

The Gospel According to John

2-5-2020

1. Last week when the clock struck 7:45 P.M. we had just completed Part II of the *Doctrine of Marriage and More*. We are now ready for Part III and the study of Christ the Bridegroom—the Church the Bride.

2. Before we begin new material, I want to give you opportunity to use 1Jo 1:9 as may or may not be necessary.

3. If you want to hear the audio of this lesson please go to *westbankbiblechurch.com* and click on *streaming audio of services or Pastor Merritt's Study Books* where you can select any number of *categorical studies found in the Bible*.

4. Now let's continue our study of Joh 8:1-11 with a brief review of what we learned from Phase II last week.

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."

5. Let's first review what we learned about divorce and adultery.

5.1 Divorce has always presented a serious problem. It is important that pastor-teachers teach what the Bible has to say about marriage, adultery 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.

5.1.1 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.

5.1.2 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.

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

5.1.4 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**.

5.1.5 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.

5.1.6 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.

5.1.7 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.

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

5.2 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)

5.2.1 Marriage is to be abolished only for marital unfaithfulness.

5.3 Adultery according to Christ 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.

6. Let me provide a New Testament word study of the Greek words translated “adultery.”

Moikalis

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.

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**.

Moikeia

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,

Moikeuo

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,

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

Moikos

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

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

8. I want to take one example from the Old Testament.

9. The Old Testament

9.1 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 1:1-3:1

10. 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.

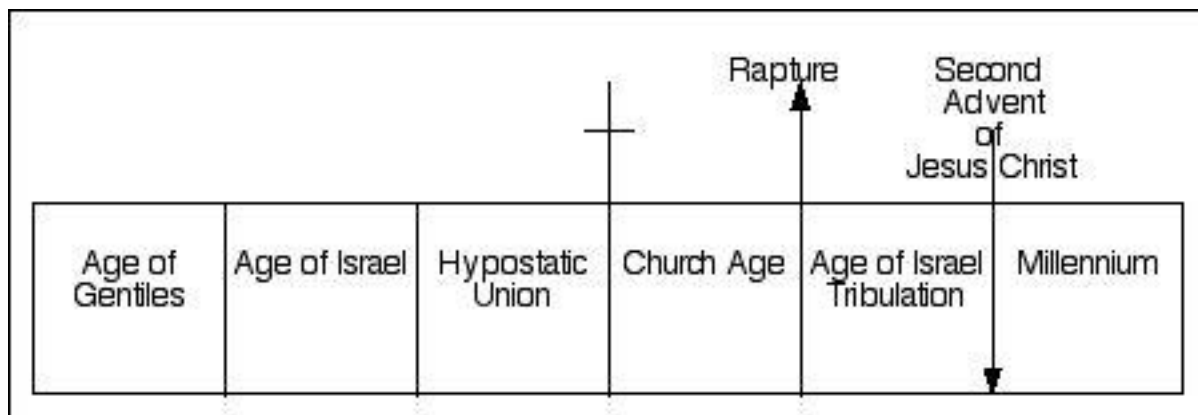
1.3 The bridegroom's friend would act as the bridegroom's agent. The agent would go to the home of the young lady, speak with the parents and a deal would be struck.

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."

End Lesson

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