

# Who Is Jesus

Pastor Mike Connell



Audio Transcripts of Sunday Sermons

Smashwords Edition

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## Who is Jesus (4 sermons)

*The focus of Revelations is a revelation of Jesus Christ - His person, His characteristics, His purpose and plan for us. Jesus as Bridegroom; King of Kings; and Judge*

[Who is Jesus \(1 of 4\) Revelations](#) The focus of Revelations is a revelation of Jesus Christ - His person, His Characteristics, His purpose and plan for us. Overview - Jesus as Bridegroom; King of Kings; and Judge

[Who is Jesus \(2 of 4\) The Passionate Bridegroom](#) The gospel story revealed in the context of a Jewish wedding.

[Who is Jesus \(3 of 4\) Sovereign King](#) Rev 19:11-16 Symbolism brought to life. How should we respond to a mighty conquering king?

[Who is Jesus \(4 of 4\) Jesus the Righteous Judge](#) If you loved someone passionately, had great power, and saw injustice - would you not step in and make it right? Get to understand what Justice and Judgement really mean.

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## Who is Jesus (1 of 4) Revelations

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*The focus of Revelations is a revelation of Jesus Christ - His person, His Characteristics, His purpose and plan for us. Overview - Jesus as Bridegroom; King of Kings; and Judge*



How many know it's in your spirit you worship God? You know, you make a decision that you're going to give yourself to Him, you'll be surprised as you give yourself how the flow comes and you don't want to stop. So I've just been praying and thinking about where to go for just ministry on Sunday mornings and I felt I'd start a series called Who is Jesus? Who is Jesus? I want to speak primarily from the Book of Revelation, but we're going to open up some other aspects and I want to encourage you to let God talk to you and bring a revelation to your own heart of who this Jesus is.

The Bible's full of Jesus, the great revelation of Jesus, so I'm going to confine myself to three aspects of who He is, and one of the works of the Holy Spirit is to make real Jesus to us. In John 16

Jesus said: the Spirit of God will take the things that are Mine and reveal them to you, so even though I teach you today, you can walk out totally unchanged. You can just have another great message - that was nice, what do I do next? I'll go and have McDonalds. You see? Or we can ask the Holy Spirit to speak to our heart, and when the Holy Spirit speaks to our heart the revelation changes us, so what I want to do is give an introduction today and just open it out, and then in the next three weeks I want to open up three different aspects of who Jesus is, and encourage you to think how to let the Holy Spirit bring revelation to you along these areas.

Some of you may only know Jesus in one kind of way; some of you may know Him in a different way. We've all got aspects of Him, but here's the key foundational conflict that will be in the end times, it's over the person of Jesus Christ. It's not which church you go to, it's not what doctrine so much. It's who is Jesus. This is the great controversy that will be in the world, and will become increasingly an issue globally, and I'll show you why shortly, because we will see as we look into the Book of Revelation how Jesus will trigger off a global war, and how He will actually - and the issue will be who is He, and how will we respond to Him. So I want to just go and have a look, start off first of all in Matthew, Chapter 16, because the Bible tells us that we all have a race to run, and we keep our eyes fixed on Jesus, so what does He look like, and how do I keep my eyes on Him?

Those are good questions to ask. Do you know how to keep your eye on Him? Or do you get caught up with everyone, and everything else, caught up with this one's things, and that one's things, offences, anxieties, worries? Or have you learnt how to run your life keeping fixed on Jesus? We're going to help you to do that, and give you some practical keys over this series. But let's just start here in Matthew, Chapter 16, one you're very familiar with, Verse 13. When Jesus came into the region of Caesarea Philippi, He asked His disciples: who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am? And some say John the Baptist, some Elijah, some Jeremiah or one of the prophets. And He said: but who do you say that I am? I would love to be able to just sit with each of you and ask you this question; who do you say Jesus is? What revelation do you have of Him? That's very important, because the way you see Jesus will determine how you relate with Him. It'll determine how you run your life, and I'm absolutely convinced of this, that the revelation you have of Jesus currently, if you'll be open to the Holy Spirit, He will increase the knowledge of who He is.

He is like a diamond with many facets. You just can't come along and think well I just know who He is; He died on the cross for my sins. There's much more than that, and we want to open up some of that. Now this challenge took place in Caesarea, it's the centre of the Roman Empire in Palestine, so it's situated right there at the foot of the Golan Heights, and it was a place where there was worship of Pan, half goat, half man. It was a place of idolatry, a place of emperor worship. It was a place where there was conflict over who Jesus was, and Jesus asked the question: who do

men say I am? And so they began to say well, some say Elijah. Well why Elijah? Because Elijah was full of passion and prayer, confronted controlling spirits and idolatry. And some say well, He's John the Baptist returned from the dead. Why? Because John was a fiery preacher who preached repentance, so they thought that looks just like John was.

Then some say Jeremiah. Jeremiah was a prophet of great compassion, who wept over the nation and its difficulties, so people picked up different impressions about what Jesus was like. They likened Him to people they knew; someone passionate, they must have seen Him preach passionately; someone compassionate, someone who was fiery in confrontation. Those are the things they saw in Him. We get a weak, wishy washy watered down Jesus. You need to know that He's passionate and fiery, and I want to show you some aspects of Him - so Jesus then put the question of well, who do you say I am? Who do you say I am? He said: You are the Christ, the Son of the living God. Now notice what he says: You are the anointed one, the Son of the living God - not a dead God, you're the Son of the living God, and Jesus said: you didn't figure this out by being smart, or going to a message. You got this by revelation of the Holy Ghost.

Now if you're going to know Jesus, you need the Holy Spirit. If we don't know how to commune with the Holy Spirit, listen to the Holy Spirit, let Him speak to us, how will we ever get to know Jesus, because that's the Holy Spirit's job description - reveal Him to us. So we'll touch on that a bit more. So let's go now and have a look into Revelations. The Book of Revelation is a great book. Now most people look at the Book of Revelations, they get caught up with beasts and antichrist and marks and numbers, and overall very negative. This of course is not the focus of the Book of Revelation. It's included in it, but it's not the focus of it by any means. Let's have a look at that, the Book of Revelation. Here it is, Book of Revelation, Chapter 1, Verse 1. Here it is.

It says: the Revelation of Jesus Christ - so what's the Book of Revelation about? It's about? [Jesus Christ.] It's about? [Jesus Christ.] It's not the anti-christ and the beasts and the tribulation, all the other stuff and marks and stuff like that. It is about Jesus Christ! Get it right, it's about Jesus. Now what is it about Jesus? It's about the person of Jesus, who He is, and what He's like. It's about His purpose, and how He's going to unfold it step by step, and it's about His plan for us, and the part we would play in it. In Revelations 1, 2 and 3, where it talks about the churches, there's at least 24 different descriptions of what Jesus is like. You could just go through the first three chapters, and have a look where Jesus reveals Himself, and begin to get an idea what He's like. Now here's the thing. If you don't know what He's like, how can you relate to Him, and know Him?

To know Him, or to become intimate with Him, is to get to know who He is, not someone else's idea of Him. That requires the Holy Spirit to help us, so the Book of Revelation is the revealing or unveiling of Jesus Christ and His plan for the church, not to run away, not to be caught out of it all, but to bring the grace and the glory and the goodness of God to all nations in the earth! I don't know if you've read the book, but the last part of the book is very clear, that all of the nations will walk in the light of the church, the house of the living God. This is a great book to read. Not only - look, look what it says here. It says: the revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him, to show His servants things which must take place shortly, and He sent and signified this by His angel, to His servant John. Now notice what it says, Verse 3: Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things. Notice it says: there is a blessing if you will read the Book of Revelation - even if you don't understand it all. There'll be some things you can understand and respond to, and this is what He said.

If you read it, hear it in your heart, and respond to it, you'll be blessed. It's the only book in the Bible that says you'll be blessed if you read that one. Why? Because it's important to the end times, it's important to us in this day. Notice what it says, Verse 7, look at this: Behold, He is coming with the clouds, and every eye shall see Him. So what Jesus is about to do in the end time, is not going to be hidden away, or a secretive thing in a building down Omaha Road. It'll be something global! Every eye shall see Him - so what Jesus is planning to do, is to impact all nations, all people, the whole earth. You are part of a global ministry, and you're called, each of us are called, to play our part. Now notice this - what will our part be? Well I'm not going to go into this aspect, I want to focus on Jesus, but have a look in Revelations 5:10. It says: you have redeemed us to God by Your blood, out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, and made us kings and priests to our God; here it is, Verse 10 - and we shall reign on the earth. We shall reign on earth.

Now notice what it's telling us. The Book of Revelation reveals who Jesus is. It's on a scale that will affect the whole of the world, and there's a vital part we play in it. Now you have to get your thinking right, otherwise you withdraw from our great call, our great commission, to change the world - not retreat from the world, but to change the world, one soul at a time, one soul at a time, one life at a time, change this world. So I want to show you three aspects in Revelation 19 of Jesus, who He is, and what He's like, and then we'll unfold each one, how it works out. We're going to ask the kinds of question like this: Who is this Jesus? What does He do, or what are His characteristics? How do I

need to respond? In other words, it's a great thing to know, but you know the devils know about Jesus too, they just tremble and go to hell see? So knowing this stuff doesn't do you any good. It's how you respond, so at the end of the meetings, I'll give you an opportunity to think: Holy Ghost, what did You say to me? How shall I respond? What are You telling me to do? Getting the idea?

Okay, let's have a look in Revelation, Chapter 19. There's a lot of stuff in Revelations I don't understand at all, and I've seen charts and tables and all kinds of things, and they're all proved wrong, so I think there are many things though that we can know, and we should act on if we know them. So let's have a look at three ways that God reveals, or Jesus is revealed, in the Book of Revelation, so Revelation, Chapter 19, here it is in Verse 6 through to Verse 9: And I heard as it were, the voice of a great multitude, the sound of many waters, and as the sound of mighty thunders, saying Alleluia! For the Lord God Omnipotent reigns! Oh, that's a great sound isn't it? Let us be glad and rejoice - now it's involving us - and give glory to Him. Why? Why should we be glad and rejoice? Because the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready. And to her it was granted she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints. And Blessed are those called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!

Here is the first picture of Jesus, and I'll unfold it next week in greater detail. He is presented as the bride groom, so one facet of Jesus is He is a bride groom. Now I want you to think about it. Notice it says, it talks about a marriage that has not yet taken place. It talks about a feast that's not taken place, it talks about a bride, so if we just take the picture out there, this is how Jesus presents Himself. He is a passionate bride groom who loves you! That's the first thing to know about Him. Now He doesn't just love you. See a lot of people stop there. He is a groom. Now each one of us has different aspects to our life, for example I am two people - a son, but I'm also to someone else a husband. I am to some others a father, and to some others a grandfather, to others a teacher, and to others a minister of God. So I am known in the world to different people in a number of different ways, and all of those ways are right, but it's only when you bring them together, you see who I am.

So it's when we bring together the pictures of Jesus that we get the proper picture of Him, and you'll see if you've only got one aspect of Him, you get a distorted view of Jesus, and it will affect how you live your life and represent Him. Think about that. See, if someone only knew me as a teacher they'd have no idea of the whole sphere of life I have as a global minister of God. They'd have no idea at all, so they say: oh well he just taught physics and maths, that's what he did, and he was quite good at teaching, and we did pretty well. But their concept is completely limited, so if they had to tell someone about me, they wouldn't really even tell them half the story. They'd have been missing out 20-30 years, do you understand that? That's why you need all the facets of it - so the first thing to see is, He is a passionate bride groom.

Now I'm going to use the word bride groom, rather than just that He loves us. We need to get up above that. He is a groom. Now here's some things about the groom. From the Bible perspective, the number one, He pursues us. You didn't suddenly have a good idea to come to Jesus; He sent the Holy Spirit to activate some people to pray for you, and pursue you, so the first thing about Jesus, He pursues people. Why does He pursue people? Because He's passionately in love with us, and He just puts His love into action, came out of heaven, came into the earth, and then He began to pursue people. Not only does He pursue us, He initiates a unique kind of relationship called covenant. That's why you need to know Him as a groom, not just Jesus, your saviour. He is a bride groom. A groom is a person who initiates covenant with a woman. Understand that - we've got a great couple over there. Kess and Steve, you're going to be getting married in about a week, is that right? And who proposed to who? [Laughter] You proposed to her, good man. See, I wonder why he did that? Because it's biblical; for the man, to initiate connection, relationship and pursue with love the woman. Why? To bring her into a covenant relationship with himself.

God has got no casual relationships. He just has what's called covenant, so you either are in covenant with God, through receiving Christ as your saviour and the lover of your soul, or you're not in covenant with Him, you're not connected to Him. If you are in covenant with Christ, which most of us here are, then the issue really is, are you a covenant keeper with God, or are you an adulterer with God? Well, there's only one or two isn't it? We either are covenant keepers, and understand what it means to keep covenant with Him as the groom, or we're an adulterer. There's no in between in it. Think about that. Jesus said in the Book of James, the word of God comes out. He said: you are friends of the world, you are adulterers, and you find yourself in hostility with the one who covenanted with you to love you.

See the relationship God has with us, He is a jealous lover. Now I don't know with you, but there was a time when I was going through a very difficult stage in my relationship with Joy at university, and she broke off with me, and she started to date someone in the same class. [Laughter] I won't spend much time describing how I felt. [Laughter] But I do understand jealous lover! [Laughter] And all the feelings that go with jealousy over someone! A jealous lover, so

the Bible portrays Jesus as jealous. He's jealous over you. Paul writes of it in 2 Corinthians 11. He says: oh, I've espoused you. I've engaged you to Him, and I'm jealous over you. I want you to be in intimacy with Him, and faithful to Him, and in love with Him, and walk with Him, and have a covenant with Him, and represent Him as husband and wife in the earth. So the church is called the bride of Christ, and we become the bride of Christ by entering covenant, and by keeping covenant.

So not only that, in order for us to become the bride, He has to rescue us. Now everyone loves a story where the woman has been trapped or captured or kidnapped, and the man comes and rescues her. I love stories like that, great stories like that. I saw a movie called Taken. Oh I enjoyed that movie. The guy's daughter got taken by these traffickers, and the guy with an unusual set of skills got her back! Oh it was gripping! It was a gripping story - but there's something in us, loves that kind of story. The fairy stories are all full of it; it's about the woman being rescued by the man. It resonates with our heart, because God came to earth and the person of Jesus to rescue us, save us by beating up that old devil, and paying the price of the redemption, and getting us free! What a great story - He's a lover of our soul, so the question is: how will I respond to His love?

We love Him because He first loved us, so love is your response. So we need the Holy Spirit to reveal the depth of Jesus' love for us, and the first way He reveals Himself is the lover of your soul - but wait, there's more as they say. [Laughs] Wait, there's more! So here's the second one, Revelations 19, let's go again and read Verse 11 through to 16. Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, so he's in the spirit having the same vision, but he's seeing it develop, and seeing other aspects of Jesus. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, in righteousness He judges and makes war. Notice that, judges and makes war - and His eyes were a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself. He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God. We know it's Jesus. And the armies of heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses. Now out of His mouth went a sharp sword - the words - that He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them, the nations, with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the wine-press of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And he has on His robe and on His thigh a name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.

So here is the second one. The second thing you see is, He is a sovereign king. Now you may not think Jesus is a sovereign king, because you don't see it. You see instead a world where the devil still runs amok in people's lives, where sin goes unchallenged many times, and we don't appear to see the sovereignty of God. Nevertheless Jesus is sovereign. He said: all authority in heaven and earth is given to Me. There's no one greater than Me. When He was on the earth He demonstrated that sovereignty, so here's another way we could recognise Jesus is a king, and now you relate to a king different to a husband. If you only know Jesus as someone who likes you, or loves, you or died on the cross for your sins, we just come away every time you feel you're sorry for your sins, and ask Him to forgive you. But if you know Him as a groom, then intimacy, connection, relationship, hearing Him is everything - but now to be revealed that Jesus is also a king, now that means I have to understand, this is not a democracy I've been put in.

I've been translated out of the kingdom of darkness, and put into the kingdom of His beloved Son. I'm now in a kingdom, with a king, a servant king but nevertheless a king, and a king has a will. A king has rules and principles that govern his kingdom. A king gives directives, and the king has a desire to advance his kingdom. Jesus' message was the kingdom, so He demonstrated His sovereign power. Think of all the different ways He demonstrated it. We'll touch on some of them later, but here it is. He healed the sick; He delivered people; He raised the dead; He calmed the storms; He spoke to trees and they died. He demonstrated complete sovereignty over all creation, and so He is king, and that requires you relate differently.

Now most of us come in, and we think like this; we're used to a democracy, and so well we just sort of argue with God over stuff. He's king and His word is final. The question is, whether you'll relate to Him as a king or not? To relate to Him as a king means I need to yield to His design for my life in every area: finances, marriage, personal life. I need to discover what He's designed me to be and to do, and then begin to co-operate with it and align with it, otherwise I'm operating out of the kingdom of darkness, not in the kingdom of His Son. I can only find that by the word of God. Now for me, the revelation that Jesus was king came when one person preached a message on the kingdom of God. I've looked at the message since. It looks so shallow and empty I don't know how I got anything out of it, but on that moment the Holy Spirit revealed to me that this king has authority, and I needed to bow the knee.

From that point everything in my life began to shift because revelation of a kingdom and then it began to unfold as time went by - and a king. So you and I can come to Jesus and He's intimate and loves us. We come to Him as the husband who loves us, but we also need to come to Him as the One who has a purpose, a destiny, direction for us, and He wants to direct your life. The question is will you yield? Whether we will yield, whether we will respond, and one of the issues of responding is recognising His authority in different spheres of our life - so He's a king.

Okay, here's the last one. Here it is, we've already seen it. We'll read the same verses, and it says: He judges and makes war. Well that's a bit tough isn't it, because we like gentle Jesus. He's lovely and He's sweet, and He loves us and forgives our sins. We come to church and half-heartedly sing, and we go home and run our life the way we want, and that's it. I'm sorry, that is not it, because He is a judge. God has appointed to Him to judge all the earth. He is a just judge, so we see Him, He's the passionate lover, He's the sovereign king, and He is a just judge. Now what does that mean, that He judges? It means that whatever's unfair in the world, He's going to sort it out. It means wherever there's wrong government, He's going to displace it, and put in His own righteous government. It means that wherever there's been crime and sin, and things have gone wrong, He's going to intervene and bring judgement on it, and that judgement sometimes means people die, because many would rather die than bow the knee to Jesus.

Now He may have come as a servant, a shepherd, a lover of our soul, and demonstrated His kingdom, but when He comes next time, He's coming in power. He's coming in glory, and He's coming to judge the earth, nothing surer. So when we look at the tribulation, and all the things that are in there that look so horrible, guess who's responsible for all of that? It's Jesus, and the saints triggered it off by their praying. He is going to introduce something that will affect the whole globe, and disrupt everything as we know it. You have to understand that, that He is a judge. He judges the intents of hearts. He judges our actions, and He calls us to account. That's what it means, He calls us to account.

Here's the good side of it: He rewards those who labour and serve Him. Here's the down side of it: He also calls us to be responsible for what we've done with our life and gifts. Not only that, if we're not saved, He will bring us into judgement. Now see this is a struggle the church is having globally, because it doesn't want to talk about hell. Hell is a real place, people do go there, have gone there, are going there, will go there. It's a real place. You should not negate or minimise that something in all of us wants justice. Now we often get it wrong in the way we do it in our spirit, but He is a righteous judge, who's able to sort this whole thing out, so He is the judge of the whole earth. So if I was to relate to Him as a judge, what does that mean? It means He is going to treat me fairly. He's going to treat me fairly. He's going to honour me, and value me, and reward me for my labours and services, even if no one noticed, and I was treated unjustly. I don't have to worry about all the injustices in my world. I just need to let them go, because He can sort it out, He's the just judge.

What I need to do, is to learn how to lean on Him and trust Him. I need to learn how to be faithful. I need to learn how to open my life, and allow Him to inspect my life regularly, and call me to account. Now a lot of Christians hate this. They struggle with being called to account for their behaviour, their words, their actions - better to be called to account by someone you can see now, and deal with the problem, than wait and suffer significant consequences over your life by not doing that. It's better we welcome someone to speak into our life, than we resist all attempts to correct us. Why? Because the Bible's clear; all of us will give account. No one escapes, no one. I think that's great news. That's great news. That is GREAT NEWS! Now you see most people get caught up with the heavy side of the thing - ooh, what's going to happen to me? Hey, I don't have to worry about that. I'm in love with Him, I'm yielding to Him, I'm walking - I don't have to be worried about what will happen. I'm looking forward to the reward!

It's those who are sinning that have got a problem! They're the ones who need to be worried - but you see He's not just the judge. He's the lover of our soul, and He'll rescue us. So you see you start to get all three put together. Now Jesus Himself taught this, John taught this. See, you think about Matthew 25. Jesus taught the parable of the Groom and the Virgins. He taught following that the parable of the King and the Kingdom and the Servants. Then He taught following that, He was the judge of the whole earth, that called the nations to give account, so Jesus Himself taught that He fills each of these roles. A bride groom and a pursuer of your soul, to rescue you, redeem you, love you, forgive you, bring you into intimacy, make you clean, present you to Himself a wonderful person. He's also the king, so He calls us to grow up, align, begin to find a place of function and serving. If we fail and fall, He's the lover of my soul.

And He calls us to be accountable with our life, our words, our actions, behaviours, because one day we will all have to give account. But if I fail, He's still the lover of my soul. I can come to Him as the lover of my soul, so all three things bring a great balance in your life. He loves, forgives, blesses. He pursues, He won't ever let me go. He will do all He can to get me where He wants me to get, but He's also got a kingdom. He won't bend, I've got to bend. It's my knee that has to bow, not His one, see? And then He's going to call my life into account in some kind of way, so better to become accountable now. That's why the Holy Spirit's given to us. Why? It's really simple. The Holy Ghost wants to reveal how much you are loved, and Jesus is your lover; two, that there is a kingdom, and it's time to get aligned, not just so that you come under His direction, but so you can bring His kingdom into the earth; miracles, signs and wonders, and bringing the presence of God to people. You can't minister that power unless you submit to the king.

Then finally, He wants us to be accountable, to open our life so we allow people to speak in, we allow the Holy Spirit to speak in, and we become safe. That's how you become safe. So here are the questions to finish. Here's the thing to finish with. If you only know Jesus as the lover and the bride groom, you become sentimental and wishy washy. If you don't know Him as the king and the judge, you just become sentimental: Oh Jesus, oh if you love me... come on, grow up. There's a kingdom to advance. It's not that that's wrong, it's just it's absolutely out of order, if that's all you've got in your revelation of Jesus. It ends up with a wishy washy, God forgives everything, God loves everyone, everyone gets to heaven, you can sin and God will forgive you. That actually despises the Spirit of God, so that's why I need the balance of the other with it, that He's the king, and there's order, and there's principle and balance in your life. So if you know Him only as the king, and you don't know Him as the lover of your soul, and the just judge, if you only know Him as the king you'll think He's authoritarian, telling you what to do, and you'll be in conflict with God as an authoritarian God.

Now if you only know Him as the judge, then you'll think that He's harsh, and He's judging you, and He's out to get you on everything, so many people, the revelation they have is not the biblical revelation. They've got some kind of harsh thing from their background. I had that for years, a harsh thing that constantly sinning, constantly wrong. I was living under a spirit of judgement, and I had a misconception. I had a partial thing of Jesus, and I didn't see He's the lover of my soul. That's a great revelation. I didn't get that for years after I was a Christian. I responded to the gospel, but I had no real revelation how much He loved me, and I want to show you about that next week and how we can enter that.

So here are the questions that just, I want you to close your eyes, and just consider right now. Just consider them right now. Here's the first question: Who is Jesus to you? Who is Jesus to you? When you think about Him, what do you think of? When you close your eyes right now, who do you say He is? What words just quickly come up to your mind right now? See, just think, don't speak it out loud. Just think about it, and then ask yourself, what does that really mean to me, see? Here's another thing to think of then: What of those three aspects of Jesus that we saw today most impacted you, or challenged you? The lover of your soul, the groom, the king and the kingdom, governing, ruling, authority, dominion, power, or the judge calling us to account, seeing into every aspect of our life, rewarding good, judging and dealing with those things that are wrong, bringing us into discipline in our life, so we'll be productive? So which aspect do you feel the Holy Spirit is challenging you on? The groom and your relationship with Him; the king and your yielding to Him; the judge and your openness to His seeing eye?

Here's the last question: What will you do about what you just realised? As the Holy Spirit speaks to you right now, what will you do about what God spoke to you today? If you're here and you're not a Christian, don't know Jesus Christ, here's what you need to do. Jesus said: to everyone who received Him, made Him welcome, put their trust in Him, He gave power to become a child of God. Jesus has been pursuing you with love for years, probably sent people into your life, invited you to church, talked to you about Jesus - but here you are right now. I can tell you now He loves you deeply and dearly, and seeks a relationship with you. You say well there's too much mess in my life. Don't worry, the thing about the groom is He just loves His bride, and He'll do everything He can to make it right.

So here's the decision you have to make if you're not a Christian today: I will receive Jesus Christ. I will turn from living a life without God, a life of sin, a life without God. I'll turn to Jesus Christ, receiving Him as my saviour, inviting Him to become my lover and friend. You know when they have a wedding, the bride comes down and makes a commitment, and so what I'm asking you to do is to make a commitment. Until the words are spoken, the commitment made is not real. There's an engaging one with another one, so here's what I'm asking you to do. If you don't know Jesus just raise your hand and say: I want to become a Christian today. Anyone here wanting to become a Christian today, right at this point, just raise your hand quickly, raise your hand quickly. Is there anyone here wanting to become a Christian, wanting to come to Jesus, give your life to Him?

How many people today felt challenged about Jesus being the groom, a covenant keeper? How many felt Him speaking to you about that today? That's wonderful - forgiving you and loving you. How many people felt challenged about Jesus being a king today, He's the king? Wow, that's quite a few, God bless. How many felt Jesus challenging you that He is also a judge, and He calls us to account? How many felt that challenge there? Praise the Lord. I won't ask how many people didn't hear the Holy Spirit speak at all, because if you didn't hear the Holy Ghost speak to you, you've got to ask yourself this question: How long since I last heard God speak to me, and what was He trying to tell me?

Father, we just thank You for every person here. We thank You that You are over this next month, bringing an increased revelation of Jesus in all His wonder, all His beauty. We thank You that we are called to be part of a great and mighty church, part of a great kingdom, a global kingdom, a kingdom that will prevail, a kingdom that does prevail. We thank You Lord today for Your hand on our lives. Everyone says [Amen.] Amen. Come on, let's rise and

give Him a clap shall we? [Applause] Let's give the king of kings, Lord of Lords a clap. Let's shout to Him, He's our God, He's our king. We shout to You today, You're the lover of our soul, You're Almighty God. We honour You and thank You today, You're our coming king. You're the judge of the whole earth. We honour You and bless You today.

## Summary Notes

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### 1. Introduction

- Heb. 12:1-2 "...Let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith ..."
- Each of us is called to keep our eyes fixed upon Jesus – He is the One we must follow.
- Key: Foundational issues that is at the heart of conflict throughout the world.
- 1) Who is Jesus? 2) How will I respond to Him?
  - Mt.16:13-17 "Who do you say I am?"
  - Location Caesarea – centre of Roman Government, place of worship of god Pan, near Golan Height.
  - Pharisees knew Bible – but missed Jesus – He didn't come as they expected.
  - Crowd thought Jesus was: Elijah (Passion), John (Passion), Jeremiah (Compassion).
  - Peter had revelation by Holy Spirit: You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God.
  - How you see Jesus affects how you relate to Him – Holy Spirit's work is to reveal Him. (Jn.16:14).

### 2. The Three-Fold Revelation of Jesus

- Rev.1:1 "The revelation of Jesus Christ which God gave him to show His servants ..."
- Main Theme of the Book of Revelation is the person, power and plan of Jesus Christ. Jesus is returning to take leadership of the earth in partnership with His people.
- Rev.1:7 "Behold He is coming with the clouds and every eye shall see Him".
- Rev.5:10 "You have made us Kings and Priests to our God and we shall reign on earth".
  - Rev.1:3 - There are 24 distinct aspects of His Kingly Majesty and Glory.

#### (a) Jesus is a Passionate Bridegroom

- Key Questions we want to ask?
  - (i) Who is Jesus? (ii) What does He do? (iii) How will I respond?
    - Revelation uncovers Jesus to be: Bridegroom; King; and Judge.
    - Rev.19:6-9 "...the marriage of the lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready".
- Jesus is the passionate bridegroom!  
He is passionate in His love for people.  
He pursues us to reach out in relationship and intimacy.  
He proposes and initiates a covenant relationship with us.  
He rescues us from sin, iniquity and bondage.
- How will you respond to Jesus the Passionate Bridegroom?

#### (b) Jesus is the Sovereign King

- Rev.19:11-16 "He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written, King of Kings and Lord of Lords".
- Jesus has sovereign power and authority to rule.
- Jesus will intervene and overthrow unrighteous government.
- Jesus is a King – He rules a Kingdom not a Democracy.
- No one will be able to resist His power and authority.
- He will establish righteous government in the earth.
- How will you respond to Jesus the Sovereign King?

#### (c) Jesus is a Righteous Judge

- Rev.19:11-15 "...in righteousness He judges and makes war".
- Jesus is a righteous judge who calls all men to account.
- He will confront and overpower every hindrance to love and justice.
- He sees to the root of issues and will both punish and reward people.
- How will you respond to Jesus the righteous judge?

#### (d) These three Aspects of Jesus are Revealed throughout the Bible

e.g. David wrote on it (Ps 2:8-12)  
John Baptist preached on it (Jn.3:29-31; Mt.3:1-12)  
Jesus taught on it Mt.25:1-13 - The Bridegroom and Virgins  
Mt.25:14-23 - The King  
Mt.25:31-46 - The Judge

### 3. We need Revelation of All Three Aspects of Jesus' Nature

#### (a) Partial knowledge leads to deception

- People tend to focus on the aspect they like.
- This distorts your view of who Jesus is – really is.
- This misleads and misrepresents.

#### (b) Balance is needed



- Jesus as Bridegroom without King or Judge = sentimentality, (Rom.6:1), Compromise.
- Jesus as King without Bridegroom or Judge = Authoritarian, hard, (Mt.25:24).
- Jesus as Judge without Bridegroom or King = Harsh, judgemental, (another spirit Lk. 9:54).

(c) Application

Who is Jesus to You?

Which of the three aspects of Jesus most strongly impacted you?

How will you respond to Jesus?

## Who is Jesus (2 of 4) The Passionate Bridegroom

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*The gospel story revealed in the context of a Jewish wedding.*



I want you to open your Bible with me in Revelations, Chapter 19. We just started a series last week called Who is Jesus? This is a good question: Who is Jesus, because a lot of people have got a lot of ideas. Jesus was talking with Peter, and He said to Peter: who do people say I am? They all come up with different ideas, and today it's the same. People come up with different ideas about who Jesus is, and if you don't really know who He is, how can you connect and relate with Him? How can you enjoy the relationship if you don't really know who He is, and out of who he is, how to connect with Him?

So the Bible talks about the riches of His glory. In other words, there's a great dimension. He's unsearchable. You could spend all your life trying to get to know Him but there's still more, so we've got to find some way that we can see what He is like. Jesus said to Peter: well who do you say I am? You will live out of who you say Jesus is, that's the reality. You will live out of the revelation you have of Jesus, so if your revelation is very light and superficial, your Christian life will be fairly superficial as

well, so we want to grow in the knowledge of Jesus. Our relationship, or our walk with God, is about a relationship with the person, Jesus Christ. It's not about all the things we do. They are the fruit, and the flow of the connection to a person, and so we look in the Book of Revelation, and we are reading now in Revelations, Chapter 19 and in Verse 7.

This is yet to come, and John's got this vision. He hears the voice of a great multitude, and this is what they're all saying. Oh! A great multitude, I love that. Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb - that's Jesus Christ - has come, and His wife or His bride - that's the church - has made herself ready. And to her it was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints. And he said: Blessed are those called to the marriage supper of the Lamb! Then when you go on, you find in this passage, in Revelations 19, there are three pictures given of Jesus Christ. This one presents Him as a bridegroom, a passionate bridegroom. The next one presents Him as a sovereign king, coming to conquer and subdue the earth, then the third one presents Him as a judge, calling every man and woman and child to account for their actions.

Now which is the right picture? The answer is they're all part of the picture, and there are many other pictures in the Bible, for example in Psalm 23 there's a picture of Jesus being a shepherd. So there are many facets to Him, so we're looking now in the Book of Revelation, where three distinct aspects of Him will be revealed. The Book of Revelation is about the revealing of Jesus Christ in the end times, and so these three aspects are quite important. So we're going to look today at Jesus, the passionate bridegroom, the passionate bridegroom, and there are in the New Testament about 23 different references to this, so it's not just something that appears in Revelation. There's about 23 distinct references to Jesus being a bridegroom. Now for a guy that's not so easy to handle. You know, Jesus the bridegroom, and the bride, give me a break! That's not - give me the king stuff next, I'll come along next week and get the king stuff. That's my thing there. So for men this is not such an easy thing to do, but it'll help you if you understand

this, that each of these represent - it's just a picture. It's a way of representing someone, and an aspect of what He's like, see?

So each of these is a picture. It's a representation to help you understand invisible things, which you can't understand just easily see naturally, so if I try to relate to Jesus, what am I going to think of? Am I going to think of sort of, someone tall, blue eyes, long hair, long robes? What am I going to think of Him? I need to know what He's like, and so the word of God reveals Him, and the different aspects of Him. The Bible tells us concerning this particular Book, you are blessed if you read it and do what it says, so for us to understand Jesus the bridegroom, and to understand how to respond to Him, what that means to us if He's a bridegroom, and how should I respond? How should I respond? How should I live out my life, in the light of that revelation - that's what we'll look at. So to do that, you've got to understand a little bit about the Jewish wedding, because if you and I think of a bridegroom and a wedding, we think immediately from our western mind set. So immediately you think of a church setting, there's three guys up here in black suits, the bride comes down, and we do some things and so on, so that's what we think of.

So if we're going to understand Jesus the bridegroom, we do have to understand a little bit about how the wedding ceremony took place, in the Jewish context. You need to know what it was like when Jesus - when the Book was written, the people understood exactly what He was talking about, because He was writing to their culture. He was writing to their culture, so for example if we said that the local tribe had called a hui, for many people they wouldn't have a clue what that's about, but for the local tribe they'd say we know exactly what that's all about. Do you understand? So you have to have a bit of culture to pick it, so let's just go through it.

The Jewish wedding consists of two parts, two primary parts and there's a bit in between. We're in the bit in between. The primary parts are what's called the betrothal, and then the actual wedding itself, the betrothal, and then the wedding. I want you to look with me, and you'll find this referred to in Matthew, Chapter 1. We're going to look first of all just quickly at the main aspects of a Jewish wedding in Jesus' day, and then we're going to see how Jesus - what He is to us, and how to respond, because the Bible's very clear on what the bride had to do.

There was a part the bride plays. There's a part we play. Okay, let's go - in Matthew, Chapter 1, Verse 18. Now the birth of Jesus Christ was like this: After His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph - the nearest thing we could say is the word 'engaged', but if I use the word engaged, you'll have a different concepts, so we use the word 'betrothed' - before they came together, she was found with child by the Holy Ghost. Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not wanting to make a public example of her, was thinking or pondering about divorcing her. So notice the word divorce is connected to someone who's engaged, so their concept of betrothal is different to ours - so here's how a Hebrew wedding went. There's a family, you can imagine a family, and they've got the father, and got a young daughter. The father's concerned that the young daughter get married, and the common practice there, number one, was the arrangement which is called in Hebrew language Shiddukhin.

Now what happened was, it took place one of three ways; either the father of the groom came and negotiated with the father of the bride, which happened to Samson. Samson's father negotiated - or he sent someone. He sent an agent on his behalf to the family, and negotiated with the father, but there's always the negotiation first of all. So of course in the story of Abraham, you remember how Abraham sent Eliezer to negotiate for a bride, so these pictures are scattered through the Bible - or the son himself would come, and he would do the negotiation. So the first part was the arrangement, or the initiating the prospect of a marriage, and so the young man would have to bring with him a lot of money, and he would also bring with him a wedding contract, and he would bring with him some wine. He would go - and you could imagine this day when a man turns up at the house, and it's obvious from how he's come that he is looking to set up a wedding. You can imagine the excitement in the house.

Now at this point the girl goes out, and the men negotiate, so there's a negotiation takes place, and what is determined in that negotiation is the next thing, the bridal price. What is this? What do I need to pay for the bride? How much do I need to pay, because the family is losing their daughter. They're losing, or there's a loss in the family, and there's a gain in the other family, so there was always a bridal price paid. They did a negotiation until they agreed upon the price that would be paid, and of course the higher the value of the bride, the higher the price that was paid, so if you got 10 oxen that's very, very - ooh, that's impressive! So the bigger the price, the more value is placed. So there's a negotiation takes place to purchase the bride, and once the price has been paid, once the money is all agreed and been paid, then the woman is then no longer going to be part of the family. She is now freed to become part of the new family, so this is a big deal, the bridal price.

The third thing that happens is the wedding contract, the wedding contract. It's called ketubah, ketubah, the wedding contract. What would happen is the girl would then be, after the men have had the arrangement, the woman would be brought in, and then he would propose to her. This was the opportunity for him to present his desire, and she had the

right of refusal. She could refuse. Remember in the day when Alianza came to Rebecca, they did all negotiations with the father, and there was all the gifts of gold and silver and jewels given. Then she had to give her consent, so the bride must give consent. The bride must give consent. Now once the bride's given consent, then they draw up the wedding contract. The wedding contract, the ketubah was very, very important.

We have a little piece of paper which we sign, you know, you sign the marriage register, and you sign a little bit of paper, but this is a different bit of paper. It's not like here. This is a different bit of paper. In this piece of paper, it outlines a number of things. One of the things it outlines, is the bridal price. It makes it very clear what's going to be paid. The second thing it outlines is the details of the wedding, how big the wedding is going to be, what's going to happen in the wedding, and then the third thing it outlines, is the provision that the groom promises and undertakes to make how he will provide for the bride. Now you can imagine the excitement. Here's someone come into the house, talked with dad, there's a price been sorted out by the men, and now she's got the opportunity to enter into this marriage contract.

Now if she agrees, then they sign the marriage contract, and they drink wine together, and now they're betrothed. They're betrothed. That word betrothal there is as good as married, they're as good as married. In fact the only way you could break a betrothal was by divorce, so legally the betrothal actually meant they're now husband and wife. Now notice what it said in Matthew 1, Verse 18. It says now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, so they're betrothed. Now the next thing that would happen would be that the groom would have a bridal gift. He'd have a gift, it's called matan - and he would gift up - they drank the wine together, and they'd written and signed the documents. He would give a gift to the bride, and the gift to the bride, sometimes it could be a few coins. Often she would make the few coins into a band and put them around her head, hence the story or the parable of the Woman Who Lost the Coin. It possibly was the wedding gift, so that's why she really, really went everywhere looking through that house trying to find that coin.

So she had that, and now she's ready to be married. She's got the wedding gift. She's got the wedding gift, they've worked out the price, worked out the contract, got all the details about everything, all the promises are going to be made, and now they're as good as married. They're betrothed. Then the husband would say, the bridegroom would say: that I'm going now to prepare a place for us to live together as husband and wife. It was understood that's what he would do, and so there would be a period of separation which could be a year or two years. Quite interesting, in Singapore, housing issue is so major for young couples, that they go and have a service in a registry office so they're legally married, and then they wait a year to two years until they can get accommodation. Then they have the official wedding. It's quite interesting to see that they do that - think whoa, that's not easy, two years, my! So anyway but there it is.

Now the bride of course, and the groom, there was some things happened during the betrothal period, and during the betrothal period, which is an important period, it was the period of preparation, period of preparation. So the betrothal period is not just hanging around waiting, it's a period of intense preparation. The first thing that we find is that the groom, he went to his father's house, because he would take his bride to the father's house, so he had to prepare for her, and the normal thing they did was to add an extension onto the father's house. So he would build onto the house that existed and make new rooms for her. The new rooms would have within it the bridal chamber, and where they would live as a couple, so they would be part of the father's house. While he was away doing that and making that preparation, then the bride's responsibility was to get herself ready, so she had one to two years. Now she knew approximately when he's coming, but she didn't know the exact details, so here's the thing.

She never knew as the time went by, which was the night he's going to come.

Now you can imagine - you know when Christmas is coming, and the frenzy that gets just before Christmas. Got the lights, I've got everything up, presents under the tree, that anticipation of it all coming is all part of it all. The anticipation of Christmas coming is immense! The kids get so excited they can hardly sleep the night of it. Now of course with this, you never knew when he was coming. You knew approximately when he was coming, didn't know exactly when he was coming, and so therefore that required that she be always ready. So she had this intense process, where now she's having to deal with all the spots, all the wrinkles. She's got to deal with her skin, and get her skin all beautiful, so now is when you get Botox, and now is [laughter] when you get to the beauty place. That's when you get yourself all done up, get rid of every wrinkle, every spot, everything that says - you wake up and there's a little bit of pimple, oh no! He might come tonight, so there'd be a frenzy to get everything right.

So it was incredibly important that first of all, that her body was presented well, and then also she focussed on getting the wedding garments, so she would work to get beautiful wedding garments ready, and she would either use the family jewels, or borrow jewellery from neighbours and friends, so that when the time came, she could instantly put on

the wedding garment. She could put on the jewels, and she could go forth to meet her husband, so that's the period. Now during that period, it was expected the bride would be faithful. In other words, they're as good as married. There's no other lovers, there's no other boyfriends. All boyfriends are gone, that's the end of all boyfriends. This is one lover, one person I'm committed to, and he is coming, and we've got a great wedding day, and a life together, so that's the betrothal.

Now you can understand the problem that Joseph had here, when he's got this season of betrothal, he hasn't got to the wedding, and his wife's pregnant, and he hasn't had a part in that. That is a problem. [Laughter] That is a big problem - small town, big problem. [Laughter] Small town. Small town mentality, the atmosphere's full of judgement, and comparisons, and everyone looks at everyone else. Everyone's watching everyone else's business, minding everyone's business, so for Mary to get pregnant during the time of betrothal, either Joseph did it, or she's been unfaithful, so he's thinking whoa, what am I going to do? Now it says that he's a just man, and he's thinking: I wonder if I could have a quiet divorce. I don't want to shame her publicly, so he had a good heart to her. Imagine how he felt. He loves her, paid the price, done all the negotiations, got the thing he's looking forward to the wedding and she's pregnant? That's not easy for a man to find his wife's pregnant before they're married - and he wasn't involved. [Laughter] Just think about the internal struggle he had over that.

Being a just man, he did not react with retaliation. He decided what he would do would be to try to quietly divorce her, because of her unfaithfulness apparently, it was as good as over. However the angel revealed to him, this is actually a divine intervention, don't do that thing. Keep her, and it says - notice this - it said: he did not know her, until after they were married. In other words during that betrothal, no sexual intimacy, faithfulness, and he kept her until after she'd had Jesus. So you see it there in the Bible. Now of course the next phase of course is the actual wedding ceremony itself, which is called nissuin (marriage), which means to carry away. Now we get this thing of carrying the bride across the threshold. That's where it comes from, out of the Bible. It all comes out of the Bible, but mostly it's so changed these days we don't understand it - so you see then the return of the groom.

So the bride is aware of approximately when it might happen, but not exactly when it will happen, and so the time is determined by the father. The father decides when the son's got everything all ready, and when he's got everything ready he says: okay, time for the wedding, and they would have the whole house all prepared for the wedding. The guests were all ready to come, guests were all invited, and now they're ready to have the wedding, so the son would go out, and he would have friends with him. They would have the shofar (trumpets), they would have lights, they would have a noise, they would shout, there would be a tremendous shout, the shofar (the trumpets), the sound and they would make a great din outside. Now you can imagine if you are waiting, and you don't know which night this is going to be - and suddenly you hear the shouting!

Now of course they're not coming in a car, so they've got to quickly get ready - if you're awake! [Laughter] I can imagine she's not going to bed early any night. Just put yourself in the picture, don't want to miss this. Not going to miss out on this - immediately she hears a - oh, and all the attendants run around, quickly and suddenly getting into her garments, she's already got everything. All the make up's all ready, she's all ready, she's into the garments, and they're ready to go out and meet the groom. They meet the groom, and they go to the father's house, where they have the final part of entering the bridal chamber, which is called chuppah. There there's the consummation of their wedding, and then the celebration or party with all the guests for seven days. Isn't that fantastic? Isn't that great, seven days, isn't that amazing?

Now how does this relate to us? Well the first thing we see is that the Bible tells us Jesus presented Himself in many different ways as the groom. I want to just show you several verses just related to that. The first thing is, He pursues us, because He loves us. He loves you passionately. The deepest need in the heart of every person is to be loved unconditionally, and God loves you. John 3:16, God so loved you, He sent His Son into the world. What did He send His Son into the world for? Why did He send Him? That He might enter into a marriage covenant with us, and to do that He had to do some things. Number one, He had to negotiate what the price would be, and here's what the price would be: His own life. 1 Corinthians 6:20, you are bought with a price; 1 Peter 1:18, you're not purchased with silver and gold or things like that which perish, but with incorruptible things, the precious blood of Jesus Christ. So when Jesus entered the world He knew He would pay the ultimate price. Greater love has no man than he lays down his life.

So out of this immense love, Jesus enters the world to pursue you, and not just you; to pursue every person in our city. He came to pursue us. Why? He loves us. He wants a relationship. He wants to bless us. He has many things planned, and your destiny can only be fulfilled if there is that connection. How wonderful it is, isn't this amazing? So He pays the price, and we see at the cross Jesus paid the price. He said: it is finished, which is the exact words that the groom would say to the bride when they're doing the arrangements for the betrothal. After it's all signed up, it's

finished. The price has been paid, contract's been signed, it's as good as done. The next thing we find is this; He invites us into covenant with Himself. Look at this in Matthew, Chapter 26, Verse 27: Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying drink all of this, for this is the blood of the new covenant, or the new marriage, which is shed for many for the remissions of sins. And I say to you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now, until the day I drink it with you in My Father's kingdom.

Now you've got to realise that they are having a supper together. Now the order of this is a little different. What they understood completely is He is now offering a covenant. Now interesting in the Old Testament, the old covenant also worked out exactly like this thing of a marriage arrangement. You find Moses went to Israel, and invited Israel to come into the wilderness unto the Lord, into marriage relationships. Then they paid the price, the blood was shed by the lambs in order to set them free. Then they went out and they get the Holy Spirit, the glory, the provision, everything came, and then they came to Mt Mount Sinai, and that was the day they should have come into their covenant relationship with God. That's the day when what was given? The law was given. What's that? The katubah. That is the marriage covenant - if you will be this, if you will do this, I will be your God, you'll be My people.

So in the Old Testament, the disciples understood completely what He's doing. He's now presenting Himself as the bridegroom, saying I have a new covenant with you. I want you to enter in, and as you eat and drink with Me, you are entering covenant. That's why we do communion. It's to remember we have entered covenant. Covenant is not convenience. Covenant means I am loyal, I am faithful, I am committed. This is the one I've given my life to, to live for. This is the one who gave His life for me.

It is a marriage thing, so when we have a communion service, you may kind of get distracted by the fact you've got this little wee thing here, a cup and a little wee bit of bread and whatever. It looks so small, but actually, what it's to do is to call to mind, we're covenanted with God Almighty! Isn't that something else! Now what about the gift? Well how about that, I'm glad you asked about the gift, because He promised. This is what He promised. Now notice this, it tells us in Ephesians 1, Verse 18, it says: He has given to us, the earnest of the spirit, which is the down payment of our full inheritance. So He's given us the gift of the Holy Spirit. Now this is the important one, is to understand the gift He's given you. In Acts, Chapter 1, Verse 8, you shall receive power from on high, and shall be witnesses unto Me - so this is, you have to understand, the gift is really significant. The gift is the reminder that you are in marriage covenant with the Lord, and the gift will empower you to prepare for His coming.

This gift God has given us, is the most precious gift of all. It's the gift of the Holy Spirit, the indwelling Holy Spirit, that leads, guides, convinces of sin, that helps us know we belong to Him. You know that what the witness of the spirit is, that we belong to another. We're already committed. Want to look at my wedding ring? I belong to another. I belong to another. That's why you wear a wedding ring. It's like you belong to someone. People go out on the dating scene, they look around and see the wedding ring - oops, belongs to another. So you are given the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit in you is visible to the spirit world. Demons recognise you are a believer. They understand you are joined to the Lord. They understand you are in covenant with the Lord, you belong to the living God. You have received the mighty Holy Ghost, and gift of God!

You'll see something else that He does in a moment, which is the bit we really want to get to - and so this is so exciting. I got so excited about all of this, I think it's wonderful. He gives us the gift of the Holy Spirit. Now John, Chapter 14, you know this familiar verse. Of course it doesn't mean a lot unless you understand the context of the wedding - Verse 2. Pick it up at Verse 1 - Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions, or dwelling places. If it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you, and if I go to prepare a place for you, chuppah, the bridal chamber for you, I will come again, and receive you to Myself; that where I am - where is He? In intimacy with the Father - there you will be also, in that same place of intimacy with God. Where I go, you know the way that I go.

So you see here, this is the language of a groom, because the groom would say, as they finished up the betrothal: now I'm going to my father's house, to prepare a place for you, and I will return. So when Jesus said this, we've got to remember the context of this is, Jesus is having His last meal with His disciples, so everything He says has got more significance than almost any other place. The significance of this is He's saying: I'm about to leave you. They didn't understand that. I'm about to pay the price to purchase you - they didn't understand that. I will rise again from the dead, and I will ascend into heaven, and I will give you a wedding gift before I go. I will return, and I'm going to prepare a place for you, so all of this is the language of the marriage. In their culture, their mind would be racing, that just as God of the Old Testament covenanted with the people of Israel, now Jesus - God is revealing Himself in Jesus, saying I have a covenant not of law, but of love. I'm about to lay My life down for you all, and then to take of the spirit in Me and put that spirit in you. You and I will be one. We will be like husband and wife. Isn't that fantastic?

This is the language of it, so when it says: He's coming as the groom, this is all that it implies there, it's in these things here. He promises to return, and we saw that in Revelations. Now Jesus has made it absolutely clear, He has gone to be with the Father, to prepare for us, so He's already in the process of preparing, and He's preparing places of intimacy, dwelling places of relationship with God, that all of us are called into. Now the key to it happening is the Holy Spirit. The key to all of this is the Holy Spirit, because the bride is called to prepare herself, so just as the husband went to prepare the place that they would consummate their marriage, and get the feast all ready, the bride had to prepare herself. Now I'm going to give you four scriptures about the bride preparing, and each one of the scriptures contains a truth about what preparation looks like for you. The thread that flows through all of it is, it has to do with the work of the Holy Spirit in your life. You can't prepare yourself without the work of the Holy Spirit. We need the Holy Spirit to help us. I'll show you how to help us in just a moment, so let's have a quick look at it. I won't take long. Let's have a look.

So how can I respond to what Christ has offered? The first two things are simple, and we'll talk about the third one in a bit more detail. The first is simple: receive Christ. Receive Him! He died on the cross for you! Why live without God? Why live a life without destiny and purpose? Receive Him, and receive Him today! The second thing is, if you're not baptised in the Holy Ghost, and haven't received the power of the spirit to live out a great life, then receive the Holy Ghost today! Get filled with the spirit, and the gift of tongues! Oh, a sign to who? Unbelievers. What of? That I am in covenant with God. How wonderful. Then the last part is this, is that we're called to prepare ourselves. Now let's just quickly look at the scriptures, very quickly. I'll just highlight them. You can search them out, and go through them yourself.

Here's number one. Number one is found in 2 Corinthians 11, Verse 2. Paul says: I have espoused you to one spouse. There it is, Verse 2. I am jealous with a godly jealousy. I have betrothed you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ. But I'm afraid that as the serpent deceived Eve by his cunningness, your minds might be corrupted from the simplicity, or pure simple devotion to Jesus Christ. Number one, the work of the spirit is simply this: to help you grow in your love relationship and devotion to Jesus Christ. This is number one. I love Him! That's why we have worship. I love Him! And this is why you get into the word. I love Him, and I want to hear from Him, so the first thing is, loyalty to Jesus Christ. Now what that really means is, He's number one in your life. You can't have a husband and a boyfriend. [Laughter] It's true. It doesn't work anywhere in life, because when the husband finds out, he'll be very jealous.

So Paul's saying: I'm really jealous, because I see how easy it is, having fallen in love with Christ and received Him and responding to Him, to then get your life filled up with other stuff. How much other stuff is filling your life? How many other things have got first call on your time, your life, your heart, your attention, your affections, your thoughts, your worries? Where is your life going? What place does Jesus Christ have in your life, number one? Number two is found in the Book of Esther, in Esther, Chapter 2, and Verse 15. There's a whole thing of its own. I got so much studying all of this, but I can only do one thing on it, so here it is, Esther. Now look at this. Now remember Esther had the opportunity to become a bride to a king. The picture is the bride to the king, and so the king sends out and says we're going to buy lots of pretty girls, and what we want to do is get all the pretty girls to come, and they'll all dress themselves up, and get themselves looking good.

They'll come in and the king will try them out, and if he likes them they're the queen, and if he doesn't like them they're gone. They're just one of the concubines, another one out there. Now I know that's pretty primitive, but that's what life was like in those days, and that's what actually was happening to her. Now here's the key thing about Esther. Look at this. Everyone else of course did what they thought was right in their own eyes. Every one of them dressed up the way they thought they'd look pretty. Every one of them did their make up the way they thought would be right, but look what it says about her. It says Esther, Verse 15, when the turn came for Esther, the daughter of Abihail the uncle of Moredecai, who had taken her as a daughter, to go in to the king - look at this - she requested nothing but what Hegai the king's eunuch, the custodian of the women, advised. And she obtained favour in the sight of all who saw her.

Now who is Hegai? The custodian of the women. The custodian of the women, his role was to get the women ready to be the wife to the king. Whose role is that? The Holy Spirit. Notice it said everyone else just did what they thought was right; this is what she did. She required nothing except what the Holy Spirit directed her, so this speaks of a surrendering to the leadership of the Holy Spirit daily in our lives. Listening to the voice of God, listening to the Holy Spirit, letting Him show you what God likes, what God doesn't like. Have you ever stopped to ask Him, what is it You like? What is it You don't like? Is there anything in my life You don't like? And then listen until you hear the reply. When you start to ask those questions, you hear all kinds of things, very specific things: I don't like this. I don't like that, it grieves Me. So the Bible says we can grieve the Holy Spirit. We can upset the one who knows Jesus, the holy

spirit doesn't speak of Himself. He just finds what the Father wants, and He reveals what the Father wants. The Bible tells us that in the Book of John.

Not only that, it tells us in the Book of John that the Holy Spirit will take the things of Jesus and make them known to us, so now what Jesus likes, the Holy Spirit can put on your heart. So don't follow tradition, don't follow your old ways, don't follow what you think is best. Start to listen to the Holy Spirit, because those who are led by the Holy Spirit are the sons of God, or they will be the bride prepared for the husband. The moment that she went in she was immediately favoured, because she let the Holy Spirit prepare her, so yield to the Holy Spirit.

Here's the last two now. Matthew 25, there's one found there. Look at this, Matthew 25 Verse 10, and it's about Jesus teaching about the end times. He says look, the kingdom of heaven is like a wedding, and guess what's happening in the wedding? The virgins are chosen, five wise, five foolish, and the five foolish of course didn't have any oil. Then the midnight cry came, Verse 6, and the bridegroom is coming, go to meet him, and all the virgins rose and trimmed their lamps. The foolish said to the wise, Verse 8: give us some of your oil, our lamps are going out. They said no, lest there's not enough, you go and buy for yourselves.

While they went to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready, went in with him to the wedding, and the door was shut. Oh, we won't go into all of that. I have taught on that before, but here's what this says. You notice it says: those who were ready? Those who were ready had paid a price to have oil for their lamp. Now you are the lamp, you are the light of the world, but what ignites you? Huh! Oil, Holy Ghost! Oil is always a type of the Holy Ghost. You and I need to be full of the Spirit of God! Excited by the Holy Ghost! Praying in tongues, letting the Spirit of God energise you day by day. He said: there's a price, it just doesn't happen. You get up, and you pray. You set discipline in your life and pray, begin to arise and ask God to empower you to pray, and you pray. You spend time in the word of God, and as you spend time in the word of God - the word of God by the way, it says it's like a mirror, that when you look into it, oh, you see what you're really like. The Holy Spirit points out where you need to change - and so notice this. Some were ready, some were not, so while all were invited, some prepare, and some do not.

Let me ask you, what is happening in your life? Are you preparing your life? Are you in connection, communing with the Holy Spirit? Are you letting Him talk to you about your life? Are you letting Him put the finger on things which don't make Him happy at all, but rather grieve Him, things like anger and bitterness and resentment and jealousy, pettiness and small mindedness, exclusivism and all that kind of stuff, pride? All those things grieve Him. Are you letting the Holy Spirit in - are you building a prayer life? What a great - why don't we this year make a decision, we will prepare ourselves, for the new things that God has? And here's the last one, I'll finish with that, and go back to where we started in Revelations 19 and Verse 7: And His wife has made herself ready. How about that? She made herself ready, so don't leave it all up to God. There's something you have to do. It requires a choice.

I've had God speaking to me about the use of my time, about using time carefully, because time can be spent, but not regained. You can get money again, but you can't get time. For many time is running out, so how are you using your time? What is wasting your time? You'd be surprised if you watch the news every day, how many hours a week that will amount to. You'll be surprised if you spend a lot of time watching this and that, or doing this and that on games, how your life disappears, and you cannot get it again. You cannot get it again - so what are you doing with your time? Here it is. His wife has made herself ready and - Verse 8 - she was arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints. I see here's the last thing that makes us ready. It's not just about our prayer life, and our intimacy with God. It's not just about spending time in the word. It's about our life becoming beautiful with acts of compassion and kindness.

Notice it said: she was arrayed in fine linen, which is the righteous acts. The words righteous acts means things you do out of your relationship with God, and in the Old Testament the word righteous was the word tzedakah, meaning to have compassion on people, to be generous to people. So here it is. You can see it all there. We see the different aspects of preparation, making yourself ready: your relationship with the Holy Spirit, your response and yielding to the Holy Spirit, you're building a life of prayer, a life where the Spirit of God moves easily and quickly through you, and you let it overflow to the reaching of people in our community, the people around you; acts of kindness, acts of mercy, acts of evangelism, acts that reach people, and let them know there's God that loves them. And to her it was granted she would be arrayed in fine linen, which is the righteous acts of all of the saints.

So we have some choices to make today. Why don't we just close our eyes just quickly now, and I want to just ask you to consider how you will respond to Jesus Christ. How will you respond? How will you respond to Him being the groom? How will you respond? Number one, if you don't know Jesus Christ, the first response you could make would be to receive Him as your saviour. Jesus said to everyone who received Him, made Him welcome in their life, He gave power to be a child of God. If you're here today and never made the decision to personally commit your life to

Christ, to put your trust in Him - church can't save you. Works can't save you. The only thing that can give a relationship with God is faith in Christ. Is there any person here today at that place of decision, please raise your hand and let me know I want to receive Christ today. I want to receive Jesus.

Okay, the second decision for you to make, are you filled with the Holy Spirit yet, do you have the Holy Spirit baptism, speak in a new language, starting to flow with the Holy Spirit, because He's the one who prepares you. He's the one you'll be listening to. When did you last speak in tongues? Have you got that gift? Why not open your heart today and receive it? Is there anyone here just at that place of decision to receive the Holy Ghost?

Here's the last decision I want you to consider. I wonder today what you are doing this year to make yourself ready, to prepare yourself? How is your devotion to Jesus Christ? Are there things in your heart, other lovers, other friends, things that have taken away that simplicity of just enjoying walking with Him? What are they? How about your prayer life, your time in the word and prayer, building a daily time and also listening and being empowered and filled by the Spirit of God day by day? What's happening there? What about the area of just yielding and surrendering to the Holy Spirit, letting Him talk into your life. When did you last hear Him speak? You need to make decisions about reordering your life, and what are you doing to extend the gospel, to build the house of God, and extend the kingdom? If there's nothing you're doing, then that would be a great place to make yourself ready this year.

This is what we'll do now, just as you're thinking about what it is you need to respond to, we're just going to stand in a moment, just each who person put their hand up to receive Jesus I'd like you to make your way to the front, stand in a row in front of me. I want to lead you in a prayer to receive Jesus. It'll take about a minute, two minutes and then we'll pray for you. Everyone is going to appreciate and value you made this decision. It's a great decision. So ready church, let's all stand together, one, two, three, stand, come on, let's give them a clap as people who put their hand up come.

## Summary Notes

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### 1. Introduction

- The key question Jesus asked Peter: Who do you say that I am? (Mt.16:15-16)
- The main theme of the Book of Revelation is the revealing of Jesus Christ. (Rev.1:1)
- Rev.19:7-9 "...the marriage of the Lamb has come and His wife has made herself ready".
- Rev.19 Reveals Jesus as:
  - (i) A Passionate Bridegroom – coming to fulfil His Wedding promises
  - (ii) A sovereign King – coming to conquer His enemies and rule
  - (iii) A Righteous Judge – coming to call all men to account
- Each picture reveals a different aspect of who Jesus is and how He relates to us.
- N.T. has 23 different references to the Bridegroom aspect of Jesus.

### 2. The Jewish Wedding – Key Elements

- The Jewish wedding consisted of two distinct parts: Betrothal and the Wedding.

#### (a) The Betrothal (Kiddushin) (Mt.1:18-19 Joseph and Mary)

##### (i) The Arrangement (Shiddukhin)

- Either the father of the groom arranged the marriage (Samson), or the father sends an agent in his place (Abraham), or the young man comes by himself to the girl's father to arrange the marriage.
- The young man brought money, a wedding contract and a flask of wine.

##### (ii) The Bridal Price (mohair)

- The two men discussed and agreed upon the price that would be paid to purchase the bride. It changed her status, freeing her from her father's house.

##### (iii) The Wedding Contract (Ketubah)

- The groom then proposed to the bride and if she consented the marriage contract (Ketubah) was written up and signed.
- This binding document called a "Ketubah" was kept in the bride's possession until the consummation of the marriage.
- The wedding contract laid out all the groom's promises of provision for his bride and details about the wedding arrangements.

##### (iv) The Bridal Gift (Matan)

- Once the proposal was agreed, the price paid, and the wedding contract signed they drank wine together. In the drinking of the wine the bride commits to the groom – they are now betrothed and considered married.
- The groom gives a bridal gift to his bride, a reminder to his bride of his love for her and his coming to receive her as his wife.

##### (v) The Betrothal Period (Kiddinshim – set apart, holy)

- After the betrothal the bride was considered to be married although still living separate from her bridegroom. It would take a divorce to break the betrothal.



- The Groom – went to his father’s house to prepare a bridal chamber and home for the bride to live in – by extending the Father’s house.
- The Bride makes preparation during the period of separation from the groom.
- She prepares herself and her wedding garments
- She had to be ready and watchful as her groom would come at night
- She wears a veil to indicate she belongs only to the groom.

(b) The Wedding Ceremony (Nissuin = to carry)

(i) The Return of the Groom

- At a time determined by his father the Bridegroom returns for his bride.
- Since the exact timing was a surprise the bride had to be ready.
- The groomsmen run ahead of the groom to sound the Shafar and shout.

(ii) The Bridal Chamber (Chuppah)

- The shout warned the bride to go out with her bridesmaids to meet the groom and return with him to his father’s house.
- On their wedding day the Bride and Groom are called King and Queen.
- The Groom and the bride entered the bridal chamber and consummated the marriage once the ceremony is complete.
- Then the guests celebrate together for seven days.

3. Jesus Our Bridegroom

- He pursues us with passionate love and longing for us (1 Jn.4:19)
- He has paid the full bridal price – His life (1 Cor.6:20)
- He invites us into covenant relationship with Him (Mt 26:27)
- He gives us His Word – the Bible outlining the covenant.
- He gives us the gift of the Holy Spirit (Eph.1:13-14)
- He promises a place in his father’s house (Jn.14:1-3)
- He promises to return and complete the marriage (Rev.19:7)

4. Our Response to Jesus

(a) Receive Christ and His Offer of Covenant Relationship

Rev.3:20 “Behold I stand at the door and knock – if any man hears my voice and open the door I will come unto him. I dine with him and he with me.”

(b) Receive the Holy Spirit

Acts 1:8 “You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you and be witnesses to unto me”.

(c) Prepare Ourselves for Jesus Return

- (i) 2 Cor.11:2 Personal devotion and loyalty to Jesus.
  - (ii) Esther 2:15 Yielding to the Holy Spirit to shape our attitudes and behaviour
  - (iii) Mt.25:10 Prayer/Word – pursuant of God’s presence and power.
  - (iv) Rev.19:7 Acts of compassion/generosity that spread the Gospel
- Righteousness = Acts of righteousness.  
O.T. Righteousness = Tsedagah = Acts of compassion.

How will You respond to Jesus Christ?

## Who is Jesus (3 of 4) Sovereign King

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*Rev 19:11-16 Symbolism brought to life.  
How should we respond to a mighty conquering king?*

I want you to open your Bible with me, go into Revelations Chapter 19, and I want to carry on with: Who is Jesus? That's what we're looking at, Who is Jesus? We're looking in the Book of Revelation. Of course the Bible abounds in insights to who Jesus is. In John 5, Jesus said to the Pharisees, He



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