

# ***Allusions, Images, and Symbols: How to Study Bible Prophecy Images from Marriage***

Lesson #3 for April 19, 2025

Scriptures: Genesis 2:23-25; 24:1-4; Ephesians 5:29-32; Ezekiel 16:4-14; Revelation 18:1-4; 19:1-9.

1. Both good and bad marriages are described in Scripture. Think of Adam and Eve contrasted with Hosea and his prostitute-wife. What does marriage have to do with Bible prophecy?

[From the writings of Ellen G. White=EGW:] Marriage, a union for life, is a symbol of the union between Christ and His church. **The spirit that Christ manifests toward the church is the spirit that husband and wife are to manifest toward each other.**—Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*,\* vol. 7, 46.3.†† [<https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p117.249&index=0>]‡

[From the Bible study guide=BSG:] Few biblical metaphors underscore the intimacy that God desires with the human race more than that of marriage. This metaphor is used so frequently in the biblical narrative—and shows up so pointedly in Revelation—that it is imperative for Bible students to grasp what God is driving at when He uses it in the Word.—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide*\* for Sunday, April 13.‡

[BSG:] **The marital trope** [figure of speech] **will be repeated in the early steps of the people of Israel at the time of the Exodus.** The motif of jealousy, often associated with the motif of marital adultery, is found, for instance, in the covenant document of the Decalogue (*Exod. 20:5; compare with Num. 25:1; Deut. 4:23, 24*). **The covenant between God and His people is thus understood in conjugal terms. God “loves” His people (*Deut. 7:8, NKJV*), and Israel is supposed to “love” God in return (*Deut. 6:5*). The Hebrew word *yada’*, “to know,” that describes the sexual, intimate, and personal relationship between husband and wife (*Gen. 4:1, Gen. 19:8, NKJV*), is used to refer to the relationship between God and His people (*Ps. 16:11; Jer. 2:2, 3; Ezek. 16:3–32*).—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide*\* 39.††§**

2. Marriage is a metaphor that the Bible uses for the relationship between God and His people.

[BSG:] The Bible is replete with love stories that powerfully reveal aspects of salvation and of God’s love for His people. The most intimate of relationships, marriage, proves to be a school in which, if we allow ourselves to experience it the way that God had intended, we can discover deep lessons about His love for us, about our relationship to Him, and about the lengths to which He has gone to redeem us.

**Modern conceptions of love and marriage have skewed our ability to appreciate what God is trying to teach us through the marital covenant.** Though human sinfulness has greatly perverted marriage (and just about everything else), marriage can still be a powerful way of revealing truth, even prophetic truth. More than just to make us happy, marriage should be a school in which we learn deep lessons about ourselves and our relationship to God....

We will explore different ways the Word of God talks about marriages, good and bad. We can then draw lessons from these examples to understand better

how God relates to His people, even when they fall short, and we can learn some truths about His love that can help us better grasp last-day events.—  
*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide\** for Sabbath Afternoon, April 12.‡

### Adam & Eve in the Garden of Eden

3. What do you think God had in mind when He created Adam and Eve and placed them in the Garden of Eden? What kind of marriage relationship did He have in mind for them?

**Genesis 2:23-25:** <sup>23</sup>Then the man said,

“At last, here is one of my own kind —

Bone taken from my bone, and flesh from my flesh.

‘Woman’ is her name because she was taken out of man.”

<sup>24</sup> That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united with his wife, and they become one.

<sup>25</sup> The man and the woman were both naked, but they were not embarrassed.—

American Bible Society. (1992). *The Holy Bible: The Good News Translation\** (2nd ed., Genesis 2:23-25). New York: American Bible Society [abbreviated as *Good News Bible*].‡

4. Some marriages in the Bible apparently worked out very well. That is probably true of the marriage of Adam and Eve although we do not know many details of that marriage. Did God instruct them on what a good marriage was supposed to be like? Or, did He leave it to them to figure that out for themselves?

**Genesis 1:26-27:** <sup>26</sup> Then God said, “And now we will make human beings; they will be like us and resemble us. They will have power over the fish, the birds, and all animals, domestic and wild, large and small.” <sup>27</sup>So **God created human beings, making them to be like himself. He created them male and female.**—*Good News Bible*.\*†

5. It is interesting in reading Genesis 1:26-27 that plural words are used to describe God making man. However, God went on to say that husband and wife should have a close relationship just like the members of the Godhead. This is not to imply that there was some kind of sexual relationship going on among the members of the Godhead—simply that God’s relationship was supposed to be a guide for a good human marriage relationship.

**Genesis 2:18-23:** <sup>18</sup> Then the LORD God said, “It is not good for the man to live alone.

**I will make a suitable companion to help him.**”... <sup>20</sup>So the man named all the birds and all the animals; but not one of them was a suitable companion to help him.

<sup>21</sup> Then the LORD God made the man fall into a deep sleep, and while he was sleeping, he took out one of the man’s ribs and closed up the flesh. <sup>22</sup>He formed a woman out of the rib and brought her to him. <sup>23</sup>Then the man said,

“At last, here is one of my own kind —

Bone taken from my bone, and flesh from my flesh.

‘Woman’ is her name because she was taken out of man.”—*Good News Bible*.\*†

6. **Did Adam have any scar left after his “surgery”? Did he miss that rib? Did God instruct them on the conjugal relationship? Or, were they to discover it on their own?**

7. Based on Genesis 3:16, some people think that God intended men to be superior to women because the first woman was taken out of a man. However, every man since that day has been taken out of a woman!
8. Notice the Hebrew wording which described the relationship of Eve to Adam:

[BSG:] “ ‘A helper comparable to him’ ” (Gen. 2:18, NKJV). The word ‘ezer, “helper,” is generally used to refer to God’s act of salvation (Exod. 18:4, Ps. 33:20, etc.). The word *kenegdo*, “comparable to him,” literally means “like” (*ke*) and “before each other” (*negdo*). The couple is thus described as being “like” each other and “before each other.”—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide\** 40.<sup>†§</sup> [Ancient Hebrew had a very limited vocabulary; it was **not** the language of Eden.]<sup>‡</sup>

### Isaac & Rebecca/Rebekah

9. Another overall good marriage that our Bible study guide discusses is that of Isaac and Rebecca/Rebekah. That story is recorded in Genesis 24. When Abraham sent his servant to find a wife for Isaac, he made it very clear that he must not choose someone from among the local pagan women. Abraham obviously had an insight into what might be the results! He saw the local people and how wicked they were. If Isaac had married a Canaanite, Abraham’s descendants would likely have disappeared into the evils of Canaan.
10. Much later, but in the same region, Nehemiah made this observation—but the people of Canaan in the time of Abraham were likely similar.

**Nehemiah 13:23-24:** <sup>23</sup> At that time I also discovered that many of the Jewish men had married women from Ashdod, Ammon, and Moab. <sup>24</sup>**Half their children spoke the language of Ashdod or some other language and didn’t know how to speak our language.**—*Good News Bible*.<sup>\*†</sup> [There is no way these children could have been correctly worshiping **YAHWEH!**]<sup>‡</sup>

11. Abraham clearly understood the moral degeneracy of the Canaanite people among whom he lived. He certainly did not want his son marrying a woman that would lead his future generations into those terrible practices. **What about Isaac marrying a daughter from the hundreds of households that Abraham had converted to follow God?**

[BSG:] Indeed, the story of so much of ancient Israel, and even of the Christian church through the centuries, has been one in which God’s people—who should have been witnessing to the world—get caught up instead in the world and in its **false teachings and religious beliefs**. Perhaps the greatest example of this sad reality has been the **introduction of Sunday, the pagan day of the sun, in place of the biblical seventh-day Sabbath**, a reality that will play a prominent role in the last days.—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide\** for Wednesday, April 16.<sup>†‡</sup>

12. The story is unusual in that Rebecca was **actually asked** if she was willing to marry Isaac and travel far away to meet him. Usually, women in those days were not given any choice.
13. It is interesting to note that when she finally arrived in southern Canaan and saw her future husband walking in the fields, she covered her face and was welcomed into the tent of Sarah who had passed away. Isaac began to love her almost immediately. This love was not some kind of momentary sentimental experience, but rather, it was a commitment for life.

14. What lessons can we learn about Christ and His church from some details we find in this story? How much do we know about Rebecca's background? Was she a faithful follower of the true God? Rebecca was the daughter of Abraham's nephew. Remember that Abraham had been told to leave his relatives because they were perverted by idolatry. But, it seems that Rebecca turned out to be a good wife for Isaac. How might their story relate to us today?

[BSG:] We are undoubtedly related to our Creator, having originally been made in His image. We have been separated from Him by sin, and yet, we are still considered to be the right bride for Him though our choices can make the marriage more turbulent than it needs to be.

Yes, God loves us, His bride, more than we love Him. What are the choices we can make—and should make—every day that can strengthen our love for God? At the same time, what choices will only deaden our love?—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide\** for Wednesday, April 16.‡

### Jesus's and Paul's Connections with Marriage

15. Early in His ministry, Jesus attended a marriage in Cana.

**John 2:1-11:** <sup>1</sup> Two days later there was a wedding in the town of Cana in Galilee. Jesus' mother was there, <sup>2</sup>and Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. <sup>3</sup>When the wine had given out, Jesus' mother said to him, "They have no wine left." [Why do you think Mary talked with Jesus about that?]

<sup>4</sup> "You must not tell me what to do," Jesus replied. "My time has not yet come."

<sup>5</sup> Jesus' mother then told the servants, "Do whatever he tells you." [Jesus was her problem solver! Joseph had 6-8 children before he married Mary.]

<sup>6</sup> The Jews have rules about ritual washing, and for this purpose six stone water jars were there, each one large enough to hold about a hundred litres [*sic-Br*].

<sup>7</sup> Jesus said to the servants, "Fill these jars with water." They filled them to the brim, <sup>8</sup>and then he told them, "Now draw some water out and take it to the man in charge of the feast." They took him the water, <sup>9</sup>which now had turned into wine, and he tasted it. He did not know where this wine had come from (but, of course, the servants who had drawn out the water knew); so he called the bridegroom <sup>10</sup>and said to him, "Everyone else serves the best wine first, and after the guests have had plenty to drink, he serves the ordinary wine. But you have kept the best wine until now!"

<sup>11</sup> **Jesus performed this first miracle in Cana in Galilee; there he revealed his glory, and his disciples believed in him.**—*Good News Bible*.\*††

[EGW:] The word of Christ supplied ample provision for the feast. So abundant is the provision of His grace to blot out the iniquities of men, and to renew and sustain the soul.—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages\** 149.1.‡

[\[https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p130.650&index=0\]](https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p130.650&index=0)‡

16. What have we learned about Jesus and His disciples in His relationship to the marriage at Cana? (1) He approved of the social relationship called *marriage*. (2) He provided more than ample grape juice for the wedding. God's grace is never in short supply. (3) God wants us to be involved in wonderful, happy, human relationships. (4) Jesus performed the miracle at Cana at least partially **so that His disciples would believe in Him**.

17. One more wedding that we need to consider related to Jesus is the wedding discussed in

Matthew 25. Why do you think the groom was delayed in this case? Why is the second coming of Christ delayed? See what Ellen White said about “The Reason for the Delay” in *Evangelism*. (<https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p30.3848&index=0>) **We are not ready!**

18. At one point, the Pharisees asked Jesus why, if marriage was God’s plan, did He make provision for divorce. Jesus rightly responded by saying it was because of the “hardness of their hearts” and the “stiffness of their necks” that He gave them divorce laws! Matthew 19:18.

[BSG:] Lifetime, faithful marriage was the ideal established by God at the foundation of the human race. Fallen humanity, unfortunately, damaged this foundational gift from God.

Perhaps, given the importance that Scripture assigns to marriage, it is not a coincidence that the institution has always been under relentless attack. **Along with the Sabbath, it [marriage] is one of the two gifts bestowed on us in Eden, and both were intended to demonstrate God’s desire for an intimate relationship with His creation.**

Marriage, the intimate pairing of two imperfect people, will always give cause for tension. A marriage between the church and Christ is the pairing of a perfect Savior with a very imperfect bride. Nevertheless, we can learn about God’s love from what a good marriage offers.

Here are three principles for marriage. First, **forgive your spouse**, however undeserving, just as Christ forgives us, however undeserving. Second, **accept your spouse, faults and all**, just as Christ accepts us, faults and all. Third, just as Christ put us before Himself, **put your spouse before yourself**. How could all three of these gospel-based principles help us not only to understand how God relates to us but also to help any marriage?—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide\** for Sunday, April 13.<sup>††</sup>

19. Normally, one had to be married to be a member of the Sanhedrin. Scholars believe that Paul was married at one time because he was a member of the Sanhedrin. Paul had some very good advice related to marriage. Would you trust the advice of a former murderer?

**Ephesians 5:21-33:** <sup>21</sup> **Submit yourselves to one another** because of your reverence for Christ.

<sup>22</sup> Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord. <sup>23</sup>For a husband has authority over his wife just as Christ has authority over the church; and Christ is himself the Saviour [*sic-Br*] of the church, his body. <sup>24</sup>And so wives must submit completely to their husbands just as the church submits itself to Christ.

<sup>25</sup> Husbands, love your wives just as Christ loved the church and gave his life for it. <sup>26</sup>He did this to dedicate the church to God by his word, after making it clean by washing it in water, <sup>27</sup>in order to present the church to himself in all its beauty — pure and faultless, without spot or wrinkle or any other imperfection. <sup>28</sup>**Men ought to love their wives just as they love their own bodies.** A man who loves his wife loves himself. <sup>29</sup>(People never hate their own bodies. Instead, they feed them and take care of them, just as Christ does the church; <sup>30</sup>for we are members of his body.) <sup>31</sup>As the scripture says, “For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and unite with his wife, and the two will become one.” <sup>32</sup>**There is a deep secret truth revealed in this scripture, which I understand as applying to Christ and the church.** <sup>33</sup>**But it also**

**applies to you: every husband must love his wife as himself, and every wife must respect her husband.—Good News Bible.\*†**

### **The Hebrew Nation As Prostitutes or Harlots “Married” to God: (1) Ezekiel’s Description**

20. There are some passages in Scripture talking about marriage which shock us! They talk about God’s marriage to the Hebrew people! Consider this from Ezekiel:

**Ezekiel 16:4-14:** <sup>4</sup> “When you were born, no one cut your umbilical cord or washed you or rubbed you with salt or wrapped you in cloth. <sup>5</sup>No one took enough pity on you to do any of these things for you. When you were born, no one loved you. You were thrown out in an open field.

<sup>6</sup> “Then I passed by and saw you squirming in your own blood. You were covered with blood, but I wouldn’t let you die. <sup>7</sup>I made you grow like a healthy plant. You grew strong and tall and became a young woman. Your breasts were well formed, and your hair had grown, but you were naked.

<sup>8</sup> “As I passed by again, I saw that the time had come for you to fall in love. I covered your naked body with my coat and promised to love you. Yes, I made a marriage covenant with you, and you became mine.” This is what the Sovereign LORD says.

<sup>9</sup> “Then I took water and washed the blood off you. I rubbed olive oil on your skin. <sup>10</sup>I dressed you in embroidered gowns and gave you shoes of the best leather, a linen headband, and a silk cloak. <sup>11</sup>I put jewels on you — bracelets and necklaces. <sup>12</sup>I gave you a nose-ring and earrings and a beautiful crown to wear. <sup>13</sup>You had ornaments of gold and silver, and you always wore clothes of embroidered linen and silk. You ate bread made from the best flour, and had honey and olive oil to eat. Your beauty was dazzling, and you became a queen. <sup>14</sup>You became famous in every nation for your perfect beauty, because I was the one who made you so lovely.” This is what the Sovereign LORD says.—  
*Good News Bible.\** [Does God condone jewelry? He seems to have given it!]<sup>‡</sup>

21. ***Was this beauty physical? Or, spiritual? If primarily spiritual, how was it perceived by the surrounding nations? Or, was Israel’s spiritual “beauty” reflected somehow in physical ways? Did the nations around Israel recognize that God was the One who had won wars for Israel and made their animals and their crops prosper? Is that what is meant when it speaks of her “beauty”?***

22. Did Ezekiel really describe Israel in those terms used in Ezekiel 16 as quoted above?

[BSG:] Israel’s beauty, however, was entirely the gift of God. **She was beautiful—the talk of the nations—precisely because she was His bride.** God says that her beauty “ ‘was perfect through My splendor which I had bestowed on you’ ” (*Ezek. 16:14, NKJV*).

This is a recurrent theme in the Bible: God’s bride is beautiful, not because of anything she has done but because God has showered His favor on her and made her that way. In a similar way, believers appear beautiful in the estimate of heaven, not because of anything we have done to earn it but because of the favor of God, the salvation that He has showered on us. We are beautiful because we are covered in His righteousness, the “righteousness of God” Himself (*2 Cor. 5:21*).—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide\** for Monday,

April 14.<sup>†‡§</sup>

23. Ezekiel's story about God marrying this baby He found wallowing in its own blood in the field was positive until one reads Ezekiel 16:15.

**Ezekiel 16:15:** "But you took advantage of your beauty and fame to sleep with everyone who came along."—*Good News Bible*.<sup>\*†</sup>

24. It would be easy to suggest that the children of Israel had prostituted themselves to the Egyptians, to the Philistines, to the Assyrians, and most recently in Ezekiel's day to the Babylonians. They had become shameless in their behavior. We have these words:

**Ezekiel 16:30-34:** <sup>30</sup> This is what the Sovereign LORD is saying: "You have done all this like a shameless prostitute. <sup>31</sup>On every street you built places to worship idols and practice prostitution. But you are not out for money like a common prostitute. <sup>32</sup>You are like a woman who commits adultery with strangers instead of loving her husband. <sup>33</sup>A prostitute is paid, but you gave presents to all your lovers and bribed them to come from everywhere to sleep with you. <sup>34</sup>You are a special kind of prostitute. No one forced you to become one. You didn't get paid; you paid them! Yes, you are different."—*Good News Bible*.<sup>\*†</sup>

## (2) Hosea and His Prostitute-Wife Compared with Israel

25. Another shocking thing that God did was to request Hosea to marry a harlot or prostitute. To understand that story, look at the following passages:

**Hosea 1:2:** When the LORD first spoke to Israel through Hosea, he said to Hosea, "Go and get married; your wife will be unfaithful, and your children will be just like her. **In the same way, my people have left me and become unfaithful.**"—*Good News Bible*.<sup>\*†</sup>

26. ***There may not have been many young women around who were not prostitutes! Was this the only way for women to earn some money?***

**Hosea 4:13-14:** <sup>13</sup> "At sacred places on the mountain tops they offer sacrifices, and on the hills they burn incense under tall, spreading trees, because the shade is so pleasant!

"As a result, **your daughters serve as prostitutes, and your daughters-in-law commit adultery.** <sup>14</sup>Yet I will not punish them for this, because **you yourselves go off with temple prostitutes, and together with them you offer pagan sacrifices.** As the proverb says, 'A people without sense will be ruined.'"—*Good News Bible*.<sup>\*†</sup> [Having sex with a temple prostitute was thought to increase the offspring one's animals bore and make one's crops flourish.]<sup>‡</sup>

27. When God offers/offered to marry a group of people and then they end(ed) up worshipping false gods, would that be a divorce? Adultery? Prostitution? Or, what? All of these?
28. A quick careful look at passages like 2 Kings 17:5-23 and 2 Chronicles 33:9 help us to realize how far the Israelites (the people of the nations of Israel and Judah) wandered away from God's ideal! Today, could we make those same kinds of mistakes?

## (3) The Pure Woman Changed to a Prostitute or Harlot in Revelation

29. It is interesting to notice that the book of Revelation also talks about prostitutes.

**Revelation 17:1-2:** <sup>1</sup> Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came



to me and said, “Come, and I will show you how the famous prostitute is to be punished, that great city that is built near many rivers. <sup>2</sup>The kings of the earth practiced sexual immorality with her, and the people of the world became drunk from drinking the wine of her immorality.”—*Good News Bible*.\*

30. These “kings” had/have and will have illicit conjugal relationships with the church, using the church to accomplish their financial and political goals. The church has done and will do the same, using civil and/or military power.

31. Revelation 12:3 tells us about a huge red dragon with seven heads and ten horns.

**Revelation 12:3:** Another mysterious sight appeared in the sky. There was a **huge red dragon with seven heads and ten horns** and a crown on each of his heads.—*Good News Bible*.\*†

32. This red dragon was determined to attack the Child born to the woman (the church) which we know represented the birth of Jesus Christ. After Jesus ascended to heaven, the Devil and his angels continued to attack the church, the ones Jesus left behind.

**Revelation 12:13-14:** <sup>13</sup> When the dragon realized that he had been thrown down to the earth, he began to pursue the woman [God’s church] who had given birth to the boy. <sup>14</sup>She [God’s church] was given the two wings of a large eagle in order **to fly to her place in the desert**, where she will be taken care of for three and a half years, safe from the dragon’s attack.—*Good News Bible*.\*†‡

**Revelation 17:3-8:** <sup>3</sup> The Spirit took control of me, and **the angel carried me to a desert**. There I saw a **woman** [no longer “God’s church”!] sitting on a **red beast** that had names insulting to God written all over it; **the beast had seven heads and ten horns** [The Devil himself!]. <sup>4</sup>The woman was dressed in purple and scarlet, and covered with gold ornaments, precious stones, and pearls. In her hand she held a gold cup full of obscene and filthy things, the result of her immorality. <sup>5</sup>On her forehead was written a name that has a secret meaning: “Great Babylon, the mother of all the prostitutes and perverts in the world.” <sup>6</sup>And I saw that the woman was drunk with the blood of God’s people and the blood of those who were killed because they had been loyal to Jesus.

When I saw her, I was completely amazed. <sup>7</sup> “Why are you amazed?” the angel asked me. “I will tell you the secret meaning of the woman and of the beast that carries her, the beast with seven heads and ten horns. <sup>8</sup>That beast was once alive, but lives no longer; it is about to come up from the abyss and will go off to be destroyed. The people living on earth whose names have not been written before the creation of the world in the book of the living, will all be amazed as they look at the beast. It was once alive; now it no longer lives, but it will reappear.”—*Good News Bible*.\*†‡ [This represents events that occurred in 1798: the “death” of the papacy (for a time)!]‡

33. What happened to the pure woman who fled to the desert at the end of Revelation 12? (Revelation 12:14) Instead of fleeing, 1260 years later, she was “riding” the beast!

34. In Revelation 18:1-4, we find out that a church, a great church, is now called Great Babylon, an immoral church; and she is fallen. God is calling *His people* to come out of her.

[BSG:] **The Bible reveals that the errors of Israel in the Old Testament would be largely repeated by Christ’s New Testament church. God’s**



**covenant people went wildly astray prior to their exile, bringing the idolatrous practices of neighboring nations into God's covenant nation.**

“Concerned over the growing rift within the church over Arius’s ideas, Constantine both convened and intervened in the Council of Nicaea.”— Christopher A. Hall, “How Arianism Almost Won,” *Christianity Today*, (2008). In each case, God’s people wandered outside of their relationship with Him in order to find “solutions” for perceived problems.—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide\** for Tuesday, April 15.<sup>†§</sup> [Arianism (much different from Aryanism) teaches that Christ was created by God and was not divine.]<sup>‡</sup>  
[\[https://www.christianitytoday.com/2008/07/how-arianism-almost-won/\]](https://www.christianitytoday.com/2008/07/how-arianism-almost-won/)<sup>‡</sup>

35. How could such a thing happen to God’s once faithful church? It seems clear that God is still calling us to come out of the apostate and immoral churches.
36. ***Is it possible that in our church, in our day, that we could be led astray? Could we actually commit spiritual fornication? By having an incorrect picture of God!***
37. Having thought through the stories so far, how should we understand Revelation 19:1-9?

**Revelation 19:1-9:** <sup>1</sup> After this I heard what sounded like the roar of a large crowd of people in heaven, saying, “Praise God! Salvation, glory, and power belong to our God! <sup>2</sup>True and just are his judgements! He has condemned the prostitute who was corrupting the earth with her immorality. God has punished her because she killed his servants.” <sup>3</sup>Again they shouted, “Praise God! The smoke from the flames that consume the great city goes up for ever [*sic-Br*] and ever!” <sup>4</sup>The 24 elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshipped [*sic-Br*] God, who was seated on the throne. They said, “Amen! Praise God!” <sup>5</sup> Then there came from the throne the sound of a voice, saying, “Praise our God, all his servants and all people, both great and small, who have reverence for him!” <sup>6</sup>Then I heard what sounded like a large crowd, like the sound of a roaring waterfall, like loud peals of thunder. I heard them say, “Praise God! For the Lord, our Almighty God, is King! <sup>7</sup>Let us rejoice and be glad; let us praise his greatness! For the time has come for the wedding of the Lamb, and his bride has prepared herself for it. <sup>8</sup>She has been given clean shining linen to wear.” (The linen is the good deeds of God’s people.) <sup>9</sup> Then the angel said to me, “Write this: happy are those who have been invited to the wedding feast of the Lamb.” And the angel added, “These are the true words of God.”—*Good News Bible*.<sup>\*‡</sup>

38. In these verses we see a celebration occurring in heaven over the destruction of the harlot or prostitute and the triumph of Christ’s bride.
39. Let us not make the mistake of being among those considered to be with the prostitute in Revelation 19. May we each one be a part of that group called *the bride of Christ*.

[BSG:] Infidelity comes with a very painful price tag. The fallout spills over into the lives of children and others. Even the most patient of wronged spouses may eventually discover that there is a moment of no return, past which the marriage can no longer be redeemed. When our world reaches a point where hearts have hardened deeply enough that there will be no more repentance, no point exists in continuing history and allowing the unbridled suffering of sin to continue. Even though there is heartbreak over the lost, those who have

suffered under this world's dispensation of sin can celebrate that it is finally over—and that the world is being restored to the way God originally designed it. This time there will *not* be a turning away from God, because we have learned, the hard way, that God was correct about the devastation that comes from separating ourselves from Him.—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide\** for Thursday, April 17.†§

40. The story of Revelation ends with the bride of the Lamb inheriting a wonderful new heaven and new earth. **Read Revelation 21:1-4.**
41. What does it mean to you to be a part of *the bride of Christ*? Think about all that Christ went through to attain the status of the Lamb who could be the husband of such a bride.
42. Review the entire sequence, starting from the end of the pre-advent judgment to the elimination of sin and sinners as described in pages 662-678 of *The Great Controversy*. (<https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p132.2990&index=0>)
43. We could spend more time considering the details of each of these marriages that we have talked about and draw lessons that would be of spiritual value.

[BSG:] Once you realize how much data is available in the rest of the Bible to help you broaden your understanding of prophecy, it can be **tempting to over-apply** it. Throughout the centuries, some Christians have emphasized the symbolism and imagery found in Bible stories to the point where they virtually begin to treat the historical narrative as a myth. **While layers of meaning are to be found just about everywhere in Scripture, we must always remember that God has a way of taking real events that involve real people and using them to teach us things about His future interactions with the church.**—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide\** for Friday.†‡

44. The wedding feast in Cana, for example, may offer insights into the metaphor of marriage used by prophecy. However, the wedding and the wedding feast were literal events.
45. Marriages can be spoiled by outside influences or people becoming involved. In the case of the church, think of what has happened as result of Sunday worship. What about the acceptance of Satan's lies about the immortality of the soul. This has been the result of Satan's first lie to Eve, "You shall not surely die." This has led to several wrong ideas: (1) Communication with the dead, (2) Purgatory, and (3) Eternally-burning hell.
46. If we apply what we know about marriage to our relationship to God, surely, the first two of God's Ten Commandments clearly oppose our departure in any way from God's ideal goal.
47. Examples of the terrible deterioration of human relationships in the Old Testament can probably be summarized in the case of Sodom and Gomorrah. How did Lot have two virgin daughters under those circumstances! Of course, we do not know how old they were.
48. So, what have we learned from this lesson about human marriage? And even the church's relationship to God?
49. What have we learned from this lesson that might help us in our own personal relationship with our spouse? And also in our relationship to God?

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