

“Behold the man!”

The titles and descriptions of Jesus of Nazareth

19. The husband of the ecclesia

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THIS ARTICLE and the next three (the ruler, the nourisher and the instructor of the ecclesia) are properly linked together. I have separated them so that the individual actions of our Lord might be clearer. The reader will, I trust, appreciate that ruling, nourishing and instructing are the chief functions of a husband. All of us will agree that the example for husbands to follow is that of Christ. In an age when the God-given authority of the husband to direct and care for the family is under siege, it is increasingly important to keep our perspectives right. We would never accuse Jesus of chauvinism or of belittling the ecclesia; we should not have cause to do so of husbands either. We would never see Jesus put himself first and the ecclesia second; husbands must act similarly. There are great lessons for our lives in the parable of Christ and the ecclesia.

Bridegroom

This title is found of Jesus only in the Gospels. It is used on several occasions, all of them in parable. The contexts of the passages clearly indicate that the bridegroom is Jesus. This thought is picked up by the Apostle Paul in Ephesians 5. Evidently Paul is making a comparison between the role of Jesus Christ as the husband of the ecclesia and men as husbands of their wives. Consider these points concerning husbands and wives from the latter part of the chapter:

- wives should submit to husbands as they submit to Christ (v. 22)
- the husband is the head of the wife, just like Christ (v. 23)
- the husband should be a saviour for the wife, just like Christ (v. 23)
- wives should be subject to their husbands, as the ecclesia is to Christ (v. 24)
- husbands should love their wives, just like Christ (v. 25)

- husbands should cherish and care for their wives, just like Christ (v. 29).

We cannot fail to understand the point. Jesus Christ is, for the bride, the ideal husband. The demonstration of love and care from our Lord that evokes submission and obedience in us is the same as that in the relationship between husband and wife.

The position Jesus now occupies is that of the betrothed bridegroom. This is not to minimise the relationship at all. The bridegroom has given the ultimate commitment to the marriage and continues to care for the wife. The bridegroom is absent, preparing with his Father the circumstances for the marriage celebration. The bride has covenanted herself to the bridegroom and eagerly awaits his return. In the minds of both Christ and his bride they are married. The celebration of the marriage has not been yet, but they treat each other as their spouse. There is preparation on both sides; the wife is preparing and the bridegroom also.

Consider the account of the marriage in Revelation 19:6-9: “And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to Him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb”.

Our Lord will not want us for his bride if we are unprepared. If we do not in our own lives and marriages display attitudes that are right then we will be like the foolish virgins of Matthew 25 and will be denied a place at the marriage supper of the Lamb.

[\(To be continued\)](#)