

# ***THE BRIDE OF CHRIST***





# ***GOD'S COVENANT WITH ISRAEL***



# GOD'S WIFE

- ❑ **Israel** is spoken of as **God's wife** while the **Church** is seen as the **Bride of Christ**.
- ❑ These are figures of speech which we call metaphors. The dictionary definition for a metaphor is:
  - a figure of speech in which a word or phrase is applied to an object or action to which it is **not literally applicable**.
  - a thing regarded as **representative or symbolic of something else**.
- ❑ So while the Church is not literally Christ's bride, it is a useful picture speaking of the relationship that exists between the Church and Jesus.

# GOD'S WIFE

- ❑ In the Old Testament Israel is repeatedly spoken of as God's wife. But Israel was an unfaithful wife:
  - Jer 3:30 (NIV) But like a woman unfaithful to her husband, so you, Israel, have been unfaithful to me," declares the LORD.
  - Jer 31:32 (NIV) "... because they broke my covenant, though I was a husband to them," declares the LORD.
- ❑ So God "divorces" Israel because she was unfaithful to the marriage covenant.
  - Jer 3:8 (NIV) I gave faithless Israel her certificate of divorce and sent her away because of all her adulteries. Yet I saw that her unfaithful sister Judah had no fear; she also went out and committed adultery.

# BRIDE OF CHRIST

- ❑ Paul says to the Corinthian church, "For I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy; for **I betrothed you to one husband**, so that to Christ I might present you as a pure virgin." (2 Cor 11:2, NASB). He instructs husbands to "love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her" (Eph 5:25 (NASB)).
- ❑ John sees "the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband" (Rev 21:2, NIV). Thus the bride speaks of those who will live in the city i.e. the saints.
  - Rev 19:7-8 (NIV) Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready. Fine linen, bright and clean, was given her to wear." (Fine linen stands for **the righteous acts of the saints.**)

# REPLACEMENT THEOLOGY

- ❑ Replacement Theology (normally associated with Preterism, Amillennialism and Postmillennialism) says that the Church has permanently replaced Israel.
- ❑ Proponents of the Replacement Theology view consider the Church as the New Israel, teaching that the many promises made to Israel are fulfilled in the Christian Church, not in literal Israel.
- ❑ Partial Preterists Gary DeMar and Peter Leithart have said:
  - In destroying Israel, Christ transferred the blessings of the kingdom from Israel to a new people, the church.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The Reduction of Christianity, Gary DeMar and Peter Leithart



# REPLACEMENT THEOLOGY

❑ Among those who reject Replacement Theology are:

1. **Historical Premillennialists** believe that Israel together with the Gentiles are part of the New Covenant. But some also hold that there is a future for Israel. Concerning Rom 11:26, George Ladd writes in *The Gospel of the Kingdom*:
  - It is quite impossible in light of the context and the course of Paul's thought in this passage to understand "all Israel" to refer to the Church... But secondly, there is to be a greater turning to the Lord on the part of Israel after the flesh, of such proportions that Paul can say that "all Israel," i.e., Israel as a whole, will be saved... When God's purpose for the Gentiles is fulfilled, so this verse implies, Jerusalem will no longer be trodden down. There will be a restoration of Israel; "all Israel will be saved."

# REPLACEMENT THEOLOGY

2. **Dispensational Premillennialists:** God's covenants are irrevocable and so while there is a New Covenant with Christians, the Old Covenant is still intact (Dual Covenant) and will result in the restoration of Israel. In the context of speaking about Israel's restoration we read:

- Rom 11:29 (NASB) for the gifts and the calling of God are **irrevocable**.
- Rom 11:29 (NLT) For God's gifts and his call **can never be withdrawn**.
- Rom 11:29 (CEV) God **doesn't take back** the gifts he has given or **disown** the people he has chosen.



# ISRAEL'S RESTORATION

- ❑ The Dispensational view holds to a rigorous distinction between God's program for Israel and for the Church. They believe that Israel has a separate irrevocable covenant with God and will be restored.
- Rom 11:25-27 I do not want you to be ignorant of this mystery, brothers and sisters, so that you may not be conceited: **Israel has experienced a hardening in part until the full number of the Gentiles has come in**, and in this way all Israel will be saved. As it is written: "The deliverer will come from Zion; he will turn godlessness away from Jacob. And this is my covenant with them when I take away their sins."
- ❑ The restoration occurs after the rapture of the church and is played out in the Millennium.

# ISRAEL'S RESTORATION

- ❑ Before Jesus returned to heaven his disciples wanted to know when Israel would be restored. Note in Acts 1:6-7 that Jesus doesn't tell them Israel will not be restored - he simply says it's not for them to know the timing.



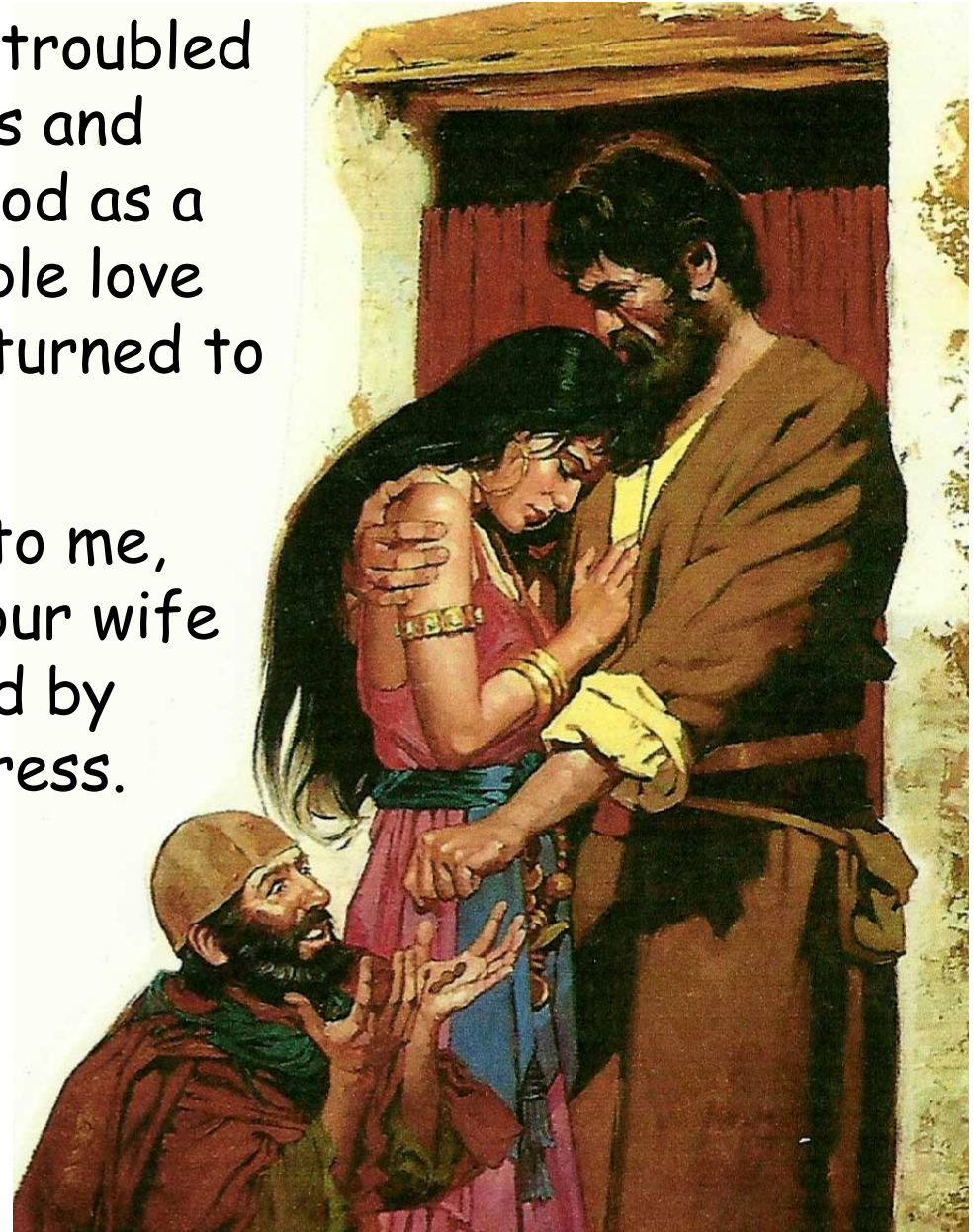
Lord,  
are you  
at this  
time  
going to  
restore  
the  
kingdom  
to  
Israel?

It is not  
for you to  
know the  
times or  
dates the  
Father  
has set  
by his  
own  
authority



# ISRAEL'S RESTORATION

- ❑ The story of Hosea and his troubled marriage with his adulterous and unfaithful wife is used by God as a type of his similar remarkable love for Israel, even when they turned to other gods.
- Hos 3:3 The LORD said to me, "Go, show your love to your wife again, though she is loved by another and is an adulteress. Love her as the LORD loves the Israelites, though they turn to other gods..."



# ISRAEL'S RESTORATION

- ❑ God says of unfaithful Israel: "Therefore I am now going to allure her; I will lead her into the wilderness and speak tenderly to her... There she will respond as in the days of her youth... you will call me '**my husband**'; you will no longer call me '**my master**'... I will **betroth you to me forever**; I will betroth you in righteousness and justice, in love and compassion. I will betroth you in faithfulness, and you will acknowledge the Lord." (Hos 2:14-20)
- ❑ Clearly God has not nullified his promises to Israel.
  - Rom 3:1-4 What advantage, then, is there in being a Jew...? Much in every way! First of all, the Jews have been entrusted with the very words of God. What if some were unfaithful? **Will their unfaithfulness nullify God's faithfulness? Not at all!** Let God be true, and every human being a liar.



# ISRAEL'S RESTORATION

- ❑ Irenaeus argued that a future earthly Millennial kingdom is necessary because of the land promises to Abraham.
  - Now God made promise of the earth to Abraham and his seed; yet neither Abraham nor his seed... do now receive any inheritance in it; but they shall receive it at the resurrection of the just.<sup>1</sup>
- ❑ The full territory promised by God to Abraham will belong to Israel i.e. from the River Euphrates to the Nile River.
  - Gen 15:18 (NASB) On that day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, "To your descendants I have given this land, From the river of Egypt as far as the great river, the river Euphrates..."

<sup>1</sup> Against Heresies 5.32

# ISRAEL'S RESTORATION

- ❑ This promised area comprises all of modern Israel, the Palestinian Territories, Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, part of Iraq, Saudi Arabia and Turkey.
- ❑ At its largest, Israel under Solomon did not include the Sinai Peninsula and the border was still far from reaching the eastern tributaries of the Nile. Like Irenaeus, Premillennialists today assert that Israel has never held all this territory specified; therefore in order for God to fulfil his promise to Abraham - this necessitates a complete fulfilment in the Millennium.
- ❑ Irenaeus explains that the blessing to Jacob "belongs unquestionably to the times of the kingdom when the righteous will bear rule, after their rising from the dead".<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., 5.33

# ISRAEL'S RESTORATION

- ❑ So the covenants with Abraham and Israel included promises of land that were not fulfilled in the Church, but will be fulfilled in the Millennium.
- ❑ Replacement Theology dismisses the amazing prophecies that have been fulfilled in the establishment of modern Israel in 1948 and the recapturing of Jerusalem in 1967 (Luke 21:24).
- ❑ So most evangelical Christians today who actively support the state of Israel, do so because of the positive influence of the Dispensational Premillennial view that national Israel has a future in the plan of God.



Israeli paratroopers stand  
in front of the Western  
Wall in Jerusalem (1967)

# ISRAEL'S RESTORATION

- ❑ Prophesying the AD 70 destruction of Jerusalem, Jesus said:
  - Luke 21:24 "They will fall by the sword and will be taken as prisoners to all the nations. Jerusalem will be trampled on by the Gentiles until **the times of the Gentiles** are fulfilled."
- ❑ This again invalidates Preterism, because Jerusalem was under Gentile occupation until the Six Day War in 1967.
- ❑ Some are bothered by the fact that the Jews have returned to Israel predominantly in unbelief with regards to the ministry of Christ. Why hasn't Israel been restored spiritually en masse yet? The Bible predicts a two-stage restoration of Israel, notably Ezekiel's vision of the valley of dry bones.



# ISRAEL'S RESTORATION

❑ Ezekiel is told to prophesy to a valley filled with dry bones. He is told "these bones are the people of Israel" (Ezek 37:11, NIV). Initially the bones assemble but have no life:

➤ I looked, and **tendons and flesh appeared on them** and skin covered them, but **there was no breath in them.** (v 7-8)

❑ But God then commands Ezekiel to prophesy again:

➤ So I prophesied as he commanded me, and **breath entered them; they came to life** and stood up on their feet - a vast army. (v 10)



# ISRAEL'S RESTORATION

❑ So the two phases of Israel's restoration are:

1. Land restoration (we have seen the start of this in the 20<sup>th</sup> century):

➤ ... I will bring you back to the land of Israel. (Ezek 37:12)

➤ You will live in the land I gave your forefathers... (Ezek 36:28)

2. And then spiritual restoration (this will happen in the Mid-Tribulation and Millennium):

➤ I will put my Spirit in you and you will live... (Ezek 37:14)

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