

## ***Session 4 The Bridegroom God: An Old Testament Overview***

### **I. REVIEW FROM SESSION 3**

- A. The Bridegroom message is a call to intimacy with God by encountering His heart (emotions, affections, and commitments) and walking in partnership with Him in a spirit of abandonment. Abandonment—Jesus gave everything and is raising up a Bride who will give everything.

<sup>4</sup>***“Father, I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am.” (Jn. 17:24)***

- B. Seeing Jesus as the Bridegroom God enables us to see ourselves as His cherished Bride. He cleanses the Church, washing her with the Word, especially revealing how He cherishes her (Eph. 5:29). As the redeemed feel cherished, they are empowered to walk in obedience and resist compromise.

<sup>26</sup>***...that He might...cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, <sup>27</sup>that He might present her to Himself a glorious church...<sup>29</sup>For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church. (Eph. 5:26-29)***

### **II. FROM THE BEGINNING IT WAS GOD’S PLAN TO RAISE UP A BRIDE FOR HIS SON**

- A. The message of the Bridegroom God and His Bride is established throughout the Old Testament (Gen. 2:24; Ps. 45:1-2, 10-15; Song 4:9-5:1; 6:4-5; 7:10; 8:6-8; Isa. 54:4-6; 62:2-5; Jer. 2:2; 3:14; 31:32; Ezek. 16:13-15, 32; 23:1-45; Hos. 1:2; 2:7, 14-23; 3:1-5).

- B. The Scriptures and human history begin with a bridegroom (Adam) and his bride (Eve) in the garden of Eden and end with a Bridegroom and His Bride in a garden paradise (New Jerusalem).

- C. God created Adam and Eve in His very image and likeness, with a capacity to relate to Him in a deep way (Gen. 1:26-27). The design of humans in God’s image, with this capacity to relate to Him, was a statement of His desire for intimate partnership with human beings.

<sup>26</sup>***Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness...”***

<sup>27</sup>***In the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. (Gen. 1:26-27)***

1. The human spirit has the unique capacity to receive God’s Spirit, or life (Gk. *zoé*).

<sup>17</sup>***But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit with Him. (1 Cor. 6:17)***

2. The human soul has personality capacities and abilities like God so that we can relate to Him.

- a. ***Mind***: We have the capacity for reason, revelation, and creative thinking.
- b. ***Emotions***: We have the capacity for intense affection, joy, gladness, zeal, holy anger, etc.
- c. ***Will***: We have a free will with the capacity for dignified actions by making decisions that have eternal consequences of being remembered, valued, and rewarded by God forever.

3. Redeemed humans will have a resurrected body that reflects Jesus’ glory (Phil 3:21).

<sup>21</sup>***...will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body... (Phil. 3:21)***

- D. 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:** She is a “suitable companion,” relating to God in intimacy without shame (Gen. 2:18-24). Paul interpreted Gen. 2:24 as God speaking about Jesus and the Church (Eph. 5:31-32).  
*<sup>21</sup>God caused a deep sleep to fall on Adam, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs... <sup>22</sup>He made into a woman...<sup>24</sup>A man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. <sup>25</sup>They were both...not ashamed. (Gen. 2:24-25)*  
*<sup>31</sup>A man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh. <sup>32</sup>This is a great mystery...I speak concerning Christ and the church. (Eph. 5:31-32)*
  2. **Rebekah:** She is a picture of the Bride, with a heart of obedience and servanthood (Gen. 24). Abraham commissioned his most trusted servant (probably Eliezer, a picture of the Spirit) to find a bride for his son Isaac. When Eliezer came to Rebekah’s town, she offered to water all ten of his camels, showing her extravagant response to the Lord.
  3. **Ruth:** She is a picture of the Bride being raised up among the Gentiles, one “who left all,” including her father’s house, in her dedication to Naomi and the God of Israel (Ruth 1:16).
  4. **Esther:** She is a picture of the Bride reigning with authority and triumphing over the enemy. She is a model of courageously risking all (Esth. 4:16) to stand for the Lord and His people.

### III. THE BETROTHAL OF ISRAEL TO GOD IN THE WILDERNESS (EX. 19; JER. 2:2)

- A. Jeremiah understood that the covenant that God had made with Israel at Mt. Sinai was the Lord’s betrothal to Israel (Jer. 2:2; 31:32). In the ancient world, a couple were legally married on the day they were betrothed. Each one made binding covenant commitments to give their all to each other. The fullness of the marriage between Jesus and His Bride occurs when He returns (Rev. 19:7-10).  
*<sup>2</sup>Cry in the hearing of Jerusalem, saying, “...I remember you, the kindness [devotion; NAS, NIV] of your youth, the love of your betrothal, when you went after Me in the wilderness.” (Jer. 2:2)*  
*<sup>32</sup>“...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)*
- B. Moses described the time when God made this marriage covenant with Israel (Ex. 19:1-20). Israel’s first meeting with God was a prophetic picture of the glory of Jesus’ second coming.  
*<sup>5</sup>If you will...keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people...  
<sup>16</sup>...there were thunderings and lightnings...and the sound of the trumpet was very loud...  
<sup>17</sup>Moses brought the people out of the camp to meet with God...<sup>18</sup>Mount Sinai was completely in smoke, because the LORD descended upon it in fire...the whole mountain quaked greatly. <sup>19</sup>And when the blast of the trumpet sounded long...God answered him by voice. (Ex. 19:5, 16-19)*
- C. Jeremiah began his ministry with a bridal perspective of God’s kingdom (Jer. 2-3). He trumpeted this message in 626 BC, about five years before Josiah’s reform of Judah in 621 BC (2 Chr. 34).  
*<sup>14</sup>“Return, O backsliding children,” says the LORD, “for I am married to you.” (Jer. 3:14)*

#### IV. HOSEA WAS THE FIRST TO PROCLAIM THE LORD AS A BRIDEGROOM

- A. God commanded Hosea to marry a prostitute (1:2). The Lord wanted Hosea’s pain-filled marriage to be a prophetic picture of the pain that God felt in His relationship with Israel (Hos. 1-3).

<sup>2</sup>*When the LORD began to speak by Hosea, the LORD said...“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. This difficult life experience equipped Hosea to be the *first* prophet to make known the Lord as a Bridegroom—this revelation was given in the context of God’s judgment on Israel (Hos. 2). Only by understanding His heart as a Bridegroom can we interpret His judgments. Hosea began to prophesy to the northern kingdom of Israel around 760 BC during a time of national prosperity; he prophesied for about 40 years, calling Israel to repent, before the Assyria invasion in 721 BC.

- C. God compared Hosea’s unfaithful wife to the nation of Israel (2:2-13). In a time of pain in the end times, Israel will confess, “I will return to my husband (the Lord), for it was better for me.”

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

- D. The Lord promised to allure backslidden Israel with His kindness and beauty (2:14). Israel will accept Jesus as Messiah when they see Him as Husband (2:16)—the Bridegroom King. Calling Jesus “my Husband” in the singular is personal, whereas we pray “our Father” in the plural.

<sup>14</sup>*“I will allure her [Israel]...<sup>16</sup>In that day...you will call Me “My Husband.” (Hos. 2:14-16)*

- E. In being betrothed to His people, the Lord made binding commitments to give them all of His heart.

<sup>19</sup>*“I will betroth you to Me forever; yes, I will betroth you to Me in righteousness and justice, in lovingkindness and mercy; <sup>20</sup>I will betroth you to Me in faithfulness.” (Hos. 2:19-20)*

1. **Righteousness**—All of His methods, motives, and results cause righteousness to increase.
2. **Justice**—He wakes up His people with divine discipline that is neither too severe nor too lenient. There will be no injustice in His leadership in the pressure that He allows to come.
3. **Lovingkindness**—He does everything because of His great love for His people.
4. **Mercy**—He acts toward His people with tenderness and abundant mercy.
5. **Faithfulness**—He will fulfill all of His promises. He is a reliable Husband.

- F. Hosea described Jesus’ “bridal gift” to His Bride as restoring the animals (2:18), the atmosphere (2:21), and the agriculture (2:22) to the conditions of Eden and causing wars to cease (2:18).

<sup>18</sup>*“In that day I will make a covenant for them with the beasts of the field, with the birds of the air ...Bow and sword of battle I will shatter...to make them lie down safely.” (Hos. 2:18)*

- G. Hosea was required to love his wife and pay to redeem her from slavery (Hos. 3:1-5).

<sup>1</sup>*“Go love a woman who is...committing adultery, just like the love of the LORD for [Israel]...” <sup>2</sup>I bought her for myself... <sup>5</sup>Israel shall...seek the LORD...in the latter days. (Hos. 3:1-5)*

## V. OTHER OLD TESTAMENT PASSAGES

- A. Ezekiel described Israel as an adulterous wife (Ezek. 16:13-15, 32; 23:1-45).

<sup>13</sup>**“You were exceedingly beautiful, and succeeded to royalty. <sup>14</sup>Your fame went out among the nations because of your beauty, for it was perfect through My splendor...”** says the Lord GOD.  
<sup>15</sup>**“But you trusted in your own beauty, played the harlot because of your fame, and poured out your harlotry...”**<sup>32</sup>**You are an adulterous wife, who takes strangers instead of her husband.”**  
(Ezek. 16:13-15, 32)

- B. The dedication of the Bride of Christ ravishes the heart of the Bridegroom King (Song 4:9-10).

<sup>9</sup>**You have ravished my heart, my sister, my spouse; you have ravished my heart with one look of your eyes...**<sup>10</sup>**How fair is your love... How much better than wine is your love.** (Song 4:9-10)

<sup>4</sup>**O my love, you are as beautiful as Tirzah, lovely as Jerusalem, awesome as an army with banners!** <sup>5</sup>**Turn your eyes [of devotion] away from me, for they have overcome me.** (Song 6:4-5)

- C. The King desires the beauty of the Bride’s extravagant, sacrificial love (Ps. 45:10-11). The only thing that God does not have—something He will not take by force—is your voluntary love.

<sup>1</sup>**I recite my composition concerning the King [the Bridegroom King]...**<sup>10</sup>**Listen, O daughter... forget your own people, and your father’s house;** <sup>11</sup>**so the King will greatly desire your beauty...**  
(Ps. 45:1, 10-11)

<sup>26</sup>**“If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother...he cannot be My disciple.”**  
(Lk. 14:26)

## VI. ISAIAH: REVELATION OF THE BRIDEGROOM GOD

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

<sup>4</sup>**Do not fear, for you will not be ashamed...**<sup>5</sup>**For your Maker is your husband, the LORD of hosts is His name...He is called the God of the whole earth.** (Isa. 54:4-5)

1. As the Lord of Hosts, He is a “warrior God,” and as God of the earth, He is transcendent.
2. This was a startling, new insight for Israel, to see the transcendent God of power as the Bridegroom God, who had deep desire for relationship with His people.
3. *Bridegroom* describes the essence of who Jesus is and what His personality is like. In nature and personality, He is a Bridegroom; by position and function, He is a King.

- B. The redeemed shall receive a new name from the Lord, who “delights in His people” (Isa. 62:4). The revelation of the Bridegroom in 62:4-5 is essential to sustaining night-and-day prayer in 62:6-7.

<sup>4</sup>**You [see your name here] shall no longer be termed Forsaken...you shall be called Hephzibah... for the LORD delights in you...**<sup>5</sup>**For as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so shall your God rejoice over you.** <sup>6</sup>**I have set watchmen on your walls, O Jerusalem; they shall never hold their peace day or night. You who make mention of the LORD, do not keep silent,** <sup>7</sup>**and give Him no rest till He establishes and till He makes Jerusalem a praise in the earth.** (Isa. 62:4-7)