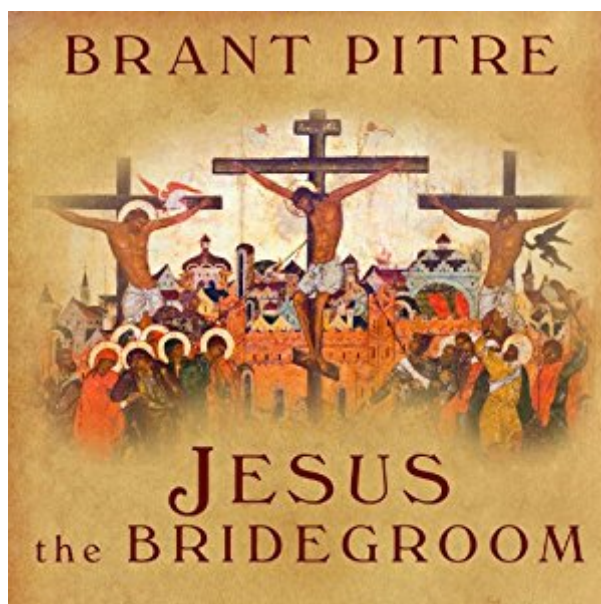


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# Jesus The Bridegroom: The Greatest Love Story Ever Told



## Synopsis

In *Jesus the Bridegroom*, Brant Pitre once again taps into the wells of Jewish Scripture and tradition, and unlocks the secrets of what is arguably the most well-known symbol of the Christian faith: The cross of Christ. In this thrilling exploration, Pitre shows how the suffering and death of Jesus was far more than a tragic Roman execution. Instead, the Passion of Christ was the fulfillment of ancient Jewish prophecies of a wedding, when the God of the universe would wed himself to humankind in an everlasting nuptial covenant. To be sure, most Christians are familiar with the Apostle Paul's teaching that Christ is the "Bridegroom" and the Church is the "Bride." But what does this really mean? And what would ever possess Paul to compare the death of Christ to the love of a husband for his wife? If you would have been at the Crucifixion, with Jesus hanging there dying, is that how you would have described it? How could a first-century Jew like Paul, who knew how brutal Roman crucifixions were, have ever compared the execution of Jesus to a wedding? And why does he refer to this as the "great mystery" (Ephesians 5:32)? As Pitre shows, the key to unlocking this mystery can be found by going back to Jewish Scripture and tradition and seeing the entire history of salvation, from Mount Sinai to Mount Calvary, as a divine love story between Creator and creature, between God and Israel, between Christ and his bride—a story that comes to its climax on the wood of a Roman cross. In *Jesus the Bridegroom*, dozens of familiar passages in the Bible - the Exodus, the Song of Songs, the Wedding at Cana, the Woman at the Well, the Last Supper, the Crucifixion, and even the Second Coming at the End of Time - are suddenly transformed before our eyes. Indeed, when seen in the light of Jewish Scripture and tradition, the life of Christ is nothing less than the greatest love story ever told.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

The themes in scripture that are woven into its tapestry from Genesis to Revelation, are, in part, what give the Bible both its authority and beauty. Years ago I read a work by the late J. Sidlow Baxter called *The Master Theme of the Bible* in which he traced the theme of the Lamb of God throughout the scripture. I remember being both deeply encouraged and filled with wonder at this singular thread that stretched the breadth of God's Word. I had that same experience reading *Jesus the Bridegroom* by Brant Pitre as he explores the theme of the God who wants to marry His people. Dr. Pitre is Professor of Sacred Scripture at Notre Dame Seminary, in New Orleans, Louisiana. With a Ph.D. in New Testament and ancient Judaism, Pitre's passion is to help people see the message of scripture through the lens of ancient Jewish eyes. He makes use of a wide range of extrabiblical Jewish writings (which he is careful to insist are not inspired) and quotes heavily from these Rabbinic sources to add color and insight to the New Testament. Pitre endeavors to present Yahweh not only as the creator but as the One who desires to be united to His creatures in an everlasting relationship that is so intimate, so permanent, so sacrificial, and so life-giving that it can only be described as a marriage between Creator and creatures, between God and human beings, between YHWH and Israel. Pitre traces this idea beginning with the divine wedding covenant at Mount Sinai, through the spiritual adulteries of Israel and into the moment when John the Baptist describes himself as the friend of the Bridegroom. (Jn. 3:29) The Bridegroom is Jesus, the Incarnate One, who has come to win the redemption of His bride. Pitre works through the accounts of the wedding at Cana, the woman at the well, the last supper and the passion of Christ, showing the remarkable connections between them, the prophets and the Jewish traditions. (The observations on the wedding at Cana and the Samaritan woman are more than worth the price of the book.) The story finds its culmination in the marriage supper of the Lamb and a vision of the glorious bride of Christ. Pitre's Roman Catholicism is quite evident in some of his application but there is a wealth of insight here that any Protestant would be rewarded by and I found a great deal of the language not often used in Protestant literature to be refreshing. Roman Catholic thought is most evident in the chapter called "The Bridal Mysteries" in which the subjects of baptism, Eucharist, marriage and virginity are discussed. Even though there is much that I would disagree with Pitre on, I found an enhancement of my own views of baptism and the Lord's

Supper while the material on marriage and virginity were outstanding. Pitre's illumination of marriage from Paul's letters and the Jewish sources is very instructive and interprets the union in a remarkable way. As we face the current onslaught of support for gay marriage, there is much here that explains why that aberration is the complete antithesis of God's design for marriage. Pitre doesn't mention gay marriage but he so elevates the mystery of marriage (Eph. 5:32) that it insists only on the union of man and woman. Furthermore, and I say this with compassion and understanding the sacrifice involved, the section on virginity or consecrated celibacy is a positive and holy direction for those Christians who struggle with same sex attraction. Pitre concludes the book with a meditation on the Samaritan women. He highlights Jesus, the bridegroom, waiting for this woman to ask her for a drink. Jesus' thirst was a prelude to the moment in which he would offer her the gift of living water. This quote from the Catechism of the Catholic Church is, frankly, one of the most lovely things I have ever read: "If you knew the gift of God! The wonder of prayer is revealed beside the well where we come seeking water: there, Christ comes to meet every human being. It is he who first seeks us and asks us for a drink. Jesus thirsts; his asking arises from the depths of God's desire for us. Whether we realize it or not, prayer is the encounter of God's thirst with ours. God thirsts that we may thirst for him. I know some of my more reformed friends will not be able to crawl out of their anti-catholic shells far enough to appreciate this but that would be their loss. The notion of prayer as an encounter between God's thirst and ours? That is priceless. Jesus is ever at the well, wooing his bride and inviting us to partake of the living water he alone can offer. Jeff Ling[...]

RUN, don't walk, to get this book and read it. Dr. Pitre has put together a fascinating synthesis of Biblical exegesis pointing to Jesus as the divine Bridegroom. While other authors have captured parts of this theme, most notably and recently in works focused on Pope John Paul II's Theology of the Body, Pitre comes at it with a very fresh angle - highlighting the distinctly Jewish roots of God as bridegroom and the chosen people (Church) as bride, and then discussing how Jesus and the New Testament entail the fulfillment of this marriage. In the OT, Pitre examines the Israelites at Mt. Sinai, the prophets, and the Song of Songs to illuminate how the Jewish scriptures point toward the marriage between God and his people. In the New Testament, Pitre unpacks what often seem obscure details of NT episodes - especially the parables of Christ, the meeting with the Samaritan woman at the well, the wedding feast of Cana, Paul's letter to the Ephesians, and Revelation. With a careful reading (and Jewish glasses) he shows how Jesus is truly the divine bridegroom and his

Church the bride in these varied Scriptural texts. What Dr. Pitre has said here is not new, but it has been neglected in mainstream Christianity (including most of the Catholic world). Dr. Pitre points out as much. The Church fathers, popes, and many other scholars have all taught this through the centuries. In "Jesus the Bridegroom," Dr. Pitre has wonderfully and accessibly re-wrapped the gift for us. It's the best "re-gift" you'll ever get.

Look at who has endorsed this book!!! Hahn, Archbishop Chaput, Sri, Fr. Barron, and because they ran out of room, Mike Aquilina is on the left fold of the dust jacket! Those of us familiar with the scholarship of Dr. Brant Pitre know how he brings a wealth of knowledge of the "Jewish Roots" of Christianity to all of his teachings and writings and it is not surprising that these well known clergymen and bible scholars lined up to tell us why we need to read this book. Pitre shows us what it really means to have a "personal relationship" with Jesus Christ as Lord, Savior, and "Bridegroom". We learn how the Mystery of the Crucifixion is Jesus' wedding day, what we are to make of The Song of Solomon, why Jesus is "The Bridegroom" and why the Church is "The New Bride", and we also are shown how the 7 Sacraments are all, in their own way, "Nuptial" Mysteries, and much more. A truly awesome gift to the People of God and to the individual to take to private meditation and contemplation in the spirit of the "spousal prayer" of St. Teresa of Avila and St. John of the Cross - the Carmelite spiritual masters and Doctors of the Church. I strongly recommend visiting Dr. Pitre's website and checking out all of his CD sets which present many of his shorter bible studies as well as many of his course length topics.

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