

# **JESUS CHRIST, OUR BRIDEGROOM, KING & JUDGE**

## **S01 OUR HEAVENLY BRIDEGROOM FEELS BURNING DESIRE – COREY STARK**

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### **I. THE END-TIME REVELATION OF JESUS, OUR BRIDEGROOM, KING AND JUDGE**

A. As we approach the end of the age, the Holy Spirit is emphasizing the revelation of Jesus Christ in the Word of God, as Bridegroom, King and Judge across the whole Body of Christ in every nation (Rev. 1:1).

1. In Jesus' final public message to the nation of Israel, He emphasized the revelation of God as a Bridegroom, King, and Judge (Mt. 22:1-14, 37).
2. A few days later, in Jesus' final private message before the upper room discourse (Jn. 14:17), He reveals Himself as Bridegroom, King, and Judge (Mt. 25).
3. The final revelation given by the Holy Spirit in the Word of God reveals Jesus as a Bridegroom, King and Judge (Rev. 19-22).
4. The clearest Old Testament description of the ministry of the Holy Spirit in the generation of the Lord's return, reveals the messianic redeemer as a Bridegroom, King, and Judge (Isa. 61-63).
5. John the Baptist who is a prototype of the end of the age forerunners and picture of the forerunner ministry (Isa. 40:1-5; Dan. 11:32-33) was the first person in the New Testament to bring together the revelation of Jesus as the Bridegroom, King, and Judge (Mt. 3:1-12; Jn. 3:29-31).

B. This three-fold revelation of Jesus isn't random, but a very *strategic revelation* to awaken a very *specific response* in the heart of God's people, particularly in the generation of the LORD's return (2 Cor. 3:18).

***2 Cor. 3:18 But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.***

C. As we come to Jesus and believe in Him "*as the Scriptures say*" (Jn. 7:38), our hearts are awakened to *respond* to Him in the specific ways He is *revealed* to us (2 Cor. 3:18). The "living waters" are different facets of the Holy Spirit's ministry revealing Christ *to us* (i.e. drink), *in us* (i.e. fountain) and *through us* to others (i.e. rivers). In other words, as we "drink" of the Holy Spirit revealing Jesus to us, we are progressively transformed into the same image and begin taking on the same characteristics in our lives and ministries.

***Jn. 7:37 Jesus stood and cried out, saying, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. 38 He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water."* (Jn. 4:7-14)**

***Jn. 4:14 Whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into eternal life.***

D. The Scripture reveals hundred's of titles for God describing many different facets of His personality, character and nature. They are all very important to understand, yet at the end of the age these three will have a unique preeminence, being emphasized in an unusual way above all of the others.

1. As a *passionate Bridegroom* Jesus feels *burning desire* for His people. The revelation of His divine love, deep *delight* and jealous *affection* transforms the Church in love as a mature Bride with confidence even in weakness, which empowers a wholehearted devotion that releases the fragrance of worship.

***Mt. 25:6 At midnight a cry was heard: 'Behold, the Bridegroom is coming; go out to meet him!'***

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2. As the sovereign King Jesus received *all power* to restore, renew and rule. The revelation of His authority, abilities and resources strengthens the Church in faith as a House of Prayer, which inspires fervent intercession to contend for His will to be done on earth as it is in heaven.

**Rev. 19:16 He has on His robe... a name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.**

3. As the righteous Judge Jesus possesses *infinite wisdom* and *great zeal* to intervene in human history and establish justice by rewarding the righteous, while confronting the rebellious to remove everything that hinders love. The revelation of His *perfect insight* causes the Church to abound in hope, knowing that He has seen everything and will make all of the wrong things right. The revelation of His *great zeal* releases the fear of the LORD, producing forerunner messengers who are gripped by the urgency of the hour and for the sake of love prepare themselves by knowing His heart, power and plans to prepare others to prevail through the unique dynamics and unprecedented events of the end-times in great victory!

**Rev. 19:2 For true and righteous are His judgments, because He has judged the great harlot who corrupted the earth with her fornication; and He has avenged the blood of His servants shed by her.**

E. There is a *dynamic connection* between these three realities, so that we cannot fully understand any one of them without seeing the other two in context. Different streams in the Body of Christ *refuse* or *emphasize* one of these three facets of His personality to the exclusion of the others, yet we can never fully understand any of them without understanding the other two. To neglect any one of these truths is to diminish the others in our understanding and experience. All three facets belong to the same diamond of this glorious Man's personality.

1. To understand Jesus as Bridegroom without seeing Him as the *sovereign King* with all power can lead to religious sentimentality and emotionalism without deep obedience to His authority that lacks faith in His abilities. To understand Him as Bridegroom without seeing Him as the *righteous Judge* can lead to a lack of urgency to prepare others by not understanding His end-time plans or the vital role that we play in the unfolding storyline.

2. To understand Jesus as King without seeing Him as a *passionate Bridegroom* with burning desire can lead to an authoritarian view of God or a misunderstanding of why He releases His power through us. He wants more than a people blessed by His power (i.e. comfort, money, honor). He releases His power to *express love* for us and *awaken love* in us. To understand Him as a King without seeing Him as the righteous Judge can lead to a lack of hope in our future by not understanding that in His perfect insight and great zeal He will release His power on behalf of the righteous to make all the wrong things right.

3. To understand Jesus as Judge without seeing Him as a *Bridegroom-King* can lead to a harsh view of God or a misunderstanding of why He releases judgment. He isn't just mad, but in infinite wisdom He is working off of an eternal blueprint to bring the mystery of God to completion (Rev. 10:7). If we preach God's judgments without encountering His heart as a Bridegroom-King who removes everything that hinders love to establish truth, humility and righteousness (Ps. 45), then we will be tempted to operate in a wrong spirit (Lk. 9:53-56). Jesus will use the least severe means to take the greatest number of people to the deepest level of love without violating anyone's freewill, while training the future rulers of the earth.

F. There is *no contradiction* in these three facets of Jesus' personality. They are one reality. God never suspends one attribute to exercise another. He is in perfect unity within Himself at all times. He never suspends His mercy to exercise His judgment. In fact, His judgment is an expression of His mercy, as it removes everything that hinders His love. The King is popular; Bridegroom invasive; Judge offensive.

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### III. JESUS, OUR HEAVENLY BRIDEGROOM FEELS BURNING DESIRE

A. As a *passionate Bridegroom*, Jesus feels *deep delight*, *burning desire* and *jealous affection* for His people (Song 2:14; 4:9; Mk. 3:13-15; Jn. 15:9; 17:24). Bridegroom is not just a title that He holds or a role that He plays. Jesus is an eternal Bridegroom at the very core of His being and He is jealous for all of our heart's affection, because He loves us with all of His heart (Ex. 20:5; 34:14; Deut. 4:24; Zeph. 1:18; 3:8; Jas. 4:5).

***Isa. 62:4 You shall be called Hephzibah... For the Lord delights in you... 5 As the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so shall your God rejoice over you.***

***Deut. 4:24 For the Lord your God is a consuming fire, a jealous God.***

B. The Bridegroom message isn't primarily about His *mercy* towards us. What bride would appreciate being married for mercy's sake? It's about Jesus' *beauty*, His *emotions* for us and His *commitments* to us to share His heart, home, throne, secrets and His beauty with us (Song 2:14; 4:9; Mk. 3:13-15; Jn. 15:9; 17:24).

***Jn. 17:24 Father, I desire that they whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory which You have given Me; for You loved Me before the foundation of the world.***

C. The Bride of Christ revelation isn't related to our gender (Gal. 3:28), but speaks of a *position of privilege* in our relationship with God to experience *unhindered access* to His heart (1 Cor. 2:9-11). We must refuse all sensual overtones. We are only "lovers of God" in contrast to being "workers for God" without relationship.

1. Men *and* women are both "sons", related to accessing *God's throne* – kingdom, power, glory.

***Rom. 8:14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.***

2. Men *and* women are both the "bride", related to accessing *God's heart* – emotions, affections, delight.

***Rev. 22:17 And the Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" (Eph. 5:31-32; Gal. 3:28; Rev. 19:7)***

D. David, the great warrior king of Israel was also a great lover of God and "man after God's own heart" (1 Sam. 13:14; Ps. 27:4; Acts 13:22). Being a lovesick worshipper doesn't violate or undermine our masculinity – it establishes it. When we speak of being "lovers of God" it is not used in a sensual sense, but in contrast to being "workers for God" without relationship. We aren't just on a work assignment *for* Him, but we love to be *with* Him (Mk. 3:13-15). This is the one thing needed (Lk. 10:38-42) and only wise way to live (Mt. 25:1-11).

***Ps. 27:4 One thing I have desired of the Lord, that will I seek: That I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in His temple.***

E. Many misunderstand Jesus' desire for them as His need for an anointed workforce. The good news is that He doesn't *need* us; He *wants* us! Why did Jesus primarily call His apostles (Mk. 3:13-15)? We are His *inheritance* (Ps. 2:8; Eph. 1:18), His *pearl* of great price (Mt. 13:45-46) and *joy* set before Him (Heb. 12:2).

***Mt. 13:45 The kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking beautiful pearls. 46 who, when He had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that He had and bought it.***

***Heb. 12:2 For the joy that was set before Him endured the cross...***

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F. Jesus corrected the Church of Ephesus for losing their first love (Rev. 2:1-7). He considered them “fallen” and in need of repentance to restore their relationship with Him (v. 5). He even threatened to “remove” their church, because of His desire for relationship and mature partnership with them above an anointed workforce. Why? He didn’t want them reproducing any more. Lovers will always outwork the workers anyway!

**Rev. 2:2 “I know your works, your labor, your patience, and that you cannot bear those who are evil. And you have tested those who say they are apostles and are not, and have found them liars; 3 and you have persevered and have patience, and have labored for My name’s sake and have not become weary. 4 Nevertheless I have this against you, that you have left your first love. 5 Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works [1<sup>st</sup> commandment], or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand [Church Rev. 1:20] from its place—unless you repent.”**

### **IV. UNDERSTANDING JESUS’ HEART EMPOWERS OUR WHOLEHEARTED RESPONSE OF WORSHIP**

A. Prior to His disciples’ greatest failure of abandonment in the garden (Mt. 26:31), Jesus revealed that His love for them was equal to the measure, quality and depth of love that the Father had for Him (Jn. 15:9). We will *never be more loved* by God than we are right now, regardless of our maturity or accomplishments, because God’s love for us can *never* improve. He loves us with *all* of His heart, mind, soul and strength.

**Jn. 15:9 “As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love.”**

B. Understanding Jesus’ love for us isn’t based on our performance, but on our identity as His eternal companions empowers us to run *to Him* in our weakness, rather than *from Him* in fear when we stumble (1 Jn. 4:18). Many imagine that they will confidently approach Him once they have *already matured* not realizing that confidence before God is the *very means* by which we receive the grace to mature in love (Heb. 4:15-16)!

**1 Jn. 4:18 There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love.**

**Heb. 4:15 For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. 16 Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace [divine influence upon heart] to help in time of need.**

C. The Holy Spirit is using the revelation of Jesus’ love for us as a Bridegroom to restore the first commandment to first place in the heart of the Church. As the Spirit reveals this aspect of Jesus’ heart for us, it awakens our hearts to *respond* to Him with the same quality and depth of wholehearted love that He has for us, because it is fueled by the same love of God that is imparted to us (Song 5:2; 8:6; Jn. 17:26; 1 Jn. 4:19).

**1 Jn. 4:19 We love Him because He first loved us.**

**Song 5:2 I sleep, but my heart is awake; It is the voice of my beloved! He knocks, saying, “Open for me, my sister, my love, My dove, my perfect one...”**

**Song 8:6 Set Me as a seal upon your heart... for love is as strong as death, jealousy as cruel as the grave; its flames are flames of fire, a most vehement [Jehovah’s] flame.**

D. The 4-fold progression of love is receiving love *from God*, loving *ourselves* (as we see what God sees in us), giving love back *to God*, love overflowing *to others* (family, friends, lost, and even our enemies).

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E. The Bridegroom message not only causes us to grow in deeper revelation of Jesus' heart, but as we receive His love for us, we are empowered by the Holy Spirit to effortlessly reciprocate extravagant love back to Him, as we obey His Word from the heart (Jn. 14:23; 2 Cor. 3:18; 1 Jn. 2:5; 4:12). Even our small acts of obedience move His heart and bring Him pleasure (Song 4:9). A cup of water is seen, valued and rewarded (Mt. 10:42).

***Jn. 14:23 Jesus answered, “If anyone loves Me, he will [be empowered to] keep My word...”***

***Song 4:9 You have ravished My heart with one look of your eyes, with one link of your necklace.***

F. Sacrificial obedience from a willing heart is the essence of authentic worship (Gen. 22:5; 2 Sam. 24:24; 1 Chr. 21:24; Ps. 40:6-8; Rom. 12:1; Heb. 10:5-7).

***Rom. 12:1 I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual [reasonable NKJV] service of worship. - NASB***

G. DREAM: What can the righteous do when the foundations be destroyed (Ps. 11:3)? “Because I know the end from the beginning, I’ve given the bridegroom revelation to empower you to wade through the *offense* of the end-times, to inspire you to go deep in *biblical understanding* (of My heart and mind) and to prepare you for *mature bridal partnership* with Me in releasing My plans and ruling with Me on the earth.” Jesus wants our relationship of *love* to mature into a deep partnership with Him that He *enjoys*. I love both of my girls the same, yet I experience a partnership with my older daughter that I deeply enjoy.

## **V. CULTIVATING INTIMACY WITH JESUS THROUGH THE WORD OF GOD**

A. Scripture reveals *two stages* of receiving from the Word of God - *milk* and *meat* (Heb. 5:12-14; 1 Pet. 2:2). *Milk* is receiving truth from someone else’s digested meat. *Meat* is learning to eat the Word of God and extract the nutrients for yourself through *experiential knowledge* (Ezek. 2:8-3:4; Rev. 10:8-11).

***Heb. 5:12 For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles... of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food. 13 For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. 14 But solid food belongs to those who are of full age... who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern good and evil.***

B. Growing in the knowledge of God is synonymous with growing in *intimacy* with God. Obviously I am most *intimate* with those whom I *know* the most. Therefore, the *more I know* about a person the *more intimate* I am with them. However, this is not purely *cognitive* information gained by memorizing facts about Him, but growing in the *experiential* knowledge of how God *thinks, feels* and *acts* by encountering Him through the Word. We study God like we study a flower or a sunset; beholding Him and drinking in the beauty (Ps. 27:4).

C. There are *three stages* to growing in intimacy with God:

1. *Invitation* (menu): His *desire* for dynamic relationship with us at a deep heart level not just *positionally* through salvation or *functionally* as anointed laborers (Mk. 3:13-15; Jn. 15:9, 16; 17:24-26). God not only loves us, but He really *likes* us! Our interaction brings Him pleasure and enjoyment (Song 2:14).

***Song 2:14 My dove... let me see your face... hear your voice; for your voice is sweet, your face is lovely.***

***Mk. 3:13 He called... those He Himself wanted... 14 that they might be with Him and send them out...***

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*STORY: I woke up in a garden waiting for Jesus. As He came and sat before me I was overwhelmed by the love and enjoyment that I felt He had for me. He never said a word, but just gazed at me with love and acceptance as I said meaningless things and wept. I understood that He really, really liked me.*

2. Substance (meat): At the heart of intimacy is the *relational knowledge* of a Person. The good news is the Holy Spirit, like a divine “search engine” longs to reveal the deep things of God to us (1 Cor. 2:9-11)! It takes God to know God. We experience the Father’s tenderness and Jesus’ heart through the Holy Spirit (Jn. 14-16). God doesn’t hide things *from* us, but rather He hides them *for* us to discover (Pr. 25:2).

***1 Cor. 2:9 “Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him.” 10 But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God... 12 Now we have received... the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God.***

***Jn. 16:13 However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth... 14 He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine [thoughts, feelings, etc.] and declare it to you.***

3. Overflow: As we encounter the LORD our hearts are not only awakened unto *eternal life* (Jn. 5:39-40; 17:3) and receive spiritual *impartation* (Jn. 6:63), but we begin to experience deep *interior pleasure* (Ps. 36:8), holy *fascination* (Ps. 27:4), the delight of *discovery* (Pr. 25:2), eternal *rest* that flows from knowing our true identity (Mt. 16:18), end-time *preparation* (Jer. 23:30), personal *transformation* – minds renewed, emotions restored, motives purified, bodies healed, as we delight to do God’s will from the heart (2 Cor. 3:18), lasting *character development* (Eph. 3:16-19), and radical acts of *selfless love* (2 Cor. 5:14; 6:4-10; 11:23-28). There is a direct correlation between what we see about God and how we respond to Him.

***2 Cor. 5:14 For the love of Christ compels us, because we judge thus: that if One died for all, then all... 15 those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again.***

***2 Cor. 11:23 I am more: in labors more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequently, in deaths often. 24 From the Jews five times I received forty stripes minus one. 25 Three times I was beaten with rods; once I was stoned; three times I was shipwrecked... 27 in weariness and toil, in sleeplessness often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness...***

D. As often as the *invitation* is given, so also the *overflowing benefits* are taught as a motivation to persevere. However, without engaging in the *substance* of intimacy we can never attain to the overflow of it! I’ve watched many sincere well-meaning Christians wrongly conclude two things: either the *message is false* and it doesn’t work or that *they’re the problem* and it just doesn’t work for them. Both are incorrect.

E. Three of us can go to the *same ocean* and have a completely *different experience*. One visits on vacation, *sees* the waves from afar and takes photos. They went to the ocean. Another walks the beach, collects shells and *feels* the surf. They went to the ocean. Another, hearing there is more is compelled by their desire and invests their time, money and energy to get equipped, so they can descend into the depths of the ocean and really *experience* the wonders and beauty of it for themselves. The same is true of the Word of God. Some are content to merely *read and memorize* with their eyes. Others, to simply *feel the benefits* of the Word of God for themselves (healing, prosperity, etc.), but to descend into the depths of the Word of God and be *immersed in the experiential encounter of a Man* is much different than just *observing it* from shore!