

Revelation
A Wednesday Night Bible Study

Lesson #58
11/14/2007
Wedding Bells In Heaven
19:1-11

God signaled a transition time of great significance in the first verse of Chapter nineteen by His use of “**meta tauta,**” “**and after these things.**” God also, for the first and only time in the New Testament, used the majestic Old Testament praise-word “**Alleluia**” to remind us of the special relationship which exists between Israel of the Old Testament and the events of the Tribulation Period as well as those being introduced in Chapter nineteen.

For thirteen chapters we have studied the events of the **Tribulation Period**, that seven-year period of time which has two purposes: 1) God judging and punishing His enemies, and 2) God chastening and disciplining His chosen people, Israel. Israel had an important role in the **Tribulation Period**, but the church was not here on earth and, therefore, not involved in what was happening. We have not seen it or read about it for thirteen chapters because, before this **Tribulation Period** of judgment and chastening could begin, the Lord removed His body, the church, from the earth by rapturing it up into His presence.

However, in Chapter nineteen, the church reappears, but this time it is not called “**the church,**” but rather “**the bride of Christ.**” God presents “**the marriage supper of the Lamb,**” an event so anticipated and glorious that it is impossible for us to fully comprehend all that is connected to it. Though we are extremely limited in our inabilities to adequately understand and appreciate the majesty of what is before us, God, who “**declares the end from the beginning ... the things that are not yet done**” (Isa 46:10), has given us some parabolic visual pictures to aid us. As we proceed to examine the magnificent events associated with “**the marriage supper of the Lamb**” which God describes to us, we shall attempt to identify these pictures God has given to us. Particularly those found in the Old Testament, presented in the Jewish marriage customs.

The instructions God gave to Israel about how they were to live often contained prophetic significance, picturing things in the future. As we read about “**the marriage supper of the Lamb**” we will discover some of the rich symbolism God built into the Jewish customs regarding marriage which incorporated the following ingredients:

The betrothal: A betrothal was arranged by the parents long before the actual wedding. It involved a contract effected by the payment of a dowry or earnest payment made by the bride’s parents. This contract carried the legal significance that from this point forward the bride and groom were legally bound to each other and were to remain chaste and faithful to each other as if they were married.

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The wedding and wedding supper: At the appointed time, the groom, accompanied by his friends, would set forth from his home to her home to claim his bride. Though the date would be set in advance, the precise day or time would not be known, thus, as the day approached, it was very important for the bride and her friends to prepare themselves and be ever vigilant and ready to greet the groom. If the friends of the bride were ready they would accompany the bride to the wedding supper or feast which was a sumptuous occasion, paid for by the father of the groom, and might last as long as a week or more at the home of the groom's father.

These are the two primary events pictured in the Jewish marriage, which include many specific details and are prophetic pictures of what is in this passage. There are many scriptural references which God sets before us in His Word pertaining to these things, some of which we shall point out as we go through the passage.

The participants in the events surrounding **“the marriage supper of the Lamb”** include:

- (1) the heavenly host (verse 1),
- (2) **“the Lamb,” who is Christ and the focus of the events** (verses 7, 11,12,13),
- (3) **Lord God omnipotent**, God the Father (vs. 6)
- (3) the wife of the Lamb, the bride, the raptured church (verses 7 & 8),
- (4) and the guests or **“called ones”** who are Old Testament believers and martyred believers saved during the Tribulation Period (verse 9).

The first six verses of Chapter nineteen contain a song of celebration in anticipation of this great event and has four stanzas of praise to the Lord, each indicated by the word **“Alleluia:”**

Redemption	vs. 1
Retribution	vv. 2-3
Relationships	vs. 4
Reign of Lord God Almighty	vv. 5-6

“Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come” (vs. 7) corresponds to the time in the Jewish tradition when the time for the wedding feast has arrived. This would indicate that the betrothal has already taken place.

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The bride is the church, the body of Christ, born at Pentecost, so we must go to the New Testament to find the fulfillment of some aspects of the prophetic picture.

Though some identify the Old Testament saints, as well as the New Testament church, as the bride of Christ, this view is incorrect. There are many major distinctions that be could noted, but we will mention only a few:

- 1) While Israel was often referred to in the Old Testament as God's wife, it was always to picture her unfaithfulness and rejection of Him so that she could prostitute herself with other gods (Jer. 3:1,14,20; Isa. 54:1-17; Eze. 16:1-59; Hosea 2:1-23).
- 2) The church was often referred to in the New Testament as "the bride of Christ" (2 Cor. 11:2; Eph. 5:25-32).
- 3) Israel goes through the Tribulation Period to experience God's judgment and chastisement (Jer. 30:6).
- 4) The church is raptured, caught up away from this earth to meet the Lord in the air, before the Tribulation Period begins (2 Thess. 4:15-17). The church is not appointed to go through this day of God's wrath (2 Thess. 5:9) because Christ has taken all of the charges against the believer and nailed them to the cross (Col. 2:14). Therefore the believer is not under any condemnation (Rom. 8:1-4) because Christ has fulfilled all of the requirements of the law for us.

More distinctions could be made, but this is not the place to study them.

When John is told to write "Blessed are they who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb" we have before us another beatitude, the fourth of the seven great beatitudes found in the Revelation of Jesus Christ for the reader and participants.

"The marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready" tells us the moment for that which all of God's plans have pointed has now arrived. Everything in the history of our world has pointed towards this moment. Christ Jesus came to redeem a people to be His own. After He ascended back up into heaven to His throne, He sent His Holy Spirit to live in those who decided to give their lives to Him and to constitute His new body, the church, with these in whom He dwells.

While the members of his body are here on this earth each one will have been going through a process of preparation for this moment. They would have been cleansing themselves with **"the water of His Word"** and learned obedience to Him in each and everything. When they sinned, they would

Revelation
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Lesson #58
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Wedding Bells In Heaven
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have been reminded that He stood ready to cleanse them by His blood of the contamination of that sin as soon as they confessed it to Him (1 John 1:6-9). Submitting to His Lordship in making choices in life, they would have learned to allow Him to work out His will through them (Phi. 2:12-13).

When He caught them up to be with Him, He passed them through the fires of cleansing to burn away any and all things that were not appropriate for heaven (1 Cor. 3:13-15) and, though they were striving to sanctify themselves (1 John 3:3) none of them became fully what they desired to be. Thus, what they were not able to accomplish, He completes the work of sanctifying them and prepares them to be like Him (Rom. 8:28-30; 1 John 3:2-3).

“And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints.”

Please note some particulars contained in this verse.

“To her was granted,” is a way of saying that our Lord has given something to us. He has given to us the privilege of **“dressing ourselves properly for His presence.”** This is further qualified by the last words of the phrase, **“the righteousness of the saints,”** which should read **“the righteous acts of the saints.”** It simply means that our Lord gives us the opportunity, while we are here on this earth, to conform ourselves to be like Him. We do this by studying His Word to learn what pleases Him and then by choosing to do those things which please Him. Therefore, between the time we become His and the time He removes us from this life, either by rapture or by death, we can and should be preparing ourselves to be like Him. Paul wrote of this:

“Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead. Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

Revelation
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Lesson #58
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Wedding Bells In Heaven
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For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself” (Philippians 3:8-14,20-21).

When He says, “**And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God**” he refers to some guests who “**are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb.**” These are likely the Old Testament saints who have already been resurrected into the presence of the Lord in heaven. Likely included would also be those converted to Christ Jesus during the Tribulation Period, who have been martyred and resurrected into His presence.

“**And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me, See thou do it not: I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.**” John is overwhelmed. Though he has witnessed a number of awesome and majestic scenes in glory while receiving this revelation, nothing compares to this. Without thinking, he falls at the feet of the angel who has been communicating God’s message to him. It is likely the biggest mistake he ever made. Had he thought about it, he never would have done it. The angel responded quickly and with urgency in his voice: “*don’t do that or we’ll both be in trouble — you for worshipping me, and me for allowing you to do so.*”

This is one of the strongest verifications of the deity of Jesus Christ that can be found in the Scriptures. Notice carefully what the angel said, “**worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.**” The angel, who, of course, was fully aware of the holiness of God, is telling John to worship Jesus.

Jesus Christ is God! Fully God! He is God in the flesh. He is God in heaven! To bow down before another, no matter who it is, to be an idolater!

In our next lesson we shall focus all of our thoughts upon the Lord Jesus Christ as He makes His appearance as King of Kings.