

The Bride

What About The Bride Of Christ?

A Scriptural Term?

Most fundamental Christians are very surprised when they hear that the term "Bride of Christ" is nowhere in scripture. Sometimes a term can be used so commonly that folks just assume it is truth. If, however, you misunderstand something, it generally becomes the foundation of light for something else. And if the foundation is wrong, then everything you might view in light of that understanding would be warped.

The first thing we will examine regarding this subject is the term "Christ," as this will become the foundation for the remainder of our study. Who, or what, is Christ. It would seem that if Christ is to have a "bride" then it would stand to reason that Christ is a male person, thus seen as taking a bride.

The term Christ was first evident in scripture with reference to Jesus. He was identified in the writing of the New Testament as Jesus Christ. In the Old Testament the prophets saw one coming who would be Messiah, the One anointed to save the people from their sins, and to bring them to fullness in God.

Christ - An Adjective

In the Greek definition of the term "Christ" we have, **Χριστός** Christos -- **Thayer Definition:** Christ = "anointed" 1) Christ was the Messiah, the Son of God 2) anointed **Part of Speech:** adjective.

Now notice in the Greek definition, when we say the word Christ, we are not speaking of a person. A person is a noun, but Christ is an adjective. Quoting from Webster's 1828 Dictionary, "An **ADJECTIVE**, n. In grammar, is a word used with a noun, to express a quality of the thing named, or something attributed to it, or to

limit or define it, or to specify or describe a thing, as distinct from something else. It is called also an attributive or attribute. Thus, in the phrase, a wise ruler, wise is the adjective or attribute, expressing a particular property of ruler."

Not Merely A Person

So Christ is not a person, rather, "an attribute," or the "expression of a quality" of a person. It is important, of course, to establish that during Jesus' earthly ministry He was uniquely given this attribute. He was "the Christ." He alone was the "anointed One," the Messiah whom Isaiah prophesied would come to save His people. What was He anointed to do? He was anointed to be Messiah, the Savior of the world. He came and fulfilled that part of his ministry through his death, burial, resurrection, and ascension into Heaven.

Once He had accomplished that assignment, entered into the Holiest in Heaven, established a new and better covenant, and was seated at the right hand of the Father, something wonderful was manifested. It was revealed to the apostle Paul, that in Jesus' ascension to the throne of God, something supernatural took place.

All who would believe on Jesus as the Christ, would themselves be quickened together with Him, and be made to sit together with Him in Christ (the anointed One and His anointing.)

Of course, as the Head of the "anointed one," Jesus would always retain that title of Christ. But His anointing would be corporately passed on to the Church. There would no longer just be the one man, Jesus, in Christ, who alone had been the "anointed One," but rather many would be joined together in Christ and made to share as "anointed ones." The anointing would no longer be

needed to save the world. That would be accomplished in the cross. At that point the scripture reveals that Jesus would be no longer "the Christ," but rather "the Head of the body (embodiment) of Christ."

Remember that Christ is not a person, but an attribute of a person or persons.

In the resurrection, Christ became the attribute identifying many members, all joined together by one Spirit to make up the whole of Christ. We are now together the anointed "ones."

The "anointed One," Jesus, is now the Head Of The Anointed Ones

The "anointed One," Jesus, is now the head of the "anointed ones," who are identified as the embodiment of the anointing of Jesus in the earth. You might say, "Christ = the Head + the body of Christ = God's anointed One and anointing in the earth."

1Co 12:12 KJV *"For as the body is one, and **batb many members**, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: **so also is Christ.**"*

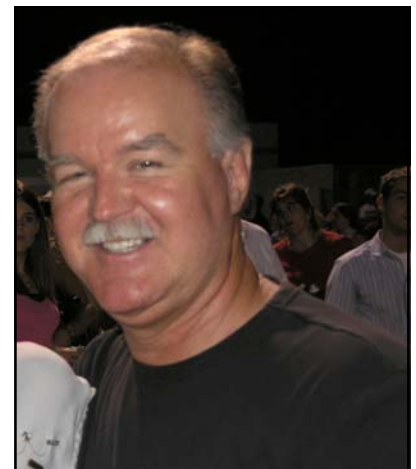
Eph 1:20-23 KJV *"Which he wrought **in Christ**, when he raised him (Jesus) from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, (21) Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: (22) And batb put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, (23) Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all."*

Notice that Christ is now not

Addresses These

Topics

- > The Marriage Supper of The Lamb
- > Does Christ Have a Bride?
- > What Paul Teaches About Christ



Pastor Don Pickney

one member (Jesus) but many members (believers in Jesus). The embodiment of God's anointing is now both Jesus and us. Then you will also notice from the above scriptures exactly when this sharing of the anointing took place.

When God raised Jesus from the dead and set Him at His own right hand...and gave Jesus to be the head of the embodiment of Christ. Jesus stopped being merely the "anointed One," and became the "Head of the anointed One."

What About The Bride Of Christ

What was uniquely in the person of Jesus, is now embodied in the Church. In the following scripture you see that transference taking place.

Eph 2:4-6 KJV "But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, (5) Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) (6) And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ (the anointing of) Jesus:" As the body (embodiment) of Christ, His anointing now resides in each of us. We are now called to do the works which Jesus did in the earth (John 14:12-14) with His anointing, and we are also anointed to specific offices within Christ (the anointing).

So Christ is not a person, but an attribute of a person describing the anointing for God's great plan. And Christ is no longer one, but "many members," with Jesus now serving as the Head of that anointing which He was originally given. He is now the head of Christ (serving in Heaven) and we are the body of Christ (in the earth).

Christ Could Not Serve As His Own Bride

With an appropriate foundation of what Christ is, an attribute, not a person, and with an understanding that Jesus (the Head) along with us (the embodiment of the anointing), make up Christ, then how could we be the Bride of Christ? How could we (the Church) be our own bride?

As you can see, with this foundation of scripture, the idea that the Church is the "Bride of Christ" has to be reconsidered. And since the scriptures are absent of any reference to the "Bride of Christ," it is safe and reasonable to search for greater light on the subject.

The Lamb's Wife - A Love Affair With

Jerusalem

Interestingly, while there is no reference in scripture to the Bride of Christ, there is something called the Lamb's wife, or the Lamb's bride.

Rev 21:9,10 KJV "And there came unto me one of the seven angels...and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife." (10) ...and (he) shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God."

I believe that you are about to be given revelation. I believe that light is even now springing forth to help you understand this great truth along with its underling message.

Psa 122:6 KJV "Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: they shall prosper that love thee."

Psa 135:21 KJV Blessed be the LORD out of Zion, which dwelleth at Jerusalem. Praise ye the LORD."

Psa 137:5-6 KJV "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning. (6) If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth; if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy."

Isa 24:23 KJV "Then the moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed, when the LORD of hosts shall reign in mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients gloriously."

Isa 31:5 KJV "As birds flying, so will the LORD of hosts defend Jerusalem; defending also he will deliver it; and passing over he will preserve it."

Notice carefully in the next verse in Isaiah how closely the description resembles the Bride which comes down out of Heaven in the book of Revelation.

Isa 52:1 KJV "Awake, awake; put on thy strength, O Zion; put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city: for henceforth there shall no more come into thee the uncircumcised and the unclean."

Here, again, is the scripture found in Rev 21:2,8,10 KJV "And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. (9) "And there came unto me one of the seven angels...and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife." (10) ...and (he) shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God."

In our immediate prior scriptures we see the obvious love affair that God has with Jerusalem. Then in Revelation the angel specifically makes reference to Jerusalem as the Bride of the Lamb. Notice that the Holy city is not called the Bride of Christ, rather the Bride of the Lamb.

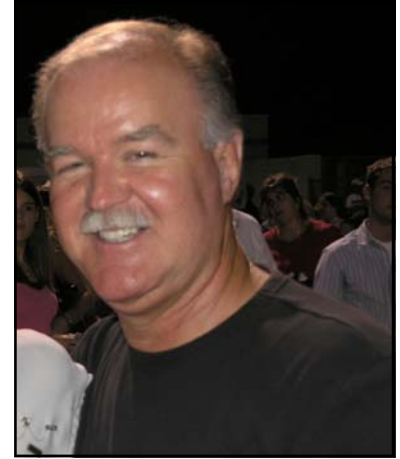
The Lamb Is The Title Of An Office, Not A Person The Bride Is The Title Of A City, Not A People

Rev 19:7-8 KJV "Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. (8) And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints."

In this verse we have a clearer picture of the Lamb, the Bride, and the Saints (the Body of Christ). Let's examine it more closely. The Lamb is a title (of similitude), given to Jesus for his substitutionary work. He only is the Lamb with reference to that part of His ministry.

For example He also serves as the Great High Priest, and stands in the office of Advocate before the Father. In our scripture we observe the "marriage of the Lamb," subsequent to the "marriage supper of the Lamb." An announcement is made, "...the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready." How does the bride make herself ready? She arrays herself with something. What does she array herself with? The Church (the righteousness of the saints).

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"And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. "

If we, the Church, are what the Bride is arrayed with, then how can we be both the Bride herself, and the "adornment" of the bride. If you are paying close attention, then you can now see that we are the adornment spoken of, not the bride herself.

Having identified each of the parts of this great marriage, given in a figure, then we can move from the analogous to the literal. Jesus, who is the literal figure of the Lamb, has longed for Jerusalem to accept Him as their own. At the close of His ministry on earth, he cried, Mat 23:37 KJV "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem...how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!"

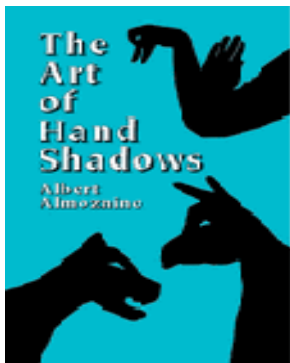
Jesus left this earth pining away for His Bride, the Holy City of Jerusalem. The earthly city, however proved not to be his bride and was destroyed. Jesus will again visit the earthly city, and from there He will reign from it over the earth for a thousand

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- > Using Shadows For Revelation
- > The Parable Of The Ten Virgins
- > The Bride or Adornment For The Bride?



Animals Are Often Used In Hand Shadow

“The bride maids on the wedding night were wont to go to the house where the bride was...”

John Wesley

What About The Bride Of Christ?

years. But before he does, while yet in Heaven, the eternal city that this earthly city could never fulfill will be readied and presented to Him.

He will first precede it and destroy all of God's foes, then God Himself will descend from Heaven, bringing with Him the bride of the Lamb, the eternal city, and we, the people of God will be the bride's adornment, as its residents forever and ever. Jesus will have his city (His bride), and He will have the adorning of His bride (the Church). All will be fulfilled, and from this city He will reign forever, and we will reign with Him, and the increase of His Kingdom and glory will be without end.

Taking Another Look At The Shadows of Truth

There are many who have mistakenly looked at scriptures, identified them as shadows, and interpreted them incorrectly.

There is an interesting art called the Art of Hand Shadows. A person will use their hands, placed in front of a bright light, with a light background. By cleverly positioning their hands, they can make shapes which deceptively look like an animal, a bird, sometime inanimate objects. Notice on the cover of the book shown by Allen Almzmno just how cleverly this may be accomplished.

Once you realize the truth, and have seen the actual thing, not just the shadow of it, then you would no longer have reason to misapply the appearance of the shadows. So it is with the ancient Bible texts and past teachings which come from looking at the shadows. Obviously, we were not seeing what we thought we were. We were teaching without the appropriate light. Once we are told specifically what is the truth, we no longer rely upon the wrong interpretations previously given through observing the shadows.

The Ten Virgins

Mat 25:1-13 KJV *“Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. (2) And five of them were wise, and five were foolish. (3) They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them: (4) But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. (5) While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept. (6) And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him. (7) Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps. (8) And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out. (9) But the wise answered, saying, Not so; lest there be not enough for us and you: but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves. (10) And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came, and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut. (11) Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. (12) But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not. (13) Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh.”*

John Wesley, founder of the Methodist Church, writes concerning this scripture, **“Mat 25:1 – 13 Then shall the kingdom of heaven - That is, the candidates for it, be like ten virgins - The bridesmaids on the wedding night were wont to go to the house where the bride was, with burning lamps or torches in their hands, to wait for the bride groom's coming. When he drew near, they went to meet him with their lamps, and to conduct him to the bride.”**

As you can readily see, this great denominational church leader did not believe that the Church is the Bride. The Church is synonymous with the Kingdom of heaven. Jesus said that the “kingdom of heaven” does not come with observation but is within you (the Church). When the Church was born on the Day of Pentecost, it was referred to as “the Kingdom of God coming with power.”

The Church Is The Adornment Of The Bride

The Church then is identified as “bridesmaids,” not as “The Bride.” We are the attendants, the adornment for the bride. As this great parable of Jesus illustrates, we go out to meet the bridegroom, the Lamb that was slain, and we accompany him, escorting the Lamb as it were, in great triumphal procession, to meet the bride. We accompany Him as he takes to Himself his eternal abode, the Holy City, the heavenly Jerusalem.

The Kingdom of heaven will accompany Jesus as he is crowned Kings of kings, and Lord of lords, as He and we with Him do enter into that great eternal City, the heavenly Jerusalem as it is brought to God's New Earth and established as the eternal abode of Almighty God Himself.

God's throne will leave Heaven where He has made His abode forever, and the throne itself will be moved to Jerusalem. God will then make that his eternal dwelling place. Rev 21:3; 22:3 KJV *“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. (22:3) And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him.”*

In Jesus' analogous lesson of the ten virgins, mankind is told that they will not have forever to prepare for this great event. Not everyone will be ready. As John Wesley explained in his commentary, the ten virgins represent “all of the candidates” to enter the Kingdom of God, and to accompany the Bridegroom to the Bride, to accompany Jesus to the heavenly Jerusalem as it makes its descent along with God's throne to the new Earth. The ten virgins, according to Wesley, represent all

(Continued on back page...)

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of humanity, all are invited to come. This would be in harmony with Rev 22:17 *KJV* "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And who-soever will, let him take the water of life freely."

Truly, all of humanity is invited, whosoever will may come. But, as it is in Jesus' parable of the ten virgins, not all will prepare themselves to be ready for that great day. Mat 25:10-13 "And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut. (11) Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. (12) But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not. (13) Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh."

The Ephesians Analogy

Another New Testament verse, often used as a type or shadow to teach that the Church is the Bride of Christ, is found in Eph 5:23-24 *KJV* "For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. (24) Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing."

In this teaching of the apostle Paul, we have an exhortation concerning the marriage relationship. That is the real subject matter. Paul had already taught from 1Co 11:3 *KJV* "But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God."

In every entity, there must be a head in order for things to function correctly. For example, our nation is headed up in the office of President. Your company may find its head in the Chairman of the Board, or CEO. The head of the marriage is the husband. It is important that you correctly understand what I have just

said. Let me use myself, a married man, as an illustration. I am a man. I am not a husband. I stand in the office of husband. As a man, I am not superior to the woman to whom I am married. The office of husband, however, which I occupy, is a superior office to the office of wife, which the lady to whom I am married occupies.

Another example could be illustrated by the President of the United States. Currently, George W. Bush occupies the office of President of the United States. As an American he holds the highest office in the nation. His office is higher than that of the Vice President, and superior to the office of his Chief of Staff, or his Cabinet members. Is George W. Bush superior to Mr. Cheney, who holds the office of Vice President. No! Mr. Cheney very possible could be a better person, a superior human being than Mr. Bush. But, when standing in their respective offices, Mr. Bush is over Mr. Cheney.

In the same manner, the office of Husband has been placed over that of Wife. When two people agree to occupy those respective offices, they must understand which has the pre-eminence.

An Espoused Bride-To-Be Is Not Under Authority Of Her Future Bridegroom

When you became a new creation you became one with Christ. You are now one with Him. That was consummated through the New Birth. He is already the head of your union. If the Church were merely his "espoused bride," not yet consummated, not yet joined together, then He would have no authority to be the head of your union with Him. If your union with Him was through a marriage, He would not have marriage rights until after the actual wedding ceremony had taken place at some time in the future.

Paul would not have been able to compare our union with Christ to that of the marriage union. You can't compare apples with oranges. But our union with Christ is already consummated as certainly as occurs during the marriage ceremony. It is not a something to occur in Heaven, some day out in the future. We are already one with Him. Praise God!

Paul states that Jesus holds an office as the Head of the Church, even as I hold the office of the head of my wife.

Authority is delegated by God to the Husband to fulfill his responsibilities to his wife and family. That authority only works for that which I am responsible. That does not give me the right to boss my wife around in all the affairs of life. Only those areas that involve the both of us, and/or our children, do I have the final authority or say so in a matter.

The wife does not need her husband's consent concerning her own personal decisions. Where she gets her hair or nails done is not his department. Her style of clothing, or shoes, etc. is of no marital concern (unless it becomes one of moral conduct which might affect the marriage or children's future). The scriptures indicate that she is primarily responsible for the nurturing and care of the children and the running of the house. If a husband and wife work out an agreement together for the common good that adjusts this responsibility, that is between them.

The Wife's Day May Not Be Spent In The Home But Her Office Holds Authority There

When the children are young, the wife (as mother) has a responsibility to deal with them, allow them to play (or not) with other children, as well as who she might choose to hire to help with the house cleaning, etc. She might consult her husband regarding whether they could or could not afford something, but once

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that decision is made, then she is free to act with full authority in those matters that are her responsibility. Only in the common responsibilities of the marriage would the husband take the leadership role and have the ultimate responsibility.

President Bush, as an illustration, has no authority to tell me which grocery store to use, or which insurance company to retain. His authority is only in matter of State, not my personal life. He may be the Head of our nation, of which I am a citizen, but his authority does not give him the right to rule my personal life. The same holds true for the responsibilities of marriage. My wife doesn't have to seek my permission about the color of her nails, or her personal daily routine. That is out of the realm of my authority in the marriage.

In the Ephesians teaching, Paul is simply making this same illustration that I have just made. Instead of using the office of President of the United States, he illustrated it by showing Jesus as the Head of the Church. In no way, does this scripture infer that the Church is His Bride, anymore than I inferred that your wife is the Vice President of the United States.

The likening of the authority relationship of the husband and wife to the President and Vice President ends only in the similarities of how authority best works. Such was what Paul was attempting to establish in his Ephesians analogy. One office is merely used to illustrate the rank and working of the other.

As you can see, scripture does not make a connection to the Church as the Bride of Christ. You are now in union with the Lord Jesus Christ, Head of the Church. You are already one with Him.