

## **PERTH BIBLE CLASS.**

### **BRIDES OF SCRIPTURE: THE CHURCH.**

**INTRODUCTION:** The Church in the context of this lesson is the sum total of every believer in the Lord Jesus from Pentecost to the Rapture, the “church of the firstborn (ones) which are written in heaven” (Heb. 12.23). The local church is described as “a chaste virgin”, espoused to Christ (2 Cor. 11.2), and in the context the emphasis is not so much on the moral purity of the assembly, but rather on the need for doctrinal purity.

The Church is seen under three major figures in the Ephesian letter.

- 1) **A BODY.** E.g. ch.1.23, and the emphasis is on Divine Authority; Christ is the Head, ch.6.23.
- 2) **A BUILDING.** Ch. 2.19-22, and the emphasis is on Divine Activity; Christ is the Builder, Matt.16.18.
- 3) **A BRIDE.** Ch. 6.22-33, and the emphasis is on Divine Affection; Christ is the Bridegroom, He loved the church, V.25.

While the church is never found in the Old Testament, some of the brides of the OT are pictures of the church as our recent studies have shown.

- 1) **THE PURCHASE OF THE BRIDE.** a) The motivation for this was love: “Christ also loved the church” Eph. 6.25. b) The cost involved: He “gave himself for it”. c) The purpose: “that he might sanctify it etc”, V 26. In our individual experiences, this took place at conversion. We were sanctified (set apart to Him) because His blood was shed (Heb.13.12), and when we put our faith in Him (Acts 26.18). The cleansing involved the application of the Word, “the washing of regeneration” Titus 3.5, the Word being the instrument God uses to effect the new birth (1Peter 1.23).
- 2) **THE PRESENTATION OF THE BRIDE.** He will “present it to himself” V27. Such is the effectiveness of His work that she will be without spot and wrinkle, i.e. flawless and ageless. She will be holy and without blemish, as He is. No wonder Paul says, “a glorious church”. The occasion of **THE MARRIAGE OF THE LAMB** is described in Rev.19.7. The reference to *the Lamb* is another reminder of the cost to make us His bride. Possibly the reference to her “making herself ready” is an allusion to the Judgement Seat of Christ. Her wedding robe is mentioned, fine linen clean and white. This is symbolic of “the righteousness of saints”, i.e. figuratively, our righteous acts on earth are woven into the bridal garment. The Marriage Supper of the Lamb will celebrate the official union of Christ and His church. Guests (they which are called, V9) will be saints out with the church age, e.g. John Baptist who described himself as “the friend of the bridegroom”, John 3.29.

3) **THE PURITY OF THE BRIDE.** This has been suggested already in the reference to her being a glorious church, and the allusion to her linen wedding garment. In this she stands in contrast to Satan's counterfeit church of Revelation 17. It is depicted as a harlot, and not a spotless bride. This harlot has no linen garment but is arrayed in purple and scarlet, and "decked" with gaudy jewellery. She has a gold cup in her hand and is drunk. The features of this latter day Babylon are already in evidence all around in Christendom today, but Revelation 17 awaits a future fulfilment of course. Imitation has been a major satanic ploy from the days of Babel when they used brick instead of stone and slime instead of mortar, Gen. 10.3. By the book of Revelation, his imitation lamb is shown to be more like a dragon (ch.13.11) and his imitation church is a drunkard, intoxicated by the blood of the martyrs. By contrast, purity characterises the true church, The Lamb's Wife.