

CHRIST'S BRIDE Revealed...

If you're among the called-out ones, male or female, this could be YOU.

Philip Shields sermons

November 2, 2013

www.LightontheRock.org

All scriptures are NKJV unless otherwise noted.

I often say or write YHVH instead of "the LORD" and Yeshua (His Hebrew name) instead of Jesus.

Summary: *If YHVH is calling you to be among the elect called-out ones, the ekklesia, this is for you – whether you are Jew or Gentile, male or female. After hearing this message, we pray you'll profoundly appreciate the Bride of Christ more than you ever have before. WHO is that Bride? Is Christ marrying a lot of people? Where is the wedding? What does scripture say about the Bride's calling and qualifications? What's her job description? You'll find all that and more in this message.*

(I recommend you print the "transcript" first and then listen to the messages with the transcript in hand.)

Hello and shalom everyone. Happy sabbath to all whom our heavenly holy Father is calling to be members of the House of God, the church of the one true living God YHVH. Welcome to all of you from around the world who are hearing or reading our free messages on this site. Be sure to be checking out our short essays, the blogs as well. Just click on "LOTR blogs".

Our site is dedicated to helping people have a closer walk with our heavenly Father as well as our Messiah Yeshua – or Jesus the Christ – and to let HIS light shine in our hearts, out of the foundation of His Rock – hence our website name –Light on the Rock.

Who remembers their wedding day? I sure can. Thirty eight years ago from last August – and I can remember our wedding day like it was yesterday. Carole and I love each other more today than we did 38 years ago. There have been a few bumps in the road, but what a blessing my wife has been; a true gift from above. So, 38 years ago, there I was - standing on stage with the minister and the best man... and then finally I caught my first glimpse of my lovely bride. Beautiful and radiant, she was, in a spotless wedding gown, gorgeous and white. She had a big smile on her face, as I did, and I couldn't wait to stand beside each other then – and for the rest of our lives.

Little did I realize that, God willing, I am *a*lso preparing to be a bride – IF, as I said, God is calling me to that favored post. Are YOU ready to be the Bride of Christ, of Yeshua?

WHO is the Bride of Christ?

You see, Yeshua (Jesus) is going to marry a group that scripture calls the Bride of Christ. **Revelation 19:7-9** speaks of the Lamb marrying a bride, and that "WIFE has made herself ready" (verse 7). Then verse 9 says "Blessed are those called to the marriage supper". This is also described in **Matthew 22:1-10**. If you're unfamiliar with these scriptures, stop the audio and read them for yourself first –**Rev. 19:7-9; Matthew 22:1-10**.

We also see in the famous marriage passage of **Ephesians 5:22-33** where the church is described as the wife of Jesus Christ – or Yeshua, if you use his Hebrew name. There in Eph 5, Paul gives marriage instructions for husbands and wives, but he constantly draws the parallel to the Bride of Christ and to Christ as the groom. Then Paul – under inspiration of the Spirit – says this, at the end of the marital passage in Ephesians 5:

Ephesians 5:32

“This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ **and the church**”.

Here, Paul describes the church – from the Greek word *ekklesia* – called-out ones, as being in the role of the WIFE of Christ. *That includes men and women who have been called out of the world and have God's Holy Spirit.*

If you listen to my sermons given between January - March 2013 about “Your Breathtaking Destiny” –God's mystery revealed, in there I explain how God himself decreed that “kind must partner with kind” – so humans marry humans, dogs partner with dogs, and so on.

The Bride of Christ has to be the same kind as he is – spirit, and of the same kind of Being that He is – or it would be confusion. When we are resurrected, we shall see him as he is, for we shall be like him (**1 John 3:1-3**). Check out those sermons.

The wedding takes place in heaven, according to Revelation 19. I've explained that in detail in the sermon **“I Go Prepare a Place for You” – given in June 2011**. In the new covenant, **there is no longer Jew or Gentile (Gal. 3:28)**, but we all become a part of Spiritual Israel, a Jew spiritually in Christ (**Romans 2:28**). And as I've said, *the called-out ones will need to be changed to spirit*, so we can be of the same KIND as Yeshua is -- those will be the ones marrying King Yeshua.

1 John 3:2

Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, **we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.**

When we are changed to spirit, as a born-again spirit child of God, we shall be just like Yeshua is. We will be of the same KIND of being He is—and able therefore to marry Him.

So surely, at least as explained in the New Covenant, the Bride of Christ is composed of individuals who come together as one body in the resurrection, and are gathered with Christ in the clouds, and then return to heaven for the Marriage Supper as spirit beings, just like Christ is. **Then we return together – married to our King Yeshua – this time on white spirit chargers** (probably angels who look like horses). Remember that even cherubim or “living creatures” who stand before God's throne have parts of their appearance like an eagle, ox, lion and man (Rev. 4:7-9). There are angels described as eagles. So there surely could be angels who look like white horses.

What then of Physical Israel?

I am aware of the scriptures in the “Old Testament” that say God will marry Israel in the future – Hosea 2:13-20, Isaiah 62 and others. But when I put ALL the scriptures

together including the new covenant scriptures, that is referring now to **SPIRITUAL ISRAEL**, not just physical Israel (at least in my view). God **WILL** indeed reconcile with national/physical Israel but the **MARRIAGE** in heaven is with the body of called-out ones who have His spirit and love His Way.

In the first Covenant the nation of Israel and God did marry at Mt Sinai – a covenant they broke very quickly with the Gold Calf incident. Eventually, due to their endless infidelities and broken promises, **God divorced Israel** (the northern 10 tribes) but never divorced Judah. You can read that for yourself in **Isaiah 50:1 and Jeremiah 3:8**.

Romans 7 explains that when Christ died, that released all the covenant requirements and he is free – upon his resurrection – to marry again. This time he will marry **SPIRITUAL Israel**, composed of those called out from all nations. IN Christ, there is no longer Jew and Gentile (**Galatians 3:28; Romans 2:28**).

Romans 11 discusses the process also. There, the root is Christ – and the “Olive Tree” is Israel – but if you read it carefully, *physical Israel's branches were cut off of their own Olive Tree and if they want to be in relationship with God, THEY – physical Israel – have to be GRAFTED BACK IN to what was, their own tree.* (repeat).

Most people don't realize that, and just keep saying Gentiles are grafted into Israel. But even physical Israel will NOT be accepted until and unless they repent and accept YESHUA as their Messiah and King. And most of all, Ephesians and Colossians make it very clear that the door is now open also to all Gentiles being called by YHWH. (Eph 2:11-18)

Go back and read Romans 11:11-27, and especially verses 21-26 carefully. As you read that, remember “the natural branches” refers to Israel, and “the wild olive tree” refers to the Gentiles who were being called and grafted in. But now, to be part of the NEW “Israel of God”, *everyone* – Jew, Gentile alike – must repent, accept Yeshua as Messiah, and be grafted in, or back in, to the Olive Tree rooted in Yeshua and the early prophets. But for now, let's move on. “Israel of God” – see Gal. 6:16. Gal. 3:7 says only those who are “of faith” are of the seed of Abraham.

Paul says to the Corinthian brethren, many of whom were Gentiles:

2 Corinthians 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**.”

Remember, Yeshua is also our High Priest, of the Order of Melchizedek (Hebrews 7). Priests had to marry virgins. We are being presented as cleansed spiritual virgins for Christ to marry. Notice the rules given in Lev 21:13-14 about priests and whom they could marry.

Leviticus 21:13-14

And he shall take a wife in her virginity. A widow or a divorced woman or a defiled woman or a harlot — these he shall not marry; but *he shall take a virgin* of his own people as wife.

So the church is called a virgin who is betrothed to one husband, Yeshua (2 Cor. 11:2). The church is also described as such in Ephesians 5:22-33 as I said earlier. You also can read of this in Romans 7:4.

Is heavenly Jerusalem – a city – the Bride?

The Bride of Christ will also be identified with heavenly Jerusalem, which is the Bride's city – it's "her city". (For more on that point, I have a sermon titled "**Our God, Our City**" – Nov 2011. Heavenly Jerusalem will come down to earth after the Millennium, according to Revelation 21 and 22. It's a beautiful city, adorned AS a bride in all her jewels (Rev. 21:2).

The Bible often ties personalities with their city, much like we say "Washington DC says..." – when referring to the President. Or like when the Prodigal son says, "I have sinned against heaven", meaning he knew he had sinned against God. God and heaven are identified together. The Bride of Christ and Jerusalem are also identified together. Christ is not going to marry a city, but a group of called-out ones who are to be and act as one loving body. That One Body is intimately identified with Jerusalem in heaven, **so that is why Jerusalem is also called "the Bride, the Lamb's wife" in Revelation 21:9-10.**

Yeshua is not marrying a city made up of streets, gates, walls and buildings. Nor is the city going to put on white linen garments (Rev 17:7-9). So saying Jerusalem Above is the Bride of Christ is a metaphor, tied in to the Bride of Christ who lives there. *It just means the Bride of Christ – any called out and filled with his spirit – is so identified with heavenly Jerusalem, that the Bride of Christ and the City that is the Bride's city, are spoken of as one and the same.*

We also know the Bride of Christ – the church – is called His BODY. How can one marry his own body, some ask.

Metaphors and analogies break down after a while. But this goes back to "the first Adam" – from whom came his bride, Eve. Yehoweh took part of Adam's side and from that built a woman. Out of one body came two beings – who were to work again to become one again (the two shall become one" – **Genesis 2:23-24**. It's the same with Christ and his Bride. He's there first – like Adam was there first.

We are considered part of His body, to depict the oneness we have with Him and with the parts of the body – one another. A husband and wife who are intimately close act as one, think as one, go in the same direction – all while having their own personalities. They're a joy to behold. This is what is being described, when the called-out ones (the church, the ekklesia) are described as part of His body. Christ becomes our life (**Gal. 2:20; Colossians 3:2-3**) as HE lives in us by His spirit, and we *become "one spirit" with Yeshua* (read **1 Cor. 6:17-20**), just as Eve became "one flesh" with Adam.

There's a lot that has just been said, but it's crucial to understand all that, to fully grasp this message today. Take the time to look up and read the verses I cited. I especially wish to address those of you in China, Russia, Kenya and all the 80+ countries that come to this site: YOU can be a part of the Bride of Yeshua. And I wish to say to those in Israel – YOU ALSO can be part of the Bride of Yeshua if you will open your eyes to see that one of your very own, a JEW, Yeshua, WAS the promised Messiah.

How can Christ marry a lot of people?

This is a good question and we need to understand it. Christ is not a polygamist. He set the ideal standard when he made one man, one woman. NOT one man and 5 women, and not one man and another man. Yeshua is not a polygamist. He is not marrying thousands, but one.

You and I are considered PARTS of a body – His Bride. I'm not the Bride, but I may be a part of the Bride, God willing. Maybe I'm like a fingernail, or kneecap, or armpit or a part of the ear. It takes many parts to make a functioning body. We'll read some scriptures shortly that will explain this in detail.

When we realize we are part of the Bride of Christ collectively -- and therefore parts of *each other*, we should treat one another with profound love and respect.

Romans 12:4-5

"For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function, so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another."

Let me say it another way: we should treat one another with as much love and respect as we would treat Jesus Christ himself, if HE were the one standing there instead of a brother or sister.

Now add to that fact that – as the Bride of Christ – we are also considered a part of HIS body, as Eve was considered a part of the first Adam's body.... what does that say about you and other brethren? That says no part of the body of Yeshua can be anything but holy.

When we attack a member of the body of Christ, a brother or sister "over there" – we are attacking Christ himself. (repeat). Let that sink in. We cannot claim to love Yeshua – and speak evil of a part of his body. You cannot praise the head of the body (Yeshua), while kicking him in the stomach (a body part, a brother or sister in Christ).

SOME of our brethren get sick because of this very thing: the body of Christ is not working together in love yet. **See 1 Cor. 11:28-30**. We have to be discerning the Body of Christ and treating one another with profound respect and love. I've had to repent of how I've ignored, mistreated, gossiped about or abused members of the body in the past. We have brethren who won't assemble together but keep going into ever more splinter groups. That really has to stop. *When we show love even to one we might consider "the least of these my brethren", we are showing love to Yeshua himself.*

Let's move on. But our Yeshua is marrying ONE body, a virgin spiritually, the church of God – **2 Cor. 11:2; Eph 5:32; Rev 19:7-9**.

He is not marrying a city composed of streets, gates, walls, buildings. The city is identified with the Bride. Where it says the Bride has made herself ready in Rev. 19, that is a picture of what everything else in the new covenant teaches – that the Bride's righteousness is Christ in us, is Christ's perfect obedience that is gifted to us (**Romans 5:15-17**). See my sermon Dec. 2012 about "Living in the Gift of YHVH's Righteousness".

God calls us, HE saves us even while we were yet sinners. He sent Christ to die for us, He saves us by Christ's life IN US anew (Romans 5:10-12), HE perfects us, HE qualifies us (**Col 1:12**) through and in Christ, HE is the beginning and the end.

There is no contradiction. *Col 1:12 is very awkward in the KJV.* NKJV makes it plainer – HE qualifies us. We are to put on the righteousness of Christ, who gives us the fruit of His righteousness (Philippians 1:11) and we are to seek the kingdom of God and ITS righteousness (Matthew 6:33).

Paul says in **Philippians 3:9-11** that he did NOT want his OWN righteousness which is from the Law, from the righteousness that is from GOD, by faith in Jesus Christ. THAT is our beauty, that is our covering, that is our righteousness and our perfection. Otherwise NOBODY will ever be perfect enough. **Gal. 2:21** says Paul would not set aside or frustrate the grace of God, for if righteousness comes from the law, then Christ died in vain! (Read Phil 3:9-11 over and over, and this short paragraph again and again, until it really is understood.)

How does our King Yeshua view His Bride?

Most believers I know frankly think they're failing spiritually. In our heart of hearts, we wonder how we could ever 'measure up' and be the Bride of the Son of God. All too often, we think we are *ugly* spiritually, because we know how often we stumble in sin and we wonder how Yeshua could ever include US as part of His Bride.

Many brethren somehow think Christ isn't all that happy about getting married – certainly not to you and not to me. Am I right?

But as I recall MY wedding 38 years ago, I couldn't wait to see my Bride. I was beaming with JOY to see her come down that aisle. I am an emotional man and I felt a deep lump in my throat and warmth in my heart as the wedding proceeded. A great and glorious day.

Would our Yeshua be thinking of His upcoming wedding any differently?

In the Song of Songs, commonly called The Song of Solomon, we read the Bride is feeling some unworthiness here and there. She feels unattractive. She's called the Shulamite. Turn to the Song of Songs, (Song of Solomon, after the book of Ecclesiastes). It's the highest pinnacle of song, like "Holy of Holies" is the pinnacle of holiness, hence this book is called the "song of Songs".

This is a book about the Bride of the Messiah. Let's see how the Shulamite, the bride, feels about herself and what her man says about her:

Song of Solomon 1:5-8

I am dark, but lovely, O daughters of Jerusalem, Like the tents of Kedar, Like the curtains of Solomon.

6 Do not look upon me, because I am dark, Because the sun has tanned me.

My mother's sons were angry with me; They made me the keeper of the vineyards, But my own vineyard I have not kept. (To Her Beloved)

7 Tell me, O you whom I love, Where you feed your flock, Where you make it rest at noon. For why should I be as one who veils herself by the flocks of your companions?

HOW does the Beloved see his bride? O FAIREST among women!

The Beloved (verse 8)

"If you do not know, O fairest among women, Follow in the footsteps of the flock, And feed your little goats Beside the shepherds' tents."

In verse 15, chapter 1 – he repeats – "YOU ARE FAIR, my love, you are FAIR..."

Some say Shulamite is the feminine form of Solomon – meaning peaceful. Others say it could refer to a woman from Shunem, in the north, near Mt. Gilboa. Abishag was a lovely Shunamite sent to care for David in his last days... and it's possible this may be referring to her. IF this is Abishag, IF – then you can read about her in 1 Kings 1 and 2. (1 Kings 1:4-5, 15; 2:13-25).

But my point is, she didn't think she was lovely. YOUR HUSBAND-TO-BE, CHRIST – SEES HIS BRIDE, INCLUDING YOU, AS LOVELY. He is the one who teaches us, through Peter, that a beautiful HEART is more lovely to him than beautiful hair, body or jewelry (**1 Peter 3:1-6**). You may be old, or sick, or injured, or bedridden or wheelchair bound – it doesn't matter. If you have a beautiful heart, He sees you as BEAUTIFUL, spiritually speaking.

You and I have to start understanding this. Messiah is our perfect, spotless covering. Our dirt and our sins have been banished from his sight, as far as east is from the west. He has cleansed us with the washing of the water of the word and by his spirit.

You can read more of the BEAUTY that Messiah sees in his Bride – covered by HIS own grace and perfection and forgiveness in other passages in Song of Songs. He just says it over and over and over. Look at Song of Songs 2:10; 4:1, 7; chapter 6:4-10 and all of chapter 7 – which is so romantic it almost borders on the erotic. I say that in love and full respect for the bride of Christ. I say it for you and for all who are the body of Christ, the church of the living God.

But instead of hearing about this, some pastors and teachers over the years - - including me at times in the past – have told the Bride how DIRTY she is, how much WRATH OF GOD she's storing up if she doesn't repent and clean up!

You don't get the Bride ready for her wedding by sticking her in a broom closet and knocking the stuffing out of her just before her wedding! NO, the Bride needs to KNOW she is beloved and *beautiful* in the eyes of her Messiah, her husband. I speak also to the men as the Bride of Christ.

Let's look at a few other passages:

**PS. 45:9-15 also speaks of bride's desirability and her attending virgins.
Psalms 45:9-15**

Kings' daughters are among Your honorable women; At Your right hand stands the queen in gold from Ophir.

10 Listen, O daughter, Consider and incline your ear; Forget your own people also, and your father's house;

11 **So the King will greatly desire your beauty;** Because He is your Lord, worship Him.

12 And the daughter of Tyre will come with a gift; The rich among the people will seek your favor.

13 **The royal daughter is all glorious within the palace; Her clothing is woven with gold.**

14 She shall be brought to the King in robes of many colors; The virgins, her companions who follow her, shall be brought to You.

15 **With gladness and rejoicing they shall be brought; They shall enter the King's palace.**

Psalms 16:2-3

O my soul, you have said to YHVH (Yehowah), "You are my Lord (Adonai), MY goodness is NOTHING apart from You." 3- **As for the saints who are on the earth, "They are the excellent ones, in whom is all my DELIGHT."**

Ephesians 5:25-27

Husbands, love your wives, just as **Christ also loved the church** and gave Himself for her, that He might sanctify and **cleanse her with the washing of water by the word**, 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.

BRIDE OF CHRIST – YOU – YOU ARE HOLY. YOU are a saint – ‘*HAGIOS*’ IN GREEK, which means “holy one”. That’s what Paul calls the early church members – SAINTS. Not by your goodness, not by your works, but by His grace and His obedience – now being lived and demonstrated in YOUR life. We are to walk as He walked, or we are liars (1 John 2:4-6). *But only Jesus can be exactly Jesus. Only Yeshua can live exactly like Yeshua. It now has to be HIM living in us. Christ is now our life (Colossians 3:2-3).*

1 John 4:17-19

Love has been perfected among us in this: that we may have **BOLDNESS in the day of judgment;** **because AS HE IS, SO ARE WE in this world.**

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.

19 **We love Him because He first loved us.**

“As HE IS, so are we in this world..” – 1 John 4:17. Is he beloved? Is HE accepted by God? Is HE perfect in God’s eyes? As we are in him, that is what God sees. Remember 1 John 4:17. In him we have boldness, for “as he is, so are we in this world.” Embrace that, accept that. Love that thought.

AS the Bride, we focus more on HIS perfect love for us, rather than on our imperfect love for Him. We focus on how HE sees His Bride – those who have covered themselves in HIM – not focusing on how WE see ourselves. Adam and Eve tried to cover themselves in leaves and failed miserably. But we cover ourselves in the perfect work of our King and in HIS loving sacrifice that paid all dues, all penalties... and now in him we are HOLY and beloved.

Ephesians 1:3-6

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, **who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ**, just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love,

having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of **His grace, by which He made us ACCEPTED in the Beloved**

Now let's turn to Proverbs 31 – and I hope you will see this in new light.

But before we can GLORY in Proverbs 31, we have to understand even though NOW is the judgment day for God's children, *if we abide in Christ*, we WILL bear MUCH fruit and do all things (**John 15:5-8**). Then, when judgment is rendered, we realize that many judgments are kind, loving, and wonderful!

1 Cor. 4:5 says in the end, during judgment each man's heart is revealed – and “then each one's PRAISE will come from God.” **1 John 4:17** says we have “BOLDNESS in the day of Judgment because as HE IS, so are WE in this world”. WE ARE THE BODY OF CHRIST. It's HIM. It's HIS body. It's HIS life. WE DIED, and our lives are now hidden in Christ in God – **Col 3:3**, and that is beautiful. Therefore **Hebrews 4:16** says we can come BOLDLY before the throne of grace – IN CHRIST. THAT'S how the Bride is in HIS eyes. If there's BAD judgment, it is because we are not abiding in Him. We are not seeking Him.

We will NOT be prepared as the HOLY BRIDE of Christ until we see that God wants to BLESS US, wants to clean us, and wants to perfect us – by CHRIST in us, by HIS covering. We're saved by GRACE, NOT OF WORKS, lest any man should boast (Eph 2:8-10). And Christ sees His Bride as “FAIREST AMONG WOMEN” – THE MOST BEAUTIFUL girl!

LESSONS FROM PROVERBS 31 – THE BRIDE OF THE KING

You've all heard of Proverbs 31 woman, the super-woman of the Bible. I believe it's a story about the Bride of Christ. Others have believed and taught that also. Even some church leaders a millennium ago taught that. And I do believe that is right: it's about the Bride of Messiah.

Now before you get all depressed, wondering how you – male or female – could ever measure up to this woman, remember this:

- **The Bride is NOT any one man or woman – but a composite of all of us (repeat).** This is not describing the perfect you. No. It's describing what the Bride will be like when the whole body comes together, with EACH ONE doing its function. NO ONE human being will do all the things listed in Prov 31. But TOGETHER, we can. Just as the TEMPLE didn't look like much when the various stones were being quarried and prepared. ONLY when all the stones came TOGETHER did it look like a glorious temple – and not a sound of a metal tool could be heard (1 Kings 6:7). By the time it was finished, it was gorgeous!

Ephesians 4:11-16 speaks of us all coming together UNTIL we come to the “perfect man” ... let's read it:

And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers,
 12 for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ,
 13 till we **all** come to **the unity of the faith** and of the *knowledge of the Son of God*, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the **fullness of Christ**;
 14 that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting,
 15 but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head — Christ —
16 from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.

Ephesians 2:19-22

Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone,
21 in whom the whole building, being fitted together, GROWS into a holy temple in the Lord, 22 in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.

ACROSTIC

Prov 31 about the bride is an ACROSTIC – A-Z, or in Hebrew ALEF- TAV. Every new verse begins with a new letter in the 22 letter Hebrew alphabet. What does this mean? This woman is the complete package. Nothing missing.

In Hebrew, the letters have a word picture, a musical note, and a numeric value. Some of these verses are interesting to tie in the word picture to what is being said. But my point is: only when all the parts of the body come together to make up the bride, can we be the complete package.

But this is key: YOU are NOT the whole body of Christ by yourself, any more than a finger is the whole body, or a chin, or big toe... but together, the body is a marvelous thing. Just as one part of any body isn't expected to be the whole thing, or do the whole thing the body does, neither are you by yourself ever going to be able to do everything you read in Proverbs 31 – because you're not the whole body, but just a part of the body of Christ. The Prov 31 wife is the "whole body" wife being described.

This should take some pressure off you! It's not about you. It's about HIM and his body. It's about when the whole body of the Bride of Christ comes together. That's when we see the entire, perfect wife. (Same was true of the temple of God. The individual stones could not be the entire temple. Only when all the stones came together and worked together could the whole being be realized.)

PROV 31 AND THE BRIDE OF MESSIAH – HIGH POINTS

Proverbs 31:10-31

10 Who can find a virtuous wife? For her worth is far above rubies (Hebrew – jewels, rubies).

The English word “virtuous” is from the Hebrew word *hayil* (2428)— translated most of the time as “strong, brave, excellent”. This is going to be about a strong and excellent wife who is strong in spirit and resourceful. In describing women, it has the meaning of virtuous, excellent, strong, brave, and capable. When used about men, it denotes MEN OF VALOR, or valiant men (Deut 3:18; 2 Kings 24:16 for example.)

Prov. 12:4 – An EXCELLENT wife is a crown of her husband...”

Holman version: A capable wife

KJV “A virtuous woman...”

My point: this is about a woman of valor, a strong woman, a brave person, an excellent woman. The Hebrew goes way past the English notion of “virtuous”. Remember I said this was written as an acrostic? Well, combine that first verse on the Prov 31 woman with the first letter of the Hebrew *alef-beit* (alphabet), which is *alef* (like our “A”) – since it is the first verse in this section – and the meaning of “strong” comes out powerfully. Alef’s word picture is the head of an ox, strength, and it always points to God. We are strong because we look to God for our strength. That’s all implied or pictured in that first verse.

The same word is used in Ruth 3:11. We know RUTH was another woman who was a type of the Bride of Christ. In there, Boaz says to her, “everyone knows you are a woman of noble character” – where *hayil* is translated not “virtuous” but “of “noble character”.

Another goal of this sermon as we go through Proverbs 31 is this: think SPIRITUAL when you read something PHYSICAL like “temple, flax, strong” etc. You’ll see this Proverbs 31 section in new light when you do.

What was the SECRET to this Prov 31 woman’s PERFECTION?

I want to start with the END: WHAT MAKES THIS WOMAN SO PERFECT? Was it because she seems able to do everything, and do it well? NO. That’s not going to be it. SHE is such a remarkable woman because she realizes SHE CAN’T do it all on her own, by herself. Many women and wives today are a wife, a working mom, a mother, a homemaker – and they’re juggling so much, it can seem daunting. So HOW did she do it?

LET’S READ THE ENTIRE PASSAGE WITH THE END IN MIND:**Proverbs 31:30**

Charm is deceitful and beauty is passing, **But a woman who fears YHVH, she shall be praised.**

She is all that we are about to read – not because she made herself that way, or pushed herself, or was born that way. NO. She is what we’re about to read as a RESULT OF HER RELATIONSHIP WITH HER GOD. Her closeness to her God is what MADE HER the woman we will read about. That’s the same thing you’ll see in 1 Peter 3:3-6—the women who TRUST IN GOD were the ones with a beautiful heart.

Jesus put it another way: "ABIDE IN ME and you shall bear MUCH fruit" (**John 15:5**). That was her secret. To "abide" is to stay, to make it your abode, your home.

My point: MAKE a point to pray and study God's word each day. Seek him. Make contact all through the day. Then HE will be living in YOU and working in you as you abide in him – and therein is our strength, in Him.

PROVERBS 31

Proverbs 31:10-31

10 Who can find a virtuous (capable, strong) wife? For her worth is far above rubies.

- Begins with Aleph – strength, points to God, who is the SOURCE of our strength. (Ephesians 6:10 –Finally....be strong in the Lord and in the power of HIS might."
- Rubies – or jewels – very valuable. Red. Color of blood. We were bought with red blood also, weren't we? What makes us valuable is the blood of Christ who bought us. HE- and his perfect life being lived in us again – is what makes us worthy and valuable. God Most High paid the ultimate price for YOU. I think that says something about how much He values you.

V 11 "The heart of her husband safely trusts her; so he will have no lack of gain".

- Again, WHY does her husband safely trust her? Because he knows SHE fears to disobey YHVH and that will guide her to be a wonderful wife.
- God is not going to have another Lucifer who turns into the Adversary. We MUST be trusted by God. We are always told to trust *in God*. But this verse also states the Bride will be a body of people in whom Yeshua can also trust.
- Are we growing in character through Christ, so He knows we're going to be reliable in obedience and in our conduct? 2 Pet 3:18- "grow in GRACE and in knowledge OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOR Jesus Christ". We are seeking to please Him and be ONE with Him.

12 "She does him good and not evil all the days of her life."

- Hebrew letter GIMEL – camel – and the word picture associated is to "lift up".
- She lifts Him up, brings him glory – and that comes back to her. She obeys her husband and seeks to be one mind with him.
- When we sin, we bring God's name into disrepute. When we are letting Him live in us and we live righteously, that brings Him joy and glory.

13 "She seeks wool and flax, And willingly works with her hands."

- Hebrew letter DALET – door – pictures pathway, door.
- Here we see a woman who is motivated, willing to do what it takes to keep the household humming. Spiritually, she's contributing to the wellbeing of the body of Christ. She prays for people, she's contributing services and help wherever she can.
- Wool – she's prepared for the cold tough times of life. For warmth. But priests were forbidden to wear anything that made them sweat (Ezekiel 44:18)

- **FLAX** - this is where we get LINEN from. Who wore linen? Priests. Kings. What is its main quality: absorbs sweat. **Priests** wore a LINEN robe, linen sash, linen turban – Exodus 28 and Ex 39:28. Also Ezek 44:17-18.
- **ROYALS also wore it – 2 Samuel 6:14** – David danced in a linen ephod.
- **Yeshua was wrapped in fine linen when taken down from the cross (Luke 23:53)**
- Point: She knows they **are A ROYAL PRIESTHOOD (kings and priests)**.
- What does the linen picture? WHO ultimately covers us? God said HE was the one who clothed the young woman who became His bride in **Ezek 16:8-10**.
 - Garment of salvation – Isa. 61:10

Revelation 19:7-8

Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready."

8 And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine LINEN, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints [which is Christ living in them].

Isaiah 61:10

I will greatly rejoice in YHVH, My soul shall be joyful in my God; **For HE has clothed me with the garments of yeshua (salvation)**, He has covered me with the robe of righteousness, As a bridegroom decks himself with ornaments, And as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.

14 She is like the merchant ships, She brings her food from afar.

Right now especially, we may have to look far and wide for good spiritual food. Gleanings from the corners of fields if necessary, like Ruth did initially.

15 She also rises while it is yet night, And provides food for her household, And a portion for her maidservants. Hebrew – VAV – tent peg, nail – to add/to secure/to hook.

- She is FEEDING her children the SPIRITUAL FOOD of God – teaching God's ways, God's word to the family. This helps us learn to be teachers as we teach our family – and have these DISCUSSIONS. She's doing what she can to help the Body of Christ grow in understanding. (Remember when I say "she", I referring to the church, the body of Christ, which includes men.)

16 She considers a field and buys it; From her profits she plants a vineyard.

- Again, look at this spiritually. **Remember Matthew 13:44** – man who buys the field with the hidden treasure? Read it if you don't remember the verse.
- **To me this says she is INVESTING IN THE KINGDOM OF GOD**; takes time to study, to learn of it. She's praying every day.
- Plants a VINEYARD. WHO is the VINE? Represents Christ again. WHO is the land owner – God the Father (**John 15:1-8**). Yeshua's the vine, we're the branches.

17 She girds herself with strength, And strengthens her arms. (Discuss)

- **Some say this means working day and night and exerts intense personal effort.** I think that totally misses the point. Some believe this means she works out hard every day to be fit. That's something we should be doing, yes – but it's not the focus of our relationship with Christ.
 - **When we are with God, He wants us to be at peace. REST, shabbat.**
 - **"HE makes me LIE DOWN in green pastures, he leads me beside STILL waters" – PS 23:2**
 - **Isaiah 30:23-** when HE blesses us, work is easier! Rain in due season. *Working by the sweat of your brow was a curse (Gen 3:17-18).* In the garden, they were at rest. After the garden, it was thorns and thistles.

Yeshua in Gethsemane - blood/sweat – fell to the ground (Luke 22:44).
By doing so, Yeshua took on himself the curse of "sweat of your brow" and the personal work it represented; also the crown of thorns (Mark 15:17) – he took the curse of a cursed land even before being nailed to the cross.

- **This verse points to the source of her strength again – Christ (Eph 6:10).** We can do all things through HIM (Phil 4:13); God is my rock, my strength.
- **Gal. 5:16-17 if we walk in the spirit we will not fulfill the lusts of the flesh**
 - That means setting our minds on, focusing on, positive spiritual things – Rom 8:4-5; it's feeding it, sowing to it – Gal. 6:7-9; being LED by spirit (Rom 8:1, 14-15).
- **When we walk with God, we walk with HIS strength (story of Rachel trying to lift something...are you using all the strength available to you?)**

18 She perceives that her merchandise is good, *And her lamp does not go out by night.*

- This is NOT about working day and night! That's unbalanced. It's about not letting the light of Christ ever go out of our lives, but every moment we're awake, HE is shining in us. (Ephesians 5:8; 1 Peter 2:9). THE OIL of God's spirit is what produces the light. We must not be like the 5 foolish virgins who began losing their light (Matthew 25:1-13).

20 She extends her hand to the poor, Yes, she reaches out her hands to the needy.

- **HEBREW letter is Kaf/chaf – word picture – OPEN HAND. To help, cover.**
- Those who help the poor are lending to GOD himself (**Prov 19:17**) and GOD WILL PAY BACK...
- **Prov 22:9-** the one with a generous eye will be blessed.
- **PS 41:1** – God will remember US when we remember to help the poor
- **Ephesians 4:28**—the VERY REASON FOR WORK is to what? – have money to help others.
- **This may also be referring to the spiritually poor.** We don't look down at anyone.

22 She makes tapestry for herself; Her clothing is fine linen and purple.
Pointing to the fine covering of God's righteousness.

Fine linen – pointing to the priests covering of linen tunics, sashes, turbans. No sweat. From FLAX. Best linen used to come from Egypt. Nowadays Irish linen is #1, then French linen.

To make linen, by the way, they have a “retting” process—a rotting process. The flax at this point literally STINKS. Then the fibers have to be set upright on a pole and scraped with a wooden knife. It takes a beating of sorts!

Purple:

Purple garments were VERY EXPENSIVE – worn by the very rich and kings. The tabernacle and temple had purple. This lady was wealthy. The first converts at Philippi were led by a woman at first who was a “seller of purple” (Acts 16:14).

Many COLORS IN THE TABERNACLE – white, red, blue, purple.

Red – earth, adam- adamah- Edom ---dirt. Humanity. Blood.

Blue – sky, heavenly, godly, spirit.

Combine the 2 = purple. Divine Royalty. But only when combine spirit with the blood.

23 Her husband is known in the gates, When he sits among the elders of the land.

- Gates – where the leaders would assemble and make decisions. Her husband was a LEADER.
- A fine husband tends to have a fine wife. One brings out the best in the other. Wayne Gretsky (hockey) and Michael Jordan made their teammates look better.

24 She makes linen garments and sells them, And supplies sashes for the merchants.

- She's all about quality. Excellence. Used to tell son “everything you do has your signature on it. It says something about you.”

25 Strength and honor are her clothing; She shall rejoice in time to come.

26 She opens her mouth with wisdom, And on her tongue is the law of kindness.

- Hebrew letter is PE/FE – and the word picture is a mouth – TO SPEAK!
- Again – where does wisdom start and come from? **PS 111:10; Prov. 9:10.**

27 She watches over the ways of her household, And does not eat the bread of idleness.

- THE GREATEST KINGS OF JUDAH – had great mothers.... Josiah, Hezekiah, Joash,

28 Her children rise up and call her blessed; Her husband also, and he praises her:

- Hebrew letter KOF – back of the head – behind, the last, the least.
- CHILDREN PRAISING MOM – the result of good training; should not be something just for Mother's day. This is not something we often see on Facebook.

2 Timothy 3:14-15 (compare to 2 Tim. 1:5 – grandmother Lois and mother Eunice)
But you must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing **from whom you have learned them, and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures**, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

- **“Her HUSBAND praises her”** – This is not a husband who is finding fault, seeing what his wife isn't doing or where she's failing.
- Who is our husband? Jesus CHRIST!
 - Song of Solomon – “You are the FAIREST among women”.
 - We have GOT to change our picture of Christ and God. They're NOT constantly finding fault.
 - Would God the Father say about YOU – “This is my beloved son/daughter in whom I WELL pleased?”
 - Jesus is NOT ashamed to call us his brothers/sisters – Hebrews 2:10-11

WHAT DO YOU THINK? IS GOD ASHAMED of you?

Hebrews 11:16

But now they desire a better, that is, a heavenly country. **Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God**, for He has prepared a city for them.

1 Corinthians 4:5

Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord comes, who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness and reveal the counsels of the hearts. Then **each one's PRAISE will come from God**.

MEN, WE HAVE GOT TO PRAISE OUR WIVES MORE -- TO HER, TO OTHERS.

29 (Husband is saying) "MANY daughters have done well, But you EXCEL them all."

- **RESH – head , first – highest....**
- Many called, few chosen.
- She excels them all because she is “in him” – in Christ, who empowers her and he covers her with HIS righteousness (Phil 3:9-11).
- Jesus presents to himself a wife who is a GLORIOUS church, not having spot or wrinkle... but she is holy and without blemish” (Ephesians 5:26-27).

30 Charm is deceitful and beauty is passing, But a woman who fears YHVH, she shall be praised.

- Think SPIRITUALLY here and not just physically. Our spiritual BEAUTY should be the adorning that comes from obeying our God and walking with him. (1 Peter 3:3)

1 Peter 1:6-7

In this YOU greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, **may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ**,

31 Give her of the fruit of her hands, And let her own works praise her in the gates.

- The final Hebrew letter - TAV – word picture: sign, cross. Covenant, to seal.

Though I've been talking about our life is now Christ's life being re-lived, we DO HAVE TO LET THAT PROCESS HAPPEN. And Christ does it THRU OUR BODIES, OUR HANDS, OUR WORDS – and HIS works become ours and ours become his. We're part of His body.

1 Timothy 5:24-25

Some men's sins are clearly evident, preceding them to judgment, but those of some men follow later.

Likewise, the good works of some are clearly evident, and those that are otherwise cannot be hidden.

Hebrews 6:10

For God is **not unjust to forget your work and labor of love** which you have shown toward His name, in that you have ministered to the saints, and do minister.

The Bride will be made ready. We should be doing all we can to pray more, study more, have that close relationship with our Maker more.

Revelation 19:7-9

Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready."

And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.

9 Then he said to me, "Write: 'Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!'" And he said to me, "These are the true sayings of God."

I said earlier that Proverbs 31 was an acrostic. It begins with ALEF – which always pointed to God, #1, word picture – strong ox or bull. Starts with a STRONG WOMAN in God. Virtuous – a strong woman of valor. It ends in verse 31 with the Hebrew alphabet TAV – the sign of the cross, the word picture pointed to covenant.

Starts with God, ends with Him making a COVENANT, a marriage covenant with the bride. She is in HIS covering, his covenant.

So I hope this has encouraged you. You are deeply loved by your husband, who adores you, loves you, and sees you as beautiful. He sees your heart. He sees you abiding in Him, and though we still fail – a lot – Romans 7 and 8 make it clear that though we fail, we are no longer condemned, for we come under the covering of Yeshua. There is now NO condemnation to those who are in Christ (Rom 8:1). He sees us in the Spirit, not in the flesh – "But you are NOT in the flesh" (Rom 8:8-9), so we CAN please God.

And remember, this perfect Bride of Christ is not just you, just one person trying to be all of that. No, if you're a finger nail on the Body, you be the best fingernail you can be, in Christ.

You are part of HIS body, holy, clean and blessed – as long as you abide in Him, and come back quickly when you realize you have not been abiding in Him. If you rebel, if you turn

your back on him, if you reject Him, if you are ashamed of Him – all that is a different story. But that's not your story..... Focus on his love. He is likely calling you to be a part of the Bride of the Son of God.

Until next time, this is your brother, Philip Shields, minister of Jesus Christ.

Numbers 6:24-27

YHWH bless you and keep you; YHWH make His face shine upon you, And be gracious to you; Yehowah lift up His countenance upon you, And give you peace."
"So they shall put MY name on the children of Israel, and I will bless them."