

The Bride of Christ

Chapter 1

Doctrines or dogmas help us to understand things that we cannot find so clearly in the Bible. People, that in general are well prepared, have thought about several subjects that have to do with our faith. Synods have been conducted, during which, after long discussions particular insights as 'the right one' were defined. A lot of those doctrines have helped a lot of people to understand more of the Bible. Not everyone is keen on studying. Not everyone has enough knowledge of the Bible to investigate everything by him or herself.

However, there is something remarkable with that Bible. One thinks to see this in it, and someone else has another vision on that. Great Reformers like Luther and Calvin destroyed statements that lasted for ages. Millions have realized that what they said was more in line with what the Bible says, than what the Catholic church taught them. How did they come to these insights? They read their Bible and wondered why in the (catholic) church other things were taught than what they read. They had the courage to write down what they discovered. They opened the eyes of many people for the truth in the Bible.

Throughout centuries it has been that one understood what God meant and another did not. Was the reason the intellect of those persons? Or was the reason that God did not deemed the time right to reveal certain truths? The Jews still don't see, except some exceptions, Jesus is the Messiah. The Bible says there is a veil upon their heart. That veil will be taken away when the fullness of the gentiles will enter the Kingdom of God. Only then they will see it. God is telling Daniel that the knowledge will increase at the end of times. Sometimes God keeps things undiscovered for a long time. It is a gift of God, that during the year 1900, the knowledge about the working of the Spirit increased. Even in that time there were people that saw that Israel would become

a nation again. That has to do with the insights God gives. Not everything is fixed according to what always has been thought and taught and therefore it is good from time to time to reinvestigate all dogmas and doctrines. Maybe the Lord deems that it is time to shine a new light over a particular aspect of His plan with this world and its people.

Based in this consideration it would be good to investigate if it is true that, as it is generally assumed, the church is the Bride of Christ.

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taught

If it is true that the Church is the Bride, then we should know where the verses are that proof this. If it is not true, then we should investigate who is the Bride. Besides, it would be good to investigate on what base the idea, that apparently is being followed world wide, has been formed.

We will try to find an answer to the question:

Is the Church the Bride?

The word 'Bride' only appears 5 times in the New Testament. In only one verse it is explained who is the bride: The New Jerusalem. That's why it is good also to include the verses that talk about The New Jerusalem. While it concerns only a few verses, we will mention them all and see if we can learn anything more about the 'Bride of Christ'.

John 3:29
"The bride belongs to the bridegroom. "

John the Baptist is speaking here about Jesus as the Bridegroom. He calls himself the friend of the Bridegroom. "The bride belongs to the bridegroom. The friend who attends the bridegroom waits and listens for him, and is full of joy when he hears the bridegroom's voice. That joy is mine, and it is now complete."

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Revelation 18:23

About Babylon: "The voice of bridegroom and bride will never be heard in you again."

This verse does not give information about the bride of Jesus.

Revelation 21:1-3

"Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God."

it is said that 'a new Jerusalem' will come down from heaven

Here it is said that 'a new Jerusalem' will come down from heaven, is prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. This will take place after the first heaven and the first earth have passed. That is, when the heaven and the earth as we know them will not exist anymore. A new heaven and a new earth will come and on the new earth will come down a New Jerusalem from heaven. This heavenly city is adorned like a bride. From the following verses it even appears that the New Jerusalem is the Bride.

Revelation 22:17

"The Spirit and the bride say, "Come!"

This verse gives no direct information about the Bride.

Beside verses about the bride, we can also find verses in the NT that speak indirectly about the bride. If the new Jerusalem is called 'the bride' in Revelations, then other verses, that speak about the new or heavenly Jerusalem, talk indirectly also about the bride.

We will read those verses.

Galatians 4:26

Abraham had two sons, one by a bondmaid, and one by a free woman. Hagar, the bondmaid is being compared to the mount Sinai, which genders slaves, slaves of the law. Hager is in line with the present Jerusalem, because that is with its children in slavery. But Sara, who by faith received the promise, her son was promised to her and she believed God, is in line with "... the Jerusalem that is above and is free, she is our mother."

This concerns two testaments. One is the testament of the law (works), made on the mount Sinai. The other one is the testament of faith, by the Spirit.

The testament of the law produces slaves and is in line with Jerusalem on earth.

The testament of faith by the Spirit brings forth sons, who will inherit. This testament is in line with the heavenly Jerusalem. They who believe in Jesus are children of the heavenly Jerusalem.

Just by logical reasoning, one would say that you cannot be at the same time child of the mother AND the mother. But here we are talking about spiritual things and also figurative sayings. We hope to gain more insight in this matter in the remaining of this bible study.

In a comparison between Israel that not dared to listen to God at the mount Sinai and the believers in Christ, says the author of the letter to the Hebrews:

Hebrews 12:22

"But you have come to Mount Zion, to the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God."

If the church would be the bride, this would be a strange verse, because it does not say: you are the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, but it says that we have come **to** the city that is called the heavenly Jerusalem.

These are all verses that directly or indirectly (by speaking about the new or heavenly Jerusalem) say something about a bride. We were able to determine that there are in fact only two verses that can tell us more about who is the bride. The

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only direct verse tells us that the bride is the heavenly Jerusalem. The second verse is an indirect reference to the identity of the bride and tells us that she is our mother. So, it's not too much, but maybe we come further if we take other key words and study the verses where these words appear. Words that have to do with the subject for example: bridegroom, wedding, wedding garment. We will now read and study those verses that talk about those key words.

Chapter 2

The Bridegroom

In the title of this bible study it is already stated that the Bridegroom is Christ. But that also is a point that first should be determined by using the bible.

That the bride is the heavenly Jerusalem, knows almost everybody, but the point is that it is not clear how we have to see the heavenly Jerusalem. If we should see it spiritually, how can we determine what is its spiritual meaning? In determining who is the Bridegroom, that problem does not arise. It is relatively easy to determine that the Bridegroom is the Lamb and that the Lamb is Jesus. Beside that it appears from the answer that Jesus gives to the disciples of John the Baptist, that Jesus is the Bridegroom.

For completeness we will mention all verses that could teach us something about the Bridegroom.

Matthew 9:14, 15

“Then John’s disciples came and asked him, “How is it that we and the Pharisees fast, but your disciples do not fast?” Jesus answered, “How can the guests of the bridegroom mourn while he is with them? The time will come when the bridegroom will be taken from them; then they will fast.”

Matthew 25

The parable of the wise and the foolish virgins. This parable does not teach us anything special about who is the bridegroom or who is the bride.

Mark 2:19

The parable of the wise and the foolish virgins. This parable does not teach us anything special about who is the bridegroom or who is the bride.

Mark 2:19

This is a parallel portion of Matthew 9:15.

Luke 5:34

Also here again a parallel portion of Matthew 9:15.

John 3:29

We saw this verse already.

Revelation 19:7

Here is mentioned the marriage of the Lamb. In fact there is not any verse that says directly that Jesus is the bridegroom, but indirectly it becomes clear that He is.

It is relatively easy to determine that the Bridegroom is the Lamb and that the Lamb is Jesus.

The Wedding guests

Above mentioned verses also speak about wedding guests. The disciples are called that way. They appear to be invited for the wedding and therefore we can not consider them equal to the bride. But are they only called wedding guests before Jesus died, or also after? Then it gets even more complex. We hope to solve this also.

Revelations 19 mentioned the invited for the marriage also.

Revelation 19:6-10

“Then I heard what sounded like a great multitude, like the roar of rushing waters and like loud peals of thunder, shouting: “Hallelujah! For our Lord God Almighty reigns. Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready. Fine linen, bright and clean, was given her to wear.” (Fine linen stands for the righteous acts of the saints.) Then the angel said to me, “Write: ‘Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb!’” And he added, “These are the true words of God.” At this I fell at his feet to worship him. But he said

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to me, "Do not do it! I am a fellow-servant with you and with your brothers who hold to the testimony of Jesus. Worship God! For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy."

The marriage of the Lamb has come. When that will be is not completely clear from this portion. It will be when, or after the Lord, our God, the Almighty, accepted the royal scepter and begun to reign.

In Corinthians 15:24 it is made clear to us that Jesus, at the end of His duty, when He will have dethroned all might and power the royal scepter transfers to God the Father. This will be at the end of the millennium or in other words, at the beginning of the eternity with the new heaven and the new earth.

The bride is the New Jerusalem, which will come down on the new earth. So it is reasonable to think that the marriage will be only celebrated when the last 1000 year of this planet will have past.

Verse 9 of Revelations 19 does not make it simpler:

Revelation 19:9

'Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb!'

Consider that the church is the bride, like many think. Who then, are the invited to the marriage supper?

The parable of the royal wedding banquet

Maybe we can get to know something more by studying the parable of the royal wedding banquet. Some people think that parables cannot be compared with other bible parts, but I believe that God gave us his Word as one holistic entity. If a parable has a mayor similarity with another part in the bible, then this is not just coincidence. And especially with this parable the

similarity with the royal marriage supper for the marriage of the Lamb with His bride is very big.

The royal wedding banquet

Matthew 22:1-19

2. "The kingdom of heaven is like a king who prepared a wedding banquet for his son."

John the Baptist testifies of Jesus: "Look the Lamb of God". From Revelation 5 it appears too that the Lamb is Jesus. When then in Revelation 19 is spoken about the marriage of the Lamb, it's clear that it means the marriage of Jesus, Jesus the Son of God.

Jesus talks in the parable of Matthew 22 about a king, who is the father of the bridegroom. I think nobody sees a problem in thinking in this context of God the Father who prepared a marriage for his Son Jesus.

Matthew 22:3-6

3. "He sent his servants to those who had been invited to the banquet to tell them to come, but they refused to come."

God then sends again slaves, but nobody listens to them. It even gets that far that ... 6 "The rest seized his servants, ill-treated them and killed them."

God sent again and again His servants to the people, especially to the Israelites, but they beat them up and killed them.

Matthew 23:37

"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing."

God, the King, then gets angry and sends his slaves now to the cross points of the roads and tells them: "invite to the banquet anyone you find."

Who is the first group of invited, they that did not want to come? Is that Israel? And if yes, who are then the invited of the second group? In general

Consider that the church is the bride, like many think. Who then, are the invited to the marriage supper?

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it is assumed, that the second group of invited stands for the believers in Christ. But it is also assumed that the same group of believers is the Bride. So, are the believers the Bride, or the invited to the banquet, or is there another option?

Perhaps it has been noticed that I skipped a verse. In practice it is always done like that. A lot of bible parts we read like that. Our thinking is often focused on ourselves:

...we want to find out who are meant with the groups invited. If we are not the first group, then we are the second group, those are the ones that listen to the Lord, and eventually everything is about the church, isn't it?

Is it really true, that everything always is applicable to the church? I think that we forget that God plans are bigger and that He does not only look at the church. But let's return to the verse that was skipped.

Matthew 22:7
"The king was enraged. He sent his army and destroyed those murderers and burned their city."

This verse comes before the invitation to the second group. I mean, there only is an invitation for a second group after the king got angry and sent his armies to put their city on fire. Has this happened already? Has the king been angry yet? Did the day of the wrath come already? Without making an extended bible study of that, I want to mention a few verses that say something about this subject.

Romans 5:9
"Since we have now been justified by His (Jesus') blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him!"

While we are justified by the blood of Jesus, we will not come in the wrath of God. The wrath of God still has to come. The wrath of God will only

come near the second coming of Jesus on earth. If this wrath of God is only coming when Jesus returns and we then being united with Him, then we can never be the second group of invited, because they are only being invited after the coming of the wrath of God.

See for extensive explanation the study :
[The Kingdom of God](#)

Revelation 6:12-17

"12 "I watched as he opened the sixth seal. There was a great earthquake. 15. Then the kings of the earth.... 16. called to the mountains and the rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! For the great day of their wrath has come, and who can stand?"

A portion from the bible that is very directly connected to Matthew 22:7 is

Luke 21:20-27

"When you see Jerusalem being surrounded by armies, you will know that its desolation is near. Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, let those in the city get out, and let those in the country not enter the city. For this is the time of punishment in fulfillment of all that has been written. How dreadful it will be in those days for pregnant women and nursing mothers! There will be great distress in the land and wrath against this people. They will fall by the sword and will be taken as prisoners to all the nations. Jerusalem will be trampled on by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled. There will be signs in the sun, moon and stars. On the earth, nations will be in anguish and perplexity at the roaring and tossing of the sea. Men will faint from terror, apprehensive of what is coming on the world, for the heavenly bodies will be shaken. At that time they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory."

This is what is being told in Matthew 22:7. This is seen from Gods viewpoint. But this all shows that it still has to happen. And it will happen when Jesus returns to earth. Only then there will be called a second group of invited. And that

Are the
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won't be the church, because the church than already is son of God in a changed body.

The clothes of the bride

In the portion of Revelations 19 about the bride, we find a few particularities. De wife of the Lamb prepared herself.

Revelation 19:8

“Fine linen, bright and clean, was given her to wear.” (Fine linen stands for the righteous acts of the saints.)”

This is not about the clothes that are washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb

(comp. Rev. 7:14 “I answered, “Sir, you know.” And he said, “These are they who have come out of the great tribulation; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.”),

but about clean and fine linen of which it is said that it is so clean and white because it is the righteousness of the saints. So the linen is white because the acts of the saints were righteous. Not because the linen has been washed in the blood of the Lamb. The church of Jesus is not justified by their acts, but by the blood of the Lamb

(Romans 5:9 “Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God’s wrath through him!”)

And still the bride dresses herself with fine clean linen, that is so white, because of the righteous acts of the saints. Is this about the church?

And if not, who then are the saints that did righteousness? At this moment we cannot answer that yet.

Summary

The bride

It is clear that the bride is the New Jerusalem. We could not determine if the church is the bride.

Paul explains in Galatians 4 that this heavenly Jerusalem is our mother. But if we have to take this literally is still the question. From the context we can see that it is about symbolic values.

Hagar-Sinai-present Jerusalem, Sara-promise-heavenly Jerusalem.

On the other hand we saw that as believers we neared the mount Sion, till the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem. It is not said that we are that city.

The Bridegroom

Jesus Christ is the Lamb of God. He is the Bridegroom.

The wedding guests

The disciples are called that way, but it is the question if they are still that after the pouring out

of the Spirit. They belong to the first group of invited in the parable of the Wedding banquet. But from this parable it appears that there is a second group of invited, who will only be called after God poured out His wrath and Jesus returned. Are this the Israelites that all will come to Israel and will be all filled with the Spirit? (See the study: [Gods kingdom](#) and the study: [The final things](#)) Or are

these the nations, that by the preaching in the millennium become followers of Jesus.

The clothes of the bride

Those are clean and white. This is the result of the righteousness of the saints. Is this righteousness of the "Christian" saints? Or are there other saints?

All together we have more questions than when we begun. That is because God wrote the bible in such a way that you have to keep searching for answers. They are in the bible, but it is not always easy to find them. Also this subject, of the bride, is connected to the Kingdom of God. And Jesus told us that we have to keep searching for that. It satisfies us to occupy us with His things. Besides, God the Father will bless us with everything we need. That is His promise.

The church of Jesus is not justified by their acts, but by the blood of the Lamb

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We now know that the second group of invited are not the believers from the ascension till the return of Jesus, but that it will be people that live in the period of the millennium.

But we still don't know who is the bride. We continue in the next chapter.

Chapter 3

Well known texts examined

In Revelation 21 we can read that the holy city, the new Jerusalem, is prepared as a bride. In Galatians 4:26 we can read that the new Jerusalem is our mother. Beside these two bible parts there are no further texts that can inform us about the bride. By christians two text parts are used to prove that the church is the bride. We shall examine the texts.

We start with the first part which can be found in:

2 Corinthians 11:1, 2

"I hope you will put up with a little of my foolishness; but you are already doing that. I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy. I promised you to one husband, to Christ, so that I might present you as a pure virgin to him."

First we have to look at this verse through a more bible true translation, although it is not English like we speak now, this translation is closest to the original text. The King James. 'For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.'

You see that was is translated in the NIV as "I promised you ... to Christ" is not likewise translated in the KJ. And there is a good reason for that, you can't find that in the original Greek text.

You were dead because of your sins and because your sinful nature was not yet cut away. Then God made you alive with Christ, for he forgave all our sins.

What does Paul mean here? Does he mean that the church is the bride?

These verses are, of course, in a wider context. We can learn from chapter 10 that there are people who are resisting to Paul.

They think, among other things, that Paul lives by the standards of the world (10:2).

We could say from them: they wanted to be more catholic than the pope.

Paul makes it clear, though he lives in the world, he doesn't live by the standards of the world. His actions are powerful and spiritual (10:3-6).

He pointed out to the Corinthians that they must not look only to what is on the surface of things.

They must not think they are the only ones who belong to Christ, Paul belongs to Christ as well! (10:7-8).

In the next part he continues. You could say that Paul felt attacked. His response is rather ironical in verse 12.

"And I will keep on doing what I am doing in order to cut the ground from under those who want an opportunity to be considered equal with us in the things they boast about."

He thinks that those people are way out of line by boasting about themselves. (10:13)

Paul doesn't want to boast upon the results of his work as an apostle. He thinks, he has the right to boast, but then he says in vs. 17:

"In this self-confident boasting I am not talking as the Lord would, but as a fool."

Then he goes on and says:

"Since many are boasting in the way the world does, I too will boast!"

What he starts telling now is boasting. It must be clear o the Corinthians that he is boasting, not talking like the Lord would do. It is the way of boasting, he just explained, you shouldn't do. But he thinks he can do that boasting, because he thinks the Corinthians will understand it.

(The mentioned verses from Corinthians you can read here:

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"I beg you that when I come I may not have to be as bold as I expect to be towards some people who think that we live by the standards of this world. For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ. And we will be ready to punish every act of disobedience, once your obedience is complete. You are looking only on the surface of things. If anyone is confident that he belongs to Christ, he should consider again that we belong to Christ just as much as he. For even if I boast somewhat freely about the authority the Lord gave us for building you up rather than pulling you down, I will not be ashamed of it."
2 Corinthians 10:2-8, NIV.

"We, however, will not boast beyond proper limits..." 2 Corinthians 10:13, NIV.)

2 Corinthians 11:2
"I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy."

Paul is jealous. He doesn't like it that his converts are following so easily another. Others who commend themselves (10:12 "We do not dare to classify or compare ourselves with some who commend themselves. When they measure themselves by themselves and compare themselves with themselves, they are not wise.").

He says:
"...I promised you to one husband,..." (NIV)
"...I have espoused you to one husband..." (KJV)

The word: espoused is the Greek word: Harmozo. This is: Harmonize, bring in tune. Paul thinks it is not wise to boast about it, but he nevertheless says to the Corinthians that he

harmonized them, brought them in tune with one man, with him self, so they will think and act as he does, "so that I might present you as a pure virgin to him (Christ) ."

In 1 Corinthians 4:15 Paul says something similar: "Even though you have ten thousand guardians in Christ, you do not have many fathers, for in Christ Jesus I became your father through the gospel."

2 Corinthians 11:3-5

"But I am afraid that just as Eve was deceived by the serpent's cunning, your minds may somehow be led astray from your sincere and pure devotion to Christ. For if someone comes to you and preaches a Jesus other than the Jesus we preached, or if you receive a different spirit from the one you received, or a different gospel from the one you accepted, you put up with it easily enough. But I do not think I am in the least inferior to those "super-apostles".

Paul already said it is foolishness that he is saying that he harmonized the Corinthians with him so they will think and act as he does, but nevertheless he thinks it is necessary to show them what his intentions are and how those others are damaging the cause. Further on he says:

2 Corinthians 11:12,16

"And I will keep on doing what I am doing in order to cut the ground from under those who want an opportunity to be considered equal with us in the things they boast about. For such men are false apostles, deceitful workmen, masquerading as apostles of Christ. "

Verse 16 "I repeat: Let no-one take me for a fool. But if you do, then receive me just as you would a fool, so that I may do a little boasting."

In all these verses it is clear that Paul react against those, whom he later called: false apostles. He keep watch over them. He harmonized them with him, because he doesn't want them to follow these false apostles. He wants them to be pure, and then presents them as pure virgins to Christ.

Paul react
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He didn't harmonize them to Christ, how should he do that? He harmonized them to himself. He want to present them to the Lord, not to commend himself, but being approved by the Lords commend.

(10:17 "But, "Let him who boasts boast in the Lord." For it is not the one who commends himself who is approved, but the one whom the Lord commends.").

The problem with this verse in the English translation is that the Greek word "aner" is translated as "husband", but it is three times more translated as "man". A man can be a husband, but in this case it is not. In this case it is Paul.

Suppose that that man is Christ, as so many people think, then we have to ask ourselves why Paul thinks it is foolish that he makes that remark. Why should it be foolish to harmonize someone to Christ?

Assuming that this would be possible.

When we think about that it must be clear that Paul speaks about himself.

There remains one remark of Paul to discuss:

3. "...so that I might present you as a pure virgin to him."

Is Paul telling here that the church is the bride? If that's what he want to tell us, it is the only time in the New testament it is told like that. Reason enough to be very cautious to explain this verse like some people do that the church is the bride.

There is another, second bible part, which is used by christians to prove that the church is the bride. It is in the letter to the Ephesians. We will discuss this later on. First we will read some verses in the New Testament which will tell us something about the church.

Romans 8:29

"For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers."

Believers "conformed" to the likeness of Jesus. And if those many brothers are us, are we then not foremost brothers of the Lord, instead of the bride?

1 Corinthians 6:15

"Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ himself?"

We are one body with Christ. It is written, nevertheless, that man and wife are one body, but that is after they get married. The wedding is still ahead of us, so being one body with Christ, in the sense of man and wife, is not possible.

The next verses show us all that we are one with Jesus, that one, that we are part of his body. A bridegroom longs to be one with his bride, we, as the body of Jesus, are already one with him, not as bride, but as a body.

1 Corinthians 12:27

"Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it."

Ephesians 1:22, 23

"And God ... appointed him to be head over everything for the church, which is his body,"

Colossians 1:18

"And he is the head of the body, the church; "

Now it become more clear that is difficult to still believe that the church is the bride, we know even less then we thought we knew. Therefore we have to do more bible research to find out who is the bride.

The Old Testament is a valuable source of information, for this subject too!

Paul didn't harmonize the Corinthians to Christ, how should he do that?

Chapter 4

The Old Testament

We've already covered some texts of the Old Testament. But there are more interesting verses about our subject.

The Old Testament speaks also about a marriage. It turned out that God married Jerusalem. And Jerusalem is the capital of the land where the people of God lives.

The prophet Ezekiel had to deliver a message from God:

Ezekiel 16

“1 The word of the LORD came to me: 2 “Son of man, confront Jerusalem with her detestable practices and say, ‘This is what the Sovereign LORD says to Jerusalem: Your ancestry and birth were in the land of the Canaanite’s; ... 5 No-one looked on you with pity or had compassion... 6 “Then I passed by and saw you kicking about in your blood, and as you lay there in your blood I said to you, “Live!” I made you grow like a plant of the field. You grew up and developed and became the most beautiful of jewels. Your breasts were formed and your hair grew, you who were naked and bare. 8 “Later I passed by, and when I looked at you and saw that you were old enough for love, I spread the corner of my garment over you and covered your nakedness. I gave you my solemn oath and entered into a covenant with you, declares the Sovereign LORD, and you became mine.”

Here we read how God married Jerusalem. It is the earthly Jerusalem, because further on we read that this Jerusalem became a prostitute. The verses we read in the New Testament spoke about an heavenly Jerusalem, the new bride of the Lord. But here in Ezekiel we read about the earthly Jerusalem, and this earthly Jerusalem became, so we read here, the wife of God. The Lord takes care for her and gives her Jewelry.

“13 ... You became very beautiful and rose to be a queen. 14 And your fame spread among the

nations on account of your beauty, because the splendor I had given you made your beauty perfect, declares the Sovereign LORD.”

Unfortunately this is not the end of the story. The Lord says in the next verses very harsh things about his wife.

“15 “But you trusted in your beauty and used your fame to become a prostitute. You lavished your favors on anyone who passed by and your beauty became his.”

“32 “You adulterous wife! You prefer strangers to your own husband!”

The Lord even called her a prostitute:

“35 “Therefore, you prostitute, hear the word of the LORD!

The Lord says then a lot of things which made it clear how adulterous she is, but He ends this chapter with these verses:

The Lord breaks the covenant with Jerusalem, His wife, the same she did.

“59 “This is what the Sovereign LORD says: I will deal with you as you deserve, because you have despised my oath by breaking the covenant. 60 Yet I will remember the covenant I made with you in the days of your youth, and I will establish an everlasting covenant with you. 61 Then you will remember your ways and be ashamed when you receive your sisters,

both those who are older than you and those who are younger. I will give them to you as daughters, but not on the basis of my covenant with you. 62 So I will establish my covenant with you, and you will know that I am the LORD. 63 Then, when I make atonement for you for all you have done, you will remember and be ashamed and never again open your mouth because of your humiliation, declares the Sovereign LORD.””

The Lord breaks the covenant with Jerusalem, His wife, the same she did. But, happily He says immediately, He will remember the covenant He made with her in the days of her youth and establish an everlasting covenant with her. This

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will be possible because He Himself will take care of reconciling. The great sacrifice of our Lord Jesus is also the reconciliation for His unfaithful wife.

A prophet who lived at the same time as Ezekiel was Jeremiah. He had to deliver also messages from the Lord. Actual the chapters we mentioned of Jeremiah and Ezekiel should be read entirely, to understand better what they are talking about. But for now I will take some parts of these prophets, which are to my view typical:

Jeremiah 2:1-3, 11, 19b

“1 The word of the LORD came to me: 2 “Go and proclaim in the hearing of Jerusalem: ““I remember the devotion of your youth, how as a bride you loved me and followed me through the desert, through a land not sown. 3 Israel was holy to the LORD, the first fruits of his harvest; all who devoured her were held guilty, and disaster overtook them,”” declares the LORD.”

Within only a few verses the Lord makes it clear that Israel deserted Him. We go on with verse 11.

“11 Has a nation ever changed its gods? (Yet they are not gods at all.) But my people have exchanged their Glory for worthless idols. 12 Be appalled at this, O heavens, and shudder with great horror,” declares the LORD. 13 “My people have committed two sins: They have forsaken me, the spring of living water, and have dug their own cisterns, broken cisterns that cannot hold water.”..... 19b.... Consider then and realize how evil and bitter it is for you when you forsake the LORD your God and have no awe of me,” declares the Lord, the LORD Almighty.”

The Lord goes on with his charge to Israel, read on:

Jeremiah 3:6-10, 12b, 14, 17-18

“6 During the reign of King Josiah, the LORD said to me, “Have you seen what faithless Israel has done? She has gone up on every high hill

and under every spreading tree and has committed adultery there. 7 I thought that after she had done all this she would return to me but she did not, and her unfaithful sister Judah saw it. 8 I gave faithless Israel her certificate of divorce and sent her away because of all her adulteries. Yet I saw that her unfaithful sister Judah had no fear; she also went out and committed adultery. 9 Because Israel’s immorality mattered so little to her, she defiled the land and committed adultery with stone and wood. 10 In spite of all this, her unfaithful sister Judah did not return to me with all her heart, but only in pretence,” declares the LORD.”

Jeremiah lived about 130 years after the people of Israel -the ten tribes- were kept in exile by the Assyrians. The remaining two tribes -the Jews- were kept in exile during his life to Babel. The Lord called Israel with the name: faithless Israel, and the Jews, that is Judah, He called them: unfaithful. The ten tribes: Israel, were cast off by Him and He gave them a certificate of divorce. The two tribes repented, but as Lord says, not with all their heart, but only in pretense. Nevertheless He didn't give them a certificate of divorce. They still remains His wife.

About Israel (the ten tribes) the Lord is still sad. He says: 12b.“... ‘Return, faithless Israel,’ declares the LORD, ‘I will frown on you no longer, for I am merciful,’ declares the LORD, ‘I will not be angry for ever.”

14 “Return, faithless people,” declares the LORD, “for I am your husband. I will choose you--one from a town and two from a clan--and bring you to Zion.” 17. At that time they will call Jerusalem The Throne of the LORD, and all nations will gather in Jerusalem to honor the name of the LORD. No longer will they follow the stubbornness of their evil hearts. 18 In those days the house of Judah will join the house of Israel, and together they will come from a northern land to the land I gave your forefathers as an inheritance.”

However this is not the subject of this bible study, I want to point, that the prophet Jeremiah writes down the words of the Lord when he speaks of Israel and Judah. Israel was already

The Lord called Israel with the name: faithless Israel, and the Jews, that is Judah, He called them: unfaithful.

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for 130 year in exile and never returned. They are, through the years scattered among the nations. Nevertheless the Lord speaks here about the 10-tribes and the 2-tribes, Israel and Judah, that they will live together in the land God has given their forefathers. So despite the certificate of divorce to Israel and the rejection of Israel there will be a time that the Lord will be merciful to them and let them return to the promised land. When? When Jerusalem shall be called: Throne of the Lord. At that time the Lord will make a new covenant, that is a marriage, with His people.

Jeremiah had to speak a lot more words from the Lord, and one of these words we read in:

Jeremiah 31:31-32

“31 “The time is coming,” declares the LORD, “when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah.

32 It will not be like the covenant I made with their forefathers when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, because they broke my covenant, though I was a husband to them,” declares the LORD.”

Literally this last sentence is: though I married them.

The first covenant, the marriage doesn't exist anymore. God gave them a certificate of divorce. Judah repented, not with their heart, but they got nevertheless mercy in the eyes of the Lord

(see Deuteronomy 24:1-4

“1 If a man marries a woman who becomes displeasing to him because he finds something indecent about her, and he writes her a certificate of divorce, gives it to her and sends her from his house, 2 and if after she leaves his house she becomes the wife of another man, 3 and her second husband dislikes her and writes her a certificate of divorce, gives it to her and sends her from

The first covenant, the marriage doesn't exist anymore. God gave them a certificate of divorce.

his house, or if he dies, 4 then her first husband, who divorced her, is not allowed to marry her again after she has been defiled. That would be detestable in the eyes of the LORD. Do not bring sin upon the land the LORD your God is giving you as an inheritance.”)

So Israel is officially divorced from the Lord and Judah went back to the Lord. So that marriage exists at the time of Jeremiah.

But a marriage will also be dissolved by death.

(see Romans 7:2-3

“2 For example, by law a married woman is bound to her husband as long as he is alive, but if her husband dies, she is released from the law of marriage. 3 So then, if she marries another man while her husband is still alive, she is called an adulteress. But if her husband dies, she is released from that law and is not an adulteress, even though she marries another man.”).

Did the woman -Judah- die?

Or did the husband -the Lord- die?

The husband -the Lord of the Old Testament- is the same as "The Word". "All things were made by him; and without him was not a thing made that was made...the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us." (see John 1)

By the death of the husband at the cross, are either husband and wife free. The marriage, or the covenant is not valid anymore, nor for Israel nor for Judah. When the new covenant will be effective, it will be again with Israel and Judah as we just read in Jeremiah 31:31-33, but as long as this new covenant is not effective the whole of Israel will be a widow.

(When you want to know more about the relation Israel-Church (Hebrews 8) you can read the study: [The Kingdom of God](#)

That this is not only my way of seeing is proved in Isaiah 54. This bible part teaches us

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something that we can use when we think furthermore about the bride.

Isaiah 54

“1 “Sing, O barren woman, you who never bore a child; burst into song, shout for joy, you who were never in labor; because more are the children of the desolate woman than of her who has a husband,” says the LORD.

4 Do not be afraid; you will not suffer shame. Do not fear disgrace; you will not be humiliated. You will forget the shame of your youth and

remember no more the reproach of your widowhood. 5 For your Maker is your husband--the LORD Almighty is his name--the Holy One of Israel is your Redeemer; he is called the God of all the earth.

6 The LORD will call you back as if you were a wife deserted and distressed in spirit--a wife who married young, only to be rejected,” says your God. 7 “For a brief moment I abandoned you, but with deep compassion I will bring you back. 8 In a surge of anger I hid my face from you for a moment, but with everlasting kindness I will have compassion on you,” says the LORD your Redeemer.”“11

“O afflicted city, lashed by storms and not comforted, I will build you with stones of turquoise, your foundations with sapphires. 12 I will make your battlements of rubies, your gates of sparkling jewels, and all your walls of precious stones. 13 All your sons will be taught by the LORD, and great will be your children’s peace.”

This bible part doesn't say exactly who is mentioned here. We have to make that conclusion by reading what is written. Verse 1 is quoted by Paul in Galatians 4:27.

“26 But the Jerusalem that is above is free, and she is our mother. 27 For it is written: “Be glad, O barren woman, who bears no children; break forth and cry aloud, you who have no labour pains; because more are the children of the desolate

woman than of her who has a husband.””

This barren woman is according to Paul 'The heavenly Jerusalem', and this Jerusalem from above has brought forth us because it is our mother. (vs. 26). This heavenly Jerusalem is the opposite of the earthly Jerusalem, that is in slavery with her children.

That barren woman, which Paul explains is the Jerusalem from above, has not to fear.

Isaiah 54:4

“4 “Do not be afraid; you will not suffer shame. Do not fear disgrace; you will not be humiliated. You will forget the shame of your youth and remember no more the reproach of your widowhood.”

This heavenly Jerusalem has become related here with a people, introduced as a woman, which apparently became disgraced in her youth and later became a widow.

This all seems very difficult. I have to admit it isn't easy, but by slowly going on with studying the Bible it must be possible to get more insight.

"For a brief moment I abandoned you, but with deep compassion I will bring you back."

What has the heavenly Jerusalem to do with a woman that became disgraced at her youth? Let us first read some other bible parts to see what the bible tells us more about that woman that became disgraced. Then we will see later on what the heavenly Jerusalem has to do with her.

Ezekiel get another word of the Lord that we can read in chapter 23. It is about two daughters from one mother. The one is called Oholah, the other Oholibah.

Ezekiel 23

“3 They became prostitutes in Egypt, engaging in prostitution from their youth.....”

“4 The older was named Oholah, and her sister was Oholibah. They were mine and gave birth to sons and daughters. Oholah is Samaria, and Oholibah is Jerusalem.”

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Samaria was the capital of the 10-tribes kingdom Israel.

5 "Oholah engaged in prostitution while she was still mine; and she lusted after her lovers, the Assyrians--warriors"....

8 She did not give up the prostitution she began in Egypt, when during her youth men slept with her, caressed her virgin bosom and poured out their lust upon her."

11 "Her sister Oholibah saw this, yet in her lust and prostitution she was more depraved than her sister."

What a bitter acquisition of the Lord to Judah and Israel. What a grief is there too, but we also can see, that the Lord in His justice, punishes.

35 "Therefore this is what the Sovereign LORD says: Since you have forgotten me and thrust me behind your back, you must bear the consequences of your lewdness and prostitution."

It is good to know, through all the bible, that God is merciful also for this people.

We learned from the texts we read, in conjunction with our subject of study, that Israel became prostitutes in Egypt and that this happened in her youth. As we read in Isaiah 54 the Lord says:

Isaiah 54:4
"...Do not fear disgrace; you will not be humiliated. You will forget the shame of your youth..."

A prophecy that connect very nice to a word of the Lord that we can read in Joel.

Joel 2:27
"...never again will my people be shamed. Then you will know that I am in Israel, that I am the LORD your God, and that there is no other; never again will my people be shamed."

This is clearly unfulfilled prophecy.

Finally some verses from Jeremiah 50. Here too you should read the whole chapter, but for now I will take some verses which connect to our subject of study. It is a prophesy about Babel. This is a prophesy that is not fulfilled yet, that will be clear when you read the verses.

Jeremiah 50 and 51

" "In those days, at that time," declares the LORD, "the people of Israel and the people of Judah together will go in tears to seek the LORD their God.

5 They will ask the way to Zion and turn their faces towards it. They will come and bind themselves to the LORD in an everlasting covenant that will not be forgotten."

20. "In those days, at that time," declares the LORD, "search will be made for Israel's guilt, but there will be none, and for the sins of Judah, but none will be found, for I will forgive the remnant I spare."

51:5 "For Israel and Judah have not been forsaken by their God, the LORD Almighty, though their land is full of guilt before the Holy One of Israel."

So we see, that "In those days, at that time," the Israelites will come, together with the Jews. They will go to Zion and seek the Lord. (see also Jeremiah 2 en 3). At that time the Lord will forgive the remnant He spared. Israel en Judah shall be united and no longer be widows. This means, that He will take them as His wife. Isaiah says the same:

Isaiah 54.
4b. "You will forget the shame of your youth and remember no more the reproach of your widowhood.
5 For your Maker is your husband--the LORD Almighty is his name--the Holy One of Israel is your Redeemer; he is called the God of all the earth."

From the verses we read it is clear that all of Israel, as it will be developed in the future, is meant by Isaiah, when he speaks about the wife distressed in spirit:

Israel en Judah shall be united and no longer be widows.

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6. " The LORD will call you back as if you were a wife deserted and distressed in spirit--a wife who married young, only to be rejected," says your God.

7 "For a brief moment I abandoned you, but with deep compassion I will bring you back.

8 In a surge of anger I hid my face from you for a moment, but with everlasting kindness I will have compassion on you," says the LORD your Redeemer."

After the Lord made it clear that He will not be in anger anymore to Israel and that His new covenant shall not be removed He goes on:

11-12 ""O afflicted city, lashed by storms and not comforted, I will build you with stones of turquoise, your foundations with sapphires. I will make your battlements of rubies, your gates of sparkling jewels, and all your walls of precious stones."

This part sounds very familiar. When I read this I have to think of the new Jerusalem as it is written in Revelations 21, don't you?

Anyway it is clear from Isaiah 54 that God doesn't have a problem to speak about a wife that is a people, and He describes that people as a city! We have to be accustomed to this way of thinking because otherwise it will be very difficult to get an idea of who the bride of Christ is.

Summary

The Old Testament is seen by many people as "old and not applicable anymore". That is however a wrong attitude. What we call the Old Testament is just one with the last part of the bible: the New Testament. We always have to use the whole bible when we want to know what God want from us and what His plans are.

We have read some parts of the Old Testament and we've seen that God entered into a marriage (covenant) with Israel. By doing so Israel became His.

When the Lord speaks about Israel He often speaks also about Jerusalem, or "the land".

Israel however became adulterous. God even called her a prostitute.

Because of the sins of Solomon the nation of Israel became divided. Jeremiah makes it clear that the Lord loves them both, but Israel, the ten tribes, sinned so much that God gives her a certificate of divorce. Israel (10-tribes) was kept in captivity by the Assyrians and till now never returned.

Her sister, Judah, saw this, yet in her lust and prostitution she was more depraved than her sister. She didn't repent with all her heart but only by appearance.

The Lord is very sad and calls again and again: Return to me Israel. He promises a new covenant (marriage) with the house of Israel and the house of Judah.

The Lord
promises a new
covenant
(marriage) with
the house of
Israel and the
house of Judah.

He will gather them in the land Israel. Israel is now a widow, because her husband died on the cross, but she shall be redeemed by the resurrected Lord. Think of the story of Ruth and Boas.

(12 And now it is true that I am thy near kinsman: howbeit there is a kinsman nearer than I.
13 Tarry this night, and it shall be in the morning, that if he will perform unto thee the part of a kinsman, well; let him do the kinsman's part: but if he will not do the part of a kinsman to thee, then will I do the part of a kinsman to thee, as the LORD liveth: lie down until the morning. Ruth 3:12-13, NIV).

For a brief moment I abandoned you, but with deep compassion I will bring you back, says the Lord

Before we start to try to make some cautious conclusions from the bible parts we already read, I will read and discuss with you two more important bible parts.

We will do this in the next chapter.

Chapter 5

Hosea 1, 2 and 3 (please read this FIRST in your own bible)

Hosea, a man who speaks words of the Lord, had to take a prostitute as wife. God wanted to show something with this. Just like Hosea was married with a prostitute, the Lord was married with a prostitute: Israel. The children born from Hosea and Gomer got names provided by God. With those names God wanted to make something clear to the people of Israel. The first son was named Jizreel. That means: Break up. Because God is going to break up the kingdom of the house of Israel.

Hosea 1

5. "In that day I will break Israel's bow in the Valley of Jezreel."

God keeps aloof of Israel and makes that clear with the name of the second child of Hosea and Gomer: Lo-Ruhamah. That means: I will no longer love.

6. "Gomer conceived again and gave birth to a daughter. Then the LORD said to Hosea, "Call her Lo-Ruhamah, for I will no longer show love to the house of Israel, that I should at all forgive them. 7 Yet I will show love to the house of Judah."

This connects totally to Jeremiah 2 en 3. The third child was a son. He was named: Lo-Ammi. That is: Not my people.

9. "for you are not my people, and I am not your God."

God wouldn't be God when after these harsh words He didn't show a way out. A view to a curative future:

10. "Yet the Israelites will be like the sand on the seashore, which cannot be measured or counted. In the place where it was said to them, 'You are not my people', they will be called 'sons of the living God.'"

Hosea 2

Chapter 2 shows how the woman, who committed adultery, not even noticed she was well cared-for by her first husband. But the Lord will stop this situation. He will stop her celebrations, ruin her vines and her fig-trees...

13. "I will punish her for the days she burned incense to the Baals; she decked herself with rings and jewelry, and went after her lovers, but me she forgot," declares the LORD, 14. "Therefore I am now going to allure her; I will lead her into the desert and speak tenderly to her... 16. "In that day," declares the LORD, "you will call me 'my husband'; you will no longer call me 'my master'. 17. I will remove the names of the Baals from her lips; no longer will their

names be invoked. 18. In that day I will make a covenant for them with the beasts of the field and the birds of the air and the creatures that move along the ground. Bow and sword and battle I will abolish from the land, so that all may lie down in safety."

When will that be? When the people of Israel will call Him 'my husband'.

That is "In that day " that the Lord will make a covenant with the animals. At that time He will abolish war, so that they may live in safety.

Micah 4:1-5 and Isaiah 2:1-5 are speaking of the same things.

(3 ... The law will go out from Zion, the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. 4 He will judge between the nations and will settle disputes for many peoples. They will beat their swords into plough shares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not take up sword against nation, nor will they train for war any more. (Isaiah 2:3-4, NIV).)

What is written there will be reality in the thousand years of peace. When Jesus will be returned to the earth and sit on His throne in Jerusalem, all Israel, the remnant, 12 tribes, will be in the land of Israel.

God wouldn't be God when after these harsh words He didn't show a way out.

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Hosea goes on:

19:"I will betroth you to me for ever; I will betroth you in righteousness and justice, in love and compassion, I will betroth you in faithfulness, and you will acknowledge the LORD."

Betroth = enter into a formal agreement to marry.

Is it necessary to explain this verse? It is very clear!

Hosea 3

In chapter 3 the Lord shows again, Israel can think to run away from the Lord and walk behind her lovers, just like Gomer did, but He paid a price to bind Israel to Himself. The first time Hosea didn't paid for Gomer, but here, in chapter 3, he bought her and said to her:

3."You are to live with me for many days; you must not be a prostitute or be intimate with any man, and I will live with you." 4 For the Israelites will live for many days without king or prince, without sacrifice or sacred stones, without ephod or idol. 5 Afterwards the Israelites will return and seek the LORD their God and David their king. They will come trembling to the LORD and to his blessings in the last days."

This prophesy, still not fulfilled, will be fulfilled when the Lord returned to the earth. To gain more insight it is good to read Ezekiel 37.

To end the reading of verses from the OT, which speak about our subject we read Isaiah 62. Please first read the whole chapter in your own bible, then we will discuss these verses.

Isaiah 62

1." For Zion's sake I will not keep silent, for Jerusalem's sake I will not remain quiet, till her righteousness shines out like the dawn, her salvation like a blazing torch.

2 The nations will see your righteousness, and all kings your glory; you will be called by a new name that the mouth of the LORD will bestow. 3 You will be a crown of splendor in the LORD's hand, a royal diadem in the hand of your God."

The Lord has prepared wonderful things for Jerusalem. The end of the suffering of Jerusalem is near, it won't be long before the Lord will exalt Jerusalem and His people and they will be a crown of splendor in the hand of the Lord.

4. "No longer will they call you Deserted, or name your land Desolate. But you will be called Hephzibah, and your land Beulah; for the LORD will take delight in you, and your land will be married."

It seems strange, that we read, that the land will be married, but let us read Jeremiah 2 again.

Jeremiah 2:7

"I brought you into a fertile land to eat its fruit and rich produce. But you came and defiled my land and made my inheritance detestable."

The land where the Israelites lived was and still is the land of God. It is good to remember that while we have so much criticism for Israel.

So, when Isaiah speaks about the land that will be called "married", then he speaks about the land and his inhibitors. And the capitol of that land is Jerusalem. Let's go on with Isaiah 62:

Isaiah 62:5

"As a young man marries a maiden, so will your sons marry you; as a bridegroom rejoices over his bride, so will your God rejoice over you"

While I was thinking about that verse I remembered, that I read somewhere that someone had seen that here four times subjects are opposite to each other. We will write this here in the same way:

A. as a	YOUNG MAN marries	a MAIDEN
B. so will	your SONS	marry YOU
C. as a	BRIDEGROOM rejoices over	his BRIDE
D. so will	YOUR GOD rejoice	over YOU.

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Because this is a new page it is easier that you can see the diagram here too:

A. as a	YOUNG MAN marries	a MAIDEN
B. so will	your SONS	marry YOU
C. as a	BRIDEGROOM rejoices over	his BRIDE
D. so will	YOUR GOD rejoice	over YOU.

Just like a YOUNG MAN marries a MAIDEN, in the same way your SONS will marry YOU.

This is a parable. Your SONS will marry YOU, as a YOUNG MAN marries a MAIDEN. So, your SONS are compared with the YOUNG MAN, and the one who is addressed with YOU is compared with the MAIDEN.

Let's read verse 4 again, to find out who is addressed as YOU.

"No longer will they call you Deserted, or name your land Desolate. But you will be called Hephzibah, and your land Beulah; for the LORD will take delight in you, and your land will be married."

The whole chapter speaks about Jerusalem and the land that belongs to it. It starts with: "for Jerusalem's sake I will not remain quiet..." and it ends with: "and you will be called Sought After, the City No Longer Deserted."

So, "YOU" in verse 4 is Jerusalem including the land that belongs to Jerusalem.

So, the SONS of Jerusalem will marry Jerusalem.

Then we read the second part in verse 5.

Exactly like the BRIDEGROOM rejoices over his BRIDE so will YOUR GOD rejoice over YOU.

YOUR GOD is compared with the BRIDEGROOM and YOU with the BRIDE. So, the GOD of the land with Jerusalem as capitol, is the BRIDEGROOM who marries the land, also named Jerusalem.

But this is not all. We already knew from other bible verses that the Lord will marry Jerusalem. But verse 4 consists of 2x2 parts.

Both times first a parable, then who are addressed.

We have just seen, that the second part makes clear that the Lord is the BRIDEGROOM and the BRIDE Jerusalem.

But how do we have to see the first part?

There it is explained that the SONS of JERUSALEM are the BRIDEGROOM, and just like the second part of verse 4: JERUSALEM the BRIDE.

Who are those SONS?

It is written that they are SONS of JERUSALEM. Can we put those SONS equal to GOD?

I mean this: We have just seen that there is a row:

YOUNG MAN/YOUR SONS/BRIDEGROOM/
YOUR GOD.

When it is like this, and we just saw that, that the BRIDEGROOM correspond with YOUR GOD, and YOUR SONS with the YOUNG MAN, then it can't be something else, then that YOUR SONS belong to YOUR GOD.

We know from the NT, that the BRIDEGROOM the LORD JESUS is. He is the son of God. But, we -believers- are also sons of God.

Galatians 4:6,7

"Because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, "Abba, Father."

So you are no longer a slave, but a son; and since you are a son, God has made you also an heir."

Furthermore it is clear from Ephesians 5:30, that we are members of His body, one flesh with Jesus. He is the head, we are His body.

Through Jesus we are sons of God. That's why we are also heirs of God.

In the text we read from Jeremiah 2 it is clear that the Lord calls 'the land' his inheritance. The land Israel, the city Jerusalem has everything to do with the inheritance God promised us.

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Those SONS are GODS SONS: Christ and His body (the church). The Head and His body are the BRIDEGROOM. We are together with our Head: Jesus, the BRIDEGROOM. But we read in Isaiah 62:5 that the SONS are sons of Jerusalem!?

Let us read Galatians 4 again, to get an answer on that question:

Galatians 4:26

"But the Jerusalem that is above is free, and she is our mother."

So, we -believers in Christ- are SONS of Jerusalem! What a totally different perspective! It is of course wonderful to be the Bride, but is it not even more wonderfully to be, together with Jesus, the Bridegroom?

Summary

Hosea has to portray, by his marriage with a prostitute, (Gomer) how God is married with Israel.

The first child they got receives a symbolic name: Jizreel. That means: Break. God shows in this way He will break His relation with Israel.

The second child receives the name Lo-Ruhamah. That means: I will no longer love.

But He will show love to Judah

The third child receives the name: Lo-Ammi. Because, says the Lord: "for you are not my people, and I am not your God."

However, there will be a time in the future, the children of Israel will be like the sand of the sea and they will be called: children of the living God. That will be when the Lord makes a covenant with the animals of the field and when there will be no weapons anymore in the land. That will be when Jesus returns.

What will happen then?

Then says the Lord: I will betroth you to me for ever!

Hosea has to buy his wife. She has to wait for many days and may not belong to a man. This is again a symbolic picture of what the Lord, the Redeemer, will do. It will take a long time that Israel will be without a husband. But about two thousand years ago God did the first step to reunion. He gave His life as a ransom for many, among those the Israelites.

And after that long, long time without the Lord, they will repent and seek the Lord their God and David, their king.

(See Ezekiel 37: 23 They will no longer defile themselves with their idols and vile images or with any of their offences, for I will save them from all their sinful backsliding, and I will cleanse them. They will be my people, and I will be their God. 24 "My servant David will be king over them, and they will all have one shepherd. They will follow my laws and be careful to keep my decrees. 25 They will live in the land I gave to my servant Jacob, the land where your fathers lived. They and their children and their children's children will live there for ever, and David my servant will be their prince for ever.)

They will come trembling to the LORD and to his blessings in the last days. This is, even now, still in the future: the last days.

Finally Isaiah shows us more.

The Bride, as we've seen, is Jerusalem. Hosea shows us that the people of Israel and Jerusalem are one. But who is going to marry the Bride? Through two parables this is made clear.

It is of course wonderful to be the Bride, but is it not even more wonderfully to be, together with Jesus, the Bridegroom?

The Bride of Christ

The first parable starts with: as a YOUNG MAN marries a MAIDEN....

so will YOUR SONS marry YOU. So, the Sons are the same as the YOUNG MAN, and the one who is addressed as YOU is the same as the MAIDEN.

Then the second parable. As the BRIDEGROOM rejoices over his BRIDE, so will your GOD rejoice over YOU.

We have seen that the YOUNG MAN, the SONS, the BRIDEGROOM and your GOD, all are the same.
Also the MAIDEN, YOU (Jerusalem) and the BRIDE are the same.

The SONS of JERUSALEM are the body of the God of Israel, from Jesus.
They are offspring of Jerusalem, explains Paul in Galatians 4.

Jesus, as head of His body, shall as one whole person, marry the bride for ever.

Chapter 6

Ephesians 5

To close this subject we will examine the part we've promised to be investigated. It is that part of the bible that is used often to prove that the church is the bride.

Ephesians 5:22

"Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord"

Paul speaks here about married women. It is not about virgins, who will be married one day, but it's about women who already have a husband. These wives must be submitted to their husbands, the same way they are submitted to the Lord.

23. "For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior.

24 Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything. "

This is about authority. The wife is under the authority of the man. The same way the church is under the authority of of Christ.

Now there are some verses about love. The love from a man for his wife and the love from Christ for his church.

"25. Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her 26 to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, 27 and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless."

Men should love their wives. Again Paul compares this love with the love Christ has for the church. Christ loved men so much, that He gave Himself on the cross in their place. Greater love is not possible. And everyone who accepted his death as done in his/her place is becoming a member of the Church, His body.

Paul doesn't say that the church is the wife of Christ, but that the church is His body.

"28. In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself.

29 After all, no-one ever hated his own body, but he feeds and cares for it, just as Christ does the church--

30 for we are members of his body."

The same way Christ loves the church, His body, men ought to love their wives and take care for her.

Paul doesn't say that the church is the wife of Christ, but that the church is His body. He is the head, we are the body. Head and body are one. The church is already now the body of Christ.

Suppose the church is the bride then the church is married to Christ before the wedding!, And the wedding is in or at the end of the thousand years of peace.

The marriage between man and wife is in love, care and being one is a picture of the being one of Christ and the Church.

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"31. "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh." 32 This is a profound mystery--but I am talking about Christ and the church."

This profound mystery is about being one flesh. Christ is the Son of God. We are parts of His body. In Him, that is in His body, we are also sons of God. This is something very special. Christ Jesus is our head, we are His body, so we are one with Him.

So, When He is going to marry, like we read in Revelations, He is going to marry with the bride and we too are going to marry with the bride, because we are a part of His body.

The new, heavenly Jerusalem is the bride. She is the city of God, that will descend from heaven to the new earth. It will be the capitol of the new earth.

How this will be is almost incomprehensible. But it will be very, very special, because everything God did was to make it possible that His plan could be fulfilled.

For this purpose God created men.
For this purpose Jesus came to earth, put off His deity and died in our place. He went into death, trusting God the Father, that He would be resurrected.

(Hebrews 5:7-9 During the days of Jesus' life on earth, he offered up prayers and petitions with loud cries and tears to the one who could save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission.

8 Although he was a son, he learned obedience from what he suffered

9 and, once made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him).

This all was necessary to come to that great purpose: A new heaven and a new earth where sin is concurred and the BRIDEGROOM (Head and body) and the Bride will rejoice.

Not all questions are totally answered. Probably that's not even possible. Important is that we

understand Gods plans every time better and better. And it is nice when we have a better understanding of what plans God has with us.