

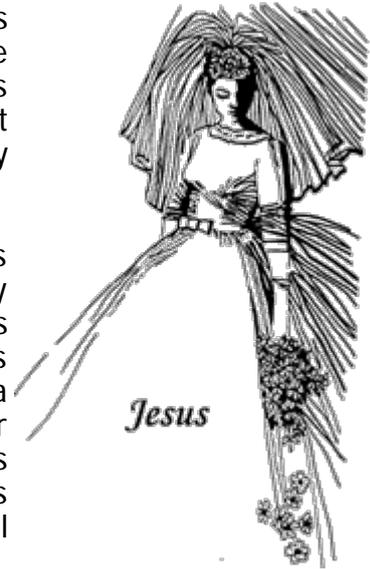
## Spiritual Growth Lessons

### LESSON 20 of 32

#### A BRIDE FOR JESUS CHRIST

The sending forth of the servant to get a bride for the son is a type of the Holy Spirit, sent forth into the world to prepare a group of people who would choose to love and serve Jesus Christ, thus becoming His "bride." The Holy Spirit does not force us to choose to serve Jesus Christ. We must willingly say, "I will go."

When we say "yes" to God, He has many gifts that He gives us to prepare us for the bridegroom. The "gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:38) is the greatest one of them all, for this is the invisible presence of Jesus that comes into our life. This presence will give us not only love, peace and joy, but also a greater understanding of God's Word, and His will for our lives. The nine gifts of the Holy Spirit were also given to His church (His bride). (See I Corinthians, Chapters 12-14.) Jesus will have no trouble recognizing His bride, because they will possess His gifts!



Jesus Himself occasionally made reference to His future relationship with the believers. The disciples of John the Baptist came to Jesus and asked why His disciples did not fast. Jesus answer was: *"Can the children of the bridechamber mourn, as long as the bridegroom is with them? but the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken from them, and then shall they fast"* (Matthew 9:15).

John referred to Jesus as the bridegroom, and himself as the friend of the bridegroom (John 3:29). Jesus gave several parables concerning His relationship as the bridegroom:

1. The Parable of the Marriage Feast (Matthew 22:1-14)
2. The Parable of the Ten Virgins (Matthew 25:1-13)



These parables teach the importance of preparing ourselves for the coming "marriage feast." We must be wearing the "wedding garment," which is the garment of salvation. The five foolish virgins were careless, and did not make sure that they stayed filled with the oil of the Holy Spirit. We must not take our salvation for granted.

*"Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall"* (II Peter 1:10).

Paul had a beautiful understanding concerning Jesus Christ being our bridegroom: *"Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church"* (Ephesians 5:25, 27; 30-32).

Jesus Christ gave us a beautiful promise before He went away: *"In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place*

*for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also" (John 14:2, 3).*

Surely our eternal home is already prepared, and Jesus is getting ready to come back for His bride, the church of Jesus Christ. Paul tells us that He is coming after "a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing," a church that is "holy and without blemish" (Ephesians 5:27). We must make sure that we are preparing ourselves for our bridegroom: ". . . for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready" (Revelation 19:7). ". . . the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut. Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not. Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh" (Matthew 25:10-13). *ds*

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