

Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain,  
to receive power and wealth and wisdom and  
strength and honor and glory and praise!

Revelation 5:11-12

## Heaven's Worship

with Pastor Steve

### Worship and Purity

Another description of the 144,000 servants of God given to us by John is that they were not defiled with women, for they are virgins. Several times in scripture we read where God describes his people as virgins. The meaning of the word virgin in The Revelation and the Old Testament goes beyond one who has not participated in sexual activity. It refers to a person or in Israel's case a nation, who has served only one God; one who has forsaken the works of the flesh and kept himself unspotted from the world.

The following scriptures give us an idea of how God addressed his people.

*Therefore you shall say this word to them: Let my eyes flow with tears night and day, and let them not cease; For the virgin daughter of my people has been broken with a mighty stroke, with a very severe blow.*

Jeremiah 14:17

*Again I will build you, and you shall be rebuilt, O virgin of Israel! You shall again be adorned with your tambourines, and shall go forth in the dances of those who rejoice.*

Jeremiah 31:4

*Set up signposts, make landmarks; Set your heart toward the highway, the way in which you went. Turn back, O virgin of Israel, Turn back to these your cities.*

Jeremiah 31:21

*How shall I console you? To what shall I liken you, O daughter of Jerusalem? What shall I compare with you, that I may comfort you, O virgin daughter of Zion? For your ruin is spread wide as the sea; Who can heal you?*

Lamentations 2:13

God declared that he was a husband to Israel. Israel was the virgin of his affection and he longed to be the affection of Israel's heart. He said, *For 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. For the Lord has called you like a woman forsaken and grieved in spirit, like a youthful wife when you were refused, says the Lord.* (Isaiah 54:15-6)

Throughout the Old Testament God commanded Israel to have no other god's before him. During times of rebellion he accused them of committing adultery with other lovers. God's assessment of Israel's condition was, . . . *She decked herself with earrings and jewelry, and went after her lovers; but me she forgot. . . .* (Hosea 2:13) *You are an adulterous wife, who takes strangers instead of her husband.* (Ezekiel 16:32) Israel sought gratification in something other than God. They loved how the things of the world made them feel.

The word defile means to make filthy or dirty. When I think about being defiled I am reminded of my football playing days in high school. You may not have ever been in a high school locker room during football season, but let me inform you it stinks. On Monday we began practice with clean uniforms which quickly became soiled during practice. We didn't take those uniforms home that night to be washed, we wore them all week. By the time Thursday's practice was over they were filthy.

That is exactly what happens when we entertain the things of this world. At first it may seem not to affect us. We enjoy how it makes us feel so we continue to indulge ourselves. Soon that thing isn't enough, and we

begin to turn to other sources of pleasure to fulfill our desires. Eventually we find ourselves cankered with worldliness.

The apostles exhorted the early church concerning a love for the things of the world. John wrote, *Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.* (1 John 2:15) James adds, *Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world.* (James 1:27) He goes on to say, *Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. Or do you think that the Scripture says in vain, The Spirit who dwells in us yearns jealously?* (James 4:4-5)

Paul, being concerned that the Corinthian believers had been deceived into believing a different gospel than the one he had preached, wrote this, *For I am jealous for you with godly jealousy. For I have betrothed you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.* (2 Corinthians 11:2)

Many people in the church today have chased after the things of this world. They have honored God with their lips but their hearts are far from him. The lusts of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life have lured them from the one who has betrothed them. However, there is no room in the true worshiper for a divided heart. Our husband is jealous for a virgin bride. True worshipers are virgins in the sense that they are married to God alone. They are not defiled with the things of this world nor have they given themselves to other gods. They have only one husband; Jesus.