

CHAPTER 5

AN UNSPOTTED WEDDING GARMENT

THE HIGH CALLING OF GOD

In most Christian churches, it is preached that the goal for an individual is salvation. Once you have accepted Jesus Christ as your personal Lord and Savior and have been saved, you have met the goal of Christianity. However, from examining the last chapter, we saw that God desires for believers in Jesus to grow to full spiritual maturity and become His Bride. The heart of the Apostle Paul for his own life was to grow to spiritual maturity.

The epistles in the New Testament were written to Christian churches. The major theme in these writings was an exhortation to existing Christians to strive to overcome the desires of the flesh and to seek to grow in spiritual maturity and holiness while living their Christian life. The Apostle Paul gave many warnings to those Christians who continued to practice the ways of the world and allowed themselves to yield to the desires of the flesh after they had become believers in Jesus as Messiah. The consequence of their behavior was that they would not be prepared to be married to their Bridegroom and would be presented before Jesus with a spotted wedding garment. This can be seen in *Jude 1:23* as it is written:

"And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh."

Unbelievers do not have a wedding garment because they are not saved. However, believers are required to put on their wedding garment in preparation for their marriage with Jesus, the Bridegroom. The Bride of Christ is called to make herself ready. In *Revelation 19:7-8* it is written:

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"Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to him; for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints."

In *Ephesians 5:27*, we understand that Jesus is coming for a Bride "without spot and blemish." The Apostle Peter tells us that those who walk in the flesh have spots and blemishes. In *2 Peter 2:10, 13* it is written:

"But chiefly them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness ... and shall receive the reward of unrighteousness as they count it pleasure to riot in the day time. Spots they are and blemishes ..."

The context of the letters of the epistles that were written to various Christian churches in the New Testament was an exhortation to them to rise above the things of the world and the desires of the flesh so that they could walk in the high calling of God. It was the heart of the Apostle Paul to strive to achieve the high calling of God. The Apostle Paul was saved on the road to Damascus when Jesus appeared to him in a vision. At this time, Paul accepted Jesus as his personal Lord and Savior. Paul's conversion is described in *Acts 9:1-6*.

The Apostle Paul, however, was not satisfied with salvation. His desire was to do the will of God and to strive to grow in the knowledge and understanding of God and to grow to spiritual maturity. Paul described this as the high calling of God. In *Philippians 3:10, 12-15* it is written:

"That I may know him (Jesus), and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death ...Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect (5048) but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Let us therefore, as many as be perfect (5046) ("telios" = spiritually mature) be thus minded, and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you."

Therefore, from this, we can see that Paul desired:

1. To know Jesus in a deeper way (after he was already saved)
2. To strive to reach a level of spiritual maturity
3. To exhort other Christians who desired to strive for spiritual maturity to be like-minded as him

What is the high calling of God? There are three primary aspects to the high calling of God. They are as follows:

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1. Seek to put away the things of the world and the things of the flesh and live holy and pure Christian lives before God. This is done by yielding to the desires of the indwelling Holy Spirit and striving to love God with a pure heart in all that we say and all that we do
2. Seek to study God's Word and learn and understand the heart of God and the ways of the Kingdom of Heaven
3. Seek to find and walk in the perfect will of God for your life by laying down your own will to do His will

THE THREE LEVELS OF GOD'S WILL

There are three levels to God's will. There is the good will of God, there is the acceptable will of God and there is the perfect will of God. This can be seen in *Romans 12:1-2* as it is written:

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is the good and acceptable, and perfect will of God."

From this passage we can see several things that we are commanded by God to do after we are saved:

1. Present our bodies as a living sacrifice holy unto God. This requires us to not live according to the ways of the world and be dominated by the desires of the flesh.
2. Be not conformed to this world but be transformed (change your way of thinking) by the renewing of your mind. A renewed mind desires to know and understand God's Word on a deeper level and to have an intimate relationship with Him on a daily basis. The person who is renewed in his mind seeks to follow after the things of God with his whole heart. It is the consuming desire in his life.
3. Prove (know and understand) the good, acceptable and perfect (5046) will of God. The word translated as "perfect" will of God in *Romans 12:2* is the Greek word, "telios," which means "complete or spiritually mature."

The good, acceptable, and perfect will of God implies that God's will is progressive. Progressive revelation and understanding of God's will comes through growth and maturity. The good will of God is for the unbeliever to be saved of his sins so that he can go to heaven. The

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perfect will of God is for the saved believer in Jesus as Messiah to grow to spiritual maturity and become God's Bride.

The person who is only walking in the good will of God understands that his sins are forgiven and he will be in heaven. The person walking in the perfect will of God has an intimate and personal relationship with God. These three different levels of God's will are expressed by the three levels of Christian believers who have a knowledge and understanding about God's Word and about the Ways of the Kingdom of Heaven. In *I John 2:12, 14* it is written:

"I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven ... I write unto you, fathers, because you have known him that is from the beginning. I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and you have overcome the wicked one."

In *I John 2:12, 14*, we see three levels of Christians. They are little children, young men, and fathers. These three levels of Christians have three distinct characteristics. Let us examine them more closely.

1. Little Children ... their sins are forgiven (they will go to heaven). This is equivalent to the "good will" of God.
2. Young Men ... the Word of God abides in them and they overcome the wicked one. This is equivalent to the "acceptable will" of God.
3. Fathers ... you have known (intimately) Him that is from the beginning. This is equivalent to the "perfect will" of God.

THE ETERNAL LIFE OF GOD

What is eternal life? Probably the most famous and most well known verse in the entire Bible within Christianity is John 3:16. In *John 3:16* it is written:

"For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

This is probably the most famous and best known verse within Christianity because it is the one verse in the Bible that best summarizes the Christian Gospel message. It is most often used to communicate the Gospel truth that by repenting of your sins and asking Jesus to come into your heart and life and become your personal Lord and Savior, you will be saved and go to heaven.

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For this reason, this is one of the verses in the Bible which is used most often to bring a person to the knowledge of salvation and the need to have their sins forgiven.

While this is an absolute Biblical truth that if we do repent of our sins and ask Jesus into our life, we will be saved and go to heaven, Christianity has misunderstood the depth of the meaning of what Jesus was speaking about when he talked about everlasting life. The Greek word which is translated as everlasting life in the King James Bible is the Greek word, "zoe". The Greek word, "zoe" is the Strong's Word (2222). The Greek word, "zoe" means "abundant life or the highest plateau of life."

The Greek word, "zoe" corresponds to the Hebrew word, "chai." The Hebrew word, "chai" is the Strong's word (2416). Both the Greek word "zoe" and the Hebrew word "chai" describe the highest form of life in existence. In essence, it is the plateau of life. In *John 10:10*, Jesus called this the "abundant" life as it is written:

"...I am come that they might have life (zoe = 2222) and that they might have it more abundantly."

The "zoe" life is the high calling of God. The "zoe" life is the fullness of spiritual maturity.

THE RICH YOUNG RULER AND ETERNAL LIFE

The rich young ruler came to Jesus seeking to obtain eternal life. I have been going to church since I was five years old. I have heard what seems like thousands of sermons preached about the story of the rich young ruler. Almost 100% of the time, it is preached that the rich young ruler turned away Jesus' offer of salvation. However, the rich young ruler did not ask Jesus how he could be saved. Instead, the rich young ruler asked Jesus how he could have eternal life (zoe =2222). Eternal life (zoe) is the high calling of God and it is the fullness of spiritual maturity.

The rich young ruler was not asking Jesus about salvation but instead was asking about what he needed to do to obtain the "zoe" or "the plateau of life." We can understand this by examining the answer which Jesus gave to the rich young ruler and by examining how Jesus responded to the questions of His disciples who witnessed this conversation. In *Matthew 19:16*, the rich young ruler asked Jesus what he needed to do to receive eternal life (zoe = 2222), not salvation, as it is written:

"And, behold, one came and said unto him, Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?"

In *Matthew 19:21*, Jesus answered him as it is written:

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"Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect ("telios" = 5046 which means, "complete or spiritually mature") go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me."

In *Matthew 19:21*, Jesus' reply to the rich young ruler was not "if you will be saved" but instead, it was "if you will be perfect." Once again, the word translated as perfect is the Greek word, "telios" which means "to be complete or spiritually mature."

Therefore, what the rich young ruler walked away from was not "salvation" but "spiritual maturity." This truth becomes more evident when we examine the reaction of the disciples and the response that Jesus gave them. The disciples misunderstood what Jesus was saying to the rich young ruler as well. They thought that Jesus was talking about salvation also. In *Matthew 19:25, 27* it is written:

"When the disciples heard it, they were exceedingly amazed, saying, Who then can be saved? ... Then answered Peter and said unto him, Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed thee; what shall we have therefore?"

The answer that Jesus gave Peter was not "don't worry, Peter, you will be saved" but instead Jesus told Peter that because the disciples followed Jesus that they would have the highest position in the Kingdom of Heaven sitting upon the twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel. In *Matthew 19:28* it is written:

"And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration (Greek word is "paliggenesia" which means "the restoration of the Messianic Age") when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel."

Finally, we can see from this story of the rich young ruler that those who obtain eternal life ("zoe =2222") are not only saved and will be in heaven but are also those who have the highest rewards when they get to heaven. Jesus told the rich young ruler what he needed to do if he wanted to be perfect (5046) (*Matthew 19:21*), which is "telios" which means "complete or spiritually mature." However, the rich young ruler declined the high calling of God. His stumbling block was the cares of this world above the concern for the things of the Kingdom of God. The highest calling of God is the "narrow" road but the cares of this world is the "wide" road.

There are not only two choices for an unbeliever - heaven or hell - but there are also two choices for the believer - the cares of this world or the desire to seek the high calling of God and God's perfect will and the abundant "zoe" life which God promises to those who would choose it. Those Christians who seek after the high calling of God and the perfect will of God for their lives will grow to spiritual maturity and be the Bride of Christ. However, most Christians choose the path of the rich young ruler. For the Christian believer in Jesus as Messiah who is reading this book, what is your choice?

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THE NARROW WAY OF GOD

In *Matthew 7:13-14*, Jesus talks about two paths. The first way is the straight way. The second way is the broad way. Once again, these verses have been preached in Christianity in the context of salvation. These verses have been preached to mean that the sinners who have not received Jesus as their personal Lord and Savior are walking the "broad way which leads to destruction" but the Christians who are saved have walked the narrow way which "leads to life" or salvation.

While it is true that those who do not accept Jesus as Messiah are on the way to destruction and hell and those who do receive him will make it to heaven, Jesus was speaking these words to His disciples as part of the Sermon on the Mount. Jesus was giving exhortation to those who would follow Him with all their heart, mind, soul and strength instructing them concerning what they needed to do to obtain the highest spiritual reward and what they needed to do to walk in spiritual maturity. In *Matthew 7:13-14* it is written:

"Enter ye in at the straight gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because straight is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life ("zoe = 2222 = spiritual maturity") and few there be that find it."

THE BRIDE WALKS THE NARROW ROAD OF TRIBULATION

In *Matthew 7:14*, Jesus declares that "narrow is the way which leads to life."

We need to examine two words in this verse. The first word is "narrow" and the second word is "life." The word translated as "narrow" is the Greek word, "thleebo." It is the Strong's word (2346). The Greek word, "thleebo," which is the Strong's word (2346) means "afflict, trouble or suffer tribulation." *Matthew 7:14* is the only place in the King James Bible where the Greek word "thleebo" is translated as "narrow." We will examine two places in the New Testament where the Greek word "thleebo" is translated as "afflicted and troubled." In *2 Corinthians 4:9* it is written:

"We are troubled ("thleebo" = 2346) on every side, yet not distressed, we are perplexed, but not in despair; Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed."

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Hebrews 11 is sometimes referred to in Christianity as the "Hall of Fame" of faith. In Hebrews 11, it lists all the great men and women of God in the Old Testament. In Hebrews 11:37 it is written concerning them:

"They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted ('thleebo' = 2346), tormented."

Therefore, from these verses, we can see that the word in *Matthew 7:14* translated as "narrow" which is the Greek word, "thleebo" refers to the "afflictions, troubles, and tribulations" of believers who seek to do the Will of God. This is what the Apostle Paul spoke about in *2 Corinthians 4:8* and the writer of Hebrews concerning the great men and women of God in the Old Testament in *Hebrews 11:37*.

THE BRIDE LIVES THE HIGHEST PLATEAU OF SPIRITUALITY

The second significant word in *Matthew 7:14* is the word, "life." The word translated as life is the Greek word, "zoe" which is the Strong's word (2222). Once again, "zoe" means "abundant, spiritual maturity or the highest plateau". Therefore, the correct understanding of *Matthew 7:14* should read as follows:

"Because straight is the gate, and (to be afflicted and suffer tribulation) is the way, which leadeth unto life (the highest plateau or spiritual maturity) and few find it" (the highest plateau or spiritual maturity)."

THE BRIDE OF CHRIST SUFFERS TRIBULATIONS

The correct spiritual understanding of *Matthew 7:14* is consistent with what we learned in chapter 3 when we discussed the topic of "A Bride for Isaac." Abraham's servant, Eliezer, who is a type of the Holy Spirit, obtained a bride for Isaac after taking ten camels to meet her (*Genesis 24:10*). As we discussed in chapter 3, the ten camels spiritually represent "trials and tribulations". As we also discussed in chapter 3, the bride for Isaac was taken from AMONG Abraham's kindred (*Genesis 24:4*). So, the correct spiritual understanding and application of *Matthew 7:14* is consistent with what we learned in studying *Genesis 24*.

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The Bride of Christ "suffers tribulation" (the narrow way) and few (a remnant among Christians who are going to heaven) find life (the highest plateau or spiritual maturity). Therefore, Jesus was telling us in *Matthew 7:14* that only a few or a remnant of those Christians who will be in heaven will seek to follow the perfect will of God (the highest plateau of the Christian life) and be willing to suffer the trials, tribulations, persecutions and afflictions which comes by completely yielding unto God and following Him with all your heart while seeking to reach spiritual maturity.

In order to further clarify that Jesus was telling us in *Matthew 7:14* that the "narrow" way was not "salvation" but was rather "spiritual maturity," let us examine the parallel passage to *Matthew 7:14* in the book of Luke. In *Luke 13:22-28*, Jesus was asked whether He was talking about salvation when He spoke concerning the "narrow" way. In *Luke 13:22-28* it is written:

"And he went through the cities and villages, teaching, and journeying toward Jerusalem. Then said one unto him, Lord, are there few that are saved? And he said unto them, Strive to enter in at the straight gate: (the "straight gate" is the "narrow" way - Matthew 7:14) for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able (few find the "straight gate" or "narrow way"). When once the master of the house is risen up, and hath shut the door (this is the wedding door - Matthew 25:6, 10-11), and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us; and he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence ye are: Then shall ye begin to say, We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets. But he shall say, I tell you, I know you not whence ye are: depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets (those who followed the "narrow" way and suffered, "trials, tribulations and afflictions" - Hebrews 11:37), in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out."

Therefore, in *Luke 13:22 -28*, we see the following:

1. Jesus was asked, "Are there few who are saved?" (*Luke 13:23*)
2. Jesus said "few" find the "straight gate" (*Luke 13:24 = Matthew 7:14*)
3. The "few" will be those who go with Jesus into the wedding door. (*Luke 13:25*)
4. Those who are not able to go in are Christians who have "eaten and drunk in thy presence and taught in our streets." (*Luke 13:26*)
5. Those Christians who have "eaten and drunk in thy presence and taught in our streets" are also workers of "iniquity." (*Luke 13:27*)
6. Those Christians who have "eaten and drunk in thy presence and taught in our streets" and are also workers of "iniquity" are weeping when they see "Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets in the kingdom of God" and they are not. Unbelievers (those who are not saved) have no heritage with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob but Christians do.
7. The Christians who are "weeping and gnashing their teeth" are doing so because of "loss of rewards" in heaven not because they have lost their salvation.

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ARE THERE FEW WHO ARE SAVED?

Let us examine these truths more closely. First of all, Jesus told us in *Luke 13:22-28*, that the "few" (*Luke 13:23*) are those who go into the wedding door. Those who do not go into the wedding door stand outside and cry "Lord, Lord open unto us." These are the same words which are spoken in *Matthew 25:1-13* by the "foolish virgins."

In the parable that Jesus told in *Matthew 25:1-13*, there were a total of ten virgins. As we mentioned in chapter 3, "ten" is the number in the Bible which represents "a legal congregation." Christians are seen as being "virgins" unto God. The Apostle Paul mentioned that Christians were "virgins" in *2 Corinthians 11:2* as it is written:

"For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused (betrothed) you to one husband (Jesus) that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ."

Earlier in this book, we studied that there were two stages to the Biblical marriage. The first stage is betrothal and the second stage is the consummation of the marriage when the bride and the groom go into the wedding room ("cheder") and "shut the door" to consummate the wedding.

In *2 Corinthians 11:2*, Paul spoke to the Christian church at Corinth and told them that they are "betrothed to one husband" (the first stage of the Biblical wedding) that I may present you as a "chaste virgin" to Christ (the second stage of the Biblical wedding). Therefore, Christians are called "virgins to Christ" and the number "ten" represents a legal congregation. So, "ten virgins" in *Matthew 25:1-13* represents those Christians who are betrothed to Jesus (have accepted Him as their personal Lord and Savior) and will go to heaven.

THE PARABLE OF THE VIRGINS

However, in *Matthew 25:1-13*, we see that of those "ten virgins" (who represent Christians who are betrothed to Jesus and will go to heaven), five virgins were wise and five virgins were foolish. The foolish virgins cried to the Lord to open the wedding door when they saw that the wise virgins went with the Bridegroom (Jesus) into the wedding room to consummate the marriage. In *Matthew 25:1-2, 6, 10-11* it is written:

"Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. And five were wise and five were foolish ... And at

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midnight there was a cry made, 'Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go out to meet him' ... And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage and the door was shut. Afterward, came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. "

From this, we can see that those who are crying in *Luke 13:25* "Lord, Lord, open to us" are the foolish virgins in *Matthew 25:11*. The foolish virgins are those who are betrothed to Jesus the Bridegroom by accepting Jesus as their personal Lord and Savior (*Romans 10:9-10*, 2 *Corinthians 11:2*) and have "eaten and drunk in thy presence and taught in our streets" (*Luke 13:26*), are "wailing and gnashing their teeth" in *Luke 13:28* and are crying, "Lord, Lord, open to us" in *Luke 13:25* and *Matthew 25:11*.

However, the "few" who go into the "straight gate" and the "narrow" way in *Matthew 7:14* are those who consummate the wedding in *Luke 13:25* and are the wise virgins of *Matthew 25:1-13*.

The foolish virgins are saved and will be in heaven but lose eternal rewards because they decided to walk the "broad" way. The foolish virgins failed to separate themselves from the world and didn't overcome the desires of the flesh. Therefore, the foolish virgins have a spotted wedding garment. However, the wise virgins walked the "narrow" way. They dedicated their lives to God and became holy unto God by separating themselves from the ways of the world and overcame the desires of their flesh. They were prepared when the wedding came and had a pure and white wedding garment (*Matthew 25:10*, *Revelation 19:7-8*).

WHO ARE THE WORKERS OF INIQUITY?

Secondly, those who are not able to go in with the Bridegroom and stand outside crying, 'Lord, Lord, open unto us' (*Luke 13:25*, *Matthew 25:11*) whom Jesus "never knew" (*Luke 13:27*, *Matthew 25:12*) are described as being "workers of iniquity" (*Luke 13:27*). In *Luke 13:25-27* it is written:

"When once the master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us; and he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence ye are: Then shall ye begin to say, We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets, But he shall say, I tell you, I know you not whence ye are; depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity. "

The parallel passage to *Luke 13:22-27* is found in *Matthew 7:13-14*, 21-23. In *Matthew 7:22-23* it is written:

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"Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? And in thy name have cast out devils? And in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity."

Many people have interpreted *Matthew 7:22-23* in the context of salvation and against the manifestations of the Holy Spirit. However, in this passage, Jesus is not speaking against the manifestations of the Holy Spirit and those whom God uses to manifest His Holy Spirit in mighty and miraculous ways but against those who are "workers of iniquity." Therefore, those who are being left behind are carnal Christians who are not the Bride because they practice "iniquity."

But what is the iniquity that they practice? In *Matthew 7:23*, the word iniquity is the Greek word "anomia." It is the Strong's word 458. The word iniquity which is the Greek word "anomia" comes from the Greek word, "anomos" which is the Strong's word 459. The word translated as "law" (Torah) in the New Testament is the Greek word, "nomos". It is the Strong's word 3551. The word iniquity (which is the Greek word, "anomia" and comes from the Greek word, "anomos") consists of two Greek words, "a" and "nomos". "A" comes from a negative participle in Greek which means "without." "nomos" means "law" (Torah). So, the workers of "iniquity" are practicing "anomia" which describes those who are "without the law" (anomos) and who are violating the Torah. Therefore, those who are being used by God in ministering the manifestations of the Holy Spirit are also teaching and practicing the breaking of the Torah (workers of iniquity).

Therefore, in *Matthew 7:23*, Jesus is rebuking those people, not because God is using them to manifest His Holy Spirit in mighty and miraculous ways, but because they are also violating the law/Torah (workers of iniquity). Because they are "workers of iniquity" (teach and practice the breaking of the Torah/Commandments), they will be among those who are "least" in the Kingdom of Heaven (*Matthew 5:19*). They still will be saved but they will be "least" in the Kingdom of Heaven because Jesus never "knew" them in an intimate way.

JESUS KNOWS HIS BRIDE

When Jesus marries His Bride, this will be the second stage of the Biblical marriage. The second stage of the Biblical marriage is the consummation of the marriage. When consummating the marriage and performing the marriage act to have children, the husband and wife are described in the Bible as "knowing" each other. In *Genesis 4:1*, Adam "knew" Eve and bore Cain and Abel. In *Genesis 24:16*, Rebekah was a virgin and no man had "known" her. Jesus does not tell the "workers of iniquity" they are not saved; however, He does tell them that He never "knew" them. "Knowing" describes the consummation of the marriage and not salvation.

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WHO ARE CAST INTO OUTER DARKNESS?

In *Luke 13:27-28*, those who are "workers of iniquity" (carnal Christians) will be "weeping and gnashing their teeth" when they realize that they will not be the Bride of Christ. In *Matthew 8:11-12* and *Matthew 22:12-13*, those who are "weeping and gnashing their teeth" are also cast into "outer darkness." The words translated as "outer darkness" is the Greek word, "skotos". It is Strong's word 4655. The word translated as "outer darkness" which is the Greek word "skotos" comes from the base of the Greek word, "skia." The Greek word, "skia" is the Strong's word 4639 and means "shade or shadow." So, the word translated as "outer darkness" which is the Greek word, "skotos" is derived from the Greek word, "skia" which means "shade or shadow." Therefore, the term "outer darkness" does not necessarily mean "pitch black" in reference to hell but can also mean "shade or shadow" which means a lack of "absolute light."

Absolute light would describe Jesus and the light of the glory of God. The light of the glory of God lit the Holy of Holies in the Tabernacle. However, the outer court was lit by natural light. In comparison to the light of the glory of God in the Holy of Holies, the natural light which lit the outer court could be described as "outer darkness" or "shady." The natural light in the outer court in the Tabernacle represents "carnal Christians." The light of the glory of God in the Holy of Holies represents those Christians who will be the Bride of Christ.

In *John 14:6*, Jesus said He was the Way (salvation), the Truth (the Word/Torah), and the Life ("zoe"). This describes the three levels of the Christians who walk with God. This also corresponds to the three levels of God's will which we spoke about earlier. Once again, the three levels of God's will is the good, acceptable and perfect will of God (*Romans 12:1-2*).

The outer court in the Tabernacle describes the "way" or the good will of God. In the outer court was the brazen altar (representing salvation) and the laver (representing baptism). This compares to the "little children" who are saved in (*I John 2:12*).

The inner court in the Tabernacle describes the "truth" or the acceptable will of God. The table of shewbread represents the Word of God. The candlestick represents the Spirit of God. This compares to the "young men" in (*I John 2:14*) who have a deeper understanding of God's Word through the help of the Holy Spirit.

The Holy of Holies represents the life ("zoe" =2222) of God or the perfect will of God. This compares to the "fathers" who have "known" God intimately and have grown to spiritual maturity. Therefore, the outer darkness in *Matthew 8:11-12* and *Matthew 22:12-13* describes "outer court" Christians who are not abiding in the light of the glory of God in the Holy of Holies. The "outer court" Christians who will not be in the "Holy of Holies" will be saved but they will not have the fullness of rewards as those who are the Bride of Christ and will be in the "Holy of Holies."

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The term "outer darkness" in the Bible has two meanings and applications. To the unbeliever who has not accepted Jesus as their personal Lord and Savior, "outer darkness" is a reference to hell and damnation. To the carnal Christian, "outer darkness" refers to not being the Bride of Christ and abiding with God in the "Holy of Holies" thereby suffering a lack of the highest spiritual rewards in heaven.

The judgment of the believer's works are described in *1 Corinthians 3:13-15* as it is written:

"Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he has built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved: yet so as by fire."

In *1 Corinthians 3:13-15*, it describes two types of Christians. These two types of Christians are characterized by their works of service unto God. The first type of Christian (the carnal Christian) is saved but has no works (his judgment is a lack of rewards by not being the Bride of Christ and being cast into "outer darkness"). The second type of Christian (the Bride of Christ) is saved and has the highest reward unto God by overcoming the desires of the flesh and submitting to the perfect will of God.

Therefore, those "workers of iniquity" (breakers of God's Law/Torah) will lose rewards by not being the Bride of Christ and will be cast into "outer darkness" being "outer court" Christians rather than "Holy of Holy" Christians.

In conclusion, by comparing *Matthew 7:13-14, 21-23* with *Matthew 25:1-12* and *Luke 13:22-27* as we have been doing, it is clear that those who are being left behind are carnal Christians who are saved but who are not the Bride of Christ. They have the following characteristics:

1. They are saved (*Matthew 7:13-14, Luke 13:22-25, 1 Corinthians 3:15*)
2. They are "foolish virgins" (*Matthew 25:1-12*)
3. They walk the "broad" way (*Matthew 7:13-14*) not the "narrow" way
4. They have not been "known" by Jesus intimately (*Matthew 25:14-12, Luke 13:25-26*)
5. They break the Torah of God (workers of iniquity) (*Matthew 7:22-23*)
6. They are cast into "outer darkness" (*Matthew 8:11-12, Luke 13:27-28*) and suffer a loss of eternal rewards (*1 Corinthians 3:13-15*)

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THE GOD-WILLED LIFE (Zoe) Vs. THE SELF-WILLED LIFE (Psuche)

Earlier in this chapter, we began to examine what the New Testament talks about when it uses the word, "Eternal Life." In this section, we will continue our study and examine the difference between two kinds of lives which Christians may live after they have accepted Jesus as their personal Lord and Savior and become saved.

The first kind of life is represented by a carnal Christian who is influenced by the ways of the world, who is dominated by the desires of their flesh and who lives a self-willed life. This type of person is a carnal Christian and is described as being a "babe" in Christ (*I Corinthians 3:1-3*). The Christian life which is dominated by the ways of the flesh is called the "psuche" life in Greek. "Psuche" is sometimes translated as "life" in the New Testament. It is the Strong's word (5590). The corresponding word in Hebrew is "nephesh." "Nephesh" is the Strong's word (5315). "Psuche" and "nephesh" describe the "soulish life."

The "zoe" life is often translated as "eternal life" in the New Testament. It is the Strong's word (2222). The word translated as eternal life in the New Testament is the Greek word, "zoe" which means, "abundant life or the highest plateau of life." The "zoe" life represents walking in the fullness of spiritual maturity. This is a characteristic of God's Bride.

The "zoe" life is a life that is yielded to please and serve God with all your heart, mind, soul, and strength. This is the greatest commandment (*Mark 12:28-30*). The "zoe" Christian desires to yield themselves to the will of God in every area of their life while seeking to learn and understand the ways of the Kingdom of Heaven.

Most Christians relate "eternal life" to salvation. The most famous salvation verse in the New Testament is *John 3:16*. In *John 3:16* it is written:

"For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life (Zoe)."

While "eternal life" (zoe) consists of being saved, "zoe" actually describes a person who is "saved" and continues to walk toward spiritual maturity and the highest plateau of the Christian life. This can be seen in *John 10:10* as it is written:

"... I am come that they might have life (Zoe = 2222) and that they might have it more abundantly."

Therefore, we can understand the difference between the "psuche" life and the "zoe" life. Below is a more comprehensive definition and characteristics of the difference between the

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"psuche/soulis life" which is represented by a carnal Christian and the "zoe life" which is an attribute of God's Bride:

ZOE: Abundant, everlasting, Spirit-led life which is yielded to the indwelling Holy Spirit working in our lives so that we may produce Godly character and bear much fruit for the Kingdom of God while seeking to walk in the perfect will of God for our lives (Characteristic of the BRIDE)

PSUCHE: Soulis life controlled and dominated by our own human desires and self-will above the will of God. Those whose lives are more controlled by following the desires of the flesh rather than the life of the Spirit (Characteristic of CARNAL CHRISTIANS and UNBELIEVERS)

LAYING DOWN THE " PSUCHE " LIFE FOR THE "ZOE" LIFE

Jesus told us that those Christians who live according to the ways of the world and the ways of the "psuche/soulis life" will not grow to spiritual maturity and live the abundant "zoe" life. Jesus told us that if we seek to hold onto the "psuche/soulis life" we will not have the "zoe" life. In *John 12:25* it is written:

"He that loveth his life (psuche = 5590) shall lose it: and he that hateth his life (psuche/soulis life) in this world shall keep it unto life (zoe) eternal."

1. Jesus laid down his life (psuche) to do the will of God (*John 10:17*)
2. We are to lay down our lives (psuche) for our brothers and sisters in the Lord in service to God (*Philippians 2:25, 29-30, 1 John 3:14,16*)
3. We are to take no thought for our life (psuche) (*Matthew 6:25*)
4. We overcome Satan by not loving our life (psuche) (*Revelation 12:11*) Jesus came so that Christians who are saved will live according to the "zoe" life of God.
5. Jesus came that we might have life (zoe - 2222) - (*John 10:10*)
6. Jesus is the way, truth, and the life (zoe - 2222) - (*John 14:6*)
7. God has given us eternal life (zoe) and this life (zoe) is in His Son (*1 John 5:11*)
8. Zoe is the narrow life (zoe) and FEW find it (*Matthew 7:13-14*)
9. The life (zoe) is the light of men (*John 1:4*)

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WALKING IN LIGHT (Zoe) Vs. WALKING IN DARKNESS (Psuche)

Those Christians who seek to walk after the "zoe" life of God are described in the Bible as walking in "light". "Light" is associated with "zoe". Those who walk after the "psuche/soulish life" are described in the Bible as walking in "darkness." Jesus is both the "zoe" of God and the "light" of God. In *John 1:4* it is written:

"In Him (Jesus) was life (zoe) and the life (zoe) was the light (5457) of men."

Those Christians who are saved and who seek to follow Jesus and please God in every area of their lives are described as not walking in darkness but in the light (5457) of the "zoe" life of God. In *John 8:12* it is written:

"Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light (5457) of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness but shall have the light (5457) of life (Zoe)."

This truth can be further seen in *John 12:46* as it is written:

"I am come a light (5457) into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness."

In *John 8:12* and *John 12:46*, Jesus is not talking about salvation. Instead, Jesus is talking about how those who already believe on Him should be living their lives as a lifestyle. In these verses, Jesus is making it very clear that those who follow Him will live their lives and experience the "zoe" life and will not "walk in darkness" as represented by the "psuche/soulish life."

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO WALK IN DARKNESS?

Walking in darkness means that you are living a carnal Christian life. Walking in darkness means that while you may be saved by accepting Jesus into your heart and life, you are still influenced by the ways of the world and are dominated by the desires of your flesh. Walking in darkness will result in walking in spiritual ignorance to the ways of God and blind your understanding to the deeper spiritual truths in God's Word. Below is a list of scriptures which explains these things.

1. Walking in darkness will keep us from comprehending God (*John 1:5*)

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2. **Walking in darkness will blind our spiritual eyes (*I John 2:11*)**
 - a) **God is light and in Him is no darkness (*I John 1:5*)**
 - b) **Followers of God will not walk in darkness (*I John 1:6*)**
 - c) **Walking in the truth of God's Word will keep us from walking in darkness (*Psalm 119:105, John 3:21, John 17:17, I John 1:6*)**

3. **Walking in darkness will produce the WORKS OF DARKNESS which is the manifestation of the desires of the flesh. The works of the flesh = unfruitful works of darkness (*John 3:20, Ephesians 5:11*)**
 - a) **The believers (Bride) are to cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light (*Romans 13:12*)**

WHAT ARE THE UNFRUITFUL WORKS OF DARKNESS?

1. **ROMANS 13:13**

- a) Rioting b) Drunkenness c) Clambering d) Wantonness e) Strife f) Envy

The unfruitful works of righteousness = Works of the flesh (psuche) (*Romans 13:14*)

2. **GALATIANS 5:19-21**

- a) Adultery b) Fornication c) Uncleaness d) Lasciviousness e) Idolatry
f) Witchcraft g) Hatred h) Variance i) Emulations j) Wrath k) Strife l) Seditions
m) Heresies n) Envyings o) Murders p) Drunkenness q) Revellings

3. **1 CORINTHIANS 5:9-11**

- a) Fornicators b) Covetous c) Extortioners d) Idolaters e) Railers f) Drunkards

The Bride of Christ does not walk in darkness which is the desires of the flesh = soulish life (psuche) which includes:

- a) Fornication b) Covetousness c) Uncleaness (*Ephesians 5:3*)

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4. **2 CORINTHIANS 12:20-21**

a) Debates b) Envyings c) Wraths d) Strifes e) Backbitings f) Whisperings
g) Conceits h) Tumults i) Uncleanness j) Fornication k) Lasciviousness

5. **EPHESIANS 4:17-18**

Walking in darkness and the unfruitful works of darkness by living the soulish life (psuche) according to the desires of the flesh = walking in the vanity of your mind (*Ephesians 4:17*)

Walking in Darkness: (*Ephesians 4:18*)

- a) Darkens our understanding of God
- b) Blinds our hearts
- c) Alienates us from the life (zoe) of God

The Bride of Christ is not to have the works of darkness manifested in her life (*Ephesians 4:19-20*)

6. **COLOSSIANS 3:5-9**

a) Fornication b) Uncleanness c) Inordinate affections d) Evil Concupiscence
e) Covetousness f) Idolatry g) Anger h) Wrath i) Malice j) Blasphemy
k) Filthy Communication l) Lying

BELIEVERS WILL WALK IN LIGHT AND DO GOOD WORKS

Christians who walk in light do good works unto God. Doing good works does not save you. We are saved by the grace of God through faith and not by our good works. In *Ephesians 2:8-9* it is written:

"For by grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast."

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However, after we are saved, God requires us to walk in light and perform good works which is our service unto Him. After explaining in *Ephesians 2:8-9* that we are not saved by good works, it explains in *Ephesians 2:10* that after we are saved, we are required by God to do good works of service for the Kingdom of God. In *Ephesians 2:10* it is written:

"For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them."

These truths can be seen in the following scriptures:

1. Jesus did the GOOD WORKS of God (*John 10:32, Acts 10:38*)
2. The believers were created before the foundation of the world to do good works (*Ephesians 2:10*)
3. By walking in the LIGHT of the life (zoe), the world will be able to see our GOOD WORKS and give glory to God (*Matthew 5:16*)
4. The believers are commanded by God to do the good works of Jesus (*John 14:12, 1 Timothy 6:17-18, 2 Timothy 3:17, Titus 1:16, 2:14, 1 Peter 2:12*)

THE BRIDE WILL WALK IN LIGHT AND NOT IN DARKNESS

Christians are instructed to: (*Romans 13:12*)

1. Cast off the works of darkness
2. Put on the armor of light
 - a) We are to turn from darkness to light (*Acts 26:18*)
 - b) We have been delivered from darkness into the kingdom of God (*Colossians 1:13*)
3. We are the children of light and not of darkness (*I Thessalonians 5:5*)
4. We were in darkness but now are children of light (*John 12:36, Ephesians 5:8*)
5. God has commanded the light to shine out of the darkness (*II Corinthians 4:6*). We have this treasure in earthen vessels (*II Corinthians 4:7*)

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THE BRIDE WILL HAVE AN UNSPOTTED WEDDING GARMENT

Jesus is coming for a Bride who is without spot and blemish (*Ephesians 5:26-27*). Being without spot and blemish is a "priestly" term. The Bride of Christ will not only be without spot and blemish but she will also be "sanctified" (*Ephesians 5:26*). Being made sanctified is also a "priestly" term. When the high priest went before God in the Holy of Holies on Yom Kippur (*Leviticus 16*), he had to prepare himself by "putting on" holy garments and "putting off" unclean garments. In *1 Thessalonians 5:23*, Christians are instructed to be "sanctified" in our soul (psyche/soulish life) that we may be preserved blameless (spiritually mature) unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ as it is written:

"And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul (psyche= 5590) and body be preserved blameless (Ephesians 5:26-27) unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Let us examine some scriptures which speak about "putting on" (which is a priestly term):

1. We are to "put on" (priestly term) the new man who is renewed in the knowledge of God (*Colossians 3:10*)
2. We are to "put on": (*Colossians 3:12-14*)
 - a) Mercies b) Kindness c) Humbleness of mind d) Meekness e) Longsuffering
 - f) Forgiveness g) Love

We are to: (*Colossians 3:15-17*)

3. Let the peace of God rule our hearts
4. Be thankful
5. Let the Word of Christ dwell in us
6. Teach and admonish one another
7. Sing Psalms and hymns and spiritual songs to God

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SUMMARY

ZOE = Spirit Life = Abundant Life = Narrow Way = Few find it = Walking in the Light = Fruit of the Spirit = Doing Good Works = Priests of God = No Spot or Blemish = Bride

PSUCHE = Soulsh Life = Carnal Life = Broad Gate = Many find it = Walking in Darkness = No fruit = No works = Not Priests of God = Spotted and Blemished Garments = Carnal Christians/Unbelievers

In conclusion, when the Bride of Christ appears before God to be married to her Bridegroom, Jesus Christ, she will be presented before Him with an unspotted and pure white wedding garment (*Revelation 19:7-8*). To those believers who have accepted Jesus into their heart and life and have accepted Him as their personal Lord and Savior, they will be saved. However, those Christians who are saved may appear before the Lord at the time of the wedding with a spotted wedding garment. They will be saved but have no works or eternal rewards (*I Corinthians 3:13-15*). Their wedding garment will be spotted by yielding to the desires of the flesh as a lifestyle after they are saved (*II Peter 2:13, Jude 1:12, Jude 1:23*).

Those who keep their wedding garment unspotted are spiritually mature before God. They will grow from spiritual babies to spiritual maturity and "ascend the hill of the Lord" by having clean hands (good works) and a pure heart (*Psalms 24:3-4, Matthew 5:8*). They will seek to live the "narrow" road which few seek and will strive to live the "zoe" life by not yielding to the flesh and the "psuche" life. They will lay down their "psuche/soulsh" life to find the "zoe" (Spirit life) of God (*John 12:25*) and by doing so will spiritually ascend to Mount Zion, the city of the Bride (*Hebrew 12:22, Revelation 21:9-10*). What is the condition of your wedding garment?

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