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## CHAPTER 35

### A Worshiping Bride

#### That Made Herself Ready

When Jesus returns, He will sweep His bride the Church off her feet. Rather than jolting her into a catatonic stupor, He desires an informed bride—one that knows the truth about themselves and about their relationship with Him. Similar to Jesus’ parable of the wise virgins who stocked reserve oil for their lamps, she has *“made herself ready”* to greet her bridegroom in a stunning new light.<sup>1</sup>

Worshippers are preparing themselves for a strong finish in order to greet Jesus with more than a dumbfounded stare and flabbergasted jabber. His glorious bride will generate both glorious praise and sincere worship. Enlightened worshippers recognize God’s divine accolades and achievements and respond accordingly. They live life with reverent enthusiasm 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—everyone will experience the glorious splendor of God’s majesty. Jesus will return to earth full strength to engage His Bride with all her senses fully restored. By worshiping Jesus now, we are strengthening our composure for His second coming. Between now and the last trumpet blast signaling His return, each moment offers an opportunity to refine unique expressions fit for the occasion.

Connecting with Jesus sight unseen and voice unheard, establishes a bond of familiarity based on relational components that are non-tangible. After communing for years with Jesus’ invisible qualities, His stunning physical presence should

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

require no introduction. Adding sights and sounds to a well-established personal relationship may heighten our awe but should not induce a flustered blackout.

For the time being, however, our Heavenly Father does not display audiovisual features to overshadow His spiritual qualities. Apparently, God does not want worshipers fixated on superficial 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 important reasons during this critical season, Jesus remains hidden and silent—almost always.

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

The supreme sacrifice that Jesus made on a cross established 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 seeks 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 evocative 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-hundred-ton boulder fixed at the equator appears motionless. Yet, because of earth's spherical axis, this massive stone spins nearly 1,038 mph (1,670 kph) faster than a snowball fixed at the North Pole. The Earth also speeds 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 stationary. It only appears motionless when viewed from Earth's vantage point, while moving at the same speed.

The visible 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 retain merit).

Our eyes can be misleading, especially when confined to an earthly perspective. Because spiritual realities exist along with physical substance, we need spiritual discernment to expand our perception. Visible images and audible sounds reveal an important part of God's nature. While every part of God holds immense importance, God has chosen to promote His invisible features as He conceals His outward appearance.

While postulating new theories in physics, Albert Einstein considered 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 much more reality 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 Jesus the Son of God. To venerate Him for all He's worth, we'll need to notice all of His features. When Jesus ascended into heaven, He offered us a perceptual advantage with fewer distractions and more participation options. By depriving our natural senses, we gain concentrated access to spiritual priorities. After Jesus ascended, our Heavenly Father sent His Spirit to escort us into superior realms of spiritual interaction.

John witnessed Jesus riding humbly into Jerusalem, *"sitting on a donkey's colt"*.<sup>2</sup> Toward the end of his life, John witnessed Jesus exalted in regal glory.

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

*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. Sights and sounds add substance to Jesus' spirit nature. His visible form complements rather than eclipses His inner qualities. Observing Jesus' worth with our eyes should not distract us from focusing where God's priorities lie.

When Jesus returns, His objective will not be to impress His chosen bride with sensory overload. The physical eminence of Christ will propel our relationship to new levels of elevated intimacy. When integrated together, His physical body and audible voice enhance His divine attributes.

Jesus established our relationship based on love. His words and deeds facilitate affectionate intimacy supported by approachable respect and admiration. 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 material features with greater appreciation. Jesus does not want His bride confused and disoriented at His appearance. Neither does He want her blindsided by impostors since *"Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light"*.<sup>3</sup>

Jesus' outward appearance will represent the full value of His inner worth. When the time comes to behold Jesus, our Heavenly Father desires an open, honest, transparent, and confident response from sincere worshipers. Adding an audiovisual component to an already intimate union should not be so overwhelming that we fail to respond with the composure of a fully prepared bride. Rather than gawking stupefied when Jesus appears, true worshipers will recognize His majesty with all-inclusive esteem. Anticipating the regal destiny that awaits them, they

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

will behave with the bridal poise of enlightened lovers—albeit from an awestruck posture of facedown veneration.

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