

Who Is The Bride Of Christ?

When asked this question, almost everyone answers, “The Church,” or “The Body of Christ,” meaning all saved people. However, nowhere in the Bible is the Church called the Bride of Christ. The Church is called His Body in Ephesians 1:22-23 but the Body and the Bride are not synonymous as has been supposed.

Using the “rule of first mention,” and keeping in mind that the things written in the Old Testament are types and examples for our learning, (Romans 15:4, I Corinthians 10:11) we can see that the Bride is taken out of the Body. Two examples from the Old Testament illustrate this truth: The first bride Eve was not the body of Adam, but was taken out of his body. Adam is a type of Christ. Eve is a type for the Bride.

In Genesis 24 we have the story of Abraham who sent his servant to take a bride for his son, Isaac. Most people say this is a type for God the Father sending the Holy Spirit into the world for calling out the Church. However, this is not the true meaning of the story. While the Gospel is to go into all the world, in this story Abraham told the servant not to go to the Canaanites, but to go to his own people to take a bride for his son.

The correct interpretation is this: Abraham, a type of the Father, sent the servant, a type of the Holy Spirit, to his own people, a type of the Church, to take a bride for his son Isaac, a type of Christ. When the message of salvation goes forth, it goes to everyone; but when God calls for his Bride, He calls not the world, but His own people, or His family.

Our Lord used the term “family” because of its meaning to us in our physical life. We are born the first time into a physical family. When we believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, trusting Him who died in our place, we are born again, into the family of God. The word “Bride” is used in a similar sense. We know what the blessings of family life involve. We also know the bride and groom, while in the family, share a closeness and an intimacy, which is not shared by the other members of the family.

With these thoughts in mind, we can see how the Lord calls those who are His to come up closer. It is not to the world, but to His own that He says, *“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. 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” (Romans 12:1-2).

Not many Christians heed this direct command. Many who are saved continue to conform to this world and they never experience sweet communion and fellowship with the Lord Jesus; and like Esau, forfeit spiritual rewards in the future for gratification of the carnal nature in the present.

In writing to the carnal Corinthians Paul tells them they are espoused to one husband that is, they are promised in marriage or engaged. The word espoused is the similar word used in Matthew 1:18, where Mary is espoused to Joseph. Before they came together he thought of putting her away since he thought she had been unfaithful. Many believers today are unfaithful, and there is a sense in which the Lord may “put them away.”

This does not mean the loss of their salvation, but in Revelation 16:15, we read, *“Behold I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and **keepeth his garments lest he walk naked and they see his shame.**”* This refers not to His righteousness with which He clothes us for our own salvation (Isaiah 61:10), but to a garment of good works (deeds) which may be maintained with a profitable result, or which may be lost to our shame and loss of rewards when Jesus returns (see I John 2:28, Titus 3:8, and II John 1:8).

Revelation 19:7, shows us the Bride *“**makes herself ready**”* for Her soon marriage by providing a garment of good deeds. Many Christians do not live for Christ after they are saved and they are not preparing themselves to meet the Bridegroom.

Paul compared the Christian life to a race where all run, but only one receives the *“**prize**”* (1 Cor. 9:24-27). Paul was fearful that he would become a *“**castaway**”* so he worked diligently to keep his body in subjection. In chapter three of Philippians, Paul talks about losing all things so that he might *“**gain Christ.**”* He also says that he wants to *“**know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, and so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead.**”*

The resurrection Paul is talking about in this passage of Scripture is something that is earned. It refers to a partial resurrection of Christians who have attained to a certain standard. Hebrews 11:35 calls it the *“**better resurrection.**”* In this passage of Scripture Paul emphasizes that he is working very hard to win the *“**prize**”*, which is in Christ Jesus. The prize is clearly the highest reward that a believer can receive for

faithful, spirit-filled service in the Lord's work. The Scriptures are replete with types, parables and doctrinal statements that express the honor and blessing attached to those who are part of the wedding of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Revelation 3:18, tells us to buy white raiment that we may be clothed and that the shame of our nakedness not appear. The white raiment is ***“the righteous acts and deeds”*** of the Saints. The word “buy” is used to show that it will cost the child of God to be among those who make up the Bride of Christ. A separated and surrendered life is costly, but how great will be the reward for those who dare to pay the price.

Many Christians are not doing these things, and may not be part of the bride. We will all give an account of our lives and be rewarded according to the good and bad we have done (please read 2Cr 5:10). Some do not live for the Lord and may suffer the loss of rewards. Those who have not provided themselves with a wedding garment may be spiritually naked and ashamed when the Lord returns.

Salvation is a free gift of God. It is eternal and cannot be lost. Crowns, rewards, and an inheritance into the Kingdom are based upon faithfulness to Him. To be part of the Bride of Christ is a great reward to those Christians who have paid the price. It is a figurative picture of those who have lived a clean, pure and holy life yielded to Him.

Just as any bride would prepare herself for her earthly bridegroom, so should every Christian prepare themselves to meet their heavenly Bridegroom. Just as a bride would not wear blue jeans to her wedding, the bride of Christ will not be an average lukewarm Christian (read the warning to the Church of Laodicea (Revelation 3:14-22)).

The Church is one Body, made up of all believers in Christ. Some are spiritual and some are carnal (I Corinthians 3). Some are wise and some are foolish (Matt.25). Who then is the Bride? Those who are providing themselves with a wedding garment and those who are preparing to meet the Bridegroom when He returns, as evidenced by their pure and sincere devotion to Jesus. All Christians will not qualify to be the Bride. Will you?

The main purpose of all of the books on this website (www.ProphecyCountdown.com) is to help Christians prepare for their great Wedding Day.

The above article was adapted from a tract by Pastor John Lanham, who founded the Chattanooga Bible Institute.