

Old Testament Role Models
for the
Bride of Jesus Christ



By B. K. Hicks

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Table of Contents

[Introduction](#)

[Chapter One: The First Woman — Adam-female \(Eve\)](#)

[Chapter Two: Women Who Risked All](#)

[A. Rebekah](#)

[B. Esther](#)

[C. Ruth](#)

[D. Tamar](#)

[Chapter Three: Archetypes of Virtue](#)

[A. The Queen, Dressed in Gold of Ophir](#)

[B. The Bride in the Song of Solomon](#)

[C. The Virtuous Woman in Proverbs](#)

[Summary](#)

Introduction

Being in the Bride of Jesus Christ is the greatest Prize of Time and Eternity. It should not surprise us, then, to discover that the Bride has to make some preparations in order to be counted worthy to receive this highest of all honours.

Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and *his wife hath made herself ready* (Revelation 19:7).

The Bride will make herself ready, first, by *willingly choosing* to give herself completely to Jesus Christ and by *willingly choosing* the Lamb of God, both in His Humility Form and in His Exalted Form. She *willingly will choose* to fight against all the corruption, error, falsehood, and infidelity that turned Old Jerusalem into a harlot city. The Bride will struggle and war against all things that are against Christ. She will put off, through crucifixion of the flesh, all Antichrist attitudes and dispositions of the Self or her inherent carnal nature.

The Hebrew text of Revelation 19:7 says that she (the Bride) made herself Holy, which means to be bright, fresh, new, untarnished, and clean. During her earthly journey, the Bride will consecrate herself to the Bridegroom to do His Will. She will choose to let the Purity and Holiness of the *Torah* (Christ's Humble Mind) govern her actions, whether His Headship bestows favours or inflicts punishments and judgments in her life. She will consecrate her strength as a true soldier to fight and to lift up the Tower of His Name. She will hallow herself from wrath and doubting so that she continually can lift up Holy hands that are filled with bright, festive praise and worship.

In Eternity, the Bride will be rewarded abundantly for her faithfulness to choose, willingly, to make herself ready for her Bridegroom, Jesus Christ. She will be honoured with the glorious, Eternal Privilege of wearing Fine Linen, Clean and White, because of her righteous thoughts, actions, and deeds.

And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the white linen is the righteousness of saints (Revelation 19:8).

The Bride's Wedding Dress is very significant because, for one reason, it reveals her Eternal Position in the Perfect Age; it also discloses her Ruling Ministry and participation in the Millennial Reign of the LORD Jesus Christ, THE KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.

The Hebrew word for *white* is *tsaw-khakh*, meaning to be dazzling white, bright, to be sunny; it comes from a biliteral root word that has the idea of brightness and splendour. The Hebrew word *tsaw-khakh* is used in Lamentations 4:7: "Her Nazarites were purer than snow, they were *whiter [tsaw-khakh]* than milk, they were more ruddy in body than rubies, their polishing was of sapphire:"

When the Nation of Israel walked as a Bride with God, her Nazarites were clothed, as it were, with radiant, pure, bright, white, dazzling countenances. Their faces shined with the Glory of God, just as Moses' face shined with God's Glory when He came down from the mountain with the second set of the Tables of the Law, and just as the Bride's White Linen Dress will shine in Eternity.

During her earthly journey, the Bride willingly will choose to be separated from the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life so that she can live in the brilliance and splendour of the Lamb's Resurrection Glory and Power. She will have sown the dazzling White Glory of the Resurrected Lamb; therefore, as His Bride, she will reap a dazzling White-Linen-Glory Dress.

The Book of Revelation clearly states that the Fine Linen of the Bride's Wedding Dress is the "righteousness of saints." Saints who sow deeds of righteousness will reap righteousness in the form of the Bride's Fine Linen, Clean and White.

The Hebrew word for *righteousness* is a feminine, plural word that means righteous acts, liberality, and beneficence. This word is used in Judges 5:11: "They that are delivered from the noise of archers in the places of drawing water, there shall they rehearse the *righteous* acts of the LORD, even the *righteous* acts toward the inhabitants of his villages in Israel: then shall the people of the LORD go down to the gates." Deborah and Barak's destruction of the enemy was called a *righteous* act of the LORD.

During her earthly journey, the Bride of Christ will allow the Lamb of God to empower her with the choice to fight against all fleshly enemies called "Selfishness" who war against God's Master Plan of Liberality and

Beneficence. The Lamb of God possesses discriminating and distinguishing Grace to ferret out the carnal selfishness of the flesh so that the Bride can sow true deeds of righteous liberality and beneficence.

The carnal man fears the righteous acts of true liberality and beneficence, for the only liberty the carnal flesh of the world has is the liberty to sow, without restraint, the deeds of evil selfishness. By contrast, the saints of God have the liberty to walk, without restraint, in the Holiness of the Lamb and to sow righteous deeds according to His Master Plan.

How great is the Lamb's Glorious Liberty! It frees saints from being slaves to the scornful, selfish frowns and threats from worldly-minded people who try to control others with their displeasure; and it liberates saints from feeling that they have to fatten others' self-seeking images with smiles of approbation. The Bride will sow the righteous deeds of almsgiving, liberality, and beneficence of the *Torah* in this life; therefore, she will reap a Garment of Fine Linen, Clean and White. In Eternity, the Bride will enjoy a position of almost unbelievable exaltation and honour with her Bridegroom.

The privilege of being in the Bride is afforded to *all* those who have been redeemed by the Blood of the Lamb. God has provided all the Spiritual Substance the believer needs: Jesus Christ's Blood, the Holy Ghost and Fire, and the Waters of His Name, Death, and Life — which constitute the Gifts provided by the believer's spiritual Foundation, Jesus Christ.* Therefore, Christians are without excuse if they fail to attain this glorious "High Calling of God in Christ Jesus."

Since the Bride's Eternal Dress of Glory is dependent upon the preparations she makes during this life, it is vitally important for those believers who want to be in the Bride of Christ to understand what these preparations are. Then, the time they have been granted in this life can be used wisely to get ready to live eternally in the New Jerusalem with Jesus Christ.

By studying the lives of some of the brides who lived during the Old Testament Dispensation, one can see the preparations they made for their marriages and learn what believers have to do as spiritual Brides in order to be ready for the Wedding of the Lamb, the Spiritual Bridegroom. God has not recorded the accounts of particular Brides in His Holy Word simply to give the Bible student factual, historical records. Their stories are fixed for time on the printed page in order to give believers doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness (II Timothy 3:16,17). They are written so that believers can read and understand how the Lamb's Bride must prepare herself for her Wedding Day.

— The Author

* B. R. Hicks, [*Revelation Book Two: Jesus Christ, the Slain Lamb*](#) (Jeffersonville, Indiana: Christ Gospel Churches Int'l., Inc. 1973). pp. 596-616.

Chapter One

The First Woman — Adam-female (Eve)

God used the first woman, Adam-female, or Eve as she was called by her husband after sin had entered their hearts, to exemplify how the Bride must prepare for the *new* and *different* Unity and Harmony she must have with her Husband in order to function with Him as a Helpmeet.

When the Creator began His Work of bringing the present creation up out of its watery grave, He worked through successive creative days to bring forth life on the Earth and to furnish the Earth with all that was necessary to sustain life. On the sixth day, God created present man in His own Image and after His own Likeness. God used His own Hands to form and shape the highest dust of the ground until it bore His Image and Likeness. Then, from His own Mouth, God breathed into man's inert form the Breath of Life, and man became a living soul.

Before man's catastrophic fall into sin, he was God's perfect workmanship, created in God's own Image and Likeness. When God first created Adam-male and female, they existed as one; the female was hidden inside the male. Later, the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam while He took Adam-female from his side.*

And the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him.... And **the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam**, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; **And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman**, and brought her unto the man. And Adam 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 2:18,21-23).

Until the time of her separation, Adam-female lived in complete union inside of Adam-male. However, in order for Adam-female to be a "helpmeet" to Adam-male, she had to be willing to have their unique unity broken so that she could be brought forth into a separate and visible form. In her new, visible form, she found a *new* unity with her bridegroom, Adam. Then, God committed unto the two of them the dominion and power to rule over all the Earth and its many forms of creation.

The Hebrew word for *help* means to surround, to protect, to guard. Interestingly enough, the word for *meet* means exactly the same thing. Hence, Adam-female was to guard her husband by being a *double* wall of protection to him. She personally stood by his side, and her Light and Glory encircled him.*

As long as Adam-female dwelled inside her bridegroom, she could not stand *beside* him and be his helpmeet; neither could her Glory-Light shine out and form a living wall of protection around him. She had to be willing to come out and be separated from the inner unity she knew with Adam-male and allow the LORD to fashion her into a visible bride so that she could experience a new unity with Adam-male, her bridegroom.

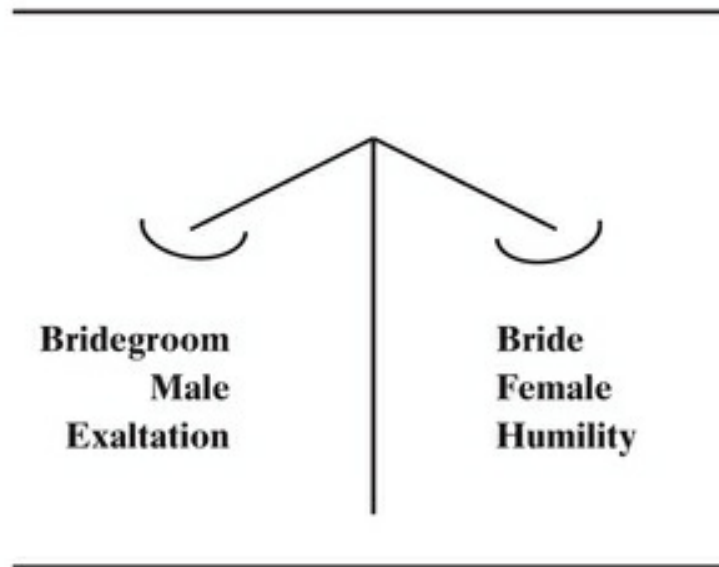
Likewise, before Christ's Bride can be His Helpmeet in the New City, she has to prepare herself, now, by making the same surrenders that Adam-female made. Christ's Bride must be willing to come out, as it were, of the Body of Christ, the Church, and be willing for Christ to shape her into a new visible form so that she can experience a new Spiritual Oneness of Relationship with Christ Jesus, the Bridegroom. She must be willing to grow beyond her former Unity with Christ's Body, His Church, in order to obtain a higher form of Unity. She must be fashioned in the Image of Christ's full Spiritual Stature so that she will be prepared to serve as His Helpmeet in the New City. She must be willing to have the Divine Word of God, the Christ, formed in her, now, so that in the Perfect Age she will shine forth with His Divine Light and Unbegotten Glory. In the Perfect Age, all the Ministry and Works of God and the Lamb will be brought forth through the Bride, the New City, the New Jerusalem.

The importance of this particular preparation cannot be overemphasized because it is the foundation upon which the Ruling and Reigning Power and Authority of the Bridegroom and the Bride are built.

The Ruling and Reigning Principle is one of the sixty-six Spiritual Principles of Truth revealed on the Golden Candlestick in the Mosaic Tabernacle.* Since this is such an important concept to understand, let us see how this Principle worked in the lives of the bridegroom, Adam-male, and his bride, Adam-female. This will help us perceive how the Ruling and Reigning Principle will operate through the Spiritual Bridegroom, Jesus Christ, and His Holy Bride in the New City.

The Ruling and Reigning Principle pertains to the Unity and Harmony of God's Humility and Exalted Image on the Earth. In the spiritual realm, God's dual Image of Humility and Exaltation is revealed in the Spiritual Stature of the Bridegroom and of the Bride. In the natural realm, God's dual Image is revealed in the opposite images of the male and the female.

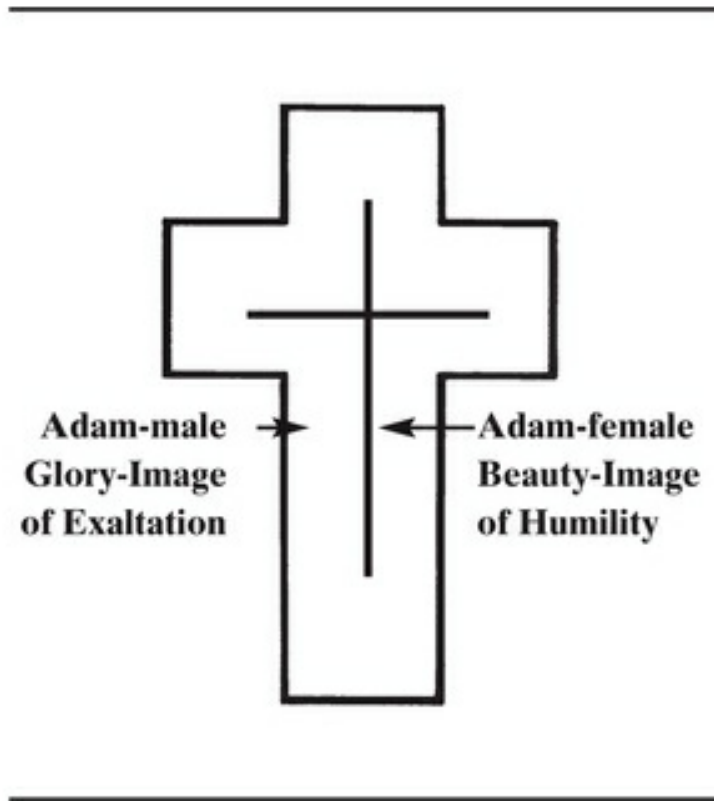
God made man in His own Image so that man could exercise dominion over the Earth. *God's Law of Opposites must be in effect before His Law of Ruling and Reigning Power and Authority can work.* The Sovereign God is a God of Balance; therefore, Ruling Power must be subject to Balance or the Law of Opposites in order for it to be a Righteous Governing Power. All creation displays God's Balanced Nature. For instance, cold is balanced by hot; darkness is balanced by light; day is balanced by night; and male is balanced by female. The first man could take dominion over the Earth because he was made in the Image of His Creator. In other words, man was a unity of opposites.



And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: **and let them have dominion** over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; **male and female created he them.** And God blessed them, **and God said unto them,** Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: **and have dominion over** the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth (Genesis 1:26-28).

When God created Adam-male and female in His own Divine Exalted and Humility Image, He invested them with the glorious Light and Beauty of His Ruling and Reigning Power and Authority. They were like two great lights, ruling over the darkness of the world; Adam-male was like a great sun, and Adam-female was like a beautiful moon.

When God created Adam-male and female, He created them as one Image and joined their opposite natures — male and female. They were created in unity and harmony, with the female being united with the male into one Image.



Before God put Adam-male to sleep and took out one of his ribs in order to make a wife for him, Adam-female (the humility side of God's Beauty-Image) was hidden within Adam-male (the exalted side of God's Glory-Image). God took Adam-female forth from the invisible, hidden position on the inside and brought her forth into visibility. Then, God placed Adam-male and female, who were opposites, in a balanced, harmonious marriage relationship under the Headship of His Word.

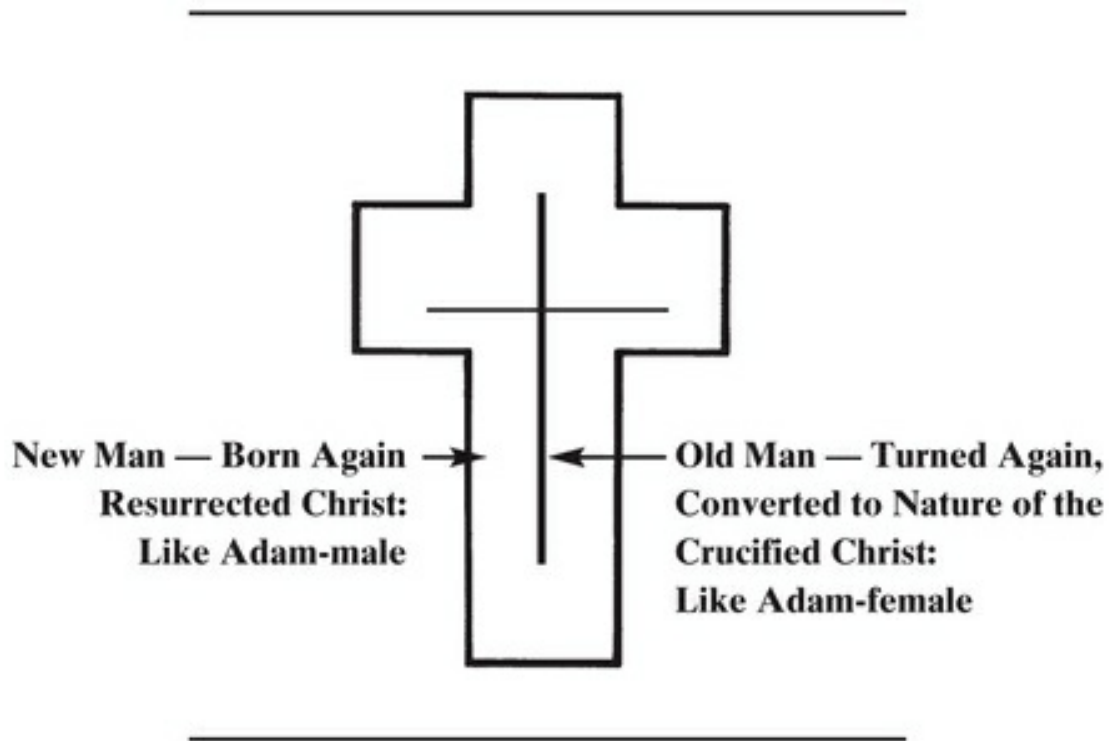
Adam-male and female inherited the same Image and Likeness. In the beginning, they lived in the same "House" of Glory and Beauty, enjoying the *inside Marriage Union* of God's Image of Glory and Beauty. After the severance of Adam-male's rib, they enjoyed an *outside Marriage Union* of God's Image of Glory and Beauty.

As God's representative Image of Glory and Beauty in the Earth, Adam-male and female were commanded to govern the creation. They were to be the Image and Form through which God would govern His creation with Compassion, Love, Equity, and Truth. Man, male and female, were given the mastery over God's creation so that they could lead the creation in Holiness and Subjection to Him, the Creator. God desired to display His Holy, Righteous Ruling Power over His creation through the Image He had given to Adam-male and female.

God has the same desire for us. He wants us to display to the world the Righteousness and Holiness of the Beauty of the Humility of the Crucified Christ and the Glory of the Resurrected, Exalted Christ. When we accept the Resurrected Christ into our heart, by faith, we receive a new birth. This experience, sometimes referred to as being "born-again," is the birth of a new Spiritual Man in our heart. However, we still have an "old man," inherited from Adam the First, which was begotten in pride and sin. The Ministry of the Crucified Christ is to *convert* our old man, turning him again into the Humility Image of Christ.

This *turning again* is accomplished as we allow the Crucified Christ to rule over the fleshly nature of our old man, changing his proud, devilish nature into Christ's Humility Nature. Our New Man is *begotten* in the Image of the Resurrected Christ, in Righteousness and true Holiness, on the *Bridegroom's* side of the Scales. Our old man or our old heart must be changed into a Bride, on the *Bride's* side of the Scales, by being *regenerated, converted, conformed* and *transformed* into the Image of the Crucified Christ. Thus, by the joining of our New Man (who is in the Image of the Resurrected Christ, the Bridegroom) with our old man (who has become a submissive Bride by having been regenerated, converted, conformed, and transformed into the Image of the Crucified Christ), we can fulfill God's Will on this Earth. We can experience a Holy Spiritual Matrimony between our converted nature and

the Nature of Christ. God desires that our New Man grow until He is mature enough to regenerate, convert, conform, and transform our old, inherited Adamic nature into a Bride. Thus, our spiritual relationship with Christ, as we grow to spiritual maturity, is similar to the Union which Adam-male and female knew in the beginning, in the Garden, before sin entered their wills.



Adam-male and female carried a perfect resemblance to their Creator. They had complete intellectual perfection and held a preeminent position over all other creatures. God proclaimed to the created world that they were perfect representatives of His Image and Likeness. God granted them the privilege of exercising their own free choice to fulfill His Will on Earth. Furthermore, they were fully conscious of this God-given privilege of free choice.

In the beginning, Adam maintained his *inside* unity of opposites under God's Headship; therefore, he enjoyed a perfect marriage relationship or union between his outer, exalted Self and his inner, humility Self. Adam was accepted as God's Governmental Representative on Earth.

The Ruling and Reigning Dominion and Authority (which God gave Adam) uses all positive and negative forces; thus, by using the Governing Power produced by the union of his outer exalted Self and his inner humility Self, Adam ruled over the creation, giving names (natures) to all of God's creation.

Later, God removed Adam's inner self and called her Adam-female. Then, the pair were supposed to rule and reign over God's creation through their outer union or marriage relationship. Before sin, they had a perfect moral sense of right and wrong; therefore, they understood that they were *not* to kill God's creation.

In the beginning, man ruled by preserving life. Now, since the dispensation of sin, he exercises his dominion by destroying the lives of creatures. When man finds a place on Earth which he desires for his own dominion, he does not hesitate to order other creatures away from it, even if he has to destroy them should they refuse to go.

God told Adam-male and female to be fruitful and multiply spiritually, intellectually, and naturally. God wanted them to propagate the human race, not destroy the world by failing to obey God's Command to multiply. God expected them to be the foundation and the perpetuation of the human race. He wanted Adam-male and female to rule through His Law of the Union of Opposites.

The Principle of Ruling and Reigning Dominion and Authority is the manifestation of the Law of Opposites in which there is a marriage union of strength and weakness — the union between the *strength* to do God's Will and the *weakness* to depend upon His Authority to produce true Ruling and Reigning Power over His creation.

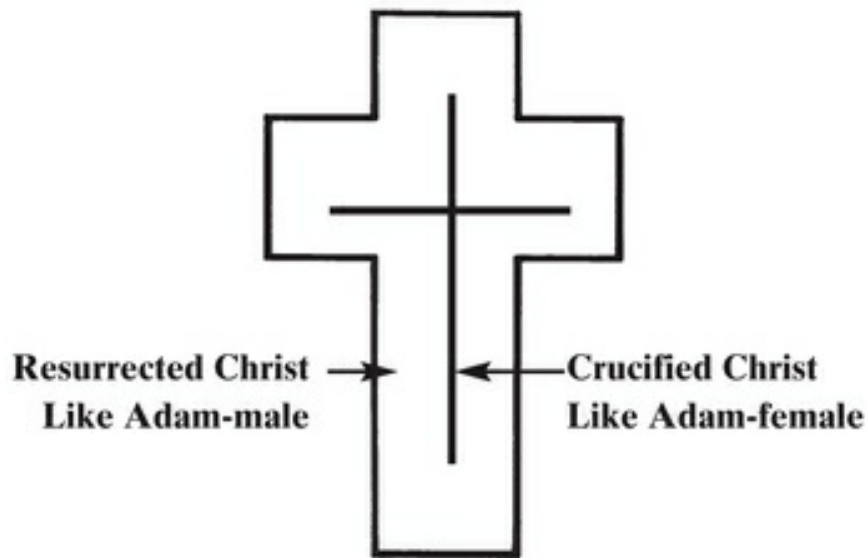
This Principle was given to Adam-male and female when God created them in His Image and Likeness. The Hebrew word for *image* is masculine. The Hebrew word for *likeness* is feminine. God gave them His Image

(masculine) and Likeness (feminine), and through these opposites (male and female) flowed God's forceful Ruling and Reigning Power and Authority.

God wanted Adam-male and female to exercise their independent power by reaching down authoritative hands to rule over His creation. At the same time, He wanted them to maintain their dependence on Him by reaching up with open hands for His Authority, which they would have received by eating from the Tree of Life. As long as Adam-male and female were obedient to their Creator, the creation gladly recognized them as master and ruler.

When Christ comes again with His Bride, the whole world of creation will bow to God's Image, the Christ and His Bride. Under the moral rule of the Bridegroom and the Bride, the whole world (all material, earthly elements and the animal kingdom and mankind) will be raised unto God-serving purposes.

Jesus Christ, the Second Adam, bears the Male and Female Image and Likeness of His Heavenly Father.



By His Authoritative Words and Works, Jesus Christ proved that He, as the Second Adam, possessed and exercised the Principle of Ruling and Reigning Power over the creation.

Jesus Christ died to restore God's Image and Likeness in mankind. Those who allow their understanding to grow in the Word until it reaches the fullness of the Stature of Jesus Christ and who have the *Torah*, the Law, written in their hearts will rule and reign with Christ during the Millennial Age; and, then, they will rule and reign with Him, eternally, out of the New Jerusalem.

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- * B. R. Hicks, [*Confirming Our Faith in the Bible's Teachings About Mankind*](#) (Jeffersonville, Indiana: Christ Gospel Churches Int'l., Inc., 1980). pp. 124,125.
 - * B. R. Hicks, [*Revelation Book Two: Jesus Christ the Slain Lamb*](#) (Jeffersonville, Indiana: Christ Gospel Churches Int'l., Inc., 1973). pp. 360-362.
 - * B. R. Hicks' notes on the subject of "[The Sixty-Six Principles on the LORD's Candlestick of Truth](#)" are available from Christ Gospel Press, P. O. Box, 786; Jeffersonville, IN 47131-0786.

Chapter Two

Women Who Risked All

Four women in the Old Testament — Rebekah, Esther, Ruth, and Tamar — serve as special role models for Christians who want to be in the Bride of Christ. They risked their all — even their very lives — in order to be joined to the bridegroom whom God had ordained for them to wed in the natural realm.

A. Rebekah — An Example of the Spiritual Bride of Christ, Who Must Choose Separation in Order To Be Prepared for Her Bridegroom

Through her willingness to choose to be separated from all that was dear and familiar to her, Rebekah, Isaac's bride, became an outstanding example of the preparation that the Bride of Christ must make, willingly, in order to be ready for her Wedding Day!

When Eliezer, who was a stranger to Rebekah, came seeking a bride for his master's son Isaac, he gave Rebekah such beautiful and precious gifts of gold, silver, and raiment that she was willing to forsake all others and separate herself from everything that was visible and dear to her in order to know a oneness of relationship with Isaac.

And they called Rebekah, and said unto her, Wilt thou go with this man? **And she said, I will go** (Genesis 24:58).

When Rebekah said "I will go," she was making her willing choice to be separated from her family, her relatives, her lifelong friends, and her country.

We have the opportunity in this life to make the same choice as Rebekah. Jesus Christ is waiting to see if we are willing to make the choice for separation from earthly, temporal surroundings and relationships in order to know Him as our Spiritual Bridegroom. He is waiting to see if we are willing to forsake the comfort and familiarity of spiritual mediocrity in order to attain the Prize of being in His Bride.

B. Esther — An Example of the Spiritual Bride of Christ, Who Must Prepare Herself with the Beauty and Fragrance of the LORD in Order to Be Made One with Him

When King Ahasuerus commanded Queen Vashti to appear before the people in her royal crown, she arrogantly refused. Therefore, the king was compelled to set her aside because of the rebellious, disobedient, disrespectful example she set before the women in the land.

Later, the king's officers went into all the provinces of the kingdom in search of virgin maidens who were willing to be brought to the Palace of Shushan in order to prepare themselves for presentation to the king. Out of this group, the king was to choose one to be his new queen.

Esther is the bride who is noted for the preparation she made so that she might be beautiful and fragrant for her king.

Now when every maid's turn was come to go in to king Ahasuerus, **after that she had been twelve months**, according to the manner of the women, (for so were the days of their purifications accomplished, to wit, **six months with oil of myrrh, and six months with sweet odours**, and with other things for the purifying of the women;) Then thus came every maiden unto the king; whatsoever she desired was given her to go with her out of the house of the women unto the king's house (Esther 2:12,13).

Esther was a beautiful Jewish virgin who lived in the midst of a heathen Gentile nation. The preparation that led to her having great beauty had begun long before the king's servants came in search of a bride for the king.

Although Esther had neither the support of a father nor the blessedness of a mother, she did not let these things mar her appearance. Her features were not distorted by fear nor clouded by the shame of being an orphan child. Her

countenance was so fair and beautiful that the king chose her to be his new queen. No doubt she suffered much jealousy from the other virgins, but she did not count the suffering as a great thing. All that really mattered to her was how she would appear when she stood before the king.

Although Esther possessed natural beauty, she was not taken directly into the king's presence when she arrived at the palace. A time of preparation was required before she would be ready for this honour.

During the first six months of her stay at the palace, Esther took baths in the oil of myrrh. Myrrh is the eighth plant mentioned as being in the heart of the Bride in the Song of Solomon, chapter four, verse fourteen; and, it fits together with meekness, the eighth fruit of the Spirit mentioned in Galatians, chapter five, verses twenty-two and twenty-three. Meekness is the outward, visible manifestation of the heart's inward state of humility. Esther's heart was not imperious and proud, as was the heart of Vashti. Her heart was humble and ready to bow and stoop to do the will of her king.

The oil of myrrh, a picture of the meekness of the Crucified Christ, is bitter to the fleshly, carnal nature. Nevertheless, it cleanses the heart and prepares the way for its exaltation.

During the next six months of her stay at the palace, Esther bathed herself with sweet odours and spices, which speak of the beautification of the Resurrected Christ.

The fragrance that was imparted to and formed in the heart of the Espoused Bride in the Song of Solomon is mentioned repeatedly. For example, her heart is described as a veritable garden of fruitfulness and fragrance. She also is seen coming out of a wilderness experience "perfumed with myrrh and frankincense, with all powders of the merchant" (Song of Solomon 3:6).

While myrrh represents meekness and humility, frankincense relates to the fruit of the Spirit called faith. The *powders of the Merchant* (the Bridegroom Himself is the Merchant) contain all the special fragrances with which He will anoint His Bride.*

If we aspire to be in the Bride of Jesus Christ, we must emulate Queen Esther whose preparation gained her beauty and fragrance which, in turn, won her the honour of becoming the king's bride. The Scriptures say that when it was her turn to appear before the king, "She required nothing but what Hegai the king's chamberlain, the keeper of the women, appointed. And Esther obtained favour in the sight of all them that looked upon her" (Esther 2:15).

Hegai was a type of the Holy Spirit, Who knows what we need in order to please the Heavenly Bridegroom so that we can be received into His Personal Presence. Esther could have been demanding; instead, she chose to subject herself to the wisdom and guidance of Hegai.

If we are wise, we will follow Queen Esther's example. We will submit ourself to God's Holy Spirit and let Him choose for us. He certainly knows what is needed to make us beautiful and fragrant for Him since He is our Spiritual Bridegroom-King.

C. Ruth — An Example of the Spiritual Bride of Christ, Who Must Separate Herself unto Jesus Christ so that She Might Live in Obedience to the *Torah*

Ruth was a Moabitess by birth. Nevertheless, because she was married to a Jewish man, she was aware of the Levirate Law in the *Torah* which required that the responsibility of raising up an heir to carry on the family name was to fall on a near kinsman should the Jewish man's widow be left childless.

During a time of famine in the land of Israel, Elimelech and Naomi had journeyed from their home in Bethlehem to Moab, a heathen land. While they were living there, their two sons married two Moabitish girls. Later, Elimelech and both of his sons died and were buried in the land of Moab.

After the men's deaths, the widow Naomi decided to return to Bethlehem of Judah, her homeland. When she started on her return journey, Naomi was accompanied by both of her daughters-in-law, Orpah and Ruth. The three women had gone just a short distance, however, when Orpah kissed Naomi and turned to go back to her father's house in Moab.

Naomi gave her daughter-in-law Ruth the same opportunity to return to Moab. She could have walked back with Orpah, if that had been the desire of her heart. Instead, Ruth clave to her mother-in-law, saying:

...Intreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: **for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God: Where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried:** the LORD do so to me, and more also, if ought but death part thee and me (Ruth 1:16,17).

This impassioned declaration was Ruth's firm commitment to separate herself from her own father, her people, and her country with its idolatrous practices.

In order to be joined to Naomi's people and Naomi's God, Ruth chose to be poor, to be a stranger, to be fatherless, and to be a widow in the land of Israel.* As a Gentile woman, Ruth demonstrated profound concern for the Levirate Law and the Promised Seed. She was willing to lose all she held dear in Moab in exchange for the privilege of fulfilling the Law and becoming the progenitor of the Promised Seed.

The two widows arrived in Bethlehem at the beginning of the barley harvest. In order to sustain Naomi and herself with food, Ruth humbled herself, went out into a field, and became a gleaner in the corners reserved for the "poor." As God ordained, Ruth found herself gleaning in the field of Boaz. Naomi was delighted to discover this fact because, in addition to being a very rich man, Boaz was also Elimelech's near kinsman. Because Naomi knew the near kinsman's responsibility under the Levirate Law, she gave Ruth explicit instructions in how and when to approach Boaz so that she could make herself known to him.

Ruth's steps of obedience took courage and humility. In order to follow all of Naomi's instructions, she had to go to the threshingfloor to meet Boaz and, as a consequence, be willing to suffer the disgrace of appearing to be a harlot. She also had to prostrate herself humbly at Boaz's feet. When he awoke, Boaz discovered a woman at his feet. However, he recognized Ruth as being a virtuous woman; therefore, he expressed his willingness to obey the Levirate Law and assume the responsibility for raising up seed through her.

And he said, Blessed be thou of the LORD, my daughter: for thou hast shewed more kindness in the latter end than at the beginning, inasmuch as thou followedst not young men, whether poor or rich. And now, my daughter, fear not; **I will do to thee all that thou requirest:** for all the city of my people doth know that thou art a virtuous woman. And now **it is true that I am thy near kinsman:** howbeit there is a kinsman nearer than I. Tarry this night, and it shall be in the morning, that if he will perform unto thee the part of a kinsman, well; let him do the kinsman's part: but if he will not do the part of a kinsman to thee, **then will I do the part of a kinsman to thee,** as the Lord liveth: lie down until the morning (Ruth 3:10-13).

What a beautiful tribute to Ruth! Boaz took her to be his wife, and the LORD blessed her with a son. Thus, Ruth, a Gentile, was privileged to be a progenitor of the royal, kingly line of David and, ultimately, of Jesus the Messiah, according to His humanity side.

Ruth's faithful, humble, obedient behaviour established her virtue and confirmed her love and kindness toward Naomi.

In order to fulfill the Levirate Law of the *Torah* in Israel by raising up a seed in her husband's name, Ruth separated herself from her homeland of Moab. Her complete separation from her country and her people, so that she could live in obedience to the *Torah*, is a beautiful picture of the Bride of Christ.

We should ask ourselves if we are willing to leave our "Moab's," our lifelong loves, in order to obey the *Torah*, the Truth of God's Word. God puts us in circumstances in which it appears that no one around us wants to obey God's Word. These are special appointments for us in which we are to make a personal choice to execute specific separations in our life, as we take a stand for God's Word and its fulfillment in our life.

D. Tamar — An Example of the Spiritual Bride of Christ, Who must Live Sacrificially in Order to Obey the *Torah* and, thus, Be Prepared for Her Bridegroom

Tamar was another Gentile woman who was willing to sacrifice her reputation in order to obey the Levirate Law and protect the Promised Seed. She counted no cost too great, even to laying down her very life, to preserve the Promised Seed that was to come forth from the loins of Judah.

Tamar was married to Judah's firstborn son Er who lived wickedly and who despised his responsibility to bring forth the Seed of Promise. When the LORD slew Er for his wickedness, Judah gave his widow to Onan, his second son. Rather than obey the Levirate Law and raise up a seed to carry on his brother's name, Onan deliberately spilled his seed upon the ground. By refusing to be a progenitor of the Messiah, Onan showed that he, just as his brother before him, despised the Promised Seed. The LORD judged Onan and slew him for his wicked act.

Shelah, Judah's youngest son, was the last hope Tamar had for fulfilling the Levirate Law through one of Judah's sons. Fearful of losing this son as he had lost his other two sons, Judah withheld Shelah from Tamar. Judah proved that he loved his son more than he loved obeying the Levirate Law. He proved that he loved his human, natural seed more than he loved protecting the Promised Seed of the Messiah, Who was destined to pass through the loins of his

family. Thus, Judah also despised the Promised Seed.

Tamar was the daughter of a Canaanite. Yet, her actions proved that she had more respect for the Levirate Law and the Promised Seed than did Judah and his sons. She was willing to sacrifice her reputation and her very life, if necessary, in order to obey the Law and preserve the Promised Seed.

Seeking to be sacrificially obedient, Tamar removed her widow's garments, covered herself with a veil, and sat in an open place, pretending to be a harlot so that she could conceive seed from the loins of Judah. When Judah passed by the place in which Tamar waited, he did not recognize her as his daughter-in-law. Believing the woman to be a harlot, Judah went in to her; and from this union, Tamar conceived seed.

Tamar wisely demanded a pledge from Judah, so he left his signet, bracelets, and staff for her to keep until his servant could return with a kid. When the servant returned, he found no one. The woman was gone. Later, when it was discovered that Tamar was expecting a child, Judah was ready to have her burned as a harlot. He soon changed his mind, however, when Tamar spread out the proof of her child's parentage, for she had a threefold witness that Judah himself was the father.

When she was brought forth, she sent to her father in law, saying, **By the man, whose these are, am I with child:** and she said, Discern, I pray thee, whose are these, the signet, and bracelets, and staff. **And Judah acknowledged them, and said, She hath been more righteous than I; because that I gave her not to Shelah my son.** And he knew her again no more (Genesis 38:25,26).

Many Christians claim to love the Law, the *Torah*. However, there are not many, like Tamar, who are willing to sacrifice themselves in order to obey it. The Bride of the Lamb will have this class of love for the *Torah*, and she will choose to sacrifice herself in order to obey it and, thus, protect the Living Seeds of Truth that she receives from her Spiritual Bridegroom.

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- * B. R. Hicks, [*The Song of Love...From the Song of Solomon*](#) (Jeffersonville, Indiana: Christ Gospel Churches Int'l., Inc., 1966). pp. 92-95.
 - * B. R. Hicks, [*Ten Glory Steps to Canaan's Land*](#) (Jeffersonville, Indiana: Christ Gospel Churches Int'l., Inc., 1981).

Chapter Three

Archetypes of Virtue

In order to be joined eternally to her Spiritual Bridegroom, the LORD Jesus Christ, the Bride of Christ must gain, in this life, the virtues depicted by three particular women who are mentioned in the Bible: the Queen who was dressed in gold of Ophir, the Bride in the Song of Solomon, and the Virtuous Woman in the Book of Proverbs. These three women serve as archetypes of virtue.

A. The Queen, Dressed in Gold of Ophir, Is an Example of the Bride Who Prepares Herself for Her Bridegroom, the LORD Jesus Christ, by the Many Sufferings She Experiences

Psalm forty-five describes the Wedding of the Bridegroom and the Bride and the conditions she has to meet in order to become the Bride.

Kings' daughters were among thy honourable women: upon thy right hand did stand **the queen in gold of Ophir**. Hearken, O daughter, and consider, and incline thine ear; **forget also thine own people, and thy father's house;** (Psalm 45:9,10).

The Espoused Bride must listen attentively and consider the Truth, bending low in her eagerness to hear and receive instructions of what she must do in order to become the King's wife. Just as Ruth had to forget her own people and her father's house, so does Christ's Spiritual Bride have to forsake all for Her Bridegroom.

In the Psalm, the Bride is exhorted to join herself to the Bridegroom and the Country over which He rules. She is not to be enchanted and deceived by the advantages offered by remaining in her native country; instead, she is to forget all the advantages offered by them so that she may be prepared for her Wedding.

The Kingly Bridegroom desires this class of beautiful loyalty to His interest.

The Queen, in Psalm forty-five, wore inward clothing of *wrought gold*, which had been hammered into thin sheets and, then, cut into fine threads and woven into fabric.

The king's daughter is all glorious within: her clothing is of wrought gold. She shall be brought unto the king in raiment of needlework: the virgins her companions that follow her shall be brought unto thee (Psalm 45:13,14).

The hammering process and the pricking of the needlework of her raiment added to her beauty, but both were painful experiences. A great multitude of hammering and pricking experiences were necessary in order to weave the beautiful, golden threads of Wisdom of the *Torah* into her Wedding Clothing!

The painful, hammering and pricking experiences of life cause great suffering to our heart, but it is through the hammering and pricking that the Gold of Wisdom of God's Truth is formed and woven into our Union with Jesus Christ.

When the inward and outward sufferings of life come, it is necessary for us to make a deliberate choice for separation unto the Bridegroom, Jesus Christ, and His Divine Will. The Bride must be prepared to accept the needlework that is ordained by God's Will.

Every plateau in the Bride's walk with Jesus Christ introduces her to a different kind of suffering. Only God's Mind understands and knows how to take the inward sufferings of life and convert them into the Gold of His Wisdom as the Espoused Bride waits on Him in the Word and prayer. His glorious Wisdom makes her "all glorious within" for Himself; the needlework makes her outwardly glorious for others. The Bride of Jesus Christ must "make herself ready."^{*}

B. The Bride in the Song of Solomon Is an Example of the Bride Who Prepares Herself for a Fruitful, Procreative or Oneness of Love Relationship with the Bridegroom, the LORD Jesus Christ

The Song of Solomon is the love song of the Bridegroom and the Bride.** This Book of the Bible begins with the Espoused Bride singing to Her Beloved about the excellency of His Love.

The song of songs, which is Solomon's. Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth: for thy love is better than wine. Because of the savour of thy good ointments thy name is as ointment poured forth, therefore do the virgins love thee. Draw me, we will run after thee: the king hath brought me into his chambers: we will be glad and rejoice in thee, we will remember thy love more than wine: the upright love thee. I am black, but comely, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, as the tents of Kedar, as the curtains of Solomon. Look not upon me, because I am black, because the sun hath looked upon me: my mother's children were angry with me; they made me the keeper of the vineyards; but mine own vineyard have I not kept. Tell me, O thou whom my soul loveth, where thou feedest, where thou makest thy flock to rest at noon: for why should I be as one that turneth aside by the flocks of thy companions? (Song of Solomon 1:1-7).

Before the Espoused or Engaged Bride in the Song of Solomon had gained sufficient spiritual maturity to enter into a spiritual Oneness of Marriage Relationship with the Bridegroom, she already knew that no other love compared with the Bridegroom-Bride Love. She was not interested in being joined to the under-shepherds who helped care for His flocks. Her soul longed to be with her Beloved, even at noon when the sun beat down in its full strength. She knew that in His Personal Presence was a rest that could be found nowhere else.

In the first chapter, the Espoused Bride started her Song to her beloved Solomon with notes of praise. In the eighth chapter, at the end of her Song when she spoke as King Solomon's married wife, she extolled the fruitful reign of peace she enjoyed in a spiritual Oneness of Relationship with the King of Peace.

Solomon had a vineyard at Baal-hamon; he let out the vineyard unto keepers; every one for the fruit thereof was to bring a thousand pieces of silver. My vineyard, which is mine, is before me: **thou, O Solomon, must have a thousand, and those that keep the fruit thereof two hundred.** Thou that dwellest in the gardens, the companions hearken to thy voice: cause me to hear it. Make haste, my beloved, and be thou like to a roe or to a young hart upon the mountains of spices (Song of Solomon 8:11-14).

We, too, as Christ's Spiritual Bride, must learn to know the Bridegroom as the King of Humility, as the Shepherd, and as the Roe, before we can enter into a spiritual Oneness of Relationship with Him and know Him as the Husbandman. As we live with Jesus Christ, the Bridegroom-Husbandman, in a spiritual Marriage Relationship in which our human will is in perfect Unity and Harmony with His Divine Will, we experience new life, new fruitfulness, and new love being brought forth continually. Failure to make the necessary preparation for this Procreative Union with the Bridegroom causes our Christian experience to become dull, boring, and lifeless.

C. The Virtuous Woman in Proverbs Is an Example of the Bride Who Prepares Herself for Receiving Praise and Honour with Her Husband

The LORD reveals a beautiful picture of the Bride of Christ in the last twenty-two verses of the thirty-first chapter of Proverbs. In the Hebrew text, verses in this portion of Scripture make an acrostic for the Hebrew alphabet.

An acrostic is a verse or arrangement of words in which certain letters in each line, such as the first or the last, when taken in order, spell out a word, motto, or spiritual concept, or form the alphabet. Acrostics are used to reveal a hidden meaning contained in the pattern of the words themselves.

In Proverbs, chapter thirty-one, the last twenty-two verses begin with the consecutive letters of the Hebrew alphabet. Thus, we see the writer paralleling the symbol of each Hebrew letter with each characteristic of the virtuous woman. By putting the two together, we gain a fuller understanding of the Bride's preparation.

1. Hebrew Letter *Aleph* — Ox — the Spiritual Beginning of All Things

Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is far above rubies (Proverbs 31:10).

The Hebrew text begins this verse with the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet, *aleph*, which signifies an ox.

The ox-like nature, which this beginning letter denotes, reveals the beginning spiritual characteristic of the Bride. She is a *virtuous woman* of strong valour. This quality in the Bride is of inestimable worth and priceless value.

The Bible says that a virtuous bride is a crown to a husband: "A virtuous woman is a crown to her husband: but she that maketh ashamed is as rottenness in his bones" (Proverbs 12:4). A virtuous bride is a woman of moral

excellence; she acts right, thinks right, has goodness of character, and is chaste and pure.

The Sin Offering Blood of Jesus Christ washes the heart and soul of His Spiritual Bride so that she is filled with the powerful forces of His Holiness and Purity. These traits enable her to minister effectively and powerfully to the LORD and to His Household. Such a Bride is of priceless value.

The strong ox-like nature of the *aleph*, the beginning letter of the Hebrew alphabet, fitly describes the Bride's beginning experience. The virtuous Woman, the Bride, is the Bridegroom's Life and Truth in action. The strong Life-Breath of the Bridegroom, the LORD Jesus Christ, is the silver cord that holds the Bride's spirit, soul, and body together and empowers her with the Strength and Virtue to show forth His Life and Truth.

2. Hebrew Letter *Beth* — House

The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her, so that he shall have no need of spoil (Proverbs 31:11).

The Hebrew text begins this verse with the second letter of the Hebrew alphabet, *beth*, which means a house.

The meaning of this letter reveals the Bride's second spiritual characteristic, which is loyalty and faithfulness to her Bridegroom. The Heart of the Bridegroom has full confidence in His Bride and her management of the affairs of His Household.

The word *spoil* is a term used to denote the goods or territory taken by force in war. The Bridegroom has no need to fight in order to take spoils of war because His Bride is faithful to manage His affairs so that there is gain for Him at home.

The Bride's pure, transparent will is filled with the Waters of Truth. Therefore, her Husband has the utmost confidence in her. His Heart is filled with peace and satisfaction because He knows that His Bride will not turn aside after another.

The Bride of Christ allows her Bridegroom to wash her human will in His precious Blood, to sanctify it with the Fire of His Holy Spirit, and to purify it with the cleansing Waters of His Name, Death, and Life until it is transformed into a transparent will like unto His own Will. Then, the Bride's will is filled with the transmitting Light Rays of Truth so that the Bridegroom's Will can be seen distinctly in all situations.

Every act or deed the Bride performs comes from her clear, crystal perception of the Bridegroom's Will. The faithful flow of Truth in the Bride's human will builds her "house" of thoughts upon the Bridegroom. Therefore, the Bridegroom's heart can safely trust in His Bride.

3. Hebrew Letter *Gimel* — Camel

She will do him good and not evil all the days of her life (Proverbs 31:12).

The Hebrew text begins this verse with the third letter of the Hebrew alphabet, *gimel*, which means a camel.

The meaning contained in this letter reveals that the Bride is like a faithful camel, for she serves her Bridegroom by doing good for Him all the days of her life. She is good to the Bridegroom by giving good words of praise and thanksgiving for His Will in her life. She does good for her Husband by giving Him sweet, pleasant words of surrender and submission to His Will in all circumstances and situations. The Bride's faithfulness and fidelity make her like a camel that is able to carry out her Husband's Will through long, dry desert places and long, tedious journeys. Thus, she justifies her Husband's confidence in her.

The patient, peaceful camel was chosen to carry Rebekah, as a bride, to Isaac, the bridegroom. The camel helped Rebekah carry out the will of her natural bridegroom by carrying her to him through a long, tedious journey.

The restful, peaceful Marriage Union of the Bride to the Bridegroom produces spiritual equilibrium so that the Bride does not hurt Him by doing evil, hurtful, noxious things to others. She will not grieve and offend her Bridegroom by harboring evil, hurtful thoughts against Him or others. The Bride does not do evil to Her Husband by becoming wretched, miserable, and unhappy because of the circumstances He has ordained for her life.

4. Hebrew Letter *Daleth* — Door

She seeketh wool, and flax, and worketh willingly with her hands (Proverbs 31:13).

The Hebrew text begins this verse with the fourth letter of the Hebrew alphabet, *daleth*, which means door.

The *daleth* personifies Jesus Christ, the Bridegroom, as the Door.

Jesus Christ, God's Lamb, is the Door through which man must enter in order to be saved from sin and its penalty, which is Death. He is the Passage and Preservation; He is the Door for Salvation and Security. He is the Door to the great Treasure House of His Wool-life and Flax-life.

Jesus, the Lamb of God, possesses the Wool-life of His Resurrection Glory to clothe His spiritual Household so that they are protected in cold winter seasons in the spiritual realm. The LORD Jesus Christ, the Source of Life, also possesses Flax-life to clothe those who desire to be in the Bride with the Humility Linen of the Crucified Christ. Those who seek the Door, Jesus Christ, will find His Wool, His Flax, and the entrance into the Bridegroom/Bride Relationship.

The Bride desires to obtain a sufficient supply of Material from which she can make Clothing for herself and her Bridegroom's Household. She seeks Wool (a picture of the Lamb's Resurrection Glory) and Flax (a picture of the Humility Linen of the Crucified Christ) so that she can clothe her family with the best of Materials. She works willingly, labouring with her own hands, cheerfully and dexterously.

In the Hebrew, the expression "she works willingly" literally means "she makes according to the pleasure of her hand." Thus, the Bride considers her work a joyful delight, not a rigorous labour. She makes the Wool and Flax into the best of Garments for her Household. Willingly, she works with Christ's Glorious Resurrection Power and Crucifixion Power in order to clothe His Household in glorious Garments of His Light and His Truth.

5. Hebrew Letter *Hay* — Window

She is like the merchants' ships; she bringeth her food from afar (Proverbs 31:14).

The Hebrew text begins this verse with the fifth letter of the Hebrew alphabet, *hay*, which means a window. Webster's Dictionary defines the word *window*, literally, to mean "wind eye" because it is an opening for admitting light and air.

The LORD Jesus Christ is the "Window of Light" for the whole world. Those who seek Him will be filled with the Light of Wisdom to seek food for their souls and spirits from afar, from the Heavens above, and not from the things of this world. Jesus said, "...I am the *light* of the world:..." (John 8:12). The Apostle Paul admonished believers to seek those things which are above. "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God" (Colossians 3:1).

The Bride of Christ is like the merchant ships in that she brings her food from afar. She is filled with the "Windows of Light" to see the importance of importing Living, Spiritual Food from the Heavenly Realm. To satisfy her soul, the Bride does not depend upon carnal, earthly sources and the supplies she finds readily at hand; instead, she seeks the priceless, precious, and most choice Food that comes from her Heavenly Bridegroom, Who is seated at the Right Hand of God the Father.

Not only does the Bride of Christ buy in the best market, but she also buys the best substance — the Resurrection Power and Crucifixion Power of Christ. The Apostle Paul said: "That I may know him, and the *power* of his *resurrection*, and the *fellowship* of his *sufferings*, being made conformable unto his death;" (Philippians 3:10).

The Bride buys on the most advantageous terms. Through humility and repentance, she exchanges her old, carnal nature for the Pure and Holy Nature of the Resurrected Christ and the Crucified Christ.

6. Hebrew Letter *Vau* — Nail

She riseth also while it is yet night, and giveth meat to her household, and a portion to her maidens (Proverbs 31:15).

The sixth letter of the Hebrew alphabet, *Vau*, begins this verse in the Hebrew text. *Vau* denotes a hook, a nail, an instrument used to fasten or hold something in place.

The LORD Jesus Christ is the fiery Nail upon which hangs all the glorious Food of the Father's House. The Prophet said, "And I will fasten him as a *nail* in a sure place; and he shall be for a glorious throne to his father's house" (Isaiah 22:23). The LORD Jesus Christ is a Nail in a sure place; He is not to be renounced nor cut down.

Jesus Christ declared that His Body was Meat, indeed, and His Blood was Drink, indeed. Hanging on the fiery Nail in the Father's House is the Spiritual Meat of Wisdom, Understanding, and Knowledge. In Jesus Christ, there is

also Drink that gives Living Satisfaction to a thirsty heart.

The Bride of Christ rises up in the night season, before daybreak, to seek the Food from the fiery Nail in the Father's House so that His Household will have the Food necessary to sustain them during the day.

The Hebrew word for *food* is *tereph*, a word used for animal's prey or food that is torn in pieces with the teeth, — food that is ready to be chewed and eaten. The Psalmist said, "He hath given meat unto them that fear him: he will ever be mindful of his covenant" (Psalm 111:5). The LORD Jesus Christ has torn in pieces sin, Death, Hell, and the grave, and He has risen from the dead. His whole Being is "choice Meat" or victory. He breaks or tears off the Meat of His victorious Wisdom, Understanding, and Knowledge, giving it to His Bride so that she can feed His Household.

The Virtuous Woman, the Bride of Christ, loves to seek the Bridegroom and His Word more than she loves personal ease and selfish pleasure. She feeds her Household so that they might cheerfully serve her beloved Bridegroom. The Bride also reserves a portion for her maidens. She allocates Food that is convenient for them. Thus, the maidens are also objects of her loving, industrious care.

7. Hebrew Letter *Zayin* — Weapon

She considereth a field, and buyeth it: with the fruit of her hands she planteth a vineyard (Proverbs 31:16).

The seventh Hebrew letter, *zayin*, begins this verse in the Hebrew text. *Zayin* means a weapon, sword, spear, ornament.

The Mouth of the Bridegroom, Jesus Christ, is filled with the two-edged Sword of His Word.

And he had in his right hand seven stars: **and out of his mouth went a sharp twoedged sword:** and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength (Revelation 1:16).

For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart (Hebrews 4:12).

The Bridegroom uses the sharp Sword of His Name and Word to circumcise the Bride's heart, separating it more and more from her paltry, carnal desires until she is filled with the wealth and riches of His Grace, Surrender, and Humility. With the Riches she gains, she buys the field in which is hidden the Treasure of the Father's Unbegotten Name, Glory, Spirit, and Word.

When the Bride examines the field that contains the priceless Treasure and considers the advantage it would be to her and her Household, she buys it.

With the Fruit of her hands, Fruit that comes from the glorious Treasure in the field, she plants a Vineyard. She desires to furnish her Bridegroom and Household with the Wine of Joy from the Fruits of the Vineyard. (A winepress was always built in a vineyard for the purpose of squeezing out the joyous, life-giving substance of the grapes.)

Now will I sing to my wellbeloved a song of my beloved touching his vineyard. **My wellbeloved hath a vineyard in a very fruitful hill:** And he fenced it, and gathered out the stones thereof, and planted it with the choicest vine, and **built a tower in the midst of it, and also made a winepress therein:** and he looked that it should bring forth grapes, and it brought forth wild grapes (Isaiah 5:1,2).

The LORD Jesus Christ desires that sinful man accept Him as a Saviour and, then, grow into the fullness of His Stature, laying hold of His Nature so that he will have the necessary price with which to purchase the Field that contains the glorious Unbegotten Name of the Heavenly Father. Jesus said, "All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him" (Matthew 11:27).

The purpose of the Vineyard is to bring forth the joyful Fruits of Thanksgiving and Praise to the Tower of Jesus' Name that is built in the midst of the Vineyard.

God's Word prophesies that the Nation of Israel, God's Bride in the natural realm, will experience this ideal scene (when every man will be properly equipped with his own vine or vineyard) in the Millennial Reign of Christ, the LORD, the Tower of the Vineyard.

8. Hebrew Letter *Cheth* — Fence

She girdeth her loins with strength, and strengtheneth her arms (Proverbs 31:17).

The eighth letter of the Hebrew alphabet, *cheth*, begins this verse in the Hebrew text. *Cheth* means a barrier or fence to enclose or surround.

The Virtuous Bride girds her loins with strength. She girds her skirt firmly around her waist with the strength she has gained from having the Truth laid in her heart and with the strength that her fidelity to her Husband has produced. Thus, her loins are veiled by her skirt, which covers her nakedness from the gaze of all strange lovers.

The Bride's strength that comes as a result of her fidelity to her Husband prepares her heart and mind for total commitment and dedication to walk in her Husband's Will. The strength in her loins flows out, imparting strength to her arms so that she can work vigorously to accomplish her Bridegroom's Will.

When one's loins are girded with the strength produced by fidelity and separation to the Bridegroom, the arms are strengthened to lift up High and Holy Praise and Thanksgiving to His Powerful Name, and they are strengthened to reach down in humble service to the poor and needy in both the natural and spiritual realms.

The Girdle of the Strength from Truth and Fidelity is the Fence that surrounds and protects the Holy Seeds of Truth in the believer's loins. It is also the fence that excludes the Devil's birds of doubt and unbelief that would steal and devour the Seeds of Truth in the believer's heart. This protective Fence allows the Holy Seeds of Truth to take root downward in the believer's heart and to bear fruit upward in a visible form in his life.

Girded loins provide strength for the arms so that they can be exercised, daily, and continually exerted in the LORD's Ministry.

9. Hebrew Letter *Teth* — Wisdom of the Good Serpent

She perceiveth that her merchandise is good: her candle goeth not out by night (Proverbs 31:18).

The ninth letter of the Hebrew alphabet, *teth*, begins this verse in the Hebrew text. *Teth* means the coiling wisdom of the serpent.

Jesus told His Disciples to be wise as serpents and harmless as doves. "Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves; *be ye therefore wise as serpents*, and harmless as doves" (Matthew 10:16).

The Virtuous Bride perceives — literally tastes and finds by experience — that her merchandise from the Bridegroom is good, pleasant, and priceless. She has the Wisdom of the Good Serpent to crawl into the cleft of the Rock, the Christ, and hide there in order to protect her priceless merchandise. The person who does not perceive his spiritual merchandise as being "good" will not protect it from Satan's thieves and robbers.

The Bride's candle does not go out by night. The Hebrew word that was translated as *candle* in Proverbs 31:18 was translated as *lamp* in Psalm 119:105: "Thy word is a *lamp* unto my feet, and a light unto my path." The Virtuous Bride's feet carry the Lamp of Truth, lighting the way to the *Torah*, the Law. Thus, her feet do not stray into the way of error and wrong.

The Lamp of Truth ever burns in the house of the Virtuous Bride, showing her Household her Bridegroom's Ways of Truth and Love. She does not allow darkness to hinder her faithful, vigorous work for her Bridegroom and His Household. The Bride ever sleeps and rests under the glorious Light of Truth so that her spirit and soul are refreshed continuously and renewed by the Holy Light of the *Torah*. Her night seasons are filled continually with the Life, Happiness, and Prosperity that radiate out from God's Holy Lamp of Truth.

10. Hebrew Letter *Yod* — Open Hand

She layeth her hands to the spindle, and her hands hold the distaff (Proverbs 31:19).

The tenth letter of the Hebrew alphabet, *yod*, begins this verse in the Hebrew text. *Yod* means a hand with outstretched fingers.

This verse describes the Bride's industrious, stretched-out hand and fingers. She does not spend her leisure time in idleness. Instead, she occupies herself with spinning thread and weaving garments for her Household and for the poor. The Bride cheerfully and dexterously stretches out her arms to do useful works, laying hold of the spinning

wheel and the distaff. Her humble nature and her willingness to serve prevent her from thinking that her works are either an offense to her dignity and honour or an infringement on her rest and repose.

The Clothes made by the Bride, as she uses the spindle and distaff, are honourable; whereas the vain ornaments worn by the daughters of Zion are considered a dishonour and reproach.

In that day the Lord will take away the bravery of their tinkling ornaments about their feet, and their cauls, and their round tires like the moon, The chains and the bracelets, and the mufflers, The bonnets, and the ornaments of the legs, and the headbands, and the tablets, and the earrings, The rings, and nose jewels, the changeable suits of apparel, and the mantles, and the wimples, and the crisping pins, The glasses, and the fine linen, and the hoods, and the veils (Isaiah 3:18-23).

The Virtuous Bride considers it an honour and a privilege to spin and weave Spiritual Garments of Truth for herself, for her Household, and for the poor. She stretches forth her hand and fingers to minister in both the natural and spiritual realms.

11. Hebrew Letter *Kaph* — Cupped Hand

She stretched out her hand to the poor; yea, she reacheth forth her hands to the needy (Proverbs 31:20).

Kaph, the eleventh letter of the Hebrew alphabet, begins this verse in the Hebrew text. The meaning of *kaph* is also descriptive of the Bride. The word indicates a bent or hollow hand or palm, which reveals that the Virtuous Bride has an open-handed liberality; therefore, she disperses her substance abroad and shares it with the poor.

The Bride of Christ is sympathetic, compassionate, kind, and tenderhearted to the poor and needy, both naturally and spiritually. The LORD rewards the labours of her hands, and she shares the blessing with others. The Bride generously opens her hollowed hands, giving alms to the poor. She knows the Truth that the Wise Man stated in the Book of Proverbs: “He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the LORD;...” (Proverbs 19:17). Therefore, she serves the poor with her own hand, exerting her nerves and sinews to soothe the poor and needy with tender love and affection.

The Bride stretches out her hand to those who are near, and she reaches forth to share with those who are a great distance away. She shares her prosperity near and far. The Virtuous Bride is like Dorcas, who was full of good works and almsdeeds, as was recorded in the Book of Acts: “Now there was at Joppa a certain disciple named Tabitha, which by interpretation is called Dorcas: this woman was full of *good works and almsdeeds* which she did” (Acts 9:36).

12. Hebrew Letter *Lamed* — Whip, Goad

She is not afraid of the snow for her household: for all her household are clothed with scarlet (Proverbs 31:21).

Lamed, the twelfth letter of the Hebrew alphabet, begins this verse in the Hebrew text. This letter means a beater, a chastiser, a staff, a whip or goad for urging oxen. The nature of the letter *lamed* describes the whipping, chastening nature of the winter winds that accompany the snow.

By preparing warm garments made of scarlet for her Household to wear, the Virtuous Bride demonstrates her acceptance of the severe beating she receives from the cold and snow in the winter season. The scarlet is so named for its glaring brightness and denotes a crimson colour of deep scarlet. Since this colour helps to absorb and retain heat, the Bride does not fear the cold of the most pinching, whipping winter.

The believer needs not fear God’s chastening whip of cold circumstances and situations in his spiritual winter seasons if he clothes himself in the crimson Glory Brightness of the Humility of the Crucified Christ and the Resurrected Christ.

The Bride of Christ clothes herself and her Household with the Truth of the Bridegroom’s Humility. There is, therefore, no need for her to fear the pinching chill of temptation or persecution. She takes refuge in the scarlet Humility of the Lamb of God.

13. Hebrew Letter *Mem* — Water

She maketh herself coverings of tapestry; her clothing is silk and purple (Proverbs 31:22).

Mem, the thirteenth letter of the Hebrew alphabet, begins this verse in the Hebrew text. *Mem* means water, waves.

This letter describes the *seminal* Waters that God has reserved for His Holy Bed of Matrimony. These are God's Holy Waters of Reproduction to build His family.

The Virtuous Bride prepares a special covering of tapestry for the Marriage Bed. The Hebrew word for *covering* refers to its being shaggy or hairy on both sides. This is a picture of covering the Marriage Bed with humble faithfulness and loyalty. The Virtuous Bride makes a double covering for the Matrimonial Bed that she shares with her Husband; thus she protects His Seed so that she might nurture and cherish them until they reach maturity.

The Bride prepares the coverings of tapestry (the pillows, the cushions, and the covers) for the entertainment and comfort of the Bridegroom in His Bed of Rest and Love and for the protection of His Seed.

These same coverings are misused by the riotous, rebellious, unfaithful, and disloyal wife who plays the harlot when her husband is away. She, the harlot wife, invites strange lovers to her home to share the coverings of tapestry that she originally has prepared for her bridegroom.

The Virtuous Bride adorns herself for her Husband. She is dressed neither in meager, simple clothes nor in sumptuous showiness but in silk (White Linen) and purple. The Bride of Christ is clothed in the White Linen of righteous thoughts, words, and deeds. Royal purple ruling-thoughts and deeds govern her life.

14. Hebrew Letter *Nun* — Fish

Her husband is known in the gates, when he sitteth among the elders of the land (Proverbs 31:23).

Nun, the fourteenth letter of the Hebrew alphabet, begins this verse in the Hebrew text. This letter means fish, and, in its elongated form, *nun* is pictured as an eel.

A natural fish speaks of motion, for it is at liberty to ascend, to descend, and to move to and fro. A fish also speaks of productive growth because it reproduces itself quickly and abundantly. The Spirit of God uses the natural fish to portray the Truth of motion and productive growth that is manifested in the spiritual realm. This is manifested in the fact that the Virtuous Bride's Husband is *known in the gates*.

It was customary in Biblical days for the elders to sit in the gates to minister the Righteous Judgment of the *Torah*. In order to do this, they had to have liberated perception that allowed them to swim into the depths of Wisdom, into the heights of Knowledge, and into the length and breadth of Understanding.

Boaz is an example of a person who went to the gate, where the court normally met to hold counsel for settling disputes and carrying out the Judgment of the *Torah*. Boaz, the near kinsman of Naomi's deceased husband, sat in the gate with the ten elders of the city in order to establish his legal right to marry Ruth, Naomi's widowed daughter-in-law. Boaz's marriage to Ruth fulfilled the Levirate Law in the *Torah*.

The Virtuous Woman's Husband is known in the Gates for His liberated Perception of wise Counsel. He is known in the Gates for establishing His Marriage with His Bride, for sowing the Seeds of Truth of the *Torah*, and for delivering its productive Judgments to the people.

So also will the Bridegroom, the LORD Jesus Christ, be known in the Gates of the New Jerusalem. The Glory of His Name will stream forth through the open Gates of the New City and liberate all creation, setting it in motion and freeing it to bring forth the productive fruitfulness of praise and thanksgiving unto the LORD God.

15. Hebrew Letter *Samekh* — Support

She maketh fine linen, and selleth it; and delivereth girdles unto the merchant (Proverbs 31:24).

Samekh, the fifteenth letter of the Hebrew alphabet, begins this verse in the Hebrew text. This letter means a prop or support, and it fitly describes the Spiritual Truth found in this verse.

The Bride makes and sells linen garments. In Old Testament times, these linen garments were called "body-linen." The body-linen, a square or a rectangular piece of fine linen, was worn either as an outer covering for the body or as a sheet, a wrapper, a covering for the body when a person was in bed. These linen garments supported the body against nakedness and cold.

The Virtuous Wife makes these fine supports and sells them to the ones who are willing to pay the price for them.

The Bride of Christ makes the Holy Linen Garments by preaching the Holy Truths of the Bridegroom, Jesus Christ. These Truths support the faith and hope of the heart of the faithful ones who are willing to pay the price to attain the Prize, the Bride of Christ.

While the Apostle Peter was in a trance, he was shown a vision of a *linen sheet*, filled with all manner of unclean animals, being let down out of Heaven to the Earth.

On the morrow, as they went on their journey, and drew nigh unto the city, Peter went up upon the housetop to pray about the sixth hour: And he became very hungry, and would have eaten: but while they made ready, he fell into a trance, And saw heaven opened, **and a certain vessel descending unto him, as it had been a great sheet knit at the four corners, and let down to the earth:** Wherein were all manner of four-footed beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air. And there came a voice to him, Rise, Peter; kill, and eat. But Peter said, No so, Lord; for I have never eaten any thing that is common or unclean. And the voice spake unto him again the second time, What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common. This was done thrice: and the vessel was received up again into heaven (Acts 10:9-16).

The mystery the LORD revealed to Peter in this vision was that the Prize of wearing White Linen is extended to *all* believers, both Jewish and Gentile.

Through her labours in the Word of God and in prayer, and through her unselfish deeds of sharing the Bridegroom's Truth in His glorious Love, the Virtuous Bride of Christ makes and weaves fine Linen to share with others. She also delivers *girdles* to the merchants or traders.

In the past, these girdles, which actually were ornately and elaborately embroidered sashes or belts, were commonly worn around the waist to support the long, loose, flowing robes. The girding of oneself was a demonstration of the girdle's bringing into subjection to it all that was under it — the robe, the clothing, and the loins.

The Bride girds her loins as a demonstration that she is ready to go wherever the Bridegroom sends her and that she is ready to do whatever He bids her to do. The Bride of Christ is willing to share her beautiful Knowledge and Experience with others so that they, in turn, may become a "merchant" to trade and to share with others.

16. Hebrew Letter *Ayin* — Eye, Fountain

Strength and honour are her clothing; and she shall rejoice in time to come (Proverbs 31:25).

The Hebrew text begins this verse with the sixteenth letter of the Hebrew alphabet, *ayin*, which means an eye. The *ayin* or eye is congruous with the Truth that is presented in this verse.

The Virtuous Bride is clothed in strength and honour. The Hebrew word for *strength* pertains to the Strength or Might of God, the power of a warrior, the firmness and stability of a mountain, the glory and splendour of power, the Ark of the Strength of the LORD's Headship, the power of praise, or the instruments of praise.

The Hebrew word for *honour* signifies Holy Ornaments of splendid beauty and the Adornments of the Sanctuary. It also signifies the Majesty of God.

The Hebrew word for *clothing* is *leb-oosh*, which signifies splendid attire. This same Hebrew word is used in the Book of Job to speak of Leviathan's covering, which was his scales of pride.

Who can discover the face of his garment [*leb-oosh*]? or who can come to him with his double bridle?... His scales are his pride, shut up together as with a close seal. One is so near to another, that no air can come between them. They are joined one to another, they stick together, that they cannot be sundered (Job 41:13,15-17).

Leviathan, the Serpent, was covered with a garment of tightly laced scales which were formed out of his proud independence. The Bride is also clothed with a Garment of Scales; however, her Scales are formed from the Strength of the Ark of God's Headship and the splendour of the Power of His Presence and Glory. These Scales are so tightly laced together that the fiery Dragon's breath and fire cannot penetrate the Bride's heart and will. Therefore, she can rejoice and laugh at the things to come.

The Bride of Christ clothes herself with the Headship of her Husband's Humble Mind and the splendour of His Presence and Spirit. She is not afraid of any evil tidings because she is covered with the Scales of His Strength and Honour. Her heart is fixed, and she trusts in the LORD. The Psalmist said, "He shall not be afraid of evil tidings: his heart is fixed, trusting in the LORD" (Psalm 112:7).

The LORD Himself is clothed with a Garment of Scales of Glory and Majesty, which the Psalmist described:

“Bless the LORD, O my soul. O LORD my God, thou art very great; *thou art clothed with honour and majesty*” (Psalm 104:1).

God desires that His Priests be clothed with Scales of Righteousness: “Let *thy priests be clothed with righteousness*; and let thy saints shout for joy” (Psalm 132:9). In both verses just quoted, the Hebrew word for *clothed* is *law-bash*, which is the root word from which the scaly clothes of *leb-oosh* comes.

God desires that His Priests’ righteous acts be laced so tightly together that they form a Garment, just as the scales of Leviathan were laced together to form a scaly covering for him. The Wife of Christ is arrayed or clothed in White Linen, which is the righteousness of saints. Her righteous deeds are likened to the tightly knit scales of Leviathan. There is no room for the Dragon’s breath of unrighteousness to penetrate them.

At His Second Coming, the Bridegroom, Jesus Christ, will be clothed with a double portion of Scales, which the Apostle John described: “And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God” (Revelation 19:13). In the Hebrew New Testament, the word *leb-oosh* is used twice in this verse — once for His *Clothing* of Glory and Honour and once for His *Vesture* dipped in Blood. This double portion of Scales signifies the double portion of Strength and Honour that the Crucified and Resurrected Christ will possess. Therefore, He will rejoice and laugh at His enemies as He goes forth to fight the Battle of Armageddon. Like her Bridegroom, the Bride of Christ is clothed with a scaly Garment of White Linen Righteousness.

17. Hebrew Letter *Pe* — Mouth

She openeth her mouth with wisdom; and in her tongue is the law of kindness (Proverbs 31:26).

The Hebrew text begins this verse with the seventeenth letter of the Hebrew alphabet, *pe*, which means mouth.

The meaning of the letter *pe* fits together beautifully with the Truth revealed in this verse, which describes the mouth of the Virtuous Woman, the Bride. The Virtuous Bride opens her mouth with Wisdom. Her words are filled with reverential fear or respect for her LORD. Because her mouth is filled with both theoretical and experiential Wisdom of the Fear of the LORD, she is qualified to give prudent advice to others.

The Virtuous Bride’s mouth is not filled with the wheels of slander, gossip, and idle, vain talk. She has a round, open mouth that looks like a great wheel, and the words of her mouth roll out like so many little wheels. Because her mouth is filled with the wheels of sound, encircling Wisdom, she ministers the marvelous Grace of the LORD to those who hear her.

The wheel of the mouth of the Virtuous Bride is governed by her tongue, the shaft of the wheel, which is filled with the Law of Kindness. This means that the whole wheel of her mouth, with its shaft (the tongue), is governed by the *Torah*, the Law of Love.

The mouth speaks out of the abundance of the heart. The fact that the Bride’s mouth speaks kind, loving words proves that her heart is filled with kindness and love. When the Law of Love and Kindness is written in the heart, it shows itself through the tongue, the shaft of the wheel of the mouth.

The Wisdom from the Virtuous Bride’s mouth and the Law of Kindness in her tongue give mighty, rolling Commanding Power to the instructions she gives her children and servants. She constrains obedience by her sympathetic, gracious, and merciful words that are animated and regulated by love. As a leader of her family, she teaches, directs, and sets the example for being filled with the Fear of the LORD and the Love of the LORD.

18. Hebrew Letter *Tsadhe* — Fishhook

She looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness (Proverbs 31:27).

The Hebrew text begins this verse with the eighteenth letter of the Hebrew alphabet, *tsadhe*, meaning a fishhook. Knowing what the letter *pe* means helps to shed more light on the Truth in this verse.

The eyes of the Virtuous Bride are like fishhooks that catch the attitudes and manners of her Household in order to inspect them. She checks to see if each one is performing properly or if some are behaving amiss.

She “fishes” in her own Household, not in the household of another. She “fishes” or looks to see if the orders that she issues for dealing with the details of her home are carried out.

The Virtuous Bride does not eat the bread of idleness, but fishes to see how she can arrange her time for more active labour and conscientious diligence. She is full of energy and occupied with obtaining the Bread of Wisdom,

Understanding, and Knowledge in the precious Word of God, which she shares with her Household. She carefully examines the circles of people in her Household to see that they all are well-fed with the Bread of Life.

19. Hebrew Letter *Koph* — Back of Head, Nape of Neck

Her children arise up, and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praiseth her (Proverbs 31:28).

The Hebrew text begins this verse with the nineteenth letter of the Hebrew Alphabet, *koph*, which means the nape of the neck or back of the head. The spiritual meaning of this verse is enhanced by understanding of the letter *koph*.

The back of the head is joined to the back of the body, just as the front of the head is joined to the front of the body. The Virtuous Bride uses the front of her head and body in the night season to work and prepare food and clothing for her Household. Therefore, when the children rise up in the morning and see the fruits of their mother's labours for them, they express joyful gratitude and appreciation behind her head. From the kitchen, as it were, she hears the gladness and thanksgiving being expressed by her family in the dining room.

The Virtuous Bride is a fruitful mother of children, and because of her faithfulness to feed, clothe, and care for them, her ears are rewarded with the experience of hearing the children's celebration in which they honour her for her loving, tender care.

The Virtuous Bride and mother also hears her children pray to the LORD God for her. The children bless the LORD for their faithful mother who has fed, clothed, and cared for them. By honouring their mother, the children fulfill their debt to the Fifth Commandment of the blessed *Torah*.

The Bridegroom-Husband also praises His Virtuous Bride. He makes her happy by allowing her to hear His Radiant Praise. Thus, her darkness from her tiredness and weariness becomes *radiant* darkness. The Husband is happy with His Virtuous Bride's faithful services and sends forth the light of her praise far and near. When the Bride hears such grateful and joyful appreciation, her ears are filled with great peace, joy, and rest!

20. Hebrew Letter *Resh* — Whole Head

Many daughters have done virtuously, but thou excellest them all (Proverbs 31:29).

The Hebrew text begins this verse with the twentieth letter of the Hebrew alphabet, *resh*, which means the whole head. The letter *resh* is very expressive of the spiritual connotation of this verse.

There are many virtuous women (virgins, queens, and concubines) who are like precious jewels, but the Virtuous Bride excels them all as *the most* precious Jewel. The Bridegroom described His Bride thusly in the Song of Solomon: "My dove, my undefiled is but one; she is the only one of her mother, she is the choice one of her that bare her. The daughters saw her, and blessed her; yea, the queens and the concubines, and they praised her" (Song of Solomon 6:9). When the Bridegroom brings forth His Bride, who radiates Light as a result of her Union with the Sun of Righteousness, she outshines all others in Glory and Splendour.

The natural sun provides heat, light, fuel, food, and power for the sustenance of life. The sun makes the weather by drawing water into clouds and sending rain upon the Earth. The sun is the reason the Earth is not dark, dead, frozen, and airless; instead, because of the sun, the Earth is dressed in a warm and living armory of colourful scales of light. Also, it is the living, gravitational pull of the sun that holds the Earth in orbit.

When the Virtuous Bride's illuminated soul has become married to the Sun of Righteousness, Jesus Christ, she becomes a shining Light to her Household. She sends forth the Waters of Living Truth, giving Food and Drink to the souls of her Household. She clothes them with the glorious splendour of the Light of Truth, causing the cold, deathly shadows of delusion and deceit to flee away. The Virtuous Bride and Mother gives forth the radiating heat of love and affection for her Household. She sends forth the gravitational Power of Light and Truth to keep her Household in the orbit of God's Will. Because the Virtuous Bride is joined to the Headship of her Husband, the Sun of Righteousness, she has the Power of His Headship to govern, guide, and guard her Household.

21. Hebrew Letter *Shin* — Tooth

Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain: but a woman that feareth the LORD, she shall be praised (Proverbs 31:30).

The Hebrew text begins this verse with the twenty-first letter of the Hebrew alphabet, *shin*, which means tooth. This letter fits together with the description of the Virtuous Bride that is given in this verse.

An exterior appearance of gracefulness or favour is very misleading if it is used as the criterion for the service and effectiveness of a wife. Gracefulness and loveliness of form are deceitful if they constitute all a wife has to offer her husband. Outward beauty is good to have, but it is not the most important qualification of a good wife. A graceful and lovely exterior is not an index of a woman's character; outward beauty can be a deceitful facade.

True character is the most essential requisite of a good wife. The inner beauty of true character endures, while outward beauty is vain, transitory, and very dangerous, unless it is accompanied by the inner beauty of God's Truth. The Virtuous Bride's inner beauty, which is built on the Truth and the Fear of the LORD, is like a beautiful white tooth in her mouth. Just as a strong white tooth in the mouth is guided and governed by the word in one's head, so also is the Virtuous Bride guided and governed by the Word in her head and by her fear of and reverential respect for God in all situations. God prefers the crown of fear and a pious character rather than the vanity and deceitfulness of outward beauty.

Vain beauty does not lead one to God but to self. Many a person has been deceived into choosing a companion by his or her outward form of beauty. The vain beauty of the body will be marred by time, age, death, and the grave. Conversely, the beauty of the fear of God in the soul increases in bloom and fragrance as time passes. The fear of God is an Eternal, indispensable characteristic of the Bride of Christ.

When the fear of the LORD crowns the soul and reigns in the heart, it prepares one for the Prize, the Bride of Christ; also, others are drawn to Christ by the inner beauty and strength of the fear of the LORD manifested in one's life.

This verse was the wise man's reflection upon the picture he already had painted of the Virtuous Woman.

22. Hebrew Letter *Taw* — Sign, Cross

Give her of the fruit of her hands; and let her own works praise her in the gates (Proverbs 31:31).

The Hebrew text begins this verse with the twenty-second and last letter of the Hebrew alphabet, *tau*, which means a sign, a mark, a cross. The meaning of this letter rightly fits together with the Truth in this verse.

According to the Truth in this portion of the Scriptures, the Virtuous Woman ministers the Obedience and Humility of the Cross; therefore, she will be counted worthy to receive the Resurrection Glory of the Cross. She, personally, will be given full credit for what she has done. She sows the seeds of sharing love, so she will be rewarded with the fruit of her labours. She will receive what she has duly and dearly earned. Her own works will praise her in the Gates. She does not court the applause and acceptance of man, but she seeks the Humility and Obedience of her Bridegroom's Cross. She needs no vain laudation of man; thus, her own works will speak for her at the solemn assembly in the Gates. There she will receive honour and glory as they unanimously agree that she deserves reward and recognition for her works.

Summary

This study has shown how the Lamb's Bride makes herself ready for her Bridegroom. She does not appear at the Marriage Supper unprepared because she makes herself ready during her journey through her life on this Earth. Therefore, she appears at the Marriage Supper clothed in the Fine Linen, Clean and White, of the Bride. The Bride's Eternal Glory Dress of Fine, White Linen is made up of her myriad thoughts, acts, and deeds of righteousness which she performs during her earthly life.

Eight natural brides in the Old Testament Scriptures exemplify the eight preparations that the Bride of Christ undertakes as she makes herself ready for her spiritual Bridegroom.

By looking at what these natural brides did, as they appear in the Old Testament in type and shadow form, we hopefully have gained a clearer understanding of the different classes of preparation that are made by the Bride of Christ while she is on Earth. These classes of preparation are as follows:

- The Bride's preparation for new Unity and Harmony as she becomes a *Helpmeet* for her Husband through separation from His Body, as exemplified by Adam-female's separation from Adam-male's body.

- The Bride's preparation for Separation from all Familiarities, as exemplified by Rebekah's choice to leave home to be married to Isaac.
- The Bride's preparation in Beauty and Fragrance, as exemplified by Esther's preparation in making herself beautiful and fragrant for the king.
- The Bride's preparation for Separation unto Obedience of the *Torah*, as exemplified by Ruth's choice to follow Naomi to Canaan's Land.
- The Bride's preparation for Sacrificial Obedience to the *Torah*, as exemplified by Tamar's obedience to the Law, although it meant sacrificing her good name.
- The Bride's preparation for myriad Sufferings, as exemplified by the Queen dressed in the gold of Ophir.
- The Bride's preparation for a fruitful, procreative Oneness of Love Relationship with her Husband, Jesus Christ, as exemplified by the Bride in the Song of Solomon.
- The Bride's preparation for receiving exalted Praise and Honour with her Husband, as exemplified by the Virtuous Woman in Proverbs, chapter thirty-one.

In Eternity, there will be visible proof that the Lamb's Wife will have made all these necessary preparations during her lifetime on Earth. When she stands with her Bridegroom, the LORD Jesus Christ, at the Marriage Supper of the Lamb, she will be clothed in her glorious Dress of Fine Linen, Clean and White!