

ABSTRACT  
“HEARING THE VOICE OF THE BRIDEGROOM”:  
A JOHANNINE NUPTIAL CHRISTOLOGY  
FOR THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY

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This study traces the nuptial themes and allusions throughout the Fourth Gospel so as to identify and explicate an implicit nuptial Christology, made explicit only in John 3:29. The investigation seeks to honor the concerns of feminist scholars about the use of nuptial imagery while elaborating a Johannine nuptial Christology that acknowledges potential issues, upholds a positive view of women, and yet retains the core scriptural metaphor. The project has two main components: (1) an exegetical-historical component arguing for the presence of nuptial Christology in the Fourth Gospel while drawing on Revelation and the work of Augustine and Ephrem the Syrian, and (2) an ethical component responding to the concerns of various feminist scholars regarding the use of nuptial Christology.

In addition to John 3:29, nuptial themes have historically been identified to varying extents in John 2:1–12; 4:4–42; 11:1–12:8; 19:25–27; and 20:11–18. Each of these pericopae, including John 3:29 and excepting John 19:25–27, are addressed in separate chapters. The interdisciplinary investigation works at the nexus of four methods: biblical criticism, reception history, feminist ideological criticism, and theological interpretation. Each chapter incorporates exegesis, assessment of relevant passages from Revelation, integration of early Church reception, and engagement with contemporary feminist concerns.

Ultimately, the study maintains that there is a nuptial Christology to be found in the Fourth Gospel that, when interpreted rightly, affirms women’s agency, dignity, active participation in Jesus’s ministry, and equality with men.