

THE
REAL MAN
&
WOMAN

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THE REAL MAN & WOMAN

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Foreword

Christian commentators seeking to support the traditional position on women's roles in the church, interpret events in Genesis 2 & 3 as 'principles' which disqualify or restrict women from speaking and leading. These events include the creation of man before woman, God's direct instruction to the man, the woman's derivation from the man, her 'helper' status, his naming of her, the serpent's approach to the woman, her faulty defence, her lust and ambition, the deception of the woman, Adam's primary accountability, the woman's childbearing role, her desire to her husband and his rule over her. Many thousands of words have been written on each of these elements of the account, seeking insights into the relative virtues and vices of men and women and justifying patriarchal arrangements in church activities and government.

All these deductions rely on one crucial assumption which to our knowledge has never been scripturally or reasonably established. The assumption is this; that Adam in some way represents all men and Eve represents all women. Commentators of previous centuries have been unabashed in their bigotry, alleging the inferiority, gullibility and culpability of "Eve's daughters" and emphasising the priority and privilege of "Adam's sons", while lamenting male vulnerability to female subversion. Modern writers have tried to be more circumspect, recognising Eve's attempt to resist temptation and Adam's apparent passivity. But they still assert that the division of the church into male and female parts with separate roles and responsibilities stands on a Genesis foundation, however regrettable the limitations and inconveniences.

'The *Real Man and Woman*' challenges the underlying assumption on which all such exegeses rely. Drawing on Paul's spiritual application of Genesis 2 in Ephesians 5, this meditation reveals how the original marriage account can be seen as a prophecy and analogy of Christ and his 'bride'. All believers, both male and female, are 'Eve', the 'seed of the woman', and their Lord Jesus is 'Adam', the 'Son of man'. Any Christian man, therefore, who seeks within the church the pre-eminence and authority of the 'Adam' component of this union is in danger of grasping at equality with God (Phil 2:6) or at the least presuming to 'stand in' for Christ himself, who alone is the perpetual, living and active head of the church (the *ecclesia*). I consider this thesis to provide the definitive refutation of the many Christian commentaries on Genesis 2 & 3 which seek to divide the Body of Christ by gender and limit his sisters in their service to him.

Deb Hurn

Preface

Eph 5:31-32 NIV

*"For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife,
and the two will become one flesh."*

This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church.

In August 2007, when I was writing 'The New Covenant Liberates Sisters', I read the above quote and saw for the first time a whole new theme of Scripture ready for exploration. As I pondered those words various scriptures came to mind to explain what was going on with Adam and Eve in the first marriage, as detailed in Genesis 2 & 3. I was captivated by the message which was hidden behind such a simple account of the first man and woman. I had never heard anyone explain this before with such detail and significance, so it was a breathtaking experience to discover such treasures myself.

I always believed this section of Ephesians 5 to contain instruction on marriage and show how God designed for husbands and wives to live and work harmoniously together (which of course it does) and yet here in one sentence was a vital clue to something so much more.

I was consumed with the thought that marriage was really speaking of a greater institution than a man and a woman sharing earthly lives together. But reflecting back on my experience, this passage of scripture had been always used for its marriage purpose with almost complete neglect of what Paul calls "a profound

mystery". Of course, spiritual lessons are always more important than natural ones and so I fast became preoccupied with the need to find the profound meanings behind all that occurred with Adam and Eve.

It was only through my previous three years' private study on the New Covenant and extensive reference to the epistle writings that I was able to make the necessary connections. I was also helped by others who shared their wealth of knowledge and understanding and filled out the parts I didn't see.

Throughout this period of learning and writing, I have been overwhelmed by the grace of God who has chosen to reveal such things and I count myself very blessed to have opportunity to write it down for others to read. No human writing can do justice to the entire subject, but this document has been put together with regular prayer that I might accurately represent God's word. I am also thankful to friends who pre-read, edited and commented on the draft and I recognise there may be later editions as new insights develop. I will be pleased to hear from anyone in this regard. Overall, I thank my Heavenly Father and my Lord Jesus for this wonderful opportunity.

Janine Hennig – December 2007

Introduction

This study concentrates on discovering Genesis 2 & 3 from a New Covenant perspective. It is not so much concerned with what Adam and Eve did or didn't do, but what the New Covenant reveals of Jesus and the saints (the believers) in this record of them.

As previously suggested in my article 'The New Covenant Liberates Sisters' (pp. 1-2), every lesson, every story, every institution revealed in the pages of scripture is built upon Jesus.

Heb 1:10 [citing Ps 102:25] tells us the Son [Jesus]... "laid the foundations of the earth". NIV

John 1:1 In the beginning was the Word...10...the world was made through him...14...the Word became flesh and dwelt among us...15 John bore witness of him, and cried out, saying, "This was He of whom I said, 'He who comes after me has a higher rank than I, for he existed before me.'" NASB

We get a good indication from these two passages that Jesus is like no other man who walked the earth.

Col 1:15 He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. 16 For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. 17 He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. 18 And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. NIV

Read this beautiful piece of scripture and there can be no doubt that Jesus is the basis; the cornerstone; the solid foundation upon which God's plan and purpose was created and has been implemented. We don't have to suppose this suggests he existed before his birth in physical terms, but that he was the very reason the earth was created. God had a plan which was centred on having a Son and heir. This heir was Jesus who would walk the earth some thousands of years after the first man was created. As a gift to his Son, all others were created with the potential to be suitable helpers and companions for him.

It doesn't take much effort to find scriptural references pointing out the connections between the first man Adam and the Lord Jesus Christ:

Rom 5:14 Adam, who was a pattern of the one to come. NIV

What we often learn from these scriptures, however, is that whilst Adam is a pattern or type of Jesus, Jesus' accomplishments overturned Adam's failures, so that they are often revealed as opposites. On the one

hand, there is an overall similarity between Adam and Christ, and yet on specific points, Jesus is better classified as Adam's contrasting type. For example:

1 Cor 15: 22 For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive. NIV

1 Cor 15:45 So it is written: "The first man Adam became a living being"; the last Adam, a life-giving spirit NIV.

1 Cor 15:47 The first man was of the dust of the earth, the second man from heaven. NIV

Rom 5:12 Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men...17...how much more will those who receive God's abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ. NIV

Adam sinned; but Jesus never did; Adam returned to the dust; Jesus never saw corruption; Adam delivered sin and death to all; Jesus delivered life in the Spirit ... and so on.

It is equally important in the analogy to consider Eve, and for that we may refer back to the Ephesians 5 passage:

Eph 5:31-32 "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh." This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church. NIV

Eve, being the first wife, is revealed as a representative of the church, or Christ's body of believers. The wife in a human marriage is a cameo of what God really had in mind to provide for his Son – companionship and help.

2 Cor 11:1 I hope you [members of the Corinthian ecclesia] will put up with a little of my foolishness; but you are already doing that. 2 I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy. I promised you to one husband, to Christ, so that I might present you as a pure virgin to him. 3 But I am afraid that just as Eve was deceived by the serpent's cunning, your minds may somehow be led astray from your sincere and pure devotion to Christ. NIV

John 3:27 To this John [the Baptist] replied, "A man can receive only what is given him from heaven. 28 You yourselves can testify that I said, 'I am not the Christ but am sent ahead of him.' 29 The bride belongs to the bridegroom [Jesus]. The friend who attends the bridegroom waits and listens for him, and is full of joy when he hears the bridegroom's voice." NIV

By these references we are provided with sufficient evidence to see Eve as a representative of those who have committed their lives to Christ; the church or united believers. The scriptures also use other words such as "the bride", a chaste woman (Revelation) and a "virgin" (as in 2 Cor 11:1 above and in the parable of the ten virgins - Matthew 25).

Eve represents all believers, who are "her seed" (Gen 3:15). There is *no evidence* or any reason to suggest that Eve – the bride, the virgin or the chaste woman, only represents the sisters (women) in the body of Christ. Eve is a representative of *all* who have been given to Christ, both brothers and sisters, as a suitable helper for him.

IMPORTANT PRINCIPLE
Adam is a representation of Christ
(and also his contrasting type)
Eve is a representation of the believers

As we move through the subsequent chapters of this study, it should also become evident that we can reasonably consider Genesis 2 & 3 as a kind of prophecy, not just an analogy. But the warning which comes with prophecy is we must concern ourselves primarily with relevant moral teaching for today while relegating our interest in sequences and time frames to a low priority.

It seems quite apparent that within these two Genesis chapters there are two distinct sections and the translators have suitably broken the sections with a chapter break. Genesis 2 appears to reveal what God had in mind to accomplish on the earth (Part 1 of this study) and Genesis 3 appears to reveal how this plan will come to fruition (Part 2 of this study).

It is easy to allow one's imagination to run wild and develop themes which God never intended, so in this study I have adopted the respected principle of using scripture to interpret scripture. Venturing beyond these bounds will be resisted in the main but, if attempted, will come with the proviso that this is speculative.

It is also important to note that this study is not a consideration of the state of Adam before he sinned; nor does it consider the trees in the garden. It is safe to say, however, that God knew from the start that Adam and Eve would sin and God had it in his plan for there to be an opportunity of salvation for all those who in the future would place their trust in him.

Rom 11:32 For God has bound all men over to disobedience so that he may have mercy on them all. 33 Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out! NIV

PART 1 – GENESIS 2

This section starts with Genesis 2:7 and discovers God's plan concerning Jesus and the saints under the New Covenant, as revealed through Adam and Eve. It explains what God had in mind from the very beginning.

1. The man became a living being

*Gen 2:7 the LORD God formed the man from the dust of the ground
and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life,
and the man became a living being. NIV*

It was imperative that Adam was created first before any other human being. This was because Adam was patterned on Jesus, confirming the important principle (as mentioned above) that Jesus was first in God's plan. Adam was the first man to receive the breath of life from God and Jesus was the first (and only) one to be conceived by God's Spirit.

Luke 1:35 "The Holy Spirit will come upon you [Mary], and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God." NIV

Both Adam and Christ came to life through the direct agency of God's Spirit. Unlike Adam, however, God would pour out his Spirit on Jesus for a greater purpose than for life alone. God's Spirit energised Jesus for the effective ministry of his gospel.

John 1:32 Then John gave this testimony: "I saw the Spirit come down from heaven as a dove and remain on him [Jesus]. 33 I would not have known him, except that the one who sent me to baptize with water told me, 'The man on whom you see the Spirit come down and remain is he who will baptize with the Holy Spirit.' 34 I have seen and I testify that this is the Son of God." NIV

John 3:34 "For he whom God has sent utters the words of God, for he gives the Spirit without measure. 35 The Father loves the Son and has given all things into his hand." ESV

Jesus received of the Spirit without measure that he might preach the good news; but even more than that, for he was the very subject and focus of the good news. God's promise to dwell among them and within them would now be realized in the resurrected Lord who would be present in Spirit form in the life of all those who put their trust in him.

Acts 2:38 Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call"...41 Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day. 42 They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. 43 Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles. NIV

2. Free to eat of the tree of life

*Gen 2:9 And the LORD God made all kinds of trees grow out of the ground—
trees that were pleasing to the eye and good for food.*

In the middle of the garden were the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. NIV

Whatever our understanding of the purpose of the tree of life, it has always been the Father's pleasure to give and sustain life and this he provided for Adam and Eve. The second Adam, Jesus, received more than mortal life; he also received immortal life and he is the one who delivers the same to his bride.

John 17:3 "Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent." NIV

1 John 5:11 "And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. 12 He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life. 13 These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may continue to believe in the name of the Son of God." NKJV

Eternal life is knowing, having and believing in Jesus. Through him it is already available in part, with much more to come at his physical return, when immortality will be bestowed on the saints.

1 John 2:17 The world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives forever. NIV

John 10:27 "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. 28 And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand." NKJV

Jesus was the first one to eat of the true 'tree of life', for he rose to immortality. If we want to eat of the tree of life, we must be willing to "come to [Jesus] to have life" (John 5:39) for Jesus is the one who has "the words of eternal life" (John 6:68) and gives them to us.

3. The man was put in the garden to take care of it

*Gen 2:15 The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden
to work it and take care of it. NIV*

God was the Creator and owner of the first garden and put Adam and Eve within it to work and take care of it. In other 'garden' parables, Jesus is the sower, the husbandman, the tree-dresser, the land-owner and even the root-stock of the vine. God has given authority to his Son to deal with the spiritual garden as he sees fit.

John 5:21 "For just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, even so the Son gives life to whom he is pleased to give it. 22 Moreover, the Father judges no one, but has entrusted all judgment to the Son, 23 that all may honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father, who sent him... 27 And he has given him authority to judge because he is the Son of Man." NIV

Matt 28:18 Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me." NIV

Heb 2:7 "You [God] made him [Jesus] a little lower than the angels; you crowned him with glory and honor and put everything under his feet." In putting everything under him, God left nothing that is not subject to him. NIV

In Eden, Eve was to help Adam in this task. But in the greater scene, she is the garden herself, which her Lord Jesus lovingly plants, tends, nourishes, prunes, harvests and enjoys.

Song 4:12 A garden enclosed is my sister, my spouse, a spring shut up, a fountain sealed. NKJV

As Eve's children, we grow and produce fruit within ourselves and also help in the task of producing it in others. We are at the same time the branches of the vine and the labourers in the vineyard.

4. God instructs Adam

*Gen 2:16 And the LORD God commanded the man,
"You are free to eat from any tree in the garden;
17 but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil,
for when you eat of it you will surely die." NIV*

Prior to Eve's existence, God instructs Adam how to live acceptably in the garden. There is an important principle established in this small detail. It was always God's intention that Jesus, represented by Adam, would be the one to truly reveal him to the believers, represented by Eve. This is confirmed in the following words:

John 1:18 "No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him." NKJV

John 14:6 Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me." NKJV

Heb 1:1 God...2 has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds; 3 who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power... NKJV

No one can understand who the Father truly is or his purpose unless they first know the Son. It is Jesus who reveals the character and purpose of God, as well as what God requires of us. In the same way that Eve relied upon Adam, all believers can only rely on hearing Jesus' instructions, because he is the one to reveal the mystery of all ages (1 Cor 2:7).

5. She was taken out of man and given to the man

Gen 2:18 The LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him." ...

But for Adam no suitable helper was found.

21 So the LORD God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man's ribs and closed up the place with flesh.

22 Then the LORD God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man. NIV

God provides companionship for Jesus, just as he did for Adam. It is important to understand that the believers were given to Jesus as his companion and helper and not the other way around.

John 17:6 "I have revealed you to those whom you gave me out of the world. They were yours; you gave them to me and they have obeyed your word. 7 Now they know that everything you have given me comes from you. 8 For I gave them the words you gave me and they accepted them. They knew with certainty that I came from you, and they believed that you sent me. 9 I pray for them. I am not praying for the world, but for those you have given me, for they are yours. 10 All I have is yours, and all you have is mine. And glory has come to me through them." NIV

It is interesting to consider that Eve was created from Adam during the time that he slept. In a similar way we see Jesus' bride was born out of him at his death and three days' rest in the earth.

John 12:24 "I tell you the truth, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds." NIV

Certainly, the scriptures teach no one is born of the Spirit without Jesus. His death marked the end of the Old Covenant and his resurrection to immortal life marked the commencement of the New Covenant which he would administer. This New Covenant was all about Christ's work to change us from being carnal creatures to spiritual ones and he used a range of metaphors to explain this concept.

Jesus is the light which would shine in his bride.

John 8:12 "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life." NIV

Jesus is the bread of life which he gives to nourish his bride.

John 6:48 "I am the bread of life...51 I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world." NIV

Jesus supplies the living water to his bride. This living water is the Spirit.

John 7:37 "...If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. 38 Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him." 39 By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive. NIV

It can also be said that the believer comes to life as a result of the blood and the water which poured forth from Jesus' side when he was speared on the cross. As we consider that small detail concerning Jesus' death, we may see a mixture of the 'living water' (John 7:38) and the 'blood of the eternal covenant' described in the quote below:

Heb 13:20 May the God of peace, who through the blood of the eternal covenant brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, 21 equip you with everything good for doing his

will, and may he work in us what is pleasing to him, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen. NIV

Perhaps we are provided with a reflection of those thoughts in John's letter, with water and blood both being metaphors of the Spirit, which flows from Jesus, in order for his bride to experience new spiritual life.

1 John 5:6 This is the one who came by water and blood--Jesus Christ. He did not come by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit who testifies, because the Spirit is the truth. 7 For there are three that testify: 8 the Spirit, the water and the blood; and the three are in agreement. NIV

6. Bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh

*Gen 2:23 The man said
"This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh;
she shall be called 'woman', for she was taken out of man." NIV*

In this simple statement, Adam acknowledges that the woman has been made from him and is of the same nature and general appearance. Unlike the animals, she was recognisably 'human'.

We can also see in the analogy that the believers are derived from the Lord Jesus and can be seen as his body come to life. The Lord Jesus is within the core of every true believer and it is imperative we are like him in nature. We must be recognisably 'spiritual'.

Eph 5:29 After all, no one ever hated his own body, but he feeds and cares for it, just as Christ does the church—30 for we are members of his body. NIV

John 17:22 "I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one: 23 I in them and you in me. May they be brought to complete unity..." NIV

Rom 8:29 For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. NKJV

The unity of Jesus and his bride is a repeated New Covenant theme.

7. Leave Father and Mother

*Gen 2:24 For this reason a man will leave his father and mother
and be united to his wife. NIV*

Once again, we are reminded of the focus passage of this study:

Eph 5:31 "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife", 32 This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church. NIV

Jesus makes it quite clear he was prepared to leave his natural family behind in order to unite with his church.

Matt 12:48 He [Jesus] replied to him, "Who is my mother, and who are my brothers?" 49 Pointing to his disciples, he said, "Here are my mother and my brothers. 50 For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother." NIV

The church (*ecclesia*) consists of those who are prepared to obey God. We too, are required to leave something behind as we unite with Jesus. At our baptism, we say goodbye to the old man of Adam (the

contrasting type here) and a life of slavery to sin, to become 'slaves' to righteousness with Christ (Rom 6). As we leave behind our old life, we may be required to leave behind those we love.

Matt 19:29 "And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or fields for my sake will receive a hundred times as much and will inherit eternal life."

As individuals, we leave behind our past life for Christ and are then formed together with other believers in a common bond, to be united as a holy temple for the Lord.

Eph 2:19 Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household, 20 built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. 21 In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. 22 And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit. NIV

8. One flesh

*Gen 2:24 "...and the two will become one flesh."
25 The man and his wife were both naked, and they felt no shame. NIV*

It was always God's purpose that Jesus would be united with a bride and this has been outlined by the institution of marriage between man and woman. We can see the similarities which exist between the ideal earthly marriage and what God intended for his Son. There are many blessings including love, knowledge, intimacy, a clear conscience, support, strength, courage, holiness, joy and a whole new family. But most importantly, this relationship starts and finishes with love.

Love

1 John 3:16 This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. NIV

Jesus proves his love by giving his life for us. We are given opportunity to declare our love for Jesus by obeying his teaching.

John 14:21 "Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me. NIV

In any earthly marriage, there is a moulding and shaping of both partners to bring two lives into one. Because Jesus is the ultimate example of love, he doesn't mould to us but we to him and his perfect love.

1 Cor 13:4 Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. 5 It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. 6 Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. 7 It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. NIV

Knowledge

A marriage involves knowledge. The word 'knowledge' often conjures up the idea of knowing facts about something and yet this is not an accurate way to describe knowledge in regard to relationships. Knowledge on a personal level is about knowing and sharing another's innermost thoughts and secrets which can only happen when there is close and regular communication. When it comes to our relationship with Jesus, we are told the bride knows her Lord, and the Lord knows his bride, as symbolized in a shepherd and his sheep.

John 10:11 "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep." NIV

John 10:4 "... the sheep listen to his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out... his sheep follow him because they know his voice." NIV

Intimacy

Jesus desires to reveal himself to us in a close and intimate sense so that others may see his presence within us.

Col 1:27 To them God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. NKJV

Rev 3:20 "Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me." NKJV

Clear Conscience

Because Jesus has loved us and revealed himself to us, we don't need to hide our past or keep secrets from him for he is prepared to "remember our sins no more" (Heb 8:12) and work with us to cleanse our conscience.

Heb 10:19 Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, 20 by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body, 21 and since we have a great priest over the house of God, 22 let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water. NIV

Support

Jesus is ready and willing to stand by our side to help make our lives easier. When we yoke our lives to his, trusting he will not fail us, the heaviest part of our load is lifted and the road ahead seems much less arduous.

Matt 11:8 "Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 29 Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30 For My yoke is easy and My burden is light." NKJV

Jesus explains how this support is currently available.

John 16:7 "Nevertheless, I [Jesus] tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you." ESV

John 14:25 "These things I have spoken to you while I am still with you. 26 But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things..." ESV

Strength

Jesus delivers a strength to his bride such as no other man can provide.

2 Tim 4:17 But the Lord stood at my side and gave me strength. NIV

Eph 6:10 ... be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. NIV

Eph 3:14 For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, 15 from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, 16 that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man... NKJV

There is divine power in the strength we receive from Jesus.

Courage

This inner strength we gain from Jesus means we need not fear what others may do to us, what the future will bring, nor even death itself. Instead we are reassured by the love we experience in Christ.

1 John 4:17 In this way, love is made complete among us so that we will have confidence on the day of judgment, because in this world we are like him. 18 There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love. NIV

Holiness

The union with Christ results in new characteristics modeled on him. It is important to note that he does not conform to our ways, but we conform to his, for he is the ultimate marriage partner.

Phil 2:1 Therefore if there is any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and mercy, 2 fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. NKJV

Christ's holiness becomes our holiness, all of which first came from God.

1 John 3:9 No one who is born of God will continue to sin, because God's seed remains in him; he cannot go on sinning, because he has been born of God... 23 And this is his [God's] command: to believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and to love one another as he commanded us. 24 Those who obey his commands live in him, and he in them. And this is how we know that he lives in us: We know it by the Spirit he gave us. NIV

1 John 5:18 We know that anyone born of God does not continue to sin; the one who was born of God keeps him safe

When Christ is in us he enables us to overcome temptation and resist sin. We can do what is right because the Spirit is at work within us, compelling us to love and good works. The love of Christ revealed through his sacrifice invokes our repentance and submission to his commands, but it is the presence of the Spirit which enables us to carry out his will. It may then be clearly seen who are true members of Christ's bride and who are not, for "by their fruits you will know them" (Matt 7:16)

John 15:4 "Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. 5 I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing...7 If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. 8 By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples." NKJV

Joy

There is great joy and pleasure to be found in our relationship with Jesus.

1 Pet 1:8 Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, 9 for you are receiving the goal of your faith, the salvation of your souls. NIV

Jude 1:24 To him who is able to keep you from falling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy-- 25 to the only God our Savior be glory, majesty, power and authority, through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all ages, now and forevermore! NIV

New Family

Being 'one flesh' with Jesus brings us into God's family, whereby we call him Father and he treats us as his children.

Eph 1:5 ... he predestined us for adoption through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will. ESV

Rom 8:16 The Spirit itself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, 17 and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ. NAB

As mentioned at the start of this section, being 'one flesh' with Jesus starts with love and finishes with love, for now we are united with the Father's love and this love dwells in us as we grow in Christ.

John 14:21 "Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me. He who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love him and show myself to him."...23 "If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him." NIV

1 John 4:13 By this we know that we abide in Him, and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit...15 Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God. 16 And we have known and believed the love that God has for us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him. NKJV

1 John 5:1 Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and everyone who loves the father loves his child as well. 2 This is how we know that we love the children of God: by loving God and carrying out his commands. 3 This is love for God: to obey his commands. And his commands are not burdensome, 4 for everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith. 5 Who is it that overcomes the world? Only he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God. NIV

All of these blessings are ours for the taking. The only thing which stops us from receiving them is a lack of faith. This offer of oneness with our beloved Lord Jesus unites us all with the Father and delivers in part God's most precious promise that he "will be all and in all".

PART 2 – GENESIS 3

This section reveals how God will carry out his plan and purpose. His purpose is that Jesus be united with his bride, and now as we consider Adam and Eve as they are tempted, sin, and receive the consequences for their sin, we are provided with details of how God would unite the bride to his Son.

9. The serpent was crafty

Gen 3:1 Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden'?" NIV

In the garden Adam and Eve were the only people present. However, when we bring the New Covenant into play, in considering Christ and the church, there are certainly human 'serpents' who need to be resisted.

1 John 4:1 Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world. NKJV

Matt 24:10 "At that time many will turn away from the faith and will betray and hate each other, 11 and many false prophets will appear and deceive many people." NIV

2 Peter 2:1 But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, NKJV

2 Cor 11:2 For I am jealous for you with godly jealousy. For I have betrothed you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ. 3 But I fear, lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. 4 For if he who comes preaches another Jesus whom we have not preached, or if you receive a different spirit which you have not received, or a different gospel which you have not accepted—you may well put up with it! NKJV

The serpent is the enemy of the bride, the deceiver, the false prophet or anyone who leads people away from the truth about the Lord Jesus and his gospel.

Matt 12:19 When anyone hears the message about the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart...38 The weeds are the sons of the evil one, 39 and the enemy who sows them is the devil. NIV

Sometimes the serpent will be those who should know better.

Matt 23:29 "Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! ...33 You snakes! You brood of vipers! How will you escape being condemned to hell? 34 Therefore I am sending you prophets and wise men and teachers. Some of them you will kill and crucify; others you will flog in your synagogues and pursue from town to town." NIV

2 Tim 3:13 But evil men and impostors will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived. NKJV

Sometimes the serpent will be those who don't acknowledge the one true God, but practice their own kind of religion.

Acts 13:6 Now when they had gone through the island to Paphos, they found a certain sorcerer, a false prophet ...8...[who] withstood them, seeking to turn the proconsul away from the faith. 9 Then Saul, who also is called Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, looked intently at him 10 and said, "O full of all deceit and all fraud, you son of the devil, you enemy of all righteousness, will you not cease perverting the straight ways of the Lord?" NKJV

There will always be those who try to deceive the bride and sometimes they will be successful.

10. Eve's ignorance and vulnerability

Gen 3:2 The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, 3 but God did say, 'You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die' " NIV

A challenge for Eve is she hasn't received God's instruction directly. She has to rely on Adam for advice and if she doesn't consult him or fully listen to him, she will be ignorant of who God is and what he wants from her. The same applies for Christ's body, the believers. They can only discover who God is and what he wants of them through Jesus. None of us, brothers or sisters, have received direct revelation from God and even though we are provided with the scriptures to read for ourselves, we won't find their full sense and

application unless we see them from Jesus' perspective and unless we are continually consulting him for his guidance and wisdom.

Eve's immaturity, and our immaturity if we leave Jesus out of the picture, is likely to be manifested in two distinctly different ways. Eve's errors are very telling warnings for us all.

Her first mistake is that she *adds* to God's requirements. Instead of "*you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil*" she adds an extra requirement of "*you must not touch it*". This small addition, which adds touch to taste, may seem harmless or even possibly beneficial, but we can see where this ends when we look to the Scribes and Pharisees of Jesus' day. They had over-defined and added so many rules to the original laws of Moses that religion had become deeply burdensome to the people. This is the problem of legalism, as caused by Jews or any Christian group intent on creating rules and regulations instead of being in tune with Jesus.

Col 2:20 Since you died with Christ to the basic principles of this world, why, as though you still belonged to it, do you submit to its rules: 21 "Do not handle! Do not taste! Do not touch!"? 22 These are all destined to perish with use, because they are based on human commands and teachings. 23 Such regulations indeed have an appearance of wisdom, with their self-imposed worship, their false humility and their harsh treatment of the body, but they lack any value in restraining sensual indulgence. NIV

On the other hand, Eve's second error reveals another kind of mistake which can lead the believers down a perilous path. Instead of "*when you eat of it you will surely die*", Eve plays down the guarantee of God's sentence by removing the "*surely*" and simply states, "*you will die*". There are dire consequences for down-playing God's judgements, and the New Testament provides plenty of references to instances where this was occurring. We can identify this as the problem caused by Gentiles or any Christian group which thinks freedom in Christ means freedom to ignore all scriptural warnings.

1 Cor 6:9 Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders 10 nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God...12 "Everything is permissible for me"—but not everything is beneficial. "Everything is permissible for me"—but I will not be mastered by anything. NIV

Both addition to and deletion of God's words are as bad as each other but in opposite directions. Both misrepresent the message of the Father and both cause problems to other believers. The one who down-plays God's requirements leads others into sin and the other who adds to God's requirements kills people's faith with unnecessary burdens. Both attitudes are as dangerous as each other. Both cause sin and death.

Ideally, Eve should have just walked away from the serpent. But failing that, if she began to have any doubts about the truth of the instruction and penalty, she could have consulted with Adam. Likewise it is dangerous for us, Jesus' body, if we don't listen to his instruction and consult him regularly. When we leave Jesus out of our lives, we have...

Col 2:19 "lost connection with the Head, from whom the whole body, supported and held together by its ligaments and sinews, grows as God causes it to grow". NIV

To deny the importance of Christ as our head means we are reverting to law and ignoring his grace covenant.

Gal 5 4 You who are trying to be justified by law have been alienated from Christ; you have fallen away from grace. NIV

The really positive message from this is that when we are united with our spiritual husband, Jesus, there are great assurances.

Eph 4:14 Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming. 15 Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ. 16 From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work. NIV

11. She took of the fruit and gave to her husband

Gen 3:6 When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. NIV

Like Eve we are all subject to temptation.

James 1:14 ...each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed. NIV

Like Adam, Jesus struggled with temptation too.

Heb 4:15 For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet was without sin. NIV

Whereas Eve was deceived by the serpent (who represents the false prophet) this is not said of Adam, nor should it be when we consider that Adam represents Christ. Jesus was never deceived by anyone, though he fully accepts and suffers for what his bride, the ecclesia delivers to him. As Adam chose to associate with Eve in her fallen state, Jesus associated with us in our humanity and mortality.

This is where Jesus again appears as the contrasting type to Adam for we know that he “*committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth.*” (1 Pet 2:22 NIV).

Adam accepted the fruit and sinned, but our Lord Jesus Christ drank of the “cup” his bride handed to him and, in not sinning himself, delivered her from sin. Unlike the fruit, Jesus ‘cup’ was anything but pleasant to taste.

Matt 10:22 “Are you able to drink from the bitter cup of sorrow I [Jesus] am about to drink?” NKJV

Jesus bitter cup was a gruesome and painful death, which he endured for his bride’s sake. It was important he lead his bride by example that she might follow him.

Isa 53:5 But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed. 6 We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all. NIV

How true it is that all believers have been deceived and have dragged Jesus into their mess! Unlike Adam, who could do nothing to save Eve from her sin, the second Adam delivers us from sin, not just by his death but by his ongoing life (Rom 5:10).

It may have been different for Eve if she had consulted her husband, who could confirm God’s instruction before she made the decision to eat of the fruit. After all, it was Adam who had been directly instructed by God how to live in the garden. The lesson applies here for every believer too, that unless we consult our spiritual husband, Jesus, on every decision we make, we are likely to fall into the same kind of trap of eating forbidden fruit. This does not suggest however, that brothers are in any better position to confirm God’s instructions than sisters, for we all need Jesus’ assistance to receive and understand God’s Word.

12. They made coverings for themselves

*Gen 3:7 Then the eyes of both of them were opened,
and they realized they were naked;
so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves. NIV*

When our conscience tells us we have disobeyed God, the immediate reaction is to feel shame. We know we are to blame for our actions and so our heart sinks, our mind becomes stressed and we are filled with sadness knowing God is not pleased.

It appears Adam and Eve both felt the same way as they tried to cover their nakedness and relieve their shame. Of course, here we have the contrast with Adam again, for Jesus did not sin and could not have felt shame for disobeying God and yet he certainly did experience shame and nakedness in his mortal life (discussed in the next chapter).

Christ's bride, represented by Eve, however, certainly has reason to feel nakedness and shame when God's commands have been disobeyed.

Heb 4:13 Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account. NIV

Adam and Eve tried to cover their shame by their own effort. Chapter 25 clarifies why such coverings would never be sufficient.

13. Afraid because I was naked

*Gen 3:8 Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the LORD God
as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day,
and they hid from the LORD God among the trees of the garden.
9 But the LORD God called to the man, "Where are you?"
10 He answered, "I heard you in the garden,
and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid." NIV*

It was in the garden that God spoke with Adam, who was hiding, feeling afraid, ashamed and naked. In the Garden of Gethsemane we see Jesus in sorrow, stress and fear crouching before God, bearing a heavy load for us all, with his representative bride, the disciples, nearby.

Matt 26:36 Then Jesus came with them to a place called Gethsemane, and said to the disciples, "Sit here while I go and pray over there." 37 And He took with Him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and He began to be sorrowful and deeply distressed. 38 Then He said to them, "My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death. Stay here and watch with Me." NKJV

Luke 12:50 "But I have a baptism to undergo, and how distressed I am until it is completed!" NIV

Luke 22:44 And being in agony, He prayed more earnestly. Then His sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground. NKJV

It was in the garden he spoke to his Father and confessed his worst fear. Not long after that, he was shamed, being rejected of his people and crucified naked.

John 19:24 ... "They divided my garments among them and cast lots for my clothing." NIV

God called Adam to account for the results of Eve's deception and so it is that he calls the greater Adam, Jesus, to address our failings.

14. The woman you gave me

Gen 3:12 And the man said, The woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I ate. MKJV

Many have suggested that by the words “the woman you gave me”, Adam blames his wife for leading him astray. This theory is dependent on the inflection of the reader, who with a change in tone can also convey that Adam simply states the facts.

What is more important is the lesson Christ teaches us about how he treats his bride, which comes to light in Jesus’ prayer in the garden.

John 17:1 After Jesus said this, he looked toward heaven and prayed:

“Father, the time has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you. 2 For you granted him authority over all people that he might give eternal life to all those you have given him...

11...Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name—the name you gave me—so that they may be one as we are one. 12 While I was with them, I protected them and kept them safe by that name you gave me. None has been lost except the one doomed to destruction so that Scripture would be fulfilled...15 My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one...20 My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, 21 that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me...24 Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am ...26 I have made you known to them, and will continue to make you known in order that the love you have for me may be in them and that I myself may be in them.” NIV

These are certainly not the words of blame. These are Jesus’ words of love and concern for his bride. Not once does Jesus, in this most beautiful prayer at the end of his life, ever blame or attribute his suffering to the disciples; present or future. Instead, out of love, he prays for them that they may receive every spiritual blessing to stay in union with him and the Father.

When we pray for someone it is because we care for them and seek for their well being. God has never been happy with blaming others for our sin; and Jesus, though he had every right to complain, does not do this here. Instead, what Jesus did achieve was to

Heb 2:15 free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death. NIV

15. The serpent deceived me

*Gen 3:13 Then the LORD God said to the woman, “What is this you have done?”
The woman said, “The serpent deceived me, and I ate.” NIV*

Many also suggest this is Eve’s attempt to blame someone else for her sin. God’s fundamental requirement of Eve and all believers is to repent of our sin. To blame another suggests there is no repentance, and this failure would give God every reason to strike her dead at that moment. It is important we respect the scriptural principle of the necessity to repent.

1 John 1:9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 10 If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us. NKJV

There is no suggestion that we can come before the judgement seat with an unrepentant heart and still be forgiven and accepted. Humility before God is the key to the Kingdom and this involves admitting and being

sorrowful for the specific sin we have committed and acknowledging the need for help to stop succumbing to that temptation when we face it again.

It is interesting that scripture does not report that Adam was deceived and this is clarified in the letter to Timothy.

1 Tim 2:14 And Adam was not the one deceived; it was the woman who was deceived and became a sinner. NIV

Whilst Adam may not have been deceived, he certainly sinned. In contrast, Jesus was neither deceived nor a sinner. We see a connection between Adam and Christ, in that Adam was drawn to sin through Eve, and Christ was associated with 'sin' through us, though remaining innocent himself. The important lesson for all of us 'Eves', or believers, is that we must stay close to the Lord Jesus through prayer and reading the scriptures, that he might impart his wisdom to us and provide us with the help to resist our temptations.

(Note: The context and interpretation of this Timothy passage is considered in detail in 'All One in Christ Jesus' by Ian & Averil McHaffie (Section 11) and will not be expounded in this document.)

16. Cursing or Blessing?

Whereas the serpent is cursed and the earth is cursed, the word 'curse' is not used in reference to Adam and Eve. Adam and Eve received consequences for their sin and yet there are two ways to look at these consequences. From a human perspective and in the setting of everyday life, they unquestionably appear as 'curses' and yet from a spiritual perspective, whereby we consider Jesus and his bride, they can be seen as the means by which spiritual 'blessing' is delivered. How we view the difficulties or suffering we face in our temporary lives possibly determines whether we are children of God on a spiritual level.

James 1:2-4 My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing. NKJV

God wants us to be complete, lacking in nothing; therefore he will test, prove and extend our faith so that we learn patience. As we mature in the relationship we develop with Jesus, we will begin to see trial as something to appreciate rather than something to fear or bear reluctantly.

2 Thess 1:4 ... so that we ourselves boast of you among the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that you endure, which is manifest evidence of the righteous judgment of God, that you may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you also suffer... NKJV

Mal 3:2-3

For He is like a refiner's fire, And like launderer's soap.

He will sit as a refiner and a purifier of silver;

He will purify the sons of Levi, And purge them as gold and silver,

That they may offer to the Lord, An offering in righteousness. NKJV

The human mind of itself is not capable of understanding "the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God". But with Christ we can begin to see and make sense of the paradoxes – strength from weakness, wisdom from folly, riches in poverty, etc. Despite the difficulties and trials we face, we are not alone for we have a captain who is prepared to take us by the hand and lead us through them to better things.

Heb 2:10 For it was fitting for Him [Jesus], for whom are all things and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings... 14 Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same... NKJV

Above all, we are reassured that our Heavenly Father is loving and gracious, and regards it a pleasure to give us the kingdom (Luke 12:32).

17. The serpent cursed

Gen 3:14 So the LORD God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this, Cursed are you above all the livestock and all the wild animals! You will crawl on your belly and you will eat dust all the days of your life." NIV

As previously suggested in chapter 9, it appears we are confronted with two main kinds of serpents or enemies to Christ's bride:

Firstly, those who have been deceived themselves and practice low-life behaviour, enticing the bride to do likewise. They will receive their condemnation.

Matt 12:34 "Brood of vipers! How can you, being evil, speak good things?...36 But I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment. 37 For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned." NKJV

Matt 23:13 "But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you shut up the kingdom of heaven against men; for you neither go in yourselves, nor do you allow those who are entering to go in." NKJV

Matt 23:14 "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you devour widows' houses, and for a pretense make long prayers. Therefore you will receive greater condemnation." NKJV

2 Thess 2:8 And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming. 9 The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, 10 and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved. 11 And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, 12 that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness. NKJV

Secondly, there are 'serpents' who can clearly see the hand of God around them, yet refuse to honour or thank him. Instead, they practice their own kind of religion, worshipping the created and not the Creator. The condemnation is much the same – death.

Rom 1:18 The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness, 19 since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. 20 For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities--his eternal power and divine nature--have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.

21 For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened... 24 Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another. 25 They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator... 29 They have become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed and depravity. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit and malice. They are gossips, 30 slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant and boastful; they invent ways of doing evil; they disobey their parents; 31 they are senseless, faithless, heartless, ruthless. 32 Although they know God's righteous decree that those who do such

things deserve death, they not only continue to do these very things but also approve of those who practice them. NIV

1 John 3:10 This is how we know who the children of God are and who the children of the devil are: Anyone who does not do what is right is not a child of God; nor is anyone who does not love his brother. NIV

It appears from the example of the Scribes and Pharisees that most false prophets of the first kind don't even realise they are rejected by God. To be sure we are the bride and not the wayward woman, we must have a relationship with Christ, whereby we know him and submit to him as our head.

18. Enmity

Gen 3:15 "And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel." NIV

Conflict and strife will exist between Christ's bride and her enemies until Jesus delivers the final blow after his return. The strife will be so great it will even divide brothers and sisters from the one family.

Luke 12:51 "Do you think I [Jesus] came to bring peace on earth? No, I tell you, but division. 52 From now on there will be five in one family divided against each other, three against two and two against three. 53 They will be divided, father against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother, mother-in-law against daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law." NIV

Matt 10:21 "Now brother will deliver up brother to death, and a father his child; and children will rise up against parents and cause them to be put to death. 22 And you will be hated by all for My name's sake..." NKJV

There will be division, for the two kinds cannot exist in peace together.

Gal 5:16 ¹⁶I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. ¹⁷For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish. ¹⁸But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. NKJV

Those who live by law are still subject to the lust of the flesh. Those who live by the Spirit, through their relationship with Jesus, are no longer controlled by such lusts. There will always be conflict between those carrying out the deeds of the flesh and those who live according to the Spirit.

Rom 8:5 For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. 6 For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. 7 Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. 8 So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God. NKJV

There can be no agreement or harmony between the carnally minded and those who live by the Spirit.

Matt 6:24 "No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon." NKJV

James 4:4 "You adulterous people, don't you know that friendship with the world is hatred toward God? Anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God." NIV

19. With pain you will give birth

*Gen 3:16 To the woman he said,
“I will greatly increase your pains in childbearing;
with pain you will give birth to children.” NIV*

Eve would experience pain as she gave birth to her children and so would all other mothers who were to walk the earth. At the same time, Eve would also experience the immense joy of carrying and giving birth to her children – precious gifts from God. When we view the spiritual Eve to be all the believers (as suggested in chapter 16) we discover a vital New Covenant theme, which is repeated over and over – in order to bring forth new spiritual life and joy, some kind of pain or suffering (a virtual death) is involved.

John 12:24 “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain. 25 He who loves his life will lose it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life.” NKJV

We should not be surprised when we experience suffering, as it is the very means by which God works out his purpose. This is the process which is best described in the phrase “born of God”. There is no question we will all experience suffering of some kind in our waiting to see the King.

Acts 14:22 “We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God.” NKJV

Phil 1:29 For to you it has been granted on behalf of Christ, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake. NKJV

1 Thess 3:3 ...no one should be shaken by these afflictions; for you yourselves know that we are appointed to this. 4 For, in fact, we told you before when we were with you that we would suffer tribulation... NKJV

2 Tim 1:8 Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me His prisoner, but share with me in the sufferings for the gospel according to the power of God... NKJV

2 Tim 3:12 Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution. NKJV

2 Thess 1:4 ...so that we ourselves boast of you among the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that you endure, 5 which is manifest evidence of the righteous judgment of God, that you may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you also suffer... NKJV

On the surface, it sounds like terrible news that we will need to suffer, as though it is a ‘curse’. Suffering, however, is important for our spiritual development and growth. It is interesting to note that it can come in different ways:

- Self imposed suffering which is the consequence of our own sin
- Suffering which cannot be blamed on anyone and is beyond human control
- Suffering which is imposed by others, sometimes referred to as persecution

All three are quite different as far as the cause is concerned; however, the unifying factor is that they should all be dealt with in the same way – in humility before God. Seeking God with a repentant heart for our own foolishness or waywardness requires humility. Seeking God to help endure pain, hardship and sorrow requires humility, acknowledging that we cannot deal with our situation alone. Enduring rejection and persecution for Jesus’ sake is very humbling and is reason to seek his comfort. Humility is the means by which we find our Heavenly Father’s strength and comfort and this is mediated to us through a living and active Lord Jesus working in our lives. Now we are able to develop a loving relationship with him as we experience his goodness and love in helping us to persevere.

2 Cor 12:7-10 ...a thorn in the flesh was given to me, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I be exalted above measure. Concerning this thing I pleaded with the Lord three times that it might depart from me. And He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness." Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong. NKJV

This profound passage tells us that our humble requests for help might not mean our pain is alleviated, but it does mean we can experience the power of Christ in our lives, to enable us to "boast in [our] infirmities" (NKJV 2 Cor 12:5-10) with a new kind of strength. The phrase "when I am weak, then I am strong" makes no sense to most people in the world, but for the bride of Christ, it is at the heart of our new life.

2 Cor 1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, 4 who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. NKJV

It is also through our suffering and the experience of divine strength and love that we can help others to be comforted. But not just comfort either...

Rom 5:3 we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance. NIV

To rejoice in our sufferings reveals the divine presence in us, for such a reaction is anything but normal in human terms.

Phil 4:12 I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound. Everywhere and in all things I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. 13 I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. NKJV

No matter what hardship or suffering we face, we are provided with the mechanism to cope and not to fear. This is the confidence which Christ brings to our lives.

Paul confirms a strong connection between the pain and sorrow of childbirth and the production of new spiritual life. He describes how much he suffers to know the Galatians were struggling to leave behind law for freedom in Christ. The New Covenant was all about Christ developing within them and yet there was resistance to this wonderful promise.

Gal 4:19 My dear children, for whom I am again in the pains of childbirth until Christ is formed in you, 20 how I wish I could be with you now and change my tone, because I am perplexed about you! NIV

There are numerous passages which soberly remind the bride of Christ that union with the Lord will result in her persecution at the hands of others.

John 15:18 "If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first. 19 If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you. 20 Remember the words I spoke to you: 'No servant is greater than his master'. If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also. If they obeyed my teaching, they will obey yours also. 21 They will treat you this way because of my name, for they do not know the One who sent me"... NIV

Matt 10:24 "A student is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his master. 25 It is enough for the student to be like his teacher, and the servant like his master. If the head of the house has been called Beelzebub, how much more the members of his household!" NIV

John 15:20 "Remember the word that I said to you, 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you. If they kept My word, they will keep yours also. 21 But all these things they will do to you for My name's sake, because they do not know Him who sent Me." NKJV

Rom 8:35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? 36 As it is written: "For Your sake we are killed all day long; We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter." NKJV

But we needn't be sad about this aspect of God's purpose, for it also brings great reassurance:

Matt 5:10 "Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." NIV

Matt 5:11 "Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. 12 Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you." NIV

So whilst pain in childbirth appears to be a curse for Eve, suffering to establish new life in the believer is what really develops the relationship with Jesus and this brings real blessing.

Heb 12:10 Our fathers disciplined us for a little while as they thought best; but God disciplines us for our good, that we may share in his holiness. 11 No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it.

20. He will rule over you

Gen 3:16 "Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you." NIV

From Eve's perspective, the domination by her husband would provide her with great challenges and trials. The word 'desire' can be considered in several ways. It can be interpreted as her desire to seek control over her own life and her husband's life. It can also be seen as a desire for her husband's sole devotion to her in an obsessive or possessive kind of way. Perhaps there is also a sense in which wives may have expectations of their husbands in things that they cannot be, do or provide. In any case, there was to be potential for friction, and all of these can be viewed in the natural way as a 'curse'.

On a spiritual level, however, as Eve represents all believers, there are greater lessons to be learned of God's New Covenant purpose in this ruling he gave. First of all, we can easily establish that Jesus would be the head of all his 'Eves' – the believers.

Heb 1:9 ...your God, has set you above your companions by anointing you with the oil of joy. NIV

Eph 1:22 And God placed all things under his [Jesus'] feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, 23 which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way. NIV

Col 2:9 For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form...10...who is the head over every power and authority. NIV

God had in mind for Christ to be appointed head of all people. In the establishment phase, however, when the bride is being determined, the issue is not forced. People have free will to decide if they will submit to his authority and many have been left alone, free to resist. What is quite clear is that Jesus rejected the human method of appointment to authority and kingship.

John 6:15 Therefore when Jesus perceived that they were about to come and take Him by force to make Him king, He departed again to the mountain by Himself alone. NKJV

Jesus revealed God's ultimate way to establish subjection and that was to give of his entire life for the sake of his bride, even to the point of a tortured death. Christ's sacrifice came first, and not the believers' subjection, for the scriptures point out that "while we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom 5:8 NIV). Jesus was appointed the head of the body because he first acted out of love and not because he first dominated others and forced their submission. What a wonderful model for all earthly husbands! Even for Jesus, kingship was not automatically due to him; he was first required to submit to his Father, sacrifice his life for his bride and, in so doing, inspire her love and respect.

That Christ is appointed our head is a true blessing from God. Whilst an earthly marriage is subject to human folly and weakness, the believers can rest assured their protector and saviour has absolute wisdom and faultless judgement in which they can trust. Jesus can 'be, do and provide' all that we look to him for and will never disappoint us.

Eph 5:23 ...Christ is head of the church...24 the church is subject to Christ...26 that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, 27 that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish...30 For we are members of His body... NKJV

If we choose to subject our lives to Christ, giving him complete control, then he will act as our head and work with us to cleanse us with water. But this is no ordinary H₂O. Jesus, whose name is the "Word of God" (Rev 19:13) provides "living water" (John 4:14), otherwise known as "the Spirit" (John 6:38) to prepare us for the time when he will physically appear on the earth. Without the scriptures we would not know who Jesus is and what he came to accomplish, and without Jesus' work through the Spirit we would not fully understand the scriptures or apply their lessons in our heart. Together they are the "Word of God", God's work for us and in us, to prepare and present us in glory.

The believers are united as Christ's body, submitting to his rule and authority while earnestly desiring his love and care. We are individually different parts of Christ's body; with different personalities and talents, given for a wide range of purposes in service to Christ. All our differences are provided by the one Spirit for the benefit and development of all.

1 Cor 12:12 The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ. 13 For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body--whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. NIV

The promise that Jesus will take care of our worries and guide us in the right paths is a huge blessing. Trusting in Jesus means following his lead, whereby we pray – "not my will, but yours be done". In this attitude of absolute respect and admiration for our spiritual husband, we acknowledge that he knows what is best for us. This is the means by which we are united with the Father.

There will be some who cannot submit to Christ's authority and judgement but will desire to usurp his headship and stand in his place. There is no head over the church but Christ and for Christ's sake we work together, submitting to each other under his guiding hand. There is a solemn warning for any believers who fail to submit to God's appointed authority, the Lord Jesus Christ. They will be opposed.

James 4:6 "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble." 7 Submit yourselves, then, to God. NIV

Rom 10:3 Since they did not know the righteousness that comes from God and sought to establish their own, they did not submit to God's righteousness. 4 Christ is the end of the law so that there may be righteousness for everyone who believes. NIV

Those who want to live according to law are denying Christ's authority and his covenant of righteousness. It is only through knowing Christ and submitting to his will that we can bear fruit.

Matt 7:15 "Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves. 16 By their fruit you will recognize them. Do people pick grapes from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? 17 Likewise every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. 18 A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit. 19 Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. 20 Thus, by their fruit you will recognize them. 21 Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. 22 Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?' 23 Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!'" NIV

False prophets are those who cannot accept Christ's authority and such people will be revealed by the fruit which they bear.

When we consider the deeper application of the following 1 Timothy passage, in which the spiritual Adam is Christ, and the spiritual Eve is the bride, there is no question who God considered to be 'first' and who was vulnerable to deception. (For a discussion on its natural application, see "All One in Christ Jesus", McHaffie, Section 11)

1 Tim 2:11 A woman [wife?] should learn in quietness and full submission. 12 I do not permit a woman [wife?] to teach or to have authority over a man [husband?]; she must be silent. 13 For Adam was formed first, then Eve. 14 And Adam was not the one deceived; it was the woman who was deceived and became a sinner. NIV

Christ is the one who was created first and the believers were created for him. The believers, both men and women, are those who are vulnerable to deception and only those who unite with Jesus and submit to his authority will go on to be united with him forever.

21. Because you listened to your wife

Gen 3:17 To Adam he said, "Because you listened to your wife and ate from the tree about which I commanded you, 'You must not eat of it'" NIV

Adam undoubtedly loved his wife and delighted in her companionship; so much so that he was prepared to listen to her and also be enticed by the fruit and its effects, while ignoring God's commands in the process. An important lesson for all in marriage is that despite the rewards the relationship can bring, God's instructions cannot be overridden.

But on a spiritual level, we know the greater Adam, Jesus, did not ignore or disobey God's instructions, so we must see Adam as a contrasting type in this respect. However, there is an important similarity between Jesus and Adam in that Jesus loves and cares for his bride and responds to her voice.

Matt 9:35 Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness. 36 When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. NIV

Matt 14:14 When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them and healed their sick. NIV

Matt 15:32 Jesus called his disciples to him and said, "I have compassion for these people; they have already been with me three days and have nothing to eat. I do not want to send them away hungry, or they may collapse on the way." NIV

Jesus' love and compassion for us is certain as we consider his response to those who cried out for his help.

John 15:9 "As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you [disciples]. Now remain in my love. 10 If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have obeyed my Father's commands and remain in his love. 11 I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. 12 My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. 13 Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends. 14 You are my friends if you do what I command. 15 I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you. 16 You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit—fruit that will last. Then the Father will give you whatever you ask in my name. 17 This is my command: Love each other." NIV

It was because of Jesus' love that he was prepared to unite with the believers and share in the consequences of their sin, even though he committed no sin himself. His love was so complete he would lay down his life for his bride and endure suffering for her in order to deliver her.

Heb 2:9 But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, now crowned with glory and honor because he suffered death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone. 10 In bringing many sons to glory, it was fitting that God, for whom and through whom everything exists, should make the author of their salvation perfect through suffering. 11 Both the one who makes men holy and those who are made holy are of the same family. So Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers... And again he says, "Here am I, and the children God has given me."... 14 Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death--that is, the devil-- 15 and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death. NIV

Unlike Adam, who succumbed to the power of the serpent who deceived his wife, Jesus destroyed the power of those who desired to deceive him. He rejected their ways and their reasoning and submitted to God's will even to the point of his own death. It is now in his immortalised state he is prepared to deliver his bride from the hands of any who wish to deceive her and in doing so, bring her new life. Any believers who unite themselves with Christ and humbly seek for his constant presence in their life will not be deceived, and nor will they be subject to the slavery of sin and its inevitable death.

Heb 5:8 Although he was a son, he learned obedience from what he suffered 9 and, once made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him. NIV

Gal 2:20 I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me. NIV

Jesus is prepared to hear and answer the voice of every believer who seeks him. His presence through the Spirit is how we can put to death our old lives and find new lives in him, with the ultimate gift of immortality to be granted at his return.

22. Through painful toil

Gen 3:17 "Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat of it all the days of your life." NIV

Because Adam sinned, he would be removed from the garden and placed in a harsh environment where he would need to sow, till and harvest the ground to feed his family. Likewise, Jesus would be required to work

with a cursed earth and it would not always be productive. In the parable of the sower (Matt 13:3-18), there are several kinds of unproductive soil representing the different minds into which our Lord sows the Word: the hard-trodden barren unbeliever, the shallow and stony-hearted and the one focused on wealth and material pleasures.

Matt 13:18 Listen then to what the parable of the sower means: 19 When anyone hears the message about the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart. This is the seed sown along the path. 20 The one who received the seed that fell on rocky places is the man who hears the word and at once receives it with joy. 21 But since he has no root, he lasts only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, he quickly falls away. 22 The one who received the seed that fell among the thorns is the man who hears the word, but the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth choke it, making it unfruitful. 23 But the one who received the seed that fell on good soil is the man who hears the word and understands it. He produces a crop, yielding a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown. NIV

Even when the seed takes hold in good ground and brings forth a crop, the enemy will sow tares amongst the crop, which cannot be clearly identified or removed, and must wait till judgment.

Matt 13:36 Then he left the crowd and went into the house. His disciples came to him and said, "Explain to us the parable of the weeds in the field." 37 He answered, "The one who sowed the good seed is the Son of Man. 38 The field is the world, and the good seed stands for the sons of the kingdom. The weeds are the sons of the evil one, 39 and the enemy who sows them is the devil. The harvest is the end of the age, and the harvesters are angels." NIV

From both of these parables we can see that not all the seed Jesus sows will grow and produce a crop. The sons of the Kingdom, whose seed comes from Jesus, will have to exist alongside the sons of the devil, the false prophets and deceivers, until Jesus arrives for the harvest. It must have distressed Jesus greatly to teach these parables and his gospel to an unreceptive audience and also experience the scorn which proceeded from the hardened hearts of the religious leaders of the day.

Jesus' task to grow a fruitful crop was to be full of painful toil and we see this represented in the parable of the vineyard:

Luke 20:9 He went on to tell the people this parable: "A man planted a vineyard, rented it to some farmers and went away for a long time. 10 At harvest time he sent a servant to the tenants so they would give him some of the fruit of the vineyard. But the tenants beat him and sent him away empty-handed. 11 He sent another servant, but that one also they beat and treated shamefully and sent away empty-handed. 12 He sent still a third, and they wounded him and threw him out. 13 "Then the owner of the vineyard said, 'What shall I do? I will send my son, whom I love; perhaps they will respect him.' 14 "But when the tenants saw him, they talked the matter over. 'This is the heir,' they said. 'Let's kill him, and the inheritance will be ours.' 15 So they threw him out of the vineyard and killed him." NIV (also Matt 21:33-46)

Like the son of the vineyard owner, Jesus was thrown out of his own vineyard and killed. Jesus endured much painful toil for the life of his bride by:

- accepting hunger, sleeplessness and discomfort
- resisting temptation and sin
- walking away from humanly ordained kingship
- allowing himself to be treated as an outcast
- remaining silent before his accusers
- allowing his body to be beaten and his life extinguished

Luke 22:44 And being in agony, He prayed more earnestly. Then His sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground. NKJV

Matt 27:50 And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice, and yielded up His spirit. NKJV

Jesus' labour for us doesn't end in the toil of his mortal life, for Jesus is still toiling in his immortal life as he works now to help us with our mortal frailties. Both in the past and in the present, Jesus endures all these things for the benefit of his bride. What believer would not respond and submit to such a beautiful man who gives all for their benefit? In sacrificing his entire life, Jesus reveals his innermost sentiment of loving tenderness for his bride.

When we truly see Jesus' sacrifice, our heart is touched and we cannot help but surrender our entire lives to him, baring our innermost thoughts, confessing our sins and weaknesses, ridding ourselves of any blame or grudges and giving our hearts and minds to him to work with in love.

Rom 5:6 You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. 7 Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might possibly dare to die. 8 But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. NIV

God provided the bride as a helper for Jesus, but Jesus gave his own life for the life of his bride.

23. To dust you will return

Gen 3:19 "By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return". NIV

Adam's sin would result in death, but as Christ did not sin, Adam is very much the contrasting type in this section. Adam brought death but Christ brings life.

Rom 6:23 For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. NIV

1 Cor 15:22 For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive. NIV

Jesus' death and resurrection to life would result in others coming to life.

John 12:23 Jesus replied, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. 24 I tell you the truth, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds." NIV

Jesus had to die first, in order to be raised to immortal life whereby he could work in us and through us, to prepare us also for the blessing of immortal life.

Rom 5:15 But the gift is not like the trespass. For if the many died by the trespass of the one man, how much more did God's grace and the gift that came by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, overflow to the many! 16 Again, the gift of God is not like the result of the one man's sin: The judgment followed one sin and brought condemnation, but the gift followed many trespasses and brought justification. 17 For if, by the trespass of the one man, death reigned through that one man, how much more will those who receive God's abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ. NIV

Unlike Adam, Jesus resisted temptation and triumphed over sin.

Heb 12:2 Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. NIV

Having already endured the cross, Jesus is now prepared to perfect the faith he first originated in us.

Rom 4:25 He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification. NIV

The risen Christ would re-unite with his bride to work with her and through her to produce the fruit of righteousness.

24. The mother of all living

*Gen 3:20 Adam named his wife Eve
because she would become the mother of all the living. NIV*

Like Eve, all members of Christ's bride will experience what it is like to conceive, develop and give birth to new spiritual life. Even though the birth is painful, the union with our Lord is pleasurable, the process of growing new life is amazing and the joy of a new heart is overwhelming. This change in us is what brings glory to the Father.

But for conception to occur, we must be open and uncovered before Jesus, our loving spiritual husband, who has already given his life for us. We will confess our sins and reveal our innermost secrets and desires through the intimacy of heartfelt prayer. Nothing of ours is withheld or covered over and no good thing is withheld from us, as Jesus, seeing our humility and trust, washes us and gives us relief and joy. Knowing our husband is compassionate and loving, we can also trust he will not hold our past sins against us and nor will we be reminded of them again. There is no shame in our union with Christ, for we long to feel his love and receive and grow his spiritual seed.

1 Peter 1:23 For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God. NIV

It is our union with Jesus – the Word of God made flesh (John 1:1,14) and whose name is the "Word of God" (Rev 19:13) – which enables us to be born again of a seed which endures forever. That seed produces fruit.

2 Cor 9:10 Now he who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness. NIV

As with a natural father, the children begotten by Jesus have characteristics like his and like his Father's.

Rom 8:16 The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God. NKJV

Spiritual conception and growth is not for our own benefit alone, for we are called to be 'mothers' of many other lives who also need to know, love and unite with Jesus.

Matt 24:14 "And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come... 19 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." NIV

Heb 2:13 And again, "I will put My trust in Him." And again, "Behold Me and the children whom God has given Me." MKJV

It is clear that Jesus' disciples of all ages are called upon to preach the good news of the Kingdom. The Kingdom commences as we begin our new life with him, honouring him as the King who reigns in our heart. This current invisible King will then become a physical reality when he returns to the earth to be seen before all.

Even though we are expected to plant and water in our efforts to preach the Kingdom (1 Cor 3:6-7), we are given assurance that the increase comes from God. Paul develops this also when he says:

Gal 1:15 But when it pleased God, who separated me [Paul] from my mother's womb and called me through His grace, 16 to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the Gentiles... NKJV

It could be seen by all observers that Jesus was at work in Paul by the Spirit as he preached. This was why Paul's efforts to preach were so successful, for others could see the transformation which had occurred in him through the active work of the Lord Jesus, so that they desperately wanted to experience the same.

There is also an intriguing passage in the first letter of Timothy to the ecclesia of Ephesus worth some consideration on this theme.

1 Tim 2:13 For Adam was formed first, then Eve. 14 And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression. 15 Nevertheless she will be saved in childbearing if they continue in faith, love, and holiness, with self-control. NKJV

The idea that women are saved by bearing and raising children is doubtful, for we know that women are saved by grace through faith, just as are men. It is also apparent that Christian women's safety in childbirth is not assured, nor do all have opportunity to give birth. A spiritual application of this verse makes much more sense as we consider that believers are saved in the process of spiritual 'child-bearing', albeit in pain and sorrow. Christ's bride, the believers, will find salvation in bringing forth new life in themselves and also in spreading the good news about Jesus to others.

Rom 10:15 "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, who bring glad tidings of good things!" NKJV

Not only is it important to preach the gospel, but also to restore those who have strayed, which gives life in the sense of saving others from death.

James 5:19 My brothers, if one of you should wander from the truth and someone should bring him back, 20 remember this: Whoever turns a sinner from the error of his way will save him from death and cover over a multitude of sins. NIV

Preaching the gospel likewise comes through practising the same kind of love and care as our Lord had for us.

Matt 25:34 "Then the King will say to those on His right hand, 'Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: 35 'for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; 36 'I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me.' " NKJV

Paul explains what the gospel is that we preach:

Eph 3:8 To me, who am less than the least of all the saints, this grace was given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, 9 and to make all see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the ages has been hidden in God who created all things through Jesus Christ; 10 to the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places, 11 according to the eternal purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord, 12 in whom we have boldness and access with confidence through faith in Him. NKJV

The 'mystery' which was previously hidden has now been revealed and accomplished in Christ. That good news is Jesus' sacrifice, by which our past sins are forgotten and our present and future is filled with his

presence. Once we know Jesus, we are able to see the gospel in many of the Old Testament accounts, and Genesis 2 & 3 is just one of these.

Col 1: 27 To them God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. 28 Him we preach, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus. 29 To this end I also labor, striving according to His working which works in me mightily. NKJV

This gospel is available to all.

Gal 3:28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. 29 If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

1 Cor 12:13 For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body - whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free - and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.

Intimate union with Christ is the only means by which we can conceive and bring forth new spiritual life. Holiness and righteousness can only be revealed through Jesus' work in us, by which we bear fruit for the Father's glory. This is the promise which inspired and enabled Paul to successfully preach and is our promise too. Christ's bride, just like Paul, will delight in bearing children for Jesus and in doing so be called "the mother of all living".

25. God made their garments

Gen 3:21 The LORD God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them. NIV

Adam and Eve tried to make their own garments and cover their shame (introduced in chapter 12), but fig leaves were not good material for clothing and God stepped in to provide something much better. When we take instruction from the New Covenant, the lesson to be learned is not so much about leaves, animal skins or even new human skin, but that the covering needed to come from God. Jesus reinforces the message that God is the provider of the best covering.

Matt 6:28 "And why do you worry about clothes? See how the lilies of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. 29 Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. 30 If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you"... NIV

Adam and Eve desperately wanted to cover themselves after they sinned and in connection with this theme, Paul elaborates on the need for a God-given covering to the believers at Corinth:

2 Cor 5:1 Now we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands. 2 Meanwhile we groan, longing to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling, 3 because when we are clothed, we will not be found naked. 4 For while we are in this tent, we groan and are burdened, because we do not wish to be unclothed but to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life. 5 Now it is God who has made us for this very purpose and has given us the Spirit as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come. NIV

This passage verifies that it was God's purpose to clothe us from the very beginning. He doesn't want us to groan all our lives with the constancy of sin and the death which that brings. Instead, he is willing and ready to graciously supply us with the heavenly gift of a garment which frees us, even now, from this burden. This garment comes in the form of his Spirit, supplied as a deposit of the heavenly things and as a guarantee that there is much more to come. This deposit theme is repeated.

2 Cor 1:21 Now it is God who makes both us and you stand firm in Christ. He anointed us, 22 set his seal of ownership on us, and put his Spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come. NIV

Eph 1:13 And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, 14 who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession -- to the praise of his glory. NIV

To establish when this deposit is made available, we refer to this commonly quoted passage.

Gal 3:26 You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, 27 for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. NIV

When we are baptized into Jesus, repenting of our sin and turning to the Son of God as our head and spiritual husband, we are recipients of the promise to be clothed by the Spirit which he supplies. The Old Covenant taught the first lesson of repentance and forgiveness, but the New Covenant reveals the greater lesson, which was hidden previously (1 Cor 2:7) that when we are united to Christ we are no longer bound to the shame of ongoing sin. The garment of God, his Spirit, is delivered, through the saving work of our Lord Jesus Christ, in his resurrected, immortalized life.

1 Cor 15:45 ... "The first man Adam became a living being"; the last Adam, a life-giving spirit. NIV

So the first man, Adam, was the first to come to life with God's Spirit and the last Adam, Jesus, was the first to experience immortalized life by God's Spirit. The contrast, however, between Adam and Christ, is that Adam was simply a recipient, however Christ is the supplier, so that all may wear this beautiful garment promised by God.

Gal 3:14 He redeemed us in order that the blessing given to Abraham might come to the Gentiles through Christ Jesus, so that by faith we might receive the promise of the Spirit. NIV

Acts 3:25 And you are heirs of the prophets and of the covenant God made with your fathers. He said to Abraham, 'Through your offspring all peoples on earth will be blessed.' 26 When God raised up his servant [Jesus], he sent him first to you to bless you by turning each of you from your wicked ways. NIV

When we truly repent, we turn away from our sinful past and turn ourselves to Jesus. When we call out for guidance, wisdom and the help to resist our temptations, he will be with us to deliver us, through the Spirit's active presence. Isaiah's prophecy also promised this role for the saviour to come;

Isa 61:1 The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is on me, because the LORD has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners... 10 I delight greatly in the LORD; my soul rejoices in my God. For he has clothed me with garments of salvation and arrayed me in a robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom adorns his head like a priest, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels. NIV

God has provided a garment of salvation and robe of righteousness for Jesus, and Jesus, in turn, provides the same for his bride. The garment is not optional, for Jesus revealed in the parable of the wedding feast what would happen to those who refused to wear it.

Matt 22:11 "But when the king came in to see the guests, he noticed a man there who was not wearing wedding clothes. 12 'Friend,' he asked, 'how did you get in here without wedding clothes?' The man was speechless. 13 Then the king told the attendants, 'Tie him hand and foot, and throw him outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth" 14 For many are invited, but few are chosen." NIV

Adam and Eve wanted to be covered and were pleased to receive God's garment. Likewise, it is important that we want the garment God offers us and that means seeking the promise of Spirit. It is clear that this garment determines whether we belong to Christ or not.

Rom 8:9 But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His. 10 And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. 11 But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you. KJV

It will be clear for all to see who is wearing this garment:

Matt 7:20 "...by their fruit you will recognize them. 21 Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord', will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. 22 Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?' 23 Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!'" NIV

Sadly, there will always be those who reject the garment offered by God and these are likely to come in one of two forms: Firstly, those who are bound to make their own garment based on rules and laws and outward appearances. To these, Jesus says:

Matt 23:25 "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you cleanse the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of extortion and self-indulgence. 26 Blind Pharisee, first cleanse the inside of the cup and dish, that the outside of them may be clean also. 27 Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs which indeed appear beautiful outwardly, but inside are full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness. 28 Even so you also outwardly appear righteous to men, but inside you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness." NKJV

Then there are those who don't think they need to wear any kind of garment, to which Paul says:

2 Tim 3:2 For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, 3 unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, 4 traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, 5 having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away! 6 For of this sort are those who creep into households and make captives of gullible women loaded down with sins, led away by various lusts, 7 always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. NKJV

So we must have a garment and it must come from God.

Rev 3:18 I counsel you to buy from me gold refined by fire, so that you may be rich, and white garments so that you may clothe yourself and the shame of your nakedness may not be seen, and salve to anoint your eyes, so that you may see. ESV

Rev 16:15 "Behold, I am coming as a thief. Blessed is he who watches, and keeps his garments, lest he walk naked and they see his shame." NKJV

Only God's garment will sufficiently cover our nakedness because God's garment is worn on the outside and within. A human garment covers externally, but God's garment penetrates the inward parts also. This Godly provision is the means by which the heart and mind can develop Godly characteristics and reveal them in righteous practice. Of course, though, it is our choice to keep our garment laundered through prayer that the Lord will work in us to change our will to his.

1 John 3:6 Whoever abides in Him does not sin. Whoever sins has neither seen Him nor known Him. 7 Little children, let no one deceive you. He who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is

righteous. 8 He who sins is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil. 9 Whoever has been born of God does not sin, for His seed remains in him; and he cannot sin, because he has been born of God. NKJV

What a wonderful promise! We do well to remind ourselves of this concept every day and encourage fellow brides of Jesus to practice righteousness through him.

Col 3:10 ...and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator. 11 Here there is no Greek or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all. NIV

Gal 2:20 I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. 21 I do not set aside the grace of God, for if righteousness could be gained through the law, Christ died for nothing! NIV

The purpose of Jesus' death is that we might no longer live for ourselves but for Christ who lives in us.

It is important to clarify here that the work of the Lord Jesus in our lives is only as effective as we want it to be. It requires regular examination of our heart and mind, awareness of his instructions, and ongoing communication in prayer that we might be complete. His toil for us was not just a one-off event in which he surrendered his mortal life, but an ongoing toil where he gives of his immortal life that we might grow to maturity in our relationship with him.

2 Cor 3: 17 Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. 18 And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit. NIV

2 Cor 4:16 Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory... NKJV

Phil 1:6 ...being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ...11 being filled with the fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God. NKJV

So, even though Jesus fulfilled the requirement of the Old Covenant law, whereby a life was given and blood was shed for the forgiveness of sins, the New Covenant offered so much more than the Old and delivers us from ongoing slavery to sin. This new covering which Jesus brings to us in his resurrected life means we become slaves to righteousness (Rom 6:19) because Christ's righteousness is at work in us, but only if we have subjected ourselves to his authority and given our lives to him.

Matt 25:10 "...the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding." NKJV

Rev 19:7 Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready. NIV

God has given us a garment and instructs us to care for it. That garment is the spiritual presence of our Lord Jesus, that he might know us and we him, in readiness for the great "*marriage supper of the Lamb*".

26. Betrothed or Married?

Some may question whether, at the current time, we are spiritually betrothed to Jesus (the bride) or already united with him in marriage (the wife). There are a good number of references to the saints being Jesus' bride and it is worth briefly considering this theme.

Rev 21:9 "Come, I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb." NIV

In this context, we see the terms 'bride' and 'wife' equated. In conjunction with that passage, perhaps we can consider the one time when a woman is both bride and wife – her wedding day. In one day, she passes from her betrothed state (having already accepted the proposal of marriage) to the wedding ceremony (when the marriage is pronounced) to the consummation of marriage when her wifely status is confirmed. We need not try to pinpoint which aspect of our spiritual life refers to what part of a wedding day, other than to see a process which can correspond to our complete life "in Christ".

Many biblical prophecies have both early and latter-day fulfillments and there are a number of terms and themes in scripture which have more than one application. For example, the "day of salvation" (2 Cor 6:2 citing Isa 49:8) can be applied to the day of our baptism when we commit to Jesus. We can refer to our day of salvation as the day Jesus' returns to the earth and says to the faithful, "*Come... take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you*" (NIV Matt 25:34). We can also see our day of salvation being each time Jesus forgives us or works with us to become new creatures in him. From all these applications we see salvation as a process which can be applied to our past, present and future lives of faith.

1 Cor 1:18 For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. NIV (also Acts 2:47, 2 Cor 2:15)

1 Peter 1:8 Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, 9 for you are receiving the goal of your faith, the salvation of your souls. NIV

Another such biblical theme is 'the kingdom of God'. God's original kingdom was centred on the people of Israel and the land of promise. God's future kingdom is yet to be revealed at Jesus' physical return to the earth when all people will see him govern the world. There are also passages and parables which speak of the believers experiencing the kingdom now when they subject their spiritual lives to the invisible King.

Rom 14:17 For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. NIV

Col 1:13 He has rescued us from the power of darkness and has brought us into the kingdom of the Son whom he loves. ISV

In Ephesians 5, Paul certainly seems to be drawing the analogy between Christ and the church now as regards a 'husband' and 'wife'.

Eph 5:31-32 "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh." This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church. NIV

Since Paul writes in the present tense, it is legitimate to consider that he thinks of the church as the wife of Christ now. Just as Adam and Eve were husband and wife from the first day, and as the intimacy of bride and groom is evident throughout the Song of Solomon, so the church (ecclesia) is one with Christ.

John 17:20 "I ask not only on behalf of these, but also on behalf of those who will believe in me through their message, 21 that they may all be one. Just as you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be one in us, so that the world may believe that you sent me. 22 I have given them the glory that

you gave me, so that they may be one, just as we are one. 23 I am in them, and you are in me. May they be completely one, so that the world may know that you sent me and that you have loved them as you loved me ISV

There is both a personal and a corporate fulfilment to our 'one-ness' with Jesus. Over time, as new converts are added to the 'bride', each one experiences union with Jesus and then gains the benefit of fellowship with others. The moment of each individual's 'marriage' to his or her Lord depends upon no one else but their opening of the door to him. This is known as baptism of Spirit (John 3:5), at which point Jesus enters and claims us for his own. At the end of time, when the "full number of the Gentiles has come in" and all Israel has been saved (Rom 11:25-26), the physical transformation of the final number of the redeemed into true Spirit unity with Christ and the Father will be celebrated.

Eph 1:21 He [Jesus] is far above every ruler, authority, power, dominion, and every name that can be named, not only in the present age but also in the one to come. 22 God has put everything under his feet and has made him the head of everything for the good of the church, 23 which is his body, the fullness of the one who fills everything in every way. ISV

The good news for believers is we don't have to wait to be united to Jesus. In the same way the children of Israel could have entered the promised land soon after Sinai, we can experience a union with Jesus as soon as we put our faith in him. Wilderness wandering is not what God had in mind for Israel and a prolonged estranged betrothal is not his plan for us either. Fortunately, the New Covenant promise is made to individuals and not a nation; therefore the faithlessness of others cannot hold us back. Jesus is ready to dwell with us right now, if only we firmly believe in that promise. This does not diminish the ultimate "marriage supper of the lamb" when Jesus returns to the earth, but is a guarantee that this hope is real.

Rev 22:17 The Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" And let him who hears say, "Come!" Whoever is thirsty, let him come; and whoever wishes, let him take the free gift of the water of life. NIV

The most important concept to understand in our union with Christ is that the Lord Jesus wants us to be thirsty for him. He makes it abundantly clear that our responsibility is to "seek first his kingdom and his righteousness" (NIV Matt 6:33) and by doing that his spiritual Kingdom will be revealed.

Luke 11:9 "So I say to you: Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. 10 For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened. 11 "Which of you fathers, if your son asks for a fish, will give him a snake instead? 12 Or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? 13 If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!"

Conclusion

This study provides ample scriptural evidence to conclude that in the record of Genesis 2 & 3, Eve represents all the believers and Adam represents Christ, although in some aspects of the story we see Adam as a contrasting type of Christ. Whilst there have been unfounded and presumptuous assertions in the past to suggest Adam is a representative of all brothers and Eve is a representative of all sisters in the ecclesia, it is time to reconsider the validity of that claim.

Few would dare suggest it is the brothers who represent the bridegroom in the parable of the 10 virgins, or that the brothers represent the lamb in Revelation, so we must seriously consider whether we are overstepping the line to suggest the brothers are representatives of Adam/Christ in the ecclesia and the sisters are representatives of Eve/Ecclesia.

Of course, we would be wrong not to recognize the similarity between Adam and Eve and the institution of marriage between a man and a woman. In this earthly union between one man and one woman, we discover a full range of shared principles, all of which have been built from God's design of Christ's spiritual union with the saints. But it is wrong to extend the marriage principle into the ecclesia in any other way than

to see Christ as the husband and the body of believers as the wife. To suggest all brothers are spiritually 'married' to all sisters, whereby they take the headship over them, misapplies the Biblical principle and gives rise to a plethora of unanswerable questions and possible offences.

Perhaps the use of Genesis 2 & 3 to underpin the idea that an ecclesia must have male headship has been developed from the belief that Jesus is not actively present within the body and therefore someone must stand in his place. But the scriptures don't teach that message and we are given every assurance that "*I am with you always, to the very end of the age.*" (Matt 28:20 NIV) and "*Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.*" (Heb 13:5 NIV). Jesus is certainly not with us physically at this time, but he is with us spiritually, as long as we want him to be present and we interact with him. This is where faithful prayer for guidance, wisdom and understanding is essential along with reading the Bible so that we might "*hear his voice*". If we eliminate either of these two essential tools from individual or ecclesial life, it means we declare we don't need him or want him to act as our head.

The deception of Eve in Genesis 3 has often been referred to as a fundamental reason why sisters may not lead or teach in the ecclesia. It has been claimed by many expositors that sisters, unlike brothers, are more vulnerable to deception, and therefore God has not allowed them to participate in these services. This is a very presumptuous suggestion and is quite offensive to some prayerful and Biblically minded sisters. There is no Biblical justification for this idea. All of Christ's bride (both brothers and sisters) are vulnerable to deception and sin. Are we otherwise to suggest that the sisters should wear the blame, not just for their own susceptibility, but for that of the brothers as well? Does Scripture *anywhere* teach this about sisters?

Instead of concerning ourselves over which gender is suitable to do what service in the body of Christ, we do well to allow each person the opportunity to serve with the particular talents which Jesus has bestowed upon him or her, according to the measure of grace by faith.

Eph 4:7 But to every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. MKJV

Rom 12:6 We have different gifts based on the grace that was given to us. So if your gift is prophecy, use your gift in proportion to your faith. 7 If your gift is serving, devote yourself to serving others. If it is teaching, devote yourself to teaching others. 8 If it is encouraging, devote yourself to encouraging others. If it is sharing, share generously. If it is leading, lead enthusiastically. If it is helping, help cheerfully. 9 Your love must be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil; cling to what is good. 10 Be devoted to each other with mutual affection. Excel in showing respect for each other. 11 Never be lazy in showing such devotion. Be on fire with the Spirit. Serve the Lord. ISV

Biblical quotes taken from:

NIV - The New International Version of the Bible
NKJV - The New King James Version of the Bible
ESV – The English Standard Version of the Bible
NASB – The New American Standard Bible
TNLT – The New Living Translation of the Bible
MKJV – Modern King James Version of the Bible
ISV – International Standard Version of the Bible