

THE BRIDE OF CHRIST

John the Baptist referred to Jesus as the Messianic Bridegroom – “**The bride belongs to the bridegroom**” (John 3:29). This statement came about as a result of a controversy between John and his disciples and a legalist regarding ceremonial washing (John 3:25-26).

We will study our lesson text by the following four homiletical points.

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| • John 3:27 | (man) | Father | plan of God |
| • John 3:28 | (you yourselves) | Forerunner | personal participation in the plan. |
| • John 3:29 | (mine) | Friend of bridegroom | prophesy of Christ in the plan. |
| • John 3:30 | (He/ me) | Favored | place in plan. |

John’s testimony is about identifying Jesus as the long awaited messianic bridegroom (Christ) – “He who has the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears Him, rejoices greatly because of the bridegroom voice. And so this joy of mine has been made full.” (John 3:29)

- Bride in waiting **Jewish believers** (who was John speaking to at the time?) (John 3:25-27)
- Bridegroom **Jesus** is the long awaited Christ. (John 3:28; John 1:29-34)
- Bridegroom friend **John the Baptist**, the forerunner to Christ (John 3:29-30)

This lesson will study six aspects of the Bride of Christ.

1. **Israel was the bride of Christ in waiting under the Old Covenant.**

As such, Israel looked for the coming of Christ as her messianic bridegroom (John 3:27-30). They have missed understanding the importance of two Comings of Christ and the mystery of the church age (Eph.3).

”For as a young man marries a virgin, so your sons will marry you; and as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so your God will rejoice over you.” (Isa.62:5; 54:5-8; Hosea 2:2, 14-23)

“And I will betroth you to Me forever; Yes, I will betroth you to Me in righteousness and in justice, in lovingkindness and in compassion.” (Hos.2:19)

Later the disciples of John came to Jesus asking why He wasn’t fasting as prescribed in the Law (Matt.9:14-17). Jesus took this occasion to remind them about the doctrine of the Bride of Christ – “The attendants of the bridegroom cannot mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them, can they? But the days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and they will fast.” (Matt.9:15)

2. **It is important to stop and briefly explain the procedure of a Jewish Wedding.**

We will mention eight things I have learned about the Jewish wedding important to this lesson.

- Contract of marriage – God’s plan of grace salvation
- Friend of groom – John the Baptist (John 3:29)
- Attendants of groom – followers of Christ (Matt.9:15)
- Bridegroom goes back to Father’s house to prepare the bridal chamber (John 14:1-3; Mark 2:19-20)
- Bride keeps herself for the groom’s return (2 Cor.11:2)

- Bridegroom comes for the bride for the wedding.
- Bridal week [Tribulation] (Dan.9:27; Judges 14; Gen.29)
- Marriage Supper – (Rev.19:9; Luke 12:35-36; 14:7-11; Matt.22:1-14)

3. There are at least eight analogies for believers of the church age.

- Flock of sheep Luke 12:32; John 10:15,27; 1 Pet.5:2-4
- Husbandry 1 Cor.3:5-9
- God's household 1 Tim.3:15
- Temple 1 Cor.3:16-17
- Body of Christ Eph.1:23; 5:23; 1 Cor.12:12-27
- Church Matt.16:18; Eph.5:23-24, 32; Heb.12:23
- Marriage Eph.5:32-33; Rev.19:9
- Bride in waiting John 3:29; Rev.19:9

The mystery of the church age is that Gentiles would also become the Bride of Christ on the basis grace salvation through faith in the gospel of Jesus Christ (1 Cor.15:3-4; Rom.1:16; Gal.3:8; Eph.3:1-6).

4. With the completion of the First Advent mission of salvation (death, burial, resurrection, ascension, session), Jesus Christ was betrothed to church age believers.

The Bride of Christ consists of all believers of all dispensations – “But also to all who have loved His appearing.” (2 Tim.4:8b)

Whenever a person believes the gospel of Jesus Christ, he becomes part of the Bride of Christ (Gal.3:8; Rom.1:16; Eph.2:8-9). “Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take away the members of Christ and make them members of a harlot? May it never be!” (1 Cor.6:15) [positional truth]

5. At the Rapture of the church, Jesus Christ (bridegroom) will come for His church age bride.

The church is a bride in waiting (earth and heaven) for the Second Coming of Christ. (1 Thess.3:13; 4:13-18).

At the end of the Tribulation, the bridegroom will come for the Jewish age bride. They will attend the marriage supper of Christ and reign with Christ in the Millennium age (Rev.19:7-10; Matt.25:1-13; Luke 12:35-40; 14:7-11).

“And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a **bride** adorned for her husband.” (Rev.21:2)

“Come here, I shall show you the **bride, the wife of the Lamb.**” (Rev.21:9)

“And the **Spirit and the bride** say, ‘Come.’ And let the one who hears say, ‘Come.’ And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who wishes take the water of life without cost.” (Rev.21:17)

6. Those members of the human race who reject the grace gospel of Jesus Christ will never get another opportunity after death to become the Bride of Christ.

(Matt.22:1-14) parable of marriage supper; (Luke 14:15; Acts 2:47; John 14:6).

“He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.” (John 3:36)