

Christian Doctrine

The Bride of Christ

Revelation 19:7-10

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INTRODUCTION:

Today Rick and Michelle are going to be married. This is a wonderful ceremony that God has instituted to join man and wife together as one for life. But this ceremony is only temporary. It lasts until death separates them. I want you to know that if you are a true believer, you have another marriage in your future. We are the bride of Christ and when He comes again we will be married to the Lamb of God for eternity! What a day that will be!

All Stand and Read Scripture

Revelation 19:7-10 (NASB)

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.

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.”

Prayer

Our Father in Heaven, we thank You for Your love, Your eternal plan for us, and Your many blessings. We thank You for the promises that You have given to those who allow You to direct their lives. We thank You for your Word that we can read and understand why we are on this earth. We thank You for Your Holy Spirit that you have allowed to dwell within us and protect us from the deceitfulness of Satan. Help us to listen for His guidance in our lives so that we will truly understand the difference between the temporary pleasures that are offered by Satan and the eternal promises that are given by You. May we live our lives for You and be invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.

In Jesus name we pray, Amen.

Earlier in this vision of John we saw the harlot finally being judged for her seduction. The time all of us have been waiting for has now finally arrived. While evil is being judged, the marriage supper of the Lamb has come. This provides another occasion for this heavenly congregation to rejoice. They are rejoicing because the time that they have all been waiting for, the coming of Christ and the end of sin, has finally arrived!

BODY:

I. THE MARRIAGE SUPPER OF THE LAMB.

Revelation 19:7-8 (NASB)

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.

This is the first reference to the bride of Christ. John is using this section to provide the contrast between the two. We know that the bride of Christ is the church. It is the people of God who He has been betrothed to Him. Here we see her purity, and her beauty, and her faithfulness. This stands in contrast to the harlot who has dominated the scene for the last few chapters. She turned out to be a fake who was ruled by demons and wild beasts. She is a picture of earthly superficial beauty. And as we have now learned, her end is one of destruction as the smoke of her fire goes up forever and ever.

Whereas the church, the bride of Christ, is a picture of true spiritual beauty. While Babylon is being judged, the church is being prepared to meet with her Groom, the Lord Jesus Christ.

I want you to pay special attention to the phrase in verse 7 "**His bride has made herself ready**".

This raises a question. It seems as though this statement is implying that the bride is responsible for her own preparation in meeting the Lord. It sounds like it is her works that is going to make her acceptable.

So what is meant by this statement?

The key is found in the following verse where we are told "**It was given to her to clothe herself in fine linen, bright and clean**".

Here we are told that the wedding garments which are made of fine linen was GIVEN to her that she might clothe herself. So these bright and pure garments are not her own. But they were given to her. At the same time, she is the one who clothes herself with them.

So the question is what are those bright and clean linen garments that she has been given to clothe herself with? We might think that these are the robes of Christ's righteousness that has been given to us because of His death on the cross. In other words our robes are His righteousness that has been given to us. From a theological perspective, this is true as our righteousness is not something we have earned on our own. It was given to us by Christ and it wiped away the sin that was in our lives. It made us fit to be able to stand before God. It is ultimately Christ's righteousness that has been imputed to us. Right? We all understand that.

But here in verse 8 we are told that these wedding garments made of "**fine linen**" are "**the righteous acts of the saints**". So we ask again, what does this mean?

We clothe ourselves with the righteous things that we do as Christians out of our lives for what Christ has done for us. We want everything that we do say to be for the glory of God. There is plenty of evidence for this in Revelation. We see white robes and righteous acts consistently being associated with human acts of righteousness. Here in Revelation 19 the context has very much to do with standing firm against the beast and not giving in to the seductions of the harlot. So "**the righteous acts of the saints**" have to do with our

faithfulness to God. You do not buckle under the weight of the persecution, you do not cave in under the lure of temptation.

Yet these garments, these righteous acts, are **given** to us in order that we may clothe ourselves in them. So taken together, what this means is that God is the One Who gives us the power and the ability to persevere in righteousness by living a life of faith following Christ. We are the ones who then use what God has given to us and live it out. Thus we clothe ourselves with what God gives us. This is the perseverance of the saints. God is the One Who causes us to persevere, but we then must persevere.

This is ultimately the way the entire Christian life works. We are not just passive bystanders in it. God saves us and empowers us and we must actively resist sin and stand firm.

Ephesians 2:8-10 (NASB)

⁸ For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, *it is the gift of God*; ⁹ not as a result of works, so that no one may boast. ¹⁰ For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.

God has graciously saved us. God has graciously worked in us. He has graciously poured out His Spirit within us. He has regenerated and renewed us making us alive in Him. He has done this in order that we may live out the Christian life that He has ordained for us to walk in.

Peter gives us a recipe on how our Christian life should progress after our initial salvation.

2 Peter 1:1-11 (NASB)

¹ Simon Peter, a bond-servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who have received a faith of the same kind as ours, by the righteousness of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ: ² Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord; ³ seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence. ⁴ For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, so that by them you may become partakers of *the* divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust. ⁵ Now for this very reason also, applying all diligence, in your faith supply moral excellence, (You need to clean up our lives and live morally) and in *your moral excellence, knowledge*, (We learn what is expected of us by reading God's Word, the Bible) ⁶ and in *your knowledge, self-control*, (As we learn what is acceptable to God, we must learn to obey Him) and in *your self-control, perseverance*, (We must remain steadfast in our obedience) and in *your perseverance, godliness*, (We are to pattern our lives after Christ who taught us how to live) ⁷ and in *your godliness, brotherly kindness*, (Help those who are in need) and in *your brotherly kindness, love*. (Love your neighbor as yourself) ⁸ For if these *qualities* are yours and are increasing, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁹ For he who lacks these *qualities* is blind or short-sighted, having forgotten *his* purification from his former sins. ¹⁰ Therefore, brethren, be all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and choosing you; for as long as you practice these things, you will never stumble; ¹¹ for in this way the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be abundantly supplied to you.

We must also realize that our "**bright and clean garments**" and our "**righteous acts**" are based upon God's righteous deeds that He has done on behalf of the saints. God has

bestowed these to us, but has credited them on our account. The righteousness of Christ now belongs to the believer. When He sees me, when He sees you, He does not see our righteousness, He sees Christ's righteousness in us.

This is also consistent with New Testament scripture. Paul told the Romans "**There is none righteous, not even one**". "**for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God**".

Let's look at verse 8 one more time.

Revelation 19:8 (NASB)

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.

So if this is referring to the righteousness of Christ, then it is saying that it is granted to the bride to clothe herself with the righteousness of Christ.

This is telling us that the very act of believing and even the essence of faith is given to us so that we may indeed believe and in believing have the righteousness of Christ placed within us.

Again this is what Ephesians 2:8-10 is telling us.

Ephesians 2:8-10 (NASB)

⁸ For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; ⁹ not as a result of works, so that no one may boast. ¹⁰ For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.

The faith that gave us salvation is a gift of God.

Has there ever been a person except Christ who has been declared righteous who is living an unrighteous life? **NO!** So you never have in scripture a person who has been given righteousness that is not also living a righteous life. You never have a person who is living a righteous life that has not had that righteousness imputed to them. They always go together. The only exception is a child who has not reached the age of accountability. They are still righteous in God's eye because they do not understand sin.

James 2:14-17 (NASB)

¹⁴ What use is it, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but he has no works? Can that faith save him? ¹⁵ If a brother or sister is without clothing and in need of daily food, ¹⁶ and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and be filled," and yet you do not give them what is necessary for their body, what use is that? ¹⁷ Even so faith, if it has no works, is dead, being by itself.

II. BLESSED ARE THE INVITED.

Revelation 19:9 (NASB)

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."

In the book of Revelation there are seven blessings that are spoken. This is the fourth of seven. Here the blessing is given to those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb. Here the whole perspective begins to shift. In the last few chapters the text was

talking about the church's participation. But now it is talking about the individual participants: those who are invited to this marriage supper.

We see wedding feasts referred to in other passages in the Bible.

In Matthew 22 Jesus tells the parable of a king who prepares a wedding feast for his son who is going to be married. He sends out slaves into the highways and byways and invites people to come. Some of the people are rejecting. This is a picture of the general call of the Gospel. It is the invitation that goes out to everyone and many will reject that invitation. So then he sends his slaves into the further reaches of his kingdom and invites others to come in. Many of them respond to the invitation. As the wedding feast is taking place the king notices that there is a guy sitting at a table without the proper clothing. So he asks "How did this guy get in here?" He had him cast into outer darkness. This parable gives us a picture of this fourth blessing in Revelation. "**Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.**" This is the message that John is told to write.

By being invited to the wedding feast, we will also live in the new world that is to come for eternity with our bridegroom, Jesus Christ. Just as a marriage supper, this is a time of rejoicing! A time of celebration! A time of feasting. This is the blessing that is promised!

You are not subject to the judgment. You are not subject to the torments that await the enemies of God. After this entire age where God's people have often found themselves on the wrong side of the tracks so to speak. As the beast, the false prophet, and the harlot have all, persecuted, attacked, and seduced the people of God. Now the people of God CELEBRATE as they are invited into His presence!

So blessed are you! Blessed are you if you have been invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb!

III. ONLY WORSHIP GOD.

Revelation 19:10 (NASB)

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."

John did as most of us would do when put before an angel and told something as wonderful as this. He was no doubt overwhelmed with joy.

In our own day, many confuse the uniqueness of the Creator with that which He has created. Angels, like men, are created beings. Thus, they are not to be objects of worship. When we see people placing great emphasis upon angels, even worshipping them (Satan being an angel), we see the effects of the reprobate mind which rejects God.

Romans 1:24-25 (NASB)

²⁴ Therefore God gave them over in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, so that their bodies would be dishonored among them. ²⁵ For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.

Let us not be part of that crowd! Remain steadfast in your faith and remain faithful to the end looking forward to our marriage to the Lamb.

CONCLUSION:

Too many people believe that since they believe in God and have been baptized or raised their hand during a church service, that they have met the requirements of salvation and they can continue to live as they did in the past.

God has given us all that we need for salvation but now we are to live a righteous life by being set apart from the world, namely, this present evil age that has been corrupted by sin and stands under God's curse. We no longer belong to that old creation, but have been made a part of the new creation. We are physically in this world, but are not of this world. For He delivered us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son. This all happens at the very beginning of our Christian life as a single, completed act. When you believe and are baptized, you are baptized into the death of Christ. We die to sin and are raised into a new life in Christ. We are promised that the Holy Spirit will dwell within us and provide an ongoing power for overcoming sin. The desire to sin is removed from the heart; sinful habits are overcome; sinful thoughts and deeds are excluded from daily life.

So as believers in Jesus Christ, we are the bride of Christ, and we wait with great anticipation for the day when we will be united with our Bridegroom. Until then, we remain faithful to Him and say with all the redeemed of the Lord, "Come, Lord Jesus!"

This morning if you are a true believer in Jesus Christ, you have your invitation stamped. You are clothed and you are ready.

If you have not given your life to Christ, now is the time. Become clothed for His marriage supper.

What a Day That Will Be.