

IV. The Greatest Party

Revelation 19:5-9 Marriage Supper of the Lamb

Intro

At the beginning of January we started a series of messages on “What happens after you die?” What we have seen so far is that believers in Christ go to be with Him when they die. Jesus said, “*My Father’s house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and **take you to be with me** that you also may be where I am*” (John 14:2-3).

The second truth we have seen is that there is more than leaving our body behind and going to be with Christ. There is also a resurrection of the body. There will be a resurrection of the deceased believer’s body and also when Christ comes, those who are alive, will be raptured or taken suddenly to be with Him in heaven (1 Thess. 4:16-17).

The third truth we looked into was the Judgment Seat of Christ where believers’ motives, conduct and service will be examined and then awarded accordingly.

Today we will focus on a fourth truth about what happens after the Judgment Seat of Christ and the rewards that believers will receive (2 Cor. 5:10). It’s called the Marriage Supper of the Lamb or the greatest party for believers which will be hosted by Christ Himself.

The passage we will be looking at is found in Revelation 19:5-9. In his vision the Apostle John saw and heard the heavenly multitudes praising God because the wedding feast of the Lamb—literally the “marriage supper”—was about to begin. The concept of the marriage supper is better understood in light of the wedding customs in biblical times.

Custom of the Wedding

In Biblical times when a couple was to be married they were three stages or periods they had to go through. Here was the custom:

1/ Betrothal Stage was a marriage contract that was agreed upon between the parents of the bride and the bridegroom, and the parents of the bride would pay a dowry to the bridegroom or his parents. Also this would give the groom time to work and prepare the home where they would eventually live and it could last up to a year. The betrothal period would be like the engagement when a man proposes marriage to the woman and gives her a ring. This period was the one Joseph and Mary were in when she was found to be with child (Matthew 1:18).

2/ Presentation Stage usually occurred a year later, when the bridegroom, accompanied by his male friends, would go to the house of the bride at midnight with a torchlight parade through the streets. The bride would know this was going to take place, and so would be ready with her maidens, and they would join the parade that would end up at the bridegroom’s home. This was illustrated in the parable of the 10 virgins in Matthew 25:1-13.

3/ Ceremony & Supper Stage was when the bridegroom and bride would exchange their vows and the marriage supper was celebrated. The marriage celebration could go on for a week. This final stage was when the married couple would finally live together as husband and wife.

The Analogy of the Wedding

What John's vision in Revelation pictures is the wedding feast of the Lamb (Jesus Christ) and His Bride (the Church) in the third stage, the implication being that the first two stages have already taken place.

The first stage, the betrothal, happened on earth when each believer, placed his or her faith in Christ. The dowry paid would be the shed blood of Christ on the cross on behalf of every believer. Now the Church would belong to Christ in the sense of betrothal and, like the wise virgins in the parable (Matt. 25), all would be watching and waiting for the appearance of the Bridegroom or Christ.

The second stage symbolizes the Rapture of the Church when Christ comes to claim His bride and take her to the Father's house.

The third stage is when the marriage supper then follows and is the final step where the Bride or Church will always be with Christ.

The Imagery of the Wedding

The Bible uses the imagery of a wedding to depict Christ's relationship with His church. Paul wrote about the betrothal of the church to Christ. He said, *"I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy. I promised you to one husband, to Christ, so that I might present you as a pure virgin to Him"* (2 Cor. 11:2).

Paul describes the church's presentation in Ephesians 5:25-27: *"Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless."* That presentation will take place at the Rapture. The Rapture signals the time when the Bridegroom, Christ (Matt. 9:15; John 3:28-29), takes His bride to His Father's house (John 14:2-3).

There are two main events which will occur after the Church is raptured to Christ, first will be the Judgment Seat of Christ and the second will be the great Banquet Feast when all believers will be united with Christ. The figures of a bridegroom and a bride in reference to Christ and His Church are frequently used in the New Testament. In many of Christ's parables He spoke of marriage and marriage suppers:

- Matthew 22:1-14 The Parable Of The Wedding Banquet
- Matthew 25:1-13 The Parable Of The Ten Virgins
- Luke 14:15-25 The Parable Of The Great Banquet

Observations on Revelation 19:7-9

1/ The opening of the Ceremony. The opening of this great event will be one of praise and worship. In Rev. 19:7 we read, *"Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory"*. There will be joy, music, and celebration as believers enter this great feast. It will be the most glorious and memorable celebration. Those in attendance will be greatly blessing!

2/ Believers of all ages will attend. In Matthew 8:11 Jesus said, *"I say to you that many will come from the east and the west, and will take their places at the feast with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven."* We are going to fellowship with all believers through the ages! Imagine the stories that will be told and shared!

3/ Presentation of the Bride: Rev. 19:8 says that *"Fine linen, bright and clean, was given her to wear." (Fine linen stands for the righteous acts of the saints.)* Those who have overcome will be dressed in white (Rev. 3:5). The Church or Bride will be before Christ, perfect and holy (Eph. 5:27).

This could only be possible if the church has completed her examination at the Judgment Seat of Christ. Therefore, the marriage of the Lamb would be prior to the physical return of Christ in Revelation 19:11-21.

This marriage feast is not to congratulate the Bride but to glorify Christ. The church will be joined with Christ never to be separated.

4/ Celebration of the Lord's Supper. We read in Rev. 19:9 *'Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb!'* When Jesus served the communion meal to His disciples, at the end of that meal He said to them, *"I tell you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it anew with you in my Father's kingdom."* Jesus was referring to this moment when all believers would be with Him at the marriage supper of the Lamb.

Conclusion

In a healthy and true marriage there must be at least four traits which must also be in the relationship between the believer and Christ.

1/ There must be love.

The pure love between a husband and a wife is the most beautiful and precious love. But with Christ it will be absolute pure and holy love. As believers our hearts will swell with admiration for what Christ has done for us and how much He loves us, that He laid down His life for us. His love is displayed most clearly at the cross. *"But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions"* (Eph. 2:4-5).

2/ There must be intimacy.

Here we are talking about intimate communion and fellowship. The need for companionship, that you are never alone. Trust is at the heart of intimacy. The more we trust someone, the closer we are drawn to that person. Scripture shows us that God is intimate with those who trust him. It will be a complete relationship of absolute trust and intimacy.

3/ There must be joy.

I think the greatest joy is the joy of loving and being loved. It's the joy of being in each other's presence. On that day believers will be rejoicing and their hearts filled with gladness that will never end. It was this fact that Jesus endured the cross. *"For the joy that was set before him [he] endured the cross"* (Hebrews 12:2). What joy? The joy of marriage to his bride, the church. The joy of presenting the church to himself in blood-bought splendor.

4/ There must be faithfulness.

No marriage can last without fidelity. There will be total commitment and trust in our relationship with Christ. At that time when all the believers will be celebrating the marriage supper of the Lamb, it will be a sacred union that will be forever.

1 Thess. 4:17-18, *"...And so we will be with the Lord forever. Therefore encourage one another with these words."*