

The Marriage Supper of the Lamb

Studies in Revelation

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Bible Text: Revelation 19:1-9; Ephesians 5:24-33

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I want to look at the 19th chapter of the Book of Revelation. We concluded last week the fall of Babylon and the great words we have there in the latter part of the 18th chapter.

Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets; for God hath avenged you on her. And a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all. And the voice of harpers, and musicians, and of pipers, and trumpeters, shall be heard no more at all in thee; and no craftsman, of whatsoever craft he be, shall be found any more in thee; and the sound of a millstone shall be heard no more at all in thee; And the light of a candle shall shine no more at all in thee; and the voice of the bridegroom and of the bride shall be heard no more at all in thee: for thy merchants were the great men of the earth; for by thy sorceries were all nations deceived. And in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth.¹

We have noted that this great city, Babylon, here refers to false religious orders of the world. Some of them are non Christian. There are various religions in the world. All of them are not Christian religions, but all of them come under the heading here of this great Babylon. It is understood by many of the old writers and commentators that it refers to Rome, Papal Rome, and Roman Catholicism. Indeed, Roman Catholicism is a mixture of paganism and Christianity and that, as such, typifies all of the false religions of the world. I do not believe that the pope is the antichrist, but he is antichrist. That religious system is anti God in every aspect.

Whenever you begin to read and study Catholicism your stomach becomes nauseated. Think that there are millions of people throughout the world who are deceived by this false doctrine.

This week my wife and I were in Biloxi and we were sitting at the motel restaurant, and

¹ Revelation 18:20-24.

we talked with a couple from over in Georgia, a nice couple, pleasant people. We talked some about families and they informed us that they were Catholics.

I just thought as they were talking, here were two well educated people. They spoke about the various family members and some of their relatives were church officers and I understood what they were saying. One of their relatives was a deacon in a Catholic church. That is a very elevated position, of course, and they had a long history of being of that order.

Usually when I am talking to people, if I possibly can, I will try to bring in a witness about Christ. But all that I was able to say to them was, “Well, I will tell you what I tell a lot of people and it is true. It is not so much important where you go to church, as who you know, that you know Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior.”

They gave agreement to what I said and I just thought I hope the Holy Spirit of God will take my words and bring them to real, true understanding. I also thought really if I wanted to push the point farther, I would hand them my New Testament that I had in my pocket and tell them to “Read this, because evidently you never read the New Testament, for if you would read a New Testament it would very clearly show you that the doctrines that the Pope advocates and your church teaches are not at all according to the Scriptures.” But I was kind and did not do that.

Certainly it is true that the false religions of the world will not stand up to the light of examination by the word of God. We have neither reservation nor hesitation to say that. The term “sola scriptura” is a term that was advocated and picked up in the Reformation movement. A lot of the reformed churches use that as a term to describe their order. Yet I will say that they are not abiding by “sola scriptura” because they hold much to the doctrines and teachings of Catholicism from which they have their origins. The very form of church government, the form of church ordinances, sacraments, church hierarchy, all of those things have their roots and origin in Catholicism which is, again, a mixture of paganism and so-called Christianity.

So Babylon is not just Catholicism. It is the world’s religious system which is all anti-Christ, anti-God. Regardless of how sincere or devout they may be, all religions do not lead to heaven. Christ said: “I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.”²

Only in Christ is there eternal life. Only in Christ can we know the truth. Only in Christ can we have access to heaven’s glory. So Babylon, that system that is anti-God, in whose streets have been filled with the blood of God’s people, not just Rome, that is true; not just Jerusalem, that is true. But all throughout the world the blood of the saints of God has flown, being shed by the various religious orders and systems. Some of them even go by the name of Christ. And that is exactly what the Lord warned his disciples when he sent them out. He said, “Some will persecute you and in so doing they will believe that

² John 14:6.

they are doing God's business." That has been true of the religious persecution that has gone on throughout the world since time began.

So Babylon is fallen. In her was found the blood of prophets and of saints and all that were slain upon the earth. God's judgment is sure and certain. And so we now come to the 19th chapter. Here is an event that I don't think is next in order.

"And after these things I heard..."³

This is, indeed, the language of the first verse here, but I don't see it as being in a chronological order. You recall that we spoken about the book of Revelation as being synchronous and that it has events repeating itself over and over again and there is a cycle to them. And so this is an event, I believe, that is toward the latter end of time. Not necessarily at the end of time, but after time. When it takes place is not so important, although it has some significance. As we would understand it to be after Christ has put down all of his enemies. It is after the resurrection of the saints.

Now that is, indeed, a very hard obstacle for those who are called preterists to have to deal with, when they say that all of the book of Revelation is history. To think that what we are looking at here and what we are reading and what we have read in the book of Revelation has already occurred, does not make any sense at all to an honest student of the Bible. It is simply that people would force their interpretation and suppress it down into a period of time, that they can say "All of this happened before 70 or by 70 AD". Impossible!

So it is at the end of time when these events are happening. Here is a very tremendous event. I see it as something that is at the height of the very purpose of God. Indeed, God has purposed to have a people. He has chosen his people from before the foundation of the world. Our names have been written in the Lamb's book of life. Our Savior makes mention of that in the 17th chapter of the gospel of John. When he is speaking there and praying to the Father, He speaks about the people that the Father had given him.

"... thine they were, and thou gavest them me."⁴

Now they were the Father's. They were in the eternal covenant. All of God's elect people were in the eternal covenant before the foundation of the world. Ephesians one and four says that, "He has chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be before Him holy and without blame. And 2 Timothy chapter 1:9 says:

"Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began."⁵

³ Revelation 19:1.

⁴ John 17:6.

⁵ 2 Timothy 1:9.

Indeed, it has been the will and purpose of God that He would have a people chosen in Christ to be heirs of eternal life. It is these people, I believe, that Jesus Christ came to die for.

“...and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.”⁶

They are the sheep of God for whom the good shepherd laid down his life.

Out of all of the people of the elect, there are a people, I believe, referred to as being the Bride of Christ. They are composed of those who are in New Testament Baptist churches since the Lord established His Church.

Now there is a great deal of difference in theological circles about the subject of the church. The vast majority of preachers or theologians today hold to what we refer to as being the universal, invisible Church. You here are very well aware that we do not hold to that position and you don't agree with it either or you would not be here. But we understand that the word 'church' means, as it is set forth in all Greek lexicons, “a local called out assembly.” It was a term that was well known in the days of our Savior. And we, being “sola scriptura”, and believing, as Baptists, in verbal inspiration—that every word that God used in the original manuscripts were words that he had chosen and ordained to use to express his very mind to mortal beings as much as is possible.

Of course, we understand and accept the fact that you cannot perfectly know the mind of God. God was really under some limitations—not that God is limited, but we are limited—and so the Word of God given to us by the prophets, the Word of God given to us by Christ, the Word of God given to us by the apostles, that Word is the very expression of the mind of God to us and it is God's mind to us contained here in the Word. And so Christ said:

“...upon this rock I will build my *ἐκκλησία* (ek-klay-see'-ah)”⁷ “my called out assembly” knowing very well that that word was used commonly, coming from the Greek origin referring to a called out assembly with a purpose of governing a state or city.

And so the Lord said:

“I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”⁸

Therefore we believe that the Church of Jesus Christ is always to be considered as a local called out assembly of born again, baptized believers having been established by Christ during his earthly ministry and as having been ordained and established for the very express purpose of doing the work of God here in time and that it will continue in time until the end of time, Ephesians 3:21, Matthew 28:19-20.

⁶ Matthew 1:21.

⁷ Matthew 16:18.

⁸ Ibid.

Now having that understanding, then, we would look at this 19th chapter as being the marriage of the Lord's churches to Himself. At the present time the Lord's churches are espoused unto Christ. They are engaged. We say that based upon a Scripture verse given to us by the apostle Paul in the 11th chapter of 2 Corinthians. Writing to the Church of God at Corinth he says to them in verse two:

“For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.”⁹

Paul here describes his work as being the work of the King's chamberlain which was... and I am holding onto this word here a moment. We use the word sometimes as groomsmen or best man in our weddings today. That has an ancient origin which was really the person somewhat responsible for the purity and the bringing together of a man and woman in marriage.

I will take you back to the Book of Esther to try to show you what we are here speaking about. Of course, this is a Gentile wedding and Gentile customs, but it illustrates here what I want to show you.

In the book of Esther, the second chapter, you are familiar with story of Esther, how that the queen Vashti, who was the wife to Ahasuerus, the king at that time over the Medo-Persian Empire. He had told her to come and present herself before all of his princes, which is understood to be somewhat in an immodest way. And so she refused and her ... his counselor's advised him then to take the crown from Vashti and give it to someone more deserving. Give it to the loveliest, prettiest woman in all of your empire.

And so a great search went out and various women were brought together, young virgins were brought together to be the future bride of the king.

There was this one woman by the name of Esther, who was Jewish. She is there as the result of the Babylonian captivity that took place previously. Obviously she and all of her family had not returned back to Jerusalem at this time. And so Mordecai, her uncle, got her into the palace, among the company of women that were to be considered as prospective brides. And in this process all of these virgins that were gathered together throughout the empire were brought into the king's chamber and they were put under the custody of a man by the name of Hegai, it is H E G A I in your King James Bible, and according to what pronunciation I can gather from it, it is pronounced as Ha-gay. He is the man that is responsible for taking care of these virgins. He is over the king's concubines and so he is to see to it that they are pure virgins. According to what we read here in the book of Esther, they were kept up for a period of one year to be sure that they were not pregnant.

He also was responsible for getting them prepared as beautiful women to go into the king when he might accept them.

⁹ 2 Corinthians 11:2.

In God's divine providence, Esther became the favorite of Hegai and he gives her the oils and the perfume and all the things by which he thinks that she will find a more favorable response from the king.

You find this in the second chapter of Esther and verse nine.

“And the maiden pleased him [referring to Hegai], and she obtained kindness of him; and he speedily gave her her things for purification, with such things as belonged to her, and seven maidens, which were meet to be given her, out of the king's house: and he preferred her and her maids unto the best place of the house of the women.”¹⁰

And so in the chambers, in the palace where the women were kept, were better rooms, better facilities. And so Hegai gave to Esther and her maidens this favored position. You will find then in verse 12.

Now when every maid's turn was come to go in to king Ahasuerus, after that she had been twelve months, according to the manner of the women, (for so were the days of their purifications accomplished, to wit, six months with oil of myrrh, and six months with sweet odours, and with other things for the purifying of the women;) Then thus came every maiden unto the king; whatsoever she desired was given her to go with her out of the house of the women unto the king's house. In the evening she went, and on the morrow she returned into the second house of the women, to the custody of Shaashgaz, the king's chamberlain, which kept the concubines: she came in unto the king no more, except the king delighted in her, and that she were called by name.

Now when the turn of Esther, the daughter of Abihail the uncle of Mordecai, who had taken her for his daughter, was come to go in unto the king, she required nothing but what Hegai the king's chamberlain, the keeper of the women, appointed. And Esther obtained favour in the sight of all them that looked upon her. So Esther was taken unto king Ahasuerus into his house royal in the tenth month, which is the month Tebeth, in the seventh year of his reign. And the king loved Esther above all the women, and she obtained grace and favour in his sight more than all the virgins; so that he set the royal crown upon her head, and made her queen instead of Vashti.¹¹

This story has many amplifications to it. It is one of the ways by which God divinely moved in providence to spare the Jewish people who were still there in the Persian kingdom living outside of Israel, one of the ways which God spared them from the terrible plot of Haman who wanted to have all the Jews killed. All that were yet in the kingdom, under the dominion of King Ahasuerus. But God had prepared ahead of time this woman Esther, to be a means of delivering them.

¹⁰ Esther 2:9.

¹¹ Esther 2:12-17.

There is also a beautiful illustration here, I believe, of the Lord's Church. And I use that term, as we refer to it, as being in its institutional sense, all of the Lord's churches, true churches. She is the one that is to be married to the king. And there is the work of the Holy Spirit is typified, I believe, by Hegai wherein he is preparing her, the Bride of Christ, the espoused Bride of Christ, I should say. He is preparing her for the ultimate time when she is presented unto her bridegroom. And he is doing that in such a way that she will, indeed, be adorned in a glorious way.

Now marriage is a very sacred ordinance established by God. In the book of Genesis we have the Lord saying that it is not good for man to dwell alone and so he took from Adam a rib and made a woman, which was to be his help mate. And, indeed, the wisdom of God was very right in saying that it is not good for man to be alone and we, as men who are married, know very well how true that is. I am so thankful for the wife that God has blessed me with. She is such a great asset to me and every man who has a God given wife, a godly wife would say the very same thing.

There came a time when Abraham had grown old and Isaac his son had grown now to maturity. Abraham called his servant and said to him, "I want you to go get a wife for my son Isaac." The servant was told not to take a wife from among the Canaanite people with whom they were now living, but to go back to their people, so to speak, back to my kinsmen and out of the kin people you are to take a wife for my son Isaac.

You are familiar with the story in the 24th chapter of Genesis. You know that the servant did that and in so doing he took Rebekah and she became the wife of Isaac. Isaac is, again, a type of Christ, the servant being a type of the Holy Spirit and Rebekah being a type of the Church, the Bride of Jesus Christ, taken from among His people. And so it is that I do not understand that all of God's elect people constitute the Bride of Christ.

Now that brings much anger from some people, the majority of all Christendom anymore would say that all of God's elect people compose the Bride of Christ. Well, I simply submit to you that the word 'church' limits who is in the Bride of Christ. There are several terms used in the New Testament to describe what a church is, a New Testament church. The very word itself tells us that it is a called out assembly, but there are other terms used to express its relationship and work. Sometimes it is called a garden. Sometimes it is called a temple. Sometimes it is called a body. And it is referred to, then, as being the Bride of Christ. In Ephesians chapter five there is a portion of Scripture that is most always used, I should say, at a wedding and there is some language here that we need to direct our attention to where Paul, writing to all prospective husbands and to all husbands who are now married. And he says unto us:

"Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it."¹²

¹² Ephesians 5:25.

Well, the argument would be made that did not Christ God love all of his elect people? Most certainly he did. He has loved them and sent his Son to die for them. John 3:16 confirms that to us. That out of the world God has an elect people, out of every nation under heaven.

But, again, according to the illustration we have in the 24th chapter of Genesis, it was from his kindred that a bride was taken as a wife for Isaac. And it must also be said that Paul here was writing in the book of Ephesians even to the church at Ephesus and in 2 Corinthians where we read that he had espoused them to Christ. That is written to the church at Corinth. So it is that in the very context to which the term bride and wife is used and espoused is used, he is always writing to a church.

There is a verse in the 20th chapter of Acts that I think has some relevancy to us here and I will not spend a lot of time talking about it this morning, but in the 20th chapter of Acts in verse 28, Paul is speaking to the church, to the elders of the church at Ephesus as he is about to take leave from them and he gives them a charge in verse 28:

“Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God.”¹³

Now you will note in the very context that this is referring to a local church. And it is that local assembly where the elders were that Paul was speaking. Of course, it applies to every New Testament church and it applies to every pastor of every New Testament church. But the initial, primary direction is to the church at Ephesus and those elders. And he says: “...to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.”¹⁴

Now particularly I am interested in the word ‘purchased’. The very origin of that word has the idea of buying something for one’s own particular use, especially to purchase something. You buy something. The illustration in the parable our Lord gave is about a man who found a pearl of great price, great value. He sold all that he had and went and bought the field that he might have that pearl. He did not buy the whole field just because it was of value. He bought the whole field because in that field was something of special value to him. He purchased the whole field for the sake of having the pearl.

And so the idea is of purchasing or buying something of value for one’s own personal use. I could go on and support that by some other Scriptures, but I will not take the time this morning. Simply my point is that the Church of Jesus Christ there is an entity which Christ has loved out of all of his elect people for a very special purpose, has chosen her and given her a Great Commission, Matthew the 28th chapter. That commission was given to the Lord’s churches and a work to be done. In John the 15th chapter verse 16, Christ speaking to the apostle said:

¹³ Acts 20:28.

¹⁴ Ibid.

“Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain.”¹⁵

That is a precious promise of perpetuity to the Lord’s churches. It is also a promise of her endowment with a great responsibility. So we understand that the Lord’s churches are the exclusive custodians of the Lord’s work, of the gospel of Jesus Christ and of His ordinances. And in so doing she has experienced much opposition and persecution. When you begin to preach the gospel anywhere, you are going to experience opposition. But when you begin to speak about the things that the Lord has set forth in his Word, you are going to experience more and more opposition. When you begin to tell people that baptism is exclusively for those who profess faith in Jesus Christ you are going to meet a lot of opposition, even from some professing Christians. When you begin to tell them that baptism is exclusively to be administered by a means of immersion, you are going to meet a lot of opposition and persecution. When you begin to tell them that it must be administered by the authority of a New Testament church, you are really going to meet a lot of opposition. And I will tell you today that more people, more Christians, more professing Christians, more true believers have died because of the doctrine of baptism than for any other doctrine set forth in the New Testament. It is referred to as being the bloody doctrine. It is, indeed, that people hate the doctrine of election and predestination, but all, the vast majority I should say, of professing Christians hate the doctrine of baptism the most, because it is a restrictive ordinance given to the Lord’s churches to administer in a very restricted way and the form that is given to us by Christ in the 28th chapter of Matthew it is “in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.”

As a result, the Lord’s churches have been the object of much scorn and persecution throughout the world. And so you come to the book of Revelation. It is a Revelation of Christ and his work, especially in his churches during time. It is the work of Christ through and by his churches, even throughout all time.

So you read in the second and third chapter of Revelation, the Lord writing to those churches, says time and time again, “he that overcometh”, “he that overcometh”, “he that overcometh”. What is he speaking about? He is encouraging the saints in those churches, wherein they are going to experience opposition and persecution, but to be faithful, even to be faithful unto death.

Now I don’t know how it is that anyone could take those admonitions and exhortations of Christ, whereby he tells his churches to be faithful even unto death, how they can take that, look at that and teach the doctrine of a “Pre-tribulation rapture”. I have told you here that was what I initially believed coming out of seminary, but the examination of that doctrine by the Word of God found that it would not hold water. God’s people have always and will always be the object of persecution at the hands of the world.

Paul says: “Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.”¹⁶

¹⁵ John 15:16.

¹⁶ 2 Timothy 3:12.

God's people, particularly His churches, have been the object of persecution throughout time, every since the Lord established His churches. Sometimes we get weary. Sometimes we get discouraged. Sometimes we get to thinking, well, you know, what is the purpose of it all. Why do we have to be so faithful? What is it that we have to be so narrow as the world would say? Why is it that we would have to experience this abuse from the world?

Well, the purpose of it all is that God is purifying his people and his churches and the end result of it is that He will have a bride that is without spot or wrinkle.

Ephesians chapter five again,

“Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it.”¹⁷

He is speaking particularly of the ministry of Christ in His churches and for His churches, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with washing of water by the Word. This is not redemption. This is not the work of Christ in redeeming us from our sins. But this is the work of the Holy Spirit of God as Christ's ministers administer His Word to His people that we are being sanctified. We are being cleansed from our worldliness by the washing of water by the Word. We are born into this world. We are a part of this world. We still have depraved natures. We are worldly beings. But we are being brought out of this world by the Holy Spirit of God and we are being purified to be a chaste virgin espoused unto Christ that he might sanctify and cleanse it by the washing of water by the Word. Here is the ultimate end; that he might present it to Himself as a glorious church without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish.

Now that is what Christ is doing for His Church. And Paul draws from that an admonition to all of us husbands.

So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church: For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh.¹⁸

That will tell you the kind of marriages that God has ordained. It is between one man and one woman. And when the world scoffs at, ridicules, denies and objects to the idea of this kind of marriage, they are shaking their fist at the God of heaven. And it is to that God that they ultimately some day will have to give a reckoning.

¹⁷ Ephesians 5:25.

¹⁸ Ephesians 5:28-31.

For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church. Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband.¹⁹

And so this relationship of a husband and wife as set forth in the Word of God is an illustration of what that relationship is between Christ and his future bride, between Christ and His Church. And this is because Christ has loved His Church, especially His church/bride and that she ultimately will be presented to Him as a glorious Church.

No, I do not believe that it is composed of all of God's elect people. But, rather, I believe it is composed of those who have been faithful followers of the lamb.

We noted in the 14th chapter of the book of Revelation, we will turn there, please, if you would. There are some phraseology or some words that I want us to see in verse four.

These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb. And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God.²⁰

These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth.²¹

And that is the New Testament churches of Jesus Christ.

Now turn with me, please, in your Bible to the 45th Psalm. I think that this psalm gives us some insight into the subject of the marriage of the king with his bride, Psalm chapter 45.

My heart is inditing a good matter: I speak of the things which I have made touching the king: my tongue is the pen of a ready writer. Thou art fairer than the children of men: grace is poured into thy lips: therefore God hath blessed thee for ever.²²

Now, first of all, we see the exaltation of the King and the adoration of Him for his majesty.

Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O most mighty, with thy glory and thy majesty. And in thy majesty ride prosperously because of truth and meekness and righteousness; and thy right hand shall teach thee terrible

¹⁹ Ephesians 5:31-33.

²⁰ Revelation 14:4-5.

²¹ Revelation 14:4.

²² Psalm 45:1-2.

things. Thine arrows are sharp in the heart of the king's enemies; whereby the people fall under thee.

Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: the sceptre of thy kingdom is a right sceptre. Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness: therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows. All thy garments smell of myrrh, and aloes, and cassia, out of the ivory palaces, whereby they have made thee glad.²³

Now here comes the description of the bride.

“Kings' daughters were among thy honourable women: upon thy right hand did stand the queen in gold of Ophir. Hearken, O daughter, and consider...”²⁴

Now here is the language, as it were, of the family, of the father to the bride, as she is about to be presented to her bridegroom.

“Hearken, O daughter, and consider, and incline thine ear; forget also thine own people, and thy father's house.”²⁵

The love of the bride is to be this. She is to have her devotion toward her husband and that is what the Church of Jesus Christ is. She is devoted to Christ and she loves him more than all others. And so she must sometimes of necessity leave her earthly parents, leave her earthly family and leave friends that she might follow Christ.

So shall the king greatly desire thy beauty: for he is thy Lord; and worship thou him. And the daughter of Tyre shall be there with a gift; even the rich among the people shall intreat thy favour. The king's daughter is all glorious within: her clothing is of wrought gold. She shall be brought unto the king in raiment of needlework: the virgins her companions that follow her shall be brought unto thee.²⁶

In modern day weddings we have bridesmaids. These are friends of the bride and they are to give attention or attend to her. You saw that in the seven virgins that were given unto Esther. They attend to her needs. Well, these are the virgins that attend to the bride here.

...her companions that follow her shall be brought unto thee. With gladness and rejoicing shall they be brought: they shall enter into the king's palace. Instead of thy fathers shall be thy children, whom thou mayest make princes in all the earth. I will make thy name to be

²³ Psalm 45:3-8.

²⁴ Psalm 45:9-10.

²⁵ Psalm 45:10.

²⁶ Psalm 45:11-14.

remembered in all generations: therefore shall the people praise thee for ever and ever.²⁷

Now I think that, indeed, is directed primarily, first of all, toward Christ. It is directed also towards His Church. Throughout all eternity she will be recognized as having a special favor with Christ. Now I don't understand all of that. I readily admit that. I quickly say that. But I set forth for you what I believe the Scriptures are teaching.

Let's go back to the 19th chapter of Revelation.

And after these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God: For true and righteous are his judgments: for he hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand. And again they said, Alleluia. And her smoke rose up for ever and ever.²⁸

So the King is exalted and He is worshipped.

And the four and twenty elders and the four beasts fell down and worshipped God that sat on the throne, saying, Amen; Alleluia.

And a voice came out of the throne, saying, Praise our God, all ye his servants, and ye that fear him, both small and great. And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.²⁹

That is ongoing today. It is going to be ultimately manifested at the end of time when all the enemies of God and of God's people have been defeated and the saints of God are gathered around the Lamb and they are worshipping and praising Him.

Now look at verse seven.

“Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready.”³⁰

Some wondering how it could be here that the wife has made herself ready. Well, it is not her own works, but rather it is what God is doing in her and to her. We noted there in Ephesians chapter five what Christ is said to be doing for His Church. He gave himself for it because He loved her that He might ultimately present it to Himself as a glorious Church without spot or wrinkle. Indeed, every one of God's elect people has the imputed

²⁷ Psalm 45:14-17.

²⁸ Revelation 19:1-3.

²⁹ Revelation 19:4-6.

³⁰ Revelation 19:7.

righteousness of Christ given unto them. But this word here for righteousness is an entirely different Greek word than that which refers to the imputed righteousness of Christ. It means righteous acts, righteous deeds, and it is in the plural sense. It is not talking about the imputed righteousness of Christ. Indeed, that is the very heart of all of our righteousness. But because of the inward working of the Holy Spirit of God whereby that God has imputed unto us the very righteousness of Christ, there is a manifestation of that inward work whereby God's people, especially those who constitute the Lord's churches, do that which God ordains for them to do and they "follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth".

Ephesians 2:10 is a very significant verse of Scripture that is neglected a lot among even many sovereign grace people. Eight and nine says:

"For by grace are ye saved."³¹

We understand that to be by the severing grace of God.

"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves."³²

We understand, then, that faith is not a result of something that you muster up, something that you do, not something that you we can generate, but rather what God does in us. It is the product of the inward working of the Holy Spirit of God. And so we are:

"...saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast."³³

And then he says in verse 10:

"For we are his workmanship."³⁴

We are his product. We are the results of His craft work. That is exactly what the word workmanship there means. It means that we are the results of His wisdom, His skill in all that He would produce. Again, Ephesians five:

"That he might present it to himself a glorious church..."³⁵

Where does the honor go? Where does the glory go? Where does the credit go to? Not to the individual that composed that church, but rather to the work of Christ by the Holy Spirit in our lives that He might ultimately present to Himself as a glorious church without spot or wrinkle. That is what God is doing in our lives, beloved. That is what the Lord is doing in His Churches. That is what the Lord is doing by the Word of God. That

³¹ Ephesians 2:8.

³² Ibid.

³³ Ephesians 2:8-9.

³⁴ Ephesians 2:10.

³⁵ Ephesians 5:27.

is what the Lord is doing by the providences that we experience, sometimes persecution, sometimes ridicule or death. But it is simply a testing whereby our faith is being purified and we are being made stronger in the Lord.

Be glad and rejoice and give honor to Him because the marriage of the Lamb is come and His wife has made herself ready. How has she been made herself ready? By following the lamb, by the Holy Spirit of God producing those Christ like graces in His church.

“And to her was granted...”³⁶

You will note that, granted. It is not works. It is grace.

“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.”³⁷

The righteous acts of the saints. Our Lord said:

“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.”³⁸

Good works, as our Lord here is speaking about, is not just giving alms to the poor. It is not just making a donation to the blood bank. Those are all good honorable things and I am not ridiculing those at all, but these are many good works that unregenerate people can do. And certainly God’s people should be doing them. Be honest. Be fruitful in things. Those are indeed credible things. But that is not what the Lord is speaking about there and that is not what he is talking about in Ephesians 2:10 when He says:

“For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.”³⁹

They are the things that Christ taught, that Christ has taught in His example and by the apostles have given to His churches. It is the things that we are to be doing as New Testament churches whereby we glorify our Savior and we do that by the work of the Holy Spirit. These things, the fine linen, is the righteous acts of the saints of God.

And then in verse nine he says “Write.”

“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.”⁴⁰

³⁶ Revelation 19:8.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Matthew 5:16.

³⁹ Ephesians 2:10.

⁴⁰ Revelation 19:9.

Now all of us here have probably at some time received a wedding invitation or maybe some time you sent out wedding invitations. But one thing you did not do, you did not get a wedding invitation to come to your wedding. You send wedding invitations to friends.

Go back to the third chapter of the gospel of John, please.

John the Baptist is here speaking, John chapter three. They have come to John and they have told him that Christ's disciples are baptizing more people than him ... than what John is now baptizing. Verse 26.

And they came unto John, and said unto him, Rabbi, he that was with thee beyond Jordan, to whom thou barest witness, behold, the same baptizeth, and all men come to him. John answered and said, A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven.⁴¹

Note that. That is true about every good thing that we ever have, whether it is your vision, talk about the physical aspect or whether talking about the spiritual aspect.

“A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven. Ye yourselves bear me witness, that I said, I am not the Christ, but that I am sent before him.”⁴²

Now note verse 29.

“He that hath the bride is the bridegroom.”⁴³

Well, everybody understands that. Why, sure. We know who the bride groom is and we know who the bride is in any wedding, you know. I always joke. They say something like this when I am performing a wedding or in the rehearsal part, talking to the bride, prospective bride and prospective bride groom, you know, I say, “You remember. You are the ones that have to speak. Everybody else is to keep quiet.”

So everybody knows who the bride and who the bridegroom is. But note what the next statement that John says.

“...but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice: this my joy therefore is fulfilled. He must increase, but I must decrease.”⁴⁴

John the Baptist is speaking of himself as being a friend to the bridegroom. And he says that Christ is the bridegroom and that there is a bride. There was a friend to the bridegroom. We have noted in Psalm 45 that the bride herself has her companions.

⁴¹ John 3:26-27.

⁴² John 3:27-28.

⁴³ John 3:29.

⁴⁴ John 3:29-30.

Now back to Revelation 19. We have those who are invited to come. These are friends of the bridegroom and friends of the bride. These are not the bride herself. She is already there by divine appointment. She is that chosen one constituted as New Testament churches, brought together in a joint eternal togetherness of all New Testament churches ever since the days of Christ. I am speaking about those who are faithful members who are faithful worshippers of the Lamb and who follow the Lamb whithersoever it goeth. They are seen here in a collective sense as the bride of Christ and they are honored by Christ.

The friends are those who have been redeemed out of the Old Testament and New Testament, John the Baptist being one of them, friend to the bridegroom and of the bride. They are invited to come to this marriage feast.

“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.”⁴⁵

You see, friends, the Lord has a special people that he loves called the Church of Jesus Christ. Oh, how this makes some people angry, not you here in the congregation. I understand that. Thank you for that. But it is those who may be listening by means of SermonAudio. May God help you to understand Revelation chapter three and verse nine. I am reading verse nine of the third chapter. This, of course, is written unto the church at Philadelphia.

“Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie.”⁴⁶

I have taught before to you here about this. My understanding of this is that it is talking about those who say they are God’s people, but are not. I don’t think this has anything to do with racial implications at all, but religious. They say they are God’s people, but they are not. They do lie. They are the synagogue of Satan, that is a false religious order.

“...behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee.”⁴⁷

He is not speaking to all believers. He is not speaking to all of God’s elect. It is only those in New Testament relationship, New Testament church relationship who are faithful and obedient followers of the Lamb.

Verse 12.

“Him that overcometh...”⁴⁸

⁴⁵ Revelation 19:9.

⁴⁶ Revelation 3:9.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Revelation 3:12.

No, let me go back to verse 10.

Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth. Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown. Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.⁴⁹

Now, let me go to Revelation chapter 21.

And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.⁵⁰

Now go to verse nine.

And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife. And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, Having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal;⁵¹

What is this city? It is the palace of the queen. It is the palace of the bride where you will see as we come to this later on, wherein the Lamb dwells with his bride.

There are people outside of this city, but the city is the dwelling place of the bride of Christ. That is what John saw, her dwelling place, her house. Our Lord said:

"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 unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also."⁵²

To whom was he speaking? Well, someone says he was talking to all Christians. Well, I will submit to that in a general sense, but this is a place prepared for a special people. It is the bride of Christ coming down out of the heavens, adorned for her husband.

⁴⁹ Revelation 3:10-13.

⁵⁰ Revelation 21:1-2.

⁵¹ Revelation 21:9-11.

⁵² John 14:2-3.

I hope that God will give us some encouragement and understanding about the precious privilege it is to be numbered among the bride of Christ, a New Testament Church. It is an honor the world does not esteem at all. It is an honor that many Christian people have no desire to hold to. And so they take their own religion. They have their own ideas, their own doctrines, and their own teachings. So we have all the various religions and various Christian denominations in the world. And there are many good, devout, sincere, born again believers, I believe, among some of those people, some of those various denominations. But there is a people in whom God has put his Spirit on and writes upon their hearts to follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. They are those that are said to be the bride of Christ.

But Paul says this. "I am jealous over you. I am concerned over you, because I have espoused you; I have engaged you to Christ."

A young woman was engaged to a man to be married and yet you saw her downtown on the streets flirting with all the various young men in town and you would say, "What is wrong with this woman? I thought she was espoused to this man. Here she is flirting with all these other men. She ought not to be doing that". The fact of the matter is in Old Testament times and even in older days in America that woman could be highly scorned.

The tragic thing of it is among Christians today who flirt with the world. We take the world to our bosoms and James refers to us and says:

"Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God."⁵³

Espoused to Christ as a chaste virgin! May God be pleased to keep us as a church and as individuals pure unto Christ through His doctrines and through His teachings, that we might indeed be gathered unto Him when He comes again as His chaste bride. In Christ's name I pray.

Our Father, we come to you here this morning hour. We thank you for your Word. We thank you for this congregation of people that love the truth of God as it is in Christ who are indeed, as we understand and believe, are following the Lamb whithersoever he leadeth. Keep us, oh Lord, pure from the world. Keep us from the world's doctrines. Keep us, I pray, dear Father, as a chaste virgin in the name of Jesus Christ I pray. Amen.

⁵³ James 4:4.