

COURTSHIP AND MARRIAGE



INTRODUCTION: “Except the LORD build the house, they labour in vain that build it: except the LORD keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain.”(Psalms 127:1)

“Most men will proclaim every one his own goodness: but a faithful man who can find?”(Proverbs 20:6)

“Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is far above rubies.”(Proverbs 31:10)

In the past, marriage and its related activities was something known only to married persons and to those who had grown enough to understand it. Today, things have changed, even a 10year old child understands what happens in marriage and also knows what dating, as well as love, is all about. Is this not of much concern to both the Church and responsible parents? **Why are there so many divorce cases? What about teenage pregnancies and all issues surrounding them?** Let us endeavor to look at this prevailing issue of **courtship** and **marriage** from different angles by first looking at how some Bible characters were impacted. Let's begin at

Good Biblical Couples

First, Adam and Eve were a perfect couple at the very beginning, for everything that God made “**was very good.**”(Gen 1:31) and since He Himself “**celebrated the first marriage.**”(PP 46.3) and therefore approved it, then not only these inspired statements, but logic also demands us to conclude that Adam and Eve, the father and mother of all **were good for each other.**



Second, Abraham and Sarah both feared God. Abraham was not only, as husband and father, responsible enough to command “**his**

household after him” to “keep the way of the LORD, to do justice and judgment”(Gen 18:19), but he himself “believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness” (Gen 15:6).



Interestingly enough “**Through faith also Sara herself** received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, **because she judged him faithful who had promised.**”(Hebrews 11:11) Regardless of their shortcomings, since they were human beings like us, their marriage was clearly sanctioned by heaven.

Next, **Isaac and Rebecca** were also a God fearing couple. “...Isaac....took Rebekah, and she became his wife; and **he loved her**: and Isaac was comforted after his mother's death.” (Gen 24:67).



Yes, the young man who had proved to be obedient both to his parents and to God loved his wife with great love. Rebecca was not only “**very fair to look upon**”(Gen 24:16), but also “**her ready courtesy gave evidence of a kind heart and an active, energetic nature.**”(PP 172.2) God chose Rebecca for Isaac, and Isaac

for Rabecca.

Then we have Boaz and Ruth. A generous and protective husband like Boaz was lucky enough to get a wife whom the entire village knew to be “**a virtuous woman**”(Ruth 3:11)



Again, Joseph “**a just man**” (Matthew 1:19) married Mary of Nazareth, the Mother of the Lord Jesus.



Had Mary being a disobedient, world loving young girl, she wouldn't have carried the Lord in her womb. The fact that the angel of the Lord said to her, “...Hail, **thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women.**”(Luke 1:28) is evident enough to show how much she valued God and his requirements.

All these, though **weak human beings like us,** **trusted in the Lord and his providence.** They were not free from error and their marriages were not free from problems. But they subjected their thoughts and choices to the Lord. They knew that allowing the Infallible

God to choose a spouse for them was the better thing to do, for God always chooses what is best for his people. Now let us also look at some

Biblical bad couples.

First, we have **Ahab and Jezebel**, a couple that was against the Lord's dealings and His prophetic ministry through Elijah. **"Ahab the son of Omri did evil in the sight of the LORD above all that were before him"**(1 Kings 16:30), and **"there was no one like Ahab who sold himself to do wickedness in the sight of the Lord, because Jezebel his wife stirred him up."**(1 Kings 21:25).



Jezebel's character and influence were evil. She was a pagan who knew not the Living God.

The scriptures say, “**She painted her face**”(2 Kings 9:30) and put on different ornaments. She was not one of those “**...women professing godliness with good works.**”(1 Tim 2:10). And how many women today are following her example?

Next is **Ananias and Sapphira** who encouraged themselves in deceit and

foolishness.

“But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, **sold a possession, And kept back part of the price, his wife also being privy to it**, and brought a certain part, and laid it at the apostles' feet.”(Acts 5:1,2)



We know what happened to them. “And Ananias hearing these words **fell down, and gave up the ghost: and great fear came on all them that heard these things**. And the young men arose, wound him up, and carried him out, and **buried him**. And it was about the space

of three hours after, when his wife, not knowing what was done, came in. And Peter answered unto her, **Tell me whether ye sold the land for so much? And she said, Yea, for so much.** Then Peter said unto her, **How is it that ye have agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord? behold, the feet of them which have buried thy husband are at the door, and shall carry thee out. Then fell she down straightway at his feet, and yielded up the ghost:** and the young men came in, and found her dead, and, carrying her forth, **buried her by her husband.**”(Acts 5:5-10)

Biblical Couples, One Good, One Bad.

First, Potiphar's wife in Genesis 29 in trying to seduce the young and handsome Joseph proved her to be both stupid and unfaithful

to her husband.



How many today disrespect both their spouse and God himself by having sexual affairs with persons they are not married to? And how many can resist temptation as Joseph did? Said he, “...**how then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?**”(Gen 39:9) This perishing world, you see, needs a good number of Joseph’s today.

Second in line is a **foolish, rude and selfish Nabal who married a strong and wise**

woman, Abigail. Says the scriptures, “the name of the man was **Nabal; and the name of his wife Abigail:** and she was a woman of good understanding, and of a beautiful countenance: but the man **was churlish[harsh] and evil in his doings;** and he was of the house of Caleb.”(1 Samuel 25:3)



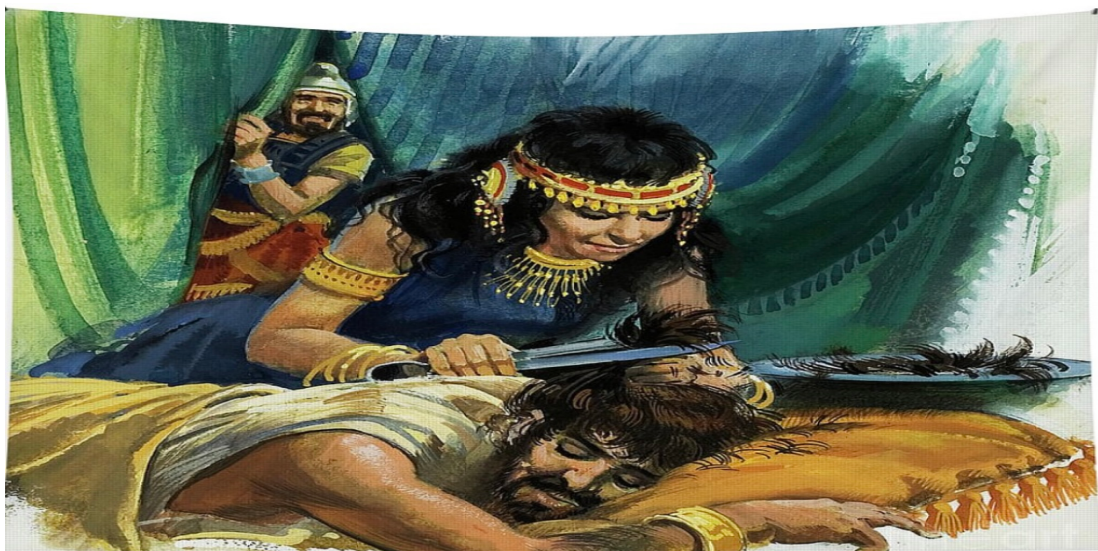
“**Abigail was the beautiful, kind, and intelligent wife of Nabal, a mean and violent-tempered man....**The Lord would have the wife render respect unto her husband, **but always as it is fit in the Lord.**”

In the character of Abigail, the wife of Nabal, we have an illustration of womanhood after the order of Christ, while her husband illustrates what a man may become who yields himself to the control of Satan.. “(DG 41.4, 43.4)

Next, **Job's wife** in urging him to “**curse God and die**” (Job 2:9) showed that she was his source of discouragement in times of distress. The faithful Job answered her saying “**Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh. What? shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil? In all this did not Job sin with his lips.**”(Job 2:10)



Delilah was the source of problem to the strongest man, Samson, and eventually brought about his downfall, for **she being a nonbeliever** came with the plan to “**Entice him**”(Judges 16:5), and she was successful.



Then Solomon ' s foreign and unsanctified wives turn his heart from following the Lord(1 Kings 11:1-10)



Herod's wife, Herodias, too, was a woman of **deceit**. She was a stumbling block to him as the husband and it was under her foolishness and influence that the greatest prophet was executed. (See Mark 6:17-28)



How many more names of couples can we mention? That of Hannah, Esther, Elizabeth e.t.c? Mary Magdalene herself, after being saved from lewdness, showed that she was ready to be a very good wife, and Paul would have been a very good husband.

Lessons to Learn.

“Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.”(1 Corinthians 10:11)

The entire history of the children of Israel, along with others, **was written for the benefit of us who are living in the last days, that we may follow not their example of unbelief, but follow the way and counsel of the Lord, as some did, not only in relation to love and marriage, but also in other things related to this life and our salvation.**

“A prudent man foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself: but the simple[silly, foolish] pass on, and are punished”(Proverbs 22:3)

Learn from the experiences of these people, brother, sister.

Marriage with unbelievers - The first Mistake to avoid.

The Lord through Moses commanded.
“Neither shalt thou make marriages with

them [the heathen, unbelievers]; thy daughter thou shalt not give unto his son, nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son. **For they will turn away thy son from following me, that they may serve other gods**: so will the anger of the LORD be kindled against you, and destroy thee suddenly.”(Deuteronomy 7:3,4)

Let us recall that **Ahab**, the king of Israel, married Jezebel a wicked queen and **a pagan daughter**. Though he himself was wicked, yet he become worse as soon as he linked himself with the wife who was the enemy of God.

Solomon’s marriage with unbelievers caused his downfall. While reigning as King, “**Beautiful and attractive women were brought from Egypt, Phoenicia, Edom, and Moab, and from many other places**. These women were numbered by hundreds. **Their religion was idol worship** ... His wives

exerted a strong influence over him and gradually prevailed on him to unite with them in their worship..”(PK 56.3.4)

Delilah, too, was a nonbeliever, and we’ve already seen what she did to a believing husband. The reason given by the Lord for not uniting with unbelievers is clear: **“For they will turn away thy son from following me, that they may serve other gods.”** This has been proven true throughout the generations. But the question naturally arises,

Who is an Unbeliever?

Well the term **“unbeliever”** in the context of Salvation can be described **at different stages.** In order, therefore, to arrive at the whole truth, we need to move step by step till we get to the very root of the matter.

First, an atheist who believes that “**there is no God**” as pointed out in Psalms 53:1 is a **nonbeliever or an unbeliever to any religion person**, whether Muslim, Hindu or Christian, and **these are also nonbelievers to him.**

Similarly, Christ said, “... he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.” (John 3:18), thus Muslims, Hindus and all other religions that don ’ t believe in Christ as the Saviour **are nonbelievers and therefore unbelievers to Christians**, and Christians are unbelievers to these religions.

Again Paul warned that within Christianity itself “**shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.**” (Acts 20:30). It’s these same false teachers who have made different denominations through their “**private interpretation**” of scripture in

Christianity, and if **the Seventh Day Adventist Church** is the only last true Church as per Revelation 12:17, **then Catholics, JW's, Pentecostals and all other Christian denominations are nonbelievers to the SDAs.** SDAs are nonbelievers to these denominations too.

Since **Within the SDA church are members who don't accept the entire truth but only believe in some parts are nonbelievers to those who've embraced the message of the third angel in its totality.** Says the Spirit “**Though the companion of your choice were in all other respects worthy (which he is not), yet he has not accepted the truth for this time; he is an unbeliever, and you are forbidden of heaven to unite yourself with him.** You cannot, without peril to your soul, disregard this divine injunction.”(5T 364.1)

Manifestly, then, **an unbeliever is someone**

who's not united with you in faith, one who doesn't believe what you believe.

But since the word also says **“Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble. But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?”** (James 2:19,20) then those who believe even the very present truth and yet do not live up to it's standards are

Unbelieving Believers.

“Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?” (2 Corinthians 6:14), again, **“There is no concord between Christ and Belial. The two cannot harmonize. To connect with an unbeliever is to place yourself on Satan's**

ground. You grieve the Spirit of God and forfeit His protection. Can you afford to have such terrible odds against you in fighting the battle for everlasting life?”(5T 364.2)

Thus while it's true that these messages are warning God's people **not to marry unbelievers like Atheists, Muslims, Catholics, or unserious and disbelieving Adventists,** it's also true that **their warning is also against marrying those who believe the present present truth but do not live it. Such are unbelieving believers.**

The counsel is, “Let a young woman **accept as a life companion only one who possesses pure, manly traits of character, one who is diligent, aspiring and honest, one who loves and fears God.**”(LYL 24.2)

The Lord is giving counsels, it's up to you to accept or reject them dear friend. The

statement “**pure, manly traits of character**” isn’t trying to say that he must be sinless, but someone whose character can stand a test. **He must not be an unbelieving believer, no, no.** Be careful who you fall in love with. This is true for both men and women.

“Before giving her hand in marriage, every woman should inquire whether he with whom she is about to unite her destiny is worthy. What has been his past record? Is his life pure? Is the love which he expresses of a noble, elevated character, or is it a mere emotional fondness? Has he the traits of character that will make her happy? Can she find true peace and joy in his affection? Will she be allowed to preserve her individuality, or must her judgment and conscience be surrendered to the control of her husband?.”(LYL 86.2)

“Let a young man seek one to stand by his

side who is fitted to bear her share of life's burdens, one whose influence will ennoble and refine him, and who will make him happy in her love.”(LYL 20.1)

Courtship.

Courtship is a form of relationship between two persons(male and female) **who are intentionally preparing for marriage**. They explore and learn each other and see whether they are **compatible** for marriage or not.

It is a period wherein you “**Weigh every sentiment, and watch every development of character in the one with whom you think to link your life destiny..**”(LYL 35.1)

Remember this is an intentional and very serious activity. It’s a period of developing true

affection and **not infatuation** for the person you intend to marry.

“Love is a sentiment so sacred that but few know what it is. **It is a term used, but not understood.** The warm glow of impulse, the fascination of one young person for another is not love; **it does not deserve the name.** **True love has an intellectual basis, a deep thorough knowledge of the object loved.**”

(LYL 36.4)

Thus there's no true love, you see, without having a deeper knowledge of the person you profess to love.

And now that we are at the very end of time, and wickedness has increased greatly, how much should we be careful with this issue? How many girls and boys have taken Courtship and Dating as a form of pleasure rather than something very serious?



“Courtship, as carried on in this age, is a scheme of deception and hypocrisy, with which the enemy of souls has far more to do than the Lord..”(MYP 450.2)

This is what we are seeing everywhere.

“Let those who are contemplating marriage weigh every sentiment and watch every development of character in the one with whom they think to unite their life destiny.

Let every step toward a marriage alliance be characterized by modesty, simplicity, sincerity, and an earnest purpose to please

and honor God. **Marriage affects the afterlife both in this world and in the world to come. A sincere Christian will make no plans that God cannot approve.** ” (MYP 435.2)

No creature can read your thoughts, only God can. Your deceptive thoughts regarding love may not be known to the person you're approaching, but nothing is hidden from heaven. God will judge both the thoughts and actions of men.

Compelled to be in prison cell rather than Divorce.

Marriage was instituted by God himself. Says He “**Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.**”(Hebrews 13:4). A good-happy marriage with the right partner

will **always be fantastic**. There's peace and joy in the home.



But having a wrong person will always be a disaster.

Many have made wrong choices. “**They are married because passion moved them, and when the novelty of the affair is over, they will begin to realize what they have done. In six months after the vows are spoken, their sentiments toward each other have undergone a change. Each has learned in married life more of the character of the**

companion chosen. Each discovers imperfections that, during the blindness and folly of their former association, were not apparent. The promises at the altar do not bind them together. In consequence of hasty marriages, even among the professed people of God, there are separations, divorces, and great confusion in the church.”(MYP 457.3)



Shall they divorce or stick around?

“For years I have been receiving letters from different persons **who have formed unhappy**

marriages, and the revolting histories opened before me are enough to make the heart ache.

It is no easy thing to decide what advice can be given to these unfortunate ones, or how their hard lot can be lightened; but their sad experience should be a warning to others.”

(5T 365.3)

You can't tell them to divorce for any reason, for that is against scripture. Says the Saviour,

“...For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore

they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.

They say unto him, Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away? He saith unto them, **Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so.**

And I say unto you, **Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery.**” (Matthew 19:5-9)

Can you tell them to go for a divorce after they’ve realized that they were not meant for each other? Well, **unless one has committed adultery, they can’t divorce at all.** They can be on separation and still be married. **What a vital thought to contemplate! Marriage is a life time covenant which can be broken only by death**(Rom 7:1-3) or through “unfaithfulness” as already pointed out.

Talking about the Marriage vow, Inspiration says, **“This vow links the destinies of the two individuals with bonds which naught but the hand of death should sever....Nothing but the violation of the marriage bed can**

either break or annul the marriage vow..”(AH 340.1,341.3)

If you marry an angel, you must happily stick around. If you marry a demon, there's no where to run to, you must stick around. Imagine you and a demon in the same house, on the same bed? That prison cell can be worse than the normal one.

You can't serve two masters simultaneously.

“ No servant can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.”(Luke 16:13)

God has said that “ **All who are not decided followers of Christ are servants of Satan..**”

(GC88 508.2) No matter the kind of profession they make, **all who have double standards**

are Satan ’ s followers and not God ’ s.

Similarly, one cannot have an affair with other persons and still be faithful in marriage . **Many people cheat on their spouse simply because they married them out of impulse and passion rather than out of love.**

Infidelity has spread everywhere, whether it’s among believers or nonbelievers.

There has been a gradual moral degradation since the fall, more and more wickedness is yet to be witnessed. People are becoming evil and true love is fading away “

And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.

“(Matthew 24:12)

Where can you find persons who love you not necessarily because of the way you look but

because of the way you are? Remember, **“True love is not a strong, fiery, impetuous passion. On the contrary, it is calm and deep in its nature. It looks beyond mere externals and is attracted by qualities alone..”**(LYL 30.1).

Character is primary, physical appearance is secondary. The reverse of this will prove ruin to many.

How many cases do we hear of people who have their health impacted or even their life cut short as soon as they get married? How can one survive after marrying a cruel demon? And are many people not reflecting the image of Satan more than the image of Christ? We can all hardly escape the fact that it's ten times easier to find a cruel wicked person than a Christ's one. You see, **“Except the LORD build the house, they labour in vain that build it: except the LORD keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain.”**

(Psalms 127:1). Yes few have said that their

marriages have worked out regardless of marrying unbelievers, but in nine tenth of the cases, the opposite happens.

Consequently, **“In this age of the world, as the scenes of earth's history are soon to close and we are about to enter upon the time of trouble such as never was, the fewer the marriages contracted, the better for all, both men and women..”**(5T 366.1)

An Adulterous Church.

The Church of God at this time finds herself in the same dilemma, professing to believe all that God has revealed and **yet she lives for the World.** No normal husband or wife can condone adultery from their spouse. It hurts, it breaks the heart, doesn ' t it? **Like an Adulterous spouse who can ' t be distinct from the promoters of infidelity and who**

can't be peculiar and preserve the purity of his or her marriage, so “ **The professed followers of Christ are no longer a separate and peculiar people. The line of demarcation is indistinct. The people are subordinating themselves to the world, to its practices, its customs, its selfishness. The church has gone over to the world in transgression of the law, when the world should have come over to the church in obedience to the law. Daily the church is being converted to the world.**”(COL 315.3)

The Lord wrote with his finger, “**Thou shalt have no other gods before me...Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth:Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God...**”(Exodus 20:3-5)

“The close relation of God to His people is represented under the figure of marriage. Idolatry being spiritual adultery, the displeasure of God against it is fitly called jealousy.”(EP 211.4)

Will the Lord then continue to just watch his people committing spiritual adultery, or will he command his angels saying **“ Ephraim is joined to idols: let him alone.”**(Hos 4:14)?

And since Salvation for the World solely depends on God’s work through His Church, what will be the destiny of the World? **Let Lord allow the Church to remain in her lukewarm condition and she will definitely be plunged into hell along with the world.**

But the loving God won’t allow this to happen . Yes, like an unfaithful spouse, she **“ hath played the harlot”** and gone after her **“lovers”**

(Hos 2:5), but the Lord says,

“... behold, I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness, and speak comfortably unto her. And I will give her her vineyards from thence, and the valley of Achor for a door of hope: and she shall sing there, as in the days of her youth, and as in the day when she came up out of the land of Egypt.”

(Hos 2:14,15)

Notice that **“the valley of Achor”** is her only door of hope to forever end her spiritual adultery with the World. And since Ancient Israel after committing a similar mistake was **purified in the valley of Achor by executing Achan the wicked**, so the antitypical valley of Achor is the purification of the Church from both sin and sinners.

“The great issue so near at hand will weed out those whom God has not appointed and

He will have **a pure, true, sanctified ministry prepared for the latter rain....**”(3SM 385.3)

This purification, you see, takes place **before the latter rain, the second Pentecostal power** for the completion of the gospel message.

“Angels keep a faithful record of every man's work, and **as judgment passes upon the house of God, the sentence of each is recorded by his name, and the angel is commissioned to spare not the unfaithful servants, but to cut them down at the time of slaughter..**”(1T 197.1, read Ezekiel 9)

“And I saw that the **Lord was whetting His sword in heaven to cut them down. Oh, that every lukewarm professor could realize the clean work that God is about to make among His professed people!.**”(1T 189.2)

Thus shall the Lord sift his people and fit them

for the final work. **This is her only strength, her only hope, her only deliverance.** Then shall the gospel work be completed and the world be warned(Isa 66:19,20). **Then and only then shall the end come.**

The Coming of Christ and the Marriage Supper.

“ And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, **I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb’s wife.** And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and **shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem,** descending out of heaven from God ... ”
(Revelation 21:9,10)

Christ is the Husband, the New Jerusalem is the Wife. **Marriage is the reception by Christ**

of his kingdom (GC88 426.2) whose capital is Jerusalem, and the citizens, the guests, are the saints. When is the City going to be ready for marriage?

“...the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb...”(Revelation 19:7-9)

The white wedding dress, the **“fine linen”** being the righteousness of the saints, **then she can only be ready when the saints have fully lived this righteousness.** “Christ is waiting with longing desire for the manifestation of Himself in His church. **When the character of Christ shall be perfectly reproduced in His people, then He will come to claim them as**

His own..”(LDE 39.2)

If so, then by the time probationary time comes to an end, **the saints will have victory over every single sin**(Rev 22:11). They will fully reflect his image and character. **At that time Christ will be crowned as King.**



Then it is that Christ will appear a second time to fetch his own, **that they may enjoy the marriage supper of the Lamb. And “they shall come from the east, and from the west, and from the north, and from the south, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God”**(Luke

13:29)

Then shall His people delight in the glorious city. **“And the city lieth foursquare...And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it. And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there. And they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it. And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life.”**(Revelation 21:16,24-27)

Will you be there? I want you to be there, and enjoy the glory of our eternal home. Make a decision for Christ, the end is near.

May the Lord help His people.

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