



Connecting with God for a Strong Finish

## CHAPTER 27

### Make Yourself Ready

Seated upon His throne, Jesus plans to return and sweep His bride off her feet. Rather than shocking her into a catatonic stupor, Jesus anticipates an informed bride—one that knows the truth about her relationship with Him. Like the wise virgins in Jesus' parable, she has "*made herself ready*"—ready to behold her bridegroom in a stunning new light.<sup>1</sup>

Worshippers are preparing themselves for a strong finish so they might greet Jesus with more than a dumbfounded stare or flabbergasted jabber. As His glorious bride, they will make His praise glorious. Enlightened worshippers comprehend God's divine accolades. They live poised to venerate Jesus for all He's worth.

Human History has yet to Record  
The Response that our Savior Deserves

Eventually multitudes of men and women, boys and girls, angels and demons will experience the glorious splendor of Christ; He will return and fully engage their restored senses. By worshiping Jesus now, we strengthen our composure for His second coming. Between now and the last trumpet blast, finite moments offer an opportunity to refine unique expressions fit for the occasion.

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<sup>1</sup> Matthew 25:1-13 with Revelation 19:7

Connecting with Jesus sight unseen and voice unheard establishes a transparent bond with affectionate familiarity. After communing with His invisible attributes, the physical presence of Christ should require no introduction. Adding sights and sounds to a well-established relationship may heighten our awe but should not induce a panic-flustered blackout.

For the time being however, our Heavenly Father will not allow audiovisual features to overshadow His spiritual qualities. Apparently, God does not want worshipers fixated on narrow parameters tied to His outward appearance. He does not want us distracted by His striking brilliance, obsessed with the sound of His voice, or preoccupied with the stimulus of His touch. For an important reason during this critical season, Jesus remains hidden and silent.

For the present, natural senses do not dominate our relationship with Christ. Limited by His audiovisual absence, we connect with inner virtues confined to His mind, will, and emotions. Jesus favors His spiritual features fortified with life transforming encounters. Though material images and competing sounds vie for our attention, they pale in comparison with the power of His presence. Everlasting joy supplements God's mercy as He forgives our sin and delivers us from evil. Perfect peace sustains our hope as Jesus immerses us in steadfast love.

The supreme sacrifice that Jesus made on the cross highlights our rank among His priorities. Those who know what He did and why He gave His life, offer more than a token of gratitude—they are blown off their feet with awestruck reverence. Unquenchable passion motivates our Savior to reconnect with us. Nothing and no one can separate us from the dynamic favor that His love conveys.

Jesus wants a bride who understands the value of her eternal significance—in light of His incomparable worth. He wants us to recognize our potential, as we comprehend the profound implications of His passionate pursuit. Because Jesus values the importance of our union, He helps us connect beyond abstract glimpses and momentary sound

bites. Today, God offers so much more than a peek at His physique or an echo of His voice.

Jesus wants to Connect with an Informed Bride  
Swept off her Feet by her Magnificent Bridegroom

### **Looks may be Deceiving**

A five-ton boulder fixed at the equator appears motionless. Yet, this massive stone spins nearly 1,038 mph (1,670 kph) faster than an object fixed at the North Pole. The Earth carries both objects around the Sun at 67,062 mph (107,300 kph). The Sun also moves relative to the center of the Milky Way as it moves relative to other galaxies. A boulder wedged anywhere on Earth is far from motionless. It only appears motionless when viewed from Earth's vantage point, moving at the same speed.

The appearance of a stationary object does not correspond with reality. What's more, time passes differently for each object, depending how fast it moves and in what gravitational environment it resides (assuming Einstein's theories of relativity have merit).

Because spiritual realities exist along with physical realities, we need the Holy Spirit to expand our perception. Visible images reveal an important part of God's nature but eyes can be misleading, especially when confined to an earthly perspective. While every part of God holds immense importance, invisible priorities currently overshadow His outward appearance.

While postulating new theories in physics, Albert Einstein used impossible thought experiments. One example involves observations made by someone riding beside an imaginary light beam traveling 186,282 miles per second (299,792 kilometers per second). Our connection with Jesus (the light of the world) does not require make-believe thought experiments. His Spirit actually dwells within each born again believer. He offers so much more than meets the eye.

As the prophet Samuel considered candidates for Israel's next king, the Lord said,

*...“Do not consider his appearance or his height.... The LORD does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.” (1 Sam 16:7 NIV)*

Worshippers are preparing for a comprehensive union with the Son of God. To venerate Jesus for all He's worth, we need to focus in the right place. When He ascended into heaven, the Son of Man offered us a perceptual advantage with fewer distractions and additional participation rights. By depriving our natural senses, we gain focused access to spiritual priorities. After Jesus ascended, our Heavenly Father sent His Spirit to escort us into superior realms of divine dimensions.

John saw Jesus ride into Jerusalem, *“sitting on a donkey's colt”*.<sup>2</sup> Much later, he witnessed another side of Jesus—one worthy of notice.

*Then I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse! The one sitting on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he judges and makes war. His eyes are like a flame of fire, and on his head are many diadems, and he has a name written that no one knows but himself. He is clothed in a robe dipped in blood, and the name by which he is called is The Word of God. (Revelation 19:11-14 ESV)*

When the time comes to behold Jesus, His appearance will be stunning and magnificent. As glorious and spectacular as His appearance may be, it will not outshine the inner qualities that define His character—they too are stunning, glorious, and magnificent. When Jesus returns, it will not be to impress His bride with sensory overload. The physical eminence, which Christ displays, will propel our relationship to new levels of elevated intimacy. When integrated together, His physical body will enhance His magnificent inner attributes.

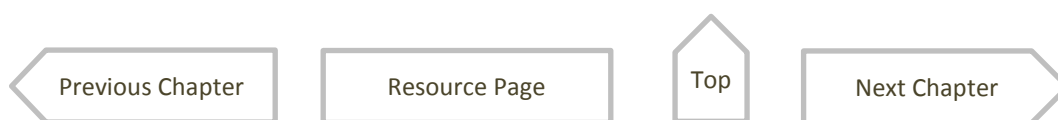
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<sup>2</sup> John 12:15 ESV

Jesus will use sights and sounds to add substance to His divine nature. His visible form will complement rather than eclipse His inner qualities. Observing Jesus' worth with our eyes should not distract us from focusing where God's priorities lie.

Jesus established our relationship based on mercy and truth not fear and intimidation. He aims for passionate intimacy not overpowering dominance. Knowing Jesus from the inside out provides a reliable reference point for coherent recognition. By familiarizing ourselves with His striking attributes, we establish a benchmark for validating His identity when He appears. Frequent exposure to God's intangible side primes our senses to behold His tangible features with greater confidence. Jesus does not want His bride confused and disoriented at His appearance. He also does not want her blindsided by impostors since even *"Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light"*.<sup>3</sup>

When the time comes to behold Jesus, our Heavenly Father desires a mature response from informed worshipers. Based on a long-standing relationship, we can expect His outward appearance to reflect the full value of His inner worth. Adding an audiovisual component to an already intimate union should not be so overwhelming that we fail to respond with the composure of a responsible bride. Rather than gawking stupefied when Jesus appears, true worshipers will recognize His majesty with comprehensive esteem. They will behave with bridal poise, not only for their cogent insight but also for the regal destiny that awaits them in His kingdom.



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<sup>3</sup> 2 Cor 11:14 NIV