

What Does it Mean to be Spiritually Married to Christ?

(Go to Meeting)

Norbert Bohnert—2021

Last week we observed Pentecost for another year, and I was wondering what I would speak on. As it turns out I have three messages lined up. The topic I'm going to speak on is marriage.

I thought I would expound on this a little bit today, and really start with the importance of the real meaning of marriage, referring to it on a physical level, but more importantly emphasizing the spiritual aspect of the spiritual marriage that will take place in the future.

Next week it will be my wife's and mine 33rd wedding anniversary. It's such a blessing to go back and look at the marriage institution as God made it, and apply those principles of a physical marriage to those of the *future spiritual marriage* that will take place after the first resurrection with the Church of God. Marrying Jesus Christ as outlined in that magnificent plan that God has set forth!

What an opportunity that we have as special called out individuals to be part of that marriage. It is important that we, in God's Church, understand why God instituted the marriage covenant. God instituted the marriage covenant as an integral part of the plan of salvation.

We live in a time when the institution of marriage is not held in high esteem in our society today. It's not held in esteem at all, which it should be. God instituted the marriage covenant. We have gotten to the point in our society, unfortunately with Satan's influence, where even sometimes our leaders must give voice to perverted unions as they are ever increasing. And as a result that could lead to being put out of office.

The institution of marriage should be upheld in the highest regard that God had intended. Marriage is basically a foundation of society. With God it is even more significant because ***marriage pictures an initial step in the plan of God!***

We know from Scripture that God is reproducing Himself in His called out sons and daughters. Exceedingly early in the creation process, God established that foundational relationship in which mankind is to propagate and to fill the earth. That foundational relationship is the marriage covenant. God gave mankind the ability to reproduce, thus propagating the human characteristics from one generation to the next.

We look and behave like our parents; that's the way God designed it. Sometimes we pick up the

genes and sometimes we have to question if they are all the best genes that we have. But we did get the genes from our parents as part of God's foundational marriage covenant of man and wife being together.

The facility to reproduce is a picture of the plan of God, and that God is bringing many sons and daughters to glory:

Hebrews 2:10: "Because it was fitting for Him, for Whom all things *were created*, and by Whom all things *exist*, in bringing many sons unto glory, **to make the Author of their salvation perfect through sufferings**"—*the suffering of Jesus Christ!*

God is reproducing Himself and He's graciously given us a part of the regenerative process. God gave mankind the gift of reproduction. Mankind reproduces itself; that is the way God designed it, right from creation!

Genesis 1:27: "And God **created man in His own image**, in the image of God He created him. He created them male and female."

Let us be reassured that none of us have yet to attain that image of God. But we are going onto perfection!

Hebrews 6:1: "Therefore, advancing beyond the beginning principles of the doctrines of Christ, **we should go on to perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith in God.**"

We do not want dead works, but we must maintain constant faith in God.

We are being told that both male and female were ***created into God's image*** (Gen. 1:27_[transcriber's correction]). This blessing bestowed on the family unit is a prophetic picture of God Himself. Paul tells us that it is possible to see the invisible hand of God at the work of the creation of nature. The human family corresponds to God's Family.

Before I go on, I'm going to presenting in the next few months—when I have opportunity—a series on marriage.

This first one is the meaning of the spiritual marriage with Christ. Then we will go onto: ***Are we prepared***—each one of us as called out children of God—***to be the Bride of Christ?*** Then third, I'm going to go over: ***What does a Godly spiritual marriage involve and look like?***

What Does it Mean to be Spiritually Married to Christ?
(Go to Meeting)

Those three items I'm going to try to cover in a series of messages over the next couple of months.

Romans 1:20: "For the invisible things of Him are perceived from *the* creation of *the* world, being understood by the things that were made—both His eternal power and Godhead—so that they are without excuse."

Creation by itself reveals the plan of God. We must believe that; we know it to be true! In the case of marriage, we find that **God is replicating and reproducing Himself through mankind!** This is the very reason that He has established the proclivity in man to reproduce.

God's plan is to reproduce Himself by developing mankind into God-kind, placing them into His Family, the eternal Family of God! Paul says:

Ephesians 3:14: "For this cause I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of Whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named" (vs 14-15).

We are the children of God, even now! We have been blessed with that.

1-John 3:2: "Beloved, now we are the children of God, and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be; but we know that when He is manifested, we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him exactly as He is." *That is so important to understand!*

What is a covenant? *A contract, a bond, an agreement between two parties!* We have the marriage covenant between husband and wife. God created and fashioned the Old Covenant as a marriage contract between Himself and the nation of Israel at that time.

Let us not lose sight of the fact that the marriage covenant pictures the plan of God, whereby He is reproducing Himself into eternal sons and daughters. It was God Himself who instituted the marriage covenant. Marriage is not a creation or invention of man. Marriage is a window from which we can view the entire plan of God.

God is reproducing Himself in us, and He begins by giving us **the marriage covenant!** We shall see how very prophetic the marriage institution is by the significant language that God has given us through His Word.

Genesis 2:21: "And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall over Adam, and he slept. And He took one of his ribs, and *afterward* closed up the flesh underneath."

It was more than just a rib bone, there was also a substantial amount of flesh, also, that was taken from Adam's body. God made mother Eve genetically identical.

Verse 22: "Then the LORD God made the rib (which He had taken out of the man) into a woman, and He brought her to the man."^[transcriber's correction] 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" (vs 22-23).

We're going to see how it references to the actual Church of God.

Verse 24: "For this reason shall a man **leave his father and his mother**, and shall **cleave** to his wife, and they shall become one flesh"—*the institution of marriage brought forth right after the creation of man and woman!*

- 'cleave' means to *irreversibly be joined together!* Permanently bound, and that forms the marriage covenant.
- 'leaving father and mother' means that *an entire family unit is created!*

Adam and Eve taken out of man, as described in the Scriptures, are indeed one and the same flesh, the same body picturing Jesus Christ and the Church, being one body, and of course, one spirit!

Paul shows us that Adam and Eve's fleshly identity—one and the same, flesh and bones—points directly to the spiritual reality of Christ and the Church.

Ephesians 5:30: "For we are members of His body—**of His flesh and of His bones.**"

We can clearly see the meaning of marriage, as it is derived from the beginning to what the future marriage with Christ will entail.

1-Corinthians 12:13: "For indeed, by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, whether bondmen or free—and we were all made to drink into one Spirit."

Ephesians 4:4: "*There is* one body and one Spirit, even as you were also called in one hope of your calling; **one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, Who is over all, and through all, and in you all**" (vs 4-6).

When the marriage covenant was enacted, man and woman became one flesh, one entity, and God created a family model based on this, after His own image and after His own characteristics.

The prophetic picture developed through the

Bible with God orchestrating the wedding ceremony between Adam and Eve. Even then marrying Old Testament Israel. Then finally, we will see that Jesus Christ takes *the spiritual church* as His Bride.

An analogy is a figure of speech embodying an extended or elaborate comparison between two things, two situations. God chose the analogy of an ideal marriage physically to portray the intimate relationship between the Church brethren and the Son Jesus Christ.

But the marriage of Jesus Christ to the Church *is not* an analogy. It will be reality that will take place. The Apostle Paul explains how Jesus Christ will enter into an eternal marriage vow with the true saints. The reality of this wonderful event will be greater than one can even imagine, especially with the limitations we have today with our mortal lives that we are working with.

Try to picture the perfect marriage of fulfillment, love, happiness, faithfulness that will never be violated.

- Is Jesus really toying with us, with our affections, by saying these things?
- By a promise of marriage?
- Is it an analogy not to be taken serious by us?

Certainly not!

We are told plainly that we are to accept the Word of God at face value; what is written is at face value, the words of God!

Hosea 2:19: “And **I will betroth you to Me** forever. Yea, I will betroth you to Me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in loving kindness, and in mercies.

- ‘**betroth**’ means *a person you are engaged to*

Verse 20: “**I will even betroth you to Me in faithfulness.** And you shall know the LORD.”

Let us always recognize that the reality of Jesus’ words is greater than any picture that we may ever have. The actual wedding of the Church to Jesus Christ will not take place until after the resurrection to life. Of course, that is represented by Pentecost, the resurrection of the firstfruits. Then follows is the marriage supper when Christ and the Church will become not one flesh, *but one spirit!* That is what we have to look forward to!

1-Corinthians 6:17: “But **he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit.**”

When a young couple marries, they are perfectly together in heart, mind, hope and love. In

the same way, with that picture God gives us the intense love and intimacy of an idealistic marriage relationship. We cannot really fathom what *one spirit* means. But through the Word of God we can get a good idea what *one spirit* means.

Revelation 19:7: “Let us be glad and shout with joy; and let us give glory to Him; for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and **His wife has made herself ready.** And it was granted to her that she should be clothed in fine linen, pure and bright; for the fine linen is the righteousness of the saints” (vs 7-8). *That’s what we have to look forward to!*

The fine white linen as it refers to a wedding dress, represents the preparedness of the saints, because Christ’s righteousness has been imputed to them who are pure, chaste virgins in waiting.

Matthew 25:10: “And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding feast, and the door was shut.”

Verse 9: “But the wise answered, saying, ‘No, lest *there* not *be* enough for us and *for* you. But instead, go to those who sell, and buy for yourselves.’”

That was clearly brought forth by the message *An Overview of the Process of Conversion* by Eduardo Elizondo. The responsibilities that we should have with oil in our vessels.

Let’s look at this a little bit closer. There is nothing allegoric about marriage. It’s an absolute reality! This will take place when Jesus Christ marries the Church.

In the book of Revelation, the beloved Apostle John^[transcriber’s correction] is telling us that the *heavenly wedding ceremony* is absolutely going to take place just as it is described. Of course, these are the *true sayings of God!*

At our initial conversion our baptismal vow included the terms of the New Covenant, as part of the baptismal vow that we took upon our baptism. Although we are not yet change from mankind to spiritual God-kind, we will be at the first resurrection.

Philippians 3:20: “But for us, **the commonwealth of God exists in the heavens, from where also we are waiting for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.** Who will transform our vile bodies, that they may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the inner working of His own power, *whereby He is able* to subdue all things to Himself” (vs 20-21).

Change our vile body means that we will be changed from mankind to spiritual God-kind. We

will be God-kind spiritual beings for the heavenly wedding that's going to occur.

We live according the terms of the marriage contract, even now because we are engaged presently to the Lamb of God. Paul says,

2-Corinthians 11:2: "For I am jealous over you with *the* jealousy of God because I have espoused you to one husband, so 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 and marriage.

The spiritual firstfruits—Christ and the Church—***are to wed one another!***

Exodus 23:16: "Also, the Feast of the Harvest of the Firstfruits of your labors, which you have sown in the field. And the Feast of Ingathering, in the end of the year, when you have gathered in your labors out of the field."

Numbers 28:26: "And in the day of the firstfruits, when you bring a new grain offering to the LORD after your weeks *have been counted*, you shall have a Holy convocation. You shall do no servile work." *Jesus Christ will be the husband of the Bride!*

Isaiah 54:5: "'For your Maker *is* your husband; the LORD of hosts is His name; and your Redeemer *is* the Holy One of Israel; the God of the whole earth shall He be called, for the LORD has called you as a woman forsaken and grieved in spirit, and a wife of youth, when you were rejected,' says your God" (vs 5-6).

Let's 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. What did Israel reply with? *I do*, in response to the terms of the marriage covenant.

Exodus 24:3: "And 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 has said, we will do.**'"

Verse 7: "And he took the Book of the Covenant, and read in the ears of the people. And they said, 'All that the LORD has said we will do, and be obedient.' And Moses took the blood and sprinkled *it* on the people, and said, 'Behold the blood of the covenant, which the LORD has made with you concerning all these words'" (vs 7-8).

Today we would sign the marriage license in front of witnesses. But the marriage covenant of the

Lord was ratified, signed in blood when Moses sprinkled the blood on the people. The heavenly New Covenant—when it comes to fruition—is so much more glorious than that of the Old Covenant.

Genesis 1:26: "And God said, 'Let Us make man in Our image, after Our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the fowl of heaven and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that crawls upon the earth.' And **God created man in His own image**, in the image of God He created him. He created them male and female" (vs 26-27).

It was God's full intention that mankind be fruitful; v 28: "And God blessed them. And God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it...'"

Why? *Because God would call various men and women out of that pool of humanity!* Not only children of God, but many were destined to be the wife of Jesus Christ in the first and better resurrection!

What a blessing it is just to understand. When God had all but wiped mankind off the face of the earth in the Noachian Flood, He again instructed mankind to be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth; and subdue it!

Genesis 9:1: "And God blessed Noah and his sons, and He said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth.'" *He keeps bringing this up:*

Verse 7: "And you, be fruitful and multiply. Bring forth abundantly in the earth, and increase in it."

The Lord God showed Himself as Old Testament Israel's husband, and foretold that He would one day soon enter into a marriage covenant with spiritual Israel. The New Testament reveals that ***Jesus Christ will marry the resurrected Church!***

Jeremiah 31:31: "'Behold, the days come,' says the LORD, 'that 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 I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which covenant of Mine they broke, although I was a husband to them,' says the LORD... [making reference to the Old Covenant] ...'but this *shall be* the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel: After those days,' says the LORD, 'I will put My Law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; **and I will be their God, and they shall be My people**'" (vs 31-33).

Jesus is going to marry His Bride, the New

What Does it Mean to be Spiritually Married to Christ?
(Go to Meeting)

Covenant Israel of God.

Galatians 6:16: “And as many as walk according to this rule, peace and mercy *be* upon them, and upon the Israel of God.”

It’s inevitable, it’s in the Word of God, Jesus is going to marry His Bride, the New Covenant Israel of God.

Revelation 19:1: “And after these things I heard *the* loud voice of a great multitude in heaven, saying, ‘Hallelujah! The salvation and the glory and the honor and the power *belong* to the Lord our God. For true and righteous *are* His judgments; for He has judged the great whore, who corrupted the earth with her fornication, and He has avenged the blood of His servants at her hand” (vs 1-2).

It is good and Holy for God to recompense all of those who hurt the people of God. To many of God’s people mix with the world.

Revelation 18:4^[transcriber’s correction]: “And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, ‘Come out of her, My people, so that you do not take part in her sins, and that you do not receive of her plagues,”

As the called ones, the saints of God, we must prepare ourselves for the marriage of the Lamb.

Revelation 19:3: “And they said a second time, ‘Hallelujah! And her smoke shall ascend upward into the ages of eternity.’ And the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshiped God, Who sits on the Throne, saying, ‘Amen. Hallelujah!’ And a voice came forth from the Throne, saying, ‘Praise our God, all His servants, and all who fear Him, both small and great.’ And I heard a voice like that of a great multitude, and like *the* sound of many waters, and *the* sound of mighty thunderings, saying, ‘Hallelujah! For *the* Lord God Almighty has reigned. Let us be glad and shout with joy; and let us give glory to Him; **for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready**” (vs 3-7).

The marriage of the Lamb is speaking of the resurrected Church of God.

Verse 8: “And it was granted to her that she should be clothed in fine linen, pure and bright; for the fine linen is the righteousness of the saints. And he said to me, ‘Write: Blessed *are* those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb.’ And he said to me, ‘These are the true words of God’” (vs 8-9).

- Is the Church of God really going enter into an eternal covenant relationship with Jesus Christ?

or

- Is it merely a sweet sentiment to help us understand that it’s going to be nice?

No, brethren! These are all true sayings of God written in the Word of God.

An analogy is a figure of speech embodying an extended or elaborate comparison between two things, or situations. Godliness has power, and we know that!

2-Timothy 3:1: “Know this also, that in *the* last days perilous times shall come; for men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, braggarts, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy” (vs 1-2).

Is that describing some of the things that we’re facing now?

Verse 3: “Without natural affection, implacable, slanderers, without self-control, savage, despisers of those who are good, betrayers, reckless, egotistical, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God; **having an outward appearance of Godliness, but denying the power of true Godliness.** But *as for you*, turn away from *all* these” (vs 3-5). *Paul clearly instructs us what we should be doing!*

Verse 6: “For from *men such as* these come those who are worming their way into houses, and are gaining control over empty-headed *gullible* women given over to *various* sins, *being* driven by all kinds of lust. **They are always learning but are never able to come to the knowledge of the Truth.** Now, just as Jannes and Jambres stood against Moses, in the same manner also these are *brazenly* standing against the Truth; **they are men of depraved minds, reprobate in respect to the faith**” (vs 6-8).

Clearly describing what is occurring now and it’s only going to get worse in the last days. We know that there will be a watering down of God’s Truth. As a result, perilous times will result. The reality of fulfillment will be so much greater than the picture that we actually see.

When we read the Scripture of the future of fulfillment of God’s plan, never assume that it is possible for us to fully grasp that with the carnal minds that we have today. The awesome majestic, incomprehensible full meaning of what God has actually promised us.

It’s very difficult with our limitations that we have in the human mind to actually understand the full meaning of what God has actually promised us.

Matthew 5:16: “In the same way also, you are to let your light shine before men, so that they may see your good works... [we’ve been instructed

What Does it Mean to be Spiritually Married to Christ?
(Go to Meeting)

to do that] ...and may glorify your Father Who *is* in heaven.”

What did Christ do? *He came to fulfill the Law!*

Verse 17: “Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish, but to fulfill.”

Christ is not selling us a bill of goods. The fulfillment that Jesus speaks of will surpass our greatest anticipations! Let us understand the Scriptures and not take them lightly.

Romans 4:3: “For what does the Scripture say? ‘And Abraham believed God, and it was imputed to him for righteousness.’”

Verse 13: “For the promise to Abraham, or to his seed, that he should be heir of the world, *was* not *given* through law; rather, *it was* through *the* righteousness of faith.”

It is the current of hidden truth that makes them more real than words. Let us recognize that the reality of Jesus’ words is greater than anything we can ever imagine; any picture that we can ever imagine seeing! Scripture tells us, says to the converted mind, more than the words related to any worldly mind.

Genesis 16:5: “And He [God] brought him [Abraham] outside and said, ‘Look now toward the heavens and number the stars—if you are able to count them.’ And He said to him, ‘So shall your seed be.’ And he [Abraham] believed in the LORD. And He accounted it to him for righteousness” (vs 5-6).

Everything is centered around righteousness! God accounted! That means that if God says something, it is so! Let no man say that it is not so! ***If God says it, it is so!***

Here is where we have to be careful. Paul clearly instructs us that we have to put on Christ.

Galatians 3:27: “For **as many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ.**” *That’s part of it!*

Romans 13:14: “But **let us put on the Lord Jesus Christ**, and not make any allowance for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts.”

We must put on Christ; we are obligated to put on Christ. Let us always recognize that the reality of Jesus’ words are greater any picture, or what anybody else says.

Jesus Christ entered into a marriage covenant with the Old Testament in the third month after coming out of Egypt. We read of that in Exo.

19. God looked at His old marriage covenant with ancient Israel as *a marriage covenant* **or** *a vow* between Him and Israel. Jesus was the husband, and Israel was His wife.

Jeremiah 3:14: “‘Turn, O backsliding children,’ says the LORD; **‘for I am your husband;** and I will take you one from a city, and two from a family, and I will bring you to Zion.” *That’s what He told Israel at the time!*

Jeremiah 31:32: “‘Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which covenant of Mine they broke, **although I was a husband to them,**’ says the LORD.”

The covenant was broken! Now the Old Covenant is gone; the marriage between ancient Israel is gone! We have the marriage of the New Covenant Church that will occur.

Ephesians 5:21: “Submit yourselves to one another in *the* fear of God. Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands, as to the Lord... [clear instructions] ...for the husband is *the* head of the wife... [in a physical sense] ...even as Christ *is the* Head of the Church; and He *is the* Savior of the Body. For even as the Church is subject to Christ, in the same way also *let* wives be *subject* to their own husbands in everything” (vs 21-24).

Verse 25: “Husbands, love your own wives, in the same way that Christ also loved the Church...”

Quite a feat that we have to do. As Christ loved the Church, husbands should be loving their wives.

“...and gave Himself for it... [Christ gave His life for that opportunity] ...so that He might sanctify it, having cleansed *it* with the washing of the water by *the* Word; that He might present it to Himself *as* the glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it might be Holy and without blame. In the same way, husbands are duty-bound to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself; for no man has ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, even as the Lord *does* the Church” (vs 25-29). *It’s comparing the two!*

Verse 30: “For we are members of His body... [the Church] ...—of His flesh and of His bones. For this reason shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined to his wife; and the two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery; but I am speaking in respect to Christ and the Church” (vs 30-32).

What Does it Mean to be Spiritually Married to Christ?
(Go to Meeting)

He's using the physical sense and relaying it as it represents the relationship between Christ and the Church.

Verse 33: "Nevertheless, let each one of you love his wife even as himself; and *let each* wife see that she reverence *her* husband."

Brethren, it's inevitable, there will be a spiritual marriage with Christ. It's yet to come. The opportunity is there for the called out ones, the ones who are in the first resurrection, the saints of God.

God has promised that to us; it will be a glorious, glorious marriage! A glorious marriage covenant that will be eternal! We have taken a brief look today of what the spiritual marriage actually is as it was designed by God, based on the principles very early in creation by the physical marriage that took place.

God instituted it! It was governed by God so that we have the opportunity and we can grow to be prepared to be the Bride of Jesus Christ.

We will look in part two in this series of what we must be doing to prepare to be the Bride of Christ!

- What does it take to have the attributes required of us to be the Bride of Christ?
- What must we do in our physical lives today to be able to be part of this most wonderful blessing of being the Bride of Christ?

Scriptural References:

- 1) Hebrews 2:10
- 2) Genesis 1:27
- 3) Hebrews 6:1
- 4) Romans 1:20
- 5) Ephesians 3:14-15
- 6) 1 John 3:2
- 7) Genesis 2:21-24
- 8) Ephesians 5:30
- 9) 1 Corinthians 12:13
- 10) Ephesians 4:4-6
- 11) Hosea 2:19-20
- 12) 1 Corinthians 6:17
- 13) Revelation 19:7-8
- 14) Matthew 25:10, 9
- 15) Philippians 3:20-21
- 16) 2 Corinthians 1:1-2
- 17) Exodus 23:16
- 18) Numbers 28:26
- 19) Isaiah 54:5-6
- 20) Exodus 24:3, 7-8
- 21) Genesis 1:26-28
- 22) Genesis 9:1, 7

- 23) Jeremiah 31:31-33
- 24) Galatians 6:16
- 25) Revelation 19:1-2
- 26) Revelation 18:4
- 27) Revelation 19:3-9
- 28) 2 Timothy 3:1-8
- 29) Matthew 5:16-17
- 30) Romans 4:3, 13
- 31) Genesis 15:5-6
- 32) Galatians 3:27
- 33) Romans 13:14
- 34) Jeremiah 3:14
- 35) Jeremiah 31:32
- 36) Ephesians 5:21-33

Scripture referenced, not quoted: Exodus 19

Also referenced: Message:

An Overview of the Process of Conversion by
Eduardo Elizondo

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