

Baptist Bride Refutation

- I. The Baptist Bride doctrine teaches that:
 1. Only members of true Baptist churches comprise the bride of Christ.
 2. The rest of the elect who were never scripturally baptized and added to a true church are not part of the bride, but are the "family of God."
 3. Faithful members of Baptist churches are now espoused to Christ and will be married to Him at the marriage supper of the Lamb.
 4. The rest of the elect who were not baptized and not members of true Baptist churches will be present at the marriage supper only as guests and onlookers and will not receive the blessings of the bride in eternity.
- II. The Baptist Bride teaching originated with, and is prevalent among, the Landmark Baptists.
 1. There is a mixture of truth and error in the Landmark Baptists' beliefs.
 2. Truth in Landmark teaching:
 - A. There is a true church in this earth.
 - B. Only churches which have an unbroken baptistic lineage going back to the church that Jesus built are true churches.
 - C. There are rewards in heaven for obedience on earth.
 3. Error in Landmark teaching:
 - A. The only church in the Bible is the local church.
 - B. The local church is exclusively the bride of Christ.
 4. Unfortunately, many of the refutations of Landmarkism and the Baptist Bride doctrine found online are more erroneous than what they are trying to refute.
- III. The Baptist Bride position rests on the belief that there is only one church in the Bible, the local church.
 1. They reject the idea of a universal church.
 - A. They are half right.
 - B. There is no universal church that assembles on earth, but there is one that assembles in heaven.
 2. The word "church" in the Bible refers to three things:
 - A. A local congregation of baptized believers who assemble together to be taught about God and to worship Him (**Act 11:26**).
 - i. Church *n.* - III. 10. A congregation of Christians locally organized into a society for religious worship and spiritual purposes, under the direction of one set of spiritual office-bearers.
 - ii. There are many local churches (**Rom 16:4; 1Th 2:14; Rev 1:4**).
 - iii. Local churches are named by their geographical location (**Act 13:1; Rom 16:1; 1Co 1:2**).
 - iv. Each local congregation is "the church" (**1Co 6:4; 1Ti 3:5**), not part of the church.
 - v. Each local congregation is "the whole church" (**Rom 16:23; 1Co 14:23**), not part of the whole church.
 - vi. Each local congregation is "*the* body of Christ" (**1Co 12:27**), not part of the body of Christ.

- vii. The vast majority of the usages of the word "church" in the Bible refer to local churches.
- B. The *institution* of the local church.
 - i. Jesus built His church in Jerusalem which was a local church and promised that the *institution* of the local church would never be destroyed (**Mat 16:18**).
 - a. Jesus was not referring to the local church at Jerusalem *alone* when He said that the gates of hell shall not prevail against it because the local church in Jerusalem came to an end in 70AD when Jerusalem was destroyed.
 - b. It was rather the *institution* of the local church, which is the kingdom of God (**Dan 2:44**), that Jesus promised would not come to an end.
 - ii. There will be glory given to God in the church until the end of time (**Eph 3:21**).
 - a. This cannot be speaking of a particular local church because all local churches come and go: none have lasted from the first century until now.
 - b. It is rather referring to the *institution* of the local church.
 - c. There will always be one or more local churches on this earth giving glory to God until the last day of time.
- C. The congregation of all of God's redeemed elect from all time.
 - i. This church is called the general assembly and church of the firstborn (**Heb 12:23**).
 - ii. This church is the bride of Christ for which He died (**Eph 5:25-27**).
 - iii. This church does not and cannot assemble on earth, but will assemble in heaven.
 - a. A church is a congregation of people (**Heb 2:12 c/w Psa 22:22**).
 - b. Congregation - 1. The action of congregating or collecting in one body or mass.
 - c. At the end of time, God will "gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth" (**Eph 1:10**).
 - d. This congregation of all of God's elect is a church by definition.
 - iv. This church could be called "the universal church".
 - v. The church in **Eph 5:25-27** are all of God's elect.
 - a. What Christ is said to do for the church in **Eph 5:25-27** He does for every one of His elect.
 - (i) He loves all of His elect.
 - (ii) He gave Himself for all of the elect.
 - (iii) He sanctifies and cleanses all of the elect "with the washing of water by the word."
 - (iv) This washing refers to regeneration by the Holy Spirit, which is brought about by the life-giving voice of the Son of God (**Joh 3:5; Tit 3:5; Joh 5:25**).
 - (v) He will present His church unto Himself "holy and without blemish" which is what He will do for all of His elect whom

He chose that they "should be holy and without blame" (**Eph 1:4**) by making "peace through the blood of his cross" to present them "holy and **unblameable** and unreprieveable in his sight" (**Col 1:20-22**).

- b. This church in Eph 5 is made up of individual members. What is true of the church as a whole is true of each individual member of it.
 - (i) If Christ gave Himself for the church as a whole, He gave Himself for each individual member of it.
 - (ii) Paul said that Christ "gave himself for me" (**Gal 2:20**).
 - (iii) When speaking of the local church, Paul also said that God purchased the church "with his own blood" (**Act 20:28**).
 - (iv) In respect of this we can also say, that what Christ did for the local church He did for all of His elect. They are all purchased with his blood.
 - c. What is said of the church in **Eph 5:22-33** can be *applied* to the local church.
 - (i) Christ is the head of the local church.
 - (ii) The local church is subject to Christ.
 - (iii) Christ does nourish and cherish the local church.
 - d. But not everything said in **Eph 5:22-33** can be *limited* to the local church.
 - (i) Paul looks through the local church and sees what Christ has done, is doing, and will do for all of His elect, of whom the local church is a portion.
 - (ii) An assembly of saints worshiping God in spirit and in truth is the nearest thing we have to heaven on this earth (**Gen 28:17**).
 - e. Observe a simple rule of logic.
 - A=C
 - B=C
 - A=B
 - f. Now let's apply this to the church in **Eph 5:25-27**.
 - (i) All of God's Elect = Those Who will be Presented Without Blame
 - (ii) The Church = Those Who will be Presented Without Blame
 - (iii) All of God's Elect = The Church
3. The Baptist Briders reject the idea that the bride of Christ is comprised of all of God's elect that will one day assemble together in heaven because there is no such entity that assembles together on earth now.
- A. This argument condemns their own position that the bride of Christ is comprised of all the faithful members of all Baptist churches because there is likewise no such entity that assembles on earth now.
 - B. The following is an excerpt from a letter that Pastor Ben Mott wrote refuting the Baptist Bride doctrine.
 - C. "Therefore, according the Mr. Fenison, the future bride of Christ will consist of all faithful Baptists and faithful remnant Israel. The Baptist Briders' version of the

future bride of Christ is an entity that is not presently visible and functioning on this earth. There is no Baptist church on this earth comprising all local Baptist churches. The Baptist Briders ridicule the idea of a future bride of Christ made up of all of God's elect assembled together since no such entity assembles on earth now. Yet neither does their version of the future bride assemble on this earth now. There is not now on this earth an assembly of all faithful Baptists and faithful remnant Israel. Such an assembly will only take place in the future according to them. As the saying goes, what is sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander. If my version of a future bride of Christ is faulty because such an entity does not assemble now, then so is their version." (Pastor Ben Mott, *Baptist Bride*)

IV. The Bride of Christ

1. The Baptist Briders maintain that the bride in **Rev 19:7-9 & Rev 21:2,9-10 & Rev 22:17** is comprised only of members of true Baptist churches.
 - A. This is false.
 - B. All of God's elect who have been regenerated and have thereby become dead to the law are married to Christ (**Rom 7:4-6**).
 - i. This is not only true of members of Baptist churches.
 - ii. All of those who are regenerate are dead to the law through the atonement of Christ, and are therefore married to Christ (**Col 2:13; Rom 8:6-10; Col 1:20-22**).
 - C. The church in **Eph 5:22-33**, comprised of all the elect, is the wife of Christ, not merely an espoused bride awaiting marriage as the Baptist Briders contend.
 - i. This is evident because Christ's relationship to the church is used as an example of how a husband should relate to his wife, not his fiancé.
 - ii. "It is clear that Paul is setting forth Christ's relationship to the church as a model for husbands and wives. Husbands and wives are to relate to each other as Christ and the church relate to each other. The relationship of Christ and the church is being compared to the relationship of a *married* husband and wife, not a betrothed bridegroom and bride! The passage lends itself to the thought that Christ and the church are already married. This is quite clear from verse 23:

Ephesians 5:23 For the husband **is** the head of the wife, **even as** Christ **is** the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body.

"That little expression *even as* means *exactly as*, or *precisely as*. The Holy Spirit in this verse is drawing an exact parallel between the relationship of a *married* husband and wife, and the relationship of Christ and the church. There is an *exact* parallel between these two relationships. The relationship between Christ and the church in this passage is *not* being compared with the relationship between a betrothed man and woman. Betrothal and marriage are two different things and *things different are not the same*." (Pastor Ben Mott, *Baptist Bride*)

- D. The bride in **Rev 19, 21, and 22** are all the same bride.

- E. The bride is identified as the great city, new Jerusalem, in **Rev 21:2,9-10**.
- i. This is Jerusalem which is above that is the mother of us all (**Gal 4:26**).
 - ii. The new Jerusalem is the "heavenly Jerusalem" which is "the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven" (**Heb 12:22-23**).
 - iii. The bride of Christ in **Rev 19, 21, and 22** is therefore the "general assembly and the church of the firstborn."
 - a. General *adj.* - 1. a. Including, participated in by, involving, or affecting, all, or nearly all, the parts of a specified whole, or the persons or things to which there is an implied reference; completely or approximately universal within implied limits; opposed to partial or particular.
 - b. The "general assembly" in heaven is therefore the universal church of all of God's elect.
 - iv. This "church of the firstborn" are "written in heaven" (**Heb 12:22-23**).
 - a. These are all of the elect whose names are written in the book of life (**Rev 20:12, 15; Rev 21:27**).
 - b. The elects' names were written in the book of life from the foundation of the world when God chose to save them (**Rev 17:8 c/w Eph 1:4**).
 - c. The wicked are not written in the book of life (**Rev 13:8**).
 - d. The general assembly and church of the firstborn who are written in heaven are therefore all of the elect.
 - e. Therefore, the new Jerusalem which is the general assembly and the bride of Christ are all of the elect.
 - v. The bride is the Lamb's wife (**Rev 21:9**) who is arrayed in clean, white, fine linen (**Rev 19:7-9**).
 - a. The bride is Christ's wife which He died for to make her clean and without spot, wrinkle, or blemish (**Eph 5:25-27**).
 - b. Those whom Christ made holy and without blame are the elect (**Eph 1:4**).
 - c. Therefore, the church, which is the bride of Christ, is the general assembly of all of God's elect for whom Christ died.
- F. The bride of Christ in **Rev 19, 21, and 22** are the same group as the innumerable multitude that John saw in **Rev 7:9-17**.
- i. The multitude which no man could number is of *all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues* (**Rev 7:9**).
 - a. This is clearly referring to all of the blood-bought, redeemed elect, not merely those that were members of Baptist churches.
 - b. This multitude are "they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." (**Rev 7:14**)
 - c. This is the multitude of God's elect redeemed by the blood of the Lamb and cannot be limited to only members of true Baptist churches.

- ii. Let's compare this multitude of all the elect in **Rev 7** with the bride in **Rev 19, 21, and 22** and see that they are the same group.
 - a. Their clothing.
 - (i) The elect are "clothed with white robes" (**Rev 7:9**).
 - (ii) The bride is "arrayed in fine linen, clean and white" (**Rev 19:8**).
 - b. Their righteousness.
 - (i) The elect have "washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb" (**Rev 7:14**).
 - (ii) The "fine linen" that the bride is clothed in "is the righteousness of saints" (**Rev 19:8**).
 - c. The temple.
 - (i) The elect are "before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them" (**Rev 7:15**).
 - (ii) In the new Jerusalem (the bride), "the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God" (**Rev 21:3**), and "the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it" (**Rev 21:22**).
 - d. No more hunger, thirst, sun, or tears.
 - (i) The elect "shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat" (**Rev 7:16**), and "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes" (**Rev 7:17**).
 - (ii) In the new Jerusalem (the bride), "the city had no need of the sun" (**Rev 21:23**) and "there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun" (**Rev 22:5**), and "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain" (**Rev 21:4**), and "there shall be no more curse" (**Rev 22:3**).
 - e. Their needs are provided for by the Lamb.
 - (i) It was said of the elect that "the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters" (**Rev 7:17**).
 - (ii) In the new Jerusalem (the bride), "in the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations" (**Rev 22:2**).
 - f. They will serve God.
 - (i) All the elect in heaven are "before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them" (**Rev 7:15**).

- (ii) In the new Jerusalem, "his servants shall serve him: And they shall see his face" (**Rev 22:3-4**).
 - iii. Therefore, the bride is the innumerable multitude of God's elect.
- 2. Baptist Briders also use **2Co 11:2** to try to prove that the local church alone is the bride of Christ.
 - A. **2Co 11:2** refers to individual Christians being espoused to Christ.
 - B. This espousal refers to our relationship to Christ in the local church on earth for two reasons:
 - i. It was Paul, not God, that espoused the believers in Corinth to Christ.
 - ii. It was Paul, not Jesus Christ, that labored to present them as a chaste virgin unto Christ.
 - C. This espousal is not the same espousal that God alone accomplished when he wed all of His elect to Christ through election and redemption (**Eph 5:25-27 c/w Eph 1:4**).
 - i. Consider the difference.
 - ii. *Paul* wishes to present the Corinthian saints, whom he has espoused to one husband, as a chaste virgin to Christ.
 - iii. *Paul* will present to Christ *only those saints* whom he espoused.
 - iv. *Jesus* will present unto Himself *all* the saints.
 - D. All the elect for whom Christ gave Himself will be presented in glory "holy and without blame (blemish)", but such is not the case with Paul in **2Co 11:2**.
 - i. On one hand, **Eph 5:25-27** presents a certain chain of events: Christ gave Himself for it (the church); Christ sanctifies and cleanses it; Christ presents it to Himself holy and without blemish.
 - ii. Whereas the presentation that Paul wanted to make of the Corinthian saints was in jeopardy.
 - iii. Hence, he was jealous over them with godly jealousy. He feared their being drawn away and corrupted from Christ, the one husband to whom he had espoused them, unto another Jesus (**2Co 11:3-4**).
 - iv. It should be obvious from these contrasts that the presentation of **Eph 5:27** and the presentation of **2Co 11:2** are two different presentations.
 - v. Remember, *things different are not the same*.

V. The parable of the marriage feast (**Mat 22:1-14**).

- 1. The parable of the marriage feast shows that God's elect *manifest* themselves to be the bride of Christ by responding in faith to the call of the gospel.
 - A. In the parable, the guests who are called to the wedding are distinct from the bride, but those of them who accept the call show themselves to be the bride.
 - i. This is the nature of parables.
 - ii. A lesson is taught by way of an allegory, but there is not a 100% correlation between the events in the parable and the reality that it seeks to explain.
 - iii. The parable of the pearl of great price is a good example.
 - a. In the parable, the pearl is the kingdom of God for which the man is searching (**Mat 13:45**).

- b. When he is searching for the pearl (the kingdom of God), he is not the pearl.
 - c. When he finds it and sells all he has to buy it, he becomes part of the kingdom of God (the pearl) (**Mat 13:46**).
 - d. Therefore, he started off being distinct from the pearl and ended up being part of the pearl.
 - iv. A similar interpretation of the parable of the marriage feast holds true, which is explained well in the following quote.
 - v. "The reason is that scriptures elsewhere represent believers as being the very bride of Christ, not as mere spectators to His wedding. The reason for the different approach in the parable of the wedding feast is that it considers the initial stages of the gospel call where there has not yet been a profession of faith in the hearers. At this stage, the gospel is not a marriage to the hearers, nor is it a proposal of marriage to them. There is no presumption at this stage that the hearers are part of the bride, and therefore no presumption they are ones for whom Jesus died. It is rather a proclamation of a marriage to which all are bidden. Only upon conversion are the bidden guests transferred to the role of bride. Hence, the gospel declares to the unconverted a marriage between Christ and His bride, for whom He specifically died, cleansing her of all sin, redeeming her unto Himself, to surely live with Him in heaven. The unconverted are called upon to believe these facts, but their role as bride to Christ, and as being redeemed by His death, are neither assumed nor declared until such time as they believe on Him. The Bible promises the cross only to believers. The problem with reformaphobia is that it misconstrues a call to a wedding as being a proposal of marriage." (David Pyles, *Reformaphobia*, p. 48)
 - B. In the parable, the guests of the wedding equate to the local church.
 - i. The Jews were first called by the gospel (**Rom 1:16**) to enter the kingdom of heaven/God (the local church) (**Mar 1:14-15**), and they refused (**Mat 22:2-6 c/w Joh 1:11 c/w Mat 21:31-32 c/w Luk 7:29-30**).
 - ii. Because of their rejection of the call of the gospel, God took the kingdom from the Jews and destroyed their city (**Mat 22:7 c/w Mat 21:43-44 c/w Luk 21:24**).
 - iii. After the Jews rejected the call of the gospel, it went to the Gentiles (**Mat 22:8-10 c/w Act 13:46 c/w Act 18:6**).
 - C. In the parable, the guests (the church) are those that are both chosen by God (the elect) and called by the gospel (**Mat 22:14**).
 - i. The gospel call is a universal call to all men (**Act 17:30**).
 - ii. There will be both bad and good that are called by the gospel and will end up in the local church (**Mat 22:10 c/w Gal 2:4 c/w Jud 1:4**).
 - iii. The reprobate that get into the church will be exposed and expelled (**Mat 22:11-13; Mat 13:24-30, 37-43; 1Jo 2:19**).
2. The parable of the marriage feast in **Mat 22:1-14** is not identical to the marriage supper of the Lamb in **Rev 19:7-9**.
- A. The parable of the marriage feast in **Mat 22:1-14** foretold the building of the NT local church, from its beginning when it went to the Jews who rejected it, and

throughout the rest of its history when it was given the Gentiles and was filled with both elect and reprobate.

- B. The prophesy of the marriage supper of the Lamb in **Rev 19:7-9** foretells of the consummation of the salvation of God's elect, the bride of Christ, when they will be brought into everlasting communion with their husband and Saviour the Lord Jesus Christ in heaven at the resurrection.
- C. Neither of these passages support the Baptist Bride belief.

VI. Baptist Briders say that the wife in **Rev 19:7** cannot be the same as those that are called to the marriage in **Rev 19:9**.

- 1. Bear in mind that we have here figures of speech.
- 2. Baptist Briders have no problem equating the wife of v. 7 with the saints of v. 8.
- 3. This is a wife that consists of a plurality of persons.
- 4. This is *obviously* a figure of speech since no literal wife is made of many persons.
- 5. This being the case, what is so farfetched with equating the wife with those who are called to the marriage supper?
- 6. If the wife consists here of all of God's elect, aren't all of God's elect called by grace and, hence, to the marriage supper? (**Rom 8:30**)
- 7. And if the wife consists only of Baptist saints, aren't they also called to be Baptist saints and thus called to the marriage supper? (**Mar 3:13; 1Co 1:2**)
- 8. So either way you run it, the wife consists of called persons.
- 9. So why should it be thought strange that in a passage that presents the Lamb's wife as consisting of a plurality of persons, it should be said of those persons: "Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb"?

VII. If the elect are already the wife of Christ, then why are they being married to Christ in **Rev 19:7-9**?

- 1. As was before proven, all the elect are already married to Jesus Christ (**Eph 5:25-27**) (see Section IV,1,C).
- 2. The marriage of Christ and the church is looked at variously in the scriptures.
- 3. In **Eph 5:25-27** and **Rom 7:4**, the elect are declared to be legally married to Christ already.
- 4. In **Rev 19:7-9**, the elect come to experience their wedding unto Christ in all its glory.
 - A. The elect now experience being married unto Christ in its seed form.
 - B. At the marriage supper of the Lamb, they will experience it in its fullness.
 - C. We only get a taste of it now, but then the whole meal.
 - D. Our marriage to Christ now is as it is with those who elope and have a legal marriage performed at the courthouse in front of two witnesses.
 - E. The marriage supper of the Lamb will be as it is when that couple later plans a huge celebration of their marriage with all their family and friends present and they renew their vows in the presence of them all.
- 5. Other aspects of our Christian life mirror this.
 - A. We are now the sons of God (**1Jo 3:2; Rom 8:16-17**), but we will get to experience the manifestation of our sonship in its fullness in heaven (**Rom 8:19-21**).
 - B. We are now adopted by God (**Eph 1:5; Rom 8:15; Gal 4:5**), but we wait for the full manifestation of our adoption that will happen at the resurrection when our bodies are redeemed (**Rom 8:23**).

- VIII. If all of the elect are the bride of Christ, then what's the point of being in a true Baptist church?
1. If all of God's elect are the bride of Christ and they all get to partake of the marriage supper of the Lamb, then what's the point of getting baptized, being a member of a local church, partaking of the communion, and keeping God's commandments in general?
 2. Those that make this objection apparently think that if there is no eternal benefit to being a sound Baptist, then why bother.
 3. Being a member of a true Baptist church is the means by which a child of God will experience many deliverances in this life that he would otherwise miss.
 - A. These include salvation from ignorance, deception, fear of death, trying to establish his own righteousness, and chastisement in this life from God for sin.
 - B. These also include salvation to the knowledge and assurance of eternal life, fellowship with like-believers, rest, and joy.
 - C. See sermon on [Temporal Salvation](#).
 4. In addition, and this is part of temporal salvation, we can really have no Biblical assurance that we are eternally saved if we are not obeying the commandments of God including the commandments of baptism and local church communion.
 - A. The evidence of eternal salvation lies in obedience, not in disobedience.
 - B. This is not to say that there are no disobedient children of God.
 - i. God has disobedient elect children that are not Bible Baptists.
 - ii. (See sermons on [Unconverted Elect and Unbelieving Children of God](#).)
 - iii. But they lack Biblical assurance of their salvation.
 - C. The genuineness of the faith of anyone who willfully refuses the commandment of Christ to be baptized should be questioned.
 - i. One reason we are New Testament Baptists, is that this is that narrow way that leadeth unto life.
 - ii. Only in this way can we be fully assured that we are God's elect.
 - D. Bear in mind that there are many very religious people who will be surprised to find themselves rejected in the Day of Judgment (**Mat 7:21-23**).
 - E. These people are religious, but they do not do the will of the Father in keeping His commandments.
 - F. See sermons on [Assurance of Salvation \(Part 1\)](#) and [Assurance of Salvation \(Part 2\)](#).