We are sure it will cause your heart to be filled with praise and thankfulness to Him. We pray it will cause you to set your heart to fulfil the part you have to play in seeing God's Magnificent Goal fulfilled.

Our prayers are with you as you study.

Every blessing.

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The Collins Ministry Team*

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The King's Table

"He brought me into His banqueting table..." Song of Solomon 2:4

The Mystery of the Ages

“...The mystery that has been kept hidden for ages and generations...which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.”
Colossians 1:26-27

Since before the creation of the world, God has had a plan and a purpose for His Church. All history and prophecy -- from Genesis through to Revelation -- has been building up to a great climax -- the fulfilment of His ultimate plan.

Hidden in the past

God's ultimate purpose has been an incredible mystery which has been hidden in times past, but is now disclosed to the Church.

"Now to him who is able to establish you by my gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery hidden for long ages past, but now revealed and made known..." Rom.16:25-27.

Foreshown in Scripture

"Therefore do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, or with regard to a religious festival, a New Moon celebration or a Sabbath day. These are a shadow of the things that were to come; the reality, however, is found in Christ" Colossians 2:16-17 (read Hebrews ch.8-10).

Everything recorded in Scripture of the life and worship of Israel was not only revealing God's involvement with them at that time in history, but was pre-picturing the outworking and fulfilment of God's glorious plan (see 1 Corinthians 10:1-11).

Foretold by the prophets

The prophetic writings of the Old Testament were all speaking of God's ultimate purpose that would be brought about through Christ.

"Concerning this salvation, the prophets, who spoke of the grace that was to come to you, searched intently and with greatest care, trying to find out the time and circumstances to which the Spirit of Christ in them was pointing when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow. It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves but you, when they spoke of the things that have now been told you by those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven..." 1 Peter 1:10-12 (see also John 5:39).

The mystery now opened!

Paul had a special commission to proclaim the message that a new era had begun! The mystery was now open...and it was open to all, Jew and Gentile alike! (Ephesians 2:11-19; 3:6-11; Revelation 10:7).

"For I am a minister of the Church by divine commission, a commission granted to me for your benefit, and for a special purpose: that I might fully declare God's Word...that sacred mystery which up till now has been hidden in every age and every generation, but which is now as clear as daylight to those who love God. They are those to whom God has planned to give a vision of the full wonder and splendour of his secret plans for the nations. And the secret is simply this: Christ in you! Yes, Christ in you bringing with him the hope of all the glorious things to come" Colossians 1:25-27 (Phillips) (see also Colossians 2:2-3; Matthew 13:11; Ephesians 5:32; 6:19; 1 Timothy 3:16).

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God's Glorious Plan

“...God had planned something better for us so that only together with us would they be made perfect.”
Hebrews 11:39-40

Planned through the ages

God has been working toward the fulfilment of His plan for a people filled with His glory since before the beginning of time, a people He would call His “church” which literally means His “called out ones” (see Matthew 16:18) -- a people called out from the darkness the world was in, into the light of His glory (see 1 Peter 2:9).

In the creation

We were in God's mind at the time of creation.

“For he chose us in him before the creation of the world...” Ephesians 1:4 (Titus 1:2; 2 Timothy 1:8-10).

In the call of Abraham

“The promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed...who is Christ...If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise” Galatians 3:16,29.

God had His ultimate goal in mind in the calling of Abraham. Abraham himself saw a vision of God's purpose (see Genesis 15:12-16), in which he saw the coming of Christ (see John 8:56) and the city of redeemed people who would be born as a result of that coming (see Hebrews 11:10,14; 12:22; Revelation 21:2).

In the choosing of Israel

The Church was God's ultimate purpose in His call upon, and dealings with, the nation of Israel.

“These things happened to them as examples and were written down as warnings for us, on whom the fulfilment of the ages has come” 1 Corinthians 10:11 (see Colossians 2:16-17).

The separation of the natural line from Isaac, Abraham's son, was for the purpose of bringing forth the Messiah, who would usher in a redeemed company of both Jew and Gentile - the Church (see Ephesians 3:6; Galatians 3:26-29). The whole of the Old Testament was picturing, proclaiming and preparing the coming of Jesus and “the glories that would follow”(1 Peter 1:10-11).

In the sending of Jesus

The Church was God's glorious intention in sending His Son to redeem the world (see Acts 20:28).

“...Christ love the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless” Ephesians 5:25-27 (see also Revelation 21:9-10).

This was the joy set before Jesus, for which He endured the Cross (see Hebrews 12:2). This was the “treasure hidden in a field” for which Jesus “sold all he had” in order to purchase (see Matthew 13:44).

Fulfilled in the Church

All this planning has been leading up to the fulfilment of God's time-spanning purpose, which will reach its climax in the Church.

“...to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen” Ephesians 3:21.

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The Opening of the Mystery

“...the mystery of Christ, which was not made known to men in other generations as it has now been revealed by the Spirit... Ephesians 3:4-5”

The mystery revealed

The Gospel proclaims that a new era has begun - the mystery has been opened. Read Ephesians 2:11-3:21. With the coming of the Holy Spirit had come the opening of the mystery of the ages. Paul, and the other apostles, not only spent their lives sharing it with the people of their generation but they put it in writing -- the New Testament.

“Surely you have heard about the administration of God’s grace that was given to me for you, that is, the mystery made known to me by revelation, as I have already written briefly. In reading this, then, you will be able to understand my insight into the mystery of Christ...now...revealed by the Spirit to God’s holy apostles and prophets” Eph.3:2-5.

The mystery defined

“This mystery is that through the gospel the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members together of one body, and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus” Ephesians 3:6.

The Gospel is the good news of *unity*. Christ is the end of racial, social and gender divisions (see Galatians 3:26-28). Through the Cross the wall of division (the Law) which was between Jew and Gentile was broken down (see Ephesians 2:11-15). The Gospel is all about...

One new man (Ephesians 2:15-18).

One nation (Ephesians 2:19).

One family (Ephesians 2:19).

One temple (Ephesians 2:20-22).

One inheritance (Romans 8:17).

One Body (1 Corinthians 12:12).

One Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:13; Eph.4:4-6).

One promise (Galatians 3:14-29).

The mystery ministered

“I became a servant of this gospel by the gift of God’s grace given me through the working of his power. Although I am less than the least of all God’s people, this grace was given me: to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ and to make plain to everyone the administration of this mystery, which for ages past was kept hidden in God, who created all things” Ephesians 3:7-9.

Paul’s whole life was as a “servant” of this wonderful good news of the opening of the mystery. His whole message revolved around two things...

The unsearchable riches of Christ

See Ephesians 3:8.

The administration of the mystery

Administration means the practical managing. In other words, *how* God has gone about making the “mystery” a reality. Again, it is in a person - Jesus Christ.

The mystery accomplished

“His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms, according to his eternal purpose which he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord” Ephesians 3:10-11.

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The Hope of Our Calling

‘ I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you... Ephesians 1:18 ’

Knowing our calling

When Paul prays in Ephesians 1:18 that the faithful in Christ Jesus (v.1) may “know the hope to which he has called you” he is not speaking of a hope that is just “wishful thinking”. Hope, like faith and love, its co-workers (1 Cor.13:13), is a dynamic force. A Christian’s hope is the sure expectation of the fulfilment of the certain and unailing goal God has set before His children.

Hope sets our sights

“...Forgetting what is behind and straining towards what is ahead, I press on towards the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenwards in Christ Jesus” Philippians 3:13-14 (Hebrews 12:1-2; 3:1; 2 Timothy 1:9).

The hope of our calling sets our sights on the wonder of what is ahead for us in eternity in Christ.

Hope effects our lives

Knowing what God has planned and purposed for us effects the whole way we live.

Abraham

“By faith [Abraham] made his home in the promised land like a stranger in a foreign country; he lived in tents as did Isaac and Jacob, who were heirs with him of the same promise. For he was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God” Hebrews 11:9-10.

Moses

“[Moses] regarded disgrace for the sake of

Christ as of greater value than the treasures of Egypt, because he was looking ahead to his reward” Hebrews 11:26 (read from v.24).

All the heroes of faith

“...they admitted that they were aliens and strangers on earth. People who say such things show that they are...longing for a better country -- a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared a city for them” Heb.11:13-16.

The Lord Jesus

Jesus had his eyes on a goal as he faced the torture of the Cross, and because of this hope was able to endure the suffering (Hebrews 12:2). The “joy set before him” was the victory of “bringing many sons to glory” (Hebrews 2:10).

The picture of a race

“Since we have such a huge crowd of men of faith watching us from the grandstands, let us strip off anything that slows us down or holds us back, and especially those sins that wrap themselves so tightly around our feet and trip us up; and let us run with patience the particular race that God has set before us. Keep your eyes on Jesus, our leader and instructor...” Hebrews 12:1-2 (Living Bible).

Like a giant relay race that has been run down through the centuries, we are now running the lap of the race in our generation. And, like the men and women of faith of old, we have our eyes fixed firmly on the finishing line -- the magnificent goal God has planned for us in Christ.

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God's Eternal Purpose

“ His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known...according to his eternal purpose... ”

Ephesians 3:10-11

In the light of the glory of God -- the wonder of who He is and what He is like -- His purpose in creating mankind stuns us...

“...‘Let us make man in our image, in our likeness’...” Genesis 1:26 (also verse 27).

People were created with a glorious purpose in mind...to be one in heart, in nature and in glory with the God of Heaven.

The eternal purpose

There are five major aspects of God's time-spanning plan that He is progressively revealing to and through His Church. His eternal purpose is that the Church (the believers in Christ) will be:

Conformed to the image of Jesus

“And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him who have been called according to his purpose. For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified” Romans 8:28-30.

Sons of the Most High

“But love your enemies, do good to them...Then your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High...” Luke 6:35 (see Heb.2:10; Rom.8:14,19; Gal.3:26).

Brothers with Christ

Both the one who makes men holy and those

who are made holy are of the same family. So Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers. He says, ‘I will declare your name to my brothers; in the presence of the congregation I will sing your praises’ Hebrews 2:11-12 (see also Romans 8:29).

Revealers of His glory

“But all of us who are Christians have no veils on our faces, but reflect like mirrors the glory of the Lord. We are transfigured in ever-increasing splendour into his own image, and the transformation comes from the Lord who is the Spirit” 2 Cor.3:18 (Phillips) (also John 17:22-23; Eph.1:22-23; 3:10-11; Jude 24).

Sharers of His Throne

“To him who overcomes, I will give the right to sit with me on my throne, just as I overcame and sat down with my Father on his throne” Revelation 3:21 (Gal.4:7; Eph.1:18-23; 2:6-7; Col.2:9-10; Heb.2:5-13).

A Bride for His Son

“I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband” Revelation 21:2 (also Rev.21:9-10; 2 Corinthians 11:2; Ephesians 5:22-23).

God's purpose in creating mankind has never changed. It is still His heart's desire and it is revealed and brought to its fulfilment in Christ. It is the reason Jesus came. His work on the Cross and in the Resurrection was to restore what had been lost by sin (Romans 5:12-20; 1 John 3:8).

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Sons in the Family

‘ ...In bringing many sons to glory...both the one who makes men holy and those who are made holy are of the same family... Hebrews 2:10-11

Adopted as sons

In Romans 8:15, Paul says “we have received the spirit of adoption” (NKJV) and in verse 23 says “we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons”. He is using the Roman method of adoption in his day to picture our new found relationship with God. Roman adoption had two parts...

The private adoption

“For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, ‘Abba, Father.’ The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children” Romans 8:15-16.

If a Roman wanted to adopt a son and heir he would go to the slave markets and buy a young child. He would pay the price for a slave but was not buying him to be a *slave* but a *son*. He would then go to one of the Roman magistrates and present a legal case for his transference into the family. This was done before seven witnesses who bore testimony to the adoption so that should anyone in the future challenge its legality the witnesses would *testify* that the adoption was genuine.

- * **We were slaves**
(Romans 7:14; 6:6, 16-22).
- * **We have been bought with a price**
(1 Corinthians 6:20; 7:23).
- * **We are now God’s children and heirs**
(1 John 3:1-3; Romans 8:16-17).
- * **The Holy Spirit testifies of this**
(Romans 8:16; Revelation 1:4).

The public adoption

“We ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies” Romans 8:23.

When his son had reached adulthood and was ready to enter into the full expression of all his father had planned for him, the Roman would hold a grand celebration to declare the fact that this was his son and heir. This was for public recognition. This is what we are eagerly awaiting! It is the ministry of the Holy Spirit to bring us to maturity in Christ and at His Second Coming a great celebration and declaration will be held!

Brothers of the Firstborn

“For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers” Rom.8:29 (see Heb.2:11-12).

Jesus is, always has been, and will always be, the “Firstborn” of Heaven. It speaks of His special relationship and special status at the right hand of God the Father. In His love He has made us joint-heirs with Him!

“Now if we are children, then we are heirs - heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ...” Romans 8:17.

Jesus is the Firstborn by right. We are God’s children and “firstborn ones” by grace (Heb.12:23). Only when we realise the wonder of who Jesus is do we realise the wonder of what He had done and the glory of God’s ultimate plan for us.

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Into His Image

“ For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. Romans 8:29 ”

God's ultimate goal for each believer in Christ is revealed in 2 Corinthians 3:18:

“And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit” (see also 1 Cor.15:49; Eph.5:25-27; Col.1:28).

The starting point

The first stage in our experience to bring about the fulfilment of the goal, is the miracle that the Holy Spirit performs the moment we receive Christ as Saviour - we are *born again* (see 1 Peter 1:3; John 1:12-13; 3:1-8; 1 Peter 1:23; Galatians 3:26). Just as in the natural a new-born baby has the family likeness, so we, too, are born in the likeness of our Father spiritually. Now, like babies, we must begin to grow to spiritual maturity.

The pathway of growth

“Like new-born babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation” 1 Peter 2:2 (see also 1 Corinthians 3:1-4; Hebrews 5:11-14).

Just as in the natural there are major stages of growth, so it is spiritually. When we believed in Jesus and the work he accomplished for our salvation, we were...

Justified

We received forgiveness and righteousness in Christ and are now able to stand before the presence of a holy, righteous God without any sense of shame or guilt.

“This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference, for all...are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus” Romans 3:22-24 (read through to verse 26).

Reconciled

Our fellowship with the Father has been restored through the blood of Jesus. We have peace with God and are filled with joy in His presence.

“Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God...we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ...we have now received reconciliation” Romans 5:1-11.

Identified

A total exchange has taken place. Jesus totally identified with us, taking everything we were, and he totally identified us with him, giving us everything that he is!

“We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. If we have been united with him like this in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection” Romans 6:4-5 (read to verse 11; Ephesians 2:6).

Glorified

“...Now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him for we shall see him as he is” 1 John 3:2.

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Growing to Maturity

“...Being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus. Philippians 16”

When the Lord Jesus had completed the work the Father had sent him to do (see John 17:4; 19:30), he ascended into Heaven and sat down at the right hand of the Father. From there he sent the Holy Spirit with a specific work to fulfil -- to bring the newborn child of God to full maturity in Christ. As the Lord Jesus expressed it...

“I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you” John 14:18 (see John 16:7-14).

Agents for growth

There are three main agents, or vehicles, which the Holy Spirit uses to reveal more of the Lord to us to change us and cause us to grow into the image of God (2 Corinthians 3:18).

The Word of God

“All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work” 2 Timothy 3:16-17.

- * **It reveals Jesus** (John 5:39; 1:14).
- * **It speaks to our hearts** (Romans 15:4).
- * **It imparts life** (John 6:63; 1 Peter 1:23-25).
- * **It is our nourishment** (1 Peter 2:2).

The trial of faith

God uses the circumstances and problems that we face in life as moulding instruments to transform us into the likeness of Jesus (see Romans 8:28-29; James 1:2-4).

“...now for a little while you may be dis-

tressed by trials and suffer temptations, so that [the genuineness] of your faith may be tested, [your faith] which is infinitely more precious than the perishable gold which is tested and purified by fire. [This proving of your faith is intended] to redound to [your] praise and glory and honour when Jesus Christ...is revealed” 1 Peter 1:6-7 (Amp) (see also 2 Corinthians 4:7-18).

Gold is put in fire to get rid of the elements mixed within it so that what comes through in the end is the pure gold. This is the purpose of the trials of our faith. Pure faith comes forth as a result which, in turn, results in the Lord giving us “praise and glory and honour” at his return (see Matt. 25:21).

The Body of Christ

“There is one body and one Spirit...But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it...It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God’s people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fulness of Christ...” Eph.4:4-13 (read through v.16. See also Eph.1:22-23).

Each individual member of the Church is important to the other. Only as the whole Body ministers to one another the “grace” Christ has given each one will we attain “to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ”.

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Co-Heirs with Christ

Now if we are children, then we are heirs -- heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ... Romans 8:17

Our inheritance in Christ **Power and victory**

"Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God" Colossians 3:1 (see also Hebrews 12:2).

We were in Christ when he rose from the dead, ascended into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of the Father (Ephesians 1:20; 2:6). Since this is true, Paul encourages us, let us seek those things that are at the right hand of God! The Scripture mentions many things that are at God's right hand. Here are some...

Authority

All authority is given to us in Christ...

"...he raised him from the dead and gave him the place of supreme honour in Heaven [the right hand of God] -- a place that is infinitely superior to any conceivable command, authority, power or control, and which carries with it a name far beyond any name that could ever be used in this world or the world to come. God has placed everything under the power of Christ and has set him up as head of everything for the Church. For the Church is his body, and in that body lives fully the one who fills the whole wide universe" Ephesians 1:20-22 (Phillips) (see also Matthew 28:18-20).

We have been given the right to use that wonderful, powerful name -- the name of Christ. In other words, we represent him.

"...Then the Father will give you whatever you ask in my name" John 15:16 (see also 2 Corinthians 5:18-19; John 14:13-14).

"Your right hand, O Lord, was majestic in power. Your right hand, O Lord shattered the enemy..." Exodus 15:6,12 (see also Psalm 118:15-16; 98:1; 89:13).

We are God's ambassadors -- his right hand expressed in the world! (see 2 Corinthians 5:20; Acts 1:8).

Strength and support

"So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand" Isaiah 41:10 (see also Hebrews 4:16).

Joy and pleasures

"...you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand" Psalm 16:11 (see also Ephesians 1:3).

Righteousness

"...your right hand is filled with righteousness" Psalm 48:10 (see also Romans 5:17).

Guidance

"...even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast" Psalm 139:10.

The kingdom

"Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world...' " Matthew 25:34 (see also Psalm 44:3).

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Sharers of His Throne

‘ To him who overcomes, I will give the right to sit with me on my throne, just as I overcame and sat down with my Father on his throne. Revelation 3:21

The place of authority

"For God is the King of all the earth; sing to him a psalm of praise. God reigns over the nations; God is seated on his holy throne" Psalm 47:7-8 (see also Isaiah 66:1; Daniel 4:17; Isaiah 40:12-26).

The Throne of Heaven represents the ultimate authority of God over all his creation, in heaven and on earth.

Our position in Christ

"...That power is like the working of his mighty strength, which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every title that can be given, not only in the present age but also in the one to come. And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way...And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus" Ephesians 1:19-23; 2:6.

God's magnificent goal for us, since the beginning of time, is that we should be partakers of his glory, sharers of His Throne.

"Now if we are children, then we are heirs -- heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory" Romans 8:17.

As the Son is co-equal with the Father, yet sub-

ject to his authority in everything (see 1 Corinthians 15:24-28), so the Church was designed to be joint-heirs with the Son, yet he is "in everything...[to] have the supremacy" (Colossians 1:18. See also Philippians 2:5-11; Revelation 4:4,10-11).

Delegated authority

This plan for us -- in the mind of God even before the creation of the world -- placed us in the line of delegated authority "far above all rule and authority, power and dominion", which includes all the angelic realm and all creation.

"His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms, according to his eternal purpose, which he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord" Eph.3:10-11 (Heb.1:4-8; 2:5-12).

Contention for the Throne

It was this plan which God had for the Church which triggered the very first power-struggle ever attempted for the Throne of the universe. Read *Isaiah 14:12-14*. Although this prophetic word is initially addressed to the king of Babylon (v.3-4), the focus changes in verse 12 to Lucifer ("morning star, son of the dawn"), the spiritual power behind the natural king. The five "I will"s, declared here by Lucifer, were in rebellion to what God had planned for his new creation. He desired the position that God had planned for us. The Church symbolises to him the very target of his contention -- *the Throne of God*.

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Revealers of His Glory

‘ And the glory of the Lord will be revealed, and all mankind together will see it. For the mouth of the Lord has spoken. Isaiah 40:5

This scripture in Isaiah 40:5 was fulfilled by the Lord Jesus in his ministry on earth (1 John 1:1-3; John 1:1-5,14-15,23) but it also finds fulfilment in the Church (John 17:20-23).

Revealed individually

"We are not like Moses, who would put a veil over his face to keep the Israelites from gazing at it while the radiance was fading away" 2 Corinthians 3:13 (read through vs 7-18).

Read Exodus 33:12-23;34:58. When God passed in front of Moses in answer to the desire of his heart to see his glory, the Lord veiled him from the fullness of his glory (his "face") with his hand. When Moses descended from the mountain after seeing "the back" of God's glory, his face was so radiant reflecting the light of the glory he had seen (limited though it was) he had to put a veil over it to protect the people. When the tabernacle (later the temple) was built, a thick veil separated the people from the third compartment, where the glory of the Lord had descended (see Exodus 40:34-35; 26:31-33).

The veil is taken away

"But whenever anyone turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away" 2 Corinthians 3:16.

Through the work of Christ on the Cross there is no longer a veil between the believer and the fullness of God's glory (see Matthew 27:50-51; Hebrews 10:19-22; 2 Corinthians 4:3-6). We have free access into his presence and day by day the Holy Spirit is revealing more and more of his glory to us which then changes us to be more like him.

The reflected glory

"But all of us who are Christians have no veils on our faces, but reflect like mirrors the glory of the Lord..." 2 Cor.3:18 (Phillips).

Just as God's "face" represents the fullness of who God is, so it is with us. When we meet someone and want to get to know them we look into their face. Our face reveals our heart -- everything we are. The Spirit's revelation to us of the glory of God (his "face") so effects us we are changed "from one degree of glory to another" (Amp.V.). Holding a mirror in such a way that it reflects the brilliance of the sun has dramatic effects upon the surroundings. Fires break out! So it is with the Christian's life. Looking into the glory of God, the face (heart and life) of the believer then acts like a mirror reflecting the glory, which has been experienced, to those around. God's glory is revealed and everyone who surrounds the believer is effected.

Revealed corporately

"It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ" Ephesians 4:11-13 (read to v.16).

God's plan is for a corporate Body, filled with his glory, who will reveal to the world all that Christ is (Habakkuk 2:14).

The King's Table

"He brought me into His banqueting table..." Song of Solomon 2:4

The Called Out Ones

‘ ...Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy...to present her to himself as a radiant church... Ephesians 5:25-27

The Church

"You have come...to the church of the first-born, whose names are written in heaven..." Hebrews 12:22-23.

"The church" means "the called out ones". Since the beginning of time God has had a plan for his called out ones - those who respond to his call - called out from a sinful, fallen world and separated for his glorious purpose (see Romans 8:29-30). From before the creation of the world, God has had a wonderful plan for his Church to be:

Radiant

"...to present her to himself as a radiant [in glorious splendour (Amp)] church..." Ephesians 5:27.

Holy

"For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy [consecrated and set apart for Him (Amp)]..." Ephesians 1:4.

Blameless

"For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be...blameless in his sight" Eph.1:4 (1 Thess.5:23; Phil.1:10;2:15).

Sanctified

"To the church of God in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus and called to be holy [consecrated and purified and made holy in Christ Jesus (Amp)]..." 1 Cor.1:2.

Diverse and mutually edifying

"The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ"

1 Corinthians 12:12 (read through to verse 27. See also Ephesians 4:7-16).

The foundation of truth

"...God's household, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of the truth" 1 Timothy 3:15.

Victorious

"Simon Peter answered, 'You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.' Jesus replied 'Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by man, but by my Father in heaven. And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it'" Matthew 16:18 (see also Romans 8:31-39; 2 Corinthians 2:14; 1 John 5:4-5).

Representing Christ's authority

"And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church..." Ephesians 1:22 (read from v.18).

The fullness of God expressed

"...the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way" Ephesians 1:23.

The revealer of his glory

"His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms...to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen" Ephesians 3:10,21.

The King's Table

"He brought me into His banqueting table..." Song of Solomon 2:4

A Body Prepared

‘ Therefore, when Christ came into the world, he said:
‘...a body you prepared for me...Here I am...I have
come to do your will, O God’. Hebrews 10:5-7

The human body of the Lord Jesus Christ was a prepared body. He was God in human form, manifest in the flesh.

“The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth” John 1:14 (see also 1 Timothy 3:16).

Everything Jesus was and said and did in this prepared human body was the will of God.

The Church - His Body

Since his finished work on the Cross, his ascension into Heaven and the outpouring of His Spirit (see Acts chapter 2), the Church, now, is his “prepared body” on earth. We are “the Body of Christ” with the glorious purpose that the will of God again be done on earth (see Matthew 6:10).

The fullness of God

The entirety of God’s being was manifested in Jesus (see John 3:31-36; 14:7-11; Colossians 2:9; Hebrews 1:3), and it is his will that the same fullness be manifested in the Church, which is his spiritual body.

“And God placed all things under [Jesus’] feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way” Ephesians 1:22-23.

Just as the human body is the vehicle through which the personality and nature of an individual - his mind, will, character, emotions and ability -

are expressed, so the Body of Christ, the Church, is the means of expression, by the Holy Spirit, of Christ’s person. God’s plan is that Christ, through his Body, should manifest to the world and to the heavenly realm four things:

The wisdom of God

“His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms, according to his eternal purpose, which he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord” Ephesians 3:10-11.

The grace of God

“And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus” Ephesians 2:6-7.

The praises of God

“But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light” 1 Peter 2:9 (see also vs10-12).

The glory of God

“Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen” Ephesians 3:20-21 (Habakkuk 2:14).

The King's Table

"He brought me into His banqueting table..." Song of Solomon 2:4

Our Purpose on Earth

‘ As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world...I have given them the glory that you gave me...to let the world know that you sent me. John 17:18, 22-23 ’

His glory filling the earth

"For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea" Habakkuk 2:14 (Isaiah 40:5).

The glory of God already fills Heaven, the dwelling place of God (see Acts 7:48-50; Luke 19:38). Yet God has long desired for his glory to fill the earth in the same way as it fills Heaven (Matthew 6:10)

The vessel of His glory

Down through history God has ordained vessels through which he could reveal his glory to a sinful world. The glory of the Lord filled...

The tabernacle (Exodus 40:34-35).

The temple (2 Chron.7:1-2; Ezekiel 10;4).

The Lord Jesus (John 1:14; 2:19-21).

The Church is now the temple of God

"In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit" Ephesians 2:21-22 (see also 1 Cor.3:16; Isaiah 6:1-3).

Just as the physical body of Jesus was the container of God's glory, so now his spiritual Body - the worldwide Church - is a vessel whose purpose is to manifest God's glory through the earth.

His glory revealed

"I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will

be revealed in us" Romans 8:18.

Our lives are the lens through which the glory of God is revealed. We are the jars of clay which contain the treasure of God's glory.

Treasure in jars of clay

"For God who said, 'Let light shine out of darkness,' made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ. But we have this treasure in jars of clay..." 2 Corinthians 4:6-7

The light of the world

"...so that you may become blameless and pure, children of God without fault in a crooked and depraved generation, in which you shine like stars in the universe" Philippians 2:15 (see Matthew 5:14; Ephesians 5:8-16; 1 Thessalonians 5:5-8).

The aroma of Christ

"But thanks be to God, who...through us spreads everywhere the fragrance of the knowledge of him. For we are to God the aroma of Christ among those who are being saved and those who are perishing" 2 Corinthians 2:14-15.

To impact the nations

"Now to him who is able to establish you by my gospel...so that all nations might believe and obey him - to the only wise God be glory forever through Jesus Christ! Amen" Romans 16:25-27 (see also John 17:21-23).

The King's Table

"He brought me into His banqueting table..." Song of Solomon 2:4

The Fullness of God

‘ For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form, and you have been given fullness in Christ... Colossians 2:9-10 ’

The great commission

"I (Paul) have become [the church's] servant by the commission God gave me to present to you the word of God in its fullness - the mystery that has been kept hidden for ages and generations, but is now disclosed to the saints. To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory" Colossians 1:25-27.

The core of Paul's message to the Church was an understanding that all the riches in Christ himself were now invested in his Body, the Church.

"My purpose is that [the church] may be encouraged in heart and united in love, so that they may have the full riches of complete understanding, in order that they may know the mystery of God, namely, Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" Colossians 2:2-3.

God's blueprint for the Church is Christ himself! Christ brings it to its fulfillment by three means...

The work of Christ for us

(Colossians 1:24).

The life of Christ in us

(Colossians 1:27).

The fullness of Christ through us

(Colossians 2:9-10).

Just as Christ was "the fullness of the Godhead bodily" (Colossians 2:9, KJV), so now also is the Church. The Church is an extension of the

Godhead, the "fullness of him who fills everything in every way" (Ephesians 1:22-23).

Three aspects revealed

There are three specific aspects of the glory of God:

His character

"And he passed in front of Moses, proclaiming, 'The Lord, the Lord, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished'..." Exodus 34:6-8 (see John 1:14).

His power

"Then Jesus said, 'Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God?'...When he had said this, Jesus called in a loud voice, 'Lazarus, come out!' The dead man came out..." John 11:40-44 (see also Psalm 19:1; Deut.5:24; Ex.19:16-20).

His manifested presence

"As he was praying, the appearance of his face changed, and his clothes became as bright as a flash of lightning...Peter and his companions...saw his glory..." Luke 9:28-35 (see also Exodus 24:15-18; 2 Chron.7:1-3).

God's wonderful plan is that these three aspects of his glory now be revealed through the Church, his Body (see Galatians 5:22-24; John 14:12; 1 Corinthians 12:7-11; Acts 6:15).

The King's Table

"He brought me into His banqueting table..." Song of Solomon 2:4

The City of God

‘ But you have come to Mount Zion, to the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God...to the church of the firstborn... Hebrews 12:22-23 ’

Eyes on a city to come

“And so Jesus also suffered outside the city gate to make the people holy through his own blood. Let us, then, go to him outside the camp, bearing the disgrace he bore. For here we do not have an enduring city, but we are looking for the city that is to come” Heb.13:12-14.

The constant motivation of Christians down through the ages is the vision of this “city that is to come”. Christians have endured suffering, persecution and rejection, all because of the assurance of that city.

Abraham - our example

“By faith he made his home in the promised land like a stranger in a foreign country; he lived in tents, as did Isaac and Jacob, who were heirs with him of the same promise. For he was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God” Hebrews 11:9-10.

Abraham’s eyes were fixed on that eternal city and this was the basis of his faith (Hebrews 11:1). This vision caused him to live “like a stranger in a foreign country”.

Foreigners on earth

The hope that Abraham had has the same effect on us and all believers. The vision of this city effects the way we live on earth now.

“All these people...admitted that they were aliens and strangers on earth. People who say such things show that they are looking

for a country of their own. If they had been thinking of the country they had left, they would have had opportunity to return. Instead, they were longing for a better country - a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has appointed a city for them” Hebrews 11:16.

A city with foundations

The Heavenly Jerusalem is set apart by its foundations, representing its permanence.

“...He...showed me the Holy City, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God. It shone with the glory of God, and its brilliance was like that of a very precious jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal...The wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb” Revelation 21:9-11,14 (read also vs 18-20).

These foundations are described in terms of twelve different precious stones, each a layer of the foundation. But the overall description is one of purity of reflective light. Jasper is believed to be the same as the diamond. If you hold a diamond up to the sun, it catches the sunlight, splintering it in all directions, breaking it up into its component colors. This is what the glory of God, shining through the city, is like. The city of God is not just a matter of physical structures (it is described as a “bride” - Revelation 21:2) but it is characterized by its citizens. Each of us is different, like a facet cut into a diamond. The glory of God shines through each Christian’s life in a completely unique way.

The King's Table

"He brought me into His banqueting table..." Song of Solomon 2:4

Betrothed as a Bride

‘ For I have betrothed you to one Husband, to present you a chaste virgin to Christ. 2 Corinthians 11:2 (Amp) ’

God the Father's glorious plan is that we be a "Bride" for His Son (see Ephesians 5:25-32; Hosea 2:19-20).

The qualities of the Bride

In Israel's culture a father would send a close friend, or trusted servant, to find a suitable bride for his son. Abraham sent his servant to find a bride for his son, Isaac. *Read Genesis 24:1-61.* The account of the servant meeting Rebecca at the well serves as a beautiful picture. The qualities which he looked for in this bride for Isaac reveal the qualities that the Holy Spirit is also searching for - a Bride that is:

Of the same bloodline (v.3-4)

God has purchased us for himself by the blood of Christ.

"Is not the cup of thanksgiving for which we give thanks a participation in the blood of Christ..." 1 Corinthians 10:16 (see John 6:53-56; Ephesians 2:13; Hebrews 12:24).

Early at the spring (v.15)

The Bible also likens the Holy Spirit to a spring of living water (see Jeremiah 2:13; 17:13; John 4:14; 7:38). It is as we spend time in the presence of God, thirsting after his righteousness, that God draws out from us the heart of the Bride.

"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled" Matthew 5:6.

Beautiful (v.16)

"Your beauty should not come from outward

adornment...Instead, it should be that of your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God's sight" 1 Peter 3:3-4.

Beauty attracts (see Psalm 45:10-11,13-15). What is it that attracts Christ to us? A holiness on the inside that shines out in our outward lives (see Psalm 51:6; 2 Corinthians 7:1).

A virgin (v.16)

Like Israel, the Church has often been guilty of spiritual adultery (Ezekiel 16:11-17), which is a love affair with this world (James 4:4). The Holy Spirit is searching for spiritual purity in the Church (see Matthew 5:8; 2 Corinthians 6:14-17; 1 John 2:15-17).

"I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy. I promised you to one husband, to Christ, so that I might present you as a pure virgin to him" 2 Corinthians 11:2 (see also v.3-4).

Rebecca expressed four attitudes which picture the heart of the Bride:

Willing to forsake all (v.5,8,58)

See Luke 14:26-27.

Ready to serve (v.14,18-20)

See Colossians 3:23-24; Philippians 2:5-7; 1 Peter 2:16.

Ready to receive (v.22-26; 53)

See Ephesians 1:3-8; John 16:24; 1:16.

Willing to endure (v.61)

See 2 Thessalonians 1:4-5; James 1:2-4; Hebrews 6:12; 10:36; 12:1.

The King's Table

"He brought me into His banqueting table..." Song of Solomon 2:4

Prepared as a Bride

“ I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. ”
Revelation 21:2

The Church has been “betrothed” to Christ and is being prepared to be presented to him as a Bride to the Bridegroom.

The picture of Esther

The account of Esther’s preparation for her presentation to the king (read Esther 2:2-18) pictures the work of the Holy Spirit in us preparing us for the coming of our King, the Lord Jesus.

“Before a girl’s turn came to go in to King Xerxes, she had to complete twelve months of beauty treatments prescribed for the women, six months with oil of myrrh and six with perfumes and cosmetics” Esther 2:12.

Three things were used in her preparation:

Myrrh

“You are a garden locked up, my sister, my bride; you are a spring enclosed, a sealed fountain...with myrrh and aloes and all the finest spices” Song of Songs 4:12-14.

Myrrh was one of the gifts given to the child Jesus by the magi (see Matthew 2:11). It was an aromatic ointment which represented two things:

Sacrifice (Exodus 30:22-33).

Burial (John 19:39-42).

As his Bride, we join with Christ in the offering up of our new lives...

“Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God”

Ephesians 5:1-2 (see also Romans 12:1).

...having buried the old life which was detestable to God.

“We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life” Romans 6:4 (read through to verse 11. See also Colossians 2:11-12; Ephesians 5:3-8).

Perfumes

“But thanks be to God, who always leads us in triumphal procession in Christ and through us spreads everywhere the fragrance of the knowledge of him. For we are to God the aroma of Christ among those who are being saved and those who are perishing” 2 Corinthians 2:14-15 (see also S of S 1:3).

Perfumes are not used to cover up body odor, but are used on a clean body to titillate the sense of smell for others. Through Christ we have been “washed with the water of the Word” (see Ephesians 5:25-27; John 15:3). It is the knowledge of God through us which is like a fragrance to others.

Cosmetics

“...to bestow on them...the oil of gladness instead of mourning...” Isaiah 61:3 (see Psalm 104:15).

Joy, together with all the other fruit of the Spirit (see Galatians 5:22-23), are like cosmetics, enhancing the beauty that is already there (see 1 Peter 3:3-4).

The King's Table

"He brought me into His banqueting table..." Song of Solomon 2:4

The Heart of the Bride

‘ I love you, O Lord, my strength, I call to the Lord,
who is worthy of praise... Psalm 18:1-3

The all-important qualities of a bride are found in the Bride of Christ - a heart of love and faith in the Bridegroom (see Luke 6:45).

The heart of faith

The story of Ruth serves as a beautiful picture of the Church looking in faith to the fulfillment of God's plan. Ruth's husband had died. She was a foreigner but made the choice to follow the God of Israel and joined herself to His family.

"... 'Don't urge me to leave you or to turn back from you. Where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay. Your people will be my people and your God my God" Ruth 1:16.

Read Romans 7:1-4. We were once "married" to sin, but on the Cross Jesus became sin and our "husband" died. We are free to be married to another - the resurrected Christ! In her new life in her new land, Ruth meets Boaz whom she believes to be the closest relative to her new family. By the law of the land he was responsible to "redeem" her - to marry her and care for her. She stood upon this word. Like Ruth, we lie at the feet of our Betrothed and say:

"...Spread the corner of your garment over me, since you are a kinsman-redeemer" Ruth 3:9 (read also verses 1-8; Ezekiel 16:8).

We, too, put our trust in the promises of God that we will be united with him - to be with him, where he is, joined with him in his glory.

The heart of love

In the Gospels, two women stand out in their love for the Lord and fearless dedication to his purposes: Mary of Magdela and Mary of Bethany.

Mary of Magdela

Read Luke 7:36-46. Many believe this "sinful woman" to be Mary Magdalene (see Luke 8:2). She was a prostitute who came to anoint Jesus. Weeping at his feet she pours the perfume on them. This was an act of repentance and Jesus took it as such. He also saw the heart behind the action - *love*.

"Therefore, I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven - for she loved much..." Luke 7:47 (read through to verse 50).

Mary of Bethany

In Matthew 26:6-13, Mary of Bethany anoints Jesus a second time. This time it is not on his feet but on his head. It is not as an act of repentance, but as an act of love and prophetic insight.

"...She has done a beautiful thing to me...When she poured this perfume on my body, she did it to prepare me for burial" Matt.26:10-12.

Whenever we see Mary, she is at the feet of Jesus: Listening at his feet (Luke 10:39-42); weeping at his feet (John 11:32-33); adoring at his feet (John 12:1-8); and worshipping at his feet (Matthew 28:1-9). This is the *heart* of the Bride revealed.

The Bride prepared

"Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready. Fine linen, bright and clean, was given her to wear' (Fine linen stands for the righteous acts of the saints)" Rev.19:7-8 (see also Rev.21:9-11).

The King's Table

"He brought me into His banqueting table..." Song of Solomon 2:4

The Glory of the Bridegroom

“ ...They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky, with power and great glory. Matthew 24:30 ”

The Bridegroom's glory

“Then I heard what sounded like a great multitude, like the roar of rushing waters and like loud peals of thunder, shouting: ‘Hallelujah! For our Lord God Almighty reigns. Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready...’” Revelation 19:6-8 (read through to verse 16).

The return of the Lord Jesus will be in a glory so bright that it will destroy all his enemies (see 2 Thessalonians 1:6-10; 2:8; Revelation 6:15-17). He will return in...

Great power

(Revelation 19:1-3; 2 Thessalonians 1:6-10)

Great majesty

(Revelation 11:15-17; 19:11-16)

But for those who love him it will be a different story altogether. That glory will herald a celebration unparalleled in history.

The Bridegroom's joy

“Your throne, O God, will last for ever and ever...You love righteousness and hate wickedness; therefore God, your God, has set you above your companions by anointing you with the oil of joy. All your robes are fragrant with myrrh and aloes and cassia; from palaces adorned with ivory the music of the strings makes you glad” Psalm 45:7-8 (see also Isaiah 62:5-10).

Psalm 45 is a wedding song and, according to

Hebrews 1:8-9, is prophetic of the Lord Jesus, the Bridegroom.

The wedding celebration is a time of great joy. All those who attend participate in the joy of the Bridegroom over his Bride (see John 3:29). Jesus gave himself at the Cross for the Church that was yet to come (see Ephesians 5:25). It was the anticipated joy of the Bridegroom that motivated the greatest act of sacrifice this world has ever known:

“Let us fix our eyes on Jesus...who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God” Hebrews 12:2.

The Bridegroom's promise

In the traditional Jewish ceremony of betrothal - where the bride was engaged to the bridegroom in a contract as binding as the marriage that was to come - the bridegroom would make a public promise to the bride. Before he went to the Cross, Jesus spoke to his disciples the same words of the traditional betrothal promise:

“In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am” John 14:2-3.

“The Spirit and the bride say ‘Come!’...He who testifies to these things says, ‘Yes, I am coming soon.’ Amen. Come Lord Jesus” Revelation 22:17,20.

The King's Table

"He brought me into His banqueting table..." Song of Solomon 2:4

The Eternal Glory

‘...No mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him’ - but God has revealed it to us by His Spirit... 1 Corinthians 2:9-10

“For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son...And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified” Rom.8:29-30.

The Lord has prepared an “eternal glory” for His Bride (2 Corinthians 4:17; 1 Peter 5:10). We have no idea the nature of what God has intended for us...

“Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him for we shall see him as he is” 1 John 3:2.

...All we know is that through all eternity we will be sharing the fullness of the glory of our Bridegroom.

Sharing the glory

“He called you to this through our gospel, that you might share in the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ” 2 Thessalonians 2:14 (see also Romans 8:17; 1 Corinthians 2:7).

The Lord Jesus, as our Bridegroom, has embraced us with his glory. This is the wonder of the love he has expressed to us. Just to receive salvation and forgiveness of sins would have been more than enough to fuel our praises throughout all eternity. Yet the Lord has gone far beyond a simple act of redemption. He has betrothed us to his glory!

“When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory” Colossians 3:4.

Glorified with him

“Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed - in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed” 1 Corinthians 15:51-52 (read to verse 57).

The consummation of God’s glorious plan will be “the redemption of our bodies” when Jesus returns (see Romans 8:23). The last enemy to be destroyed - death - is conquered (see 1 Corinthians 15:26). This “mortal” will put on “immortality” (1 Corinthians 15:53-54) and our physical bodies will be changed “in the twinkling of an eye” into the likeness of his glorious body.

“But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, who, by the power than enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body” Phil.3:20-21.

The mystery Paul spoke of in Ephesians 5:31-32 will be fulfilled. Christ and His Church will be “one flesh” - one in heart, one in mind, one in purpose, one in glory. The mystery of the ages will be completed (see Rev.10:6-7; Rom.16:25-26). This flawed world will be rolled up and a new era will begin (see 2 Peter 3:10,13).

As his Bride we will be bonded with him in a common life and yoked in a common destiny. In this “shared glory” we see a glimpse of the wonder of what God has in store for us.

Making the Truth Mine

Write out in full the scripture from this lesson which means the most to you. We encourage you to commit the verse to memory.

Write out one statement from the study which you feel is most significant for your life.

Write in your own words how you believe you should respond to the truth of this study. Are there any decisions you should make?

You can make a difference!

For this study to have its full effect in your life, we encourage you to:

- * Read and digest the study - meditate on the Word of God.
- * Put into action what you have learnt (James 1:22).
- * Share the Word of God with others.

Your places of ministry have been pre-arranged by God: your home, the street you live on, your place of work and your church.

“I run in the path of your commands, for you have set my heart free” Psalm 119:32

Food for Thought

Sending God's Word to the Ends of the Earth

The Word of God made available in a
clear, simple layout for personal study and
for use in sharing with others.

The King's Table is designed to help...

- ***Every believer for personal study***
- ***Parents to teach their children***
- ***Leaders of home groups***
- ***Ministers of congregations***
- ***Christian schools and home schooling***
- ***Missionary projects to other nations***

Our Project 21 series for leaders has been widely received and multiplied throughout Asia and the Pacific. The reports from many places of growth and blessing encourage us greatly in the spreading of the life-giving Word of God. It is something that for us never loses its excitement.

The King's Table is an extension of the Project 21 teaching program which has many series of 21 lessons on different subjects. Our prayer is that this series might be a great blessing to you.

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