

Dispensationalism — Marriage Ceremony

Marriage Ceremony Precedes the Return of Christ with his Saints

Revelation 19:7-16 NASB

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."] [8] 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.] [9] Then 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." [10] Then I fell at his feet to worship him. But he said to me, "Do not do that; I am a fellow servant of yours and your brethren who hold the testimony of Jesus; worship God. For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." [11] And I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse, and He who sat on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and wages war. [12] His eyes are a flame of fire, and on His head are many diadems; and He has a name written on Him which no one knows except Himself. [13] He is clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God. [14] [And the armies which are in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, were following Him on white horses.] [15] From His mouth comes a sharp sword, so that with it He may strike down the nations, and [He will rule them with a rod of iron; and He treads the wine press of the fierce wrath of God, the Almighty.] [16] And on His robe and on His thigh He has a name written, "KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS."

It is clear that the saints will be made ready for the marriage ceremony prior to the 2nd coming of Christ, and will then ride with Christ down at the 2nd coming clothed in fine linen explaining that the Marriage ceremony happens prior.

"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."

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

""The marriage of the Lamb'...is the consummation of the marriage of Christ and the Church as His bride...The Lamb's wife is...to be distinguished from Israel, the unfaithful wife of the LORD..., who is to be restored in the millennium."

— C. I. Scofield, ed., *The New Scofield Reference Bible* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1967), 1371; cf. Lewis Sperry Chafer, *Systematic Theology* (Dallas: Dallas Theological Seminary, 1948), 4:54ff.; 7:127–30.

THE JEWISH WEDDING SYSTEM AND THE BRIDE OF THE MESSIAH:

By Dr. Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum

■ 1. THE ARRANGEMENT

A. The Jewish Wedding System

The first step in the Jewish wedding system is the arrangement. In the arrangement, the father of the groom makes the arrangement with the father of the bride and pays the father of the bride the bride price. This stage may occur when the bride and groom are children; often they did not even meet each other until their wedding day. In fact, that was true in the case of my own grandparents, who first met each other on their wedding day.

Acts 20:28 NASB

Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.

Ephesians 5:26 NASB

Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her

■ 2. THE PREPARATION

A. The Jewish Wedding System

The second step in the Jewish wedding system is known as the preparation. That is the period of the betrothal. It lasts for at least a year but could also last for many years, especially if the arrangement was made when the bride and groom were only children. This is the period of time when the bride is being trained and prepared to take on the role of a wife. This is the period of time when she is observed for her purity. That is why the betrothal always lasted for a minimum of one year. This will allow at least a full nine months to pass to make sure that, at the time of the betrothal, the bride was a virgin. If she gives birth before the year is up, it is known then that she was in a state of immorality. Again, the period of preparation, the period of betrothal, may be of a long or of a short duration. It might be as short as a year, but it might be many, many years because often the arrangement that led to the betrothal would occur when the bride and groom were children.

Ephesians 5:26-27 NASB

so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, [27] that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless.

2 Corinthians 11:2 NASB

For I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy; for I betrothed you to one husband, so that to Christ I might present you as a pure virgin.

■ 3. THE FETCHING OF THE BRIDE

A. The Jewish Wedding System

In the Jewish wedding system, the groom would go to the home of the bride on the wedding day to fetch her to his home. This would lead to a bridal procession like the one found in Matthew 25:1-13, for example. The groom had left and he is now coming back with the bride. The virgins in this parable do not represent the Church. The virgins go out to meet the groom as he is returning to his home with the bride.

1 Thessalonians 4:16-17 NASB

For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. [17] Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord.

■ 4. THE CEREMONY

A. The Jewish Wedding System

The fourth step, the ceremony, was conducted in the home of the groom. Only a few, usually the immediate family and two witnesses, were invited to come in and observe the wedding ceremony.

Revelation 19:6-8 NASB

Then I heard something like the voice of a great multitude and like the sound of many waters and like the sound of mighty peals of thunder, saying, "Hallelujah! For the Lord our God, the Almighty, reigns. [7] 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." [8] 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.

■ 5. THE MARRIAGE FEAST

A. The Jewish Wedding Feast

The marriage feast is the fifth step in the Jewish wedding system, and there are many more people invited to the marriage feast. Whereas a few are invited to the wedding ceremony, many others are invited to the marriage feast to celebrate the marriage of the son. Often the marriage feast lasted for a total of seven days.

Isaiah 25:6 NASB

The LORD of hosts will prepare a lavish banquet for all peoples on this mountain; A banquet of aged wine, choice pieces with marrow, And refined, aged wine.

Isaiah 26:19 NASB

Your dead will live; Their corpses will rise. You who lie in the dust, awake and shout for joy, For your dew is as the dew of the dawn, And the earth will give birth to the departed spirits.

John 3:29 NASB

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. So this joy of mine has been made full.

Revelation 19:9-10 NASB

Then 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." [10] Then I fell at his feet to worship him. But he said to me, "Do not do that; I am a fellow servant of yours and your brethren who hold the testimony of Jesus; worship God. For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy."

■ 6. THE HOME OF THE BRIDE

A. The Jewish Wedding System

The sixth step concerns the home of the bride. In the Jewish context, the groom is responsible to provide a suitable home for the bride, and he does this during the preparation stage, the second stage.

John 14:1-3 NASB

"Do not let your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me. [2] In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. [3] 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.

Revelation 21:9-11 NASB

Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues came and spoke with me, saying, "Come here, I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb." [10] And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the holy city, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, [11] having the glory of God. Her brilliance was like a very costly stone, as a stone of crystal-clear jasper.