

Jesus Is the Bridegroom

Read John 3:22-36

Earlier in his ministry, John the Baptist had introduced Jesus in two ways:

- *“Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!”* (John 1:29, NASB). Jesus would be God’s sacrifice to redeem His people from their sin.
- *“I baptize you with water for repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, and I am not fit to remove His sandals; He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire”* (Matthew 3:11, NASB). Jesus would immerse God’s people in God’s Spirit (John 1:33).

But here in John 3, he describes Jesus differently: He is the Bridegroom.

“I am not the Christ, but I have been sent ahead of Him. He who has the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly because of the bridegroom’s voice. So this joy of mine has been made full.” (John 3:28-29, NASB)

Jesus calls Himself the Bridegroom early in His ministry, in answer to a question about why His disciples did not fast:

“While the bridegroom is with them, the attendants of the bridegroom cannot fast, can they? So long as they have the bridegroom with them, they cannot fast. But the days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast in that day.” (Mark 2:19-20, NASB)

John had already said that Jesus would lay down His life for God’s people, and that He would baptize them in God’s Spirit. But by describing Him as the Bridegroom, he has suggested more about Jesus’ relationship with God and His people:

1. As we have seen, in the Old Testament God called Himself the husband of His people. Thus when Jesus described Himself as the Bridegroom, He was suggesting what He would later say plainly: *“I and the Father are one”* (John 10:30, NASB).
2. Jesus’ coming is thus pictured as a wedding, as the joyful, loving, permanent, fruitful union between God and His people.

Jesus had come to perfectly unite God and His people.