

Marriage Vow

(Sermon Notes) By Warren Zehrung 12/16/2017

Why has God chosen the analogy of a **perfect marriage** to portray the relationship between the Church brethren and His Son, Jesus Christ? We are quickly becoming a nation of people who do not appreciate the sanctity of marriage. Modern Israel has forgotten how marriage is the foundation of society, and without stable marriage in a nation – it is soon doomed to fall into despair and desolation. The institution of marriage is greatly under **attack** – all around the world. Even in God’s Church, way too many have forgotten that **marriage** is supposed to be a picture of Christ and the Church brethren.

Ephesians 5:31 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**.

That means intimately together in mind, heart and all things – working together for one final goal – the Kingdom of God.

Ephesians 5:32 This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.

The apostle Paul explains how Jesus Christ is entering into an eternal **marriage vow** with the true saints.

Specific Purpose Statement In today’s sermon we will be comparing the **old marriage vow**— the Old Covenant—with the **new marriage vow**—the New Covenant, that will be extant for eternity. The actual wedding of the Church brethren and Jesus Christ will not be consummated until the resurrection to spiritual Life has taken place followed by the marriage supper when Christ and the Church will have become, **not one flesh**, but one Spirit.

1Corinthians 6:17 He that is joined unto the Lord is **one Spirit**.

We will be **one Spirit** with Jesus Christ. What does that mean? When a young couple marries they are perfectly together in heart, mind, hope and love. The young man tells his fiancé, “I will love you forever.” The young lady tells her fiancé, “I will never, never leave you – till death do us part.” They make permanent and unbreakable promises to each other. They **vow** their undying love to each other. They enter into a **marriage covenant** with one another.

In the same way, without the picture that God gives us of this intense love and intimacy in an idealistic physical marriage relationship, we would not be able to fathom what “**one Spirit**” means.

Revelation 19:7-9 Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to Him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife hath made herself ready.

Revelation 19:8 And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the **righteousness of saints**.

Revelation 19:9 And He saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the **marriage supper** of the Lamb. And He saith unto me, These are the **true sayings** of God.

The fine white linen wedding dress of the bride represents the preparedness of the saints because **Christ’s righteousness** has been imputed to them who are pure chaste maidens in waiting (Matthew 25:10). The beloved apostle John is telling us that the heavenly **wedding ceremony** is absolutely going to take place just as it is described here – the **true sayings** of God.

At our initial calling and conversion, our **baptism vow** included the terms and conditions of the **New Covenant**. Although we are not yet changed from man-kind to spiritual God-kind, as we will be for the heavenly wedding, we live according to the terms of the **marriage contract** even now because we are **engaged** to the Lamb of God. Paul says:

2Corinthians 11:2 For I am jealous over you with the jealousy of God: for I have **espoused** you in marriage to one husband, that I may present you as a **chaste virgin** to Christ.

The chaste virgin honors her marriage vow to her betrothed **before, during** and **after** the courtship. We are destined to be in the better resurrection – because we are the **firstfruits** of God's Plan. The spiritual firstfruits, Christ and the Church brethren, are to **wed** one another (Exodus 23:16, Numbers 28:26). Jesus Christ will be the husband of the bride. Carrying the analogy further we read of Christ being the husband:

Isaiah 54:5-6 Thy Maker is thine **husband**; the Lord of hosts is His name; and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel; The God of the whole earth shall He be called. For the Lord has called thee as a woman forsaken and grieved in spirit, and a **wife** of youth, when thou were refused, says thy God.

God described His relationship with Old Testament Israel, formed by that Old Covenant **Marriage Vow**, to Jeremiah when He said,

Jeremiah 11:4 I commanded your fathers in the day that I brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, from the iron furnace, saying, **Obey my voice**, [keep the Ten Commandments] and do them, according to all which I command you: so **shall ye be my people, and I will be your God**. [In the Old Testament marriage relationship.]

Notice the picture of the Wedding Covenant that takes place at the time of Pentecost, less than two months after Israel was delivered from Egyptian bondage by Jesus Christ.

Israel replies, "**I Do**," in response to the terms of the **Marriage Covenant**.

Exodus 24:3 Moses came and told the people all the words of the Lord, and all the judgments: and all the people answered with one voice, and said, All the words which the Lord hath said **we will do...**

Exodus 24:7 And he took the **book** of the **covenant**, and read in the audience of the people: and they said, All that the Lord hath said **we will do**, and be obedient.

Exodus 24:8 And Moses took the blood, and sprinkled it on the people, and said, Behold the blood of the **covenant**, which the Lord hath made with you concerning all these words.

The heavenly New Covenant, when it will have come to fruition, is so much more glorious than this Old Covenant that the difference between the Old and the New is inconceivable. Paul explains how **fantastically greater** the New Covenant is than the Old Covenant.

Joe Tkach was fond of saying that the Worldwide Church of God was an Old Covenant church. The blood is on his head because he really messed up a lot of people. Like Judas Iscariot, Joe Tkach was ordained of old to that condemnation, an ungodly man, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.

Jude 1:4 For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.

The Worldwide Church of God **was not** an Old Covenant church. Nothing could be farther from the truth! The Church of God is a **New Covenant** church. What Joe Tkach meant by Old Covenant church, was that before he came on the scene, we believed in keeping the Ten Commandments – which the Protestants say **were nailed to the cross**, and we do not need to obey them any longer.

When you ask Protestants if it is now okay to kill, steal, cheat and lie – they say, Oh, we do not do those things... It turns out that they mean that the **Sabbath** Commandment was **nailed to the cross**.

Brethren the Old Covenant was based on **physical** promises of blessings, protection from enemies, land and children... Under the Old Covenant, Israel was to be a great nation - a set apart people. God said:

Exodus 19:5 Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and **keep my covenant**, then ye shall be a very special treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine:

Exodus 19:6 And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and **an holy nation**. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel.

The Old Covenant called for physical **circumcision** so that Israel would be physically different from everyone else. They were set apart for national blessings from God when they lived according to the terms of the Old Covenant.

Read about the tremendous national riches, blessings and wealth **for obedience** in Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28. Here is a point that I wish to make: The Old Covenant was a very good thing. It was a stepping stone to how we got to where we are today. Paul explains:

2Corinthians 3:6 [God] also has made us competent ministers of the New Covenant; not of the letter, **but of the Spirit**: for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.

2Corinthians 3:7 But if the ministry of death [Old Covenant], written and engraved in stones, **was glorious**, so that the children of Israel could not steadfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance [his face shone brightly]; which glory was to be done away:

The glory of the Old Covenant was **transitory**. It was temporary compared to the exquisite glory of the New Covenant.

2Corinthians 3:8 How shall not the ministering of the Spirit [of the New Covenant] be rather [so much more] glorious?

2Corinthians 3:9 For if the ministry of condemnation [the Old Covenant] be glorious, much more doth the ministry of righteousness [the New Covenant] exceed in [most splendid] glory.

Hebrews 8:6 But now hath [Jesus] obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was **established upon better promises**.

The New Covenant is a spiritual Covenant based on better promises and eternal life!

2Corinthians 3:10 For even that [Old Covenant] which was made glorious had no glory [by comparison] in this respect, by reason of the glory that excels [of the New Covenant].

2Corinthians 3:11 For if that which is done away was glorious [the Old Covenant], much more that [the New Covenant] which remains is **superbly** glorious.

At the institution of the New Covenant Passover - Jesus spoke of His **blood of the New Covenant**

Matthew 26:26 As they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body.

Matthew 26:27 And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it;

Matthew 26:28 For this is my blood of the **New Covenant**, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.

Remember that when Christ came to this earth – Israel, especially Judah, was still **expecting and looking** for the fulfillment of the **covenant promises** made to Abraham.

Luke 1:67 Zacharias was filled with the Holy Spirit, and prophesied, saying,

Luke 1:68 Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for he hath visited and redeemed his people,

Luke 1:72 To perform the mercy promised to our fathers, and to remember **His holy covenant**;

The apostle Peter said on that first Pentecost: Peter refers back to the unilateral promise - the one sided Covenant in Genesis 15:

Genesis 15:17 It came to pass, that, when the sun went down, and it was dark, behold a smoking furnace, and a burning lamp that passed between those pieces.

Genesis 15:18 In the same day the LORD **made a covenant** with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates:

Acts 3:25 Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the **covenant which God made** with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds / nations of the earth be blessed.

We see how very much these New Testament people relied on God's promises – His Covenants. They relied on God's promises.

Look at how much God's Covenants were on Stevens mind the very last hour of his life - before he became the first New Testament Christian **martyr**:

Acts 7:2 And he said, Men, brethren, and fathers, hearken; The God of glory appeared unto our father **Abraham**, when he was in Mesopotamia, [Ur of the Chaldees] before he dwelt in Harran,

Acts 7:3 And [God] said unto him, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and come into the land which I shall shew thee. [the Promised Land]

Acts 7:4 Then came he out of the land of the Chaldeans, and dwelt in Harran: and from thence, when his father was dead, he removed him into this land, wherein ye now dwell. [Palestine]

Acts 7:5 And he gave him none inheritance in it, no, not so much as to set his foot on: [not one square foot of the holy land] yet he promised that he would give it to him for a possession, and to his **seed after him**, when as yet he had no child.

Acts 7:6 And God spoke on this wise, That his seed should sojourn in a strange land [Egypt]; and that they should bring them into bondage, and entreat them evil four hundred years.

Acts 7:7 And the nation to whom they shall be in bondage will I judge, [you know of the plagues in Egypt - every first-born died] said God: and after that shall they come forth, and serve me in this place.

Acts 7:8 And he gave him the **covenant of circumcision**: and so Abraham begat Isaac, and circumcised him the eighth day; and Isaac begat Jacob; and Jacob begat the twelve patriarchs.

The Covenant with Abraham called for physical **circumcision** in order to set the people of God apart.

Genesis 17:8 And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God.

Genesis 17:9 And God said unto Abraham, Thou shalt keep **my covenant** therefore, thou, and thy seed after thee in their generations.

Genesis 17:10 This is **my covenant**, which ye shall keep, between me and you and thy seed after thee; Every man child among you shall be circumcised.

Genesis 17:11 And ye shall **circumcise** the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be a token of the covenant betwixt me and you.

Genesis 17:12 And he that is eight days old shall be circumcised among you, every man child in your generations, he that is born in the house, or bought with money of any stranger, which is not of thy seed.

Genesis 17:13 He that is born in thy house, and he that is bought with thy money, must needs be circumcised: and my covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant.

Genesis 17:14 And the uncircumcised man child whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, that soul **shall be cut off** from his people; he hath broken my covenant.

Circumcision was required for **Passover** as well.

Exodus 12:48 And when a stranger shall sojourn with thee, and will keep the Passover to the LORD, let all his males be circumcised, and then let him come near and keep it; and he shall be as one that is born in the land: for no uncircumcised person shall eat thereof.

That is why the New Covenant Passover is only for converted baptized brethren.

Even in the Old Testament, physical circumcision looked forward to the **New Covenant circumcision**. God said to Moses in verse 14 – Forty years after their deliverance from Egypt:

Deuteronomy 10:14 Behold, the heaven and the heaven of heavens is the LORD'S thy God, the earth also, with all that therein is.

Deuteronomy 10:15 Only the LORD had a delight in thy **fathers** [the patriarchs] **to love them**, and he chose their seed after them, even you above all people, as it is this day.

Deuteronomy 10:16 Circumcise therefore the **foreskin of your heart**, and be no more stiff-necked.

That is the New Covenant concept. Here is a good short **definition** of the New Covenant:

Romans 11:26 And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob:

The New Covenant brings **forgiveness of sins**.

Romans 11:27 For this is **my covenant** unto them, when **I shall take away their sins**.

Galatians 3:13 Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law [death], being made a curse for us: for it is written, **Cursed is every one that is hanged on a tree**: [stake of cross]

Galatians 3:14 That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the [New Covenant] promise of the Spirit through faith.

Galatians 3:15 Brethren, I speak after the manner of men; Though it be but a man's covenant [contract], yet if it be confirmed, no man disannuls, or addeth thereto.

No one can arbitrarily change a contract!

Galatians 3:16 Now to Abraham and his seed **were the promises made**. [God covenanted with Abraham] He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy **seed** [singular], which is Christ.

Galatians 3:17 And this I say, that the **covenant**, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law [Levitical Law], which was four hundred and thirty years after [later], cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect.

Nothing in the sacrifices, washings, etc., can change the preordained Covenant with Abraham – it is sure.

Galatians 3:18 For if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise: but God gave it to Abraham by promise. [divine assurance]

We find more of the definition of the New Covenant here:

Hebrews 9:15 And for this cause [Jesus] is the mediator of the New Covenant, that by means of death [Cursed is every one that is hanged on a tree], for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first [Old] Covenant, they **which are called** [that is us] might receive the **promise of eternal inheritance**.

The New Covenant is an everlasting Covenant:

Hebrews **13:20-21** Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the **everlasting covenant**, Make you perfect in every good work to do his will.

And, we find more of the definition of the New Covenant here also:

Hebrews 10:14 For by one offering [Jesus] hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified. [that's us]

Hebrews 10:15 Whereof the Holy Spirit also is a witness to us: for after that he had said before,

Our very nature is changing...

Hebrews 10:16 This is the **covenant** that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my **laws into their hearts**, and in their minds will I write them;

Hebrews 10:17 And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more.

Hebrews 10:18 Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin. [we no longer require to Old Covenant sacrifices]

Paul was quoting Jeremiah here – let's go back and look at that New Covenant announcement back in the Old Testament: Jeremiah tells us that the New Covenant will

be written on the hearts and minds of the people. The Old Covenant had divinely given laws, but it was written on tablets of stone. Jeremiah looked for a time when God's laws would be written in our innermost beings. All those in the New Covenant will have their own intimate and personal knowledge and relationship with God. Under the New Covenant, sins are forgiven. After repentance of sins and acceptance of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, sins are forgiven. The ultimate sacrifice of Jesus Christ is offered once and for all paying the penalty of sin for those who repent.

Jeremiah 31:31 Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a **New Covenant** with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah:

Jeremiah 31:32 Not according to the [Old] Covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my **covenant** they brake, although I was an **husband** unto them, saith the LORD:

Jeremiah 31:33 But this shall be the [New] Covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people.

Jeremiah 31:34 And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.

Ezekiel 16:60 [God says to His people] I will remember my **covenant** with thee in the days of thy youth, and I will establish unto thee an **everlasting covenant**.

Hebrews 8:1 Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum: We have such a high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens;

Hebrews 8:2 A minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man.

Hebrews 8:3 For every high priest is ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices: wherefore it is of necessity that this man have somewhat also to offer.

Hebrews 8:4 For if he were on earth, he should not be a priest, seeing that there are priests that offer gifts according to the law:

Hebrews 8:5 Who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount.

Hebrews 8:6 But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises.

Hebrews 8:7 For if that first covenant had been **faultless**, then should no place have been sought for the second.

Protestants like to say that the Old Covenant was seriously flawed – and needed to be done away with. But that is not what God is saying at all. The problem is that without **God's Holy Spirit** to direct and motivate them, the people were unable and unwilling to live by the Ten Commandments.

Hebrews 8:8 For finding **fault** with **them** [Old Testament Israel], he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a **New Covenant** with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah:

In verses 8-12, Paul is quoting from Jeremiah 31:31-34:

Hebrews 8:9 Not according to the [Old] Covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord.

Hebrews 8:10 For this is the [New] Covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people:

Hebrews 8:11 And they shall not teach every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest.

Hebrews 8:12 For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.

Hebrews 8:13 In that he saith, A **new covenant**, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away.

Yes! We do not have to die. The curse has been removed. Jesus Christ has instituted for us the New Covenant – and the terms of the New Covenant, and when we abide in those New Covenant terms and laws – with the aid of God’s Holy Spirit motivating us, it’s So much more glorious – the results are beyond comprehension and comparison. We are privileged to be a part of the New Covenant even now—and when He returns we will be the Bride of Jesus Christ.

End: Marriage Vow