

THE WIFE OF JEHOVAH & THE BRIDE OF CHRIST

GOD'S ULTIMATE PURPOSE is to provide a family for Himself and a Bride for His Son as His eternal companion to reign with Him forever (Eph. 5:31-32; Rev. 19:7-9).

Israel –The Wife of Jehovah

In the Old Testament, Israel is regarded as wife of Jehovah (Jer. 3; Ezek. 16; Hos. 2; etc.). But that lovely relationship was defiled by Israel's spiritual adultery and unfaithfulness to her Husband.

Jeremiah 3:1-5 shows Israel being guilty of playing the harlot with many lovers and in verse 3:20 Israel is compared to a wife who has turned away from her husband. Israel was a wife guilty of adultery: ***Surely, as a wife treacherously departs from her husband, So have you dealt treacherously with Me, O house of Israel, says Jehovah.***

She is now regarded as divorced from her Husband.

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.***

But there will be a glorious future restoration to her Husband. The restoration of Israel as Jehovah's wife is described in Isaiah 54:1-8, and the remarriage is further described in Isaiah 62:4-5. Hosea 2:14-23 depicts the courtship and the wooing in the wilderness and shows the many results of the reunion.

The Church—The Bride of Christ

Paul, in addressing the Corinthians, says: ***“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”*** (2 Cor. 11:2).

Language like this could not be used of Israel. Israel will be forgiven and restored as the repentant wife of Jehovah, but not as the chaste virgin bride of the Lamb.

The relationship between Israel and Jehovah is dramatically different than that of Christ and His bride. Perhaps the most significant difference is that the marriage of Jehovah to Israel occurred in time past, whereas the marriage of Christ with His bride has not yet taken place (*Tony Garland*).

The great doctrinal passage of the bride of Christ in NT is Ephesians 5:25-33. In His affectionate relationship, 7 ministries are outlined which Christ performs for His bride.

- In the past— He loved the Church and gave Himself for it. This reaches from eternity past, up to the cross (v25).
- In the present—He sanctifies, cleanses, nourishes, and cherishes it (v. 26).
- In the future—Christ presents the Church to Himself (v27).

Revelation 19:7-9— *Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready.” And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.*

Then he said to me, “Write: ‘Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!’” And he said to me, “These are the true sayings of God.”

The marriage and the marriage supper of the Lamb are described in Rev.19:7-9. The fact that she is called the Lamb’s wife shows that the marriage has already taken place.

The marriage takes place in Heaven; the Supper will take place on earth at His second coming. ***Many will come from the east and the west to take their places at the banquet*** (Matt. 8).

In John 3:29, John the Baptist referring to Jesus said: ***“The bride belongs to the bridegroom. The friend who attends the bridegroom waits and listens for him, and is full of joy when he hears the bridegroom’s voice. That joy is mine, and it is now complete.”***

The Baptist was the forerunner of the Messiah, and as the last of the law and the prophets, did not regard himself as a part of the bride. He called himself the friend of the bridegroom.

The fact that John the Baptist calls himself “the friend of the bridegroom” in John 3: 29, indicates that he and the glorified Old Testament saints, called “the spirits of just men made perfect” (Heb. 12:23), and the tribulation martyrs, would be among the guests at the wedding.

The word “bride” is used three times in Revelation 21 and 22. The first two occurrences refer to the Holy City, the New Jerusalem, descending, coming down from God out of heaven. In the closing verses of the Bible we find the third mention. In Rev.22:17 we told of the present yearning on the part of the bride for her bridegroom—the love of her life. The Spirit and the bride say, ***“Come!”***

To the dearest object of His heart and eye, Jesus replies in verse 20 and says, ***“Yes, I am coming soon.”***

Soli Deo Gloria

