

### Sabbath School Lesson #3 – Images From Marriage – 12-18 April 2025

**C**hrist receives the kingdom, when He takes possession of the capital, in Heaven, and this is called in a figure the marriage. The saints are the guests who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb. “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” (Revelation 19:9). The faithful are watching when the Lord returns from the wedding. The Lord will take them to the mansions prepared, and make them sit down to the marriage supper, and He will come forth and serve them. His own hand shall pluck of the fruit of the tree of life, and give them to eat, and bring them water from the river of life.

Who is the bride at the marriage in Revelation 19:9? “In the summer and autumn of 1844 the proclamation, “Behold, the Bridegroom cometh,” was given. The two classes represented by the wise and foolish virgins were then developed — one class who looked with joy to the Lord's appearing, and who had been diligently preparing to meet Him; another class that, influenced by fear and acting from impulse, had been satisfied with a theory of the truth, but were destitute of the grace of God. In the parable, when the bridegroom came, “they that were ready went in with him to the marriage.” The coming of the bridegroom, here brought to view, takes place before the marriage. The marriage represents the reception by Christ of His kingdom. The Holy City, the New Jerusalem, which is the capital and representative of the kingdom, is called “the bride, the Lamb's wife.” Said the angel to John: “Come hither, I will show thee the bride, the Lamb's wife.” “He carried me away in the spirit,” says the prophet, “and showed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God.” Revelation 21:9, 10. Clearly, then, the bride represents the Holy City, and the virgins that go out to meet the bridegroom are a symbol of the church. In the Revelation the people of God are said to be the guests at the marriage supper. Revelation 19:9. If guests, they cannot be represented also as the bride. Christ, as stated by the prophet Daniel, will receive from the Ancient of Days in heaven, “dominion, and glory, and a kingdom;” He will receive the New Jerusalem, the capital of His kingdom, “prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.” Daniel 7:14; Revelation 21:2. Having received the kingdom, He will come in His glory, as King of kings and Lord of lords, for the redemption of His people, who are to “sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob,” at His table in His kingdom (Matthew 8:11; Luke 22:30), to partake of the marriage supper of the Lamb” – Ellen Gould White {GC 426.2}.

**Sunday: One Flesh** – Read Genesis 2:23-25 and Ephesians 5:29-32. In what ways does a human marriage mirror Christ's bond to humanity? While we were living in sin, we were married to sin. The law of marriage is that the two parties to it “shall be one flesh.” Our first husband was the body of sin. We were one flesh with sin. We were by nature perfectly united to sin. Whatever sin devised, that we did. We were married to sin until death did us apart. When the gospel was preached to us, we were willing to be crucified, and we died. In death the separation from sin was effected; for it is by the body of Christ that “we” become dead. We are crucified with Him. The body of sin is also crucified. But while the body of sin is destroyed, we have a resurrection in Christ. We died in Christ, and were raised in Him. But “if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. And all things are of God” (2 Corinthians 5:17-18). “I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me” (Galatians 2:20). The death of Christ, then, is that by which we become united to Him. It is, so to speak, the marriage ceremony, by which we declare our union with Christ. Paul says, “I have espoused you to one Husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ” (2 Corinthians 11:2). Just as in ordinary marriage two persons are united, so that they are no longer two, but “one flesh,” so in putting on Christ we become one with Him. Paul, after declaring that a man shall leave father and mother, and shall cleave unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh, adds, “This is a great mystery; but I speak concerning Christ and the church” (Ephesians 5:32). But in this union with Christ it is His personality that dominates; we yield ourselves to Him – we become swallowed up in Him – so that the one person is not us with Christ.

**Monday: The Beautiful Bride** – Read Ezekiel 16:4-14. What do the details about this bride's exaltation teach us? “The unfaithfulness of the church to Christ in permitting her

confidence and affection to be turned from Him, and allowing the love of worldly things to occupy the soul, is likened to the violation of the marriage vow. The sin of Israel in departing from the Lord is presented under this figure; and the wonderful love of God which they thus despised is touchingly portrayed: "I swore unto thee, and entered into a covenant with thee, saith the Lord God, and thou becamest Mine." "And thou wast exceeding beautiful and thou didst prosper into a kingdom. And thy renown went forth among the heathen for thy beauty: for it was perfect through My comeliness, which I had put upon thee.... But thou didst trust in thine own beauty, and playedst the harlot because of thy renown." "As a wife treacherously departeth from her husband, so have ye dealt treacherously with Me, O house of Israel, saith the Lord;" "as a wife that committeth adultery, which taketh strangers instead of her husband!" Ezekiel 16:8, 13-15, 32; Jeremiah 3:20" {GC 381.3}. Are Seventh-day Adventists repeating the history of this bride as shown in Ezekiel 16:14? Sadly, yes! "Satan's snares are laid for us as verily as they were laid for the children of Israel just prior to their entrance into the land of Canaan. We are repeating the history of that people. Lightness, vanity, love of ease and pleasure, selfishness, and impurity are increasing among us. There is need now of men who are firm and fearless in declaring the whole counsel of God; men who will not sleep as do others, but watch and be sober. Knowing as I do the great lack of holiness and power with our ministers, I am deeply pained to see the efforts for self-exaltation. If they could but see Jesus as He is, and themselves as they are, so weak, so inefficient, so unlike their Master, they would say: If my name may be written in the obscurest part of the book of life, it is enough for me, so unworthy am I of His notice" – Ellen Gould White {5T 160.2}.

**Tuesday: Hosea's Harlot Wife** – Read Hosea 2:14-23; what does this passage reveal about God? In Hosea 1:2 and 3:1, God tells Hosea to go and love his estranged wife. In this illustration, Israel, the bride, had become unfaithful. But God did not break His covenant, which is everlasting, nor did He cast off the unfaithful bride. He begs her to come back. O nothing is humiliating than a man to beg for reconciliation with one who has wilfully turned away from him, despising his love, publicly putting him to shame; yet that is just what the Lord did. Read the third chapter of Jeremiah, and the whole of the book of Hosea. He says: "Return thou backsliding Israel, saith the Lord; and I will not cause Mine anger to fall upon you; for I am merciful, saith the Lord, and I will not keep anger for ever. Only acknowledge thine iniquity, that thou hast transgressed against the Lord thy God, and hast scattered thy ways to the strangers under every green tree, and ye have not obeyed My voice, saith the Lord. Turn, O backsliding children, saith the Lord; for I am married unto you; and I will take you one of a city, and two of a family, and I will bring you to Zion" (Jeremiah 3:12-14).

**Wednesday: Isaac and Rebekah** – Read Genesis 24:1-7; What importance did Abraham place of the selection of a wife for his son and how is this regarded by Adventists today? As we read this narrative, we are forcibly struck with the deep solicitude which the father of the faithful felt for his son of promise in securing for him a worthy wife. He does not leave this important transaction to his son but puts his most experienced servant under a solemn oath to fulfil his will in the matter. All this looks consistent and right; yet how widely it contrasts with the customs of our times in leaving children at an early age to form acquaintances as they please, and to select for themselves. In matters infinitely less in importance parents are expected to counsel and dictate. But in selecting companions for life, a matter upon which the happiness and prosperity of the parties for life, and perhaps of the parents, may depend, the children, moved by fancy and impulse, are generally left to take their own course. Not so with Abraham, of whom God said, "I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him" (Genesis 18:19). In the case, as far as human agency was concerned, the selecting of a wife for Isaac was left with his aged father's most reliable trusted servant.

**Thursday: The Harlot Is Judged** – Read Revelation 19:1-9. What does this tell us about the harlot? In the end, the harlot (this is the same spoken of in Revelation 13 and 17) will be judged. In the coming Sunday Law, the climax of the persecution by this harlot will be reached, with saints persecuted by this harlot; but the saints will sing the song of triumph when they behold the complete destruction of that great system of opposition to God and His true worship, comprehended in great Babylon. This destruction takes place, and this song is sung in connection with the second coming of Christ at the beginning of the thousand years.