

THE BRIDE OF CHRIST

SESSION ELEVEN: THE BRIDEGROOM GOD AND HIS BRIDE – OLD TESTAMENT OVERVIEW

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I. GOD'S ETERNAL PLAN: TO GIVE A BRIDE TO HIS SON

- A. The message of the Bridegroom God and His Bride was established in the Old Testament.
- B. Four women in the Old Testament are pictures of the Bride of Christ. Each woman gives us insight into the different ways in which we relate to Jesus as our Bridegroom God.
 1. ***Eve***: as a suitable companion, relating to God in intimacy without shame (Gen. 2)
 2. ***Rebekah***: as a bride of extravagant obedience (Gen. 24)
 3. ***Ruth***: as a Gentile bride who was exalted and delivered from hopelessness (Ruth 1-4)
 4. ***Esther***: as a bride reigning with authority and triumphing over the enemy (Esth. 1-10)

II. THE BETROTHAL IN THE WILDERNESS

- A. Jeremiah's first prophecy was during the reign of King Josiah and Israel's last reform before the Babylonian captivity in 586 BC (2 Chron. 34-35; 2 Kgs. 22-23). Josiah's reform was influenced by Jeremiah's first sermon calling Israel to remember that they were betrothed to God (Jer. 2:2).
- B. Jeremiah interpreted the time when God established a covenant with Israel as a betrothal (Ex. 19). God's betrothal ceremony with Israel as a nation occurred in the wilderness at Mt. Sinai.

²*Cry in the hearing of Jerusalem, saying, "Thus says the Lord: 'I remember you, the kindness of your youth, the love of your betrothal, when you went after Me in the wilderness...' Israel was holiness to the LORD, the firstfruits of His increase. All that devour him will offend; disaster will come upon them,' says the LORD." (Jer. 2:2-3)*
- C. The betrothal was at Mt. Sinai (Ex. 19) and the consummation is at the second coming (Rev. 19).

³²*The covenant that I made...I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, though I was a husband to them, says the LORD. (Jer. 31:32)*
- D. Moses described the time when God made a marriage covenant with Israel (Ex. 19:1-20). Israel's first meeting with God was a prophetic picture of the glory of the second coming.

⁵*If you will...keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people...*
¹⁷*Moses brought the people out of the camp to meet with God...*
¹⁸*Mount Sinai was completely in smoke, because the LORD descended upon it in fire...*
¹⁹*The blast of the trumpet sounded long and became louder and louder... (Ex. 19:5, 17-19)*

¹⁸*All the people witnessed the thunders, the lightning flashes, the sound of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking; and when the people saw it, they trembled... (Ex. 20:18)*
- E. Jeremiah began his ministry with a bridal paradigm of God's kingdom (Jer. 2-3). He trumpeted this message in the generation of Josiah's national reform.

¹⁴*"Return, O backsliding children," says the LORD; "for I am married to you..." (Jer. 3:14)*

III. HOSEA’S REVELATION OF THE BRIDEGROOM GOD

- A. Central to Hosea’s book is the unique story of God commanding him to marry a prostitute named Gomer. God’s people were living in spiritual adultery. He wanted Hosea’s marriage to offer a prophetic picture of it. His pain-filled marriage was a picture of how God felt. This was at the very beginning of his long prophetic ministry (over 50 years). God wanted him to experience the pain, disappointment, and joy of the recovery of a broken marriage relationship. This equipped Hosea to be the first prophet to make known the Bridegroom God to Israel and the nations.

²When the LORD began to speak by Hosea, the LORD said to Hosea: “Go, take yourself a wife of harlotry and children of harlotry, for the land has committed great harlotry by departing from the LORD.” (Hos. 1:2)

- B. Hosea’s story is told in chapters one and three. God charged Israel with marital unfaithfulness. God prophetically compared Hosea’s unfaithful wife to the nation of Israel (Hos. 2:2-13). In the midst of her pain, Israel will confess, “I will return to my husband, for it was better for me.”

⁶Behold, I will hedge up your way with thorns, and wall her in, so that she cannot find her paths. ⁷She will chase her lovers...she will seek them, but not find them. Then she will say, “I will go and return to my first husband, for then it was better for me than now.” (Hos. 2:6-7)

- C. Hosea’s message was new in two ways: first, in introducing the Lord as a Bridegroom God, One with burning desire; second, in saying that the northern kingdom would be destroyed within one generation. The message was that a Bridegroom God orchestrated both judgment and restoration. Hosea suffered a double heartbreak over his adulterous wife and his nation; he loved them both.
- D. Hosea’s message was given just before a severe judgment came on the northern kingdom of Israel. Israel experienced civil war in 931 BC. For about 200 years (931–721 BC) there was great division. Hosea prophesied to the north during a time of economic prosperity. This was the first time that the “Bride of Christ” message was declared to Israel, and it was given in the context of judgment. Only by understanding His heart as a Bridegroom can we interpret His judgments. The One who judges loves so much that He will remove all that hinders love.

IV. HOSEA: REVELATION OF THE BRIDEGROOM GOD (HOS. 2:14–3:5)

- A. Israel forgot, but God will pursue her until she loves Him. Jesus will allure Israel to Himself. He uses both the judgment of thorns (2:6-7) and the allurements of His kindness and beauty (2:14).

¹³But Me she forgot... ¹⁴Therefore...I will allure her, will bring her into the wilderness, and speak comfort to her... ¹⁵She shall sing there...as when she came up from...Egypt. (Hos. 2:13-15)

1. **Allure:** God’s main way of turning us from unfaithfulness is by His kindness and beauty. The revelation of God’s beauty and kindness deeply touches the human spirit (Isa. 4:2).
⁴Do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance? (Rom. 2:4)
2. **She shall sing there:** God awakens her with new songs even in her wilderness struggles.

- B. Hosea was the first one to declare that Israel would receive their Messiah as a Husband (v. 16). God's people will call Jesus "my Husband" not just my Savior, Healer, and King (Rev. 22:17).
¹⁶*"It shall be, in that day," says the LORD, "that you will call Me 'My Husband,' and no longer call Me 'My Master,' ¹⁷for I will take from her mouth the names of the Baals, and they shall be remembered by their name no more."* (Hos. 2:16-17)
1. ***My Husband:*** Israel will accept Jesus as their Messiah when they see Him as their Husband! All Israel will be saved (Rom. 11:26) in context to the bridal paradigm. Calling Jesus "my Husband" in the singular is very personal. We pray "our Father" in the plural.
 2. ***My Master:*** You will no longer call the Lord "my taskmaster" (slave driver). When our view of God changes, we gain new confidence and love in our relationship with Him.
- C. Hosea's unprecedented statement was that God wants to marry His people forever.
¹⁹*I will betroth you to Me forever; yes, I will betroth you to Me in righteousness and justice, in lovingkindness and mercy; ²⁰I will betroth you to Me in faithfulness, and you shall know the LORD.* (Hos. 2:19-20)
1. Significant points about our relationship with Him:
Yes, I: It is the Genesis 1 God who is speaking and acting.
Betroth: He wants to marry His people, not just forgive them and use them.
You: Weak and broken people like Israel.
Forever: It is not just for the 1,000 years of the millennial kingdom.
I will: It is settled. It is not in the balance. It is final and cannot be turned back.
 2. The nature of the marriage relationship:
In righteousness: Emotional wholeness with a radiant heart in total victory.
In justice: He will never allow injustice to harm His people.
In lovingkindness: We are the object of His tender affections and goodwill.
In mercy: Our weakness and failure do not disqualify us.
In faithfulness: He is true to everything He says about Himself and to us (Rev. 19:2)
You shall know the Lord: His goal is intimacy with His people forever.
- D. Jesus' "bridal gift" to His people is His blessing, when He supernaturally restores the atmosphere, agriculture, animals (without any animosity) of the whole earth and causes all wars to cease (Hos. 2:18-23). The conditions of the garden of Eden will fill the earth (Isa. 11:6-9).
¹⁸*In that day I will make a covenant for them with the beasts of the field, with the birds of the air, and with the creeping things of the ground. Bow and sword of battle I will shatter from the earth, to make them lie down safely... ²¹*I will answer...the heavens, and they shall answer the earth. ²²The earth shall answer with grain, with new wine, and with oil...* (Hos. 2:18-22)*
- ⁶*The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb...the calf and the young lion and the fatling together... ⁹The earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD...* (Isa. 11:6-9)

- E. Hosea was required to love his wife and pay to redeem her from slavery (Hos. 3:1-5). Jesus paid a great price to purchase us. The God who restores is the same One who paid the price for us.

¹*The LORD said to me, “Go again, love a woman who is loved by a lover and is committing adultery, just like the love of the LORD for the children of Israel...”*²*So I bought her for myself...*⁵*Afterward the children of Israel shall return and seek the LORD their God and David their king. They shall fear the LORD and His goodness in the latter days. (Hos. 3:1-5)*

²⁰*You were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body... (1 Cor 6:20)*

V. ISAIAH: REVELATION OF THE BRIDEGROOM GOD

- A. We receive a new name from the Lord who delights in His people (Isa. 62:2-5).

²*You shall be called by a new name, which the mouth of the LORD will name.*³*You shall also be a crown of glory in the hand of the LORD, and a royal diadem in the hand of your God.*⁴*You shall no longer be termed Forsaken...but you shall be called Hephzibah...for the LORD delights in you, and your land shall be married...*⁵*For as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so shall your God rejoice over you. (Isa. 62:2-5)*

- B. Walking free from fear and shame is rooted in seeing the Bridegroom God (Isa. 54:4-6).

⁴*“Do not fear, for you will not be ashamed; neither be disgraced, for you will not be put to shame; for you will forget the shame of your youth, and will not remember the reproach of your widowhood anymore.*⁵*For your Maker is your husband, the LORD of hosts is His name; and your Redeemer is the Holy One of Israel; He is called the God of the whole earth.*⁶*For the LORD has called you like a woman forsaken and grieved in spirit, like a youthful wife when you were refused,” says your God... (Isa. 54:4-6)*

- The reason we can overcome fear and shame is because of who our husband is:
Our Maker: Our creator or our “Genesis 1 God” is the husband of His people.
Lord of Hosts: The captain of heaven’s armies wars to destroy all obstacles against us.
Redeemer: He paid the price so none can accuse us before God (Rom. 8:31-39).
God of the whole earth: None of our enemies can escape His rule and authority.
Holy One: Because He is holy or infinitely superior to all, He will fascinate us forever.
- Forget the shame of your youth:** We move into confident love and shame-free living as we encounter our Bridegroom God who desires us, wars for us, provides, and protects us. Shame and fear lie to us, making personal restoration seem impossible and out of reach.
- A woman forsaken and grieved in spirit:** Jesus heals our wounded spirit. When someone’s spirit is crushed, they want to give up. The spirit of despair is compared to the tragedy a young bride would feel if her husband rejected her soon after their wedding.
³⁵*Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?...³⁸For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come...³⁹shall be able to separate us from the love of God... (Rom. 8:35-39)*