

THE FALSE CHURCH(LESSON 8)

READ PROV. 7

QUESTIONS

Why is the woman a picture of the church?

What are the other pictures of the church in the Bible?

Explain the validity of the symbolic method of interpreting the scriptures.

What are the characteristics of the man who is seduced by the woman?

What is the significance of "her corner"?

Prov 7:8

Passing along the street near her corner; and he took the path to her house (NKJ)

What is the significance of the underlined verses in terms of the operating system of this woman?

Prov 7:9

In the twilight, in the evening, in the black and dark night. (NKJ)

Using the underlined verses, glean the characteristics of a false church.

Prov 7:10-21

10 And there a woman met him, with the attire of a harlot, and a crafty heart.

11 She was loud and rebellious, her feet would not stay at home.

12 At times she was outside, at times in the open square, Lurking at every corner.

13 So she caught him and kissed him; with an impudent face she said to him:

14 "I have peace offerings with me; today I have paid my vows.

15 So I came out to meet you, diligently to seek your face, and I have found you.

16 I have spread my bed with tapestry, Colored coverings of Egyptian linen.

17 I have perfumed my bed with myrrh, aloes, and cinnamon.

18 Come, let us take our fill of love until morning; let us delight ourselves with love.

19 For my husband is not at home; he has gone on a long journey;

20 He has taken a bag of money with him, and will come home on the appointed day."

21 With her enticing speech she caused him to yield, with her flattering lips she seduced him. (NKJ)

From the following verse, what can you conclude about the end result of going to such a church.

Prov 7:23

Till an arrow struck his liver. As a bird hastens to the snare, he did not know it would cost his life. (NKJ)

How can such a catastrophe be prevented?

ANSWERS – LESSON 8

1. WOMAN AS A PICTURE OF THE CHURCH.

1 Cor 3:16-17

16 Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?

17 If anyone defiles the temple of God, God will destroy him. For the temple of God is holy, which temple you are. (NKJ)

Acts 7:48

"However, the Most High does not dwell in temples made with hands, as the prophet says: (NKJ)

The church is the temple of God-the dwelling place of God. It is not made by human hands. This dwelling place of God is also called "the holy city".

Rev 21:2-3

2 Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

3 And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God. (NKJ)

Rev 21:9-10

9 Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls filled with the seven last plagues came to me and talked with me, saying, "Come, I will show you the bride, the Lamb's wife."

10 And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the great city, the

holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God,(NKJ)

The holy city(the dwelling place of God) is called the bride, the "Lamb's wife".

Thus the bride is the church(the dwelling place of God).

2 Cor 11:2

For I am jealous for you with godly jealousy. For I have betrothed you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.(NKJ)

Paul compares the church to a chaste virgin.

THE WOMAN IS THEREFORE A VALID SYMBOL OF THE CHURCH.

Jer 6:2

I have likened the daughter of Zion to a lovely and delicate woman.(NKJ)

OTHER PICTURES OF THE CHURCH.

HOUSE

Heb 3:6

but Christ as a Son over His own house, whose house we are if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm to the end.(NKJ)

1 Pet 4:17

For the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God? (NKJ)

1 Tim 3:15

but if I am delayed, I write so that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth. (NKJ)

TABERNACLE

Rev 21:2-3

2 Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

3 And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God. (NKJ)
The Bride, the Holy City is called the tabernacle of God.

TEMPLE

1 Cor 3:16-17

16 Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?

17 If anyone defiles the temple of God, God will destroy him. For the temple of God is holy, which temple you are. (NKJ)

2 Cor 6:16

16 And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: "I will dwell in them and walk among them. I will be their God, and they shall be My people." (NKJ)

VINEYARD

1 Cor 9:7

Who ever goes to war at his own expense? Who plants a vineyard and does not eat of its fruit? Or who tends a flock and does not drink of the milk of the flock? (NKJ)

Paul compares the church to a vineyard and a flock.

MAN

Eph 4:13

till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; (NKJ)

BRANCHES

John 15:5

"I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. (NKJ)

SHEEP

John 10:27-28

27 "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me.
28 "And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand. (NKJ)

LIVING STONES

1 Pet 2:5

you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. (NKJ)

BODY

Col 1:18

And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence. (NKJ)

Eph 1:22-23

22 And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church,
23 which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all. (NKJ)

PRIEST

1 Pet 2:9

But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; (NKJ)

THE SYMBOLIC METHOD OF INTERPRETATION.

Symbolism is the use of one object to represent another which is essentially different from itself, but has certain common features.

The symbolic method of interpretation is the method whereby the interpretation of the scriptures is determined by the interpretation of the symbol. The old saying applies, "when the plain sense does not make common sense, then seek another sense."

John 6:53

Then Jesus said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you. (NKJ)

John 6:66

From that time many of His disciples went back and walked with Him no more. (NKJ)

One of the reasons that many of his disciples went back, is that they did not understand symbolic language. Any ordinary person would have interpreted Jesus' requirement as cannibalism instead of a covenantal relationship.

GUIDELINES FOR SYMBOLIC INTERPRETATION

FEATURE LINK

There must be features common to both.

CONTEXT LINK

Because an object may symbolize more than one thing, the context must be examined to determine what is being symbolized(e.g. lion may symbolize satan, Jesus or an overcoming believer.)

BIBLICAL LINK

Because the Bible interpret its own symbols, the scriptures must be searched to determine the interpretation of the symbol.

CULTURE LINK

The symbol must be interpreted in its cultural context.

LANGUAGE LINK

Interpret the symbol in the language in which it was communicated.

SYMBOLIC LINK

If the verses under consideration, makes literal sense, then symbolic interpretation is valid if the contextual scriptures suggest this or the Bible uses the object as a common symbol.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE MAN SEDUCED BY THE WOMAN:

Prov 7:7

And saw among the simple, I perceived among the youths, a young man devoid of understanding, (NKJ)
He is simple(innocent).

He is young(immature) – he is not of full age.

He lacks understanding(he has no discerning).

He is among the youths. He associates with the immature, not with those wiser than himself.

THE PROBLEM THAT THE MAN ENCOUNTERS IS DUE TO A LACK OF DISCERNING.

Heb 5:14

But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil. (NKJ)

This young man is representative of those who have not internalized solid food. They are not accustomed to the personal application of doctrinal truths to discern good and evil. There is no internal radar system, built by the word of God to detect error. They have no perception of evil. They are simple men and women in a complicated world-lambs in a lion's den.

her corner

This woman takes ownership of the corner. The corner is the place of joining of 2 walls. It is the location of the cornerstone. Jesus is the cornerstone who joins Jews and Gentiles together. This woman blocks the corner. Figuratively, she represents a church who blocks the people from seeing Jesus.

6 In the twilight, in the evening, in the black and dark night. (NKJ)

She is activated by the twilight. Twilight is the time of partial illumination. This church is activated by partial illumination – half-truths. She preys on individuals who have some knowledge of the word of God(milk and bread Christians).

She operates in the night so that her true ugliness cannot be seen. She moves the innocent, young believer from partial illumination to darkness.

7.1 And there a woman met him, with the attire of a harlot, and a crafty heart.

The attire of an harlot is intended to seduce. It is exaggerated and flamboyant. She wears a wig, false eyelashes, false smile, exaggerated make-up(false face), exposes her flesh and false height(high heel shoes). THIS IS A PICTURE OF A CHURCH WITH FALSE MANIFESTATIONS, INTENDED TO SEDUCE THE SIMPLE AND IMMATURE.

and a crafty heart.

The heart of this church is deranged. It is crafty in the sense of having an hidden agenda – to destroy its followers.

She was loud and rebellious,

This church makes her presence felt. She is easily noticed. Her loudness shuts out the still small voice of God.

her feet would not stay at home.

At times she was outside, at times in the open square, Lurking at every corner.

This church is a movement. She is busy - busy with many programmes and activities. She lurks at every corner. The corner is the place of decision for direction. This church is strategically involved in decisions that affect the city. She is not left out. She has a loud voice, so you cannot miss her when important decisions are made.

So she caught him and kissed him; with an impudent face she said to him:

She knows that actions speak louder than words. She meets the felt need before talking. This church specialises in meeting the felt need first e.g. paying your grocery bill or connecting your water and electricity. These good deeds are used to win the trust of the undiscerning.

"I have peace offerings with me; today I have paid my vows.

This is not the usual prostitute. An allegory is intended. She carries peace offerings and makes vows – she is religious. For her to function at this level, a dead conscience is required. It does not make sense for a decadent woman to carry peace offerings and make vows. This church cleverly covers her motives with religion, eliminating any suspicion from the undiscerning, immature believer.

So I came out to meet you, diligently to seek your face, and I have found you.

She made him feel wanted and important. This is the clever ploy of this church to maintain its membership. She makes the believer feel important and sought out.

I have spread my bed with tapestry, Colored coverings of Egyptian linen.

She has coverings of Egyptian linen, not fine linen. Egypt is a symbol of worldliness. This church is covered with worldly philosophies that are pleasing to the one unschooled in the ways of righteousness.

7.9 I have perfumed my bed with myrrh, aloes, and cinnamon.

Exod 30:23-25

23 Take thou also unto thee principal spices, of pure myrrh five hundred shekels, and of sweet cinnamon half so much, even two hundred and fifty shekels, and of sweet calamus two hundred and fifty shekels,
24 And of cassia five hundred shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary, and of oil olive an hin:
25 And thou shalt make it an oil of holy ointment, an ointment compound after the art of the apothecary: it shall be an holy anointing oil.
(KJV)

The anointing oil was made of myrrh, cinnamon, calamus, cassia and olive oil. The bed of the harlot is perfumed with only some of the components of the anointing oil. The false church, pictured here, has a counterfeit anointing in the place of intimacy- the bed i.e. her worship is powered by a counterfeit anointing. This anointing does not have the cassia, calamus and olive oil. Cassia is a purgative("internal cleansing agent"). Thus this anointing does not have the power to sanctify. Calamus is an aromatic root. Paul associates sacrificial giving with aroma.

Eph 5:2

And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma. (NKJ)

The harlot's anointing does not inspire sacrifice but fleshly indulgence.

The harlot's anointing has no olive oil, a symbol of life-giving sustenance.

Come, let us take our fill of love until morning; let us delight ourselves with love.

She indulges in love. This church is intoxicated with love without truth. This church majors on offering you a good time. She fulfills the human need for love to the point of excess, but is devoid of truth. Love becomes her powerful tool of manipulation. She is there in the moment of your deepest need. Her love makes you obligated to pay – with your soul. The truth is that this is an immoral relationship which does not bring glory to God. LOVE WITHOUT TRUTH IS SENTIMENT. This church operates on sentiment.

7.11 For my husband is not at home; he has gone on a long journey;

Her husband is absent. Jesus is absent from this house. This is an house of ICHABOD – the glory has departed. God could not tolerate her prostitution.

7.12 With her enticing speech she caused him to yield, with her flattering lips she seduced him.

She is skilful in communication. She uses flattery to seduce.

Ps 5:9

For there is no faithfulness in their mouth; their inward part is destruction; their throat is an open tomb; they flatter with their tongue. (NKJ)

COMPARE THIS WITH PAUL'S MINISTRY.

1Thes 2:3-5

3 For our exhortation did not come from error or uncleanness, nor was it in deceit.

4 But as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, even so we speak, not as

pleasing men, but God who tests our hearts.

5 For neither at any time did we use flattering words, as you know, nor a cloak for covetousness-- God is witness (NKJ)

8. Till an arrow struck his liver. As a bird hastens to the snare, he did not know it would cost his life. (NKJ)

The woman destroyed him by attacking his liver, not his heart. The heart belongs to God. The young man dies through liver failure. The liver is the chief organ of detoxification. Liver failure causes jaundice through the accumulation of Bilirubin in the blood. A jaundiced man looks yellow, like gold. The person who has been to this church looks like gold. But this is not like the transparent gold of the city of God in Rev.21:21. This is sickness due to a failure of detoxification – sickness due to a failure of cleansing – a failure of sanctification. He went to a church that killed him.

How can such a catastrophe be prevented?

Prov 7:1-5

1 My son, keep my words, and treasure my commands within you.
2 Keep my commands and live, and my law as the apple of your eye.
3 Bind them on your fingers; write them on the tablet of your heart.
4 Say to wisdom, "You are my sister," and call understanding your nearest kin,
5 That they may keep you from the immoral woman, from the seductress who flatters with her words. (NKJ)

TREASURE THE WORD OF GOD.

OBEY THE WORD OF GOD.

KNOW THE WORD AT YOUR FINGERTIPS.

LET THE WORD OF GOD DWELL IN YOU RICHLY,

WALK IN WISDOM AND UNDERSTANDING WHICH COMES FROM THE WORD OF GOD.

Ps 119:130

The entrance of Your words gives light; it gives understanding to the simple. (NKJ)

NOTE THAT IT IS NOT PRAYER, PRAISE, FASTING, CORPORATE GATHERINGS, SOLEMN ASSEMBLIES OR CHURCH PROGRAMMES THAT ARE GOING TO PROTECT A PERSON FROM THE COUNTERFEIT, BUT WISDOM AND UNDERSTANDING THAT COMES FROM THE WORD OF GOD. THUS AN ACCURATE CHURCH WILL MAKE THE WORD OF GOD ITS PRIORITY.

ADDITIONAL NOTES

There are two kinds of people that meet you in your crisis(corner – place of decision).To the simple their presence is interpreted as love and proof of covenant. One group is there out of genuine love, concern and compassion. The other group looks at your crisis as an opportunity for personal gain – to craftily manipulate you by a mistaken symbol of love. The presence of people in your crisis is a mistaken symbol of love. So is the meeting of a felt need. How then are we to discern the genuine from the counterfeit?

PROOF OF GENUINENESS

LOVE FOR GOD DEMONSTRATED BY A FEARFUL OBEDIENCE TO HIS WORD.

John 14:15

"If you love Me, keep My commandments.(NKJ)

Those who reverentially obey God's word prove their love for God and hence their genuineness. They study God's word to obey accurately. They are attracted to an accurate division of God's word. They delight in His word.

KIND OF FRUITS.

Matt 7:20

"Therefore by their fruits you will know them.(NKJ)

Get suspicious when someone consistently manifests the works of the flesh.

Gal 5:19-24

19 Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, 20 idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies,

21 envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,

23 gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.

24 And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.(NKJ)

INTEGRITY

Does the person keep his word? Those who lie demonstrate that their father is the devil.

SECRET ACTS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

Accidental discovery of acts of goodness or righteousness, where an individual has not advertised that which he has done for the Lord.

SACRIFICE

Does the individual make sacrifices for the kingdom of God.

Gal 6:17

From now on let no one trouble me, for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus. (NKJ)

THESE ARE JUST A FEW WAYS TO DISCERN GENUINENESS.