

# QUANTOCK MINISTRIES

www.quantockministries.org.uk

---

*A Bible teaching and preaching ministry  
for the Christian community*

**D M HERRING**  
**45 LUXBOROUGH ROAD**  
**BRIDGWATER**  
**TA6 7JN**

**01278 451297**  
**qmins@aol.com**

## **THE PREPARATION OF THE BRIDE - EPHESIANS 5 v 25 – 27**

### 1. The preparation of the Bride spiritually - the Church Age

The Church Age commenced on the Day of Pentecost. This is a completely different period in world history from what went before (Ephesians 3 v 2 – 6). The essential mark is the indwelling Holy Spirit, showing a new character within a person (Romans 8 v 23, 2 Corinthians 5 v 17) with a growing sanctification (2 Corinthians 3 v 18). Christians are not immune from the joys and trials of life (Matthew 5 v 45), and they may well experience the consequences of sin - personal, national or international (Galatians 6 v 7). God disciplines His children but this is not judgement, or punishment, but rather part of the process of sanctification (Romans 8 v 1, Hebrews 12 v 7 – 11, James 1 v 2 – 4). Sadly, God may also withhold His grace (Romans 1 v 18 – 32, 1 Corinthians 5 v 4 – 5, Revelation 2 v 5), but not His salvation.

### 2. The preparation of the Bride physically – the Rapture

The Church Age finishes with the Rapture of the Church (1 Thessalonians 4 v 13 – 18, 1 Corinthians 15 v 42 – 44, 51 – 55) and, at the very end of the age, the short seven-year period of judgement known as the Tribulation. There are powerful reasons for believing the Rapture occurs before the Tribulation and this is dealt with on pages 26 to 29. Here we see just four reasons:

- a) the principle of safety for God's people (Isaiah 26 v 20, 1 Thessalonians 1 v 10 and 5 v 9, and Revelation 3 v 10);
- b) the removal of the Holy Spirit before the antichrist is revealed (2 Thessalonians 2 v 1 – 12);
- c) the general instruction to be ready at any time (Romans 13 v 11-12, 1 Corinthians 1 v 7, Philippians 3 v 20, Titus 2 v 13, James 5 v 7 - 9, Revelation 22 v 7,12 & 20);
- d) the Rapture occurs in a time of peace and safety, not in the mayhem of the Tribulation (Matthew 24 v 38-39 and 1 Thessalonians 5 v 2-3).

1 Thessalonians 4 v 13 – 18 gives us the definitive description of the Rapture:

- a) v13 – 15. This is dealing with what has happened to Christians who have already departed, prior to the Rapture. They have “fallen asleep”, i.e., their spirits have left their bodies and are now at rest in the Lord (2 Corinthians 5 v 8). It is best seen as a “conscious” sleep – conscious of the Lord, of being in His presence, and probably of each other, but almost certainly not conscious of things on earth. These spirits will return with the Lord when He comes “in the air”. The Christians who have departed prior to this event certainly do not miss out. The ground of their hope is the death and resurrection of the Lord Himself.
- b) v16. This, the return of the Lord for His Bride, is usually referred to as the Rapture. It is the fulfilment of the promise of similarity given in Acts 1 v 11, i.e., He returns to the air, and is only seen by those who know Him; one angelic voice, one trumpet call, and one loud command. It is very different to His later return with His Bride (Matthew 24 v 30 – 31, Zechariah 14 v 3 – 5, Revelation 19 v 11 – 16). The loud command is the same word as found in John 11 v 43, literally, a voice to wake the dead by name (John 10 v 3 – 4, 14 – 16). The

bodies of the dead Christians rise, immediately redeemed (Romans 8 v 23), and reunited with their returning spirits. The disposal of each Christian's body on death is therefore of no great concern, for each body is unique, the components are all in the environment somewhere, and the Lord just needs a single cell of each body in order to reconstitute the whole.

- c) v17. Then, the Christians alive at that moment are instantly changed, body and spirit (1 Corinthians 15 v 51 – 52), to meet the Lord in the air. Now the whole being, body and soul, is completely redeemed. Eternal life continues, with each Christian being a complete and eternal entity, strangely different but strangely familiar, just as the Lord was in His resurrection body (Philippians 3 v 21).
- d) v18. This should be encouragement of the highest order for every believer.

### 3. The preparation of the Bride morally – the judgement seat

During the church Age we are each a strange mixture morally. 1 Corinthians 3 v 10 – 15 addresses this issue very clearly and repays careful study. Two questions arise from the passage: when will be the Day, and where is the fire? The Day is almost certainly the day of Rapture (2 Corinthians 5 v 6 – 10), and the fire is in the Lord's eyes, that look at us searchingly at the deepest level (Revelation 1 v 14, 2 v 18, 19 v 12, Psalm 11 v 4 – 5a, Matthew 3 v 11).

### 4. The Wedding Supper of the Lamb

Then there is the glorious presentation to the Father (Jude v 24) and the Wedding of the Lamb (Revelation 19 v 6 – 9), followed by our return with the Lord for His Messianic reign on Earth (Revelation 19 v 11 – 21 and Zechariah 14 v 3 – 5, where we are the "holy ones").