COGMA
Church of God Mission Academy

STUDY GUIDE
43
4 OF 4

The New Testament Church

STUDY GUIDE 4 OF 4:

Christ And The Church: The Lamb's Wife

An overview of the Church's living union with Christ.



Equipping and empowering for effective service
2 Timothy 2:2

INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE STUDENT

My Study Plan

Preparing a Study Plan before starting this Study Guide will assist you in completing it within a designated timeframe. It also helps in developing the discipline required for studying God's Word effectively.

Proverbs 16:3:

> *Commit thy works unto the LORD, and thy thoughts shall be established.*

My Study Guide Journal

Keep a record as you progress through your Study Guide, including the Personal Responses for each section, for future reference and goal setting.

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PREFACE

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The relationship between Jesus Christ and His Church is one of the great spiritual mysteries revealed in Scripture. The Church is not simply a gathering of people who believe the same teachings, nor is it a human organisation formed around the name of Jesus. It belongs to Christ, receives its life from Christ, and is presented in Scripture as the Lamb's wife.

John recorded the words of the angel in **Revelation 21:9-10**:

> *"And there came unto me 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,"*

The angel promised to show John *"the bride, the Lamb's wife,"* and John was shown the holy Jerusalem. The city therefore represents a people: the Church of Jesus Christ. This relationship is not reserved for a future age. The Church belongs to Jesus Christ now in the Gospel Day and is presented as His wife.

Paul develops the same truth through the relationship of husband and wife.

Paul wrote in **Ephesians 5:30-32**:

> *"For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church."*

Paul calls this relationship *"a great mystery."* He reaches back to the creation of Adam and Eve and shows that their relationship provided a physical picture of a deeper spiritual reality concerning Christ and His Church.

Eve was in Adam before she was brought forth from him. In the same way, the Church was within God's eternal purpose before it was manifested. What had been hidden in God was brought forth and revealed in the Gospel Day through Jesus Christ.

This Study Guide will follow that biblical picture carefully. We will consider Jesus Christ as the Lamb of God, the Church as the Lamb's wife, the relationship between the first Adam and the last Adam, and the picture of Eve being brought forth from Adam.

We will also examine how the sacrifice of Jesus Christ relates to the Church He purchased with His own blood and how the relationship between Christ and His Church reveals a present spiritual family. Throughout this teaching, the focus must remain upon Jesus Christ Himself.

The Church does not possess life independently of Him. Its foundation is Christ, its Head is Christ, its salvation is in Christ, and its life is Christ dwelling within His people.

The mystery of Christ and His Church therefore reveals far more than a religious institution. It reveals a living people who belong to Jesus Christ, have been brought into His body through the new birth, and now live by His indwelling life.

The Lamb has a wife, and that wife is His Church.

Personal Response

Key Truth

How does the image of the Lamb's wife direct attention to Christ's sacrifice and His people?

Personal Reflection

Have you treated the Church as an institution rather than people purchased through Christ's sacrifice?

Action Step

Consider a believer you know. Explain how Christ's sacrificial love should change your attitude and care towards that person.

INTRODUCTION: THE GREAT MYSTERY OF CHRIST AND THE CHURCH

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Paul describes the relationship between Jesus Christ and His Church with words that reach back to the beginning of creation. He does not present the Church as an institution standing apart from Christ. He presents a spiritual union so profound that he calls it *"a great mystery."*

Paul wrote in **Ephesians 5:28-32**:

> *"So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church: For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church."*

Paul begins with the natural relationship of husband and wife, but he tells us plainly that his deeper subject is *"Christ and the church."* The earthly marriage relationship provides a picture through which God reveals a greater spiritual truth.

The Mystery Was Present From the Beginning

The words Paul uses come directly from the creation of Adam and Eve.

Moses wrote in **Genesis 2:22-24**:

> *"And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh."*

Eve was brought forth from Adam and then presented to him as his wife. Adam recognised that she had come from him, saying, *"This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh."*

Paul deliberately takes this language and applies it to Christ and His Church. The first relationship gives us the type, while Christ and His Church reveal the greater spiritual reality.

Christ Is the Source of the Church

Eve did not originate independently of Adam. She was brought forth from him. In the same way, the Church does not originate in human religion, organisation or decision. Its source is Jesus Christ.

Paul says:

"For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones."

This language expresses spiritual union and origin. The Church belongs to Christ because its life comes from Him.

The believer does not become part of Christ's Church by attaching themselves outwardly to a religious system. Through the new birth, the believer receives spiritual life in Jesus Christ and becomes part of His body. The Church lives because Christ lives within His people.

The Church Is His Wife Now

Paul does not describe the relationship between Christ and His Church as something waiting to begin in a future age. He speaks of Christ as the present Head of the Church and compares that relationship with the relationship of a husband and wife.

Paul wrote in **Ephesians 5:23-25**:

> *"For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;"*

Christ is the Head of the Church, He is the Saviour of the body, and the Church belongs to Him now. This agrees with Revelation, where the angel identifies the holy city as *"the bride, the Lamb's wife."*

The relationship is present, not future.

The Mystery Reveals a Spiritual Family

This relationship also helps us understand why Scripture describes born-again believers as the children of God and Jerusalem above as *"the mother of us all."*

Paul wrote in **Galatians 3:26**:

> *"For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus."*

Believers are not waiting to become God's children in a future age. They belong to His family now through Jesus Christ.

The Church therefore appears in Scripture under several related pictures. It is the body of Christ, the wife of Christ, the household of God and the heavenly Jerusalem. Each picture reveals another aspect of the same born-again people.

The Great Mystery Revealed

Paul's statement brings the whole subject into focus:

"This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church."

The mystery begins with Christ. The Church comes from Christ, belongs to Christ and lives by Christ. He is its Head, He gave Himself for it, and He dwells within His people.

The relationship between Adam and Eve therefore provides more than an illustration of human marriage. God uses that first union to help us understand the spiritual relationship between Jesus Christ and the people who belong to Him.

As this Study Guide continues, we will follow that mystery from the Lamb of God to the Lamb's wife, from Adam and Eve to Christ and the Church, and from the physical type to the spiritual reality revealed in the Gospel Day.

Personal Response

Key Truth

What does the mystery of Christ and His Church reveal about their union?

Personal Reflection

Have you viewed union with Christ as a distant promise rather than His life within His people now?

Action Step

Read Ephesians 5 and identify an assumption that needs correcting. Explain how that truth should change your view of His Church.

JESUS CHRIST THE LAMB OF GOD

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Before we can understand the Church as *"the Lamb's wife,"* we must first understand why Jesus Christ is called the Lamb of God. The language of the Lamb belongs to God's revelation of salvation and points directly to the sacrifice through which Jesus Christ redeemed His people.

When John the Baptist saw Jesus approaching, he identified Him immediately.

John wrote in **John 1:29**:

> *"The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."*

John did not simply call Jesus a lamb. He called Him *"the Lamb of God."* Jesus Christ was the One through whom God would deal with the sin that separated humanity from Him.

The Lamb Pointed to Sacrifice

Throughout the Old Testament, lambs were associated with sacrifice. Their blood belonged to a system of types and shadows that pointed forward to the greater sacrifice that would be fulfilled in Jesus Christ.

Those sacrifices could not take away sin. They prepared the picture, while Jesus Christ is the reality.

Peter wrote in **1 Peter 1:18-20**:

> *"Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you,"*

Peter connects the Lamb directly with redemption. We were not redeemed by silver or gold. We were redeemed *"with the precious blood of Christ."*

The sacrificial lamb was the picture. Jesus Christ is the fulfilment.

Without Blemish and Without Spot

Peter describes Christ as *"a lamb without blemish and without spot."* Under the Old Covenant, the sacrifice had to meet God's requirements. The physical condition of the animal pointed towards the perfection of the One who would fulfil the sacrifice.

Jesus Christ was without sin. He did not need cleansing for Himself before He could save others. He could give Himself for us because He was holy and without sin.

Paul wrote in **2 Corinthians 5:21**:

> *"For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."*

The Lamb who takes away sin had no sin of His own. His sacrifice was not simply the death of an innocent man. It was the saving work of Jesus Christ, in whom God was fully revealed, giving Himself for the redemption of His people.

Personal Response

Key Truth

Why is the spotless Lamb central to the Church's life?

Personal Reflection

How has Christ's sinless sacrifice changed the value you place upon His redeemed people?

Action Step

Examine how you have treated a member of Christ's body. Describe a change that would express His love within you.

The Lamb Was Foreordained

Peter also says that Christ as the Lamb was *"foreordained before the foundation of the world."* The work of salvation was not an emergency response after humanity fell into sin. The Lamb belonged to God's purpose before the world began.

Yet Peter also says that He was *"manifest in these last times for you."* The purpose was eternal, but the Lamb was manifested in time.

Jesus Christ entered genuine human life, suffered, shed His blood and died. Through that sacrifice, what had been purposed in God was accomplished in history.

This becomes important when we consider the Church. The Church also belongs to God's eternal purpose, yet it was brought forth and revealed in the Gospel Day through the saving work of Jesus Christ.

The Lamb Belongs to the Gospel Day

Jesus Christ as *"the Lamb of God"* belongs particularly to the Gospel Day, the day of salvation in which His sacrifice provides redemption from sin. The Lamb was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but Peter says that He was *"manifest in these last times for you."*

The purpose was eternal, while the manifestation of the Lamb belongs to the Gospel Day in which salvation is offered through Jesus Christ. John the Baptist therefore announced Jesus with the words: *"Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."*

The title directs our attention to His sacrificial work for those who need to be saved and born again into the kingdom of God. Jesus Christ remains the Lamb throughout the Gospel Day while the work of salvation continues in this present earthly order.

The Lamb therefore belongs to the present day of redemption, in which sinners may come to Jesus Christ, receive salvation and be made spiritually alive in Him.

The Blood of the Lamb Purchased the Church

The sacrifice of Christ cannot be separated from the Church that belongs to Him.

Paul said to the elders at Ephesus in **Acts 20:28**:

> *"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."*

The Church was purchased with God's own blood. The Lamb gave Himself for the people who would become His body and His wife.

This is why the relationship between Christ and the Church is inseparable from Calvary. The Church does not belong to Jesus because it adopted His name or formed a religious organisation around His teaching. It belongs to Him because He purchased it with His own blood.

The price was His life.

The Lamb Takes Away Sin

John's words remain central:

"Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."

The purpose of the Lamb is not simply to provide an example of sacrifice. Jesus Christ came to deal with sin.

Through the new birth, the sinner is made spiritually alive and brought into a new relationship with Jesus Christ. Salvation is complete in Him, and the believer becomes part of the body for which Christ gave Himself.

The Lamb therefore stands at the centre of both salvation and the Church. The One who takes away sin is the One who builds His Church. The One whose blood redeems is the One to whom

the Church belongs, and the One who gives spiritual life is the One who lives within His people.

The Lamb and His Wife

Revelation brings these truths together when it speaks of *"the bride, the Lamb's wife."* The title Lamb reminds us how this relationship was made possible. Jesus Christ gave Himself, shed His blood, purchased the Church and brought salvation.

The Church therefore belongs to the Lamb because it has been redeemed through His sacrifice. Before examining the wife, we must keep the Lamb clearly before us because the Church can never be understood apart from Jesus Christ. Everything it is depends upon Him.

Jesus Christ is the Lamb of God who gave Himself to take away sin and purchase a people who belong wholly to Him.

Personal Response

Key Truth

How does the Lamb's sacrifice explain His relationship with His wife?

Personal Reflection

When you hear 'the Lamb's wife', do you think first of Christ's completed saving work?

Action Step

Consider a belief about the Church's belonging to Christ. Explain how His sacrifice should correct or strengthen it.

THE BRIDE IS THE LAMB'S WIFE

BACK TO CONTENTS

Once Jesus Christ is identified as the Lamb of God, Revelation directs our attention to the people who belong to Him. John is shown not only the Lamb, but also *"the bride, the Lamb's wife."*

John wrote in **Revelation 21:9-10**:

> *"And there came unto me 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,"*

The angel tells John exactly what he is going to see: *"the bride, the Lamb's wife."* John is then shown *"that great city, the holy Jerusalem."*

The identification is direct. The holy Jerusalem represents the bride, and the bride is the Lamb's wife.

The Bride Is a People

The language of Revelation is symbolic. John does not see a natural woman standing beside Jesus Christ. He is shown a city, and that city represents a people.

Jesus Himself used the picture of a city when speaking about His disciples.

Jesus said in **Matthew 5:14-16**:

> *"Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."*

Jesus says to His people, *"Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid."* A city can therefore be used to represent a collective people.

In Revelation, the holy Jerusalem represents the redeemed people who belong to Jesus Christ.

The Lamb's Wife Is the Church

The identity becomes even clearer when Revelation is read alongside Paul's teaching concerning Christ and the Church.

Paul wrote in **Ephesians 5:23-25**:

> *"For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;"*

Paul places the relationship of husband and wife alongside the relationship of Christ and the Church. Christ is the Head, the Church is His body, and Christ loved the Church and gave Himself for it.

Revelation then describes the same spiritual people as *"the bride, the Lamb's wife."* The Lamb's wife is therefore the Church of Jesus Christ.

Personal Response

Key Truth

Who is identified as the Lamb's wife?

Personal Reflection

Have you spoken of Christ's Church with the respect due to people He loves and purchased?

Action Step

Identify an attitude or way of speaking that needs correction. Explain how you will honour Christ by honouring His people.

The Wife Belongs to the Lamb

The title *"Lamb's wife"* also tells us something about ownership and relationship. The Church belongs to Jesus Christ because He gave Himself for it.

Paul wrote in **Acts 20:28**:

> *"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."*

The Church was not purchased by human effort, founded by a religious leader or created by an organisation. It belongs to the Lamb because He purchased it with His own blood.

His sacrifice is therefore inseparable from His relationship with the Church. The Lamb gave Himself for His wife.

The Bride and the Body Are the Same People

Scripture uses different pictures to reveal different aspects of the same Church. As a body, the Church is joined to Christ as its Head. As a wife, the Church belongs to Christ in a spiritual marriage relationship. As the holy Jerusalem, the Church is pictured as the city that came from God.

These descriptions must not be separated into different peoples. Paul makes the connection especially clear when he moves from the language of the body directly into the language of marriage.

Paul wrote in **Ephesians 5:30-32**:

> *"For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church."*

The body and the wife belong to the same mystery. Paul is speaking about Christ and the Church.

The Wife Has the Glory of God

When John is shown the holy Jerusalem, he continues by saying that it was *"Having the glory of God."* The wife of the Lamb is therefore not glorious because of earthly buildings, wealth or religious status. Her glory comes from the presence of Jesus Christ.

Paul wrote in **Colossians 1:27**:

> *"To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory:"*

The glory is Christ in you. The Church is glorious because Jesus Christ dwells within His born-again people by His Spirit.

The wife does not possess spiritual life independently of her Husband. Her life is in Him.

The Bride, the Wife and the Church

Revelation calls her the bride and the Lamb's wife. Paul calls her the Church and the body of Christ. These expressions reveal different aspects of one spiritual people.

The Church belongs to Jesus Christ because He purchased it. It lives because He dwells within it, and it is joined to Him because He is its Head. Revelation identifies this same people as *"the bride, the Lamb's wife."*

The next question is therefore unavoidable: if Revelation calls the Church the Lamb's wife, is this marriage still waiting for some future time, or does Scripture reveal that the relationship already exists?

That question leads directly to the next section.

Personal Response

Key Truth

How do the bride, the wife and the Church belong to one spiritual picture?

Personal Reflection

Have you separated the bride, the wife and the Church into different groups or future stages?

Action Step

Compare Revelation 21 with Ephesians 5. Explain what you will change in your understanding of the one present Church.

THE MARRIAGE IS PRESENT, NOT FUTURE

BACK TO CONTENTS

Revelation does not describe the Church only as a bride who may one day become a wife. The angel identifies her directly as *"the bride, the Lamb's wife."* Scripture therefore presents a relationship that already exists between Jesus Christ and His Church.

John wrote in **Revelation 21:9-10**:

> *"And there came unto me 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,"*

The angel does not say that John will see someone who will one day become the Lamb's wife. He says, *"I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife."* The relationship is presented as a present spiritual reality.

Christ Is Presently the Head of His Wife

Paul's teaching in Ephesians gives the same picture. He compares the relationship between husband and wife with the relationship that already exists between Christ and the Church.

Paul wrote in **Ephesians 5:23-27**:

> *"For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he 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."*

Paul speaks of an existing relationship: *"Christ is the head of the church."* The Church is subject to Christ, just as the wife is subject to her husband. Christ's relationship with His Church is therefore not waiting for a future age to begin.

He is already its Head, its Saviour and the One to whom it belongs.

Christ Already Gave Himself for His Church

Paul also tells us how this relationship was established: *"Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it."* The sacrifice has already taken place. Jesus Christ gave Himself, shed His blood and purchased the Church.

Paul wrote in **Acts 20:28**:

> *"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."*

The Church is already a purchased people, and it already belongs to Christ. The relationship between the Lamb and His wife therefore rests upon an accomplished sacrifice, not upon an event still waiting to occur.

Personal Response

Key Truth

What has Christ already done for His Church?

Personal Reflection

Have you thought the Church must wait for a future event before she truly belongs to Jesus Christ?

Action Step

Consider **Ephesians 5:23–25**. *State the belief that needs correcting and how Christ's present care strengthens your faith.*

We Are Children of God Now

This present relationship agrees with Scripture's teaching concerning the family of God. Those who are born again are not waiting for some future age before becoming God's children.

Paul wrote in **Galatians 3:26**:

> *"For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus."*

Paul says *"ye are."* The born-again believer belongs to God's family now.

Paul also wrote in **1 Timothy 3:15**:

> *"But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth."*

The Church is the house of God. It is God's present spiritual household, made up of those who have received life through Jesus Christ.

The Family Picture Requires a Present Relationship

Scripture uses the natural family to help us understand spiritual truth. Paul tells us that believers are *"the children of God,"* and he also identifies *"Jerusalem which is above"* as *"the mother of us all."*

Paul wrote in **Galatians 4:26**:

> *"But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all."*

Revelation identifies that holy Jerusalem as *"the bride, the Lamb's wife."* The pictures therefore agree. The children of God belong to a present spiritual family, and Jerusalem above is presented as their mother and as the Lamb's wife.

A future-only marriage would not fit the family picture Scripture has already established. The children are present, the spiritual mother is present, and Christ's relationship with His Church is present.

The Whole Family Already Exists

Paul describes God's people as one family.

Paul wrote in **Ephesians 3:14-15**:

> *"For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named,"*

The family is not waiting to be formed. Paul speaks of *"the whole family in heaven and earth."* Born-again believers on earth belong to the same spiritual family as those who have gone before them.

The family is united in Jesus Christ and receives its identity from God.

Bride and Wife Are Not Two Different Churches

Revelation uses both words together: *"the bride, the Lamb's wife."* We should therefore not create two different Churches or two separate stages in which the Church is only a bride now but cannot be the wife until some future event.

John is explicitly told that the bride he is about to see is *"the Lamb's wife."* The language reveals relationship, belonging and union. The Church belongs to Christ now, Christ is its Head now, the Church is His body now, and the redeemed are God's children now.

The holy Jerusalem is also *"the mother of us all"* now. These truths belong together.

A Present Spiritual Union

The marriage language is spiritual, just as the body, temple and city language is spiritual. Jesus Christ is not described as entering a natural human marriage with a physical woman who represents the Church. The relationship is between Christ and His born-again people.

Paul gives the controlling explanation in **Ephesians 5:31-32**:

> *"For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church."*

The natural marriage is the picture, and the spiritual union of Christ and the Church is the reality. Scripture therefore does not require us to wait for a future marriage before Christ and His Church can belong together.

The Lamb already has a wife, and that wife is the Church He loved, purchased and joined to Himself.

Christ and His Church are in a present spiritual relationship, and the Church is now the bride, the Lamb's wife.

Personal Response

Key Truth

Why is Christ's union with His Church a present spiritual reality?

Personal Reflection

How should the Church's present union with Christ affect the attention you give to another believer?

Action Step

Consider a neglected relationship. Explain how the indwelling love of Christ should change your response to that person.

ADAM AND EVE: THE TYPE

BACK TO CONTENTS

Paul's teaching concerning Christ and the Church reaches back to the first man and woman. Adam and Eve were real people, and their relationship established the natural family. Yet Scripture also uses what happened between them as a type that helps us understand a greater spiritual reality.

Before applying that type to Christ and His Church, we need to examine the physical picture carefully.

God Created Man

Moses wrote in **Genesis 1:27-28**:

> *"So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth."*

God's purpose included both male and female and the establishment of a family through which mankind would multiply. Genesis then gives further detail concerning the formation of Adam.

Moses wrote in **Genesis 2:7-8**:

> *"And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul. And the LORD God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed."*

Adam was formed and placed in the garden before Eve was brought forth from him. This order becomes important when Scripture later uses Adam and Eve to help us understand Christ and His Church.

Eve Was Brought Forth From Adam

The making of Eve was different from the formation of Adam.

Moses wrote in **Genesis 2:21-23**:

> *"And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man."*

God did not form Eve independently from the dust as He had formed Adam. He took from Adam and, from that which had been in Adam, brought forth the woman.

This is the essential feature of the type. Eve was in Adam before she was manifested separately from him. God then brought her forth and presented her to Adam.

Adam immediately recognised her origin. He said, *"This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh,"* and explained that she would be called Woman *"because she was taken out of Man."*

Personal Response

Key Truth

How does Eve's coming from Adam prepare a picture of the Church?

Personal Reflection

Have you treated the account of Adam and Eve as only natural history, or as a picture pointing to Christ?

Action Step

Read Genesis 2 with Ephesians 5. Explain how recognising Christ as the fulfilment changes your understanding of His Church.

She Came From Him

The words *"taken out of Man"* are especially important. Eve's origin was in Adam. She did not first exist independently and later decide to become joined to him. She came from him.

The relationship therefore began with origin before it was expressed in marriage. Adam was the source from which Eve was brought forth, and when she was presented to him, he recognised that she belonged with him because she had come from him.

This physical event prepares us for Paul's later words concerning Christ and the Church: *"For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones."* Paul's language deliberately reaches back to Adam's words concerning Eve.

God Brought Her to the Man

Genesis also says that God *"brought her unto the man."* The relationship was not something Adam constructed for himself. God acted throughout the account.

God caused Adam to sleep, God took from Adam, God made the woman, and God brought her to Adam. The formation and presentation of Eve were therefore the work of God.

This becomes important when the type is applied to the Church. The Church is not the product of human religious organisation. What the physical picture shows in Adam and Eve prepares us to understand something that God Himself would accomplish spiritually.

Eve Became Adam's Wife

The account then identifies the relationship between Adam and Eve.

Moses wrote in **Genesis 2:25**:

> *"And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed."*

Eve was not simply someone who had come from Adam. She was his wife. The one who had been in Adam and was brought forth from Adam was then joined with Adam in the marriage relationship.

The physical picture therefore contains several connected truths: Eve was in Adam, she was brought forth from Adam, she belonged with Adam, and she became Adam's wife. From that union came the natural family.

The Beginning of the Natural Family

God had already commanded mankind to *"Be fruitful, and multiply."* The bringing forth of Eve made possible the natural family through which human life would continue.

Adam and Eve therefore stand at the beginning of the natural human family. Adam is the first man, Eve comes forth from him and becomes his wife, and together they become the beginning of the family through which succeeding generations are born. This physical family relationship provides the framework that Scripture later uses to teach spiritual truth.

The Type Must Lead Us to Christ

The purpose of examining Adam and Eve is not to remain with the natural picture. Paul tells us plainly that there is a greater mystery involved.

Paul wrote in **Ephesians 5:30-32**:

> *"For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church."*

Paul takes the language of Adam and Eve and applies it to Christ and the Church. The events in Genesis therefore provide the type, while Christ and His Church reveal the spiritual reality towards which the type points.

The important features are already before us. The woman was in the man before she was manifested, she was brought forth from him, she became his wife, and from their union came a family.

Paul tells us that behind this physical picture lies *"a great mystery."*

The type is Adam and Eve. The greater spiritual reality is Christ and His Church.

Personal Response

Key Truth

Why must the picture of Adam and Eve lead us to Christ?

Personal Reflection

Have you allowed details of Adam and Eve to control your teaching rather than Paul's explanation of the mystery?

Action Step

Identify one assumption about the type that needs correction. Explain how you will keep Jesus Christ central in understanding it.

CHRIST AND THE CHURCH: THE ANTITYPE

BACK TO CONTENTS

Having examined Adam and Eve as the type, we can now follow Paul's own interpretation to the greater spiritual reality. Adam was the source from which Eve was brought forth, and she became his wife. Paul tells us that this physical relationship points beyond itself to Christ and the Church.

Paul wrote in **Ephesians 5:30-32**:

> *"For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church."*

Paul leaves no uncertainty concerning the antitype. His deeper subject is not Adam and Eve themselves. He is revealing the relationship between Jesus Christ and His Church.

Christ Is the Source of the Church

Adam was the source from which Eve was brought forth. In the spiritual reality, Jesus Christ is the source of the Church.

The Church did not begin with a group of people deciding to establish a religious organisation. It belongs to the eternal purpose of God and receives its life and identity from Jesus Christ.

Paul wrote in **Colossians 1:18**:

> *"And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence."*

Christ is not one member among many within the Church. He is its Head, its beginning and the One who has the preeminence. Everything the Church possesses spiritually comes from Him.

Its life, salvation and unity come from Christ. Its very existence as His body depends upon Him.

The Church Was in God's Eternal Purpose

Just as Eve was in Adam before she was manifested, the Church was within God's eternal purpose before it was revealed in the Gospel Day.

Paul wrote in **Ephesians 3:9-11**:

> *"And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord:"*

Paul speaks of a mystery *"hid in God"* and connects its revelation with *"the church."* He also tells us that this belongs to God's *"eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord."*

The Church was therefore not an afterthought. Before it was manifested among men, it was within God's eternal purpose in Christ. As Eve was hidden in Adam before being brought forth, the Church was hidden within that divine purpose before being revealed.

Personal Response

Key Truth

How does the Church belong to God's purpose in Christ?

Personal Reflection

Does knowing that the Church belonged to God's eternal purpose change your trust in Christ's care?

Action Step

Consider any fear that His Church depends upon human organisation. Explain how you will trust the purpose of God in Christ.

The Church Was Revealed Through Jesus Christ

The eternal purpose became visible through the saving work of Jesus Christ.

Paul wrote in **Ephesians 5:25-27**:

> *"Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he 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."*

Christ *"gave himself for"* the Church. The Church therefore cannot be separated from His life, His sacrifice, His blood and His saving work. What had been within God's eternal purpose was brought into manifestation through Jesus Christ.

At Pentecost in A.D. 31, Jesus Christ came as the Holy Spirit to dwell within His people, and the Church was revealed as His living body. The Church came from God because God Himself was its source, and the one God was fully revealed in Jesus Christ.

Members of His Body

Paul's words are deliberately connected with Adam's words concerning Eve. Adam said, *"This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh."* Paul says concerning Christ and the Church, *"For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones."*

The spiritual meaning is not that believers become part of the physical body of Jesus. Paul is describing the profound spiritual union between Christ and the people who belong to Him. The Church is His body because He is its Head and His life dwells within its members.

Paul wrote in **Ephesians 1:22-23**:

> *"And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all."*

The body cannot live independently of its Head, and the Church cannot live independently of Christ. Jesus Christ is the indwelling life of His people.

Christ and His Church Are Joined

The type also shows relationship. Eve came from Adam and was then joined to Adam as his wife. In the antitype, the Church comes from God, who was fully revealed in Jesus Christ, and belongs to Christ in a spiritual marriage relationship.

This is why Paul can move naturally from speaking of the Church as Christ's body to speaking of husband and wife. The two pictures reveal the same spiritual union.

As the body, the Church is joined to Christ the Head. As the wife, the Church belongs to Christ the Husband. Neither picture allows the Church to exist independently of Him.

Christ remains central in both.

The Church Lives From Christ Within

This relationship must never be reduced to believers trying to imitate Jesus from outside themselves. The life of the Church is the indwelling Christ.

Paul wrote in **Colossians 1:27**:

> *"To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory:"*

The mystery is *"Christ in you."* The Church is alive because Christ lives within His people. Its holiness, unity and spiritual life flow from His indwelling presence.

The antitype therefore reaches far beyond an outward comparison between a husband and wife. It reveals a living spiritual union between Jesus Christ and the people whom He has redeemed.

The Type Finds Its Reality in Christ

The pattern can now be seen clearly. Adam was the source from which Eve was brought forth, and Eve became his wife. Paul then takes that relationship and says, *"This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church."*

Jesus Christ is the source and Head of His Church. The Church was within God's eternal purpose in Christ before it was manifested. Christ gave Himself for it, the Church was revealed in the Gospel Day, and Jesus Christ now lives within His born-again people by His Spirit.

Adam and Eve provide the type, but Christ and His Church reveal the spiritual reality.

Personal Response

Key Truth

What does Christ fulfil that the Adam and Eve picture could only show?

Personal Reflection

Have you given the natural picture more attention than the spiritual life Christ gives His Church?

Action Step

Explain what needs correcting in your understanding of the type, and how it will direct your faith towards Christ Himself.

THE FIRST ADAM AND THE LAST ADAM

BACK TO CONTENTS

Paul develops the relationship between Adam and Jesus Christ even further by describing them as the first Adam and the last Adam. The first Adam stands at the beginning of the natural human family, while Jesus Christ, the last Adam, is the source of spiritual life for those who are born again.

Paul wrote in **1 Corinthians 15:45-47**:

> *"And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit. Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual. The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven."*

Paul deliberately places Adam and Jesus Christ alongside one another. One belongs to the natural order of the first creation, while the other brings the spiritual life of the New Covenant.

The First Man Adam

Paul begins with the words *"The first man Adam was made a living soul."* Adam was the first man and stood at the beginning of the natural human family. God formed him from the dust of the ground and gave him natural human life.

Moses wrote in **Genesis 2:7**:

> *"And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul."*

Every person who enters this world through natural birth belongs to the earthly human family that began with Adam. Paul therefore describes the first man as *"of the earth, earthy."*

This is the natural order into which we are physically born.

Jesus Christ Is the Last Adam

Paul then makes the contrast: *"the last Adam was made a quickening spirit."* The word quickening means giving life. Jesus Christ is therefore presented as the One who gives spiritual life.

This does not deny the genuine humanity of Jesus Christ. He truly possessed a real body, soul, mind, emotions, will and human experience, including physical needs, development and suffering. Yet the divine Spirit dwelling in the man Christ Jesus was not a created human spirit of human origin. God Himself, the eternal Spirit, dwelt within Him.

Paul continues, *"the second man is the Lord from heaven."* The first Adam received natural life, while the last Adam gives spiritual life. The first stands at the beginning of the natural family, while Jesus Christ is the source of the new spiritual life received through the new birth.

The Natural and the Spiritual

Paul explains the order: *"Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual."* We first enter natural life through physical birth. The new birth then brings us into spiritual life in Jesus Christ.

Jesus explained this distinction to Nicodemus.

Jesus said in **John 3:5-7**:

> *"Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again."*

Natural birth gives natural life, while the new birth gives spiritual life. That spiritual life comes through Jesus Christ.

Personal Response

Key Truth

How do the first and last Adam differ?

Personal Reflection

Have you relied on natural family or religious heritage as a measure of spiritual belonging?

Action Step

Consider the last Adam as the giver of life. Explain what attitude must change when you recognise new birth as the source of spiritual family.

From the Earthy to the Heavenly

Paul continues the comparison in **1 Corinthians 15:48-49**:

> *"As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly."*

Through natural birth, we belong to the earthly human family. Through the new birth, we receive spiritual life in Jesus Christ.

This heavenly life is not produced by outwardly copying the conduct of Jesus. It comes from Christ Himself dwelling within the born-again believer. The change is inward and spiritual.

The Last Adam Gives Life

The description *"a quickening spirit"* is central to Paul's teaching. Jesus Christ does not simply point towards spiritual life; He gives it.

The believer is not spiritually alive because of religious membership, outward ceremonies or personal effort. Spiritual life comes from Jesus Christ.

Paul wrote in **2 Corinthians 5:17**:

> *"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."*

The new creation is *"in Christ."* Jesus Christ is therefore not simply the example placed before the new creation. He is the source of its life, and His own life dwells within those who belong to Him.

Translated Into the Kingdom

The spiritual life given by the last Adam also brings the believer into the kingdom of God.

Paul wrote in **Colossians 1:13**:

> *"Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son:"*

The believer is not waiting for a future kingdom before this translation can take place. Paul says God *"hath delivered us"* and *"hath translated us."* The kingdom is a present spiritual reality entered through the new birth.

Paul also wrote in **1 Corinthians 15:50**:

> *"Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption."*

The kingdom of God is not entered through natural ancestry or physical descent. Entrance requires spiritual birth.

The natural family begins with the first Adam, while the spiritual family receives life through the last Adam, Jesus Christ.

The Last Adam and the Spiritual Family

This brings us back to the family picture that runs through this Study Guide. Adam stands at the beginning of the natural family, and Eve was brought forth from Adam and became his wife. Together they provide the physical type.

Jesus Christ is the last Adam. He gives spiritual life to those who are born again, and the Church belongs to Him as His body and His wife.

The relationship is therefore deeper than an outward resemblance between Adam and Christ. Paul is showing us two orders: the natural and the spiritual. The first Adam was *"of the earth, earthy,"* while the last Adam is *"the Lord from heaven."*

Through the first Adam, we receive natural life. Through Jesus Christ, the last Adam, we receive new spiritual life.

The first Adam stands at the beginning of the natural family; Jesus Christ, the last Adam, is the life-giving source of the spiritual family of God.

Personal Response

Key Truth

How does the last Adam bring forth a spiritual family?

Personal Reflection

How does belonging to the family that receives life from Christ affect your treatment of other believers?

Action Step

Identify someone you have regarded as outside your family. Explain how Christ's indwelling life should govern your fellowship.

THE FIRST EVE AND THE CHURCH

BACK TO CONTENTS

The relationship between the first Adam and the last Adam prepares us to consider the corresponding picture of Eve and the Church. Eve was brought forth from Adam, became his wife and stood at the beginning of the natural human family. Paul then takes the relationship between Adam and Eve and tells us that its greater spiritual meaning concerns Christ and the Church.

The comparison must therefore be understood as typology. Eve provides the physical type, while the Church is the spiritual reality to which the type points.

Eve Was Brought Forth From Adam

Moses wrote in **Genesis 2:21-24**:

> *"And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh."*

Eve came from Adam. She had been in him before she was separately manifested, and God brought her forth from that which He had taken from Adam.

Adam therefore said, *"she was taken out of Man."* Her origin in Adam is central to the type.

Eve Became Adam's Wife

The woman who came from Adam was also joined to Adam as his wife. Scripture does not present these as unrelated truths. Eve came from Adam and belonged with Adam.

The relationship of husband and wife was therefore present from the beginning of the natural family. Paul later takes these very verses and applies it to Christ and the Church.

Paul wrote in **Ephesians 5:30-32**:

> *"For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church."*

Paul tells us plainly where the type leads. It leads to Christ and the Church.

The Church Came From Christ

Just as Eve did not originate independently of Adam, the Church does not originate independently of Jesus Christ. Christ is its source.

The Church was within God's eternal purpose before it was manifested. Through the saving work of Jesus Christ, what had been hidden in God was brought forth and revealed in the Gospel Day.

Paul wrote in **Ephesians 3:9-11**:

> *"And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord:"*

The Church was not invented after Calvary by those who followed Jesus. It belonged to God's *"eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord."* Before it was manifested among men, it was within God's purpose in Christ.

As Eve was in Adam before she was brought forth, the Church was in God before it was manifested. It came forth from God, who was fully revealed in Jesus Christ.

Personal Response

Key Truth

How does the first Eve point toward the Church that comes from Christ?

Personal Reflection

Have you thought of the Church's life as independent of Christ rather than coming wholly from Him?

Action Step

Read Ephesians 5 and examine where you have relied upon human religious structures. Explain how your trust will change.

The Church Is the Wife of Christ

The parallel continues beyond origin into relationship. Eve became Adam's wife, and the Church is identified as the wife of Christ.

John wrote in **Revelation 21:9-10**:

> *"And there came unto me 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,"*

The holy Jerusalem is identified as *"the bride, the Lamb's wife."* The physical wife in Genesis therefore helps us understand the spiritual wife revealed in the New Testament.

Adam and Eve provide the type. Christ and the Church reveal the spiritual reality.

Eve Became the Mother of the Natural Family

Scripture identifies Eve with motherhood.

Moses wrote in **Genesis 3:20**:

> *"And Adam called his wife's name Eve; because she was the mother of all living."*

Eve stands at the beginning of the natural human family as *"the mother of all living."* She had been brought forth from Adam, became his wife, and through their union the natural family continued from generation to generation.

The relationship is physical and natural. Adam is the first man, Eve is his wife, and Eve is identified as the mother within the natural family. Every person who enters this world through natural birth belongs to that earthly human family.

The type is therefore complete: Adam, his wife, and the natural family that came through them.

The Heavenly Jerusalem Is the Mother of the Spiritual Family

Paul then gives us the corresponding spiritual picture.

Paul wrote in **Galatians 4:26**:

> *"But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all."*

Just as Eve is identified as the mother within the natural family, Jerusalem which is above is identified as the mother within the spiritual family picture.

The heavenly Jerusalem is the Church of Jesus Christ.

The writer of Hebrews wrote in **Hebrews 12:22-23**:

> *"But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect,"*

Hebrews identifies the heavenly Jerusalem with Mount Sion and *"the general assembly and church of the firstborn."* The spiritual mother is therefore not an earthly city or religious institution. It is the Church of Jesus Christ.

The distinction is clear. Eve is the mother of the natural family, while the heavenly Jerusalem, the Church, is the mother of the spiritual family. The first is connected with natural birth, while the second is connected with those who belong to God's family through the new birth.

The motherhood language must not be misunderstood. The Church does not independently give spiritual life. God gives the new birth by His Spirit, and those who are born of God belong to the heavenly Jerusalem.

The natural picture and the spiritual reality therefore correspond. Eve is *"the mother of all living"* naturally, while Jerusalem above is *"the mother of us all"* spiritually.

God Is the One Who Gives Spiritual Life

The motherhood imagery must remain within its biblical purpose. The Church does not possess an independent power to regenerate sinners. Spiritual birth is the work of God by His Spirit.

Jesus said in **John 3:5-7**:

> *"Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again."*

The Church is called the mother within the family imagery because those who are born of God belong to the spiritual family represented by Jerusalem above. The Church does not generate divine life independently of Christ. Its own life comes from Him.

Jesus Christ is the life-giving source.

The Physical and Spiritual Families

The type can therefore be followed carefully. In the natural picture, Adam comes first, Eve is brought forth from Adam, Eve becomes Adam's wife, and Eve is called *"the mother of all living."* From that union comes the natural family.

In the spiritual reality, Jesus Christ is the last Adam and the source of spiritual life. The Church came forth from God, who was fully revealed in Jesus Christ, is identified as the Lamb's wife, and is described as Jerusalem above, *"the mother of us all."* Those who are born of the Spirit belong to God's spiritual family.

The natural family therefore provides the pattern, while the spiritual family in Christ reveals the greater reality.

The Type Reveals the Great Mystery

Paul does not leave us to invent the connection ourselves. He explicitly connects the language of Adam and Eve with Christ and the Church.

"This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church."

The first Eve therefore provides a physical picture through which God helps us understand the Church. She came from Adam, belonged to Adam as his wife, and stood within the natural family as its mother.

The Church came from God, who was fully revealed in Jesus Christ, belongs to Christ as His wife, and is described in Scripture as Jerusalem above, *"the mother of us all."* The natural picture prepares us to understand the spiritual reality.

Eve was brought forth from Adam; the Church was brought forth through Christ and belongs to Him as the Lamb's wife.

Personal Response

Key Truth

What great mystery does the picture of Eve help reveal?

Personal Reflection

Has the illustration of Eve helped you see the Church as belonging to Christ now?

Action Step

Consider one old assumption about the Church's origin or identity. Explain what Paul's words have corrected.

THE CHURCH BROUGHT FORTH THROUGH CHRIST'S SACRIFICE

BACK TO CONTENTS

The typology of Adam and Eve reaches an important point when we consider how Eve was brought forth from Adam and compare this with the saving work of Jesus Christ. Adam entered a deep sleep, his side was opened, and from him God brought forth the woman who became his wife. In the greater spiritual reality, Jesus Christ gave Himself in death, His side was pierced, and through His sacrifice He purchased the Church that belongs to Him as His wife.

The physical picture does not mean that the Church was literally formed from Christ's blood and water. The events at Calvary reveal through symbolism the cost, source and relationship of the Church to Jesus Christ.

Adam's Deep Sleep Prepared the Type

Moses wrote in **Genesis 2:21-22**:

> *"And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man."*

Adam slept while God acted. His side was opened, and from what God took from Adam He made the woman who would become Adam's wife.

Paul later tells us that the relationship between Adam and Eve contains a deeper meaning concerning Christ and the Church.

Paul wrote in **Ephesians 5:31-32**:

> *"For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church."*

The physical event points beyond itself to the greater spiritual reality of Christ and His Church.

Christ Gave Himself for the Church

The corresponding spiritual truth begins with the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

Paul wrote in **Ephesians 5:25-27**:

> *"Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he 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."*

Christ *"gave himself"* for the Church. The Church therefore cannot be separated from Calvary because its relationship with Jesus Christ rests upon His saving work. He loved the Church, gave Himself for it and redeemed the people who would belong to Him.

The Side of Jesus Was Pierced

John records what happened after Jesus had died.

John wrote in **John 19:32-34**:

> *"Then came the soldiers, and brake the legs of the first, and of the other which was crucified with him. But when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs: But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water."*

The parallel with Adam is striking. Adam entered a deep sleep and his side was opened, while Jesus Christ died and His side was pierced. Eve was brought forth and became Adam's wife, while the death of Christ provided the saving work through which He purchased the people who belong to Him.

The first event gives us the physical type. The second directs us to the saving work of Jesus Christ and the Church that belongs to Him.

Personal Response

Key Truth

What does the piercing of Jesus' side show within this teaching?

Personal Reflection

When you consider Christ's pierced side, do you focus on an outward image or His completed sacrifice?

Action Step

Reflect on the price Christ paid for His people. Explain how that truth should change your regard for someone He redeemed.

The Church Was Purchased With His Own Blood

Scripture directly connects the blood of Jesus Christ with the Church.

Paul wrote in **Acts 20:28**:

> *"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."*

The Church was *"purchased with his own blood."* This is one of the clearest statements of the Church's relationship to the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

The Church did not become His through human decision or because a religious organisation claimed His name. Jesus Christ purchased it with His own blood, and the Church belongs to the One who paid the price for it.

The Blood Speaks of Redemption

Peter uses the same language of redemption.

Peter wrote in **1 Peter 1:18-19**:

> *"Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot:"*

The price was not silver or gold. It was *"the precious blood of Christ."* This is why the language of the Lamb and the Lamb's wife belongs together so naturally.

The Lamb gave Himself, and the wife belongs to the One who redeemed her. The Church is a blood-purchased people.

The Water Points to Cleansing by the Word

John also records that water came from the side of Jesus. Within the wider spiritual picture, Scripture connects cleansing with the Word of Christ.

Jesus said in **John 15:3**:

> *"Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you."*

Paul likewise says of Christ and the Church that He gave Himself *"That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word."* The spiritual lesson is not an outward ceremony. Christ cleanses His people through His Word.

The blood points to redemption, while the water points to cleansing by the Word. Both direct our attention to the saving work of Jesus Christ.

The Church Did Not Originate With Men

The Church that Christ purchased was not created by those who later gathered in Jerusalem. It belonged to God's eternal purpose before it was manifested.

Paul wrote in **Ephesians 3:9-11**:

> *"And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord:"*

Paul says that the mystery was *"hid in God"* and belonged to His *"eternal purpose."* Calvary therefore did not begin a human institution. Through the saving work of Jesus Christ, God accomplished what had already been within His eternal purpose.

Brought Forth and Revealed in the Gospel Day

The sacrifice of Jesus Christ made possible the redemption of His people. Then, at Pentecost in A.D. 31, Jesus Christ came as the Holy Spirit to dwell within His people, and the Church was manifested as His living body and habitation.

Jesus had promised in **John 14:18**:

> *"I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you."*

He came. The One who had given Himself for the Church came to dwell within the Church. What had been hidden in God was now revealed among men.

The Church was not brought forth by human organisation. It was brought forth through the saving work of Jesus Christ and revealed when He came to live within His people by His Spirit.

The Type Finds Its Fulfilment in Christ

The parallel can now be seen clearly. Adam entered a deep sleep, his side was opened, and Eve was brought forth and became his wife. Jesus Christ gave Himself in death, His side was pierced, and His blood purchased the Church.

His Word cleanses the Church, and at Pentecost He came as the Holy Spirit to dwell within the people He had redeemed. The type therefore directs us to Jesus Christ and the Church that belongs to Him.

The Church exists because of Him, belongs to Him and was purchased by Him. It lives because He dwells within it.

Paul's words remain the controlling explanation:

"This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church."

The Church was brought forth through the saving work of Jesus Christ, purchased with His own blood, cleansed by His Word, and revealed as His living people in the Gospel Day.

Personal Response

Key Truth

How does Christ's sacrifice fulfil the picture of Eve and Adam?

Personal Reflection

Have you allowed the physical picture of Adam to overshadow what Christ's sacrifice accomplished?

Action Step

Use a verse about His sacrifice to examine that assumption. Explain how you will keep redemption and Christ's life central.

CHRIST THE HEAD AND SAVIOUR OF HIS WIFE

BACK TO CONTENTS

Having seen that the Church was brought forth through the saving work of Jesus Christ, Paul now shows us the continuing relationship between Christ and His Church. Jesus Christ is not only the One who purchased the Church. He remains its Head, its Saviour, its Husband and the One who nourishes and cherishes it.

The Church therefore never becomes independent of Him. Everything it is spiritually depends upon Jesus Christ.

Christ Is the Head of the Church

Paul wrote in **Ephesians 5:23-27**:

> *"For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he 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."*

Paul states the relationship plainly: *"Christ is the head of the church."* No minister, council, organisation or religious system can occupy the position that belongs to Jesus Christ.

The Church receives its direction, authority and spiritual life from Him. Christ is the Head, and the Church is His body.

Christ Is the Saviour of the Body

Paul immediately adds, *"and he is the saviour of the body."* The Head of the Church is also its Saviour.

The Church exists because Jesus Christ saves. Those who belong to His body are those who have received spiritual life through Him. Membership in an earthly organisation cannot create this relationship.

Paul wrote in **1 Corinthians 12:13**:

> *"For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit."*

At the new birth, the believer receives the Spirit of Christ and is brought by that one Spirit into the one body. Jesus Christ saves, gives spiritual life and brings the believer into His Church.

Christ Loved the Church

Paul then reveals the character of Christ's relationship with His wife: *"Christ also loved the church."* His headship is not distant or uncaring. It is expressed through love.

That love was demonstrated when He *"gave himself for it."* Christ did not simply speak of His love for the Church. He gave Himself.

The Lamb's relationship with His wife is therefore founded upon His saving love. He loved the Church, gave Himself for it and purchased it with His own blood. The Church belongs to the One who gave Himself for it.

Personal Response

Key Truth

How did Christ show His love for the Church?

Personal Reflection

Has Christ's self-giving love changed the way you respond to people who are difficult to serve?

Action Step

Identify a reluctance or selfish motive. Describe how the life of Christ within you should govern your care for another believer.

Christ Sanctifies and Cleanses His Church

Paul continues, *"That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word."* The Church does not establish its own standard of holiness. Christ sanctifies and cleanses His people through His Word.

Jesus said in **John 15:3**:

> *"Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you."*

His Word remains the standard for His Church. The wife does not determine what the Husband should say, and the body does not direct the Head. Jesus Christ speaks, and His people receive His Word.

The Church remains subject to Christ and His truth.

Christ Presents a Glorious Church

Paul says that Christ's purpose is *"That he might present it to himself a glorious church."* The glory of the Church does not come from buildings, wealth, numbers, earthly recognition or religious influence. Its glory is found in Jesus Christ.

Paul wrote in **Colossians 1:27**:

> *"To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory:"*

The glory is *"Christ in you."* The Church is glorious because Jesus Christ dwells within His born-again people by His Spirit.

Its holiness is not an outward appearance produced by human effort. It flows from the indwelling life of Christ and submission to His Word.

The Lord Nourishes and Cherishes the Church

Paul continues the husband-and-wife comparison in **Ephesians 5:28-32**:

> *"So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church: For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church."*

Paul says that the Lord *"nourisheth and cherisheth"* the Church. These words describe His continuing care for the people who belong to Him.

Jesus Christ did not give Himself for the Church and then leave His people to sustain their own spiritual life. He remains present within them by His Spirit. The Church lives from Christ.

Members of His Body

Paul again joins the picture of marriage with the picture of the body: *"For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones."* The wife and the body are the same spiritual people viewed through different biblical pictures.

As His body, the Church is joined to Christ the Head. As His wife, the Church belongs to Christ the Husband. Both pictures show complete dependence upon Him.

The Church does not possess a separate spiritual life alongside Jesus Christ. Its life is His life within His people.

The Church Is Subject to Christ

Paul also says, *"Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ."* This is essential to understanding the relationship.

The Church does not lead Christ, redefine Christ or create its own truth and then attach the name of Jesus to it. Christ is the Head, and the Church is subject to Him.

His Word governs His people, His truth directs His people, His Spirit dwells within His people, and His life works through His people.

Christ Remains Central

The marriage picture continually directs our attention back to Jesus Christ. He is the Head of the Church, the Saviour of the body, the One who loved the Church and gave Himself for it.

He sanctifies and cleanses His Church, nourishes and cherishes it, and dwells within His people. The Church belongs to Him as His wife.

Paul brings the whole relationship together with these words:

"This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church."

The greatness of the Church is never found in the Church apart from Christ. Everything that gives the Church life, holiness, identity and glory is found in Jesus Christ.

The Church is alive because Jesus Christ is its Head, its Saviour, its Husband and its indwelling life.

Personal Response

Key Truth

Why must Christ remain central as Head and Saviour of His wife?

Personal Reflection

Have you placed any earthly authority or institution above Christ's continuing care for His wife?

Action Step

Consider how you speak about the Church. Explain how you will centre your trust on its Head and Saviour.

THE WIFE AND THE FAMILY OF GOD

BACK TO CONTENTS

The relationship between Christ and His Church brings us naturally to the picture of the family of God. Scripture speaks of God as Father, believers as His children, and the Church as the household of God. It also describes Jerusalem above, the Church, as *"the mother of us all."*

These pictures belong together and help us understand the present spiritual relationship between Jesus Christ, His Church and those who are born again.

Believers Are the Children of God Now

Those who are born again do not wait for a future age before becoming God's children.

Paul wrote in **Galatians 3:26**:

> *"For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus."*

Paul says *"ye are."* The relationship is present. Through the new birth, believers receive spiritual life in Jesus Christ and belong to God's family now.

This family relationship is not created by natural ancestry, church membership or religious ceremony. It comes through Jesus Christ.

The Church Is the Household of God

Paul identifies the Church directly with the household of God.

Paul wrote in **1 Timothy 3:15**:

> *"But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth."*

The *"house of God"* is not a religious building. Paul says that it is *"the church of the living God."* The Church is therefore God's spiritual household, made up of those who have been born again and belong to Jesus Christ.

The family is spiritual because its members have received spiritual life from God.

Jesus Christ Is the Everlasting Father

If believers are the children of God, Scripture must also reveal who their Father is. Isaiah identifies the One born as the Son with titles that reveal who He is.

Isaiah wrote in **Isaiah 9:6**:

> *"For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace."*

The One born as the Son is also identified as *"The mighty God"* and *"The everlasting Father."* Jesus Christ is the one true God fully revealed through genuine human life.

As to His humanity, He was the Son who was born. Yet the eternal Spirit dwelling in and revealed through the man Christ Jesus was not a created human spirit. God Himself, the eternal Spirit, dwelt within Him.

Those who are born again therefore receive their spiritual life from Jesus Christ. He is not simply the founder of the family. He is its life-giving source.

One God and Father of All

Paul reinforces this truth in **Ephesians 4:6**:

> *"One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all."*

There is one God and Father. That one God was fully revealed in Jesus Christ and now dwells within His born-again people by His Spirit.

The family of God therefore cannot be understood apart from Jesus Christ. The Father is revealed in Him, the children receive life through Him, and He dwells within those who belong to Him.

Personal Response

Key Truth

How does one Father unite God's family?

Personal Reflection

Have you limited the family of God by the boundaries of your own assembly?

Action Step

Identify a judgement needing correction and describe how you will welcome a born-again believer as part of the one family.

The Church Is the Mother in the Spiritual Family Picture

The family picture also includes the Church.

Paul wrote in **Galatians 4:26**:

> *"But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all."*

Jerusalem above is the heavenly Jerusalem, the Church of Jesus Christ. Just as Eve was the mother within the natural family, Jerusalem above is presented as the mother within the spiritual family picture.

The Church does not independently create spiritual life. God gives the new birth by His Spirit. The motherhood language identifies the spiritual family to which those who are born of God belong.

Jesus Christ is the life-giving source. The Church is His wife, and those who are born again belong to the family pictured through that relationship.

The Wife and the Children Belong to the Same Family

The picture now comes together. Jesus Christ is the everlasting Father, the Church is the Lamb's wife, Jerusalem above is called *"the mother of us all,"* and born-again believers are called *"the children of God."*

These are not disconnected expressions. They form one spiritual family picture. The natural family of Adam and Eve provides the type, while Christ and His Church reveal the spiritual reality.

The Whole Family Belongs to God

Paul speaks of this family in **Ephesians 3:14-15**:

> *"For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named,"*

The family reaches beyond one earthly congregation or one generation. Paul speaks of *"the whole family in heaven and earth."*

All who belong to Jesus Christ are part of this one spiritual family. Some are living on earth, while others have completed their earthly course, but all belong to the same family of God. The family is not divided by earthly organisations, national borders or human names because its identity comes from God.

The Family Relationship Is Present

This family picture also confirms that the relationship between Christ and His Church is present. The children exist now, the household exists now, and Jerusalem above is *"the mother of us all"* now.

Christ is the Head and Husband of His Church now. The family therefore does not depend upon a marriage still waiting to begin in a future age.

The spiritual relationship already exists. The Church belongs to Christ, and those who are born again belong to God's family now.

A Family Centred in Jesus Christ

The family of God must always remain centred in Jesus Christ. He gives the life, He saves, He is the Head, He is the Husband, and He is the everlasting Father revealed to us.

His own life dwells within His born-again people. The Church has no spiritual identity apart from Him, and the children of God have no spiritual life apart from Him.

The family exists because of Jesus Christ.

The wife belongs to Christ, the children receive life through Christ, and the whole family of God finds its identity and life in Jesus Christ.

Personal Response

Key Truth

Why is God's family centred in Jesus Christ?

Personal Reflection

What has the life-giving work of Jesus Christ changed in the way you understand God's family?

Action Step

Consider one relationship in that family. Explain how His indwelling life should be expressed in encouragement or service.

THE FAMILY BEARS THE NAME OF GOD

BACK TO CONTENTS

The Church is the family of God, and Scripture also connects that family with the name of the One to whom it belongs. Human families commonly bear a family name, and the spiritual family likewise receives its identity from God rather than from a human founder, movement or organisation.

The name therefore speaks first of belonging. The Church belongs to God because He brought it forth, Jesus Christ purchased it with His own blood, and His life dwells within His people.

Kept in the Father's Name

On the night before His crucifixion, Jesus prayed for those who belonged to Him.

Jesus prayed in **John 17:9-11**:

> *"I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine. And all mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them. And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are."*

Jesus prayed, *"keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me."* The people belonged to God, and Jesus desired that they should be kept in His name and in spiritual unity.

The Church therefore does not receive its true identity from the name of a human leader, denomination or religious movement. Its identity comes from God.

The Whole Family Is Named From God

Paul connects the family directly with its Father.

Paul wrote in **Ephesians 3:14-15**:

> *"For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named,"*

Paul speaks of *"the whole family in heaven and earth."* There is one spiritual family, and that family receives its identity from God.

The family is not divided into separate spiritual households belonging to different human founders. All who are born again belong to the one household of God.

Paul wrote in **Ephesians 2:19**:

> *"Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God;"*

Born-again believers are members of *"the household of God."* The family belongs to Him.

The New Testament Speaks of the Church of God

This belonging is reflected repeatedly in the New Testament expression *"the church of God."*

Paul told the elders in **Acts 20:28**:

> *"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."*

The Church is called *"the church of God,"* and the verse immediately explains why it belongs to Him: *"which he hath purchased with his own blood."*

The name is therefore inseparable from ownership. The Church is God's because God purchased it, and the God who purchased the Church with His own blood was revealed in Jesus Christ.

Personal Response

Key Truth

Why does the New Testament call believers the Church of God?

Personal Reflection

Have you treated the words 'Church of God' as a label rather than a declaration of belonging?

Action Step

Compare that assumption with **Acts 20:28**. *Explain how your words or treatment of Christ's people should change.*

The Church of God at Corinth

Paul uses the same expression when writing to believers in Corinth.

Paul wrote in **1 Corinthians 1:2**:

> *"Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours:"*

Paul does not identify the Church by a human founder. It is *"the church of God."* At the same time, those who compose that Church are *"sanctified in Christ Jesus"* and call upon *"the name of Jesus Christ our Lord."*

The name of God and the name of Jesus Christ cannot be separated into competing spiritual identities. The one God has been fully revealed in Jesus Christ, and the Church belongs to Him.

A Family Name Does Not Create the Family

It is important, however, to keep the order correct. A person does not become part of God's family simply by placing the words Church of God on a building, organisation or membership document.

The name cannot create the reality.

Jesus said in **John 3:3**:

> *"Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."*

Entrance into God's family comes through the new birth. A human organisation may use a biblical name while containing people who have never been born again. Likewise, the spiritual Church consists of all who truly belong to Jesus Christ, wherever they may physically gather.

The spiritual reality must come first.

The Name Declares Whose We Are

To bear God's name therefore means more than using particular words on a sign. It declares ownership and identity.

The Church is God's Church, the family is God's family, and the people belong to God. Jesus Christ is their Head, Saviour and indwelling life.

The name directs attention away from human founders and back to the One to whom the Church belongs.

One Family, One Identity

The Church Jesus built is one body and one spiritual family. Different human names cannot create different bodies within Christ.

Paul wrote in **Ephesians 4:4-6**:

> *"There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all."*

One body belongs to one Lord and one God. The family therefore finds its common identity in Him.

This does not mean that the power of the Church rests in a title. It means that God's people recognise whose family they are and do not place a human identity above the spiritual identity they have received in Jesus Christ.

His Name and His Life Belong Together

The true family of God bears more than a name outwardly. Jesus Christ dwells within His people.

Paul wrote in **Ephesians 4:6**:

> *"One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all."*

The God whose name identifies the family is the God who lives within the family. This is what gives the name its spiritual meaning.

The Church bears God's identity because it belongs to Him, was purchased by Him and lives by His indwelling presence. There is therefore one spiritual family because there is one God, one Lord, one Spirit and one body.

The Church is the family of God, and that family bears the name and identity of the God who revealed Himself in Jesus Christ and now dwells within His people.

Personal Response

Key Truth

Why must God's name and His life remain together?

Personal Reflection

Have you depended upon the name of a church rather than the new birth to recognise God's people?

Action Step

Examine that dependence in the light of God's Word. State what you will now believe about who belongs to His family.

CONCLUSION: CHRIST AND HIS CHURCH ARE ONE

BACK TO CONTENTS

The relationship between Jesus Christ and His Church is one of the great mysteries revealed in Scripture. The Church is His body, His wife, His household and the spiritual family that belongs to Him. Each picture reveals a different aspect of the same truth: the Church cannot be understood apart from Jesus Christ.

Paul gave the controlling statement in **Ephesians 5:32**:

> *"This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church."*

The mystery begins with Christ and remains centred upon Him.

The Lamb Has a Wife

Jesus Christ is the Lamb of God who gave Himself for our redemption. Revelation then identifies the people who belong to Him as *"the bride, the Lamb's wife."*

The wife is not a future people waiting to come into relationship with Christ. The Church already belongs to Him. Christ is presently its Head, its Saviour and the One who gave Himself for it.

The relationship is present.

The Type Pointed to the Reality

Adam and Eve gave us the physical picture. Eve was in Adam before she was brought forth from him. She came from Adam, became his wife and became the mother within the natural family.

Paul then takes that relationship and applies it to Christ and the Church. The Church was within God's eternal purpose before it was manifested. Through the saving work of Jesus Christ, it was brought forth and revealed, and it belongs to Him as His wife.

The natural type finds its greater spiritual reality in Christ.

The First and Last Adam

Paul called Jesus Christ *"the last Adam."* The first Adam stands at the beginning of the natural family, while Jesus Christ is the life-giving source of the spiritual family.

Paul wrote in **1 Corinthians 15:45**:

> *"And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit."*

Jesus Christ gives spiritual life. Those who are born again do not receive that life from a religious organisation, ceremony or human effort. They receive life through Christ, and His own life dwells within them.

The Natural Mother and the Spiritual Mother

Scripture calls Eve *"the mother of all living."* She is the mother within the natural family picture.

Paul wrote in **Galatians 4:26**:

> *"But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all."*

Jerusalem above, the heavenly Jerusalem, is the Church and is presented as the mother within the spiritual family picture. Eve belongs to the natural family, while the heavenly Jerusalem belongs to the spiritual family.

God Himself gives the new birth by His Spirit, and those whom He makes spiritually alive belong to His Church.

Christ Purchased His Church

The Church belongs to Jesus Christ because He gave Himself for it.

Paul wrote in **Acts 20:28**:

> *"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."*

The Church was purchased with His own blood. It was not founded by men or created by denominational organisation. It belongs to Jesus Christ because He redeemed it.

Christ Is the Life of His Church

The relationship between Christ and His Church is not only one of ownership. It is a living spiritual union.

Paul wrote in **Colossians 1:27**:

> *"To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory:"*

The mystery is *"Christ in you."* The Church does not live by attempting to reproduce the life of an absent Christ. Jesus Christ personally dwells within His born-again people by His Spirit.

He is the life of the body, the life of the wife and the life of the family.

The Great Mystery Is Christ and the Church

The different pictures now come together. Jesus Christ is the Lamb, and the Church is the Lamb's wife. Jesus Christ is the last Adam, and the Church is pictured through the woman brought forth and joined to Him.

Jesus Christ is the everlasting Father, Jerusalem above is the mother within the spiritual family picture, and born-again believers are the children of God. Christ is the Head, Saviour, Husband and indwelling life of His Church.

None of these truths places the Church above Jesus Christ or gives it life apart from Him. Every picture leads back to Him.

The great mystery is Christ and His Church: a redeemed people who came from God, belong to Jesus Christ, and live because Jesus Christ dwells within them.

Personal Response

Key Truth

How do the Lamb, His sacrifice and His present wife reveal the great mystery of Christ and the Church?

Personal Reflection

What has Christ's present love and care for His Church corrected in your thinking?

Action Step

Identify one member of His Church whose needs you have overlooked. Explain how Christ's love within you should shape your response.

MODULE CONCLUSION: THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH

BACK TO CONTENTS

Throughout this module, Scripture has revealed the New Testament Church from several different perspectives. Each picture adds something important, yet all of them lead to the same conclusion: the Church belongs to Jesus Christ, is composed of those who are born again, and lives because Jesus Christ dwells within His people by His Spirit.

The Church is not a building, denomination, registered institution or human organisation. It is the living body of Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ Built His Church

Jesus said in **Matthew 16:18**:

> *"And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."*

Jesus said, *"I will build my church."* The Church therefore belongs to Him. He is its Builder, its Foundation and its Head.

No human organisation can create the Church Jesus built. Men may establish organisations, construct buildings and maintain membership records, but only Jesus Christ can give spiritual life and make a person part of His body.

There Is One Body

Paul wrote in **Ephesians 4:4-6**:

> *"There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all."*

There is not one spiritual body for one denomination and another body for another group. There is one body, one Spirit, one Lord and one God and Father of all.

Every person who is truly born again belongs to this one spiritual body. Jesus Christ gives the life, and by the one Spirit the believer is brought into His Church.

Zion Is the Present City of God

The Church is also revealed as Zion, the heavenly Jerusalem and the New Jerusalem.

The writer of Hebrews wrote in **Hebrews 12:22-23**:

> *"But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect,"*

The controlling words are *"ye are come."* Born-again believers have already come to Mount Sion, the city of the living God and the heavenly Jerusalem.

The New Jerusalem is therefore not a future physical city awaiting descent from the sky. It is the present spiritual people of God, the Church in whom Jesus Christ dwells.

The Church Is the Lamb's Wife

Revelation gives us another picture of the same people.

John wrote in **Revelation 21:9-10**:

> *"And there came unto me 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,"*

The holy Jerusalem is *"the bride, the Lamb's wife."* The Church belongs to Jesus Christ in a present spiritual relationship. He loved it, gave Himself for it and purchased it with His own blood.

Paul called this relationship *"a great mystery."*

The Life of the Church Is Christ Within

The greatest truth running through all these pictures is not simply what the Church is called, but why it is alive.

Paul wrote in **Colossians 1:27**:

> *"To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory:"*

The life of the Church is Christ in you. The Church does not live by outwardly copying an absent Jesus. Jesus Christ came to His people as the Holy Spirit at Pentecost in A.D. 31, and He now dwells within every born-again believer.

That indwelling life makes the Church a living body, Zion the city of the living God, and the Church the temple and habitation of God. It also reveals the Lamb's wife as a living people joined to Christ.

One Church in Jesus Christ

The different biblical pictures now stand together. The Church is the body of Christ, the household of God, Mount Sion, the heavenly Jerusalem, the New Jerusalem and the Lamb's wife. These are not different Churches, but different revelations of the one born-again people who belong to Jesus Christ.

He built the Church, purchased the Church, and remains its Head, Husband and Foundation. He is also the life within the Church, and every person who is born again belongs to Him.

The New Testament Church is the one spiritual body of born-again believers in whom Jesus Christ lives by His Spirit, established upon Him, governed by Him, belonging to Him and filled with His life.

Personal Response

Key Truth

How do the four Guides in this module point to one Church built, filled and joined to Jesus Christ?

Personal Reflection

Have you drawn a boundary around the Church that Christ Himself has not established?

Action Step

Name that boundary and explain how you will recognise and care for His people while remaining faithful to the Bible.

SUBMISSION TO COGMA FOR APPRAISAL

Instructions

Complete this section after you have finished the Study Guide. It must be completed online.

The link is located at the bottom of the online Study Guide — https://cogma.com.au/study-guides/

Your answers should reflect your understanding, your personal response, and how you intend to live by the truth you have studied. Answer honestly and be specific.

1. Main Truth

How do the Lamb's sacrifice and His present union with the Church explain why she is called His wife? Explain why Christ's love, rather than a human institution, gives the Church her identity.

2. Understanding

How does the account of Adam and Eve point to Christ and His Church? Explain what the natural picture shows and why Christ's sacrifice and spiritual life must govern its meaning.

3. Personal Reflection

Did you previously think of the Lamb's wife mainly as a future reality? Explain which teaching or verse has corrected or strengthened your understanding of Christ's present union with His Church.

4. Response to Truth

If Christ is already Head and Saviour of His wife, how should that affect the way you speak of and treat His people? Describe one part of your own response that needs to change or grow.

5. Action Step

Examine your attitude towards a believer whom Christ has redeemed. Explain what His love reveals about your attitude and how His indwelling life should shape your response.

6. Early Response

Have you begun to respond to that believer in the light of Christ's love? Explain any change in your attitude or conduct, or what has prevented a response.

7. Ongoing Practice

What will help you continue to care for Christ's people as His present wife and God's family? Describe a regular way to remember His sacrifice and let His love guide your conduct.

8. Doctrinal Clarity

Explain how Eve from Adam, the pierced side of Christ and the Church brought forth through His sacrifice fit together. Why must the picture of Adam and Eve lead to Christ rather than control the teaching by itself?

9. Living the Truth

Suppose a believer from another assembly needs help. How should the truth that Christ's wife is one family bearing God's name shape your response? Give a realistic example.

10. Final Response

Bring together the Lamb, His sacrifice, His present wife and the spiritual family He has formed. What has become clearer or been corrected in your understanding? Explain what you are prepared to do as a member of His Church.