

4.10 - Marriage of the Lamb

Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready. (Rev. [19:7+](#))

To understand the marriage of the Lamb, it is helpful to review what Paul said concerning the role of the Jews in relation to the things of God:

For I could wish that I myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my countrymen according to the flesh, who are Israelites, to whom *pertain* the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the service *of God*, and the promises; of whom *are* the fathers and from whom, according to the flesh, Christ *came*, who is over all, *the* eternally blessed God. Amen. (Rom. [9:3-5](#))

Even after the rejection of their Messiah and His subsequent crucifixion, Paul emphasizes the Jewish aspects of all that God has done. Paul indicates that the Jews, as a nation, had the greater connection with God than the Gentiles because of all of the following:

1. The adoption of the nation of Israel by God.
2. [The Abiding Presence of God](#) dwelt in Israel's midst.
3. The covenants (Abrahamic, Mosaic, Land, Davidic, New) were given to Israel.
4. The Law of Moses was given to Israel.
5. The service of God in the [tabernacle](#) and the various [Temples](#) was Israel's.
6. The [OT](#) promises of restoration and blessing were to Israel.
7. The fathers of the faith (Abraham, Isaac, Jacob) were Jews.
8. Jesus Christ, according to the flesh, came in the line of the Jews.

Since all of Scripture, with the exception of the books written by Luke,¹ was written by Jews and Jesus was born in a Jewish lineage, it is not surprising to find that the marriage of the Lamb is patterned after a *Jewish wedding*. By becoming more familiar with Jewish wedding practices, we are in a better position to appreciate aspects of the marriage of the Lamb as taught in Scripture:

In order to fully comprehend what is happening in Revelation [19:6-9+](#), it is first necessary to understand the Jewish wedding system that was common in Jesus' day and was still used among Jews until the beginning of the twentieth century.²

4.10.1 - The Jewish Wedding Analogy

Although various sources describing the practice of Jewish marriage at the time of Christ differ in the details, there is general agreement concerning its major elements. Unlike Western marriage practices, the Jewish marriage has a greater degree of formalism involving numerous steps:

Jewish marriage included a number of steps: first, betrothal (which involved the prospective groom's traveling from his father's house to the home of the prospective bride,

paying the purchase price, and thus establishing the marriage covenant); second, the groom's returning to his father's house (which meant remaining separate from his bride for 12 months, during which time he prepared the living accommodations for his wife in his father's house); third, the groom's coming for his bride at a time not known exactly to her; fourth, his return with her to the groom's father's house to consummate the marriage and to celebrate the wedding feast for the next seven days (during which the bride remained closeted in her bridal chamber).³

First, the father of the groom made the arrangements for the marriage and paid the bride price. The timing of the arrangement varied. Sometimes it occurred when both children were small, and at other times it was a year before the marriage itself. Often the bride and groom did not even meet until their wedding day. The second step, which occurred a year or more after the first step, was the fetching of the bride. The bridegroom would go to the home of the bride in order to bring her to his home. In connection with this step, two other things should be noted. *First*, it was the father of the groom who determined the timing. *Second*, prior to the groom's leaving to fetch the bride, he must already have a place prepared for her as their abode. This was followed by the third step, the wedding ceremony, to which a few would be invited. Prior to the wedding ceremony, the bride underwent a ritual immersion for ritual cleansing. The fourth step, the marriage feast, would follow and could last for as many as seven days. Many more people would be invited to the feast than were to the marriage ceremony. In the Marriage of the Lamb all four of these steps of the Jewish wedding ceremony are evident.⁴

The major steps of the Jewish wedding analogy are summarized below with related Scriptures:

Steps in a Jewish Wedding		
Step	Description	Scriptures
Marriage Covenant	The father pays for the bride and establishes the marriage covenant.	Acts 20:28 ; 1Cor. 6:19-20 ; 11:25 Eph. 5:25-27
Bridal Chamber Prepared	The son returns to his father's house and prepares the bridal chamber.	John 6:62 ; 14:2 ; Acts 1:9-11
Bride Fetched	At a time determined by the father (Mat. 24:36), the groom fetches the bride to bring her to his father's house. "Although the bride was expecting her groom to come for her, she did not know the time of his coming. As a result, the groom's arrival was preceded by a shout, which forewarned the bride to be prepared for his coming." ⁵	John 14:3 ; 1Th. 4:13-18
Bride Cleansed	The bride undergoes ritual cleansing prior to the wedding ceremony.	1Cor. 3:12-15 ; Rev. 19:7-8+
Wedding Ceremony	The private wedding ceremony.	Rev. 19:7+

Consummation	In the privacy of the bridal chamber the bride and groom consummate the marriage.	Rev. 19:7+
Marriage Feast	The celebratory marriage feast to which many are invited.	Mat. 22:1-14 ; 25:1-13 ; Luke 12:36

At the time of our writing, the first step in the wedding has already taken place. The marriage covenant was established at the First Coming of Christ. Whenever a person places their faith in Jesus Christ, they enter into this covenant (the New Covenant) and become part of His bride. Since the ascension of Jesus following His resurrection, He has been at His Father's house preparing the bridal chamber:

Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions ([μοναί \[monai\]](#), dwelling places); if *it were* not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, *there* you may be also. (John [14:1-3](#))

As we discussed concerning the [Rapture](#), passages such as John [14:1-3](#) are of a completely different character from what is described in Revelation [19+](#) concerning the Second Coming. In John [14](#), Jesus indicates a heavenly destination for believers. He returns from His Father's house to fetch them and to bring them to heaven. There is an emphasis on intimacy: "that where I am, there you may be also" (John [14:3](#)). How different this is from the scene before us in this chapter (below)! Jesus will ride forth in warfare and vengeance with the armies of heaven. There will be immense bloodshed at His coming and His return is followed by the reign of the saints *on earth* (Rev. [20:4-6+](#)). It is irreconcilable differences such as these in various "coming passages" which tell us that His coming for the Church at the [Rapture](#) is a *different* coming than His Second Coming.⁶

In its description of the Second Coming, Revelation [19+](#) does not mention either a translation (rapture) of living believers (1Cor. [15:51-52](#)), or a resurrection of dead believers (cf. 1Th. [4:16](#)).⁷

At the time the events of John's vision actually take place—during the Tribulation prior to the Second Coming—the first *three* of the steps in the wedding ceremony will be complete: the bride has been fetched to the Father's house in the [Rapture](#) of the Church.

For an extended treatment of the analogy between Christ and the Church and Jewish marriage practices, see [Showers, [Maranatha, Our Lord Come](#), 164-169].

4.10.2 - Roles in the Wedding Party

When we interpret passages which touch on the subject of marriage, we must be careful to distinguish the different roles within the wedding party. There is a groom and a bride, but they are not alone in the marriage party. There are additional men and women who attend the wedding party. If we fail to appreciate these different roles, we confuse those *attending* the bride with the bride herself (e.g., Mat. [25:1-13](#)). Since the role of the bride and groom are fairly obvious, here we will mention some of the related members of the bridal party.

The OT describes several different roles in courtship and marriage. In the Song of Solomon, we find repeated mention of *virgins* who are not the bride (The Shulamite): “Because of the fragrance of your good ointments, Your name is ointment poured forth; therefore the virgins love you” (Sos. [1:3](#)). Even though the virgins are not the bride, they still love The Beloved (cf. Mat. [15:1-13](#)). The song also mentions *daughters of Jerusalem* who are friends of the Shulamite who also seek The Beloved (Sos. [2:7](#); [5:8](#); [6:1](#)). The Beloved has companions who desire to look upon The Shulamite (Sos. [5:1](#); [6:13](#); [8:13](#)). Even though the relationship is between The Shulamite and The Beloved, other persons on the sideline also express interest in the relationship between The Shulamite and The Beloved.

The psalmist records a kingly wedding which involves both the Queen (bride) and King (groom), but also includes her companions, called *virgins*: “Kings’ daughters *are* among Your honorable women; at Your right hand stands the queen in gold from Ophir. . . She shall be brought to the King in robes of many colors; the virgins, her companions who follow her shall be brought to You” (Ps. [45:9-14](#)). Not everyone at a wedding occupies the role of the groom or bride.

The [NT](#) also mentions relationships within the wedding party other than the bride and groom. When John the Baptist’s disciples come to him complaining about Jesus’ rise in popularity, John observes: “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. Therefore this joy of mine is fulfilled” (John [3:29](#)). From John’s response, we learn several important facts: (1) Christ is a bridegroom; (2) Christ has a bride (those who were coming to Him); (3) John is not of the bride, but is the *friend of the bridegroom*.⁸ Elsewhere, Jesus referred to his disciples as “friends of the bridegroom” (literally: *sons of the bride chamber*, Mat. [9:15](#); Mark [2:19](#); Luke [5:34](#)).

The differences among roles within the bridal party is most evident in the [parable](#) of the foolish virgins (Mat. [25:1-13](#)). When reading the parable, we need to ask two related questions: (1) is this parable about polygamy? (2) if not, where is the bride? Mention is made of ten virgins and one bridegroom. The virgins are not to be married—they *attend* the wedding party. Notably absent in the parable is any mention of the bride. And where do the wise virgins go? “And while they [the foolish virgins] went to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding; and the door was shut” (Mat. [25:10](#)). *Wedding* is γάμους [*gamous*] , plural, which generally denotes the *wedding feast*: “Josephus distinguishes in *Antiquities* 14, 467f between γάμος [*gamos*] =wedding [singular] and γάμοι [*gamoi*] =wedding celebration [plural]. But for ‘marriage’ he sometimes uses the singular, sometimes the plural.”⁹ These virgins are not waiting for the bridegroom in order *to get married*, but *to attend the wedding feast*.¹⁰ The groom already has a bride who is not mentioned in the parable. We believe these distinctions are significant and indicate that the coming of the groom for the virgins is at His Second Coming which follows upon the marriage of the Lamb described here. The virgins do not marry, but attend the marriage feast which follows. The context also supports this view:

This parable as well as the next one deals with the Jews in the tribulation period. This is seen from various facts. The context favors this view . . . The subject being discussed is the end time, the final years before the kingdom is established. At this time the church will be absent from the earth.¹¹

In summary, there are different roles within the wedding analogy found within Scripture. Not everyone who will be in the kingdom of God is the bride. This is evident from the distinctions found within Scripture. It is also evident because the marriage of the Lamb takes place in heaven

prior to Christ's Second Coming—when some saints are still on the earth below and many of the saints in heaven have not yet been resurrected to receive their glorified bodies.

Just as the Bridegroom comes not alone, but with attendants, companions, and a long train of rejoicing ones who make up his party, the whole of whom together are called the Bridegroom's coming, whilst, strictly speaking, there is a wide difference between him and those with him; so it is on the side of the Bride. She has her companions and attendants too,—“virgins which follow her.” They make up her company and train. In coming to wed her the Bridegroom comes also into near and close relation to them. To a blessed degree they share the Bride's honours. . . [but] the Bride has relations to the Bridegroom which belong to her alone.¹²

Having established that not all believers are the Lamb's bride, who is the bride?

4.10.3 - Israel Married to Jehovah

The nation Israel is unlikely to be the Lamb's bride because she has already been wed. God the Father is Israel's husband:¹³

“Return, O backsliding children,” says the Lord; “for **I am married to you**. I will take you, one from a city and two from a family, and I will bring you to Zion.” (Jer. [3:14](#)) [emphasis added]

“They say, ‘If a man divorces his wife, and she goes from him and becomes another man's, may he return to her again?’ Would not that land be greatly polluted? But **you have played the harlot with many lovers; yet return to Me**,” says the Lord. (Jer. [3:1](#)) [emphasis added]

Then I saw that for all the causes for which **backsliding Israel had committed adultery, I had put her away and given her a certificate of divorce**; yet her treacherous sister Judah did not fear, but went and played the harlot also. (Jer. [3:8](#)) [emphasis added]

Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah—not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, though **I was a husband to them**, says the Lord. But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. (Jer. [31:31-33](#)) [emphasis added]

Even though Israel proved to be an unfaithful wife which God put away by divorce, He promises to remain faithful to her in His relationship as husband. Moreover, in order to divorce her, she had to first be married.

Bring charges against your mother, bring charges; **For she is not My wife, nor am I her Husband!** Let her put away her harlotries from her sight, and her adulteries from between her breasts . . . (Hos. [2:2](#)) [emphasis added]

She will chase her lovers, but not overtake them; yes, she will seek them, but not find them. Then she will say, '**I will go and return to my first husband**, for then it was better for me than now.' (Hos. [2:7](#)) [emphasis added]

As unfaithful as Israel has been, God promises to stand by her. Their husband-wife relationship will be reestablished:

"And it shall be, in that day," says the Lord, "That **you will call Me 'My Husband,'** And no longer call Me 'My Master.' " (Hos. [2:16](#)) [emphasis added]

I will betroth you to Me forever; yes, I will betroth you to Me in righteousness and justice, in lovingkindness and mercy; I will betroth you to Me in faithfulness, and you shall know the Lord. (Hos. [2:19-20](#)) [emphasis added]

The LORD's accomplished purpose in Israel's chastening also will result in the reestablishment of her original husband-wife relationship to the LORD.¹⁴

The relationship between Israel and Jehovah is dramatically different than what the NT records concerning Christ and His bride. Perhaps the most significant difference is that the marriage of Jehovah to Israel occurred in time past, whereas the marriage of Christ with His bride has not yet taken place. This is the subject of the passage before us.

Israel in her land was the wife of Jehovah (Jer. [3:14-20](#); Isa. [54:1](#)), but the wife was divorced because of her iniquity. Israel, however, is to be reinstated in Jehovah's favour. But a divorced wife can never again be a virgin, and it is not a divorced wife but a virgin whom the Lord marries (Lev. [21:14](#)).¹⁵

4.10.4 - Jerusalem Married to God

The marriage of Israel to Jehovah is seen in promises of God concerning the city, Zion. In her restoration, God will rejoice over the city as a bridegroom rejoices over the bride:

For Zion's sake I will not hold My peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, . . . You shall also be a crown of glory in the hand of the LORD, and a royal diadem in the hand of your God. You shall no longer be termed Forsaken, nor shall your land any more be termed Desolate; but you shall be called Hephzibah [*My Delight is in Her*], and your land Beulah [*Married*]; for the LORD delights in you, and your land shall be married. For *as* a young man marries a virgin, so shall your sons marry you; and *as* the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so shall your God rejoice over you. (Isa. [62:1a](#), [3-5](#))

Thus says the Lord God to Jerusalem: . . . "When I passed by you again and looked upon you, indeed your time was the time of love; so I spread My wing over you and covered your nakedness. Yes, I swore an oath to you and entered into a covenant with you, and you became Mine," says the Lord God. (Eze. [16:1](#), [8](#))

"Sing, O barren, you *who* have not borne! Break forth into singing, and cry aloud, you *who* have not labored with child! For more *are* the children of the desolate¹⁶ than the children of the married woman," says the LORD. "For **your Maker is your husband, the**

LORD of hosts is His name; and your Redeemer is the Holy One of Israel; He is called the God of the whole earth. For the LORD has called you like a woman forsaken and grieved in spirit, like a youthful wife when you were refused,” says your God. “For a mere moment I have forsaken you, but with great mercies I will gather you. . . . O you afflicted one, tossed with tempest, *and* not comforted, behold, **I will lay your stones with colorful gems, and lay your foundations with sapphires. I will make your pinnacles of rubies, your gates of crystal, and all your walls of precious stones.** Indeed they shall surely assemble, *but* not because of Me. Whoever assembles against you shall fall for your sake.” (Isa. [54:1](#), [5-7](#), [11-12](#), [15](#)) [emphasis added]

It is in this sense that the New Jerusalem is also said to be the Lamb’s wife (Rev. [21:2+](#), [9+](#)). Although the marriage of the Lamb takes place in heaven prior to the Second Coming and the Millennial Kingdom, there is an aspect of the marriage involving the New Jerusalem which extends into the eternal state. This aspect is broader than the initial consummation in Revelation [19+](#) and likely involves the redeemed of all ages. The relationship of the New Jerusalem as the wife of the Lamb is founded on these OT promises which describe God in a marriage relationship with Jerusalem.

In the new heavens and the new earth, the bride concept will be expanded to include not only the church, but also all the redeemed of all ages as the New Jerusalem becomes the bridal city (Rev. [21:1-2+](#)).¹⁷

[The New Jerusalem] is called the Bride, because it embraces the Bride, and because it is the Bride’s everlasting home and residence. But for the very reason that it is the home and residence of the Lamb’s Wife, it must include her retinue, her companions, and her attendants, who share the glory with her, but who are not strictly the Bride herself.¹⁸

See commentary on [Revelation 21:9](#).

4.10.5 - Church Betrothed to Christ

Having seen that the relationship between Israel and God is set forth in terms of a consummated marriage followed by divorce and eventual restoration, we are in a position to examine passages which describe a marriage relationship involving Christ.

If one makes the Wife of Jehovah and the Bride of Messiah one and the same, he is faced with numerous contradictions because of the different descriptions given. Only when one sees two separate entities, Israel as the Wife of Jehovah and the Church as the Bride of the Messiah, do all such contradictions vanish.¹⁹

As we saw above, John the Baptist declared himself as the *friend of the bridegroom* (John [3:29](#)). Thus, he indicated that Jesus is a bridegroom and that he, John, was not part of the bride. In numerous other passages, Jesus referred to Himself as a bridegroom (Mat. [9:15](#); Mark [2:19](#); Luke [5:34](#)). Paul describes the relationship of the Corinthian church as being betrothed as a virgin to Christ: “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” (2Cor. [11:2](#)). When teaching of the freedom of the believer from the law, Paul uses the analogy of a woman whose first husband dies who then becomes free to marry another: “Therefore, my brethren, you also have

become dead to the law through the body of Christ, that you may be married to another—to Him who was raised from the dead, that we should bear fruit to God” (Rom. [7:4](#)). In his epistle to the Ephesians, Paul makes the analogy between a husband and wife and Christ and the Church (Eph. [5:24](#)). In the same way that husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies, so Christ loves believers: “For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones. ‘For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.’ This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church” (Eph. [5:30-32](#)). Paul is saying that in the same way believers are merged with Christ, as the body of Christ, so should husbands consider their wives. “[The Church] is both the body of Christ and the bride of Christ, as Eve was the body of Adam and also his bride.”²⁰ Some observe that none of these passages explicitly teach that the Church *is* the bride of Christ. They suggest that the marriage analogy used by these passages is only an instructional aid which is intended to teach relational truths and that the passages are not meant to establish the Church as the bride. While it may be true that the primary intent in these passages is teaching relational truths, this does not necessarily mean that the Holy Spirit chose the marriage analogy by chance. The sheer number of times where the wedding analogy appears is in itself considerable indication that more is afoot than mere analogy:

In the OT, God is the bridegroom of Israel (cf. Isa. [54:6](#); [62:5](#); Jer. [31:32](#); Eze. [16:7-14](#); Hos. [2:16](#), [19](#)), and in the NT, Christ is the bridegroom of the church (cf. 2Cor. [11:2](#); Eph. [5:25](#) ff.; Rev. [3:20+](#); [19:9+](#); [21:2+](#), [9+](#); [22:17+](#)). In the gospels, Christ is the bridegroom a number of times (cf. Mat. [9:15](#); Mark [2:19-20](#); Luke [5:34-35](#); John [3:29](#)) and parables about marriage occur in Mat. [22:2-14](#); [25:1-13](#); Luke [14:15-24](#).²¹

We believe that the bride/bridegroom analogy in the NT is more than a mere framework for the delivery of relational instruction, but also an indication of the identity of the bride. The bride of Christ consists of the Church—those who have been baptized into His body, the body of Christ. As such, they are “one flesh” with Him, which is the subject of the mystery which Paul related to the Ephesians (Eph. [5:32](#)). There is a unique sense in which the Church is *His*: “on this rock I will build **My church**” [emphasis added] (Mat. [16:18](#)).

That Abraham or any other Old Testament saint will form part of *the Body of Christ*, we cannot for a moment believe! The great mystery of the Church, His Body, committed to Paul in such a sense that he called himself *minister* thereof (Col. [1:24-27](#)), a ministry so very distinct, definite and exclusive as to call for the great passage of Ephesians [5:23](#), cannot be merely an opening up to the Old Testament saints of a calling, character and privileged which they possess and of which they did not know! That is unthinkable. No one was “baptized” into that one Body until Pentecost. When that Body, the Church, is presented by Christ to Himself, “a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing,” it will be composed only of the saints from Pentecost to the rapture.²²

Of whom is the bride composed? We answer unhesitatingly, of *all* saints embraced within these two epochs, Pentecost (Acts [2](#)) and the Translation (1Th. [4:17](#)). These two events respectively mark the commencement and the termination of the Church’s sojourn on earth.²³

Some may question why the church age believers should be granted the honor of being the bride, while believers from other ages are merely guests. But one may equally ask why God singled out Israel to be the covenant people. The only answer to both questions is that God sovereignly purposed that it be so (cf. Deu. [7:7-8](#)).²⁴

A typological hint as to the bride of the Lamb can also be found in a study of the book of Ruth. The story involves Naomi (a Jew), Ruth (a Gentile), and Boaz (the kinsman-redeemer, see commentary on [Revelation 5:1](#)). Through the sequence of events recorded in the book, Boaz (who represents the Messiah) takes Ruth as his Gentile bride (representing the Church) and Naomi (representing Israel) is restored to her land.

Another consideration when identifying the bride of the Lamb is the matter of resurrection. At the time of the marriage of the Lamb (Rev. [19:7+](#)), there is only one group of saints who have already been resurrected to receive their glorified bodies: the Church at the [Rapture](#) prior to the Tribulation. It would seem premature for other saints which have not yet been resurrected to be included in the marriage with the Lamb. Nor will they return with Him as part of the army of heaven (Rev. [19:14+](#)).

The difficulty of including Israel along with the church as part of the bride is a chronological one. OT saints and dead saints from the period of Daniel's seventieth week will rise in time for the Millennium (Dan. [12:1-2+](#)), but not in time to join Christ in His triumphal return (Rev. [19:14+](#)). It is also impossible for saints who die during the Millennium to be part of this company, because their resurrection will not come in time (Rev. [20:5-6+](#)). Yet it is incontrovertible that Israel will appear with the church in the New Jerusalem which is also Christ's bride. The city's twelve pillars and twelve foundations (Rev. [21:12+](#), [14+](#)) prove the presence of both distinctive groups.²⁵

Although they will be resurrected to participate in the wedding *feast* at the Millennial Kingdom (Isa. [26:19](#); Dan. [12:2+](#); Rev. [20:4+](#)), at the time of the marriage itself they are only soul and spirit. Because they were never joined to the body of Christ by the baptizing work of the Holy Spirit which began on the Day of Pentecost, they are not part of the marriage mystery "concerning Christ and the church" (Eph. [5:30-32](#)). See commentary on [Revelation 17:14](#).

Various identifications of the wife of the Lamb described in Rev. [19:7-8+](#) have included the redeemed of national Israel, the church, and Israel and the church. Portrayal of Israel as a faithless wife of the Lord in the OT is an obstacle to the first and third possibilities, as is the chronology of Israel's resurrection. The redeemed of Israel will not rise until after the Seventieth Week of Daniel (Dan. [12:1-2+](#)), so they will not be part of the bride at the time depicted in Revelation [19:7-8+](#), a time before the Second Advent (Rev. [19:11-16+](#)).²⁶

According to Daniel [12:1-3+](#) and Isaiah [26:19-21](#), . . . the resurrection of Israel and the Old Testament saints will not take place until the second advent of Christ. Revelation [20:4-6+](#) makes it equally clear that tribulation saints will not be resurrected until that time also. While it would be impossible to eliminate these groups from the place of observers, they can not be in the position of participants in the event itself.²⁷

4.10.6 - Israel, the Church, the New Jerusalem

As we have seen, the OT represents Israel as the wife of Jehovah. Although she has been unfaithful and divorced by her Husband, a time is coming when “all Israel will be saved” (Rom. [11:26](#)). At that time, Jehovah will take her back as His wife:

I will call them My people who were not My people, and her beloved, who was not beloved. And it shall come to pass in the place where it was said to them, “You are not my people.” There they shall be called sons of the living God. (Rom. [9:25-26](#) cf. Hos. [2:23](#); Hos. [1:10](#))²⁸

In the meantime, those who accept Messiah Jesus are baptized into His body (1Cor. [12:13](#)). In the same way that Eve was literally “one flesh” with Adam, having been taken from his side (Gen. [2:21-24](#)), so believers are joined into the spiritual body of Christ and betrothed to Him. During *Jacob’s Trouble and the Great Tribulation*, the wife of Jehovah is being purified on earth in preparation for her restoration during the Millennial Kingdom to follow. At the same time, the bride of Christ is in her bridal chamber, having been taken in the *Rapture* and wed to Him at the marriage of the Lamb.

Later, after the *Millennial Kingdom* has come to a close and a new heavens and new earth are created, the holy city, the New Jerusalem, is prepared by Jehovah as a bride adorned for her husband—the Lamb (Rev. [21:2+](#), [9+](#)). The long-unfulfilled promises of the restoration of Jerusalem, which found their initial fulfillment in the Millennial Kingdom (Isa. [62](#)), will come to final fruition in the New Jerusalem where all the redeemed of all ages are in union with God and the Lamb Who are its temple (Rev. [21:22+](#)). This is the ultimate consummation of all the redeemed. See *Temple of God*.

See commentary on *Revelation 19:7*, *Revelation 19:8*, and *Revelation 19:9*.

Notes

¹Some suggest even Luke was Jewish, although evidence seems to point to his Gentile identity.

²Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum, *The Footsteps of Messiah*, rev ed. (Tustin, CA: Ariel Ministries, 2003), 595.

³Charles C. Ryrie, *Come Quickly, Lord Jesus* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 1996), 67.

⁴Fruchtenbaum, *The Footsteps of Messiah*, 162-163.

⁵Renald E. Showers, *Maranatha, Our Lord Come* (Bellmawr, NJ: The Friends of Israel Gospel Ministry, 1995), 165.

⁶We see similar irreconcilable differences in OT passages concerning His ministry: He is to reign as king (Isa. [9:6-7](#)), but He is to die for the world (Isa. [53](#)). How can these both be true? The answer is found in two separate comings. And so it is with *Rapture* and Second Coming passages.

⁷John MacArthur, *Revelation 12-22 : The MacArthur New Testament Commentary* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 2000), Rev. [19:11](#).

⁸“John was martyred before the Church was formed, hence he comes in as one, perhaps the most honoured, of the guests at the marriage supper.”—Walter Scott, *Exposition of The Revelation* (London, England: Pickering & Inglis, n.d.), Rev. [19:9](#).

⁹Frederick William Danker and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 151.

¹⁰The KJV and NKJV have “wedding” in Mat. [22:1-14](#) and [25:1-13](#), whereas the NASB has “wedding feast.” The Greek word is γαμους [*gamous*] (plural) which generally indicates the wedding banquet. The plural form implies the banquet or celebration (as opposed to a smaller, potentially private ceremony)..

¹¹Stanley D. Toussaint, *Behold The King: A Study of Matthew* (Portland, OR: Multnomah Press, 1980), 283.

- ¹²J. A. Seiss, [*The Apocalypse: Lectures on the Book of Revelation*](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1966), 427.
- ¹³“Israel in captivity is prefigured as a wife (Isa. [54:5](#); [62:5](#) [Jerusalem]) put away for unfaithfulness, who is childless and desolate.”—Merrill F. Unger, [*Unger’s Commentary on the Old Testament*](#) (Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, 2002), Rev. 54:1.
- ¹⁴*Ibid.*, Hos. [2:15](#).
- ¹⁵Scott, [*Exposition of The Revelation*](#), Rev. [19:6](#).
- ¹⁶“Jerusalem.”—Scherman, ed., [*Tanach*](#) (New York, NY: Mesorah Publications, Ltd., 2001), Isa. [54:1](#).
- ¹⁷MacArthur, [*Revelation 12-22 : The MacArthur New Testament Commentary*](#), Rev. [19:7](#).
- ¹⁸Seiss, [*The Apocalypse: Lectures on the Book of Revelation*](#), 428.
- ¹⁹Fruchtenbaum, [*The Footsteps of Messiah*](#), 598.
- ²⁰Arno C. Gaebelein, [*The Revelation*](#) (Neptune, NJ: Loizeaux Brothers, 1961), 116.
- ²¹Robert L. Thomas, [*Revelation 8-22*](#) (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1995), Rev. [19:7](#).
- ²²William R. Newell, [*Revelation: Chapter by Chapter*](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1994,c1935), 297.
- ²³Scott, [*Exposition of The Revelation*](#), Rev. [19:6](#).
- ²⁴MacArthur, [*Revelation 12-22 : The MacArthur New Testament Commentary*](#), Rev. [19:7](#).
- ²⁵Thomas, [*Revelation 8-22*](#), Rev. [19:7](#).
- ²⁶R. L. Thomas, “Marriage Supper of the Lamb,” in Mal Couch, ed., [*Dictionary of Premillennial Theology*](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1996), 248.
- ²⁷J. Dwight Pentecost, [*Things to Come: A Study in Biblical Eschatology*](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1958), 226.
- ²⁸This passage in Romans is often misconstrued as denoting the *Gentiles*, but in the original context it speaks of the divorce and restitution of *Israel*—the very topic Paul is discussing. Although the principles involved can be used to point to the redemption of the Gentiles, that is an *application* of the passage, not its original meaning.