



Unto Full Stature Ministries



<https://ufsministries.com/podcast/>

Series 2. Understanding the Church

Episode 11. The Bride of Christ

Revelation 19.6-9 is a glance into the future for the Church. There is no bride “of” Christ in the earth today. But, there is a bride to be “for” Christ in the earth, one being prepared, a virgin now known as the Church. Many things must take place before this great and glorious event called “*the marriage supper of the Lamb*” because this event is an object of eternity; and nothing of the earth enters into eternity without a needful time of redemption, transformation, spiritual refinement, testing, and judgment; and a seeing that *all is good, very good*; for what is not will be separated at the last judgment, that of the Great White Throne judgment, as it is written in Revelation 20.13-15.

Rev. 19.6-9 “*6And I heard, as it were, the voice of a great multitude, as the sound of many waters and as the sound of mighty thunderings, saying, “Alleluia! For the Lord God Omnipotent reigns! 7Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready.” 8And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.*

9Then he said to me, “Write: ‘Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!’ ” And he said to me, “These are the true sayings of God.”

This passage in the Book of Revelation is a glance into the future. There is no bride “of” Christ in the earth today. But, there is a bride to be “for” Christ in the earth, one being prepared, a virgin now known as the Church. Many things must take place before this great and glorious event called “*the marriage supper of the Lamb*” because this event is an object of eternity; and nothing of the earth enters into eternity without a needful time of redemption, transformation, spiritual refinement, testing, and judgment; and a seeing that *all is good, very good*; for what is not will be separated at the last judgment, that of the the Great White Throne judgment, as it is written in Rev. 20.13-15

“And they were judged, each one according to his works. 14Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. 15And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.”

But rather than discussing the last judgment, let us consider God’s very first judgment of things, following the six days of creation. At the close of each day’s work, except for the second, He judged creation as being *good*. However, at the close of the sixth day, following the creation of man, he declared it to be *very good*.

Gn. 1.31 “*31Then God saw everything that He had made, and indeed it was very good. So the evening and the morning were the sixth day.*”

God’s approval of all things in the natural universe is of utmost importance. He saw nothing in matter or man contrary to Himself, or independent from Him, or inherently evil, but saw all things *created* by Him, *set* in place by Him, and *ordered* by Him as being good in itself and perfect in its relationship to Him and to His own purpose and plan. Therefore, the adjective “*good*” should not be limited in meaning to the sense of “suitability” or being “fit and proper.” There is nothing “evil” in God’s newly-created universe, it was “*very good*”—meaning all of creation met with God’s approval and sense of righteousness.

It was *very good* because man, the crown jewel of God’s works, His visible image, the one who is given authority and power to act on His behalf on the earth, was now *created, set into place* in the Garden of Eden, and *set in order* of overseer of all worldly things as God’s own representative. Gn. 1.31 “*So the evening and the morning were the sixth day,*” all works were completed on that first Friday. God then rested on Saturday, the Sabbath.

So man, Adam, was given a free will to make decisions in the earth as God’s deputy, God’s second in command or assistant to act on God’s behalf. These decisions to be made were not to be

independent of God, but after the intent of God, according to His will and purpose. It means to be living in Divine righteousness in relationship to God and all of creation. To act independent of God, to exercise one's own will according to what he or she felt is right or wrong is rebellion and anarchy. And so we see this scene of man, Adam and Eve, being enticed by the devil, to act willingly and disobediently by deliberately eating of the forbidden fruit of independence, the fruit from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, Gn. 3.6-7,

“6So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate. 7Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves coverings.”

So Eve, then Adam, were led astray by Satan with delusions, not by trickery, but by the promise of personal gain for things contrary to the righteous will of God. Therefore, sin entered into their hearts, and darkness and death entered their lives. Sin is the inner propensity to do unrighteousness, things immoral, evil, or wicked; it is to live a life doing those things that miss the mark of God's approval, being “sinful.” Sin is not just a principle but a force, meaning that it can influence man's will, his choices and actions, leading him to commit unrighteous deeds. Both apostles Paul and Peter caution of the enslaving power of sin (Rm. 6.22, 8; 2; 2 Pet. 2.19-20).

Just as any child who claims independence of their parents, who is rebellious, free spirited and self-willed, is incapable of true filial affection and obedience; all mankind became dead to God and alienated in sin; because, Adam and Eve, who were the descendent parents of all mankind, were infected with sin, all descendants became corrupt with sin. Thus, from that time forward all mankind was in need of a savior for all are judged sinners after the similitude of Adam. Rm. 5.18-19 speaks of two men, one causing offense and condemnation, the other of obedience and righteousness,

“18Therefore, as through one man's offense judgment came to all men, resulting in condemnation, even so through one Man's righteous act the free gift came to all men, resulting in justification of life. 19For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so also by one Man's obedience many will be made righteous.”

The two men described here are of course first Adam and then Christ. In speaking of “one Man's righteous act,” the verse is addressing the ultimate sacrifice for sin, the crucifixion, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ on our behalf. In Christ a right relationship between God and man is being restored. It is accomplished by terminating the old and beginning over with a new beginning, a new creation. The final blessing of God's completed work of creation on that Friday must now be compared with the final words of Christ spoken on the cross of the second creation. It was upon that same day of the week when Jesus uttered, “*It is finished.*” (Jn. 19.30) As the Father uttered three words in Genesis, “*Let there be,*” Jesus now says, “*It is finished;*” all that the Father initiated in the first creation are now consummated and made complete in the second creation. The first creation was in the natural, that of the physical world, the second is in the spiritual, as it is written,

1 Cor. 15.46-49 “**46**However, the spiritual is not first, but the natural, and afterward the spiritual. **47**The first man was of the earth, made of dust; the second Man is the Lord from heaven. **48**As was the man of dust, so also are those who are made of dust; and as is the heavenly Man, so also are those who are heavenly. **49**And as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly Man.”

This verse speaks of a new spiritual creation in and through Christ that begins now and will culminate in the resurrection of our bodies at His second coming, which will then be truly the final culmination of all things...leading to the ultimate fellowship and union of man with God: the *marriage supper of the Lamb*.

The Spiritual Creation

Let's take a closer look at this *spiritual creation*. The soul of man can only have fellowship with the world environment through his body in which, and through which, all things are sensed by sight, sound, touch, taste and smell. In like manner, the only fellowship the soul can have with the spiritual environment, chiefly with God and His Kingdom, is through the spirit of man. However, this spirit of created man is now dead in sin, and fellowship with God is impossible, but not so for the new spiritual creation of those who are made alive to God,

Eph. 2.1-2 “**1**And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, **2**in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience.”

This is written of those who “were” *dead in trespasses and sins*, who “now” are *made alive to God*. Regenerated believers, meaning those who have been *born again* by the Spirit of Christ, must consider an entirely new way of thinking, becoming less dependent on sensing the natural and more discerning of the spiritual. The spiritual always functions by faith, by believing in the invisible and intangible, those things comprised of the promises and blessings and fellowship of God. We believers are “now” a *new creation* in Christ. The importance of which is written,

Eph. 2.10 “**10**For we are His workmanship, **created** in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.”

Let's consider this verse one clause at a time, beginning with: **We are His workmanship**. The word rendered “*workmanship*” is only used elsewhere in Romans 1.20 where it is applied to the “*works*” of God in creation. There is a Divine purpose for this new creation, a destiny hidden away in the heart of God, in which **God is working in us** both to will and do of His good pleasure, that is, to eat of the Tree of Life and its fruit of righteousness. Next clause,

Created in Christ Jesus. This creation is distinctly spoken of as a *new creation*, a second creation, not as flesh and blood as in the first creation but in newness of spirit, which is alive to God. It is written in 2 Cor. 5.17-18

***“¹⁷Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new. ¹⁸Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ,...*”**

By faith, the old life with that sinful nature “has passed” away, with all its guilt and remorse, its unrighteous life and isolation from God. It no longer exists because a new beginning has begun a new life in relationship and fellowship with God in Christ. Next clause,

Unto good works. The use of the word “*unto*” indicates that this is a work in progress; it is a doing or becoming righteous in the eyes of God. It involves a Christ-like character and of doing His righteous deeds—which in turn means doing those things “He” deems right and not doing those things “He” deems unacceptable or wicked; thus, the final determination of the value of things done comes from the mind, heart, and will of God alone. When Jesus said, Jn. 8.29 “...I always do those things that please Him” may be interpreted as He lives in a right relationship with His Father. But for the believer, this is a time of the preparation of the *soul*, of growing into righteousness, and to learn to come into Divine fellowship of God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Next clause,

Which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them. The mystery of God’s predestination has largely been misinterpreted by many in the Church. Predestination has less to do with God predetermining all events, and especially the fate of souls, some of which being called the *elect* and the rest being called *lost souls*. What it does have to do with, in all truth, is God’s predetermination that “in Christ” there will be a people of God, all who are “in Christ,” irrespective of race, gender, class distinction, or whatever else man in His mind separates people into classes. The whole idea of predestination is bound up with this: that a believer is born again of the Spirit of Christ, thereby being “in Christ,” he or she is predestined to all the spiritual blessings in heavenly places and to becoming a member of the immediate family of the Father, as a member for the bride of Christ, and as a holy habitation of the Holy Spirit. Each individual must decide for themselves: am I “in Christ” or am I “outside Christ; am I a part of the new creation, or is it life as usual under the pretense of religion?”

Our walk in this lifetime is predetermined by God to be one of a righteous lifestyle, a lifestyle that progressively grows in His righteous approval. It is through the inward working of His Holy Spirit, working in us, as it is written, Phil. 2.12-13, “¹²Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; ¹³for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.” This speaks clearly of the progressive salvation of the soul, to walk in His righteousness. Thus, we look back to the salvation of the spirit, forward to the salvation of the body, and look in the present for the ongoing salvation of the soul.

The New Creation

We read in Genesis 1 of the first creation, the six days in which He created the heavens and the earth and all living things, including man. We behold the wonders of this creation on a starry night as the expanse of the universe comes into view or behold the panorama of a

mountain range; we listen to the melodious songs of birds like the nightingale and robin or the cry of a newborn baby; when we savor the taste of a freshly picked apple or tomato; when we smell the fragrance of lilacs and roses; or the inward warmth when we hold the hand of a loved one. This is a physical creation for us to enjoy and appreciate, and we do this through our divinely created spectacular bodies.

But then Gal. 6.15 speaks of yet another creation, a *new creation*: Gal. 6.15 “¹⁵For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but a **new creation**.”

This creation involves not the body as with the first man, Adam, who was formed from the dust of the earth. This creation is spiritual, being created with a new and eternal spirit from the seed of Christ. Being born again constitutes the real difference between the believer and the rest of the whole of mankind. This is the highest requirement of God; it is beyond a simple belief in Jesus Christ; it is becoming inwardly alive spiritually through Him. The fact is that it is not by religion practices, of conformity to certain rites and rituals and obedience to commandments that a man is to be accepted into the family of God, nor of race, gender, wealth, culture or bloodline, but it is whether a man is born again and is in fact a *new creature* in Christ. It is written, 1 Pet. 2.9-10,

“⁹But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; ¹⁰who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy.”

“You” it is spoken of, the regenerated believers in Christ, who are now and eternally a *chosen*, or “elect,” race of people. Originally Abraham and his progeny were selected from among all the families of the earth. It was out of the seed of Abraham that this family, after the flesh, was selected to be God’s special people. Of this God spoke, that they would be, Ex. 19.5-6 “My treasured possession out of all the nations—for the whole earth is Mine. ⁶And unto Me you shall be a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.’ This people, the descendants of Abraham, Israel, is but a type, a pattern in the natural, a kind of prophetic example, a future people in Christ Jesus, those who now have become born of the seed of Christ, a spiritual people and a *chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people*.

Heb, 8.6 speaks of a new covenant as a *better covenant, which was established on better promises*. The promises of the old covenant involved becoming a great nation in a prosperous land; and with obedience to the Law, they would be blessed and protected from their enemies. So this covenant made with Abraham’s descendants, Israel as a nation, secured only temporal benefits to them—pertaining mainly to the present life. But the new covenant in Christ is established upon better promises involving the resurrection of the body, eternal life, a new heaven and earth, and a special relationship and fellowship with God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. These are promises of spiritual blessings made through Christ of infinitely greater value. (See Eph 1)

The High Calling

To have a *relationship* with God is above and beyond that of being created by a Creator. It is becoming born again of the seed of Christ—born into the actual family of God— 1 Pet. 1.23 *“having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever.”* And so, in terms of *relationship*, we are connected to God as born-again members of His family unit. But now *fellowship* with God is even altogether higher and more compelling, for it reveals the nature of our interaction with Him.

For example, we, as the children of God, can draw near to Him through Jesus Christ. Herein we know the fellowship of God in worship and in revelation of Him. This mere spiritual fellowship with Him produces an actual change in our souls. It is by spiritual power we are changed in mind and character, in function and purpose, in hope and anticipation of that which is to come. The word *“transformed”* is used in the Bible to denote the results of this Divine power working in us. There is a Divine purpose for the transformation of our souls.

Let’s be a little technical for a moment and explain more fully this word *“transformed.”* In the lexicon, *“The Greek verb (metamorphoó) signifies a profound transformation or change in form. The term implies a change that is not merely superficial but involves an essential alteration in nature or character.”* Thus, transformation is the Divine working into our lives of His righteousness, of the character of Christ-likeness, of the response to function as a family member and as a member of the Body of Christ, and of the apprehension of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Paul speaks of this high calling in Phil. 3.13-14,

“¹³Brethren, I do not count myself to have attained; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, ¹⁴I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

There is this *high calling* with regards to the nature of our fellowship with the Father and to the nature of fellowship with the Holy Spirit, but the focus here is on the nature of fellowship with His Son and our Lord Jesus Christ; our present transformation is towards a special and eternal fellowship with Christ. Thus today, we are undergoing a time of preparation for a future glory.

What we are now, presently deemed *“the Church,”* is also called the *“Body of Christ,”* of which Christ is the Head. (Eph. 1.22-23) This is a most significant thought, that as Adam was duly appointed to be God’s representative on the earth, the Church now exists as Christ’s duly appointed expression upon the earth. It is within this dynamic body of believers that His people are being prepared for the age to come. We are to function as a body, ministering and serving one another, building up, making spiritually mature, transforming souls. First there will be the return of Christ and the catching up of believers with Him as the great resurrection takes place, the transformation of our bodies, Phil. 3.20-21 *“The Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body.”* Then comes judgment and finally the being joined together with Christ as His eternal bride, to sit with Him and reign with Him on His Throne.

Thus, in the first covenant, Israel served a purpose in the economy of God, preparing a way in the natural for a second spiritual covenant to follow. He even referred to Israel as His wife in the first covenant, Jer. 3.14 *“Return, O backsliding children,” says the LORD; “for I am married to you.”* And now, the second covenant is playing a purpose in the economy of God. Its purpose is for the Church to prepare a people for the culmination of all things, when there will be a new heaven and new earth, the resurrection of the dead into new spiritual bodies to live in that eternal environment, and the time when the Church will be no more; for now the Church will become the Bride of Christ to sit and reign with Him on His throne. This, is a high calling,

S2.E11. Questions for Discussion

1. What does it mean to eat the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. And, what are its consequences.
2. Describe the two creations: natural and spiritual. Why is the latter considered a “better covenant?”
3. Explain the most significant aspects of Ephesians 2.10.
4. Why is faith needed for our walk in the new creation but is not needed for our walk in the first creation?
5. Explain the salvation of the whole man: spirit, soul, and body. Explain how the word *transformation* applies to the soul; to the body.
6. What is the Bride of Christ and why is it considered a high calling?