

A Contentious Woman and a Harlot

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The Holy Scriptures frequently refer to women and also to harlots, and yet in many cases it is not addressing literal women at all. Instead, the word “woman” can be used to symbolize a righteous person while the word “harlot” can refer to someone who refuses to obey Almighty God. This is one of God’s “mysteries” as the apostle Paul stated. He pointed out that a righteous woman figuratively represents the relationship between those who are obedient to God and as a result have the potential of being married to their spiritual husband, Jesus Christ. In sharp contrast, an individual pictured by a harlot represents someone who is disobedient to God’s word and therefore not faithful, or suitable to be married to Christ,

Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave himself for it (her) that he might sanctify (set it apart) and cleanse it (of sin) with the washing of water (symbolizing baptism that follows repentance of sin) by the word, that he might present it to himself (symbolizing the relationship between a husband and wife) a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish (sinless because of Christ’s sacrifice) (Eph. 5:25-27; NKJV used throughout unless otherwise noted; Ed. notes in parentheses).

This is a great mystery, but I (Paul) **speak concerning Christ and the church** (Eph. 5:32; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

Then I (God) saw that for all the causes for which **backsliding Israel had committed adultery** (spiritually speaking by being unfaithful to God’s commands), **I had put her away and given her a certificate of divorce...** (Jer. 3:8a; Ed. notes in parenthesis; emphasis added).

So it came to pass, **through her** (Judah’s) **casual harlotry, that she defiled the land and committed adultery with stones and trees** (symbols associated with pagan religious practices) (Jer. 3:9; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

A righteous woman is pictured as a prime target for Satan. She represents all those who seek to obey Almighty God, and as a result the Adversary wants to destroy her,

Now when the dragon (symbol of Satan) saw that he had been cast to the earth (because he sinned against Almighty God; cf. Isa. 14:12-15; Eze. 28:14-16), **he persecuted the woman** who gave birth to the male Child (ref. to Christ’s birth as the Son of Man). But the woman was given two wings of a great eagle (symbolic of protection), that she might fly into the wilderness to her place, where she is nourished (by the word of God) for a time and times and half a time, from the presence of the serpent. So **the serpent spewed water out of his mouth like a flood after the woman** (warfare against God’s people; cf. Isa. 59:19; Rev. 12:17), that he might cause her to be carried away by the flood (Rev. 12:13-15; Ed. notes in parentheses).

And the dragon was enraged with the woman, and **he went to make war with the rest of her offspring, who keep the commandments of God** and have the testimony of Jesus Christ (Rev. 12:17; cf. Isa. 8:20).

In contrast, an unrighteous woman is associated with those who refuse to obey God's law and commandments. Because of this, she is unfaithful and compared to a harlot,

The woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls (outward appearance was attractive; cf. Mt. 23:27), having in her hand a golden cup full of abominations and the filthiness of her fornication. And on her forehead a name was written: Mystery, Babylon the Great, **the Mother of Harlots** and of the Abominations of the Earth (Rev. 17:4-5; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

An unrighteous woman's corrupt behavior can influence others to become harlots and, in Revelation 17:4-5, these harlots symbolize many false religious systems that have come from her corrupt values and teachings. She has had a very powerful and negative effect upon them. Her actions are not only against God's commands; she also promotes materialism to everyone under her influence,

For all the nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and **the merchants of the earth have become rich through the abundance of her luxury** (Rev. 18:3; emphasis added).

She wants everyone to focus on the physical things of this world and everything it offers, even though she appears to be a righteous person. Because she is successful in her deception, many will weep when her lies are exposed and they come to the realization that their material pursuits are about to end abruptly,

And the kings of the earth who committed fornication and lived luxuriously with her will weep and lament for her, when they see the smoke of her burning (Rev. 18:9; emphasis added).

The book of Proverbs contains many insights into the behavior of mankind as well as the fallen host. One of these proverbs describes the action of a contentious woman and the effects it can have on the relationship with her husband (cf. Rev. 21:2). Using the analogy of a woman representing those who are going to be married to Jesus Christ, the following proverb presents some serious problems,

It is better to dwell in a corner of a housetop, than in a house shared with a contentious woman (wife) (Prov. 21:19; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

This proverb pictures a woman who grumbles and complains to the point that her husband can no longer dwell with her. Figuratively speaking, she does not want to obey his commands nor does she appear to recognize his authority in their relationship. In essence, she has sown discord between them. This describes perfectly what happened between ancient Israel and her future husband, who would later be known as Jesus Christ (2Cor. 11:2; Heb. 13:8). It also pictures the relationship today between most Christians and the one they claim to represent, Jesus Christ, because they are contentious regarding obedience to God's law and commandments. Most do not believe they need to be subject to His commands. Instead, they prefer to argue and debate about it, just like a contentious wife (Mt. 7:21-23),

So I (God) spoke to you (ancient Israel); yet **you** would not listen, but **rebelled against the command of the Lord**, and presumptuously (willfully) went up into the mountain (Dt. 1:43; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

Then it shall be, if you by any means forget the Lord your God, and follow other gods, and serve them and worship them (Christianity's pagan holidays, disguised as being righteous: see studies on God's Holy Days), I testify against you this day that you shall surely perish (ultimately). As the nations which the Lord destroys before you, so **you shall perish, because you would not be obedient to the voice of the Lord your God** (Dt. 8:19-20; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

You (including future rebellious generations) **shall be left few in number**, whereas you were as the stars of heaven in multitude, **because you would not obey the voice of the Lord your God** (Dt. 28:62; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added)

Surely, as a wife treacherously departs from her husband, so have you dealt treacherously with me, O house of Israel, says the Lord (Jer. 3:20; emphasis added).

Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah – not according to the 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, my covenant which they broke, though I was a husband to them**, says the Lord (Jer. 31:31-32; emphasis added)

Whether “God’s woman” is an individual, a nation, or a religious group of people, the rules are the same and they apply equally to everyone. As soon as there are compromises regarding obedience to God’s law and commandments, whoever is involved will be on a slippery slope which eventually leads to a complete breakdown of society. This has happened time and again throughout man’s history and will repeat itself until the return of Jesus Christ. In order to restore peace, Christ will enforce his Father’s commands (Zec. 14; Isa. 2:3; Mic. 4:2). Today, many of those who claim to represent Christ condone acts which are against the word of God. They are either oblivious to His commands or simply choose to ignore them. Either way, they are going to be held responsible for their actions. There is no such thing as breaking only one of God’s laws and thinking it will end there. It never has and never will. Ancient Israel is a case in point. They started on the path of compromise and before too long had thrown God’s law out the window and were assimilated into the pagan religious systems around them. Some of the results are described in scripture, along with the consequences which were very unpleasant and painful (Dt. 28:15-68),

You built your high places (of false worship) at the head of every road, and made your beauty to be abhorred. **You offered yourself to everyone who passed by, and multiplied your acts of harlotry. You also committed harlotry with the Egyptians, your very fleshly neighbors, and increased your acts of harlotry to provoke me (God) to anger** (Eze. 16:25-26; emphasis added).

You also played the harlot with the Assyrians, because you were insatiable; indeed you played the harlot with them and still were not satisfied. Moreover you multiplied your acts of harlotry as far as the land of the trader, Chaldea; and even then you were not satisfied. “How degenerate is your heart!” says the Lord God, “seeing **you do all these things, the deeds of a brazen harlot.**” (Eze. 16:28-30; emphasis added).

Any woman who has sunk to this level of rebellion and depravity cannot be married, in a figurative sense, to Christ. Instead, she would have to be so completely changed that she no longer resembled the person she was previously. She would have to be cleansed by Christ's sacrifice, and subject to his authority (Lk. 9:35), including obedience to God's commands (Jn. 15:10). Almighty God's commands and Christ's commands are identical (Jn. 8:28; 38a). Someone thinking that God will "accept them as they are" does not understand His plan of salvation (see study: Once Baptized, Is A Person Guaranteed Everlasting Life?). Instead, they must repent of sin and begin living a completely different life, if they expect to be married to Jesus Christ (Rom. 6:4). In the First Covenant there is a law that supports the principle that mankind, which has departed from their true spiritual husband en masse, cannot be married to him again. Instead, they have to become so transformed by the action of God's Holy Spirit that they no longer resemble the sinful person they used to be (2Cor. 5:17),

When a man takes a wife and marries her, and it happens that she finds no favor in his eyes because he has found some uncleanness (indecent) in her, and he writes her a certificate of divorce (cf. Jer. 3:8a), puts it in her hand, and sends her out of his house, when she has departed from his house, and goes and becomes another man's wife, if the latter husband detests her and writes her a certificate of divorce, puts it in her hand, and sends her out of his house, or if the latter husband dies who took her to be his wife, then **the former husband who divorced her must not take her back to be his wife...** (Dt. 24:1-4a; emphasis added).

Therefore no contentious woman and no harlot, who has rebelled against the law and commandments of God, can be married to Jesus Christ. If a sinful person does not repent during this lifetime, it is possible they will repent in a future resurrection from the dead (Rev. 20:4-6). Even then, they would have to change so much that even their closest friends and relatives would not recognize them. When this occurs, the repentant individual can be married to Christ and inherit everlasting life, thus fulfilling the role of a virtuous woman with her spiritual husband,

Who can find a virtuous wife? For her worth is far above rubies. The heart of her husband safely trusts her: so he will have no lack of gain. **She does him good and not evil all the days of her life** (Prov. 31:10-12; emphasis added).

The majority of this world's Christianity does not resemble this virtuous woman and Jesus Christ does not trust them, let alone consider them worthy of being his future bride (Mt. 7:21-23). Because they reject God's law and commandments, they "do him evil."

As this last proverb implies, it is extremely rare to find a virtuous woman. Unfortunately, most who claim to know and follow Jesus Christ cause him shame, because they are such poor representatives of his Father's way of life,

An excellent wife is the crown of her husband, but **she who causes shame is rotteness in his bones** (Prov. 12:4).

The role of Christ's bride is to be subject to his authority and to faithfully obey all the instructions (commands) that she is given. She has to loyally continue doing this until

the end of her life (Mt. 10:22), while continuing to grow in the grace and knowledge of her husband (2Pet. 3:18).

Many Christians believe they have a close relationship with Jesus Christ while at the same time claiming they don't have to obey his Father's commands, which is something Christ never taught (Mt. 4:4; 19:17; Jn. 8:28; 38a; 15:10). This position defies scripture as well as logic. There is no closer relationship in this life than that of a husband and wife. If the woman does not believe she should be subject to her husband's authority and obedient to his instructions, she is compared to either a contentious wife or a harlot. Either way, she cannot dwell with him or claim that she represents him. Instead, the two of them would have to separate, just as ancient Israel did because of their rebellious conduct (Jer. 3:8a),

Do two walk together unless they have an agreement? (Amos 3:3).

Using the Apostle Paul's analogy of a seed being sown and then completely transformed into a plant no longer resembling the original seed, so an individual must change from living a life of rebellion against God's law and commandments into a person who deeply desires to obey every word of Almighty God (Mt. 4:4). Until this complete transformation occurs, a person cannot be compared to a virtuous woman adorned to be married to her spiritual husband, Jesus Christ (Rev. 21:2),

And what you sow (i.e. seed), you do not sow that body that shall (eventually) be, but mere grain – perhaps wheat, or some other grain. But God gives it a body as He pleases (as it grows), and to each seed its own body (1Cor. 15:37-38; Ed. notes in parentheses).

Because we do not live in an agrarian based society any longer, these simple and yet profound analogies are often lost; just as the spiritual meaning behind the harlot and contentious woman are usually obscured. In summary it should be the goal of everyone, who believes they are a Christian, to become a virtuous woman. In order to become a virtuous woman in a spiritual sense, an individual needs to loyally obey their future husband and follow his example of obedience to every command of Almighty God.

This document is the collaborative work of individuals who believe God's truth should be given freely (Mt. 10:8; 1Cor. 2:12; 2Cor. 11:7; Rom. 10:14-21) and the message of the one true God should be made available to all nations (Mt. 24:14) as a prerequisite to the return of Jesus Christ as King of kings (Mt. 17:10; 19:17; Mk. 9:11; Lk. 1:17; Rev. 19:11-16).

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