

Session 6 The Marriage of the Lamb (Rev. 19:5-10)

Please refer to the teaching notes for this message.

INTRODUCTION

Paragraph A. The Father's ultimate purpose for creation was to provide a family for Himself. God is a father. In His heart He's a father forever; He has a father's heart. He also wanted to provide a bride for His Son as His eternal companion.

Verse 7 commands us to give Him glory, "for the marriage of the Lamb has come and His wife has made herself ready" (Rev 19:7). Again, a statement I make regularly is that the guiding principle of the Father's activity throughout all human history is to raise up a prepared bride for a worthy Son. His glory is actually manifested in the context of this truth. We give Him glory because of this truth, because of this reality.

GOD WANTS TO EXPRESS THE JOY OF HIS TRIUNE LOVE WITH HUMAN BEINGS

Paragraph B. God's glory is manifest in bringing to pass the wedding realities which He determined from ages past. When we read Genesis 1-2, significant prophetic pictures of the wedding, which are manifest at the end of the book of Revelation, are all there. The first two chapters of Genesis are expounded in the last four chapters of the book of Revelation, meaning there was a clear blueprint in place before Adam and Eve were ever created. It was on His heart before He created the human race. It's all about a wedding.

I love that song we sing: "It's all about a wedding." A wedding is coming. We were created so that God could express more love. God created humans, not so He could express more power—although He did that, too—but to express love. He had already expressed substantial amounts of power in the creation of the heavens and the earth. He created humans to do something more than to display power—which of course He also does. He wanted to express love—the most profound part of His character, which the Bible calls the greatest of all (1 Cor. 13:13). God calls love the greatest of all and He wanted to give expression to this. He wasn't just creating more servants to add to the billions of angels so that He would receive more attention. He wanted to share Himself and express the joy of His triune love with human beings. He wanted an expression of that love.

God is so happy. He is so secure in Himself. He wasn't looking for more attention; He was looking for a greater expression of who He is. He wanted to share Himself with others who could actually experience His love and His glory. It's the thrill and the exhilaration of experiencing God's love move Him deeply.

WE POSSESS AN UNDERSTANDING OF GOD'S LOVE THAT THE PURITANS LACKED

Paragraph C. In the 1980s, my favorite writers were the Puritans. I read many of the Puritans. Jonathan Edwards—I devoured the writings of Jonathan Edwards—David Brainerd, Owens, and Baxter. Some of you will know those names. Guys like Martin Lloyd-Jones and Ian Murray drew a lot of attention in this generation to the Puritans. I devoured them, because they wrote so brilliantly on the glory of God. There's no other group in history with whom I'm as familiar as the Puritans. They were a prophetic voice to the Church in their day. Even centuries later, they continue to be a prophetic voice, calling the Church to the revelation of the glory of God.

You must know this, that as good as they are—I fed my spirit on them; they're brilliant, the best—yet they were limited in their revelation, because the Holy Spirit wasn't emphasizing the revelation of the bride in that hour of history like He is in the generation of the Lord's return. They wrote on the glory of God, but they neglected the

revelation of the Bride of Christ. If you're like me and you fed your spirit on them and you've been really moved and stirred, understand that there was a neglect in their presentation which we must not neglect today. There's a more complete presentation of the glory of God. It includes the significance that the bride has in the Father's heart, the Father's plan, and the manifestation of the Father's glory. The Puritans didn't take hold of what the Spirit is emphasizing in the generation of the Lord's return, that being the bridal revelation. The Spirit and the Bride cry, "Come!"

THE OCEAN OF GOD'S LOVE WILL NEVER BE FULLY SOUNDED

In Ephesians 2, Paul gives us an unusual insight into God's motive and God's reason for action. Ephesians 2:6 says that we were made to sit together in heavenly places. That's a statement about ruling with Jesus forever. In verse 7, he gives us insight. It's rare that Paul would let us see beyond the veil, so to speak. He tells us why God did what He did, why He raised up humans to rule with Christ forever: "So that in the ages to come, He would show something that needed to be shown: the exceeding riches of His kindness" (v. 7, paraphrased). He had kindness in His heart that needed expression, because love by definition must be expressed.

He goes on later in Ephesians 3:18-19 and highlights love as the incomprehensible dimension of God. He didn't highlight power but love. Love is the one aspect of the personality of God which we will never ever plumb to the full depth in all the ages. Paul said that the understanding of the very ocean of God's love at the center of His being is beyond human comprehension.

Paragraph D. One more point before we look at Revelation 19. Isaiah was given a significant revelation that our Creator, the Genesis 1 God, is in fact a husband at the very core of His personality. He doesn't just function like a husband. At the core of who He is, He's a bridegroom.

AT THE CORE OF HIS PERSONALITY, GOD IS THE VERY FOUNTAIN OF LOVE AND DESIRE

Isaiah said this: "Your Maker"—your Creator—"is your husband" (Isa. 54:5). In this verse, Isaiah was making a radical statement in his generation which only focused on the transcendence of God—back in 700 B.C. Israel wasn't captured with the idea of a God who wanted to relate tenderly and deeply as a bridegroom. They were focused on a God who was so holy that they could never say His name. There's another dimension to God that both Isaiah and Hosea described. They were of the same generation—contemporaries—and they said that God is more than our Creator and more than just transcendent in power. They said that He's actually filled with desire for human beings. It's as if they said, "He's your Husband. At the core of His personality, He isn't just transcendent in power, but He's the very fountain of eternal love and desire who wants to connect, even with you."

THE DESIRE OF GOD'S HEART WAS RELATIONSHIP WITH HIS PEOPLE

God's primary purpose for creation was for more relationship, not a greater display of His power. There was something else on God's heart when He created the human race. It was a desire for relationship. That's what Isaiah was saying. We need to catch this.

Again, I've so appreciated the prophetic voice of the Puritans in their generation—and they remain a prophetic voice in *this* generation—but they did neglect this huge dimension of the reality of the glory of God. The two great commandments to love God and to love people are one and the same in God's heart. He doesn't pick one over the other. It's one river flowing out of the being of God.

THE FIRST RESPONSE OF THE BRIDE ON THE DAY OF HER WEDDING

Paragraph E. Just a little review from last week. I'll remind you of this one point: it's the first response of the Bride on the wedding day. We spent the first four verses last week focusing on this. The very first thing that's recorded is the Bride expressing her agreement with God's judgments which are leading up to the coming of the Lord.

This isn't a small issue, because the subject of the judgments of God, which we looked at last week, is the most difficult subject for the human race, even the Body of Christ, to come into agreement with God. It's a supernatural manifestation of power that humans can see. His judgments are actually a manifestation of His love, not a contradiction to it.

In Revelation 19:1-10, we have two sections. The first section is about the multitudes celebrating God's judgment on Babylon—verses 1-4. The second section, which we'll look at tonight, is the great multitude celebrating the revelation of the marriage of the Lamb—verses 5-10. These two themes, the judgment of Babylon and the revelation of the marriage of the Lamb, are emphasized by the Holy Spirit in the generation of the Lord's return. These two truths are actually one reality. They're two sides of one coin. They aren't opposites; they aren't in tension with one another. They're an expression of the same heart of God who is filled with love, wisdom, and power.

ALL THE REDEEMED WILL AGREE WITH THE JUDGMENTS OF GOD

Paragraph E, John says, "After these things I heard a loud voice of a great multitude, saying, 'Alleluia! We agree with Your judgments'" (v. 1, paraphrased). That's the first order of business on the wedding day: they agree with Jesus instead of being offended at Him.

Number one: "After these things" means after the judgment of Babylon as described in Revelation 17-18. The judgment is after the rapture of the Church. The Body of Christ will have been raptured at this point in time. So all the redeemed are together in heaven, but it's not enough just to see that they're in heaven. They're experiencing the heavenly realm, but it's more than that. At the time of Jesus' second coming, the veil between heaven and earth is lifted. Though they're experiencing the glory of the heavenly dimension resulting from the supernatural qualities of the resurrection, they still have access and contact with the earthly realm, and it's visible to them. It's not heaven versus earth; it's heaven *and* earth, because the veil has been lifted as described in Isaiah 25:7.

I call it—not that this is a biblical term, but I think the idea is right—"the great amphitheater in the sky." At the time of the rapture the saints will have physical, material bodies, but with all the properties of the resurrection. They will see the throne of God and they will see all the events of the earth. The veil will be lifted and they will move effortlessly between both realms forever. I say this because it's an important truth to understand. I may not say that truth exactly right, but I believe I'm in the spirit of how the Bible describes it.

Roman numeral II. We're going to begin to look at the new material here in Revelation 19. Remember, the first response of the bride is agreement with the judgments of God, rather than offense and confusion. Now her second response is here in chapter 19:5-7: she's praising God with gladness of heart, which means she's rooted in gratitude. Because to praise with gladness, saying, "Thank You, God, my heart is happy," is to be grateful; that's really what that means. The Bride is established in gratitude.

Let's begin to read this. We're looking at the second part of Revelation 19:1-10. The first part is verses 1-4. The second part is verses 5-10. We're looking at the second part of this.

“PRAISE OUR GOD, ALL YOU HIS SERVANTS”

A voice came from the throne, and this voice proclaimed, “Praise our God, all you His servants” (v. 5). We don't know whose voice this is, but we know it belongs to someone speaking *with* the authority of God, but *under* the authority of God. It's not even the Holy Spirit; it's some angelic being who confesses that God is his God. It's a nameless voice, because all the attention is upon God.

Here's what the message is: “Praise our God, all you His servants” (v. 5). The key word is *all*, because this will be the first time in all of human history where all the redeemed, from Adam right down to the last one who is saved, will be together for the first time—all the redeemed of all generations with resurrected bodies will be together in the presence of God. It will be the first time this has ever happened, right here—after the rapture of the Church.

He says, “All you His servants” (v. 5). He highlights those who fear Him, both small and great. This is important because we're going to find out that David actually described this event ahead of time in Psalm 22:23. We'll examine it later. David described facets of the great marriage supper of the Lamb ahead of time. This voice is actually using the same terminology that David established and highlighted first in Psalm 22:23. David said, “You who fear the Lord, praise Him . . . and fear Him” (Ps. 22:23)! This voice is using the same language from David's prophecy, which harkens back to the great marriage supper of the Lamb that we'll look at in a short while.

“ALLELUIA! FOR THE LORD GOD OMNIPOTENT REIGNS!”

Verse 6. John hears a voice. In verse 5, he heard the prophetic decree: “Praise our God, all you His servants!” Now he hears the voice of a great multitude, “as the sound of many waters and . . . of mighty thunderings” (Rev. 19:6). The voice says, “Alleluia!” This means, in essence, “We agree with You, God; we agree with what You're doing.”

Then he gives three statements of agreement with a spirit of praise. Number one: “The Lord God Omnipotent reigns” (Rev. 19:6b). Number two: “The marriage of the Lamb has come” (v. 7). Number three—which isn't small—“His wife has made herself ready” (v. 7). The bride has said yes and fully volunteered her obedience to the Holy Spirit. We realize it's the grace of God, but the part that John emphasizes is that she has responded to the grace of God and has made herself ready.

Paragraph A. John gave three reasons for praise—three reasons to be glad and to give glory to God. Number one: God reigns. Number two: the marriage of the Lamb has come. Number three: the bride is responsive. She made herself ready. Let's look at those.

Number one: “Alleluia! For the Lord God Omnipotent reigns” (v. 6)! This idea of God Omnipotent reigning, isn't just a reference to the glorious doctrine of the omnipotence of God over all of history. There's something more specific they're declaring here. Most of you know that *omnipotence* means all-powerful, *omnipresent* means that God is present everywhere, and *omniscience* means He's all-knowing. They're declaring the omnipotence of God. In context, this isn't just the glorious *doctrine* of His omnipotence—His power over creation throughout history—but it specifically refers to His taking up of the leadership of the earth in an openly

manifest way. He's taking over the nations: that's what it's talking about even more specifically. It means that it's time for God to rule every nation in an observable, visible way, which every eye can see. The Father is doing it through the agency of His Son. The hour for His reign on the earth has come. That's more specific than the glorious doctrine of His omnipotence throughout all the ages. They're declaring in essence, "Jesus is going to replace every national government on the earth and place it under the Father's leadership." God is taking up His place of manifest government on the earth, and He's doing it through His Son, Jesus. They're saying in essence, "Jesus is coming and taking over the earth." That's what that means in this context.

JESUS WANTS TO RULE WITH A PEOPLE IN PARTNERSHIP WITH HIMSELF

Number two: the second thing for which they praise God. They say with a spirit of praise, "We agree! Alleluia! The marriage of the Lamb has come." It's not just that Jesus wants to rule the earth, but that He wants to rule it in partnership with people. The marriage means, "Yes, I will rule, but not by Myself."

This is stunning in its implication. He didn't need for us to rule the earth. In John 17:24—the verse that we quote so often here at IHOP–KC—Jesus said in His High Priestly Prayer, "Father, I desire that she may be with Me where I am, that she may behold My glory which You have given Me" (Jn. 17:24, paraphrased).

So, number one, we have the reality that Jesus is taking over the earth; number two, we have the marriage. He will only do it in the context of His people. He wants to do it with her. "Father, I desire that she may be with Me where I am." Number three: the great miracle of human history. This is an unprecedented miracle: the Bride is responsive. She has made herself ready. That's the glory of being equally yoked in love in the partnership.

So those are the three points of focus. Jesus is taking over the earth so that the Father will reign through Him. He's doing it with a people, and not just with a people in a marriage relationship, but a people who are responsive to Him in love. They're equally yoked in love. It's a remarkable statement.

ALL THE SAINTS HAVE BEEN GATHERED AND BROUGHT TO A HOLY CONVOCATION

Paragraph B. We have to grasp the setting to see the drama of the grand announcement in verse 5. The grand announcement is, "Praise our God, all you servants of the Lord" (v. 5, paraphrased). The setting is the most unique day in human history. The rapture of the Church has just happened. All the redeemed are together with resurrected bodies for the first time ever in human history. The key idea is that all the servants of God are together. That's a brand new reality. It has never happened before.

Now each one of the saints has been gathered and brought to this glorious, holy convocation. This is the first holy convocation. I estimate that several billion saints from all of human history are there together for the first time, along with billions of angels. This is a massive worship gathering, the first one when everyone is present. The saints have just been resurrected. They have been given new garments in addition to the garment of righteousness. They have new job assignments. They have glorious responsibilities. Many things are happening, and because they're still humans they're processing everything that's happening. So much is happening so fast!

The voice from the throne breaks forth. Remember, there are possibly two to three billion saints and billions more angels—we don't know how many, but the number is innumerable. The whole congregation is gathered before the Lord. The voice is saying in essence, "Stop everything you're doing."

The saints are excited. They're preoccupied. Everything is new—new garments, new roles, new assignments, new setting. The voice says in effect, "Cease everything you're doing and gather."

Some of you might have the wrong idea that all you do in heaven is worship. It's not. As a matter of fact, you'll have very extensive job responsibilities forever and forever, because remember, the work which was given to Adam before he sinned was an extension of the glory of God; it was partnership with God. Work wasn't a curse. The curse was working with frustration in the heat of the sun by the sweat of the brow—that was the curse, not the work itself. Forever you'll be occupied with assignments from God in partnership with Him: assignments which are important between you and the Lord. It's not as if you're going to a billion-year worship service. There will be times when all of heaven will gather together and all the work will cease. Worship continues night and day around the throne, but the rule will be reigning and ruling with Him forever and forever; working with a spirit of worship, with times of direct worship.

On the very first day when they will all be gathered, the voice will say in essence, "Stop everything you're doing in this vast city! Everyone gather to the big place of holy convocation!" They will gather before God, before His throne. That's what's going on here.

"THE STONE WHICH THE BUILDERS REJECTED HAS BECOME THE CHIEF CORNERSTONE"

Number two: the uniqueness of the day. It will be a historic day beyond anything we can really imagine. As a matter of fact, Psalm 118 describes this day. It's the day when the stone which the builders rejected becomes the chief cornerstone (Ps. 118:22). Who is that stone? Jesus! The builders, the leaders of Israel, rejected that stone. It's the day when the rejected stone becomes the chief cornerstone on which the Father is building the millennial earth in the age to come. He is the stone on which everything is built, not only in this age, but in the age to come. The entire new world order is built on the rejected stone.

He is now the cornerstone. He is the cornerstone throughout history, but then He will be openly manifest to all the nations. Everything is built on this Jewish Man who is fully God and fully Man. He has become—openly, before all the nations—the chief cornerstone on whom all society is built in a very specific, not just a symbolic way.

"This is the day that the Lord has made" (Ps. 118:24). We know this verse. It's talking about the day of the Lord's return and the beginning of the millennial kingdom when Jesus is manifest as the chief cornerstone before all nations. They cry out, "We will rejoice and be glad in it" (ibid). This is the very language the bride will use on the wedding day—"We will rejoice and be glad"—because Psalm 118 is actually describing that day. When the psalmist said, "This is the day," it's talking about the day we're reading about in Revelation 19.

"Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord" (Ps. 118:26)! Most of us are familiar with that verse, because in Matthew 23:39, Jesus said in effect, "I won't return to Jerusalem until the Jewish leaders declare this to Me" (Mt. 23:39, paraphrased). When they do, the millennial kingdom will start and His throne will be set up in Jerusalem.

The point is this: on the day when everyone gathers before the throne to rejoice and be glad, they will do it because the omnipotence of God is manifest on the earth through a Jewish man named Jesus of Nazareth, fully God and fully Man. It isn't remarkable that God would rule the earth. What is remarkable is that a man would rule the earth. Of course the great mystery is that He is fully God and fully Man. Great is the mystery.

“THE LORD SHALL BE KING OVER ALL THE EARTH”

Zechariah 14 talks about that day and describes it in verse 7: “It shall be one day which is known to the Lord” (Zech. 14:7). The words “one day” means it will be a unique day—unique in history. Those ideas are connected: one and unique. On it, “The Lord shall be King over all the earth. On that day it shall be—‘The Lord is one,’ and His name one” (v. 9). The idea is that the Lord is unique. His name is unique. There are dimensions of His name which we don’t know and grasp (Rev. 19:12).

My point is that on this great dramatic day, all the saints are gathered together. They’re fully experiencing the heavenly realm, but they have a view of the entire earthly realm as well, because the veil has been lifted. They have gathered together. Many things are happening in their mind and in their heart. The voice from the throne says in effect, “Stop everything!” This is the first holy convocation in all of history where every single redeemed person and all the angels are present for the first time. It’s a new beginning. The Man Jesus is taking up His leadership on the earth.

“A VOICE LIKE MANY WATERS AND LIKE MIGHTY THUNDERINGS”

Paragraph C. The great multitude cries out, “Alleluia! Jesus reigns; He is taking over the leadership of the earth. The marriage has come. He is doing it in partnership with people. The bride is ready; she’s responsive to His leadership” (Rev. 19:6-7, paraphrased). Wow! Everything God said is coming to pass in open manifestation on the earth. These aren’t just realities happening in heaven. They will be displayed in the earthly realm for all to see.

The voice of the great multitude is like the sound of many waters, like the sound of mighty thunderings. For those of you who have read the book of Revelation—which most of you have many times— this is instantly familiar. Whose voice is like many waters and like thunder? The voice of God (Rev. 1:15). However, this isn’t the voice of God, this is the voice of the multitude.

Here’s what will be happening. During this first worship gathering, when all the saints will gather and everything will be set aside, so many new things will be happening in the lives of all believers. It will be so dramatic. So much will be happening in such a short period of time. They will focus on the Father and say in effect, “Praise be to God!” My opinion is that the primary focus in this call to worship is on the Father, though we need not distinguish and make the Son secondary, because They’re both in it together with the Spirit moving as well. If I had to guess which one is in focus here, I would think it’s the Father.

Here’s what is happening. The Spirit is so powerfully anointing this first all-redeemed-from-history worship service. It’s the first one. There’s an anointing that’s so dramatic, because the bride is in complete unity with God and they’re in complete unity with one another, as Jesus prayed in John 17:21-22. It has come to pass now. There’s a corporate praise and worship time where the anointing of the Spirit is so powerful that the corporate body sounds just like God. Specifically in the book of Revelation, together in unity with Jesus, she sounds just like Jesus. He is described as having a voice like many waters, but this isn’t the individual voice: it’s everyone together. It’s Psalm 133: the commanded blessing of God in the full manifestation. The bride actually sounds like Jesus when she speaks together with one voice. That’s like a divine endorsement of being equally yoked in love. When she speaks together in unity, the Spirit is anointing her in such a profound way.

Paragraph D. They’re saying, “Praise be to God!” The wedding starts with a focus on the Father and with a spirit of gratitude and with so many glorious things happening. They have a new body. They’re figuring it out.

They have new clothing. They have garments that are radiant. They have a new environment. There's a reunion of the saints from all the ages. It's exciting. They all come together to the Father. They come and they say, "Thank You! Praise be to You!" It's like the ten lepers: the nine didn't return to say, "Thank You," when they were healed; only one returned (Lk. 17:17-18).

The entire redeemed community starts off, saying, "Thank You, for Your Son is reigning on the earth. He's doing it in partnership with us and by the anointing of the Spirit. We were ready for the miracle of history. Thank You!"

Who conceived such an idea? Of course the genius of this glorious plan was flowing from the Father's heart. He designed the plan to send Jesus. Jesus said it a number of times: "The Father sent Me." It was the Father's idea to give Jesus an inheritance that would be His eternal companion. It was the Father's idea to send the Spirit to prepare us. It was the Father's idea to join the heavenly and the earthly realms together under human leadership with Jesus as the Head, fully God and fully Man. Only the Father could have come up with such a storyline.

Our beginning together starts with gratitude, adoration, and humility: "Thank You, God. We see where this is going now. Only You could have come up with such a storyline as this."

"LET US BE GLAD AND REJOICE AND GIVE HIM GLORY"

Paragraph E. We thank Him. The Lord God Omnipotent reigns. When God's reign is declared in the book of Revelation, it's pointing to Jesus' earthly reign in the millennial kingdom. When it talks about God beginning to reign, it doesn't mean He began to reign in heaven. He has been reigning in heaven from eternity past. There's nothing new about God reigning in heaven. There's no new announcement necessary to explain that He reigns in heaven. The new piece of information is that He is reigning on the earth in an open display which no one can challenge—full leadership over every segment of society and every single little village in every single nation of the earth.

Paragraph F. "Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory" (Rev. 19:7). Here are these three phrases: be glad, rejoice, and give Him glory. We can root our heart in the truths of Revelation 19:5-10 now, because we become glad as we rejoice in these three truths and as we glorify God for them. My question is, "Are you glad?" Talking about in your life, has God broken the spirit of despair, condemnation, depression, and self-preoccupation, which we all come by so naturally?

THERE'S A SPIRIT OF GLADNESS THAT'S STRONGER THAN THE SPIRIT OF DESPAIR

The way we're made glad in this age is the same way we're made glad in the age to come. It's by rejoicing with our mouth and consciously glorifying God for three things. Jesus will rule the whole earth; it's just a matter of time. He rules it now, but I'm talking about the open manifestation of His rule. Secondly, He wants us to rule with Him; He doesn't want to rule alone. Thirdly, the spirit of grace is available to everyone who wants to be made ready.

I find myself sometimes quieting my heart. I say, "I want to be glad. I want a spirit of gladness." So I will consciously rejoice and thank God and give Him glory for these three truths related to my life and the future of the earth.

I tell you, even in this age, when we align our hearts with these truths, there's a spirit of gladness. I don't mean that it's unbroken and that we don't have to sign up for it again and again and again, but there's a spirit of gladness that's stronger than the spirit of despair. I'm talking about gladness that's rooted in truth. I'm talking about a spirit of joy that's rooted in revelation. Again, we will operate in gladness in the age to come by these three truths touching our spirit, but we can actually begin to appropriate it even now.

Paragraph G. The big statement is that the marriage of the Lamb has come—John 17:21-24. The great day of human history has finally come. It's more than the fact that we're raised from the dead. Being raised from the dead with a resurrected body is awesome, but there's something more. We're raised from the dead with a glorified body. The angels have supernatural bodies and they're doing well, but there's more than a resurrected body and forgiveness of sin. We will be in profound union of heart and mind with the uncreated God, Christ Jesus, by His desire and by the Father's design. This is the declaration.

Beloved, it's more than escaping hell. It's more than happiness in the age to come with a supernatural supply of everything. It's profound connectedness. The marriage of the Lamb, the full connection of humans with the God Man, with Jesus, has finally come—face-to-face connection on the earth that will go on forever, because the marriage isn't just a connection. Now we're technically married to Him when we're born again, but I'm talking about face-to-face encounter on the earth, face-to-face with connection to His heart.

The things He prayed in John 17:21-24 will be fully manifest. They're manifest in part now, but they will be fully manifest in that day.

THE CHOICES OF THE INDIVIDUAL FOR LOVE ARE MAGNIFIED AND EMPHASIZED

Paragraph H. She made herself ready. John emphasizes the role of the individual's free will. He doesn't say Jesus made her ready. That would be true, but on the wedding day, there's a recognition that we actually did our part.

Over the years I've heard people say, "Well, if God wants me free, He will make me free; if God wants me humble, He will make me humble; if God wants me this or that, He will make me."

The Scripture says, in effect, "No, you choose and He will give you inspiration and He will give you ability, but you have to choose." On the wedding day, the choices of the individual for love is magnified and emphasized. It takes nothing from God, but rather it magnifies the power of the beauty of Jesus touching the heart of the individuals.

Know this: the Spirit cares about our individual choices. We must voluntarily choose to love and obey. That we choose is the very definition of love. There's no substitute for obedience—none. No one can do it for you. Your good friend or family member can't love God for you. Only you can give God all your love; only you can. Yes, it's certain that the corporate bride will be ready, but it's not certain that you'll be ready. God will have a corporate people, but as individuals, each one of us must decide. It's not automatic. God won't decide for you and no one else will. We decide day by day, decision by decision.

That decision is not only important, but it's remembered and honored by God on the wedding day. I mentioned last week that the bride makes herself ready by coming into agreement with Jesus in every area of her life: in

her character, her understanding, and her power. Those are the three ways. In our heart, in our mind, and in our ministry, we make ourselves ready. We come into agreement with Jesus.

Roman numeral III. The Bride's rewards. Verse 7: "His wife has made herself ready" (Rev. 19:7). That's the human part; that's human responsibility. She responded. Now by the grace of God it was granted to her to be arrayed—or to be beautified. In Isaiah 61:3, it says that He will give us beauty for ashes. The beauty He gives He imparts to us. She will be beautified by the grace of God on that day.

Here's the most amazing part: "To her it was granted to be arrayed, to be beautified, in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints" (Rev. 19:8, paraphrased). We all receive the gift of righteousness freely. Our foundational garments are the free gift of righteousness. In addition to the free gift of righteousness—the garments of righteousness—we have clothing that will be individual and distinct to every single believer.

HE SEES AND REWARDS ALL THE SECRET CHOICES OF OUR HEARTS

Paragraph A. It was granted to her. God's grace is emphasized. Here's the emphasis: that He rewards us for our small and weak acts of obedience. I mean, it's remarkable what He rewards us for. We make the smallest act of obedience in humility and we say no to sin and yes to love. He remembers it and the miracle of it is that no one else would give us a dime for the activity in our heart which just took place. No one saw it, but He gives us eternal rewards. He pays us so well for doing so little. Our love is flawed and our love is frail, but our love is real. He pays us so well.

The fact that we will have beautiful garments which are a manifestation of our devotion to Him is because of the way He evaluates so generously. We will have garments and rewards. We'll say, "Lord, did that really move You that much?"

The answer will be, "Yes."

Paragraph B. Our individual responses will be honored and remembered by the Lord. Rewards we receive in the age to come declare how Jesus feels about the way we loved Him in this life. Beloved, when we receive these rewards, we will wear our love forever in our garments. I mean the love you have for Him in this age which people don't even know about because it's done in the secret transactions of your heart. You make choices for love, purity, or humility which no one else recognizes, but He does, and you'll wear that forever.

The next time you hear yourself agree with the devil and say, "It isn't worth it; I can't take it anymore," say instead, "In the name of Jesus, I rebuke that lie and expose it. I will wear forever the love I show for Him, even in the secret place of my life, that no one recognizes."

It matters what we do each step of the way in the face of temptation, and not just temptation but sin and difficulty. It's hard. It's small. No one honors what you're doing. No one recognizes it. There's no manifestation of the presence of God, but you're still obeying. I tell you, it moves Him. You'll wear it forever.

It matters what we do even in the place of boredom. Take hold of that spirit of boredom. Cast it out and engage yourself with God. Open His Word and serve His people and shake off the spirit of slumber. Don't get away

with as little as you can, but make yourself rich towards God by obedience in this age, even in small acts that no one else sees.

“TO HER IT WAS GRANTED TO BE ARRAYED IN FINE LINEN, CLEAN AND BRIGHT”

Paragraph C. He highlights two different facets of her garments: clean and bright. *Clean* means they're pure. This is in contrast to the harlot in Revelation 17:4, who was arrayed in garments, but they were impure. Her activity was impure. These are garments that are clean because they're the expression of a lifestyle that was clean in our secret life. They aren't just clean, but bright. There's a supernatural dimension of glory. It's not just that there's an absence of defilement, but they're glorious.

In Matthew 17:2, on the Mount of Transfiguration, Jesus appeared in garments of light. In the place of bright, put the words “the light of the glory of God.” We will have garments composed of light. I don't know all that's involved. In Psalm 104:2, it says that God clothes Himself in garments of light. Our garments will be clean, because they will be an expression of living clean in secret, and God honors us for that. We already have the gift of righteousness. That isn't what this is talking about. It's talking about garments that give expression to the quality of life you lived in this age. Not only will they be clean; they'll be bright. There will be a supernatural dimension to them, because we're engaging with the Spirit in the secret place of our life. We will have clothing that expresses that supernatural dimension—the brightness of the light of the glory of God.

Roman numeral IV. Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper. The most commonly-agreed upon opinion by commentators who take end-time prophecy at face value—I'm not talking about the people who just symbolize it and write it off as symbolic—is that the wedding supper begins at the second coming in the Millennium and continues for the entire thousand-year reign. I don't know if that's true. I believe it begins at the Millennium. Probably it goes the entire seventh day—a day is like a thousand years—an entire day of God's history on the earth. The feast takes place on the earth, but it has a heavenly dimension to it as well.

Paragraph B. I'll just mention this and then leave it to you to read on your own. The Jewish marriage custom had three stages. There was the betrothal stage. There was the procession-to-the-wedding-ceremony stage. There were the wedding feast days. There are three stages. You can read that paragraph on your own if you would like. The marriage feast is the third stage.

Roman numeral V. I'm out of time, but I want to recommend these scriptures to you so that you'll read them. I want to stir your curiosity and hunger. There are many prophetic pictures of the marriage supper in Scripture. In paragraphs A, B, and C, I give a lot of snapshots where you can get more information in the Bible to get a clearer picture about this grand day called the wedding feast.

WE WILL DRINK OF THE MARRIAGE WINE ON THE MOUNTAIN OF GOD

Paragraph D. I love this one! Isaiah gives us insight into the marriage supper. I believe this is for believers with resurrected bodies and even for the people of the nations on the millennial earth. On a mountain the Lord will make a feast of choice pieces. He will make the greatest feast of all of history. The Lord will host the feast. This will happen on this mountain (Isa. 25:6).

Actually, four times in the passage, four different times—three times in Isaiah 25 and once in Isaiah 24:23, the verse before this passage—four times in this context, Isaiah mentions the mountain. It's on this mountain that God will host a feast for all the nations—on a mountain. It's the mountain around Jerusalem, of course. The

point I want to make is that there are heavenly qualities to this mountain in verses 7-8, but there are also earthly qualities to this mountain in verse 10. In verse 10, He judges Moab. He defeats His natural enemies on this mountain. It's on the same mountain that death is swallowed up and is no more, and that He will wipe away all the tears from all eyes forever.

The point is this: in Isaiah 25, four times Isaiah mentions the mountain. One time he says it's the mountain where Jesus reigns (Isa. 24:23). The next time, in Isaiah 25:6, it's the mountain where God hosts the great feast. In verses 7-8, it's the mountain with supernatural qualities. Death is completely vanquished on this mountain. And unless we think it's only a heavenly mountain, in verse 10 it's mentioned as the mountain where Moab—a nation that was hostile towards Israel—is defeated. There's an earthly natural dimension. So there's a merging of the two realms that happens on this mountain. The great marriage supper of the Lamb is hosted by God on this mountain. The heavenly and the earthly dimensions are interacting with one another. There's a dynamic connection between the heavenly and the earthly.

Paragraph E. This is absolutely superb. Psalm 22:1-21, the first half of the psalm, describes negative experiences. It's describing Jesus at His crucifixion—the heavy dimension of the sorrow Jesus went through. The second half of the psalm, verses 22-31, shifts dramatically and becomes gloriously positive.

The psalm is about Jesus. It's recognized by most commentators as the superb messianic psalm—which means a psalm about the Messiah. There are a number of messianic psalms, but none greater than Psalm 22. In the second half of this psalm—verse 22-31—Jesus describes facets of the marriage supper of the Lamb. In verse 22, Jesus declares the name of the Father in the midst of the assembly of all the saints through history. Can you imagine Jesus Himself teaching us about the Father? At the great marriage supper, the theme will be the Father and the Teacher will be the Son (Jn. 17:26; Heb. 2:12).

David urges us to glorify and fear the Lord (Ps. 22:23). This is quoted in Revelation 19:5. The voice from the throne lifts this verse right out of Psalm 22 and quotes it for the wedding day. David said it first, and Revelation 19:5 records it a thousand years later.

Here's my favorite, Psalm 22:25: “My praise shall be of You in the great assembly” (Ps. 22:25). This is Jesus talking about the Father. It's as if He says, “When the great assembly gathers, I'm going to tell them about You. I will pay My vows before those who fear You.” Jesus is talking to the Father: “Father, I will pay My vows to You, but in the presence of all the redeemed of history. I will keep My vows to You, Father” (v. 25b, paraphrased).

I love this psalm. “All the ends of the earth will turn to the Lord at that time. All the families of the earth will worship” (Ps. 22:27, paraphrased). The context is the millennial kingdom, no question!

“The kingdom is the Lord's. He rules over all the nations” (Ps. 22:28, paraphrased). “And on the day Jesus reigns on the earth, all the prosperous of the earth will eat and worship” (v. 29, paraphrased).

“What? Eat and worship? What does that mean?”

When Jesus is in the midst of the assembly, all the prosperous—all the great ones of the earth—will eat and worship. These are facets of the marriage supper of the Lamb. I lost you on the eating; I knew I should have held on there.

Paragraph G. God hosted a meal for Moses and the seventy elders of Israel. God caught them up in the Spirit and they ate a meal with God on the sapphire pavement before the throne. That was a prophetic insight into the marriage supper of the Lamb. There's a lot to say about that, but we're out of time. Well, I don't have that much to say, but a little more than I already said.

Paragraph H. This is a great one: David, as a prototype of the Messiah, had a royal coronation banquet. When he was established as king of Israel, when he was received as king by all the great warriors of the land, there was a great banquet in the land (1 Chr. 12:38). They were all in unity. That was a down payment, I believe, with messianic overtones of the marriage supper of the Lamb. They were all there with one mind and a loyal heart. All of Israel together is making him king. This has overtones of what will happen on that great day.

THE LORD WILL SUMMON ALL THE BIRDS TO THE GREAT SUPPER OF GOD ALMIGHTY

Paragraph I. The great supper. The Bible calls it the great supper, where God invites the vultures and all the birds that together will eat the flesh of men. It's called the great supper of God. You wonder what this is. The birds will feast on all those who are killed in the battle of Jerusalem at the end of the Armageddon campaign—the millions of soldiers from all over the earth.

This has a parallel and connection to the marriage supper of the Lamb. Both of them are called the supper of God. I read this and I say, "Lord, why are You calling that a supper, when You call all the birds to eat the flesh of these millions?" Maybe there will be tens of millions, maybe more; maybe hundreds of millions, I don't know—the place where all the soldiers of the nations of the earth will come. God will kill them and God will tell the birds to eat them.

I say, "Why are You calling this a supper?"

I can only think of one reason. It's because the suppers He gives—the birds eating the flesh of the enemies of God and the marriage supper—are the same subject; they're two sides of one coin. The supper reflected in the death of the wicked who hate God and the supper of great blessing for those who love God are deeply and intimately connected, because together they're expressions of one great plan to transition the earth under the leadership of God.

It's a big statement about how God views the great slaughter that's coming. He isn't ashamed of it. He says in effect that it's necessary. It's as if He says, "It's an expression of My desire to show My leadership with My bride and to have a supper for all of those who say yes to Me."

I guess we covered the whole outline. I've never done that before! Let me just say this: "I've never done this! Really, it's the first time!"

In verse 9, the angel tells John, "Write this and make it known: blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb" (Rev. 19:9). John is commissioned to make this truth known. This is foundational to the forerunner ministry and the forerunner calling. Then he goes on and says that the testimony of Jesus is the true

spirit of prophecy (v. 10). The forerunner calling to make known the marriage supper and all the events related to it, positive and negative, is the true spirit of prophecy. That's the point. The end-time forerunners must devour these truths and be living expressions of them. The angel told John in effect, "Write these truths; make them known. Lay hold of these." These truths are critical to the forerunner ministry at the end of the age. This is the true spirit of prophecy.

Amen. Let's stand.

MINISTRY TIME

Lord, we say yes. We want to write these truths. We want to preach these truths. We want to sing them. We want dramas to show them forth. We want to express them in every way possible: in the arts, in music, in writing, through technology, through preaching, and testimony. We want to make known these truths.

Some of you are saying yes to that, and obviously the vast majority of you in this room are saying, "I want to be one that makes these truths known; this is my story. I want to be captured in this storyline of God."

Beloved, it's the story of every believer; but for those who are forerunners, it's your message and not just your personal story. It's actually your message.

I'm going to pray for those who say, "I want my heart to be made glad. I want to be glad and rooted in the revelation of these truths." Remember, verse 7 tells us to be glad, and here's how you're glad: by rejoicing and glorifying God for these truths.

I want anyone who says, "I need God to lift off this thing which is attacking my heart and I want this spirit of gladness to touch me." I'm not talking about a spirit of silliness; I'm talking about a gladness that's rooted in the revelation of the marriage supper of the Lamb. If you're saying, "I want this," and you would like prayer for this, I would like you to come forward.

The enemy wants to assault you; he wants to take you out. And the Holy Spirit wants you to be glad. Again, I'm talking about a gladness rooted in truth and revelation. Here's what you're saying to the Lord: "I will rejoice in this. I will get these truths in my mouth. I will start saying them to You. I will thank You for them. I will rejoice."