

The Bridegroom Messiah and the Eucharist

Dr. Brant Pitre

The Creation of Man and Woman: A Nuptial Covenant

21 *So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and while he slept he took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh;* 22 *and the rib which the LORD God had taken from the man he made into a woman a brought her to the man.* 23 *Then the man said, "This at last is bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called 'Woman', because she was taken out of Man."* 24 *Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and cleaves to his wife, and they become one flesh.* (Genesis 2:21-24)

The Divine Bridegroom: The Exodus Covenant

7 *And you [Israel] grew up and became tall and arrived at full maidenhood...* 8 *[the LORD] passed by you again and looked upon you, behold, you were at the age for love; and I spread my skirt over you, and covered your nakedness: yea, I plighted my troth to you and entered into a covenant with you, says the Lord GOD, and you became mine...* 11 *And I decked you with ornaments, and put bracelets on your arms, and a chain on your neck.* 12 *And I put a ring on your nose, and earrings in your ears, and a beautiful crown upon your head...* (Ezekiel 16:7-12)

God's Plan: To Again Wed Himself to Mankind

59 *"Yea, thus says the Lord GOD: I will deal with you as you have done, who have despised the oath in breaking the covenant, 60 yet I will remember my covenant with you in the days of your youth, and I will establish with you an everlasting covenant...* 62 *I will establish my covenant you, and you shall know that I am the LORD... when I forgive all that you have done, says the Lord GOD."* (Ezekiel 16:59-63)

4 *Fear not [Jerusalem], for you will not be ashamed; be not confounded, for you will not be put to shame; for you will forget the shame of your youth, and the reproach of your widowhood you will remember no more.* 5 *For your Maker is your Husband, the LORD of hosts is his name; and the Holy One of Israel is your Redeemer, the God of the whole earth he is called.* 6 *For the LORD has called you like a wife forsaken and grieved in spirit, like a wife of youth when she is cast off, says your God.* 7 *For a brief moment I forsook you, but with great compassion I will gather you.* (Isaiah 54:4-7)

John the Baptist and The Bridegroom Messiah

You yourselves bear me witness, that I [John] said, *I am not the Messiah*, but I have been sent before him. *He who has the bride is the bridegroom*; the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly at the bridegroom's voice; therefore this joy of mine is now full. He must increase, but I must decrease. (John 3:28-30).

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The Wedding at Cana

On the third day there was a wedding at Cana in Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there; 2 Jesus also was invited to the wedding, with his disciples. 3 When the wine failed, the mother of Jesus said to him, “They have no wine.” 4 And Jesus said to her, “Woman, what is that between you and me? My hour has not yet come.” 5 His mother said to the servants, “Do whatever he tells you.” 6 Now six stone jars were standing there, for the Jewish rites of purification, each holding twenty or thirty gallons. 7 Jesus said to them, “Fill the jars with water.” And they filled them up to the brim. 8 He said to them, “Now draw some out, and take it to the steward of the feast.” So they took it. 9 When the steward of the feast tasted the water now become wine, and did not know where it came from (though the servants who drew the water knew), the steward of the feast called the bridegroom 10 and said to him, “Every man serves the good wine first; and when men have drunk freely, then the poor wine; but you have kept the good wine until now.” 11 This, the first of his signs, Jesus did at Cana in Galilee, and manifested his glory; and his disciples believed in him. (John 2:1-11)

When The Bridegroom is Taken Away

18 Now John’s disciples and the Pharisees were fasting; and people came and said to him, “Why do John’s disciples and the disciples of the Pharisees fast, but your disciples do not fast?” 19 And Jesus said to them, “Can the wedding guests fast while the bridegroom is with them? As long as they have the bridegroom with them, they cannot fast. 20 *The days will come, when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast on that day.* 21 No one sews a piece of unshrunk cloth on an old garment; if he does, the patch tears away from it, the new from the old, and a worse tear is made. 22 *And no one puts new wine into old wineskins; if he does, the wine will burst the skins, and the wine is lost, and so are the skins; but new wine is for fresh skins.*” (Mark 2:18-22)

The Wedding Supper of the Lamb: the Last Supper

1 Now before the feast of Passover, when Jesus knew that *his hour had come* to depart out of this world to the Father, *having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end.* (John 13:1)

26 Now as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and broke it, and gave it to the disciples and said, “Take, eat; this is my body.” 27 And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, “*Drink of it, all of you; 28 for this is my blood of the new covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.* 29 I tell you I shall not drink again of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father’s kingdom.” (Matthew 26:26-29)

1 “Let not your hearts be troubled; believe in God, believe also in me. 2 In my Father’s house are many rooms; if it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? 3 *And when I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may also be.*” (John 13:1-3)

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The Marriage Bed of the Cross

17 So they took Jesus, and he went out, bearing his own cross, to the place called the place of a skull, which is called in Hebrew Golgotha. There they crucified him... 28 After this Jesus, knowing that all was now finished, said (to fulfill the scripture), “I thirst.” 29 A bowl full of common wine stood there; so they put a sponge full of the wine on hyssop and held it to his mouth. 30 *When Jesus had received the wine, he said, “It is consummated”; and he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.* (John 19:17, 28-30)

For it was from the side of Christ as he slept the sleep of death upon the cross that there came forth ‘the wondrous sacrament of the whole Church’. (CCC 1067)

Husbands, love your wives, *as Christ loved the Church and gave himself up for her*, that he might sanctify her by the washing of the water with the word, that he might present the Church to himself in splendor, without any spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. Even so husbands should love their wives as their own *bodies*. He who loves his wife loves himself. For no man ever hates his own *flesh*, but *nourishes and cherishes it, as Christ does the Church*, because we are members of his body. (Ephesians 5:25-30)

The End of Time: The Marriage Supper of the Lamb

6 Then I heard what seemed to be the voice of a great multitude, like the sound of many waters and like the sound of mighty thunderpeals, crying, “Hallelujah! For the Lord our God the Almighty reigns. 7 Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory, for *the wedding of the Lamb has come, and his Bride has made herself ready*... And the angel said to me, “Write this: *Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb.*” (Rev 19:6-9)

The Catechism: the Nuptial Covenant and the Eucharist

Sacred Scripture begins with the creation of man and woman in the image and likeness of God and concludes with a vision of the “wedding-feast of the Lamb.” (CCC 1602)

God who created man out of love also calls him to love—the fundamental and innate vocation of every human being. For man is created in the image and likeness of God who is himself love. Since God created him man and woman, their mutual love becomes an image of the absolute and unfailing love with which God loves man. (CCC 1604)

The nuptial covenant between God and his people Israel had prepared the way for the new and everlasting covenant in which the Son of God, by becoming incarnate and giving his life, has united to himself in a certain way all mankind saved by him, thus preparing for “the wedding-feast of the Lamb.” (CCC 1612)

The entire Christian life bears the mark of the spousal love of Christ and the Church. Already Baptism, the entry into the people of God, is a nuptial mystery; it is so to speak the nuptial bath which precedes the wedding feast, the Eucharist. (CCC 1617)