

THE MARRIAGE OF THE LAMB

Tom's Perspectives
by Thomas Ice

"Let us rejoice and be glad and give the glory to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb has come and His bride has made herself ready." And it was given to her to clothe herself in fine linen, bright and clean; for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints. And he said to me, "Write, 'Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.'" And he said to me, "These are true words of God."

—Revelation 19:7–9

Recently at a prophecy conference I was asked if there was a difference in the Bible between the marriage of the bride (the church) to the Lamb and the marriage supper of the Lamb. I answered that I believe that Scripture indicates that there is a difference in these things and that they are two events that will take place at two different times in history. Let me show you why I think this way.

THE MARRIAGE OF THE LAMB

According to Revelation 19:7, the bride, (which is made up of the corporate and collected members throughout the church age taken to heaven at the rapture), makes herself ready for an impending event. How is the bride or the church made ready? She is made ready by clothing "herself in the fine linen bright and clean," which is said to be "the righteous acts of the saints." This statement means that by this point in history (right before the second coming), the sum total of the bride, the body of Christ, is in heaven and has already gone through the bema judgment where church age believers are to be evaluated for their faithfulness to Christ during this present age (Rom. 14:10; 2 Cor. 5:10). The result of going through the judgment seat of Christ results in the bride being given fine linen that Revelation 19:8 says, "is the righteous acts of the saints." This is how "His bride has made herself ready." Ready for what? She has made herself ready for the marriage of the Lamb. Thus, within the framework of the symbolism being used in this passage, it means that the marriage (marriage ceremony) takes place right before the second coming.

Later, Revelation 19:14 says, "And the armies which are in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, were following Him on white horses." Thus, having been newly married to the Lamb, the bride begins her role in history of reigning at the right hand of Christ (Rev. 3:21) by accompanying her new husband in the heavenly ascent from heaven on white horses in order to participate in the judgment of Armageddon at the second advent. Arnold Fruchtenbaum further explains as follows:

The wedding announcement will be made (v. 6) and the Bride will finally be made ready (v. 7). The reason the Bride will now be fully ready for the marriage ceremony is because she will have her entire bridal gown on (v. 8). . . this also shows that the marriage ceremony takes place after the Judgment Seat of the Messiah, when the saints are rewarded for their deeds on earth (1 Cor. 3:10–15). . . . This corresponds to the ritual cleansing of the Jewish

wedding system. The ones present at the marriage ceremony are the “few,” that is, only those in Heaven at that time.¹

THE MARRIAGE SUPPER

It is at this point that many Christians today often confuse the marriage of the Lamb with the marriage supper of the Lamb. But they are two separate events that occur at two different times in history. Revelation 19:9 says, “Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.” This passage clearly has a forward look anticipating a future time. It cannot refer to anyone in heaven since the church (the bride) is the only redeemed entity in heaven. However, after the second coming when believers from other ages will be resurrected (Dan. 12:2) along with tribulation saints, both mortal and resurrected ones (Rev. 20:4), these will be the invited guest who will be guests at this celebration supper. I believe that the marriage supper will be during the first part of the millennial reign of Christ. Fruchtenbaum says:

Hence, the “many” who are bidden to attend the marriage feast on earth are all the Old Testament saints and the Tribulation saints resurrected after the Second Coming. While the marriage ceremony will take place in Heaven just before the Second Coming, the marriage feast will take place on earth after the Second Coming. In fact, it would seem that the marriage feast is what begins the Millennium or the Messianic Kingdom; the Church’s co-reigning with the Messiah will start with a tremendous marriage feast.²

There are some New Testament passages that speak of Christ eating and banqueting in the kingdom are in my opinion references to the celebration related to the marriage supper of the Lamb. What are some of these passages which strongly imply that the celebration of the marriage supper commences in the millennial kingdom?

MATTHEW 8:11

This passage says, “And I say to you, that many shall come from east and west, and recline at the table with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven.” Here is a picture of the redeemed of the ages (from Adam to John the Baptist) sitting down with Christ in the kingdom and enjoying a meal together. These are likely the invited guest that we see spoken of in Revelation 19:9, since they are redeemed human beings from the ages who are not part of the church, the Bride of Christ. In this way there will be guests at the marriage supper of the Lamb who will be able to celebrate the marriage of the second person of the Trinity to His bride—the church.

LUKE 13:28–29

The statements made by Jesus in this passage have some parallels to the things He said in Matthew 8:11, but there are also some differences. It says, “There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth there when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, but yourselves being cast out. And they will come from east and west, and from north and south, and will recline at the table in the kingdom of God.” This is in the context of Christ rebuking the Jewish leaders of His day who were advocating rejection of the Messiahship of Jesus to the nation. The leaders of Israel at this time thought that they were in league with Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and the prophets, when in reality they were opposed their message by not recognizing Jesus as their long promised Messiah. Therefore, others will come from the

four-corners of the world and experience the fellowship of the kingdom. This dining with the Messiah will likely commence with the celebration that will take place at the marriage supper of the Lamb. Like in Matthew 8:11, these others are the invited guests mentioned in Revelation 19:9.

LUKE 22:16–18, 29–30

This is an important passage in relation to the marriage supper of the Lamb. We read in Luke 22:16–18 the following: “for I say to you, I shall never again eat it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God. And when He had taken a cup and given thanks, He said, “Take this and share it among yourselves; for I say to you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine from now on until the kingdom of God comes.” This is called the Lord’s Supper, which Jesus inaugurated for the soon to be born church to practice until His return to get His bride. Christ’s promise not to eat or drink again until He does it when the kingdom comes, means that He will not be celebrating His marriage supper in heaven before He descends at His second coming with His bride. Here He says the next time he eats and drinks will be at the coming of the kingdom, which will start at the beginning of the thousand years of His reign upon earth.

The above stated idea is reinforced at the end of the Luke 22 passage when Christ says the following in verses 29 and 30: “and just as My Father has granted Me a kingdom, I grant you that you may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom, and you will sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.” Once again, Jesus speaks of eating and drinking during the kingdom. This is the time when we will commence personal fellowship with our Saviour. Thus, it follows that this will be the time when the marriage supper of the Lamb, celebrating with the various redeemed of the ages Christ’s taking of a bride.

When the two parts of Luke 22 are combined it supports the notion that the marriage supper of the Lamb, mentioned specifically in Revelation 19:9 will take place during the millennial kingdom time frame. Matthew 26:29 is a parallel passage to Luke 22 and says, “But I say to you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father’s kingdom.”

PARABLE OF THE WEDDING FEAST

Matthew 22:1–14 does not teach about a supper or feast in the kingdom, but this parable does picture a wedding feast (verse 4) similar to what most likely will take place at the beginning of the millennial kingdom when the Father’s Son celebrates the marriage supper of the Lamb. Thomas Figart explains the purpose how this parable pictures the marriage supper of the Lamb when he says:

At first glance it may seem inappropriate to refer to the “*kingdom of heaven*” as a marriage feast for the son (Christ) of the king (the Father) since the Church had not even begun. Indeed, how could Christ be presented to Israel in this royal fashion before His death? But when the parable is take as a whole, it can be seen as including the rejection of the Son, the destruction of Jerusalem and the judgment of unbelievers at the return of Christ to the earth. . . . The fact is the Jews had already rejected Him by the time this parable was given, and it is His way of showing some of the events which pertain to the succeeding years, even up to and including His return to earth.³

Thus, this parable is a picture of the wedding feast or supper that will take place in the kingdom, but many of those who thought they would be there (non-elect Israel) will be absent. Likewise, many who were thought to have not even been invited will show up as legitimate guests at this important event in history. This is why it says in Revelation 19:9, "Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb."

CONCLUSION

Though the marriage of the Lamb to His bride (the church) and the marriage supper of the Lamb are closely related, they are separate events, just as the wedding ceremony and the wedding reception of our day are separate events. In fact, these two events are often held at two different locations, just as the marriage of the Lamb will be in heaven right before the second coming (Rev. 19), while the marriage supper of the Lamb will commence with the beginning of the millennium. Perhaps some are confused and fail to make these distinctions because the word marriage is used to refer to both events. By comparing Scripture with Scripture and distinguishing the things that differ, it appears clear that they are two separate events. The most important thing for anyone to consider is whether they will be invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb. I hear there are going to be some interesting guests there. Make sure you are one of them by trusting Christ's gift of salvation through simple faith in Him and His gracious work on the cross that paid for the sins of all those who believe. Maranatha!

ENDNOTES

¹ Arnold Fruchtenbaum, *The Footsteps of the Messiah: A Study of the Sequence of Prophetic Events*, Revised Edition (Tustin, CA: Ariel Ministries, 2003), p. 597.

² Fruchtenbaum, *Footsteps*, p. 597.

³ Thomas O. Figart, *The King of The Kingdom of Heaven: A Verse by Verse Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew* (Lancaster, PA: Eden Press, 1999), p. 402.