

• **LESSON 13 (March 26)** •

The God Who Has Promised to Return for His Bride

Our last lesson in this study of the God of promises and covenants is a good time to look back, reflect on where we've been, and do our best to tie everything together in order to understand as much of the "big picture" of what God has accomplished on our behalf as possible. How would you summarize the main point of each one of our lessons in this study?

- 1 – The Nature of the God of Promises -
- 2 – The God of Covenants -
- 3 – The God Who Promises and Works to Defeat Death -
- 4 – The God Who Has Set His Bow in the Cloud -
- 5 – The God Who Made a Covenant with Abraham -
- 6 – The God Who Made a Covenant with Israel -
- 7 – The God Who Made a Promise to David -
- 8 – The God Whose Heart is Grieved by Forsaken Covenants -
- 9 – The God Who Promised a New & Better Covenant -
- 10 – The God of Peace Who Establishes an Eternal Covenant -
- 11 – The God Who Raises Us to Walk in Newness of Life -
- 12 – The God Who Instituted the Covenant of Marriage -

As a conclusion to our study, reflect on what Paul reveals concerning the ultimate purpose behind the sacrifice of Jesus Christ and the cleansing of his church.

Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. (Eph 5:25-27)

Think through what Paul is communicating. What do these important God-breathed phrases mean?

- ❖ “that he might sanctify her” –
- ❖ “having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word” –
- ❖ “so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle” –

All of which leads to this most pressing question: **WHEN?** When is Christ going to “present the church to himself in splendor”? Consider carefully the input of these passages.

For I feel a divine jealousy for you, since I betrothed you to one husband, to present you as a pure virgin to Christ. (2 Cor 11:2)

And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him, if indeed you continue in the faith, stable and steadfast, not shifting from the hope of the gospel that you heard, which has been proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, became a minister. (Col 1:21-23)

Then I heard what seemed to be the voice of a great multitude, like the roar of many waters and like the sound of mighty peals of thunder, crying out,

“Hallelujah! For the Lord our God the Almighty reigns.

Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory,

for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his Bride has made herself ready;

it was granted her to clothe herself with fine linen, bright and pure”—

for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints. (Rev 19:6-8)

He who testifies to these things says, “Surely I am coming soon.” Amen. Come, Lord Jesus! (Rev 22:20)

- ❖ The God of promises and covenants has had an “eternal purpose” that has been “realized in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Eph 3:11). How is his great plan ultimately going to reach its consummation and realization? And what do we need to be doing in the meantime?