

The Bride of Christ and Ancient Traditions: What's True?

The term “the bride of Christ” has been at the center of many controversies throughout the centuries. Where did it come from? What does it mean? Who is the bride? Have we misunderstood who's who? The answers to these questions come not from a Western theological perspective but from a Hebrew understanding of the process of engagement, marriage, the reception and the marriage supper.

I have performed a few weddings during my more than 40 years of ministry. During your lifetime you have probably attended a few, including yours and those of your children or, in some cases, grandchildren.

In Hebrew tradition, marriages were arranged. They were more than just a commitment between the bridegroom and his bride but of two families coming together. When the engagement happened, the bridegroom made a covenant with the bride. He left her in her village and went to prepare a home for her in his village. After everything was ready, and the bridegroom's father agreed it was time, a delegation made its way to receive the bride. The bridegroom came with his groomsmen; the bride was ready with her attendants. They got married, arrived at their reception and had a wedding supper.

Who's who? Could it be that Israel is the bride? We, as the “glorious” church, are the guests. And for those of us who love and support the Jewish people, our invitation entitles us to a seat at the marriage supper?

What's the truth? {eo}

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