

WHO IS THE BRIDE OF CHRIST?

A. Is the Church Body the Bride of Christ? There are many denominations, and even some Pauline dispensationalists, who say that we **are**. Always remember, there are **good** and wonderful people on both sides of this.

1. What we will look at is not a personal view, or **presumption**, but what God's Word says. Most just take something as being true because of what they have heard from their **denomination**, or even from a **song**.

2. We know that **never once** in the King James Bible do we find the term "the Bride of Christ". This is

a religious term - actually a core belief of the **R.C.C.** The Bible never refers to the Body of Christ as "the Bride of Christ".

This should be a **red flag to us, showing it is nothing more than a **manmade** belief or **tradition** of men.

Colossians 2:8 - Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.

3. We do find the following phrases: "the marriage supper of the Lamb" in Rev. 19:7 & 9, "the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming out of heaven, prepared **as** a bride adorned for her husband in Rev. 21:2, and "the Lamb's **wife**" in Rev. 21:9.

4. *It seems that a marriage is certainly occurring in the closing chapters of Revelation, but who is marrying whom? We have to always remember **context**, and Revelation shows God is returning to **restore** Israel at the end of the Tribulation.

B. The O.T. prophets clearly refer to the nation of Israel as God's wife.

1. Jeremiah 2:31-32 - O generation, see ye the word of the LORD. Have I been a wilderness unto Israel? a land of darkness? wherefore say my people, We are lords; we will come no more unto thee? Jer. 2:32 Can a maid forget her ornaments, or a bride her attire? yet my people have forgotten me days without number.

2. Jeremiah 3:14, 20 - Turn, O backsliding children, saith the LORD; for I am married unto you: and I will take you one of a city, and two of a family, and I will bring you to Zion: Jer. 3:20 Surely as a wife treacherously departeth from her husband, so have ye dealt treacherously with me, O house of Israel, saith the LORD.

3. Isaiah 54:5-6 - For thy Maker is thine husband; the LORD of hosts *is* his name; and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel; The God of the whole earth shall he be called. Isa. 54:6 For the LORD hath called thee as a woman forsaken and grieved in spirit, and a wife of youth, when thou wast refused, saith thy God.

4. The book of Hosea recalls how God **married** Israel when He brought them out of Egypt. Moses enacted the Law Covenant (Ex. 24) and Hosea recounts how Israel became **unfaithful** to God, as a cheating wife. Israel literally went after other **gods**. Eventually God **divorced** her.

*God sent her (Israel) into Gentile captivity and Jerusalem (**Zion**) was destroyed in 586 B.C.

But Hosea also describes how God will **forgive** her of her sins, **restore** her, **remarry** her, and bring her back into her own homeland (Israel-Jerusalem). Biblically, you **cannot** separate Jerusalem from the Jewish people.

Hosea 2:15-23 - And I will give her her vineyards from thence, and the valley of Achor for a door of hope: and she shall sing there, as in the days of her youth, and as in the day when she came up out of the land of Egypt. Hosea 2:16 And it shall be at that day, saith the LORD, *that* thou shalt call me Ishi; and shalt call me no more Baali. Hosea 2:17 For I will take away the names of Baalim out of her mouth, and they shall no more be remembered by their name. Hosea 2:18 And in that day will I make a covenant for them with the beasts of the field, and with the fowls of heaven, and *with* the creeping things of the ground: and I will break the bow and the sword and the battle out of the earth, and will make them to lie down safely. Hosea 2:19 And I will betroth thee unto me for ever; yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in lovingkindness, and in mercies. Hosea 2:20 I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness: and thou shalt know the LORD. Hosea 2:21 And it shall come to pass in that day, I will hear, saith the LORD, I will hear the heavens, and they shall hear the earth; Hosea 2:22 And the earth shall hear the corn, and the wine, and the oil; and they shall hear Jezreel. Hosea 2:23 And I will sow her unto me in the earth; and I will have mercy upon her that had not obtained mercy; and I will say to *them which were* not my people, Thou *art* my people; and they shall say, *Thou art* my God.

5. Jeremiah 31:31-32 - Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: Jer. 31:32 Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the LORD:

*God will save Israel, marry her to **Himself**-Land (Jerusalem), and of course God will marry Himself to the **land**.

6. Interestingly, notice the following verses:

- a. Isaiah 49:18 - Lift up thine eyes round about, and behold: all these gather themselves together, *and* come to thee. *As* I live, saith the LORD, thou shalt surely clothe thee with them all, as with an ornament, and bind them on thee, as a bride doeth.

*To whom is God speaking? Isaiah 49:14 - But Zion said, The LORD hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me.

*He is speaking to **Zion** - Jerusalem.

- b. Isaiah 61:10 - I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth *herself* with her jewels.

*To whom is God speaking? Isaiah 61:3a - To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion,

- c. Isaiah 62:5 - For as a young man marrieth a virgin, so shall thy sons marry thee: and as the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee.

*To whom is God speaking? Isaiah 62:1 - For Zion's sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp *that* burneth.

- d. These verses show the bride to be Zion-**Jerusalem**, and that agrees with Revelation 21:1-3, 9-10-

[And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. Rev. 21:2 And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.]

Rev 21:3 And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God *is* with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, *and be* their God.

Revelation 21:3, 9-10 - And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God *is* with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, *and be* their God. Rev. 21:9 And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife. Rev. 21:10 And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God,

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- (1) The bride, the Lamb's wife, is identified as the holy **city** Jerusalem. Remember, in God's **covenant** with Israel, you cannot separate Jerusalem from its people - the Jews. Revelation does not concern **us**!
 - (2) The Lamb's wife is the **New** Jerusalem, the Jerusalem currently in **heaven** that will come down to earth. It is the heavenly Jerusalem that Abraham and other O.T. believers anticipated.

Hebrews 12:22 - But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels,

Hebrews 11:10, 16 - For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker *is* God. Heb. 11:16 But now they desire a better *country*, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city.

7. Also note: John 3:29 - He that hath the bride is the bridegroom: but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice: this my joy therefore is fulfilled.
 - a. [bridegroom] is **God**.
 - b. [bride] are the people of Israel-Jerusalem - **remnant**.
 - c. [friend] is John the **Baptist**.
 - (1) The best man was the one to present the bride to the bridegroom, and that is **exactly** what John the Baptist did in presenting Jesus Christ to Israel.
 - (2) So far the Scriptures never mention the Body Church in the context of being the Bride. The Body is still a **secret**-mystery.
8. Revelation 22:17 - And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.

In Revelation, the bride is already identified as "the holy city", New Jerusalem. Also, Jerusalem is **representative** of redeemed Israel. Jerusalem and the bride (Jewish believers) are **in**separable. Notice how the New Jerusalem is described.

Revelation 21:12, 14 - And had a wall great and high, *and* had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel: Rev. 21:14 And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

C. Why then does most of Christendom, and most Bible teachers, agree that the **Body** of Christ is the Bride of Christ?

Answer:

1. They fail to understand the great mystery revealed to **Paul** (not all, but most).
2. They fail to **dist**inguish between Israel and the Body Church (again- not all, but most).
3. Paul makes the Body Church **ident**ified with the Mystery.

Colossians 1:24-26 - Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the church: Col. 1:25 Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil the word of God; Col. 1:26 *Even* the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints:

4. They fail to understand when Paul uses marriage terms in a **met**aphor to illustrate a certain truth.

means to use a word, a phrase in a way that is different from its usual use - to show a **likeness** to something else.

Metaphor

- a. Example: The curtain of night is a metaphor that likens night to a curtain that conceals. It is a figure of speech. Example: This (grape juice) is my **blood** which is shed.

*Likewise, a **simile** is a figure of speech in which two things are different in more ways they are said to be **alike**. Example: She sings like a bird.

- b. Metaphor and simile are similar.

(1) Metaphor: "Tell the fox" - "Thou worm Israel" - "Jehovah is my rock and fortress" - "The moon shall be turned into blood"

(2) Simile: "His eyes were **as** a flame of fire" - "Three unclean spirits **like** frogs"

Paul, at times, used a **figure of speech** to teach a truth without it being the actual meaning of the word. Example: married-bride-spouse-and virgin

5. Point? Ephesians 5:25-33. Ephesians 5:31-32 - For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. Eph. 5:32 This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.

- a. The Bible does teach that the marriage relationship between a husband and wife reflects- **resembles** the loving relationship-union that the **Body** has with its Head. But in these verses, we never read that we are Jesus Christ's wife or His bride. Israel is His wife, and He **never** calls us His wife.

- b. Ephesians 5 is explaining-describing how marriage is designed to function. The way to understand the marriage relationship is to understand, or see, how Jesus Christ and His Body **interact** with each other.

6. Romans 7:1, 4 - Know ye not, brethren, (for I speak to them that know the law,) how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth? Rom. 7:4 Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, *even* to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God.
- As we were bound to sin, married to Adam, in that sense we are free from sin - now alive, married to Christ. Since salvation, we have been joined in union with Christ.
 - All Romans 7 is saying is now we are free from law, dead to the law of sin and dead works, not bound to live the Christian life in our own flesh and energy. Our joining to Christ allows us to make it His life through us.
 - *Nowhere does it say that we are the bride of Christ. Believers are made dead to the law as the wife is maritally dead and free to be joined with another (metaphor-simile) Christ.
 - The word "married" is the word "joined" in verse 3-4. The application Paul is making is that a death must take place to break our bond to the Law-Adam before we can be joined to Christ.
7. II Corinthians 11:2 - For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.

- Here again, we read no terminology about us being the Bride of Christ. What Paul is doing here in verse two is using a simile, likening us to being spiritually pure (gospel-doctrinally-context-verse 1-4), as a "chaste virgin" would be sexually pure. The devil could cause us to follow "another Jesus" (Israel's earthly ministry).
- Again, as false teachers were trying to pull Corinthians away from Paul and His Gospel of Grace, so Paul likens himself as giving the Corinthians to Christ in marriage. This again must be understood figuratively, because Paul has taught that Christ is the Head of the Church - not the husband, and that the Church is His Body - not His Bride.

Ephesians 1:22-23 - And hath put all *things* under his feet, and gave him *to be the head over all things to the church*, Eph. 1:23 Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.

- Conclusion: 1. Created things are used to describe God and our relationship with Him (tree, dove, fire, smoke, etc.).
- As a man, I am not a woman. God is not my boyfriend or future husband. If anything, I am part of Christ's body (groom?). So how could I be a bride?
 - God made a covenant and a promise to Israel. God married Himself to Israel with covenants, and God divorced Israel.
Jeremiah 3:8 - And I saw, when for all the causes whereby backsliding Israel committed adultery I had put her away, and given her a bill of divorce; yet her treacherous sister Judah feared not, but went and played the harlot also.
 - God promises to remarry Israel (Hosea and Rev. 21:2, 9-21).
 - Remember that the Body has no covenants, meaning no marriage, espousal, or divorce.
Ephesians 2:12 - [That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world:]

*There is enough Scripture shown to prove that → we are not the Bride of Christ, but we are the Mystery Body!