

# Qualifications of the Bride of Christ

*From a sermon delivered by Rev. T. G. Oshokoya  
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**F**or the few minutes ahead of us, we will look into the scripture to see the qualifications of the bride of Christ. The qualifications, the preparations that the bride will need to make so that he will be presentable for the marriage. Well in our assembly we are familiar with the preparation that the bride to be and the bridegroom to be usually make in preparation for their forthcoming marriage. No matter how poor we may be, we do not want to use those things we already possess but we want to have some new things for the marriage. Because it is in our lives a very special occasion and it's a time when we prepare so as to enter a new lease of life. We will go straight into the scripture to examine a few verses because our time is far spent. We go first into the scriptures as we look at Psalm 45:9 to 12.

**9 Kings' daughters *were* among thy honourable women: upon thy right hand did stand the queen in gold of Ophir.**

**10 Hearken, O daughter, and consider, and incline thine ear; forget also thine own people, and thy father's house;**

**11 So shall the king greatly desire thy beauty: for he *is* thy Lord; and worship thou him.**

**12 And the daughter of Tyre *shall be there* with a gift; *even* the rich among the people shall intreat thy favour. Psalm 45:9-12**

These few verses we have read, we have a presentation given us in the form of a parable, in a way that we might be able to get the spiritual meaning. With respect to the King's daughters preparation for a wedding that she is looking forward to and in order to be worthy for the occasion, she has got to put on an ornament and that ornament is above all to separate her from the people and from the habits of the world. And she will have to go out of her own parent's house in preparation for that marriage that she is looking forward to. Because the king is looking forward to a type of ornament and the King who is looking for an ornament is that same king whom that princess ought to have given her own heart to with a purpose to worship him. And she's got to prepare to come before the king with a gift. No wonder then we rage/reign in respect of our chieftain, our ruler of the Jews who came to Jesus Christ and who confessed that they have tried their own methods but it has been of no avail. In that they have seen that the teachings of Jesus were unbeatable and his methods were without parallel. He came to Jesus and told him that with all their education, with all their attainments they just have not been able to make the mark. He therefore puts it to Jesus Christ that what was the way they needed to follow in order to make the mark and this is the discourse that we will read from St John's gospel chapter 3. Reading from St John chapter 3 verses 3 to 5.

**<sup>3</sup> Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.**

**<sup>4</sup> Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?**

**<sup>5</sup> Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.**

**<sup>6</sup> That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. John 3:3-6**

2 Corinthians 5:17 and 18

**<sup>17</sup> Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.**

**<sup>18</sup> And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation;**

We shall limit ourselves to these two references only to the matter of the new birth. What do we want to know by this? Jesus Christ was telling this ruler that before anyone could enter the kingdom of God that person must be born again, must experience the new birth and the ruler, Nicodemus was asking how could he be born again when he was already old and Jesus Christ emphasised the same point again that except a man be born again he would not enter the kingdom of Heaven. And not just enter the kingdom of Heaven, but he would not even see it and the point there is to emphasis in verse 3 and verse 4 and 5 of St John's gospel, the explanation is given that that which is of flesh is of flesh and that which is of the spirit is of the spirit. Now the new birth, when we experience the new birth the things of the old must pass away and all things must become new. We now transact our business when we are born again in a way which God will approve. We shall transact our business directed by God himself. Old habits, old manner of dressing, and all old habits will give place to the new and this was the point that Jesus Christ was emphasising to Nicodemus. When we talk about the point of the new birth, this assembly has a fair understanding of that teaching because that is the step of the membership of this church. But we have got to ask ourselves that the new birth which we have confessed, well has it conformed to our ways, have we conformed to the will of God in every respect with respect to our business transactions with the manner in which we contract our business, with the manner in which we have our children and with the manner in which we do all our things. If we want to be among the member of the church triumphant, because this is the highest qualification and this church triumphant are the same who are the bride of Christ. If we want to be the member of the church triumphant, we must have as our key word victory, and that will be victory over the flesh, victory over the world and victory over everyone. By a new creature we mean that they are already married to Jesus Christ by our manner of habits. We do not contract our business the way the world does, we do not talk the way the world do, we do not dress the way they dress and we do not comport ourselves in any manner in which the people of the world comport themselves. All things in short are become new if we call ourselves new creatures in Christ. If these have not happened, it simply means that we are part and parcel of the world and unless we have the new birth by which we become a new creature, when the Lord Jesus Christ comes, we shall not be among those who will be raptured to become the bride of Christ. From the book of Psalms we will take a look at the some of the other qualifications. Psalm 45:13 to 15

**<sup>13</sup> The king's daughter *is* all glorious within: her clothing *is* of wrought gold.**

**<sup>14</sup> She shall be brought unto the king in raiment of needlework: the virgins her companions that follow her shall be brought unto thee.**

**<sup>15</sup> With gladness and rejoicing shall they be brought: they shall enter into the king's palace.**

Matthew 5:8

**<sup>8</sup> Blessed *are* the pure in heart: for they shall see God.**

We have here a picture of the privileges to be enjoyed by the bride who is going to meet the bridegroom in that she has decorated herself; she has been clad richly with all the qualifications richly to meet the king, to meet the bridegroom. And as she approaches in splendour, in majesty she will not be alone in that glory and in that honour. She will have round herself others who have similarly adorned themselves who will be lieutenants around her to meet the King. It is not possible to meet God or to see him when we are still in our inbred sin. It is not possible to meet God when we are full of transgressions and it is not possible to see the King when we are still in our filthiness. We can only see him when we are washed in the blood of the lamb of Calvary. That is why this statement comes from the lips of Christ in St Matthew's gospel chapter 5:8 that " Blessed *are* the pure in heart: for they shall see God." It is the Lord Jesus Christ who knew our frame, who knew that we cannot help ourselves and by our own righteousness, our own human methods and wisdom and philosophies that we could not live a

righteousness life who volunteered to come into this world to make atonement for our sins by surrendering himself and submitting to the death on the cross where his blood was shared on the cross and which blood when sprinkled upon our hearts we have our sins washed away and through that same blood we have our hearts purified. And it is only when this is done that we have a hope of seeing God. Reading from the epistle of Paul to the Ephesians chapter 5 verses 26.

**26 That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word,**

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

These are not new verses to us but are these promises claimed by us? Because all those things that surround these promises are really weighty. If truly our iniquity or our transgressions have been washed away and we have the favour and approval of God and we have been justified and further we have gone for the purification of our hearts and all the old man, the old sin is purged and our hearts cleansed, now certainly we shall have a life that is holy, a life without blemish because it is from heaven and it is of God. The power in that blood is such that someone who was guilty before has by the power of that blood been declared guiltless. The power in that blood is such that someone who has taken advantage of it was with a lot of blame but now has been declared blameless. The power in the word is such that having taken advantage of the blood, he was under the curse of God but now the curse has been removed. And to the extent that his habit his way of life is now completely different and the world can testify to it also that this is a different person in that he does not behave like worldly people do and he stands out as someone who is blameless and who is guiltless and someone who is living an exemplary life. Because the substance of his feeding from time to time which is the word of God is embedded with such power that cleanses him from time to time. Even though we still feed on physical food, the word of God that we feed upon is the one that sanctifies us from time to time as it is made known to us in John 17:17, "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth." As we search that word of God, as we study it, as it dwells within our hearts and we live upon it, from time to time that word will continue to sanctify us and we find that this record repeated in 1 John 1:7, "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." It is the blood of Jesus Christ when it is applied to our hearts that cleanses us from all sin, when any evil thoughts wants to spoil our fellowship with God, that blood of Jesus will wash it away. When we want to stray away and we want to walk our own way, it is the blood of Jesus that corrects us and brings us back to the line once again. When our mind wants to do anything that is contrary to the will of God, the blood of Jesus will change our desires and make sure we walk in the centre of the will of God because the word of God is powerful. It is sharper than any two edged sword and it discerns the intents and purposes of our heart. It is that word of God the more we feed upon it, the more it continues to search us, the more it continues to reveal more and more of God unto us and the more we conform to the perfect image of God. Now Jesus Christ makes us understand this is not the end of the qualification, when we have been justified and when we press forward to be sanctified in which our hearts are purified. We need to still press further to have a fullness of the anointing of God. When we are justified we have a measure of anointing, when we are sanctified we have a greater measure of his anointing and then we have the greatest measure still when the Holy Ghost endues us with his power. We read in Luke 24:49, "And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high." The Lord Jesus Christ told his disciples to tarry in Jerusalem for the promise of the father and they waited in Jerusalem for that promise as Jesus Christ had told them. And when the Holy Ghost would descend upon them, that Holy Ghost would teach them all the things that they needed to know. He would teach them of the truth of God, of the righteousness of God and the judgement that was to come. It was that same Holy Ghost who would comfort them, it was that Holy Ghost also who would teach them all things that they needed to know and would empower them to proclaim the gospel through the ends of the earth. The reason he wanted them to wait for that power was that they would have the enabling to carry out the great commission that he had given to them. John 14:16 to 17.

**16 And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever;**

**17 Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.**

This has no secret interpretation other than what we have explained. It was of this same Holy Ghost that Peter the apostle was speaking when he said that this promise was unto you and unto your children and for as many as the Lord our God shall call. And he made them understand that this Holy Spirit will abide with them forever. Well it is expedient that someone who would be a member of the church triumphant which we referred to otherwise as the bride of Christ should have the anointing of God by which he is endued with the power of the Holy Ghost. If such a person is not qualified he would not be among the bride of Christ who would go with Jesus Christ. even before the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ the second time, if you do not have the Holy Spirit of God till its overflowing when the problems of life and the billows of life does come, they will subdue you instead of you subduing them. When stress of life and difficulties and disappointment come you will find that you will be swept away under the thumbs of life instead of you being overcomers of these things. We have a picture of the bride of Christ in the account we read in Matthew 25:1 to 13 with respect to the five virgins who were wise and the five virgins who were foolish. They all were virgins and by Bible language we understand this to be people who have been saved from their lives of sin, sanctified and baptised with the Holy Ghost and fire. But when the bridegroom came they that were wise had oil in their lamp and to spare to the extent that when the bridegroom came, they put oil in their lamps and they were able to go in. But this other people who were foolish, it was not that they were not filled with the Holy Ghost, they were baptised with the Holy Ghost but as they were full of the cares of the world and transacting their businesses and going about this or that, the measure of the Holy Ghost had dwindled in their lives and they had not taken the pain of getting refilled. Because we should understand that as we go about our lives and businesses, we have measure of the Holy Ghost being spent as we meet with the world, at school, at home and in our various confrontations. But then in order to be able to get on and be fully prepared we must have it refilled and get ourselves recharged and the re anointing of the Holy Ghost so that when the bridegroom comes we will be qualified to go with him. These people who were wise they had oil in their lamps and when the bridegroom came, they put their lamps on, they trimmed it and went inside with the bridegroom. But these other ones of course they were careless. They said "please give us oil into our lamps", they said "we will not give you so you and ourselves will not become beggars and we both will be in want". They went out to purchase oil into their lamps but by the time they came back, alas the door had been shut against them.

1 Peter 1:5,

**5 Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.**

**6 Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations:**

**7 That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ:**

**8 Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see *him* not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory:**

**9 Receiving the end of your faith, *even* the salvation of *your* souls.**

**1 Peter 1:5-9**

To enjoy this passage we just read we need to read from verse 3 but because time is short we have cut the passage. Do you know it's a very wonderful and marvellous privilege that God has given to us in this gospel where God saves souls? Because this is a foundation of a heritage which cannot be corrupted that we are in. Inheritance that is without regret, inheritance that fadeth not away, it has been reserved for us in Heaven. Salvation you have got it and you have problems here and there, persecutions here and there. The devil wants to take your salvation away from you but you stay stubbornly with the Lord and for better for worse, you want to remain in the faith. Because you have known of that great heritage Jesus Christ has reserved there for you. Now you want to go on at any cost being in the fire line for God because you want to fight your fight to the very end. He that endureth to the end, the same shall be saved. Amen