



# The Sword & The Plow

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## The Marriage of the Lamb

*Kurt Simmons*

The marriage of the Lamb is an eschatological theme, tied to the second coming of Christ (Matt. 25: 1-13). What is the significance of this imagery and when was it fulfilled?

### **Marriage Imagery in the Old Testament - Covenant with Israel**

In the Old Testament, the imagery of marriage was a symbol for the law of Moses and covenant with Israel. God espoused (betrothed) Israel to himself in the exodus from Egypt.

*"I remember thee, the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals, when thou wentest after me in the wilderness, in a land that was not sown" (Jer. 2:2).*

God "married" Israel when he entered into a covenant with her:

*"Now when I passed by thee, and looked upon thee, behold, thy time was the time of love; and I spread my skirt over thee, and covered thy nakedness: yea, I swore unto thee and entered into a covenant with thee, saith the Lord God, and thou becamest mine" (Ezek. 16:8).*

The language of "spreading his skirt" over Israel (consummating the marriage) should probably be interpreted as Moses setting up the tabernacle and the "glory cloud" filling it (Ex. 40:17-38), representing God dwelling with his people and cohabitating with his bride. Marriage requires faithfulness in the spouses; adultery and fornication are causes for divorce. As Israel and Judah proved unfaithful to the Old Covenant,

God divorced the nation. This occurred in the Assyrio-Babylonian exile, when God "put away" his wife for her adulteries:

*"Wherefore, O harlot, hear the word of the Lord: Thus saith the Lord God; Because thy filthiness was poured out, and thy nakedness discovered through thy whoredoms with thy lovers, and with all the idols of thy abominations, and by the blood of thy children, which thou did give unto them: Behold, therefore I will gather all thy lovers, with whom thou hast taken pleasure, and all them that thou hast loved, with all them that thou hast hated; I will even gather them around about against thee, and will discover thy nakedness unto them, that they may see all thy nakedness And I will judge thee, as women that break wedlock and shed blood are judged; and I will give thee blood in fury and jealousy" (Ezek. 16:35-38).*

Although Israel and Judah were faithless, God's purpose to redeem mankind required that the Jews not be cast off forever just yet. Christ had to be born in Bethlehem and die upon a Roman cross. Therefore, God "remarried" Israel by bringing back the nation out of captivity, returning them to the land. In the following passage, widowhood refers to divorce; the law deemed a divorced woman "dead" to the law of her ex-husband:

*Sing, O barren, thou that didst not bear; break forth into singing, and cry aloud thou that didst not travail with child: for more are the children of the desolate than the children of the married wife, saith the Lord. Enlarge the place of thy tents, and let them stretch forth the curtains of thine habitations: spare not, lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy stakes; for thou shalt break forth on the right hand and on the left: and thy see shall inherit the Gentiles, and make the desolate cities to be inhabited. Fear not; for thou shalt not be ashamed: neither be thou confounded; for thou shalt not be put to shame: for thou shalt forget the shame of thy youth, and shalt not remember the reproach of thy widowhood any more. For thy Maker is thine husband; and Lord of host is his name; and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel; the God of the whole earth shall he be called. For the Lord hath called thee as a woman forsaken and grieved in spirit, and a wife of youth, when thou wast refused, saith thy God. For a small moment have I forsaken thee; but with great mercies*

*will I gather thee. In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the Lord thy Redeemer" (Isa. 54:1-8)*

This passage, typical of many Old Testament prophecies, looks beyond the restoration of Israel to Palestine following the Assyrio-Babylonian exile, and anticipates the salvation of Christ. The "married" woman refers to Israel before the captivity; the "desolate" woman refers to Israel during the captivity. The reproach of Israel's widowhood (divorce) would be forgotten in the kindness God showed by returning her to the land, and bringing Christ into the world. The children of the "desolate" would be more than the children of pre-captivity Israel: Christ would come, the gospel would be proclaimed among the Gentiles, and the ranks of the faithful would break forth on every side. This leads us to the New Testament.

### **Marriage Imagery in the New Testament**

John the Baptist was the first to make reference to marriage imagery in the New Testament:

*"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" (Jn. 3:29).*

Christ is the bridegroom; John is his forerunner and friend; the bride is spiritual Israel. That Jesus is the bridegroom identifies him as divine, for it is God who marries Israel. Moreover, that he is called the bridegroom, and not husband, shows that his appearance heralds the coming of a new covenant wherein he will become husband to his new bride. In the mosaic economy, God had married national Israel, but in the New Testament economy, the covenant people consist of men of every race and language who respond to the gospel call. Some call this "replacement theology" whereby the church replaces national, ethnic Jews; we call it basic, gospel instruction:

*"For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel: neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children: but, in Isaac shall thy seed be called. That is, they which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed" (Rom. 9:6-8).*

In terms of chronology, the marriage of Christ to the bride shapes up this way:

- Death on Calvary (AD 33): Legal termination of the Old Testament, first marriage terminated; Christ espoused to new bride.
- Pentecost thru Second Coming (AD 33-70): Betrothal period; bride washed and purified by the blood of Christ, looking to the consummation.
- Second Coming: Marriage consummated (AD 70); Christ cohabits with wife in the New Jerusalem (church).

Let us survey the scripture where these lessons are found.

### **Calvary: Legal Termination of Old Testament, Espousal of Christ to Bride**

There are few things clearer than the fact that the Old Testament legally terminated at the cross. Unbelieving Jews may have tried to keep the temple ritual and law alive, but there is no contradicting the fact that Jesus' death on Calvary fulfilled the law's demand of blood sacrifice, ending the legal efficacy of the mosaic law. Daniel makes this perfectly clear when he said "in the midst of the week" Messiah would cause the "sacrifice and oblation" to legally cease (Dan. 9:27). "Midst of the week" points to the middle of the final prophetic week, and was fulfilled by Jesus' death at the end of his 3 1/2 year ministry. This is fully confirmed over and over again by Paul, but nowhere more clearly than in Romans seven:

*"Know ye not, brethren, (for I speak to them that know the law,) how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth? For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband. So then if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man. Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God" (Rom. 7:14)*

This passage teaches us that the law of the first husband (Old Testament) ended at the death of Christ. Jesus was national Israel's husband, the God of the Old Testament clothed upon with humanity. When he died on Calvary, national Israel was widowed and

husbandless, and the Old Testament was annulled. Israel was "loosed from the law," made "free from the law," and "dead to the law," so they could enter a new covenant and new marriage under the gospel of the resurrected Christ. Those who respond to the gospel call were espoused to Christ and become the church and bride. Thus, national, ethnic Israel and the law of Moses were left behind at Calvary, and spiritual Israel and the gospel of Christ began.

### **Pentecost to AD 70: Betrothal Period**

During the period from the cross until the second coming, the church was in a state of "betrothal" or "engagement." Paul thus says,

*"I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ" (I Cor. 11:2; cf. Eph. 5:24-27).*

In Jewish law, the betrothal period was equal in law to marriage and a woman who took another man during this period was just as guilty of adultery as a woman who was in a consummated marriage (Deut. 22:12-21; Matt. 1:18, 19). We sometimes hear it said that the couple lived together during the betrothal period, without consummating the marriage, but the Bible nowhere bears this out. Although betrothed, Joseph and Mary were not living together when she conceived by the Holy Ghost, for she went and lived with her kinswoman, Elizabeth, for three months (Lk.1: 39, 56). When she returned home and it was found that she was pregnant (for she now began to show), the angel instructed Joseph not to fear "to take unto thee Mary thy wife" and "Joseph being raised from sleep did as the angel of the Lord has bidden him, and took unto him his wife" (Matt. 1:23, 24). Thus, although deemed man and wife in contemplation of law during the betrothal period, the husband and wife lived apart. This is confirmed by the parable of the ten virgins, which places the marriage ceremony and consummation at Christ's second coming, after going into a "far country to receive a kingdom and return" (Matt. 25:1-13; Lk. 19:12).

### **Washed and Justified from Sin:**

#### **Destruction of Jerusalem AD 70, or Calvary AD 33?**

There is an error current among Preterists that says the old law was still valid, and that the church was not justified, but continued under the debt of sin until AD 70. Yet, Paul's whole analogy in Rom. 7:1-4 turns upon the hinge of the Old Testament's end at Calvary, terminating the law of the first husband, so that believers could enter a new covenant with a new

husband in Christ. If it is true that the Old Testament was still valid after the cross, then the church was an adulteress in taking a new husband in Christ. Such is the quandary created by those teaching "covenant eschatology," keeping the mosaic law and ritual alive beyond the cross of Christ.

Let God be true though every man a liar: The church was not an adulteress, the law had ended, and she was free to take a new husband under the gospel of the risen Savior. What about justification from sin: Would Christ consummate a marriage at his return with a bride soiled with sin? Of course he wouldn't. Thus, the bride was washed and justified during the betrothal so Christ could receive her chaste and pure at his return.

*"Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that the 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" (Eph. 5:25,-27).*

Brides are fastidious about their adornment on their wedding day. Everything must be perfect, "without spot or wrinkle." So, Christ washed and cleansed his bride from sin at Calvary, so that she might be glorious at his coming to consummate the marriage. We see this picture in Revelation, where the bride is robed in white raiment in preparation for the marriage, at the end of Christ's eschatological coming<sup>1</sup>:

*"Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor 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 the saints" (Rev. 19:7, 8).*

Thus, from AD 33 until the second coming, the church was in a state of purity and sanctification, washed by Christ's blood, waiting to consummate the marriage. She was clothed in fine linen, clean and white, showing that she was justified from sin. There is nothing to the error that the law was valid and the church continued under the debt of sin until AD 70.

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<sup>1</sup> We say "end of Christ's eschatological coming" for it is clear that the coming stretched at least over AD 66-70, the duration of war with Rome, but the marriage occurred only at this period's end.

## **AD 70: The Consummation of Lamb's Marriage with the Bride**

The second coming was the point at which the Lord came to dwell with his bride, and cohabit with her, symbolically enjoying the intimacy of sexual union. We see this in Rev. 21:2, 3 where the new Jerusalem comes down to earth:

*And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God...And there came 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. 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" (Rev. 21:2, 3, 9, 10).*

That she is called the "new Jerusalem" shows that she has replaced the old, earthly Jerusalem, which turned harlot, and was destroyed (cf. Rev. 11:8; 16:19; 18:21). The imagery of the new Jerusalem descending out of heaven does not mean the bride was formerly in heaven and is now come down. It is not the bride that is descending, but the habitation of God. The city above and the church below are made one, God inhabiting both. The woman, driven from Jerusalem into the wilderness in the persecution over Stephen (Acts 8:1; Rev. 12:6, 12), is no longer a homeless exile; she becomes the earthly seat of Christ's kingdom and throne, the new Jerusalem. The marriage now consummated, she is adorned and attired with gold and precious jewels, for she is heaven's queen:

*"Thy Maker is thine husband; the Lord of host is his name...O thou afflicted, tossed with tempest, and not comforted, behold, I will lay thy stone with fair colours, and lay thy foundations with sapphires. And I will make thy windows of agates, and thy gates of carbuncles, and all thy borders of pleasant stones" (Isa. 54:5, 11, 12; cf Rev. 21:18-21).*

### **Time of Fulfillment**

Since consummation of the marriage of the Lamb is an important proof that the book of Revelation is fulfilled

and the second coming a past event, it is worth pausing to provide proof of its timing.

We have already noted that the term "new Jerusalem" implies that it replaced "old Jerusalem" and serves to date fulfillment of the book. Revelation makes numerous specific references to the destruction of Jerusalem. Jerusalem is the "great city," the spiritual "Sodom and Egypt where also our Lord was crucified" (Rev. 11:8). The temple is portrayed as still standing, and the city to be given into the power of the Gentles to tread it under foot forty-two months, or three and a half years (Rev. 11:1, 2; Lk. 21:24). Jerusalem and Jewry are "Babylon, the Mother of Harlots," drunk with the blood of the saints. She is portrayed driving a scarlet colored "beast," which devours the saints (Rev. 17:1-6; 11:7). The beast bears the number of a man - 666 - whose equivalent in Hebrew characters adds up to Nero Caesar (NRWN QSR) (Rev. 13:1-10, 18). Identification of Nero with the beast is corroborated by John in chapter seventeen. The beast has seven heads which are the empire's kings: five were already fallen (Julius, Augustus, Tiberius, Caius, Claudius), one still reigns (Nero), and another was yet to come, who would continue only a short space (Galba, ruled 7 months). Finally, in Babylon the Harlot was found all the blood of prophets and saints, and all those slain upon the earth (Rev. 18:24). This echoes exactly Jesus' saying about Jerusalem:

*"Wherefore, behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes: and*

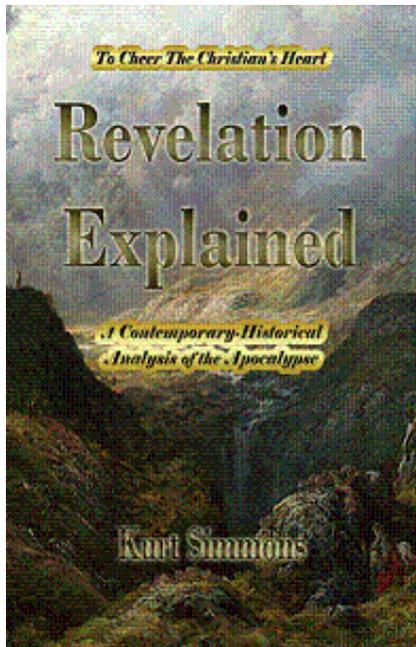
*some of them ye shall kill and crucify; and some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city: that upon you may come all the righteous blood upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and altar. Verily I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation" (Matt. 23:34-36).*

There are many more proofs tying the events described in Revelation to the time of Nero's persecution and the destruction of Jerusalem, but they are beyond the scope of the present study. Suffice it to say, the consummation of the Lamb's marriage is clearly tied to the time when the Jewish nation was taken away for its sins, and the Roman Empire experience the "year of four emperors" following the death of Nero.

### Conclusion

What was the marriage of the Lamb? The marriage was the point at which the Lord returned from heaven to dwell with his bride, and the church was clothed with the new Jerusalem, the capital city and earthly seat of Christ's throne.

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# Herodotus - The Winged Serpents of Arabia

*Editor's note: Herodotus is called the "father of historians". He was a Greek who wrote the history of the Persian Empire, its rise and Darius' invasion of Europe and Greece. He provides much important information about the ancient world. One interesting fact he speaks of is the winged serpents of Arabia. These are also treated in detail by Josephus in his history of the Exodus, and mentioned by the prophet Isaiah (Ant. II, x, 2; Isa.14:29 and 30:6). Isaiah's mention of the "flying serpent" is sometimes treated as evidence the Bible is not reliable and is not inspired, but here we see that history fully confirms the text. Moreover, what does Herodotus' account tell us about dinosaurs and creatures that lived within the memory of man, but are treated as having existed "millions" of years ago by evolutionists?*

"There is in a place in Arabia, situated very near the city of Buto, to which I went on hearing of some winged serpents; and when I arrived there, I saw bones and spines of serpents in such quantities as it would be impossible to describe: there were heaps of these spinal bones, some large, some smaller, and other still less; and there were great numbers of them. The place in which these spinal bones lie scattered is of the following description: it is a narrow pass between two mountains into a spacious plain; this plain is contiguous to the plain of Egypt; it is reported that, at the beginning of spring, winged serpents fly from Arabia toward Egypt; but that ibises, a sort of bird, meet them at the pass, and do not allow the serpents to go by, but kill them: for this service the Arabians say that the ibis is highly revered by the Egyptians, and the Egyptians acknowledge that they reverence these birds for this reason...the form of this serpent is like that of the water-snake; but he has wings without feathers, and as like as possible to the wings of a bat." Bk. II, ch. 75

"Again, Arabia is the farthest of the inhabited countries toward the south; and this is the only region in which grow frankincense, myrrh, cassia, cinnamon, and ledanum. All these, except myrrh, the Arabians gather with difficulty. The frankincense they gather by burning styrax, which the Phoenicians import into Greece; they take it by burning this; for winged serpents, small in size, and various in form, guard the trees that bear frankincense, a great number round each tree. These are the same serpents that invade Egypt. They are driven from the trees by nothing else but the smoke of the styrax. The Arabians say this also, that the whole land would be filled by these serpents if some such thing did not take place with regard to them, as I now happens to vipers...So also, if vipers and the

winged serpents of Arabia multiplied as fast as their nature admits, men could not possibly live. But now, when they couple together, and the male is in the very act of impregnating, as he emits the seed, the female seizes him by the neck and clinging to him, never lets him go until she has gnawed through him. In this manner the male dies, and the female pays the following retribution to the male: the offspring, while yet in the womb, avenging their father, eat through the matrix; and having gnawed through her bowels, thus make their entrance into the world, But other serpents, which are not hurtful to men, lay eggs, and hatch a vast number of young. Now vipers are found in all parts of the world; but flying serpents are abundant in Arabia, and nowhere else: there they appear to be very numerous." Bk. III ch. 107-109



# Mosaic Law Ended at the Cross

*Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ (Rom. 7:4)*

*Editor's Note: The following chart presents items of the Mosaic law on the left, and show from scripture on the right where they are specifically said to be abrogated at the cross and by gospel of Jesus Christ.*

The Law	Ended at the Cross
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Circumcision</b></p> <p><i>(Circumcision was the very essence of the Old Testament; it was the sign and seal of the Old Covenant; the land promises and all participation in the Jewish commonwealth stood upon this foundation. If circumcision was no longer valid, then none of the Old Testament law and ritual was valid.)</i></p>	<p>"But neither Titus, who was with me, being a Greek was compelled to be circumcised: and that because of false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage: to whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the gospel might continue with you" (Gal. 2:3-5).</p> <p>"Stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage. Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing...Christ is become of no effect unto you...ye are fallen from grace" (Gal. 5:1-4).</p> <p>"Beware of the concision [<i>e.g. Jews teaching that the law was still valid</i>]. For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh" (Phil. 2:2, 3).</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Levitical Priesthood</b></p> <p><i>(The priesthood served merely in types and shadows, looking ahead to the intermediary work of Christ.)</i></p>	<p>"For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law...for it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Juda; of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood" (Heb. 7:12, 14).</p> <p>"And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement" (Rom. 5:11).</p>

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Temple Service &amp; Blood Sacrifices</b></p> <p><i>(The temple ritual and sacrifices stood as a grand object lesson, pointing ahead to the atoning sacrifice of Christ. Once Jesus' had purchased our redemption, the temple ritual lost its efficacy and shadow was set aside, giving place to the body and substance, which was Christ.)</i></p>	<p>"Then verily the first covenant had also ordinances of divine service, and a worldly sanctuary" (Heb. 9:1). [Note: the writer places these in the <i>past tense</i>.]</p> <p>"Which stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation. But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come...neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place having obtained eternal redemption for us" (Heb. 9:9-12).</p> <p>"Above when he said, Sacrifice and offering and burnt offerings and offering for sin thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure therein; which are offered by the law; then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second... For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified" (Heb. 10:8-14)</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Separation of Gentiles in Temple Service</b></p> <p><i>(The temple service segregated Jew and Gentile to prevent pagan customs from creeping into the national worship. The Gentiles worshipped in a separate court, marked off by a wall. On this wall were warnings that if any uncircumcised male crossed, he would suffer immediate death. The legal termination of the temple ritual in the sacrifice of Christ is clearly shown by Paul, when he says that the middle wall of partition between Jews and Gentiles was done away, and that the church was the new temple to the Lord. The fact the temple of the church was still being built in no way changes the fact that the old law was abolished in Christ's flesh.)</i></p>	<p>"For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace... Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief cornerstone; in whom all the building fitly frame together growth unto an holy temple in the Lord: in whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit" (Eph. 2:14-22).</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Jewish Festival Days</b></p> <p><i>(These laws were objects lessons; they were types and shadows pointing to God's plan of salvation and the redemptive work of Christ, and thus passed when Jesus finished his atoning sacrifice.)</i></p>	<p>"But now that ye have known God...how turn ye again to...bondage? Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years" (Gal. 4:9, 10).</p> <p>"Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of any holyday, or of the new moon, or of the Sabbath days" (Col. 2:16).</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Dietary Laws</b></p> <p><i>(These laws were given primarily to separate the Jews from the pagan nations around them, preventing them from having close (table) fellowship, by not being able to dine with Gentiles.)</i></p>	<p>"What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common" (Acts 10:9-16).</p> <p>"I now, and am persuaded in the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of itself...for the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and</p>

<p><i>Their abrogation shows the Old Testament was past.)</i></p>	<p>peace, adnjoy in the Holy Ghost" (Rom. 14:14-17).</p> <p>"Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils...commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and now the truth. Fro every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving: for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer" (I Tim. 4:1-5).</p>
<p><b>Prohibition Against Associating with Gentiles</b></p> <p><i>(The law of Moses had forbidden Jews to eat or associate with Gentiles, in order to prevent them from intermingling with Gentles and from acquiring pagan customs. The abolition of the laws against associating with Gentles shows that the Old Testament had been taken out of the way.)</i></p>	<p>"Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or come unto one of another nation; but God hath shewed me that I should not all any man common or unclean... God is no respecter of persons: but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him" (Act. 10:28, 34, 35)</p> <p>"Peter rose up, and said unto them, Men and brethren, ye know how that a good while ago God made choice among us, that the Gentles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel, and believe. And God, which knoweth the hearts...put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith" (Acts. 15:7-11).</p>
<p><b>Righteousness by Works of Merit versus Obedience of Faith</b></p> <p><i>(The essence of the Old Testament was to show man the impossibility of salvific perfection by human effort. Salvation can only come by the grace of God through faith in Christ. Faith having come, the law was abolished.)</i></p>	<p>"But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut upon unto the faith which should afterward be revealed. Wherefore the law was our school master to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster" (Gal. 3:23, 24).</p> <p>"For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believeth" (Rom. 10:4).</p>



***"God Forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world" (Ga. 6:14)***

*(Context shows that the "world" Paul was crucified to was the world of Judaistic observances under the law.)*

# *The Parable of the Seed and Harvest in*

## *Mark 4:26-29*

*"And he said, So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground; and should sleep, and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how. For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear. But when the fruit is brought forth, immediately he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come" (Mk. 4:26-29).*

This parable is unique to the gospel of Mark; none of the other evangelists records it. It is especially interesting because it places the harvest at the moment when the wheat reached maturity. The harvest is the point at which those who responded to the gospel were **reaped by Christ in martyrdom**. We can see this in Revelation 14:9-16:

*"And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive [his] mark in his forehead, or in his hand, The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who*

*worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name. Here is the patience of the saints: here [are] they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus. And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed [are] the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them. And I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud [one] sat like unto the Son of man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle. And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in thy sickle, and reap: for the time is come for thee to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe. And he that sat on the cloud thrust in his sickle on the earth; and the earth was reaped."*

Notice the similarity of imagery: Christ harvesting his seed by sickle. But in Revelation 14 it is clear this harvest was by martyrdom under Nero and the Jews. The Christians were gathered into the eternal kingdom at death where they were given rest.

Thoughts of tremendous comfort for those called to endure martyrdom! This also helps us understand the "gathering" and "harvest" which figure so prominently in many parables.



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# Mea Culpa: How I Was Wrong on Eph. 1:13-14 and the "Redemption of the Purchased Possession."

*To make mistakes is unavoidable. However, while it is not in our power to never err, it is in our power to quickly admit our mistakes and move on.*

I try to have the humility and forthrightness to admit when I have been wrong. My take on Eph. 1:13-14 is one of those cases where I have to admit to having been wrong. The view I formerly took on this passage was that the "redemption of the purchased possession" spoke to the church's redemption from the bondage of sin. My thinking was that the church is the "purchased possession."

*"Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood" (Acts 20:28).*

By this (mistaken) view, the church was the purchased possession and was waiting of redemption. And what could redemption be but remission of sins? However, I now see that I was totally wrong.

First, the idea that the church was waiting for redemption and justification - that these were somehow held in abeyance until AD 70 - simply has no Biblical support. Dozens and dozens of verses affirm that redemption and justification were complete and possessed by the church from and after the cross. Not one verse can be produced showing that justification came in AD 70, or that the church remained under the debt of sin after the cross. Since redemption from sin was already an accomplished fact, redemption in Eph. 1:13, 14 cannot speak to sin.

Second, the passage itself indicates what the "purchased possession" is; viz., our heavenly inheritance. When Christ purchased our salvation from sin, he also purchased our adopted sonship and eternal inheritance above. As a token of our adoption, God has "sealed" us with his Spirit in our hearts:

*"For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage*

*against a fear; but ye have received the Spirit of Adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him that we may be also glorified together" (Rom. 8:14-17).*

A "seal" is an evidentiary token or device. When we obtain copies of official documents, the clerk affixes an official seal to them for purposes of authentication. Paul says in Rom. 8:14-17, above, that the Spirit "beareth witness" with our spirit (authenticates) that we are the children of God. The groaning of the Spirit that cannot be uttered (v. 26) and our cries of "Abba, Father" are the "earnest" (guarantee, surety) of our inheritance.

The probable source of Paul's imagery in Ephesians is the book of Jeremiah. Under the law of Moses, the right of redemption - viz., the right to purchase and possess - a family member's land fell to the near kinsman, who purchased the land under seal (some token of evidence). This very thing is shown in language remarkably similar to Eph. 1:13-14, when the prophet Jeremiah was in prison during the siege of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar:

*"And Jeremiah said, 'The word of the LORD came to me, saying, 'Behold, Hanamel the son of Shallum your uncle will come to you, saying, 'Buy my field which is in Anathoth, for the right of redemption is yours to buy it.'" Then Hanamel my uncle's son came to me in the court of the prison according to the word of the LORD, and said to me, 'Please buy my field that is in Anathoth, which is in the country of Benjamin; for the right of inheritance is yours, and the redemption yours; buy it for yourself.' Then I knew that this was the word of*

*the LORD. So I bought the field from Hanamel, the son of my uncle who was in Anathoth, and weighed out to him the money—seventeen shekels of silver. And I signed the deed and sealed it, took witnesses, and weighed the money on the scales. So I took the purchase deed, both that which was sealed according to the law and custom, and that which was open; and I gave the purchase deed to Baruch the son of Neriah, son of Mahseiah, in the presence of Hanamel my uncle's son, and in the presence of the witnesses who signed the purchase deed, before all the Jews who sat in the court of the prison"(Jer. 32:6-12; emphasis added).*

This passage describes Jeremiah's purchase (redemption) of his uncle's land. The redemption was sealed in evidence of his purchase. God's purpose in having Jeremiah buy the land served to assure his promise to restore the captivity to Palestine.

*"Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: "Take these deeds, both this purchase deed which is sealed and this deed which is open, and put them in an earthen vessel, that they may last many days." For thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: "Houses and fields and vineyards shall be possessed again in this land"' (Jer. 32:13, 14).*

It is easy to see the analogy to our case. Our paternal inheritance in heaven has been purchased by our Kinsman Redeemer (Christ), with whom we are joint-heirs of eternal life. The transaction was paid in blood, and the evidence of the purchase has been sealed in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, by whom we cry "Abba, Father." This yearning serves as the earnest of our heavenly inheritance until it comes into our actual possession.

### **Conclusion**

Ephesians 1:13-14 expressly states that our inheritance is the purchased possession of which the Spirit is the earnest and seal. Redemption from sin and justification is nowhere in the text.

## *Why is the Home School Movement Rising?*

By

*Hannah Simmons*

Homeschooling is not a new idea—it is the restoration of an old and successful idea. It is not only a return to effective, parent-directed education—but for some it is part of a moral and spiritual reformation.

From the founding of this country by the Pilgrims in 1620 to the mid-1800's, most of the early education provided took place at the home with the parents, pastor, or a tutor providing the instruction. In colonial America, home education provided a complete education of children, making them both literate and self-sufficient, and also prepared those who wanted to proceed to grammar schools or college (Klicka, 2002). As a result of home education and private grammar schools, the overall literacy in the first hundred years of our country was much higher than it is today. John Adams said "a native of America, especially of New England, who cannot read and write is as rare a Phenomenon [sic] as a comet" (Butterfield, 1961).

It wasn't until the early 1900s when the public schools were formed and attendance laws were passed that homeschooling nearly died out (Klicka, 2002). Some believe this change to state education began a decline in American education. However, homeschooling has grown significantly since the 1970's in the USA. The modern homeschool movement is making an exodus from "conventional" or "standardized" schooling to return to the traditional, individualized home instruction. In the spring of 2007 1.5 million students were being homeschooled (National Home Education Research Institute, 2010). Since 2007 there has been a steady eight percent increase in the homeschool movement every year until there are now over two million homeschool students. Some possible reasons for the homeschool trend include religious/moral convictions of the parents, dissatisfaction with academic standards, and the school environment (U.S. Department of Education, 2008).

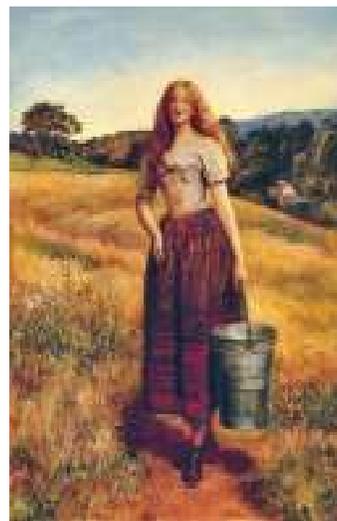
Many believe homeschooling is particularly attractive as an adjunct of spiritual and moral education where children are carefully trained in God's Word to not only think but live as Christians. According to the U.S. Department of Education, a significant amount in the movement (eighty-three percent) educates at home for religious and moral reasons. The public schools have practically removed all references to religion and prayer, in effect removing traditional teaching and standards, substituting a "sanitized" secular education. When prayer was removed from the schools in 1962, the public schools experienced a terrible decline. Statistics from 1962 show SAT scores suddenly plummeting—teen pregnancies, teen suicides, teen alcohol and drug abuse, teen sexual diseases, use of pornography among students, and illiteracy rates suddenly increased between 200 and 300 percent (Barton, 1988). This situation would certainly be a reason for parents with religious convictions not to use the public schools.

The academic failure in the public schools is also one of the reasons parents are not choosing the public school system. Most of the areas of academic decline have been in math, reading skills, logic, and the ability to draw inferences. The textbooks, used by the public schools, contain numerous errors and lack content. For example, Texas Board of Education was ready to receive new history textbooks when two individuals announced they had found two-hundred and thirty one obvious historical errors (Graves, 1991). While there are many fine public school teachers, many are incompetent and lack training. Teachers' colleges and universities do not teach knowledge but rather four years of methods. Poor training is apparent in the low standards set by many states to be certified to teach. For instance, the educational exams used by some states require a score of only thirty-five percent for math certification (Klicka, 2002)—this type of score would cause a student to fail an exam who was studying this subject. According to the Thomas B. Fordham Institute, public schools teachers are more likely to send their children to a private school than any other group (Doyle, 2004). On the other hand, modern American culture must take its share of the blame for the academic failure in the public schools. Teachers cannot be expected to succeed where they are undermined by the system in which they work or the home environment of the student. The public school product is not

prepared for college or the business world. Colleges have had to simplify their courses and standards in order to admit public school graduates.

Many choose homeschooling (eighty-eight percent) out of concern over the public school environment (U.S. Department of Education, 2010). In 1940 the top discipline offenses, according to educators, were: talking, chewing gum, making noise, running in the halls, getting out of turn in line, wearing improper clothing, and not putting paper in wastebaskets. By 1982 the top disciplinary offenses had become rape, assault, robbery, burglary, arson, bombings, murder, suicide, absenteeism, vandalism, extortion, drug abuse, alcohol abuse, gang warfare, pregnancies, abortions, and venereal diseases (USA Today, 1985). Parents wishing to provide a safe environment for children and youth may elect to homeschool rather than expose their children to the violence in the public schools.

As the schools continue to fail, parents are beginning to realize the dangers of sending their kids to public school. Homeschool parents are realizing that they can do a better job in educating their kids—and they are doing just that. Homeschooling is an option that is available to parents if they are seriously committed to educating and teaching their children in traditional, biblical values America was founded on. If kids are not taken out of the failing public school system, America is likely to loose a generation of children.



*But if a woman have long hair is it her glory I Cor. 11:15*