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The Day God Divorced Israel And Married A New Bride (Part 1 of 5)



By Dan Maines

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Introduction

† Many people know that Scripture speaks of Israel as God's wife and the church as the bride of Christ, but few have followed the complete story from beginning to end.

† The prophets spoke of a covenant marriage, a covenant unfaithfulness, and a covenant divorce.

† Jesus came during the final days of that covenant relationship and announced the judgment that would soon come upon Jerusalem.

† The destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70 was not merely the fall of a city. It marked the final end of the old covenant relationship and the full revealing of the new covenant bride.

Jeremiah 3:8

And I saw that for all the adulteries of faithless Israel, I had sent her away and given her a certificate of divorce, yet her treacherous sister Judah did not fear; but she went and prostituted herself also.

† God plainly said He gave Israel a bill of divorce because of her covenant unfaithfulness.

† This was covenant language, not merely political language.

† The marriage relationship between God and Israel had been broken through continual spiritual adultery.

† The prophets repeatedly described idolatry as adultery against God. (Ezekiel 16:32, Hosea 4:12-13)

Hosea 2:2

Dispute with your mother, dispute,
Because she is not my wife, and I am not her husband;

But she must remove her infidelity from her face
And her adultery from between her breasts,

† God declared that the covenant relationship had been broken.

† Israel continued claiming covenant privileges while rejecting covenant faithfulness.

† Hosea presents the tragedy of a wife who abandoned her husband while still claiming to belong to him.

† This became a picture of first century Jerusalem, which claimed to represent God while rejecting His Son. (Matthew 21:38-39)

Matthew 22:7

Now the king was angry, and he sent his armies and destroyed those murderers and set their city on fire.

† Jesus warned Jerusalem that judgment was coming upon those who rejected Him.

† The king's armies point to God's use of the Roman armies as instruments of judgment.

† The burning of their city perfectly matches the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70.

† The old covenant city that rejected the Son faced the covenant judgment Jesus repeatedly warned about. (Matthew 23:37-38, Luke 21:20-22)

Ephesians 5:25-27

Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her, so that He might sanctify her,

having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless.

† Paul presents Christ as the bridegroom and the church as His bride.

† This is not a future bride but a present covenant relationship.

† Christ gave Himself for His people so that they might be presented holy and blameless.

† The focus is no longer an earthly nation but a spiritual people united in Christ. (Galatians 3:28-29)

Revelation 19:7-8

Let's rejoice and be glad and give the glory to Him, because the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His bride has prepared herself. It was given to her to clothe herself in fine linen, bright and clean; for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.

† The marriage of the Lamb arrives after the judgment of the harlot.

† The old covenant unfaithful city is removed before the new covenant bride is fully revealed.

† Revelation presents two women, the harlot and the bride.

† One is judged and the other is presented in glory. (Revelation 17:1-6, Revelation 21:9-10)

Revelation 21:2

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

† The New Jerusalem is identified as a bride.

† This is not an earthly city rebuilt in the future.

† The New Jerusalem represents God's redeemed covenant people.

† The contrast is intentional. Earthly Jerusalem was judged, but New Jerusalem remains forever. (Hebrews 12:22-24)

Revelation 21:9-10

Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls, full of the seven last plagues, came and spoke with me, saying, "Come here, I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb."

And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the holy city, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God,

† The angel specifically identifies the bride as New Jerusalem.

† Scripture interprets Scripture.

† The bride is not a future physical city.

† The bride is God's covenant people dwelling in union with Him through Christ.

Historical References

† Eusebius recorded that Jerusalem's destruction fulfilled the warnings given by Christ concerning the city and temple.

† Josephus described the burning of Jerusalem and the temple exactly as Jesus foretold.

† Clement of Alexandria wrote of the transition from the old covenant order to the new covenant established through Christ.

† Early Christian writers consistently viewed Jerusalem's destruction as a major covenant turning point in redemptive history.

How It Applies To Us Today

† We are not waiting to become the bride of Christ, we belong to Him now.

† Our identity is found in Christ and His covenant, not in earthly Jerusalem.

† The old covenant system has passed away, but the new covenant relationship remains.

† We live as citizens of the New Jerusalem that Scripture says we have already come to. (Hebrews 12:22-24)

† Our confidence rests in a completed covenant relationship established by Christ's finished work.

Q&A Appendix

Q: Did God literally stop loving Israel?

A: No. God's judgment was against covenant unfaithfulness, not against His own character. The old covenant relationship ended, but salvation remained available through Christ to Jew and Gentile alike. (Romans 10:12-13)

Q: Who is the bride of Christ?

A: The bride is God's redeemed covenant people, revealed as New Jerusalem, the wife of the Lamb. (Revelation 21:9-10)

Q: When did the marriage of the Lamb occur?

A: Revelation places the marriage after the judgment of the harlot and in connection with the completion of God's covenant promises, culminating in the events surrounding Jerusalem's fall. (Revelation 19:7-8)

Q: Are believers part of the bride today?

A: Yes. All who are in Christ belong to His covenant people and share in the blessings of the New Jerusalem. (Hebrews 12:22-24)

† This is the fulfilled perspective we proclaim at Fulfilled Prophecies †

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Source Index

† Jeremiah 3:8; Hosea 2:2; Matthew 22:7; Ephesians 5:25-27; Revelation 19:7-8; Revelation 21:2; Revelation 21:9-10

† Josephus, Wars of the Jews; Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History; Clement of Alexandria

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