

The Bride of Christ

"What does it mean that the church is the bride of Christ?" The Bride of Christ or the bride, the Lamb's wife is a term used in reference of related verses in the Bible. The Church was identified as the bride betrothed to Christ. The Church is the family of God—made up of Christians who are the children of God the Father. And Jesus is the head of the body, the church. Ephesians 5:22–25 speaks of relationship between husband and wife and the teaching of Jesus as head of the church. Christ is head because He is Savior of the body. The Father desires that all people ultimately become His children, but there is another relationship a greater spiritual reality that of marriage. Human marriage between a husband and wife was intended to portray/describe the marriage of Jesus Christ to the Church. *But as the church is subject to Christ, so also the wives ought to be to their husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her, This mystery is great; but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church.*(EPH5:22-32) Paul presents the relationship between Jesus and the Church as a model for marriage. Symbolically, Jesus is the "head" united to the Church, which is his body. Unity was made possible, and is maintained, because Jesus lowered himself and gave himself up for his beloved church. And He elevates the church by sanctifying and glorifying her. The Church sustains this union by being cooperative and faithful, submissive and obedient, to Jesus. Paul urges husbands to love their wives as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her. He further urges husbands to "love their own wives as they love their own bodies," and adds, "He who loves his wife loves himself. After all, they feed and care for their body, just as Christ does the Church". By loving and caring for wife as his own body. In Gen.2:24, "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh" Paul advised husbands to love and nurture their wives, and wives to be submissive (i.e. cooperative, loyal) as well as respectful, to their husbands. Here, we see a relationship between husbands and wives laid out: Husband head of wife (Christ head of church) Wives subject to husbands (Church subject to Christ) Husbands love wives as Christ loves the church. Husbands love wives as their own bodies(Christ nourishes/cherishes the church) Man leaves mother/father and is joined unto his wife(two are then one flesh) We are the body of Christ and He is the head, we are one in Him. Lord's desire to "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."(EPH5:27) Christians must avoid sexual immorality, vulgar language, foolishness, and other inappropriate attitudes. Christ desire is for believers to appear before Him without any flaws or marks or imperfections, but with a clean heart. The purpose for Christ's relationship with the church is to bring on greater holiness. A bridegroom is a man of a bride, about to be married or who is just married, or the husband of the bride. Bible compares the relationship of Jesus and His church to that of a Bride and Groom. The church is likened to a bride with Christ as her bridegroom. In Mat.9:14-15, Jesus refers to himself as Bridegroom. John the Baptist presented himself as the "friend who attends the bridegroom," will be the guest and those are called to marriage supper of the Lamb. The bride belongs to the bridegroom,(JOH3:29) referred to Jesus and the church, His spiritual bride. In Song of Solomon 1:15-16, Bridegroom declares, "Behold, you are fair, my love! Bride declares, "Behold, you are handsome, my beloved! so pleasant!" Jesus is as lovely and fragrant as a Rose of Sharon, beautifully reflect His tender Love to His bride as the church. Jesus desires a relationship with His church of intimacy and passion. Paul says "That I may win Christ." He was completely captivated by Christ, having eyes only, devote for the Lord. This church—the Bride of Christ—is not one specific local church or denomination but the entire body of believers throughout the ages since the day of Pentecost. All who have trusted Lord, received salvation by grace thru faith are collectively His Bride. Individually, Christians are Christ's brethren. But collectively they constitute His Bride, betrothed or engaged to Him and later to join Him in a divine marriage relationship for all eternity. Jesus, the Bridegroom, has sacrificially and lovingly chosen the church to be His bride. Just as there was a betrothal period in biblical times during which the bride and groom were separated until the wedding, so is the bride of Christ separate from her Bridegroom during the church age or Grace period. Her responsibility during the betrothal period is to be faithful to Him.(2CO11:2;EPH5:24) And we wait with Hope for that day. And we "watch and be ready" for Lord's Coming. We should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ,(TIT2:12–13) At the second coming of Christ, the church will be united with the Bridegroom and the wedding ceremony will take place and eternal union of Christ. Human marriage was instituted with the first man and woman, Adam and Eve. God caused Adam to fall into a deep sleep, then He opened the flesh in the man's side and took from him a rib, from which He made Eve to be a wife—a partner suitable for and complementing the man. When God presented her to him, Adam said, "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh"(GEN2:23) In essence, Eve was part of Adam—of his very body. Bible explains divine spiritual relationship "For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones. The joining as one flesh on the physical level has a spiritual parallel in the special and intimate relationship Christ shares with His people. "He who is joined to the Lord is one spirit with Him". Yet, those in the Church are currently betrothed to Him, with responsibility of remaining spiritually pure and found blameless in the sight of God. "For I have betrothed you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.(2CO11:2) Watch and pray always! 1CO7:25, sees an advantage for a Christian to remain single. If you are single state then secure undistracted devotion to the Lord.and there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake.(MAT19:12)

The marriage covenant between God and his people occurs in the Old Testament. *"Your Maker is your husband, The Lord of hosts is His name; And your Redeemer is the Holy One of Israel; He is called the God of the whole earth.*(ISA54:5) One of the main descriptions from that point forward in the Old Testament is God as the husband (bridegroom) and Israel as the bride. This comparison is used as a reminder of type of relationship God wants to engage in. *I will betroth you to me forever; I will betroth you in righteousness and justice, in love and compassion. I will betroth you in faithfulness, And you shall know the Lord.*(HOS2:19-20) "Betroth", implying the intense love of God to His people. The marriage covenant will be as it were forever. Both sides of the covenant are expected to honour their "wedding vows". God promised to bless Israel when they maintain the covenant and curse them when they stray. Israel is often depicted as cheating on God with "false gods"(EZE16:32) God has Hosea act out that God will redeem his bride (a prostitute wife)(HOS3:1) The image is that with God, no matter how far out we stray, He wants us back in relationship. Hosea's commitment symbolizes God's faithful, patient love with His erring people. Jesus speaks of himself as the bridegroom. *"How can the guests of the bridegroom fast while he is with them? They cannot, so long as they have him with them. But the time will come when the bridegroom will be taken from them, and on that day they will fast."*(MAR2:18-20) This metaphor of God as husband is transferred over to the New Testament with the Church as the "bride" and Jesus Christ as the "bridegroom" The church is betrothed, or espoused and promised as the intended bride of her husband, Jesus Christ. The marriage is not effectuated. At the end, we see the bride married to Jesus. *"Hallelujah! For our Lord God Almighty reigns. Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready. Fine linen, bright and clean, was given her to wear."* (Fine linen stands for the righteous acts of the saints) (REV19:6-8)

The New Covenant, to which followers of Jesus Christ pledge themselves, is in fact a marriage covenant. This New Covenant had been promised to Israel long before Christ came in the flesh. It was necessitated by the fact that the nation had violated the terms of the Old Covenant, which God had entered into with Israel at Mount Sinai—"My covenant which they broke, though I was a husband to them, says the Lord"(JER31:32) Israel in her land was the wife of Lord.(JER3:14-20) So the Old Covenant was likewise a marriage covenant. But the nation broke her marriage vows—even worshipping other gods, which God looked on as spiritual adultery and harlotry.(LEV17:7)

A New Covenant—a new marriage agreement is for all people, but all must become spiritually Israelites through Christ. God also spoke in the Old Testament of being married to the city of Jerusalem, which was representative of all Israel.(EZE6) Likewise, the future New Jerusalem is referred to as "the bride, the Lamb's wife" This is because it will be made up of all who are faithful to God—being the eternal dwelling of God and His people. May we all remain faithful, looking forward with anticipation to a joyful eternity of perfect union with Jesus Christ.

In Eden God created a bride for Adam, a help meet for him.(GEN2:18) The bride was meet for him—that is, suitable, fitting, adapted to and completing him; "a helper who is like him." The Lord God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him." Then the Lord God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man.(v.22) The Bible gives certain parallels and contrasts between Adam and Jesus, calling the former "the first man Adam... the first man," and calling Jesus "the last Adam... the second man from heaven." Just as God presented a suitable bride to the first Adam, so He will present a suitable bride to Jesus, the last Adam. There will be a bride, who will be presented perfect to Jesus Christ.

Bible says there is one body, or church, into which Jesus calls His end-time people—the bride of Christ. And not all of the espoused will press in to that kind of wonderful intimacy and closeness to the heavenly bridegroom. His church in such detail that description, vivid, powerful, is found in Rev.12, 14. *I have likened the daughter of Zion To a lovely and delicate woman.*(JER6:2) Jesus symbolizes His glorious church(daughter of Zion) as a pure woman.

In Revelation 12:1, Jesus symbolizes His church as a woman "clothed with the sun," with "the moon under her feet," and wearing "a crown of twelve stars." What do these symbols mean? The sun represents Jesus, His gospel, and His righteousness. "The Lord God is a sun"(PSA84:11) Jesus wants His church to overflow with His presence and glory, which Christ holds in his right hand, and the church here bears on her head. And to support and sustain her followers and members; and to be a luminary to them, to guide them in their ways. "The moon under her feet" represents the sacrificial system.(HEB10:1) As the moon reflects the light of the sun, so she receives her light from Christ; and the church is in the exercise of grace. Also, it denotes the light derived from the word of God, which was a lamp to her feet and a lantern to her paths. The "crown of twelve stars" represents the work of the 12 apostles, crowned meant the ministers of the Gospel, the doctrine which they preached end of the earth. This being on her head shows crown and glory, as she held it in its power, an emblem of her victory over her enemies. Hallelu-Yah!

In 1 Peter 3:1-2, 5-7, Peter's point is that godly conduct is a powerful witness. They will notice attractive behavior and through it be drawn to the source of that behavior—a relationship with Jesus Christ. Submission is the attitude and action of willingly yielding to and obeying the authority. Wives should submit to their husbands as they do to the Lord. A godly wife will live in the fear of God, aware that He sees all that is going on in the sight of God. A gentle/meek and quiet spirit. is precious in the sight of God. It means strength under submission or control. A Christian wife should live with husband so that he is attracted to Christ by her respectful and pure conduct. The wedding garment of bride is divine character the bestowing righteousness. *You ought to live holy and godly lives.*

The Hebrew term (go el) for kinsman-redeemer designates one who delivers or rescues.(GEN48:16;EXO6:6) or redeems property or person.(LEV27:9-25,25:47-55) The story of Ruth and Boaz begins when Ruth and her mother-in-law, Naomi, return to Bethlehem ("House of Bread") from Moab (a type of the carnal, self-pleasing life; a land of many idols) where they had been living. Ruth (type of the bride) was a gentile who came from Moab. Naomi's husband and both sons, the husband of Ruth, had died, leaving the women penniless and without a male protector. Upon arriving in Bethlehem, Naomi (type of the Holy Spirit) sends Ruth to glean in the fields of Boaz,(Jesus) a wealthy and a kinsman redeemer'. It was Naomi who was encouraging, leading, counseling her. Ruth would never have been introduced to Boaz without the intimate leading and relationship, trust in Naomi. Boaz agrees, willingly takes Ruth as his wife, and together they bear a son named Obed who became the grandfather of David, the forefather of Jesus. The concern Boaz displayed as kinsman-redeemer to the widow reflects an aspect of God's own character. In New Testament, we see the ultimate kinsman-redeemer in Jesus Christ, who redeemed us from sin by dying for us. A redeemer is someone who comes to save, rescues, deliver someone out of trouble by paying a great price for their freedom. Jesus Christ is considered our living redeemer because he came to save and deliver us out of sin by paying a great price for it. The price that Jesus Christ paid for our deliverance from sin was his life. He died upon the cross for our sins so that he may redeem us, deliver us, save us from our sins.(ISA11:4)

In the book of Esther, King Ahasuerus had many virgins to choose from but only one found favor with him, Esther. They all auditioned but "the king loved Esther above all the women, and she obtained grace and favor in his sight more than all the virgins; so that he set the royal crown upon her head, and made her queen". Mordecai (Holy Spirit) led her, encouraged her, even challenged her. Every day that she was in the 12 month period of preparation he inquired at the palace gates to see how Esther was doing. Esther was an orphan and she would never have made King's queen(bride) without Mordecai and neither will we unless we have a very intimate relationship with him.

Some typological the bride of Christ are found in Genesis 24. There we read the story of the patriarch Abraham sending his trusted servant back to Abraham's ancestral homeland to secure a wife from among his kindred for his son Isaac. A picture emerges as we regard Abraham, as depicting God the Father, Isaac representing Jesus the Son, and the trusted servant typifying the Holy Spirit. Rebekah then comes into focus as the bride of Christ. The servant was instructed to not go to the Canaanites(the world), but to go to his own people (of my kindred, and of my father's house, the Church) to take a bride for his son. He is entrusted to select her. He showers her with expensive gifts. And He is the one who leads her back to Isaac. Rebecca had to completely trust servant to led her to Isaac. The bride of Christ will evidence a willingness, a desire, to join her espoused husband, Jesus Christ. "Will you go with this man?" "I will go," she said.(GEN24:58,67) She left family, relatives, friends, country, everything that was familiar to her and trusted the Abraham's servant (Holy Spirit) to led her to Isaac (Jesus) and to become his bride.

Matthew 25:1-13 presents Jesus' parable of the ten virgins is key to understanding the bride of Christ. It is important to notice that this speaks of a distinguishing, even a separation, among the Lord's people. *"At that time the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. Five of them were foolish and five were wise.(MAT25:1-10)* "At that time" and the preceding context indicate this is an end-time event. The kingdom of heaven is to likened ten virgins. All ten are within the kingdom. They all had lamps. They all had the word of God. They "went out to meet the bridegroom." All of them were looking forward to the coming of the bridegroom. All are called virgins, waiting for the Bridegroom to arrive. All of them get tired and fall asleep. All of them hear the call and wake up, trim their lamps. All of them have oil in their lamps. The Foolish do not have enough oil and they have to go buy more oil. While the Foolish are on their way to get more oil the Bridegroom comes and takes the Wise. When the Foolish return. And the door was shut! While it appears the five foolish virgins were busy, they were not properly prepared or ready when the Bridegroom arrived. Their lamps are going out due to an insufficient amount of oil. This is a picture of the Church today too caught up with the things of this world. Many appear to be very busy, but they are not making the proper preparations to meet their Bridegroom. Therefore, this shows us that many will lose vision of the fact Jesus will return and will grow spiritually sleepy. And the wise had been busy while waiting for Him to arrive, despite growing weary and sleepy. Then five discovered they had neglected to have sufficient oil. Oil is typical of the Spirit of God. They had neglected to maintain the close communion with God that keeps the Spirit dwelling within the soul. When the groom arrives, they are not admitted to the feast while arriving late. They left behind by missing the later rapture! Jesus urges His followers to be prepared and watch for His return, because you do not know the day or the hour.

The Shulamite Bride: *"You are all fair, my love; there is no spot in you.(SOS4:7)* Scene opens with guests gathered around the feast, in the marriage hall. He begins to draw special attention to the Shulamite's beauty, characteristics he observes in her, reaffirming His love for her growth and maturity. God designed our heart to grow like a garden to bear herbs(leaves as beauty), flowers(blossoms emit a fragrance) and fruit(food offers nourishment) according to the spiritual maturity we cultivate in our relationship with Him. These three reflect our character in the Christ because they all reflect loveliness and aroma of His character. Bride is, in reality, a mirror image of bridegroom, reflecting his character. Bride of Christ is pure as a chaste virgin, undefiled; sincere devotion to Christ, waiting and looking for the Bridegroom to return. *"the king greatly desire thy beauty: honor him, for he is your lord.(PSA45:11)*

Notice all the virgins in the parable, fell asleep, they were not alert. They do not represent the Bride. All Christians are betrothed(engaged) for marriage to Christ. But not all will maintain their sincere and pure devotion to Christ. Some will set their affections on other things over and above Christ, and will thereby become guilty of in effect, a spiritual adultery. *"Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God?"(JAM4:4)* The spotless bride of Christ will emerge as a group of believers will measure up! The bride-glorious church—a holy church, a blameless and radiant church—is called to measure up to the stature of Jesus Christ! Further the comparison of Adam and Jesus as, respectively, the first man Adam and the last Adam.(1 CO15:45-47) "The first man, Adam, became a living soul. The last Adam became a life-giving spirit" That's speaking of Jesus. A portion of the first Adam's body—a rib—was fashioned by God and presented as a bride to Adam. In the same manner, a portion of the body of Christ, which is the church, will be presented by God as a bride to his Son. Now you are the body of Christ.(1CO12:27) But the entire body will not qualify as Christ's bride! The "first Adam's" bride was taken from a portion of Adam's body. Bride of Christ is a remnant portion of body of Christ.

Here is a summary of some characteristics of Christ's bride:

1. The bride will be presented as a pure virgin to him (2 Cor. 11:2).
2. The bride will be known for her righteous acts (Rev. 19:7-8).
3. The bridal church will be (Eph. 5:25-27): a. Holy, b. Cleansed and washed by the word of God, c. A radiant church, d. Without stain or wrinkle, e. Without blemish, f. Blameless
4. The bride of Christ will have the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ (Eph. 4:13).
5. The bride will come from a portion of the body of Christ, rather than being the entire body (Gen. 2:22).
6. The bride will have a sincere and pure devotion to Christ (2 Cor. 11:3).
7. The bride will be watchful and prayerful (Luke 21:36).
8. The bride will have been pressing for perfection (2 Cor. 13:9,11).
9. The anointing, the baptism with the Holy Spirit, will be abundantly operating in the lives of those who qualify for the bride of Christ (Matt. 25:3-4).
10. The bride will live in a state of readiness to meet the bridegroom (Matt. 25:10)

With the help and grace of the Lord, all these are attainable. But not all Christians will cooperate with the Lord's grace and expend the effort to measure up in these and any other needful areas. Jesus is seeking a perfect bride, a "help meet" for Him! Lord Himself word to Martha, "But one thing is needful" i.e. to sit at His feet and find our delight in Him. Mary chose that good part, sitting at Jesus' feet implies having submitted, devoted and believed.

The Bride of Christ is described as being a "glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing"(EPH5:27) She is a "chaste virgin"(2CO11:2), "arrayed in fine linen, clean and white"(REV:19:8). Sanctification—purity of heart is a virtue she has obtained thru the Blood of the One who gave His life for her. She must keep herself unspotted from the world and walk in holiness. she must walk to be one of those who are "called, chosen, faithful"(REV17:14)

The Bride of Christ Like a Virtuous Woman; the Bride as the virtuous woman described in Proverbs:31:10-31. She is of rare value with a price far above rubies. What makes her so? "The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her." Her heart is attached to Christ, and He can trust His Bride. She is not affected by the fashions of this world. But some virgins will set their affections on other things over and above Christ and has committed adultery with the world, so, they are not part of the Bride of Christ. They did not maintain their sincere/pure devotion to Christ.

The Bride of Christ is like the wise virgins, have that supply of oil in her vessel that is typical of the Holy Spirit. When one receives baptism of the Holy Spirit, the Spirit enters the life to dwell there for purpose of directing that life, granting power and boldness to that one in the work of the Lord. Thus, the Bride of Christ "worketh willingly with her hands" She is diligent in the work that God has called her to do. In the Parable of the Talents illustrates necessity of active and faithful service. God supplies opportunity for service according to spiritual gifts to edify church. As her deeds of love/kindness are known she finds her services. *She watches over the ways of her household,*

The church is already promised for eventual presentation to Christ as a radiant, blameless bride. The church must live and serve now in such a way as to be ready for presentation to the heavenly bridegroom. Before the second coming of Christ, there shall be a spiritual relationship between the bride and Christ whereby the woman bears a son, a man child. The man child: "Who has ever seen such things? Can a country be born in a day or a nation be brought forth in a moment? Yet no sooner is Zion in labor than she gives birth to her children.(ISA66:8) In Rev.12, we see a woman who gives birth to a Man Child. Bible gives many descriptions of those Christians that live exemplary lives before God. Jesus called them: "Overcomers" (is victorious). "To him who overcomes and does my will to the end, I will give authority over the nations—He will rule them with an iron scepter."(REV2:26-27) Christlike conquerors are called to be overcomers, rule nations with Jesus Christ, with an iron rod. This is the precise description of the Man child, given in Rev12:5 "She gave birth to a son, a man child, who will rule all the nations with an iron staff. And her child was caught up to God and to His throne". This Man child who is an overcomer, the first fruits is a select group of saints who will be taken to the throne of God, mount Zion in heaven before tribulation begins, were the dragon can't harm man child. The perfected, glorious church will bear a first fruits of souls brought into kingdom of God. *O my love, you are altogether beautiful and fair. there is no spot in you.(SOS4:7)*

While there is a "lamb's wife, the bride of Christ", it is the glorified church—Rev.21:9-10 states that the "the bride, the Lamb's wife" is the Holy Jerusalem. "as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband" to Christ as a bridegroom. 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. Jesus comes for His Bride, who loves Him with all their hearts, who talks with Him throughout the day, walk in purity, faithfulness, abide in God's Word, sing hymns, songs of hope, proclaim his love for us.(2CO11:2)

Most people believe that every born-again person will be soon be raptured and at that time become a part of the Bride of Christ. Rev 19:7 speaks of bride made ready, spotless or wrinkle. *My dove, my undefiled is one, Is the only one.*(SOS6:9)In Rev.3:12, it is clear one type of all the churches that could be said to be the Bride. They have kept the Word, abide in Him and brought forth fruit unto perfection. They were committed observing truth in their lives and ministry. They kept themselves pure, put-on righteousness, have sanctified life. So, it is apparent that this group of overcomers, are named after the place in which they live, the New Jerusalem. This heavenly city is being prepared in Heaven and will come down to new Heaven at the end of the millennial reign of Jesus. As Jesus said, "*I go to prepare a place for you*"(JOH14:2) is to be fulfilled. Jesus will return, to receive His Own unto Himself. brings us joy, glory, blessed beyond measure when we see Christ. In SoS:2:13 refer to rapture of Bride to a place the groom lives to as the clefts of the rock. *Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away.* O my dove, in the clefts (refuge) of the rock (fortress), in the secret places of the stairs (Jacob's ladder which led to heaven). So just as "the rock" refers to Jesus and place He abides, "the New Jerusalem" refers to the Bride of Christ, ultimate inhabitation. The New Jerusalem are eternal as part of New Heaven and the place only comes into being after the 1000 year reign of Christ on earth which means the old heaven and earth are eliminated. Only those whose names are recorded in the Lamb's book of life are free to enter the New Jerusalem, for they possess eternal life and belong to Jesus. Jesus, the Lamb of God, bought them with His blood and will grant beloved of the Lord the right to tree of life.

The Chaste Virgin that is betrothed. The Bride is a specific group of saints. *as a chaste virgin to Christ.*(2CO11:2) Simplicity means sincere and single minded-devotion to Christ. We must rely on Him; He must be our hope. We must have no idols in our heart. Here speaking who are betrothed to Christ to be their husband. While the Bride has to wait for return of Bridegroom, she has consecrated herself to her husband alone, should she prove faithful. All believers are called virgins. That kind of virgin, destined to be espoused to Jesus, as a chaste or pure saints.

The Bride of the First Adam, we see how first marriage involving the first Adam, shadows the heavenly marriage of second Adam, Jesus. When God created first Bride for Adam, He first put him to sleep. He then created Eve, his bride, taking her out of his body. Today, just about the entire body of Christ, is asleep. Church don't realize how soon that Jesus is coming for His Bride. When the second Adam, Jesus does come, the Bride will be taken out of the entire Body of Christ, who shall rise first at the sounding of the trumpet of God. via the first fruits rapture!

There are different groups of believers that make up the church. We have seen that the Word of God refers to them as the Bride and tribulation saints; the wise and the foolish; and the great and the least. In Rom 8:1, verse refers to two groups of those that are "in Christ Jesus," those "walk according to the Spirit" and those that "walk after their flesh." If you walk after the Spirit, you will be walking after the Word. It is the power of the Word of God allows you to live an overcoming life of freedom and victory. Overcomers are those who overcome the world, the flesh(sin) and the devil. *Let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, fix our eyes on Jesus!*(HEB12:1-2)

In Rom 8:29, says those that are "conformed to the image of His Son" or in other words, those who follow after the Jesus, being perfected are the "firstborn among many brethren." also "the first-born from the dead"(COL1:18) Jesus is the first Overcomer, Forerunner, firstfruits, firstborn in Zion. Heb12:22-23 shows who registered in heaven. It says the "church of firstborn" first fruits, bride are numbered.(REV14:1) They are overcomers by rapture into the mount Zion standing with Jesus. This is the one who born in Zion in general assembly of heavenly Jerusalem. Church includes wise virgins is complete at the second rapture, a multitude so great that no man could number them.(REV7:14)

Being born again means being born into the Lord's family and becoming God's children by faith in Jesus Christ. But required discipline of Jesus, by let him deny himself, take up his cross, follow Jesus, be gospel partnership, faithful witness and become son of God. We need to grow and mature so that we may be qualified and matured to be the bride of Christ, for the readiness of the bride depends on the maturity in life of the overcomers. The bride of Christ signifies the glorious church; the bride enters with the Lord as the Bridegroom at the wedding feast. Let us look at the promises given to those that are overcomers in Rev.3:21, *To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.* A throne is a place where a king rules and reigns. Rev.7 shows the tribulation saints/wise virgins were given honor of reigning with Christ. Scripture indicates how few in the body of Christ will be ready when Jesus returns for His Bride, For many are called/invited, but few are chosen.(MAT22:14) Among all believers, many are number that are called to be the Bride, but few are found worthy to be chosen. Like Apostle Paul, believers today desire that being counted worthy before God to be the Bride, have great motivation to press on for that prize of the high calling. He is striving for that he had not yet attained. He was running a race to win a prize. Part of that pressing on is to walk in holiness. Spiritual life is a growth to attain, a task to accomplish, a race to run, a course to finish-all triumphantly, at the same it is warfare to fight and overcome. May you be strengthened with all power, so that you may have endurance, patience.