

**Greetings, dear reader, in the Name of Our Beloved Bridegroom, the Lord JESUS CHRIST!**

In this study, we will be looking at the well-known picture of the Church as the Bride of Christ.

This picture is particularly brought out in Genesis. First we see the church mirrored in the creation of Eve from Adam (Gen 2:21-24), the first type of Christ encountered in Scripture (Rms 5:14, I Cor 15:45-49). As Adam was put to sleep, and Eve created from his side, even so we the church, the bride of Christ, came from the Second Adam, Jesus, as He was put to sleep by the Father. We are flesh of His flesh and bone of His bones (1 Cor 12:27, Eph 5:25-32).

We see this picture of us as the bride of Christ elaborated on further in Genesis 24. The servant of Isaac, typifying the Holy Spirit, is sent to seek a Bride (Rebekah) for the Son of Abraham, Isaac, who here typifies Christ. Note the following:

The servant gives her gifts and new raiment (Gen 24:53). Similarly the bride of Christ is no longer dressed in the “filthy rags” of her own righteousness (Isa 64:6) but arrayed in fine linen, clean and white (Rev 19:8). She is led through the wilderness (of this world) by One who, like the servant, is her Teacher, Protector, Comforter, and Paraclete (one called alongside of), namely the Holy Spirit.

Isaac, the type of Christ, awaits union with His bride when she comes to Him and in the meantime prepares a place for her (John 14:3) as she approaches. Like Christ, he was promised long before his coming (Luke 1:70), finally appeared at the appointed time (Gal 4:4), was conceived and born miraculously (Luke 1:35), was offered up in sacrifice by his Father, was obedient unto death (Phil 2:8), but brought back from the dead to be the head of a great nation and to bless all peoples.

Rebekah represents us the church, the chaste bride (2 Cor 11:12) preparing to meet Her Heavenly Bridegroom (Jn 3:29, Rms 7:4). Her marriage was planned long before she knew about it (Eph 1:3,4). She learns of the Son through His emissary and her Paraclete (the Holy Spirit). She immediately leaves all to go to Him, loving Him before she sees Him, and rejoicing with joy unspeakable and full of glory (1 Pet 1:8). She journeys through the

wilderness to meet Him, guided by the servant (1 Pet 1:3-9), and is loved by and finally united to the Son (1 Thess 4:17, Rev 19:7).

Notice also that before Isaac meets Rebekah in Gen 24, he is last seen at the place of sacrifice in Gen 22. Then he does not appear again until he goes out to meet Rebekah. This is yet to be fulfilled, corresponding to the going forth of Christ to meet us His bride at the end of the age! Maranatha! Even so, Come, Lord Jesus!

We may also see the bride of Christ in Asenath, the Gentile bride of Joseph (Gen 41:45), in the Gentile bride of Moses (Numbers 12:1), in Ruth, the Gentile Bride of Kinsman-Redeemer Boaz, in the royal wedding Song of Psalm 45, in the Shulammitte bride of Song of Solomon, and in Hosea's purchased Gomez.

In Jewish marriage customs in the first century AD, the Jewish bridegroom would say to the intended bride to be, after their engagement and his giving her a ring: "I go to prepare a place for you." The bridegroom would go back to his father's house, build an extension, and be away from the bride for an extended period, typically a year. Then he would return to the waiting bride, with a trumpet being blown.

At His Passover feast, Jesus told His disciples: ***"I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am ye may be also."*** (John 14:2-3).

When arrangements were made for the marriage, before the bridegroom returned for the bride, a written contract would be made listing things such as the dowry (the price paid by the groom for the bride) and terms of maintenance of the marriage. This binding document, called a "ketubah", was kept in the bride's possession until the consummation of the marriage. This corresponds to the New Testament that Jesus left His followers until His return, telling us of the price He paid (His own blood) to make us His own, and the terms of maintenance of the marriage – communion in prayer with Him and living by faith, hope and love. Our engagement ring is the Holy Spirit. We have been sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession (Ephesians 1:3-14), given at Pentecost.

At the engagement ceremony, or “Shiddukhim”, the first part of a two-part ceremony was concluded by the toast of a glass of wine. Likewise Christ, in His “last supper” Passover meal with His disciples, brake bread, and gave it to His disciples, and said: *“Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you”*; then He took a cup of wine and said *“Drink ye all of it, for this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of the fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father’s Kingdom”*. *(Matt 26:26-29)*. The second cup of wine has yet to be drunk, at the marriage feast whose hour draws nigh. We await also the blowing of the last trump when our Bridegroom returns for us (I Thess 4:16).

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