

# ZOOM STUDY: IMPORTANT BIBLICAL SYMBOLS

## IDOLATRY & ADULTERY

- 1.) What does it mean to “adulterate” something? While all sins are equally evil, inexcusable, and condemning in God’s sight, few sins are as destructive as the act of adultery. How is this so?
- 2.) How is adultery a fitting parallel to idolatry?
- 3.) Throughout the Old Testament, the Lord refers to himself as the husband and to the Israelites as the bride. Why was this comparison such a comfort to the faithful in Israel?

**Isaiah 54:5, 10** “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. ...Though the mountains be shaken and the hills be removed, yet my unfailing love for you will not be shaken nor my covenant of peace be removed,” says the LORD, who has compassion on you.

**Isaiah 62:3-5** [Zion] will be a crown of splendor in the LORD’s hand, a royal diadem in the hand of your God. No longer will they call you Deserted, or name your land Desolate. But you will be called [“my delight is in her”], and your land [“married”]; for the LORD will take delight in you, and your land will be married. 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.

- 4.) How did the majority of the Israelites treat their loving “husband”?

**1 Kings 19:18** “I reserve seven thousand in Israel—all whose knees have not bowed down to Baal and all whose mouths have not kissed him.”

**Jeremiah 3:6-10** 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. 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. 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. Because Israel’s immorality mattered so little to her, she defiled the land and committed adultery with stone and wood. In spite of all this, her unfaithful sister Judah did not return to me with all her heart, but only in pretense,” declares the LORD.

**Ezekiel 16:26, 28-29** “You engaged in prostitution with the Egyptians, your lustful neighbors, and provoked me to anger with your increasing promiscuity. ...You engaged in prostitution with the Assyrians too, because you were insatiable; and even after that, you still were not satisfied. Then you increased your promiscuity to include Babylonia, a land of merchants, but even with this you were not satisfied.”

- 5.) What is Jesus Christ in relationship to the church? How does he serve in that capacity?

**Ephesians 5:22-23, 25-27** Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord. 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. ...Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless.

6.) There was spiritual adultery in the Old Testament visible church (that is the nation of Israel), and the Bible says there will also be the same in the visible church during the New Testament era. Revelation 17 and 18 describe the “great prostitute,” who is in the visible church and “in bed with” the rulers of the world and opposes the true church of God. What is the identity of this prostitute generally and specifically? What will happen to her in the end?

**Revelation 17:1-6, 15a, 9, 18** One of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and said to me, “Come, I will show you the punishment of the great prostitute, who sits on many waters. With her the kings of the earth committed adultery and the inhabitants of the earth were intoxicated with the wine of her adulteries.” Then the angel carried me away in the Spirit into a desert. There I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast that was covered with blasphemous names and had seven heads and ten horns. The woman was dressed in purple and scarlet, and was glittering with gold, precious stones and pearls. She held a golden cup in her hand, filled with abominable things and the filth of her adulteries. This title was written on her forehead: MYSTERY BABYLON THE GREAT THE MOTHER OF PROSTITUTES AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH. I saw that the woman was drunk with the blood of the saints, the blood of those who bore testimony to Jesus. When I saw her, I was greatly astonished. ...Then the angel said to me, “...The seven heads are seven hills on which the woman sits. ...The woman you saw is the great city that rules over the kings of the earth.”

**Revelation 18:1-5, 8, 21** After this I saw another angel coming down from heaven. He had great authority, and the earth was illuminated by his splendor. With a mighty voice he shouted: “Fallen! Fallen is Babylon the Great! She has become a home for demons and a haunt for every evil spirit, a haunt for every unclean and detestable bird. For all the nations have drunk the maddening wine of her adulteries. The kings of the earth committed adultery with her, and the merchants of the earth grew rich from her excessive luxuries.” Then I heard another voice from heaven say: “Come out of her, my people, so that you will not share in her sins, so that you will not receive any of her plagues; for her sins are piled up to heaven, and God has remembered her crimes. ...Therefore in one day her plagues will overtake her: death, mourning and famine. She will be consumed by fire, for mighty is the Lord God who judges her.” ...Then a mighty angel picked up a boulder the size of a large millstone and threw it into the sea, and said: “With such violence the great city of Babylon will be thrown down, never to be found again.”

7.) How does the church, Christ’s bride, make herself ready for the wedding feast, the final everlasting union with God?

**Isaiah 61:10** I delight greatly in the LORD; my soul rejoices in my God. For he has clothed me with garments of salvation and arrayed me in a robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom adorns his head like a priest, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.

**Revelation 19:6-8** 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.)

*Closing Prayer: Bridegroom Jesus, thank you for betrothing yourself to us and for granting us an intimate, loving union with you. Lead us to respond to your love by faithfully and entirely living for you alone until we are yours forever in the glories of heaven. Amen.*