

# Ephesians 5:25-27 Commentary

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EPHESIANS - CHRIST AND THE CHURCH  
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SYMMETRY OF EPHESIANS	
EPHESIANS 1-3	EPHESIANS 4-6
The Root	The Fruit
Spiritual Wealth	Spiritual Walk
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Privilege	Practice
Doctrine	Duty
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Belief	Behavior
Privileges of the Believer	Responsibilities of the Believer
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The Finished Work of Christ	The Faithful Walk of the Christian
Work of Christ In Us	Work of Christ Through Us
We in Christ	Christ in Us
Word of God	Walk of the Christian
Heavenly Standing	Earthly Walk
Who You Are In Christ	Whose You Are In Christ
Identity	Responsibility
Position of the Believer	Practice of the Believer
Theology	Ethics

**Ephesians 5:25** [Husbands](#), **love** your [wives](#), [just](#) as [Christ also loved](#) the [church](#) and [gave Himself](#) up for her, ([NASB: Lockman](#))

**Greek:** [Oi andres](#), **agapate** (**2PPAM**) [tas gunaikas](#), [kathos kai o Christos egapesen](#) ([3SAAI](#)) [ten ekklesian kai heauton paredoken](#) ([3SAAI](#)) [huper autas](#).

**Amplified:** Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her, ([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))

**NLT:** And you husbands must love your wives with the same love Christ showed the church. He gave up his life for her ([NLT - Tyndale House](#))

**Phillips:** But, remember, this means that the husband must give his wife the same sort of love that Christ gave to the Church, when he sacrificed himself for her. ([Phillips: Touchstone](#))

**Wuest:** The husbands, be loving your wives with a love self-sacrificial in its nature, in the manner in which Christ also loved the Church and gave himself on behalf of it,

**Young's Literal:** The husbands! love your own wives, as also the Christ did love the assembly, and did give himself for it,

## HUSBANDS, **LOVE** YOUR WIVES: Oi andres, agapate (2PPAM) tas gunaikas:

- Ep 5:28; Genesis 2:24; 24:67; 2 Sa 12:3; Pr 5:18,19; Col 3:19; 1 Pe 3:7
- [Ephesians Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Ephesians 5:25-31: Spirit-Filled Families - 2](#) - Wayne Barber
- [Ephesians 5:25-33 Do You Really Love Your Wife? \(Part 1\)](#) - Steven Cole
- [Ephesians 5:25-33 Do You Really Love Your Wife? \(Part 2\)](#) - Steven Cole
- [Ephesians 5:25-33 A Job Description For Husbands](#) - Steven Cole
- [Ephesians 5:25-33 I'm the Boss, Aren't I?](#) - Steven Cole
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**Note:** All verbs in **bold red** indicate commands, not suggestions! Also hold mouse pointer over underlined links for pop up of Scripture which stays open and can be copied.

**Husbands love** - In this next section Paul instructs husbands in three separate verses to love their wives! (Eph 5:25, 28, 33)

**Wayne Barber** discusses how a husband can even love this way reminding us that "being filled with the Spirit is like taking a glass, knocking the bottom out of it, sticking it in the river, and letting the river flow through it. It is not filling it up, drinking it and emptying it. No, you don't empty yourself of God. God has come into you to be a permanent resident. The way in which you are controlled by His Spirit, Who is like a river of living water flowing from your innermost spirit, is to deal with sin in your life being willing to let Him control every area of your life. Then that flow can be what it ought to be. So hang on to that. Be fully exposed to the Lord Jesus. Then you begin to experience the strengthening in the inner man by His ability that is far beyond yours. (Ephesians 5:25-31: Spirit-Filled Families)

Paul has a similar command for Christian husbands in Colossians...

Husbands, **love** (present imperative) your wives, and **do not be embittered** (present imperative with a negative conveys the sense "Stop being embittered toward") against them. (See **note** Colossians 3:19)

In first Peter there is a parallel charge with a sharp warning for disobedience...

You husbands likewise, live with your wives in an understanding way, as with a weaker vessel, since she is a woman; and grant her honor as a fellow heir of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered. (See **note** 1 Peter 3:7)

**Husbands** ([435](#)) (**aner**) is simply the word for an adult male, in this case the husband.

**Love** ([25](#)) (**agapao** related to noun **agape** - see word study) means to love unconditionally and sacrificially reflecting the love that God Himself is. **Agapao** does not describe an emotional love but represents the act of the will of one who desires and seeks the other's highest good. In the context of Ephesians, this divine love, which is one of the fruits of the Spirit, is itself empowered in Spirit filled husbands, those who are wearing the garment of the new man. Any attempts to exhibit **agape** love based upon natural strength or self-effort are destined to fail. Just as Christ's love for His Bride the Church was costly, in the same way this love by husbands demands the death to self.

**Agapao** describes the self-less love which is given even if it is not received or returned! The husband must love the wife with a love which never exercises a tyranny of control but which is ready to make any sacrifice for her good. Paul defines this love in a very pragmatic way writing that...

(Agape) **Love is patient** (has a long fuse before it blows), **love is kind** (provides something beneficial for her needs not greeds), **and is not jealous** (doesn't boil over easily); love does not brag (doesn't exhibit self display or conceit) **and is not arrogant** (isn't haughty or puffed up and inflated with pride), **5 does not act unbecomingly** (doesn't behave in an ugly, indecent, improper, rude, disgraceful, dishonorable manner); **it does not seek its own** (does not care for anything except its self interests, of having its own way in everything), **is not** (note KJV is incorrect adding "easily" - the idea is not at all!) **provoked** (aroused to a paroxysm of anger, is not "touchy" or easily irritated, does not have a sharp or contentious edge, does not have a spasm over every little irritation), **does not take into account** (logizomai is a bookkeeping term!) **a wrong suffered** (does not keep a ledger or permanent record of trespasses), **6 does not rejoice in unrighteousness** (is not glad when iniquity triumphs), **but rejoices with the truth; 7 bears all things** (protects by covering over the faults and frailties of others, bearing with them), **believes all things, hopes all**

**things** (looks at the bright side of things and does not despair), **endures all things** (continues in activity despite resistance and opposition). **8 Love never fails** (is never without effect, will never come to an end). (**1 Corinthians 13:4-8a**) (see expository notes)

**Agape love** is Christ's love which is the motive behind His saving grace. The consummation of His love is seen at Calvary where God demonstrated His own love for us, despite the fact that we were sinners, hostile toward God and at enmity with Him! Christ's love for us was demonstrated in action, His willingness to give Himself up for us. That same quality of love is now possible for believer because the very Essence of that love now lives in the believer's heart in the Spirit of Christ.

**Husbands, how would you describe your love toward your wife this past week? Sacrificial or selfish? (If you're having trouble answering this question, go back to the preceding passage in 1 Corinthians 13 and "grade" yourself for the week!)**

When we fail to love like Christ, we have no excuse for the Power to live righteously now resides in every believer who is willing to surrender to the control of the Holy Spirit.

Note that Paul uses the **present imperative** which commands husbands to continually love their wives. How can a wife not voluntarily, willingly submit to a husband who is continually loving his wife with a Christ-like, divine, Spirit controlled and empowered love?!

**EBC** has an excellent comment noting that...

In Greco-Roman society it was recognized that wives had obligations to their husbands, but not vice versa. In this, as in other respects, Christianity introduced a revolutionary approach to marriage that **equalized the rights of wives and husbands** and established the institution on a much firmer foundation than ever before. One word summed up the role of the wife—"submit". One word does the same for the husband—"love". This is the highest and distinctively Christian word for loving. As over against **eros** ("sexual passion") and **philia** ("family affection") Paul chooses the verb *agapao* to insist that the love of a Christian man for his wife must be a response to and an expression of the love of God in Christ extended to the church (cf. vv. 1, 2). Colossians 3:19 (see **note**) spells out the practical implications of such love: "*do not be harsh with them.*" ([Gaebelein, F. Editor: Expositor's Bible Commentary 6-Volume New Testament. Zondervan Publishing](#)) (Bolding added)

#### JUST AS CHRIST ALSO LOVED THE CHURCH : *kathos kai o Christos egapesen* (3SAAI):

- Ep 5:2; Mt 20:28; Luke 22:19,20; John 6:51; Acts 20:28; Gal 1:4; 2:20; 1Ti 2:6; 1Pe 1:18, 19, 20, 21; Rev 1:5; 5:9
- [Ephesians Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
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**Just as Christ loved the Church** - Paul begins to "define" the character of the **love** called for from the husband. It is to be like Christ's love. It follows that it could only be a supernatural love, a **love** that emanates as fruit from one who is filled with the Spirit (calling for obedience to the command in Eph 5:18, cp Gal 5:22, Ro 5:5). **You can mark it down husbands (and I am one with you) -- To try to love like Christ in our natural strength, the garment of the "old man", is to assure failure in loving one's wife as willed by God.**

**Christ** ([5547](#)) (**Christos** from *chrío* = to anoint, rub with oil, consecrate to an office) is the **Messiah, the Anointed One, Christos** being the Greek equivalent of the transliterated Hebrew word Messiah.

**Wayne Barber** adds that this **love** is "not affection answering to affection. This is what a lot of people think. "*Well, yes. I could love my wife if she would just love me. If she would show me a little attention I could love her back.*" No, sir. It is not affection responding to affection. As a matter of fact, it is so **unconditional** she doesn't even have to do a thing for us to be commanded to love her. It is love that strives to the highest good of the one loved and will pay any price for it to take place, whatever it is. Whatever is necessary for that person, the highest good, he will pay any price in order to see those needs met, especially the spiritual ones. It is the highest form of love -- selfless, unconditional and committed to the highest good of our wife. (**Ephesians 5:25-31: Spirit-Filled Families**)

**Loved** ([25](#)) (*agapao* see above) in this context shows us its sacrificial, unselfish nature. For the husband to exhibit this supernatural

love like Jesus, he has to have a supernatural source, the continual filling of the Holy Spirit. There is no other way we can love like Jesus loved, except to allow His love to flow through us as one of the aspects of the fruit of His Spirit.

**Church** ([1577](#)) (**ekklesia** from **ekkaléo** = call out in turn from **ek** = out + **kaleo** = call) literally "called-out ones". The Greeks used **ekklesia** for assembly of citizens called out to transact city business. The church is a living organism, composed of living members joined together; through which Christ works, carries out His purposes and He lives.

Everyone who has been saved belongs to the body of Christ, the universal **church**. The universal church is manifested in the world by individual local churches, each of which is to be a microcosm of the body of Christ. The church is to function under the leadership of the Holy Spirit, operating under His sovereign rule. Jesus Christ is the Founder and Lord of His church and has guaranteed its perpetuity until He returns.

**Related resource:**

- [A SPIRIT FILLED CHURCH](#)

**AND GAVE HIMSELF UP FOR HER : kai heauton paredoken (3SAI) huper autes:**

- [Ephesians Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
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**Gave Himself up for her** - This phrase helps define the sacrificial nature of the husband's love. It lays down self for the other person.

**EBC** comments that = Once again the apostle draws a comparison between the marriage relationship and the relationship of Christ and the church (cf. Ep 5:22, 23, 24). It was on the cross that our Lord gave himself up for his bride. The analogy is all the more telling, since **ekklesia** is feminine. This is an aspect of the atonement not given such prominence elsewhere in the NT. Paul himself has already declared that Christ laid down his life "for our sins" (Ro 4:25-note; Gal 1:4), or "for me" (Gal 2:20-note), or "for us all" (Ro 8:32-note). Now he affirms that our Lord's sacrificial death was "for her," i.e., for the church ([Gaebelein, F. Editor: Expositor's Bible Commentary 6-Volume New Testament, Zondervan Publishing](#))

The eloquent preacher **Chrysostom** (347-407AD - his name means "golden tongue") has a wonderful expansion of this passage

"Hast thou seen the measure of obedience? Hear also the measure of love. Wouldst thou that thy wife shouldst obey thee as the Church doth Christ? Have care thyself for her as Christ for the Church. And if it be needful that thou shouldst give thy life for her, or be cut to pieces a thousand times, or endure anything whatever, refuse it not. ... He brought the Church to his feet by his great care, not by threats nor fear nor any such thing; so do thou conduct thyself towards thy wife."

**Gave up** ([3860](#)) (**paradidomi** from **para** = alongside, beside + **didomi** = give) means to give alongside. The basic idea is to give over from one's hand to someone or something with particular reference to a **right** or an **authority**. This concept is illustrated in the devil's attempt to tempt our Lord...

And the devil said to Him, "I will give You all this domain and its glory; for **it has been handed over to** (**paradidomi**) me, and I give it to whomever I wish. (Luke 4:6)

In the ancient world **paradidomi** was used as a technical term of police and courts = 'hand over into the custody of'. The idea is to give over into one's power or use and involves either the handing over of a presumably guilty person for punishment by authorities or the handing over of an individual to an enemy who will presumably take undue advantage of the victim, as was the case in the arrest and trials that followed our Lord's being giving over.

In Galatians 2:20 **paradidomi** is in the **aorist tense** which **Vine** states...

is in the point tense (Ed: "aorist") because it refers to the "one act of righteousness," Romans 5:18 (see note),

in which the eternal love of God found its highest expression, and by which the salvation of believers was secured... Complete comprehension of "the mystery of God, even Christ" lies beyond the capacity of the human mind. The more closely it is considered the greater grows the wonder of its unfathomable depths. Not only was God in Christ during His life on earth, John 14:10, God was in Christ in His reconciling death, 2 Corinthians 5:19. This ground is holy, yet is it to be approached, albeit with "reverence and awe," for all that God has been pleased to reveal is proper subject for the worshipful consideration of His children. Two cautions are needful here, however. We may not go beyond what is written, and we may not expect to eliminate mystery from the Divine sacrifice or to reconcile all that is revealed concerning it; the human point of view is far too low, the human outlook far too limited, to admit of that. ([Collected writings of W. E. Vine. Nashville: Thomas Nelson](#))

In the introductory verses to this letter to the Galatians, Paul explained that Jesus

"gave (didomi = active voice = of His own volition) Himself for (huper = on behalf of = speaks of His substitutionary death for) our sins, that He might deliver us out of this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father" (Galatians 1:4)

Later **Paul** taught that...

Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us-- for it is written, "CURSED IS EVERYONE WHO HANGS ON A TREE"-- in order that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith. (Gal 3:13, 14) (**Comment:** Note He was not "accursed" but became a curse in the same sense that "He was made to be sin" in 2Cor 5:21. He voluntarily submitted himself to the curse of the law that that curse might be removed from us.)

**Preacher's Commentary** illustrates Christ giving Himself up for us with the following story...

Following the success of the communist revolution in China in 1948, two young men were given the job of destroying Christian chapels. One evening at dusk, after they had devastated a small chapel, they decided to sleep in it that night. As they were lying on the floor there, one of them saw a crucifix so high on the wall they had not been able to reach it. He looked at it steadily for a while, then said to his companion, "Do you see the picture of God nailed to that stick of wood?" "Yes," the other responded, "but what of it?" The first answered, "You know, I never saw a God who suffered before." This is something new—a Savior who voluntarily suffers. ([Briscoe, D. S., & Ogilvie, L. J. The Preacher's Commentary Series, New Testament. 2003; Thomas Nelson](#))

Jesus explained His purpose to the disciples declaring that...

"the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many." (Mt 20:28)

In John Jesus declared...

"I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep... For this reason the Father loves Me, because I lay down My life that I may take it again. No one has taken it away from Me, but I lay it down on My own initiative. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This commandment I received from My Father." (John 10:11, 17-18)

The awesome truth about Jesus' life for our life cannot be repeated enough, as Paul emphasized in many of his letters...

He who was **delivered up** (paradidomi) because of our transgressions, and was raised because of our justification. (see **note** Romans 4:25)

"Walk in love, just as Christ also loved you, and **gave Himself up** (paradidomi) for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma. (see **sermon** Eph 5:2)

Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and **gave Himself up** (paradidomi) for her (see **sermon** Eph 5:25)

(Jesus) gave Himself as a ransom for all, the testimony borne at the proper time. (1Ti 2:6)

(Jesus) gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds. (see **note** Titus 2:14)

Although Paul clearly states that Jesus of His own volition **gave Himself over** into the hands of evil men, many of the other uses of paradidomi in the gospels describe the giving over of our Lord Jesus Christ into the hands and the authority of His various and manifold adversaries... and so we read that **Jesus was given over**...



**By Judas** - And Judas Iscariot, who was one of the twelve, went off to the chief priests, in order to **betray** (paradidomi - to hand Him over to them) Him to them. (Mark 14:10) (Compare: Simon the Zealot, and Judas Iscariot, the one who **betrayed** [paradidomi] Him. - Mt 10:4)

**By the Sanhedrin to Pilate** - And early in the morning the chief priests with the elders and scribes, and the whole Council, immediately held a consultation; and binding Jesus, they led Him away, and **delivered** Him up (paradidomi) to Pilate (Mark 15:1)

**By Pilate to the people's will** - And he released the man they were asking for who had been thrown into prison for insurrection and murder, but he **delivered** (paradidomi) Jesus to their will. (Luke 23:25)

**By Pilate to the soldiers for execution** - And wishing to satisfy the multitude, Pilate released Barabbas for them, and after having Jesus scourged, he **delivered** (paradidomi) Him to be crucified. (Mk 15:15)

**S Lewis Johnson** speaking of living our lives now based on faith in the Son of God asks...

But do we have good reasons to rest in Him? The final words of Galatians 2:20 supply ample grounds. Our faith is in the Son of God, "who loved me and gave himself for me." Cf. Gal 1:4. All of the essentials of the atonement are found here. His redemptive work is grounded in the love that expressed itself in the cross, the word "loved" being an aorist in tense and referring to the event of the cross as the issue of eternal, electing love (cf. Eph 1:3-6; 2:4, etc.). The verb, "gave," means to hand over, to deliver over (cf. Ro 4:25-note; Ro 8:32-note; Eph. 5:2). It in this context suggests these important things:

(1) First, His death was voluntary. He gave Himself.

(2) Second, His death was a penal sacrifice, for He had to deliver Himself over to the cross. The aorist of the participle again points to the cross as the event at which the delivering took place. And it was a delivering of Himself over to the divine penalty for sin. He, thus, was a sacrifice.

(3) Third, His death was substitutionary. It was "for me," Paul says, a personal reference that is expanded to all the elect in other places in his writings (cf. Eph. 5:2; Gal. 1:4). The use of the first person here "indicates the deep personal feeling with which the apostle writes," Burton believes.

Incidentally, it is never said in the New Testament that Christ loves the world. He loved the church, and He loves me; the special relation that He bears to His own is the New Testament stress (cf. Rev 1:5).

The apostle has set forth for us the secret of true life. It is found in the voluntary, penal substitutionary sacrifice of the Son of God who, uniting us with Himself, has died our death under judgment and has raised us up with Him in His resurrection to enjoy forever His life beyond the sphere of the Mosaic Law. It is no longer the hopeless struggle to keep the Law, but it is now the confident trust in the Lawgiver Himself, who lives His life out within me and through me. Can we not count on Him who loved me in all my sin and iniquity and, in spite of that, gave Himself for me? Cf. Romans 5:9, 5:10; Romans 8:32. (Read his full message on [Galatians 2:15-21](#))

**Warren Wiersbe** draws the analogy between the church and a bride writing... The church is pictured as the bride of Christ. It is interesting to compare the church to the first bride in the Bible, Eve (Ge 2:18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25). She was taken from Adam's side, and Christ's side was pierced for us on the cross. She was formed when Adam was asleep, and Christ experienced the sleep of death to create the church. Eve shared Adam's nature, and the church partakes of Christ's nature (Eph 5:30,31). Eve was the object of her mate's love and care, and Christ loves the church and cares for it. Adam was willing to become a sinner because of his love for his wife (1Ti 2:11, 12, 13, 14, 15), and Christ willingly was made sin because of His love for the church. Eve was formed and brought to Adam before sin entered the human family; the church was in the mind and heart of God before the foundation of the world. ([Wiersbe, W. W. Wiersbe's Expository Outlines on the New Testament. Wheaton, Ill.: Victor Books](#))

**Spurgeon Morning and Evening** on Ephesians 5:25 - What a golden example Christ gives to his disciples! Few masters could venture to say, "If you would practice my teaching, imitate my life;" but as the life of Jesus is the exact transcript of perfect virtue, he can point to himself as the paragon of holiness, as well as the teacher of it. The Christian should take nothing short of Christ for his model. Under no circumstances ought we to be content unless we reflect the grace which was in him. As a husband, the Christian is to look upon the portrait of Christ Jesus, and he is to paint according to that copy. The true Christian is to be such a husband as Christ was to his church. The love of a husband is special. The Lord Jesus cherishes for the church a peculiar affection, which is set upon her above the rest of mankind: "I pray for them, I pray not for the world." The elect church is the favourite of heaven, the treasure of Christ, the crown of his head, the bracelet of his arm, the breastplate of his heart, the very centre and core of his love. A husband should love his wife with a constant love, for thus Jesus loves his church. He does not vary in his affection. He may change in his display of affection, but the affection itself is still the same. A husband should love his wife with an enduring love, for nothing

"shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." A true husband loves his wife with a hearty love, fervent and intense. It is not mere lip-service. Ah! beloved, what more could Christ have done in proof of his love than he has done? Jesus has a delighted love towards his spouse: He prizes her affection, and delights in her with sweet complacency. Believer, you wonder at Jesus' love; you admire it-are you imitating it? In your domestic relationships is the rule and measure of your love-"even as Christ loved the church?"

**Ephesians 5:26** [so](#) that He might [sanctify](#) her, having [cleansed](#) her by the [washing](#) of [water](#) with the [word](#), ([NASB: Lockman](#))

**Greek:** [hina auten hagiase](#) (3SAAS) [katharisas](#) (AAPMSN) [to loutro tou hudatos en rhemati](#).

**Amplified:** So that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the Word, ([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))

**NLT:** to make her holy and clean, washed by baptism and God's word. ([NLT - Tyndale House](#))

**Phillips:** Christ gave himself to make her holy, having cleansed her through the baptism of his Word ([Phillips: Touchstone](#))

**Wuest:** in order that He might sanctify it, having cleansed it by the bath of water in the sphere of the Word,

**Young's Literal:** that he might sanctify it, having cleansed it with the bathing of the water in the saying,

#### SO THAT HE MIGHT SANCTIFY HER: [hina auten hagiase](#) (3SAAS):

- John 17:17, 18, 19; Acts 26:18; 1Cor 6:11; Titus 2:14; Hebrews 9:14; 10:10; 1Peter 1:2; Jude 1:1
- [Ephesians Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
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**So that** - Introduces a purpose clause, explaining why Christ gave Himself up for the Church. See discussion of importance of observing and interrogating **terms of purpose or result** (so that, in order that, that, as a result).

**He might sanctify her** - The Bride of Christ has been set apart by Christ. In Paul's day, the father would chose a bride for his son, which is analogous to what happened in the Godhead, Paul writing that...

He (God the Father) chose us in Him (in Christ, in union with Him) before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him. (see note Ephesians 1:4)

So in eternity past, believers were in a sense "engaged" or **"betrothed"** to Christ, this engagement or **betrothal** not being realized in the believer's life until the day of their regeneration by the Spirit, the day of their new birth by grace through faith, the day on which the Spirit baptized them (united them with, identified them with) the Body of Christ, the Church, the Bride of Christ.

Jesus answered and said to him (Nicodemus), "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is **born again**, he cannot see the kingdom of God." (John 3:3)

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy **has caused us to be born again** to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead (See note 1 Peter 1:3)

Since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren, fervently love one another from the heart, for **you have been born again** not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, that is, through the living and abiding word of God. (See notes 1 Peter 1:22; 1:23)

**He saved us**, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, **by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit**, Whom He poured out upon us richly through



Jesus Christ our Savior, that being justified by His grace we might be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life. (See notes Titus 3:5; 3:6; 3:7)

For by one Spirit **we were all baptized into one body**, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit. (1Cor 12:13).

And in order to assure His "sincerity" and authenticity of our betrothal to Christ, our Bridegroom gave us the glorious gift of His Spirit.

In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation-- having also believed, **you were sealed in Him** with the **Holy Spirit of promise** (See note Ephesians 1:13)

The **seal of the Spirit of Christ** serves to identify the Bride as now belonging only to Christ and underscores that she could be that she would be His possession forever. But at the moment of our betrothal, Christ did something else... He gave His bride the most glorious engagement ring ever given... His Spirit. Paul records that the Spirit of promise was...

Who is given as a **pledge** (as an engagement ring" = **arrabon** - **see word study**) of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of God's own possession, to the praise of His glory. (See **note** Ephesians 1:14) (**Comment:** Using the metaphor of Bridegroom/Bride, the phrase "*with a view to the redemption*" refers to the return of the Bridegroom Christ Who will sweep away His Bride the church into glory, as she is transformed "*in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet*" [1Cor 15:52] at which time she is forever changed and puts on her imperishable, immortal bridal attire.)

In a parallel passage Paul speaks about the betrothal of Christ to His Bride writing...

I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy; for **I betrothed** you to one husband, that to Christ I might present you as a pure virgin. (2Corinthians 11:2)

**Comment:** Paul is acting like a Jewish father who is giving his daughter, the Corinthian believers, to the bridegroom, Christ. *Betrothed* is in the middle voice which emphasizes Paul's personal interest and involvement in the matter [*"I myself betrothed you"*]. Ultimately Christ will present His bride to Himself as explained in Ephesians 5:26. Note that elsewhere Christ is referred to as the "Bridegroom" [Jn 3:29, Mk 2:19-20] which creates no conflict with Paul's designation as "Husband" for as explained below betrothal was tantamount to marriage and required a certificate of divorce to terminate. Note that the Bride as "pure virgin" parallels Paul's words in Ephesians 5:27 "*the church in all her glory having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing but that she should be holy and blameless*".

John explains that the Bridegroom will return, but that in the meantime He was preparing the home for His Bride

In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for **I go to prepare a place for you**. And if I go and prepare a place for you, **I will come again, and receive you to Myself**; (cf "*that He might present to Himself the Church in all her glory*" Ephesians 5:27) that where I am, there you may be also. (John 14:2, 3)

Paul also described the Bridegroom's sudden return to sweep His Bride off of her feet writing that...

we do not want you to be uninformed, brethren, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve, as do the rest who have no hope. 14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep in Jesus. 15 For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive, and remain until the coming of the Lord, shall not precede those who have fallen asleep. 16 For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first. 17 Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and thus we shall always be with the Lord. 18 Therefore comfort one another with these words. (1Thessalonians 4:13-18-see notes)

John brings this glorious event to conclusion writing...

"Let us rejoice and be glad and give the glory to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb has come and His bride has made herself ready." And it was given to her to clothe herself in fine linen, bright and clean; for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints. And he said to me, "Write, 'Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.'" And he said to me, "These are true words of God." (Revelation 19:7-9-[note](#))

## THE BRIDE SANCTIFIED

In Ephesians 5:26 Paul is speaking primarily of sanctification as what the theologians refer to as **positional sanctification** (past tense salvation, the point in time when we were justified or declared righteous when we placed our faith in Christ substitutionary sacrifice on the Cross - see discussion of the **Three Tenses of Salvation**).

**Positional sanctification** is a one time event and contrasts with so-called **progressive sanctification** in which the justified believer is daily, more and more, gradually being set apart from the world and unto God. Progressive sanctification is the idea inherent in other phrases such as being conformed more and more into the image of God's Son (Ro 8:29-note; cf, progressive transformation in Ro 12:2-note) or of being continually transformed from glory to glory by the Spirit (2Cor 3:18).

These two aspects of **sanctification** are important to understand because when one reads the evangelical commentaries on Ephesians 5:26, some authorities interpret "**might sanctify her**" as a past, completed event (synonymous with positional sanctification). Other authorities interpret this passage as Christ's **progressive** (ongoing) **sanctification** and cleansing of His Bride, the Church, whom He will continue to set apart and cleanse in order that He might present her to Himself at the wedding.

If one adheres rigidly interpretation of the Greek text, the aorist tense of both **sanctify** and **cleansed** favors a past completed action. On the other hand, simple logic dictates that the past completed action (positional sanctification or justification) cannot be divorced from ongoing or progressive sanctification. In other words, positional and progressive sanctification are two sides of the same coin. Justification without sanctification is not taught in Scripture and if carried to the extreme leads to the teaching that one could be saved and live anyway they wanted to live for the rest of their life and still go to heaven when they die. In my humble opinion, this is a errant teaching and to base one's eternal destiny upon it is fraught with danger. I would day "Caveat Emptor!"

Now with this background, these notes take the stand that at Calvary when Christ gave His life up for His Bride, He set her apart and at the same time set into motion a process of sanctification that is manifest by His Bride's righteous acts ("*righteous acts of the saints*") that will culminate in Her obtaining her glorious, bridal attire of "*fine linen, bright and clean, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.*" (Revelation 19:8-note) She will receive her final gown at the return of her Bridegroom to obtain His Bride. At that time John records...

"that when He appears, we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him just as He is." (1John 3:2)

In this glorified state Christ presents the Bride to Himself, at the time all the believers have attained the perfect state with clean, white linens, with no spot or wrinkle or any such thing. That time clear speaks of Christ second coming when He receives His Bride to Himself, which is synonymous with the rapture of Church as discussed above (see 1Thes 4:13-18-**see note**)

**With this background let us consider some of the comments regarding Ephesians 5:26 by respected expositors.**

One of the deans of Biblical prophecy, the late **Dr. John Walvoord** divides Christ's relationship to His Bride into **3 basic phases**...

The present work of sanctification (**Ed note:** "Progressive Sanctification" as discussed above) described in Ephesians 5:26 will culminate in a future work revealed in Ephesians 5:27 where it is said that Christ has the goal

"that he might present the church to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish."

When the work of Christ for His church has been consummated, the church will be in heaven without any evidence of sin which spoiled its testimony in this world. There will be no spot, that is, visible defilement; no wrinkle that is, no evidence of age or corruption, or anything of a similar nature such as a blemish. Instead, the whole church will be completely holy and adapted to the environment of heaven.

A further thought is introduced in the description of the bride as the wife of Christ in Revelation 19:8 where after the announcement of the coming marriage feast and the declaration in Revelation 19:7,

"his wife hath made herself ready," the passage declares: "and it shall be given unto her that she should array herself in fine linen, bright and pure: for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints."

Here the result of the present work of Christ is defined as clothing the bride in fine linen, namely, the righteous acts which stemmed from the present work of the sanctifying application of the Word of God.

The work of Christ for the church in this present age therefore partakes of the character of the loving ministry anticipating that future joyous occasion when the bride will stand complete in heaven with every beauty and grace. The bride is already joined to Christ in legal marriage and in recognition of the price that was paid at Calvary and the acceptance of the offer of salvation. This is the **first phase** of the marriage relationship.

The bride is now awaiting the coming of her bridegroom, which will be fulfilled at the rapture of the church and which is the **second phase**.

Subsequent to the rapture, the marriage feast will be observed which is anticipated in Revelation 19:7–9, which is the **third phase**.

The present work of Christ will therefore have its consummation in these future events and ultimately the church, which is now incomplete and with many deficiencies, will stand perfect in heaven in every beauty and grace.

The figure of the bridegroom and the bride is a proper conclusion to all the other figures which depict the relationship of Christ to His church and especially emphasizes that which is yet ahead. ([Bibliotheca Sacra: Volume 122. Issue 487. Page 199. 1965](#)) (Bolding added)

**William MacDonald** is in agreement with Walvoord writing at the present time Christ's...

love for the church is shown in His work of sanctification: **that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word**. To sanctify means to set apart. Positionally the church is already sanctified; practically she is being set apart day by day. She is going through a process of moral and spiritual preparation, similar to the one-year course of beauty culture which Esther took before being presented to King Ahasuerus (Esther 2:12, 13, 14, 15, 16). The process of sanctification is carried on **by the washing of water by the word**. In simple terms this means that the lives of believers are cleansed as they hear the words of Christ and obey them. Thus Jesus said to the disciples,

"You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you" (John 15:3).

And He linked sanctification with the word in His high priestly prayer:

"Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth" (John 17:17).

Just as the blood of Christ cleanses once for all from the guilt and penalty of sin, so the word of God cleanses continually from the defilement and pollution of sin. This passage teaches that the church is being bathed at the present time, not with literal water, but with the cleansing agent of the word of God. ([MacDonald, W & Farstad, A. Believer's Bible Commentary: Thomas Nelson](#))

**O'Brien**, in contrast to the above authorities, takes the approach that Christ's sanctification of the Church does not refer to progressive sanctification writing that...

The basic idea of this verb 'sanctify or make holy' is that of setting someone apart to God for his service. Christians are described as those who are 'sanctified in Christ Jesus' (1Cor. 1:2), whom God has set apart for himself in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ (1Cor. 6:11). In an expression which is without parallel in Paul's letters, Ephesians 5: 26 stresses the corporate dimension by asserting that it is the church (note the emphatic position of 'it') which is sanctified through Christ's death.

Some understand the verb here (and the language of sanctification generally) as describing a process of moral renewal and change, which is preceded by an initial cleansing from sin. But the verb ("might sanctify") refers to the church being brought into 'an exclusive and dedicated relationship with God, as the holy people of the New Covenant' (cf. 1Cor. 1:2; 6:11), not to an ongoing process of sanctification... Through his sacrificial death Christ claimed the church as his own to be his holy people (cf. Eph 5:27). 'Christ died to devote the church to Himself in an exclusive and permanent relationship analogous to marriage'. There are two elements: a separation from all that is unclean and evil, and a consecration to God and his will. ([O'Brien, P. T. The Letter to the Ephesians. W. B. Eerdmans. 1999](#))

**Sanctify** (37)(**hagiazō** from **hagios** [see word study] = holy, set apart) means to set apart for God, to sanctify, to make a person or thing (in the OT altars, days, priests, etc were set apart) the opposite of *koinos*, which means profane or common. When Christ died on the cross, our Lord's purpose was that he should sanctify for Himself a people in truth.

Here are the 28 uses of **hagiazō** in the NT - Hagiazō is translated in the NAS as hallowed(2), keep holy(1), sanctified(16), sanctifies(2), sanctify(7).

Matt. 6:9; 23:17, 19; Lk. 11:2; Jn. 10:36; 17:17, 19; Acts 20:32; 26:18; Rom. 15:16; 1 Co. 1:2; 6:11; 7:14; Eph. 5:26; 1 Thess. 5:23; 1 Tim. 4:5; 2 Tim. 2:21; Heb. 2:11; 9:13; 10:10, 14, 29; 13:12; 1 Pet. 3:15; Rev. 22:11.

**Jesus** set Himself apart for **His Bride** declaring...

And for their sakes I **sanctify** Myself, that they themselves also may be **sanctified** (perfect tense = past completed act with continuing effect, speaks of permanence this setting apart) in truth. (John 17:19, cp Heb 2:11)

This sanctification was the result of the **gospel** being proclaimed...

to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to God, in order that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been **sanctified** (perfect tense = past completed act with continuing effect, speaks of permanence this setting apart) by faith in Me.' (Acts 26:18, cp Acts 20:32, where sanctified is also in the perfect tense).

This **gospel** took vile sinners and made them saints, baptized into a body known as the Church...

And such were some of you (sins listed in 1Cor 6:9, 10); but you were washed, but you were **sanctified**, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the Spirit of our God. (1Cor 6:11)

The writer of **Hebrews** adds that...

By this will we **have been sanctified** (perfect tense = past completed act with continuing effect, speaks of the permanence of Christ's setting apart of His Bride) through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. (Hebrews 10:10-note, contrast use of **hagiazō** in Heb 10:14 [note] where the present tense, passive voice [continuously "being sanctified"] speaks of progressive, daily sanctification).

**Eadie** writes that the idea is that Christ ...

might consecrate her (His Bride, the Church), or set her apart to Himself as His own redeemed and peculiar possession—that she should be His and His alone—His by a special tie of tender devotedness—was the object of His death. ([Ephesians 5 Commentary](#))

**Warren Wiersbe** applies this truth writing...

The husband's love will also be a **sanctifying love** (Eph. 5:26, 27). The word sanctify means "to set apart." In the marriage ceremony, the husband is set apart to belong to the wife, and the wife is set apart to belong to the husband. Any interference with this God-given arrangement is sin. Today, Christ is cleansing His church through the ministry of His Word (John 15:3; 17:17) (**Ed**: "progressive sanctification" as discussed above). The love of the husband for his wife ought to be cleansing her (and him) so that both are becoming more like Christ. Even their physical relationship should be so controlled by God that it becomes a means of spiritual enrichment as well as personal enjoyment (1Cor 7:3, 4, 5). The husband is not to "use" his wife for his own pleasure, but rather is to show the kind of love that is mutually rewarding and sanctifying. The marriage experience is one of constant growth when Christ is the Lord of the home. Love always enlarges and enriches, while selfishness does just the opposite. ([Wiersbe, W: Bible Exposition Commentary. 1989. Victor](#)) (Bolding added)

**John MacArthur** also applies Jesus' **sanctifying love** to Spirit filled husbands writing that...

For husbands to love their wives as Christ loves His church is to love them with **apurifying love**. Divine love does not simply condemn wrong in those loved but seeks to cleanse them from it. Christ's great love for His church does not allow Him to be content with any sin, any moral or spiritual impurity in it. God tells His people,

"Though your sins are as scarlet, they will be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they will be like wool" (Isa 1:18).

He casts the sins of His forgiven children "into the depths of the sea" (Micah 7:19), and He forgives their iniquity and remembers their sin no more (Jer. 31:34)... Love wants only the best for the one it loves, and it cannot bear for a loved one to be corrupted or misled by anything evil or harmful. When a husband's love for his wife is like Christ's love for His church, he will continually seek to help **purify** her from any sort of defilement. He will seek to **protect** her from the world's contamination and **protect** her holiness, virtue, and purity in every way. He will never induce her to do that which is wrong or unwise or expose her to that which is less than good. ([MacArthur, J: Ephesians. Chicago: Moody Press](#)) (Bolding added)

**Hughes** also applies these verses to the sanctifying effect of a husband's love writing that...

a prominent instrument in (the wife's) progressive sanctification has been her loving husband. He has been a humble partner in developing her beauty. How did this come about? He was a man in whom the Word of God

richly dwelled (Col 3:16-note). As God's Word and Spirit filled him, he lived out the ethics of the Kingdom. As her loving head, he served her and prayed for her and adored her with unconditional love. The tide of his authenticity encouraged her onward and upward in her beauty of soul. All was and is of Christ the Bridegroom — but the sanctifying love of the husband was an effective instrument in Christ's hands. When we men read verses 25 through 27 together, we cannot escape our huge responsibility. Is our wife more like Christ because she is married to us? Or is she like Christ in spite of us? Whatever our effect, our call is clear: sanctifying love ([Hughes, R. K.: Ephesians: The Mystery of the Body of Christ. Crossway Books](#))

## HAVING CLEANSED HER BY THE WASHING OF WATER WITH THE WORD: *katharisas* (AAPMSN) to *loutro tou hudatos en rhemati*:

- Ezekiel 16:9; 36:25; Zechariah 13:1; John 3:5; Acts 22:16; Titus 3:5, 6, 7; Hebrews 10:22; 1Pe 3:21; 1John 5:6
- Jn 15:8; 17:7; James 1:18; 1Peter 1:22,23
- [Ephesians Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Ephesians 5:25-31: Spirit-Filled Families - 2](#) - Wayne Barber
- [Ephesians 5:25-33 Do You Really Love Your Wife? \(Part 1\)](#) - Steven Cole
- [Ephesians 5:25-33 Do You Really Love Your Wife? \(Part 2\)](#) - Steven Cole
- [Ephesians 5:25-33 A Job Description For Husbands](#) - Steven Cole
- [Ephesians 5:25-33 I'm the Boss, Aren't I?](#) - Steven Cole
- [Ephesians 5:25: God's Pattern for Husbands-1](#) - John MacArthur
- [Ephesians 5:25-33: God's Pattern for Husbands-2](#) - John MacArthur

**Having cleansed** (2511) (*katharizo* from *katharos* = pure, free from admixture of what is false) means to cause something to become clean. In a spiritual sense, it means to purify from pollution and guilt of sin. In secular Greek *katharizo* occurs in inscriptions for ceremonial cleansing.

Here are the 31 uses of *katharizo* in the NT - Matt. 8:2, 3; 10:8; 11:5; 23:25, 26; Mk. 1:40, 41, 42; 7:19; Lk. 4:27; 5:12, 13; 7:22; 11:39; 17:14, 17; Acts 10:15; 11:9; 15:9; 2Co. 7:1; Eph. 5:26; Titus 2:14; Heb. 9:14, 22, 23; 10:2; James. 4:8; 1Jn 1:7, 9. *Katharizo* is translated in the NAS as clean(3), cleanse(5), cleansed(16), cleanses(1), cleansing(1), declared clean(1), make clean(3), purify(1).

In **Titus** we read that Christ Jesus our Lord,

gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and **purify** (*katharizo*) for Himself a people for **His own possession**, zealous for good deeds. (See **note** Titus 2:14)

**Washing** (3067) (*loutron* from *louo* = to bath oneself, referring to the whole body. [Click](#) discussion of in John 13:10) means "a bathing" referring to the action rather than the bath itself. **Loutron** may also refer to a basin or laver for washing.

It should be noted that several lexicons render **loutron** figuratively as baptism, referring to water baptism, but other very reputable Greek lexicons do not consider this a valid interpretation.

**NIDNTT** writes that...

In Greek literature *louo* means wash, (mid.) wash oneself, take a bath; generally it indicates washing the whole body, in contrast to *nipto* which is used for washing parts of the body, and *pluno* which is used of inanimate objects, especially clothes. *Apolouo* is a strengthened form of *louo*, has the same meaning but stressing the removal of dirt. **Loutron** means the place where one has a bath, the bath-house, or the water for a bath, or simply the bath... *loutron* only occurs twice in the LXX, referring to animals' bathing (Cant. 4:2; 6:6) and in Sir. 34:25, referring to a ritual washing. Josephus uses it in War, II, 8, 13 (161) of a bath that married Essenes take with their wives to aid conception.

**Loutron** in literary Gk. signifies the place where a bath is taken, whether the house for bathing, water for bathing, or simply the bath. ([Brown, Colin, Editor. New International Dictionary of NT Theology. 1986. Zondervan](#))

There are only 4 uses of **loutron** in Scripture, 2 in the Septuagint (LXX) (see below) and 2 in the NT, the present verse and **Titus 3:5** (note)

**Song of Solomon 4:2** "Your teeth are like a flock of newly shorn ewes which have come up from their



**washing**, all of which bear twins, and not one among them has lost her young.

**Song of Solomon 6:6** "Your teeth are like a flock of ewes which have come up from their **washing**, all of which bear twins, and not one among them has lost her young.

**Water** (5204) (**hudor** from **huo** = to rain) can refer to literal water. **Hudor** is often used in the NT as a figure of speech which represents the enlivening, refreshing, and comforting influences of Holy Spirit.

Through His prophet **Ezekiel** God promises Israel in what in its essence represents the **New Covenant** (only specifically named in the OT in Jer 31:31, 33)

"For I will take you from the nations, gather you from all the lands, and bring you into your own land. 25 Then **I will sprinkle clean water** on you (in Ephesians this "clean water" is the spoken Word, epitomized by the Gospel), and you will be clean; **I will cleanse** (Septuagint = **katharizo** same verb used in Ephesians 5:26) **you from all your filthiness and from all your idols**. 26 Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. 27 And I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances. (Ezekiel 36:24-27)

**Word** (4487) (**rhema** from verb **rheo** = to speak - to say, speak or utter definite words) refers to the spoken word, especially a word as uttered by a living voice. **Laleo** is another word translated speak but it refers only to uttering a sound whereas **rheo** refers to uttering a definite intelligible word. **Rhema** refers to any sound produced by the voice which has a definite meaning. It focuses upon the content of the communication. For example in Luke we read...

And they understood none of these things, and this **saying** (**rhema**) was hidden from them, and they did not comprehend the things that were said. (Luke 18:34)

In the plural **rhema** ("words"), means saying, speech or discourse.

**Rhema** is used to refer to "the thing spoken of", an object, a matter, an affair or an event. For example we read in **Luke 1:65**

And fear came on all those living around them; and all these **matters** [**rhema**] were being talked about in all the hill country of Judea.

(Compare to) But Mary treasured up all these **things** (**rhema**), pondering them in her heart. (Luke 2:19)

**Rhema** in the NT can exhibit several nuances of meaning depending on the context --

a **prophecy** ("*that you should remember the words - rhema - spoken beforehand by the holy prophets and the commandment of the Lord and Savior spoken by your apostles.*" see **note 2** Peter 3:2),

a **charge** against one (Mt 27:14 Jesus "*did not answer him with regard to even a single **charge***" - rhema), a message (Ro 10:8 "*But what does it say? **THE WORD** - rhema - IS NEAR YOU, IN YOUR MOUTH AND IN YOUR HEART*"-- *that is, the word - rhema - of faith which we are preaching.*"),

a **promise** (Lu 2:29 "*Now Lord, Thou dost let Thy bond-servant depart In peace, according to Thy **word***", Lu 1:38 And Mary said, "*Behold, the bondservant of the Lord; be it done to me according to your word.*" And the angel departed from her.),

a **command** (Mt 4:4 "*Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every **word***" - rhema - *that proceeds from the mouth of God*"; Luke 5:5 And Simon answered and said, "*Master, we worked hard all night and caught nothing, but at Your bidding*" - rhema - *I will let down the nets.*")

There are 68 uses of **rhema** in the NT = bidding (1), charge, 1; discourse, 1; fact, 2; matters, 1; message, 2; nothing, 1; remark, 1; say, 1; saying, 1; sayings, 3; statement, 6; thing, 2; things, 4; word, 18; words, 22.

Matt. 4:4; 12:36; 18:16; 26:75; 27:14; Mk. 9:32; 14:72; Lk. 1:37, 38, 65; 2:15, 17, 19, 29, 50, 51; 3:2; 5:5; 7:1; 9:45; 18:34; 20:26; 22:61; 24:8, 11; Jn. 3:34; 5:47; 6:63, 68; 8:20, 47; 10:21; 12:47, 48; 14:10; 15:7; 17:8; Acts 2:14; 5:20, 32; 6:11, 13; 10:22, 37, 44; 11:14, 16; 13:42; 16:38; 26:25; 28:25; Ro 10:8, 17, 18; 2Co. 12:4; 13:1; Ep 5:26; 6:17; He 1:3; 6:5; 11:3; 12:19; 1Pet. 1:25; 2Pet. 3:2; Jude 1:17)

There are too many uses of **rhema** (about 516) in the **Septuagint (LXX)** to list.

The significance of **rhema** (as distinct from **logos**) is exemplified in the injunction to take the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, Eph 6:17



And take THE HELMET OF SALVATION, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the **word** (rhema) of God. (See **note** Ephesians 6:17)

In **Ephesians 6:17** the reference is not to the whole Bible as such, but to the individual scripture which the Spirit brings to our remembrance for use in time of need, a prerequisite being the regular storing of the mind with Scripture.

One of my favorite uses of **rhema** is in Luke's record of the angel's words to Mary...

For nothing will be impossible with God. (Luke 1:37)

**Comment:** You are probably asking "Where is **rhema** in this verse?"

The Greek can be rendered

"No word of God can fail."

Only a few English translations render **rhema** in this way. The 1901 **ASV** has

"For no **word** from God shall be void of power."

The **Weymouth** has

"For no **promise** from God will be impossible of fulfillment."

The **Amplified** has

"For with God nothing is ever impossible and no **word** from God shall be without power or impossible of fulfillment."

This is a powerful verse about God's powerful spoken word!

Here in Ephesians 5 the **rhema** is a **purifying** word.

In Hebrews 11 we see rhema is a **creating** word...

By faith we understand that the worlds were prepared by the **word** of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things which are visible. (Heb 11:3)

In Hebrews 1 **rhema** is a **upholding** word, a word associated with Jesus' power...

And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the **word** of His power. When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high (Heb 1:3)

In **Matthew 12** we see rhema can refer to a **potentially damaging** word (be careful what rhema proceeds from your mouth!)...

"And I say to you, that every careless **word** (rhema) that men shall speak, they shall render account for it in the day of judgment.<sup>37</sup> "For by your **words** (logos) you shall be justified, and by your words you shall be condemned." (Mt 12:36, 37)

**Comment:** Note how **rhema** is used in parallel with **logos**. As a generalization, **rhema** brings out the single item rather than the whole content as in **logos**.

**Matthew 4** we see it is a **nourishing** word...

But He answered and said, "It is written, 'MAN SHALL NOT LIVE ON BREAD ALONE, BUT ON EVERY WORD THAT PROCEEDS OUT OF THE MOUTH OF GOD.'" (Mt 4:4) (**Comment:** Here we see that rhema is not only a nourishing word but a **temptation defending** word, used to fend off the fiery missiles the Evil One had thrown at Jesus to tempt Him.)

In **John 6** we see rhema is a **life giving** word, a word of eternal life, Jesus declaring that...

It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing; the **words** (rhema) that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life... 68 Simon Peter answered Him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have words of eternal life. (John 6:63, 68)

This word is the agent of this sanctification as **Paul** wrote in Titus...

He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing (loutron) of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit. (See **note** Titus 3:5)

The purpose of the spoken word is to produce a blamelessness and holiness that makes us fit to be presented to Christ as His own beloved and eternal bride, to dwell in His glorious presence forever (cf. Rev. 21:1ff-[note](#)).

Christ's present ministry to the church is that of sanctifying and cleansing her by using the water of the Word of God. Water for washing is sometimes used as a symbol of the Word of God.

In **John 15** Jesus declared...

You are already clean because of the **word** which I have spoken to you. (John 15:3)

In **John 13** John used the root word [louo](#) explaining to Peter that...

He who has **bathed** ([louo](#) in the perfect tense = past completed action with ongoing effect) needs only to **wash** (*nipto*) his feet, but is completely clean; and you are clean, but not all of you. 11 For He knew the one who was betraying Him; for this reason He said, "Not all of you are clean. (**John 13:10-11**) (**Comment:** The imagery is oriental, where the Roman citizen would **louo** his entire body at the public baths and **nipto** his feet when he arrived home. Jesus used **louo** to refer to the cleansing of the sinner in "the Fountain filled with Blood drawn from Immanuel's veins" at the moment of salvation when he is completely and eternally justified or declared righteous by faith in Christ. "Wash his feet" refers to a daily cleansing of the saint in his walk and his feet become "dirty" from sin and thus has to do with progressive or practical sanctification or daily being set aside more and more to God and from this world which is passing away. In this verse it appears that Jesus is referring to the "washing of regeneration", to the one time occurrence in salvation when the sinner is justified by grace through faith. The partial washing indicated by the verb *nipto* is a picture of the daily need for confession and cleansing as in 1John 1:7,9. But see comment on this verse in the [Net Bible](#) regarding this interpretation).

In **John 17** in His prayer to His Father Jesus said...

**Sanctify** (aorist imperative) them in the truth. Thy word is truth. (John 17:17)

**So how does Christ sanctify His Church today?** By the washing of the water with the Word. Pastor-Teachers, are you "washing" your flock the Jesus way? Remember Paul says in Eph 5:29 (note) that He also **nourishes** (promotes the growth of) His Bride and the only spiritual food that accomplishes this goal is the pure milk of the Word.

**Satan Counterfeits the Truth of God's Word** - Each year the Tai Lue Buddhists celebrate the Songkran Festival when people splash water over each other, symbolizing the cleansing of sin from the previous year and a fresh start for the new year. This is very common for all Southeast Asian Buddhists, and it provides them with a false sense of cleansing from sin. Pray that Word of Truth will penetrate the hearts of thousands Tai Lue Buddhists will soon line up along the Mekong River having their sins washed away and their lives refreshed by Christ for eternity. ([Tai Lue in China](#))

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From **ILLUSTRATIONS OF BIBLE TRUTH** by Harry A. Ironside - **THE CLEANSING WORD** "That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of the water by the word" (Eph 5:26).

The Word is for **cleansing** as well as for **instruction**, and if it keeps going through you it will have a marvelous effect upon your mind and heart and life. It will cleanse and purify you and fit you to be a real worker for the LORD JESUS CHRIST.

You remember the story of the Scotch laddie who was one of those inquisitive youngsters who always wanted a reason for everything he was told to do? He was working for a farmer and when the old man told him to do anything, the lad generally asked, "Why?" This disturbed his employer.

On one occasion he said to the boy as he handed him a market basket, "Take this basket down to the creek and fill it with water." When the laddie asked, "Why?" and started to explain that it would not hold water, the old man replied, "None o' yer 'whys.' I'm paying for your time; you do as I tell you."

So the boy started for the creek with the basket in his hand. Wading into the water, he dipped the basket into the creek and lifted it up. Of course, the water all ran out.

Disgusted, he said, "It will no' hold the water."

The old farmer replied, "Fill it up again."

Again the lad obeyed, and once more the water all ran through.

His master said, "Fill it again."

This time the boy answered, "I'll fill it up once more, but if it does no' hold this time, you will no make me a fool again."

So he dipped it into the creek the third time, and as he held it up, the water all ran out. Angry, he flung the basket over into the grass, saying, "Take your auld kreen; I'll no be a fool fer ye or anybody else."

The old man picked it up good naturedly and then held it between him and the sun. As he examined it carefully, he explained, "It's a guid deal cleaner than it was, and that's what it needed." The water running through it had cleaned away the dirt, and this is how the Word of GOD affects our lives.

Our LORD JESUS prayed, "Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth." (John 17:17) We are sanctified by the washing of the water by the Word. We cannot give too much time to the study of this blessed Book. **I do not mean merely studying it in order to get sermons out of it, but what we need is a daily, thoughtful, prayerful study of the Word for the nourishment of our own souls, for building ourselves up in our most holy faith.** (Bolding added)

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**Constant Companion** - When my wife and I are preparing for a trip, one of the first things we do is get out the road atlas. We study it intensely to learn the best routes, determine the number of miles we'll have to travel, pick out interesting places to visit, decide how far we can get in a day, and estimate expenses. On the journey, the atlas is our constant companion, and we consult it many times a day. We couldn't get along without it.

For Christians, the Bible is an atlas for their spiritual journey, but it is much more. It is described as:

- sweeter than honey (Psalm 19:10-[note](#); Ps 119:103-[note](#))
- a lamp (Psalm 119:105-[note](#))
- rain and snow (Isaiah 55:10,11)
- a fire (Jeremiah 23:29)
- a hammer (Jeremiah 23:29)
- water (Ephesians 5:26-[note](#))
- a sword (Ephesians 6:17-note)
- solid food (Hebrews 5:12-note, He 5:14-note)
- a mirror (James 1:23-note)
- milk (1 Peter 2:2-note)

Like the highway traveler, we as Christians are on a long and sometimes hazardous journey. We face many decisions and will have many needs on our pilgrimage to paradise. The Bible has been given to us to help us make those decisions and to meet those needs. It should be our constant companion—studied diligently and consulted often along the way. We can't do without it. ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

I have a companion, a dear, faithful friend,  
A union of blessing that never shall end;  
Till Jesus returns with His saints from on high  
We'll travel together, my Bible and I. —Anon

**The Bible is like a compass—it always points the believer in the right direction.**

Ephesians 5:27 that He might **present** to **Himself** the **church** in **all** her **glory**, **having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing**; but that she would be **holy** and **blameless**. (**NASB: Lockman**)

**Greek:** [hina parastese](#) (3SAAS) [autos heauto](#) endoxon [ten ekklesian, me echousan](#) (PAPFSA) [spilon e rutida e ti ton toiouton, all' hina e](#) (3SPAS) [hagia kai amomos](#).

**Amplified:** That He might present the church to Himself in glorious splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such things [that she might be holy and faultless]. ([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))

**NLT:** He did this to present her to himself as a glorious church without a spot or wrinkle or any other blemish. Instead, she will be holy and without fault. ([NLT - Tyndale House](#))

**Phillips:** to make her an altogether glorious Church in his eyes. She is to be free from spots, wrinkles or any other disfigurement - a Church holy and perfect. ([Phillips: Touchstone](#))

**Wuest:** in order that He might himself present to himself the Church glorious, not having spot nor wrinkle nor any of such things, but in order that it might be holy and unblamable.

**Young's Literal:** that he might present it to himself the assembly in glory, not having spot or wrinkle, or any of such things, but that it may be holy and unblemished;

#### THAT HE MIGHT PRESENT TO HIMSELF THE CHURCH IN ALL HER GLORY: hina parastese (3SAAS) autos heauto endoxon ten ekklesian:

- 2Co 4:14; 11:2; Col 1:22,28; Jude 1:24
- Ps 45:13; 87:3; Isa 60:15-20; 62:3; Je 33:9; He 12:22, 23, 24; Re 7:9-26
- [Ephesians Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Ephesians 5:25-31: Spirit-Filled Families - 2](#) - Wayne Barber
- [Ephesians 5:25-33 Do You Really Love Your Wife? \(Part 1\)](#) - Steven Cole
- [Ephesians 5:25-33 Do You Really Love Your Wife? \(Part 2\)](#) - Steven Cole
- [Ephesians 5:25-33 A Job Description For Husbands](#) - Steven Cole
- [Ephesians 5:25-33 I'm the Boss, Aren't I?](#) - Steven Cole
- [Ephesians 5:25: God's Pattern for Husbands-1](#) - John MacArthur
- [Ephesians 5:25-33: God's Pattern for Husbands-2](#) - John MacArthur

**Present** ([3936](#)) (**paristemi** from **para** = near, beside + **histemi** = place, set) literally means to place or set beside or near and hence to place at someone's disposal. **Paristemi** means to present oneself for service or to put at the service of.

In the Septuagint (LXX - Greek translation of Hebrew OT) **paristemi** is used as a technical term for the priest's placing the offering on the altar.

Josephus (Ant., 4, 113) uses this verb **paristemi** recording that

"He then slew the sacrifices, and offered (**paristemi**) them as burnt offerings, that he might observe some signal of the flight of the Hebrews".

Keep in mind the cultural context in which Romans was written. Gentile (and Jewish) citizens of ancient Rome had a firsthand understanding of presenting sacrifices which would have helped them understand the picture of Christ presentation of the church to Himself. Modern believers do not have this understanding of a sacrifice and there is a tendency not to understand the serious nature of this call. Before a priest in Israel could minister on behalf of others, he was obliged to **present** himself in a consecrated condition and the sacrifices he offered were to be without blemish ([Mal 1:8-13](#)).

**Church** ([1577](#)) (**ekklesia** from **ekkaléo** = call out in turn from **ek** = out + **kaleo** = call) literally "called-out ones". The Greeks used **ekklesia** for assembly of citizens called out to transact city business. The church is a living organism, composed of living members joined together; through which Christ works, carries out His purposes and He lives.

Everyone who has been saved belongs to the body of Christ, the universal church. The universal church is manifested in the world by individual local churches, each of which is to be a microcosm of the body of Christ. The church is to function under the leadership of the Holy Spirit, operating under His sovereign rule. Jesus Christ is the Founder and Lord of His church and has guaranteed its perpetuity until He returns.

#### HAVING NO SPOT OR WRINKLE OR ANY SUCH THING: me echousan (PAPFSA) spilon e rutida e ti ton toiouton

- Song 4:7; He 9:14; 1Pe 1:19; 2Pe 3:14
- [Ephesians Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Ephesians 5:25-31: Spirit-Filled Families - 2](#) - Wayne Barber
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**Spot** ([4696](#)) (**spilos**) (See antonym **aspilos**) originally meant a rock or cliff but in later Greek refers to that which constitutes an unwanted spot or stain upon something -- a stain, a disfiguring spot or blemish, defect. Metaphorically as used in this verse **spilos** refers to a moral blemish or a disgrace.

**Spilos** is used in Greek literature in Heras in the allegory of the building of the tower, of certain stones, which represent people with serious faults.

**Moulton and Milligan** report the use of **spilos** in the expression, "the dregs of humanity from the city."

In English dictionaries **spot** is a small mark on a surface and figuratively a moral flaw or taint on one's character or reputation. Spot suggests a conspicuous tinge of something offensive, such as a blemish, stain or other impurity, which renders the object no longer pristine or pure but rather contaminated in some way. A **blemish** is a shortcoming, a lack or an imperfection that impairs worth or utility.

**Spilos** is used only one other time by Peter who writes that the false teachers are...

suffering wrong as the wages of doing wrong. They count it a pleasure to revel in the daytime. They are **stains** (spilos) and blemishes, reveling in their deceptions, as they carouse with you, (See **note 2** Peter 2:13)

**Comment:** Here **spilos** stands for immoral people attached to a godly community those who bring shame or cause disgrace. They are base, gluttonous, lascivious or riotous persons.

**Wrinkle** ([4512](#)) (**rhutis** from **rhuo** = to draw or contract) is used only in this verse and describes something like skin or fabric with lines or creases. In this verse **rhutis** is used figuratively to describe some type of imperfection. In this verse **rhutis** is used to describe what mars the fellowship, unity, or testimony of the church.

#### BUT THAT SHE WOULD BE HOLY AND BLAMELESS: all' hina e (3SPAS) hagia kai amomos:

- Eph 1:4; 2Co 11:2; Col 1:22,28; 1Th 5:23; Jude 1:21; Re 21:27
- [Ephesians Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Ephesians 5:25-31: Spirit-Filled Families - 2](#) - Wayne Barber
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#### Related Passages:

Revelation 19:7-8+ "Let us rejoice and be glad and give the glory to Him, for the **marriage of the Lamb** has come and **His bride** has made herself ready." 8 It was given to her to clothe herself in fine linen, bright and clean; for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.

1 Cor 6:11+ Such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.

1 Thessalonians 5:23+ Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

### CHRIST'S BRIDE HOLY AND BLAMELESS

In this section of Ephesians Paul is presenting **marriage** as a picture (**metaphor**) of the relationship between **Christ, the Bridegroom**, and the **Church, His Bride**, holy and blameless. This is the believer's position NOW and FOREVER AND EVER. AMEN! [See below](#) for marriage in the ancient orient.

**Holy** (40) (**hagios**) is literally holy one and refers to that which is set apart (sanctified) for a special purpose. **Hagios** was used throughout the NT to speak of anyone or anything that represents God's holiness: Christ as the **Holy** One of God, the **Holy** Spirit, the **Holy** Father, **holy** Scriptures, **holy** angels, **holy** brethren, and so on.

The Gentiles understood this term because among the pagans, **hagios** signified separated and dedicated to the idolatrous gods and carried no idea of moral or spiritual purity. The man made gods were as sinful and degraded as the men who made them and there simply was no need for a word that represented righteousness! The worshipper of the pagan god acquired the character of that pagan god and the religious ceremonies connected with its worship. The Greek temple at Corinth housed a large number of harlots who were connected with the "worship" of the Greek god Aphrodite. Sadly, the set-apartness or "holiness" (so to speak) of the Greek idol "worshipper" was in character licentious, totally depraved, and sinful, the antithesis of the saint in Christ. But the grace of invaded the cesspool of Corinth and thus Paul was able to write these words of encouraging about their new position in Christ

To the church of God which is at Corinth, to those who have been sanctified in Christ Jesus, saints by calling, with all who in every place call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, their Lord and ours....Who (CHRIST) will also confirm you to the end, **blameless** ([anegkletos](#) = irreproachable = no charge can be brought against us) in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. (1 Cor 1:2, 8+)

**Blameless** (299) (**amomos** from **a** = without + **mos** = spot) is literally without blemish, free from faultiness. This picture reminds one of the Old Testament sacrificial animal which was required to be free of defects. Under Jewish law before an animal could be offered as a sacrifice it must be inspected and if any blemish was found it must be rejected as unfit for an offering to God. Only the best was fit to offer to God. All 8 NT uses of amomos - Eph. 1:4; Eph. 5:27; Phil. 2:15; Col. 1:22; Heb. 9:14; 1 Pet. 1:19; Jude 1:24; Rev. 14:5 In the Septuagint (LXX) translation of Nu 6:14 **amomos** is used three times to describe the sacrificial animal that possesses a defect as unacceptable.

'And he shall present his offering to the LORD: one male lamb a year old **without defect** (amomos - FORESHADOWING THE LAMB OF GOD - Jn 1:29+) for a burnt offering and one ewe-lamb a year old **without defect** (amomos) for a sin offering and one ram **without defect** (amomos) for a peace offering (Nu 6:14+)

**Barclay** adds that in this context **amomos** "thinks of the whole man as an offering to God. It thinks of taking every part of our life, work, pleasure, sport, home life, personal relationships, and making them all such that they can be offered to God (**ED**: cf Romans 12:1-2+). This word does not mean that the Christian must be respectable; it means that he must be perfect (**ED**: WHICH HE IS IN CHRIST = OUR POSITION). To say that the Christian must be **amomos** is to banish contentment with second bests; it means that the Christian standard is nothing less than perfection (**ED**: IN OTHER WORDS BASED ON OUR POSITION, WE NOW SHOULD DAILY SEEK IN DEPENDENCE ON THE POWER OF THE SPIRIT [see the [Paradoxical Principle of 100% Dependent and 100% Responsible](#)] TO PRACTICE OUR POSITION [see also progressive sanctification]. **DON'T MISUNDERSTAND** - OUR "PRACTICING OUR POSITION" DOES NOT MERIT FAVOR WITH GOD, BUT ACTUALLY IS POSSIBLE BECAUSE OF THE FAVOR/GRACE HE BESTOWS. ON THE OTHER HAND PRACTICING OUR POSITION IS PLEASING TO OUR FATHER AND THAT SHOULD BE OUR GREAT DAILY DESIRE - cf Col 1:10+, 2 Cor 5:9+, Eph 5:10+, Col 3:20+, Heb 11:6+). ([Barclay, W: The Daily Study Bible Series. The Westminster Press](#))

This is the second time Paul affirms these saved sinners are now eternally sanctified, holy and blameless in Christ

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 would be **holy and blameless** (amomos) before Him. In love (Ephesians 1:3-4+)

Paul reaffirms these same two glorious truths in his letter to the Colossians writing that...

And although you were formerly (1) alienated and (2) hostile in mind, (3) engaged in evil deeds, YET (STRIKING TERM OF CONTRAST) He (Jesus) has now reconciled (transferred us from a state of hostility toward God to another quite different state, peace with God) you in His fleshly body through death, in order to present (place beside, put at God's disposal) you before Him **holy** (hagios) and **blameless** (amomos) and beyond reproach (Colossians 1:21-22+)

Writing to the saints at Philippi Paul commanded them to work out their salvation in fear and trembling (Php 2:12+), doing so by the enabling desire and power of the Spirit energizing them (Php 2:13NLT+) for then they would be able to shine forth as "Gospel lights"...

**Do** ([present imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) all things without grumbling or disputing; 15 so that you will prove yourselves to be **blameless** (amomos) and innocent, children of God above reproach in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you appear as lights in the



world, (Php 2:14-15+)

**THOUGHT** - How does your light shine today? Bright and blameless? Perhaps you might want to sing the little wonderful chorus [This little light of mine](#) (you'll be tapping your foot to this one!)

[This little light of mine](#)

I'm going to let it shine

Oh, this little light of mine

I'm going to let it shine

This little light of mine

I'm going to let it shine

Let it shine, all the time, let it shine

**Amomos** not only describes those **in Christ**, but is the same adjective used by Peter to describe the Lamb of God Who redeemed us not with perishable things like silver and gold...

If you address as Father the One who impartially judges according to each one's work, **conduct** ([aorist imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) yourselves in fear (REVERENTIAL AWE PROMPTING OBEDIENCE MOTIVATED BY LOVE AND RESPECT) during the time of your stay on earth (OUR STAY IS SHORT! 1 Cor 7:29+, THEREFORE LET US Redeem the Time!); knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, but with precious (costly, of exceptional value) blood, as of a lamb **unblemished** (amomos) and spotless (of highest quality and without defect), the blood of Christ. (1 Peter 1:17-19+)

The writer of Hebrews reasons from lesser to greater...

For if the blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling those who have been defiled (BY TOUCHING DEAD BODY - SEE COMMENTARY ON Numbers 19:2-10) sanctify for the cleansing of the flesh, how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself **without blemish** (amomos) to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? (Hebrews 9:13-14+)

In Jude we read one of the most glorious, encouraging benedictions in all the Scripture **MEMORIZE IT AND BE BLESSED FREQUENTLY AS THE SPIRIT RECALLS THESE TRUTHS TO YOUR MIND**

Now to Him Who is able to keep you from stumbling (HALLELUJAH!), and to make you stand in the presence of His glory **blameless** (amomos) with great joy (NOT GREAT SHAME, BUT GREAT JOY BECAUSE YOU ARE ETERNALLY CLOTHED IN THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF CHRIST!), 25 to the only God our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen. (Jude 1:24-25+) AMEN AND AMEN!

**THOUGHT** - Let us apply these incredible truths - may God grant us grace by His Spirit so that our practice corresponds to our position (holy and blameless) and our light shines brightly before an increasing darkened world in desperate need of the truth of the Gospel! In Jesus' Saving Name (Mt 1:21+)

## MARRIAGE CUSTOMS IN BIBLE TIMES

### (1). The father chose the bride for his son.

Just as He (the Father) chose us in Him (Christ) before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him. ( Eph 1:4-note).

### (2). A binding wedding agreement, the betrothal, was made before the marriage was consummated.

I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy; for I **betrothed** (harmozo [from **harmos** = joint, articulation] means to fit together, give to marriage - see below) you to one **Husband**, that to Christ I might present you as a pure virgin. (**2Cor 11:2**)

To break the marriage covenant (betrothal was equivalent to marriage in the ancient world - see discussion of betrothal below) a bill of divorcement was required. If impurity (any unfaithfulness was considered adultery)

was found in the bride, then the bride could be put to death.

**(3). At the appointed time for the marriage, the ceremonies began with the wedding procession, which usually took place near midnight.**

But we do not want you to be uninformed, brethren, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve, as do the rest who have no hope. (1 **Thess 4:13**- note).

**(4). The Bridegroom and his friends went to the bride's home to get her and her attendants and take them to his home.** (Mt 25:1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13). The Bride was taken to the father's home, led to a canopy and beside her husband spoke the wedding vows. (Rev 19:7, 8).

"Let us rejoice and be glad and give the glory to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb has come and His Bride has made herself ready." And it was given to her to clothe herself in fine linen, bright and clean; for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints. (Revelation 19:7, 8-[note](#))

**(5). The Marriage Supper followed** (see Mt 22:1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14) usually at the home of the groom and lasted from 3-7 days, the last day being the most elaborate. The Marriage Supper was the "bringing home" of an already accredited bride to her covenanted husband, to which guests were invited.

And he said to me, "Write, 'Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.'" And he said to me, "These are true words of God." (Rev 19:9-[note](#))

Abraham, Isaac and Jacob are among the guests of the marriage of Christ to His Bride the Church...

Now when Jesus heard this, He marveled, and said to those who were following, "Truly I say to you, I have not found such great faith with anyone in Israel. And I say to you, that many shall come from east and west, and recline at the table with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven; but the sons of the kingdom shall be cast out into the outer darkness; in that place there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." (Mt 8:10, 11, 12).

## BETROTHAL

The **Betrothal** as alluded to above was a serious engagement in the ancient world...

Once the arrangement to marry was entered into, there was a betrothal that was more binding than the engagement in contemporary society. In the oriental custom a bride betrothed to a husband is also considered a wife even though she has not assumed that role completely. In the Orient, when the parents of the bride and the bridegroom agreed in a formal way on the future marriage of their children, such an agreement was the legal marriage even though years might elapse before husband and wife might begin living together and assume the full responsibility of marriage. In a similar way, the Church is a Bride in that she is still on earth and Christ is in heaven; on the other hand, she is a wife because she has been betrothed to Christ and set apart for Him.

A man who was betrothed to a woman, even though not yet married, was exempted from military service.

'And who is the man that is engaged to a woman and has not married her? Let him depart and return to his house, lest he die in the battle and another man marry her.' (Deut 20:7).

If a girl was already betrothed and was lay with another man this was considered a capital offense because she already belonged to her husband-to-be. Such violation involved the death penalty

"If there is a girl who is a virgin engaged to a man, and another man finds her in the city and lies with her, then you shall bring them both out to the gate of that city and you shall stone them to death; the girl, because she did not cry out in the city, and the man, because he has violated his neighbor's wife. Thus you shall purge the evil from among you. (Deut 22:23,24).

The betrothal could be broken only by a legal transaction (bill of divorce), and the ground for such termination was adultery. Betrothal lasted for about twelve months, during which the home was to be prepared by the bridegroom, who would which is pictured by John who records Jesus' promise...

"Let not your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house

are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place (topos - any portion of space marked off from surrounding space) for you, I will come again, and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also. (Jn 14:1, 2, 3)

**Comment:** Some feel this is the New Jerusalem but we cannot be dogmatic. We can state confidently however that Jesus is preparing a place. As **John Walvoord** says

While we do not know the nature of the place which Christ is preparing except for scattered references to heaven and the description of the New Jerusalem itself, it may be concluded that the infinite power and love of Christ will prepare adequately for His bride. The church may anticipate heavenly surroundings which will be infinitely beautiful and perfectly adapted to their fellowship with Christ and their worship of Him." - Bibliotheca Sacra: Volume 122, Issue 487, page 199)

The wedding clothes would be prepared by the bride, which is pictured by John in the Revelation who describes Christ's Bride the Church...

Let us rejoice and be glad and give the glory to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb has come and His Bride has made herself ready. And it was given to her to clothe herself in fine linen, bright and clean; for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints. (Revelation 19:7, 8)

Ephesians 5:25 makes it clear that the Bride's making herself ready is by virtue of Christ sanctifying her by the washing of water with the word. ([see discussion](#))

In NT times the man became formally betrothed when he gave a present to the girl and said, "By this, thou art set apart for me according to the laws of Moses and of Israel." Christ has given His Bride, the Church, such a pledge Paul recording that...

In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation-- having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is given as a **pledge** (the Greek word was used for an **engagement ring**) of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of God's own possession, to the praise of His glory. (Eph 1:13,14-note)

**Holy** ([40](#)) (**hagios** [word study]) is literally holy one and refers to that which is set apart (sanctified) for a special purpose. **Hagios** was used throughout the NT to speak of anyone or anything that represents God's holiness: Christ as the **Holy** One of God, the **Holy** Spirit, the **Holy** Father, **holy** Scriptures, **holy** angels, **holy** brethren, and so on.

The Gentiles understood this term because among the pagans, **hagios** signified separated and dedicated to the idolatrous gods and carried no idea of moral or spiritual purity. The manmade gods were as sinful and degraded as the men who made them and there simply was no need for a word that represented righteousness! The worshipper of the pagan god acquired the character of that pagan god and the religious ceremonies connected with its worship. The Greek temple at Corinth housed a large number of harlots who were connected with the "worship" of the Greek god. Thus, the set-apartness or holiness of the Greek worshipper was in character licentious, totally depraved, and sinful.

**Blameless** ([299](#)) (**amomos** [word study] from **a** = without + **mos** = spot) is literally without blemish, free from faultiness. This picture reminds one of the Old Testament sacrificial animal which was required to be free of defects. Under Jewish law before an animal could be offered as a sacrifice it must be inspected and if any blemish was found it must be rejected as unfit for an offering to God. Only the best was fit to offer to God. In the **Septuagint** (**LXX** = Greek of the Hebrew OT) we see **amomos** used three times noting that the Nazarite "shall present his offering to the LORD: one male lamb a year old **without defect** (**amomos**) for a burnt offering and one ewe-lamb a year old **without defect** (**amomos**) for a sin offering and one ram **without defect** (**amomos**) for a peace offering" (Nu 6:14)

**Barclay** adds that **amomos**...

thinks of the whole man as an offering to God. It thinks of taking every part of our life, work, pleasure, sport, home life, personal relationships, and making them all such that they can be offered to God. This word does not mean that the Christian must be respectable; it means that he must be perfect. To say that the Christian must be **amomos** is to banish contentment with second bests; it means that the Christian standard is nothing less than perfection. ([Barclay, W: The Daily Study Bible Series. The Westminster Press](#))

Paul reaffirms these same two glorious truths in his letter to the Colossians writing that...

He (Jesus) has now reconciled (transferred us from a state of hostility toward God to another quite different state, peace with God) you in His fleshly body through death, in order to present (place beside, put at God's disposal) you before Him **holy** (hagios) and **blameless** (amomos) and beyond reproach (see **note** Colossians 1:22)

In the Septuagint (LXX) translation of Nu 6:14 **amomos** is used three times to describe the sacrificial animal that possesses a defect as unacceptable.

'And he shall present his offering to the LORD: one male lamb a year old **without defect** (amomos) for a burnt offering and one ewe-lamb a year old **without defect** (amomos) for a sin offering and one ram **without defect** (amomos) for a peace offering (Nu 6:14)

**Amomos** not only describes those **in Christ**, but is the same adjective used by Peter to describe the Lamb of God Who redeemed us not with perishable things like silver and gold...

**1 Peter 1:19** but with precious (costly, of exceptional value) blood, as of a lamb **unblemished** (amomos) and spotless (of highest quality and without defect), the blood of Christ. (see note **1 Peter 1:19**)

The writer of Hebrews asks rhetorically...

**Hebrews 9:14** how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself **without blemish** (amomos) to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? (see note)

Let us apply these incredible truths - may God grant us grace so that our practice corresponds to our position (holy and blameless)!