

The Gospel According to John

1-29-2020

1. Last week when the clock struck 7:45 P.M. we had just completed Part I of the *Doctrine of Marriage and More*. We are now ready for Part II and a study of polygamy.
2. Before we begin new material in John chapter eight, I want to give you opportunity to use 1Jo 1:9 as may or may not be necessary. If you want to hear the audio of this lesson please go to *westbankbiblechurch.com* and click on streaming audio of services.
3. Now let's see what we can learn from Joh 8:1-11.

Joh 8:1 But Jesus went to the Mount of Olives.

Joh 8:2 At dawn he appeared again in the temple courts, where all the people gathered around him, and he sat down to teach them.

Joh 8:3 The teachers of the law and the Pharisees brought in a woman caught in **adultery**. They made her stand before the group.

Joh 8:4 and said to Jesus, "Teacher, this woman was caught in the act of **adultery**."

Joh 8:5 In the Law Moses commanded us to stone such women. Now what do you say?"

Joh 8:6 They were using this question as a trap, in order to have a basis for accusing him. But Jesus bent down and started to write on the ground with his finger.

Joh 8:7 When they kept on questioning him, he straightened up and said to them, "If any one of you is without sin, let him be the first to throw a stone at her."

Joh 8:8 Again he stooped down and wrote on the ground.

Joh 8:9 At this, those who heard began to go away one at a time, the older ones first, until only Jesus was left, with the woman still standing there.

Joh 8:10 Jesus straightened up and asked her, "Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?"

Joh 8:11 "No one, sir," she said. "Then neither do I condemn you," Jesus declared. "Go now and leave your life of sin."

Part II Doctrine of Polygamy

Introduction

1. The teaching of the epistles is clear that a pastor-teacher must be the husband of only one woman. (1Ti 3:2)

1Ti 3:2 Now the overseer must be above reproach, the husband of but one wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach,

1.1 The epistles also make clear a deacon must be the husband of but one wife. (1Ti 3:12)

1Ti 3:12 A deacon must be the husband of but one wife and must manage his children and his household well.

1.2 Every believer is ordered to love his wife as Christ loved the church. (Eph 5:25)

Eph 5:25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her ...

1.3 The New Testament therefore obviously prohibits multiple wives.

History of Polygamy

1. Polygamy was never authorized in the Bible but rather seemed to be tolerated as opposed to being sanctioned. The tolerance was found only in the Old Testament.

2. The wife of a man's youth was rather a prize to be forever appreciated said the Scripture.

Deu 17:16 The king, moreover, must not acquire great numbers of horses for himself or make the people return to Egypt to get more of them, for the LORD has told you, "You are not to go back that way again."

Deu 17:17 He must not take many wives, or his heart will be led astray. He must not accumulate large amounts of silver and gold.

Psa 128:3 Your wife will be like a fruitful vine within your house; your sons will be like olive shoots around your table.

Psa 128:4 Thus is the man blessed who fears the LORD.

Pro 5:18 May your fountain be blessed, and may you rejoice in the wife of your youth.

Pro 5:19 A loving doe, a graceful deer--may her breasts satisfy you always, may you ever be captivated by her love.

Pro 5:20 Why be captivated, my son, by an adulteress? Why embrace the bosom of another man's wife?

Pro 31:10 A wife of noble character who can find? She is worth far more than rubies.

Pro 31:11 Her husband has full confidence in her and lacks nothing of value.

Ecc 9:9 Enjoy life with your wife, whom you love, all the days of this meaningless life that God has given you under the sun--all your meaningless days. For this is your lot in life and in your toilsome labor under the sun.

3. The New Testament established the sanctity of marriage.

Heb 13:4 Marriage should be honored by all, and the marriage bed kept pure, for God will judge the adulterer and all the sexually immoral.

4. Polygamy is related to “reversionism” and is an overt expression of a negative mental attitude. The anecdote of Lamech introduces us to the subject.

4.1 Polygamy was pervasive in the line of Lamech, a notorious reversionist.

4.2 Lamech, son of Methushael was our first recorded polygamist. He married Adah and Zillah. He was said to be the father of nomads, musicians, and metal smiths.

Gen 4:19 Lamech married two women, one named Adah and the other Zillah.

Gen 4:20 Adah gave birth to Jabal; he was the father of those who live in tents and raise livestock.

Gen 4:21 His brother's name was Jubal; he was the father of all who play the harp and flute.

Gen 4:22 And Zillah, she also bare Tubalcain, an instructor of every artisan in brass and iron.

Gen 4:23 Lamech said to his wives, "Adah and Zillah, listen to me; wives of Lamech, hear my words. I have killed a man for wounding me, a young man for injuring me.

5. Polygamy violates the concept of Right Man/Right Woman.

6. By acts of volition and a refusal to conform to God's protocol plan a man can destroy his right woman. You can either accept the woman God has provided or reject God's wisdom.

7. Man is not designed for an intimate relationship with more than one woman; man is not psychologically capable of more than a one woman relationship.

8. Polygamy is a form of self-induced misery for both the man and the woman.

9. Elkanah's polygamy contributed to Hannah's troubles. Hannah was one of the two wives of Elkanah, a Levite of the line of Kohath, who lived in Mount Ephraim.

10. Because Hannah was barren Elkanah had married Peninnah, a second wife, who bore him children.

11. Hannah was a woman of prayer and faith as well as a woman of strong desires. She begged God for a son, and promised that if God provided, she would give him back to the Lord. This she did when Samuel was born.

11.1 Jealousy between Hannah and Peninnah resulted in Hannah's trauma.

1Sa 1:6 And because the LORD had closed her womb, her rival kept provoking her in order to irritate her.

12. Gideon's polygamy caused trouble among his children.

Jdg 8:30 And Gideon... had seventy sons of his own, for he had many wives.

Jdg 8:31 He also had a concubine, who lived in Shechem ... she bore him a son, whom he named Abimelech ...

Jdg 9:1 Abimelech ... hired vain and light persons, who followed him ...

Jdg 9:5 they slew his half-brothers, the sons of Gideon ...

Jdg 9:6 ... the men of Shechem gathered together ... and made Abimelech king ...

Jdg 9:22 After Abimelech had reigned three years over Israel,

Jdg 9:23 ... God sent an evil spirit between Abimelech and the men of Shechem; and the men of Shechem dealt treacherously with Abimelech:

12.1 The Lord disciplined Abimelech (a child of polygamy) because he dispossessed a rightful heir. Gideon's act of polygamy resulted in a problem for Gideon and his posterity.

13. Now let's look at further anecdotal evidence of problems associated with polygamy.

13.1 David's polygamy compounded his problems with his children and the discipline extended to the second generation.

1Ch 3:1 These were the sons of David born to him in Hebron: The firstborn was Amnon the son of Ahinoam of Jezreel; the second, Daniel the son of Abigail of Carmel;

1Ch 3:2 the third, Absalom the son of Maacah daughter of Talmai king of Geshur; the fourth, Adonijah the son of Haggith;

1Ch 3:3 the fifth, Shephatiah the son of Abital; and the sixth, Ithream, by his wife Eglah.

1Ch 3:4 These six were born to David in Hebron, where he reigned seven years and six months. David reigned in Jerusalem thirty-three years,

1Ch 3:5 and these were the children born to him there: Shammua, Shobab, Nathan and Solomon. These four were by Bathsheba daughter of Ammiel.

1Ch 3:6 There were also Ibhar, Elishua, Eliphelet,

1Ch 3:7 Nogah, Nepheg, Japhia,

1Ch 3:8 Elishama, Eliada and Eliphelet--nine in all.

1Ch 3:9 All these were the sons of David, besides his sons by his concubines...

13.2 The result of Solomon's failure to heed God's warning concerning polygamy is recorded in 1st Kings.

1Ki 11:1 King Solomon, however, loved many foreign women besides Pharaoh's daughter--Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Sidonians and Hittites.

1Ki 11:2 They were from nations about which the LORD had told the Israelites, "You must not intermarry with them, because they will surely turn your hearts after their gods." Nevertheless, Solomon held fast to them in love.

1Ki 11:3 He had seven hundred wives of royal birth and three hundred concubines ...

1Ki 11:6 So Solomon did evil in the eyes of the LORD; he did not follow the LORD completely, as David his father had done.

1Ki 11:7 On a hill east of Jerusalem, Solomon built a high place for Chemosh the detestable god of Moab, and for Molech the detestable god of the Ammonites.

1Ki 11:8 He did the same for all his foreign wives, who burned incense and offered sacrifices to their gods.

14. Now we are ready to consider the subject of divorce.

14.1 Divorce has always presented a serious problem. It is important that pastor-teachers teach what the Bible has to say about marriage and divorce. In the earliest teachings of the Bible man and woman were to “marry” and stay together refraining from sexual relations with any other; anything other than monogamy was forbidden.

14.1.1 But mankind being what mankind “was and is” has found staying married a difficult task; so polygamy early developed and God, given mankind’s wayward nature taught and authorized divorce.

14.1.2 So men began to have multiple wives and concubines; women were often divorced and family problems prevailed. Even kings were not spared incest, rape, murder, family rebellion etc., and all because they didn’t heed God’s call for monogamy.

14.1.3 So the New and the Old Testament are replete with accounts of misadventures in marriage.

14.1.4 Christ in His Kingdom teachings explained that God permitted divorce only because of the hardness of man’s heart and He further added that the only grounds for divorce was **adultery**.

14.1.5 Our Lord then expanded His teaching about **adultery** and fornication by saying if a man lusted in his heart for a woman, he was guilty. This then complicated everything, for what healthy red-blooded male could avoid adultery/fornication by that definition.

14.1.6 Fortunately, next came the epistles which teach all sin is to be “attacked” in the privacy of the mind by using 1Jo 1:9, i.e., confession. The epistles, however, also stressed the heinous nature of sexual sins because they affect the body and the soul of the believer.

14.1.7 The body said Paul, is the temple of the Holy Spirit and therefore it was blasphemous to think of the body being joined to a harlot – a not so kindly description of a sexual union between two people outside of marriage.

14.1.8 So much for an introduction to the subject of divorce.

14.2 It was only because of the hardness of men's hearts that Moses allowed a bill of divorcement, but such was not says our Lord the original plan. (Mat 5:31-32; 19:8-9; Mar 10:2-9 and Luk 16:18)

Mat 5:31 "It has been said, 'Anyone who divorces his wife must give her a certificate of divorce.'

Mat 5:32 But I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for marital unfaithfulness, causes her to become an adulteress, and anyone who marries the divorced woman commits **adultery**.

Mat 19:8 Jesus replied, "Moses permitted you to divorce your wives because your hearts were hard. But it was not this way from the beginning.

Mat 19:9 I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for marital unfaithfulness, and marries another woman commits **adultery**."

Mar 10:2 Some Pharisees came and tested him by asking, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?"

Mar 10:3 "What did Moses command you?" he replied.

Mar 10:4 They said, "Moses permitted a man to write a certificate of divorce and send her away."

Mar 10:5 "It was because your hearts were hard that Moses wrote you this law," Jesus replied.

Mar 10:6 "But at the beginning of creation God 'made them male and female.'

Mar 10:7 'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife,

Mar 10:8 and the two will become one flesh.' So they are no longer two, but one.

Mar 10:9 Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate."

Luk 16:18 "Anyone who divorces his wife and marries another woman commits **adultery**, and the man who marries a divorced woman commits **adultery**.

14.2 Marriage is to be abolished only for marital unfaithfulness.

14.3 This means that a divorce could be allowed only when there had been sexual intercourse with another person other than the betrothed either in premarital sex or afterward in marriage.

14.4 Christ pointed out that a man could commit **adultery** just as well as a woman, by forcing an unjust divorce. This was contrary to the views of the Jews, who saw the woman as the only possible offender.

14.5. Adultery according to Scripture can be committed in the mind and thus like all sin is subtle and if not confessed in the mind it can lead to marital unfaithfulness. Both a male and a female can commit the mental attitude sin of adultery.

15. Let me provide a New Testament word study of the Greek words translated "adultery."

Moikalis

Mat 12:39 But he answered and said unto them, An evil and **adulterous** generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas:

Mat 12:40 For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

Mat 16:4 A wicked and **adulterous** generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given unto it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas. And he left them, and departed.

Mar 8:38 Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this **adulterous** and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.

Rom 7:2 For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband.

Rom 7:3 So then if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no **adulteress**, though she be married to another man.

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.

Jam 4:4 Ye **adulterers** and **adulteresses**, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.

Moikaomai

Mat 5:32 But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit **adultery**: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth **adultery**.

Mat 19:9 And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit **adultery**.

Mat 19:10 His disciples say unto him, If the case of the man be so with his wife, it is not good to marry.

Mat 19:11 But he said unto them, All men cannot receive this saying, save they to whom it is given.

Mat 19:12 For there are some eunuchs, which were so born from their mother's womb: and there are some eunuchs, which were made eunuchs of men: and there be eunuchs, which have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He that is able to receive it, let him receive it.

Mar 10:11 And he saith unto them, Whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth **adultery** against her.

Mar 10:12 And if a woman shall put away her husband, and be married to another, she committeth **adultery**.

Moikeia

Mat 15:19 For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, **adulteries**, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies:

Mat 15:20 These are the things which defile a man: but to eat with unwashen hands defileth not a man.

Mar 7:21 For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, **adulteries**, fornications, murders,

Mar 7:22 Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness:

Mar 7:23 All these evil things come from within, and defile the man.

Joh 8:3 And the scribes and Pharisees brought unto him a woman taken in **adultery**; and when they had set her in the midst,

Gal 5:19 Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; **adultery**, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness,

Gal 5:20 Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies,

Gal 5:21 Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

Moikeuo

Mat 5:27 Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit **adultery**:

Mat 5:28 But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed **adultery** with her already in his heart.

Mat 19:18 *The Rich Young Ruler* saith unto him, Which? Jesus said, Thou shalt do no murder, Thou shalt not commit **adultery**, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness,

Luk 16:18 Whosoever putteth away his wife, and marrieth another, committeth **adultery**: and whosoever marrieth her that is put away from her husband committeth **adultery**.

Luk 18:20 Thou (the Rich Young Ruler) knowest the commandments, Do not commit **adultery**, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Honour thy father and thy mother.

Luk 18:21 And the *Rich Young Ruler* said, All these have I kept from my youth up.

Joh 8:4 They say unto him, Master, this woman was taken in **adultery**, in the very act.

Rom 2:22 Thou that sayest a man should not commit **adultery**, dost thou commit adultery? thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege?

Jam 2:8 If ye fulfil the royal law according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well:

Jam 2:9 But if ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin, and are convinced of the law as transgressors.

Jam 2:10 For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.

Jam 2:11 For he that said, Do not commit **adultery**, said also, Do not kill. Now if thou commit no **adultery**, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law.

Jam 2:12 So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty.

Rev 2:22 Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit **adultery** with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds.

Moikos

Luk 18:11 The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, **adulterers**, or even as this publican.

Heb 13:4 Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and **adulterers** God will judge.

Jam 4:4 Ye **adulterers** and **adulteresses**, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.

16. There are several interesting metaphors using marriage to teach various subjects.

17. I want to take one from the Old Testament and one from the New Testament.

18. The Old Testament

18.1 Hosea forgave and took back his adulterous wife Gomer because God commanded him; not once but twice and each time it was to remind the prophet Hosea and us of God's love for Israel and His future family. A synopsis of the events will suffice:

Hos 1:1 The word of the LORD that came to Hosea:

Hos 1:2 When the LORD began to speak through Hosea, the LORD said to him, "Go, take to yourself an adulterous wife ..., because the land is guilty of the vilest **adultery** in departing from the LORD."

Hos 1:3 So he married Gomer daughter of Diblaim ...

Hos 2:5 ... She said, 'I will go after my lovers, who give me my food and my water, my wool and my linen, my oil and my drink ...

Hos 2:7 She will chase after her lovers ... she will look for them but not find them. Then she will say, 'I will go back to my husband as at first, for then I was better off than now.' ...

Hos 2:10 God said I will expose her lewdness before the eyes of her lovers;

Hos 3:1 The LORD said to me, "Go, show your love to your wife again, though she is loved by another and is an adulteress. Love her as the LORD loves the Israelites, though they turn to other gods and love the sacred raisin cakes."

18.2 And Hosea accepted God's plan. The Lord used the analogy to teach the error of Israel and God's ever-present unrequited love for His people.

19. Now we are ready for a review of a most interesting metaphor: **Christ the Bridegroom the Church the Bride**

1. Introduction:

1.1 First, I want to preview the differences between marriage today and the institution of marriage which existed at the time of Christ and the early church.

1.1.1 Most of you know about marriage today. You find your right man or right woman, go down to the court house, get a license, find a preacher or a J.P. and have them say a few words over the deal and bingo you are married.

1.2 It was quite different in antiquity. Marriages were arranged. Often the groom would find a girl to his liking, enlist the help of a friend and then a negotiation took place with the father of the bride.

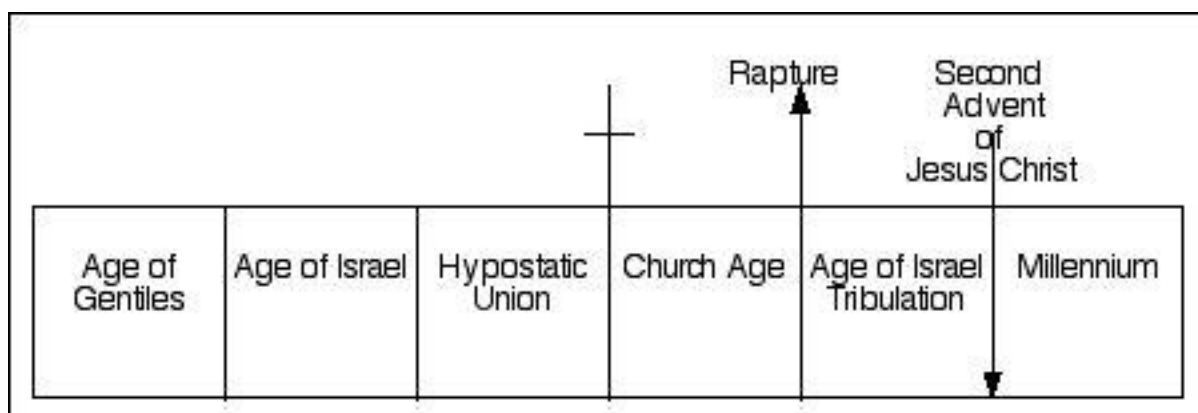
1.3 The bridegroom's friend would act as the bridegroom's agent. The agent would go to the home of the young lady, speak with the parents and a deal would be struck.

1.4 The dowry in most cases would be exchanged or promised and thus a marriage contract was recognized.

1.5 As part of the marriage contract the groom agreed at some undetermined time to come for his bride. The groom would first acquire a house and all that was needed for a secure home.

2. The bride, in our metaphor, is the universal church of the Church Age and the Bridegroom is Christ. Christ is at this moment building a home in heaven for us as His future bride.

2.1 Our agent is the Holy Spirit and the undetermined period is the length of the Church Age.



2.2 As was the marriage custom of Christ's day, we too as the bride now wait until our Bridegroom the Lord Jesus Christ, is ready to take us to His home in Heaven.

2.3 The shout of our Lord and the blast from the trumpet of God will signal the Bridegroom's readiness. We, as the bride are to wait expectantly for the call of the Bridegroom.

1Th 4:16 For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:

1Th 4:17 Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

2.4 Now let's look further at how the Bible uses the analogy of Christ the Bridegroom, and the bride the church.

2.5 The metaphor is first used by John the Baptist in Joh 3:26-29.

2.5.1 John is the agent of the Messiah Jesus, the Bridegroom, and Israel is the potential bride. Unfortunately, Israel will not accept the proposal made by John and thus there is [at this point] no marriage. There was an offer but no acceptance.

Joh 3:26 They came to John and said to him, "Rabbi, that man who was with you on the other side of the Jordan--the one you testified about--well, he is baptizing, and everyone is going to him."

Joh 3:27 To this John replied, "A man can receive only what is given him from heaven.

Joh 3:28 You yourselves can testify that I said, 'I am not the Christ but am sent ahead of him.'

Joh 3:29 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.

2.5.2 Wycliffe in his Bible Encyclopedia has the following to say about Joh 3:26-29. I will first quote and then comment:

"John makes clear early on that he is not the Bridegroom ... Rather, he makes clear he is a friend of the Bridegroom. It was the function of such a man to act as go-between in making the marriage arrangements. This is the way it is still done in many Muslim nations. A friend, an agent, will contact the family of the prospective bride and discussions will ensue and then in many cases a meeting is set up under a most controlled situation. Usually the meeting is short and casual.

"After that first meeting many marriages are then arranged. John was such an agent for Israel. He introduced them to their Messiah."

2.6 Our agent, who arranges our marriage, is not John the Baptist but the Holy Spirit of God. We, as believers of the Church Age, unlike Israel accepted the proposal of marriage communicated by the Holy Spirit and we, as the Bride of Christ, are now waiting for our Bridegroom to come and take us to His home.

3. Let's look at a few points about John as the forerunner of Christ who declared I am not the Bridegroom, only his friend.

3.1 John's ministry had to fade as the ministry of Jesus increased.

Joh 3:30 He must become greater; I must become less.

3.2 John was a man of mystery. According to our Lord and Savior, John would have been the reincarnation of Elijah, had there been a national repentance on the part of Israel.

3.3 The nature of his role is made evident by his early charter and the prophecy of the angel to Zacharias his father. John could only introduce Israel to Jesus; he could not force them to accept their Bridegroom.

Luk 1:17 And he will go on before the Lord, in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to their children and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous--to make ready a people prepared for the Lord."

3.4 John's role in our categorical study is the agent for the Messiah and prospective Groom, John came to call out a loyal and repentant remnant.

3.5 That remnant was to accept the advent of the greater than John and thus experience the long-awaited Messianic Kingdom.

3.6 John's significance lies in his being Christ's forerunner, an agent who introduced Israel to their potential Bridegroom. The negotiations failed with Israel's rejection and the believers of the Church Age became the Bride-in-waiting.

4. So much with reference to John as the friend of Israel. Now let's return to the marriage procedure of Jesus' day.

5. The young man who marries is termed in the Hebrew a **Bahur**, a choice, stalwart in the prime of his strength. He was to be economically secure. This requisite would indicate the male would be older and well established and thus capable of caring graciously for his younger bride. So also, our Bridegroom, Christ, is more than able to take care of us.

6. His bride is said to be a virgin, a **Betula**, a young maiden attractive and ready for marriage.

7. The father considered it his duty to secure wives for his sons. God also is not willing that any should perish. Even hell itself was not created for man but for Satan and his fallen angels.

Mat 25:41 Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels:

8. Very often in countries surrounding ancient Israel the prospective bride and bridegroom would simply acquiesce to the arrangements made in the interests of their families.

9. On the other hand, there was opportunity in Israel for marriages based on courtship.

10. A young man could state his preference and open discussions with her family, through his agent. Jacob wanting Rachel is an example, thus he opened negotiations with Laban.

11. Jewish women were not kept secluded as in most Muslim lands.

12. Women tended sheep and some even carried water, gleaned fields and ran family businesses. Thus, young men could themselves look for prospective brides.

13. The selection of the bride was followed by a betrothal.
14. It was a formal proceeding and far more binding than our engagement.
15. In fact the men who were betrothed were already considered to be sons-in-law and the lady was a bride in all respects except intimacy.
16. A betrothed man was deferred from military service so he could go get his bride consummate the marriage and live with her for a year. During that time they were to learn how to appreciate and love each other.
17. Sex before marriage and **adultery** were serious crimes in Israel. So also, in the case for those betrothed to Christ who go "a whoring." The Lord Himself disciplines His own.
- Heb 12:6 For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.
18. The betrothal was ordinarily facilitated by a friend or legal representative on the part of the bridegroom. The agent would negotiate the amount of the dowry and the method of payment. The amount of the "gift" or dowry was usually paid at once to her family. The dowry for us is the sacrifice of Christ on the cross, a payment totally acceptable to God.
19. Marriage, in both ancient Mesopotamia and Israel, was purely a civil contract and not formalized by any religious ceremony.
- 19.1. While the Bible does not specifically mention a written marriage contract, such contracts were stipulated in the Code of Hammurabi. Several marriage contracts have been discovered among the papyri at a 5th century B.C. Jewish colony.
- 19.2 The Mishnah (a part of the Talmud) describes such a contract and there it gives minute directions as to the handling of the dowry.
20. The essence of the marriage ceremony or festivities was the taking of the bride from her father's house and bringing her to the home of the bridegroom or his father.
- 20.1 Thus there was literal truth in the Hebrew expression "to take" a wife. We as church age believers will meet Christ in the air and from there Christ

will escort us to His home in the Heaven, just as the bridegroom of Christ's day escorted his bride home.

21. Very often considerable time elapsed between the contract of marriage and the consummation of the marriage. The time stipulated for the consummation was not specified in the agreement. Not unlike the indeterminate period of the Church Age and the Rapture; such timing has been reserved to the Father.

22. In formal attire, the bridegroom, accompanied by his friends or attendants, was led by a band in a festive route to the bride's house. The bride was beautifully dressed and adorned with jewels.

22.1 The angels of heaven will escort our Lord to that point in the heavens where amidst the galaxies every believer will receive a uniform of glory for our resurrection body and together with Christ, we will fly away to our heavenly abode

23. The book of the Revelation speaks of our future glory in fine linen, bright and clean when in heaven we become the bride of Christ.

Rev 19:7 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.

Rev 19:8 Fine linen, bright and clean, was given her to wear."

24. In antiquity the bridegroom, his bride and their wedding guests would be guests of honor at a "marriage supper." After our wedding in heaven to our Bridegroom, we too shall attend a great wedding supper, above the millennial earth. Our presence will be celebrated when Christ proudly introduces us as His bride.

25. In closing our analogy let's look to the epistles for further perspective of our metaphor: Christ the Bridegroom and the church the bride.

2Co 11:2 I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy. I promised you to one husband, to Christ, so that I might present you as a pure virgin to him.

2Co 11:3 But I am afraid that just as Eve was deceived by the serpent's cunning, your minds may somehow be led astray from your sincere and pure devotion to Christ.

26. As we await our beloved Savior at the Rapture we must avoid being led astray from our pure devotion and that can only be done by the consistent intake of the Word under the filling of the Spirit.

27. Your relationship with Christ is like a marriage in the sense it must get better every day; and it will get better to the extent we learn more of Christ and His will for our lives.

Rom 12:1 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.

Rom 12:2 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

Summary

1. The analogy of Christ as the Groom and the Church as the Bride is especially meaningful now that we know more about marriage at the time of Christ.

2. We live in the Devil's world, and as unbelievers our father is the Devil.

3. Our marriage is arranged by our Heavenly Father.

4. The dowry is the spiritual death of Christ on the Cross.

5. The contract has been sealed and the Church is purchased from the slave market of sin and we are now betrothed.

6. We must however wait for the timing of the Groom and when He is ready, He will call for His Bride the Church.

7. As we await the marriage with its glorious festivities our every thought must be upon our Groom as we anticipate the marriage when we will meet His many friends.

8. We must keep ourselves spotless and make ready by keeping every thought on the Lord Jesus Christ.

9. Premarital indiscretions will result in severe discipline so we must use the two power options to keep ourselves unspotted.

10. The marriage will of course occur at the Second Advent and Israel is called to attend the festive event-- the marriage supper of the Lamb.

Rev 19:9 And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God.

11. The Lord taught a sad parable: "Many from Israel were called but few came."

Mat 22:3 And sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden to the wedding: and they would not come.

Mat 22:4 Again, he sent forth other servants, saying, Tell them which are bidden, Behold, I have prepared my dinner: my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready: come unto the marriage.

Mat 22:5 But they made light of it, and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise:

Mat 22:6 And the remnant took his servants, and entreated them spitefully, and slew them.

Mat 22:7 But when the king heard thereof, he was wroth: and he sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city.

Mat 22:8 Then saith he to his servants, The wedding is ready, but they which were bidden were not worthy.

Mat 22:9 Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage.

Mat 22:10 So those servants went out into the highways, and gathered together all as many as they found, both bad and good: and the wedding was furnished with guests.

Mat 22:11 And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment:

Mat 22:12 And he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless.

Mat 22:13 Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness, there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Mat 22:14 For many are called, but few are chosen.

12. As the betrothed we must take our responsibility seriously and prepare by keeping every thought focused on our Lord and Savior, our Groom, even Jesus the Christ.

13. So hopefully now we understand the importance of marriage in the life of a Christian. Unless one has the gift of celibacy there is a right man for every right woman and for every right woman there is a right man.

14. God's plan though replete with many open and closed doors can best be summarized by the following commands penned by the Apostle Paul.

Eph 5:22 Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord.

Eph 5:23 For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the savior of the body.

Eph 5:24 Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything.

Eph 5:25 Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;

Eph 5:26 That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word,

Eph 5:27 That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.

Eph 5:28 So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself.

Eph 5:29 For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church:

Eph 5:30 For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.

Eph 5:31 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.

Eph 5:33 Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband.

Eph 4:29 Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.

Eph 4:30 And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.

Eph 4:31 Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice.

Eph 4:32 Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

15. In closing let me leave you with a primitive chart showing how the Right Man and Right Woman begin the Christian life as babes. The two are to cycle doctrine, thus developing capacity for marriage. They are to ultimately meet on the Z axis and then continue together their journey toward spiritual maturity.

