

Holy Spirit Guided Ministry
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Is The Church The Bride Or The Body Of Christ? What Does The Word Say?

What have Christians heard preached from the pulpit in churches and on television for many years? Has it not been that the church is the bride of Christ? The word of God in Ephesians 5:27 it is written “**27** *That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.*” (KJV) Preacher after preacher and church after church uses the word bride instead of church when they quote Ephesians. Are they correct in changing the wording of the word of God? If we are to be ambassadors of Christ, we must know the truth of the word of God and speak that truth as Jesus Christ spoke the truth as he fulfilled the Law of Moses. We must remember what God said to Moses about building the earthly temple from the instructions God gave. If we speak contrary to the written word of God, we speak from the flesh man and not the spirit man. The word of God says who the bride is and who is the body is.

Let us refer to the word of God and find the truth that we may be set free as we put our roots down deep in Jesus Christ. This is written in the word of God. **Colossians 1:18** **18** Christ is the head of the church, which is his body. He is the first of all who will rise from the dead, so he is first in everything. (NLT) **Ephesians 1:22-23** **22** *And God has put all things under the authority of Christ, and he gave him this authority for the benefit of the church.* **23** And the church is his body; it is filled by Christ, who fills everything everywhere with his presence.(NLT) Colossians and Ephesians both reveals that Jesus is the Head of the church and the church his body. The body is always referred to as the same gender as the Head. These two Scriptures state who the church is. Let us search more of the written word of God to verify these two Scriptures.

Look what Paul wrote in **Galatians 3:27-28** **27** *For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.* **28** There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. (KJV) If we are one in Christ, then we are his body as stated in Colossians 1:18 and Ephesians 1:22-23.

Paul said or wrote that by his sufferings he was completing what remains of Christ's sufferings for his body, the church. **Colossians 1:24 24** *I am glad when I suffer for you in my body, for I am completing what remains of Christ's sufferings for his body, the church.* (NLT)

Paul describes that we are to grow in him (Christ) in all things who is the head, and the whole body will be fitted together perfectly **Ephesians 4:15-16 15** *Instead, we will hold to the truth in love, becoming more and more in every way like Christ, who is the head of his body, the church.* **16** *Under his direction, the whole body is fitted together perfectly. As each part does its own special work, it helps the other parts grow, so that the whole body is healthy and growing and full of love.* (NLT)

What did Jesus say to Paul (Saul) as he journeyed toward Damascus? **Acts 9:3-4 3** *And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven: 4 And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?* (KJV) This scripture will lend support to the fact that the Church is Christ's body. Notice that Jesus did not question why Saul was persecuting his bride. Instead, His question was "why persecutest thou me?" The Church is his body as it is written in Colossians 1:18 and Ephesians 1:22-23. Jesus was telling Paul it is my body you are persecuting.

Ephesians 5:30 *For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.* (KJV) We are one with Christ; we are his body, his flesh and his bone. Paul leaves no doubt that we take on Christ's gender for identity's sake as we become 'one with him'. In Acts 8:1 there was great persecution against the church which is the Body of Christ. **Acts 8:1** *And Saul was consenting unto his death [Stephen]. And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria, except the apostles.* (KJV)

From the written word of God and God cannot lie, we have established the church is the body of Christ being members of his body, of his flesh and of his bones. Then who is the bride if it is not the church? Before we answer let us consider how the word bride as used in the word of God.

In doing a word search for bride in the Kings James Bible it is used fourteen times, nine times in the Old Testament and five times in the New Testament. (Isaiah 49:18, 61:10, 62:5; Jeremiah 2:32, 7:34, 16:9, 25:10, 33:11; Joel 2:16; John 3:29; Revelation 18:23, 21:2, 21:9, 22:17) The usage of the word bride is used as the bride of a husband (a wife) or as a bride in **symbolism** (1: the art or practice of using symbols especially by investing things with a symbolic meaning or by expressing the invisible or intangible by means of visible or sensuous representations) or as a **metaphor** (a figure of speech in which a word or phrase literally denoting one kind of object or idea is used in place of another to suggest a likeness or analogy between them.). In Song of Songs, Solomon used the bride as a metaphor representing the Church which is the body of Christ throughout. Solomon also used the King in Song of Songs symbolically as Jesus Christ showing his love to the bride and leading her to maturity

From the word of God we know the church is the body of Christ. If we still insist the church is the bride of Christ, it has to be identified as symbolism or as a metaphor to be correct in our speaking. In Ephesians 5:21-30, Paul uses the husband and wife as a metaphor or symbolism. The husband is the head as Christ is the head. As the wife submits to the husband, the body (the Church) must submit to Christ the head. Only being washed in the water by the Word can the church be presented to Christ as a glorious Church without spot or wrinkle, being holy and

without blemish when he, Christ comes again. **Ephesians 5:21-30** ²¹ Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God. ²² Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. ²³ For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. ²⁴ Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing. ²⁵ Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; ²⁶ That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, ²⁷ That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. ²⁸ So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. ²⁹ For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church: ³⁰ For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. (KJV)

Consider also if the church was the bride of Christ, Christians would have no authority to use the name of Christ. A bride does not have the authority to use the grooms name before marriage. If the church, the body of Christ was identified as the bride of Christ in Scripture, then we would not have the legal right to take on His identity or be considered one with Him. Scripture after scripture reveals He has already given us His name to use; therefore we cannot be the bride or the betrothed. If we were, we would not have the keys to his Kingdom or the authority to use his name. The word of God says we do have the authority to use the name of Jesus when we pray. **John 16:23-26** ²³ *And in that day ye shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you.* ²⁴ *Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.* ²⁵ *These things have I spoken unto you in proverbs: but the time cometh, when I shall no more speak unto you in proverbs, but I shall shew you plainly of the Father.* ²⁶ *At that day ye shall ask in my name: and I say not unto you, that I will pray the Father for you:* (KJV) And **Mark 16:17-18** ¹⁷ *And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; ¹⁸ They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.* (KJV)

John was a prophet and referred to himself as “the friend of the bridegroom” for the church had not been officially established at that time. John did not say betrothed to Christ but a friend. **John 3:29** ²⁹ *He that hath the bride is the bridegroom: but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice: this my joy therefore is fulfilled.* (KJV) Jesus speaks of the children of the bridechamber while the bridegroom is with them. **Matthew 9:15** ¹⁵ *And Jesus said unto them, Can the children of the bridechamber mourn, as long as the bridegroom is with them? but the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken from them, and then shall they fast.* (KJV) **Matthew 9:15** ¹⁵ *Jesus responded, "Should the wedding guests mourn while celebrating with the groom? Someday he will be taken from them, and then they will fast.* (NLT) Can wedding guests be the bride also? Revelation 19:9 answers that question **Revelation 19:9** ⁹ *And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God.* (KJV)

We have the invitation to the wedding feast, if we are invited as guests, then who is the bride adorned in white linen in Revelation 19:7-8? ⁷ *Let us be glad and rejoice and honor him. For the time has come for the wedding feast of the Lamb, and his bride has prepared herself.* ⁸ *She is*

permitted to wear the finest white linen." (Fine linen represents the good deeds done by the people of God.) (NLT)

There are the only two Scriptures that gives reference and definition as to who a bride is. John in Revelation 21:2 describes the New Jerusalem as a bride (a metaphor) adorned for her husband. But in Revelation 21:9-10, John is shown who the bride is. **Revelation 21:2** ² *And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.* (KJV) Only in Revelation 21:9-10 is a description of the bride and who the bride is for. The Word of God is truth and if we are the children of God, we must speak the truth of the Word and not the doctrines of man. **Revelation 21:9-10** ⁹ *And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife.* ¹⁰ *And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God,* (KJV) The Word of God states who the bride is and it is not the Church

Revelation 3:12 confirms that Christ and His Body (the Church) will be one with that holy city, the New Jerusalem. **Revelation 3:12** ¹² *Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name.* (KJV)

In **Revelation 22:17** *And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.* (KJV) Who are the Spirit and the bride that says come to in verse 17? If the bride is the Church then who is being invited? Does this not say by the context of the verse that the bride was considered to be separate from the church? Remember that the book of Revelation was written to the church. So from verse 17 'he that heareth' is the church being the body of Christ. The church cannot be the bride. Also in Revelation 21:11 describes what the bride of the Lamb was filled with. ¹¹ *It was filled with the glory of God and sparkled like a precious gem, crystal clear like jasper.* (NLT) The New Jerusalem is filled with the glory of God and in Revelation 22:17 the Spirit and the bride say. Come. Who is calling out Come? Is it not the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit?

Then in **Revelation 21:26-27** it states--²⁶ *And all the nations will bring their glory and honor into the city.* ²⁷ *Nothing evil will be allowed to enter--no one who practices shameful idolatry and dishonesty--but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's Book of Life.* (NLT) Who are all the nations (the people) bringing their glory and honor into the city? Is it not the people who have reigned with Christ that were not deceived by Satan after the one thousand years? Who abides in the city until the nations (the people) bring their glory and honor? The answer is in **Revelation 21:22-24--22** *And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it.* ²³ *And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.* ²⁴ *And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it.* (KJV)

We see that the Word of God is its own witness. If we claim to be children of God, we must live in the truth of the Word and speak the truth of the Word. If we speak not the truth of his Word, then we are in disobedience to his Word. Are we then disciples of Jesus Christ? What does the Word of God say? **1 John 2:3-6** ³ *And how can we be sure that we belong to him? By*

obeying his commandments. ⁴ If someone says, "I belong to God," but doesn't obey God's commandments, that person is a liar and does not live in the truth. ⁵ But those who obey God's word really do love him. That is the way to know whether or not we live in him. ⁶ Those who say they live in God should live their lives as Christ did. (NLT) Did not Jesus Christ speak the truth at all times? If we are to be imitators of Christ and the light of Christ is to shine through us, we must speak as Christ spoke. We must not be tempted to follow current leaders who misquote the word church in Ephesians 5:27 as the bride. Using the word bride as a symbol or metaphor to describe the body of Christ is okay. But when we start calling the Church the bride of Christ, this is a false statement and does not line up with the Word of God. Amen.