

Session 4 Jesus the Bridegroom King: Hosting a Wedding

INTRODUCTION

Misty is speaking tonight, so let's pray for her. Lord I ask You, just as she's preparing, that You would visit her with the spirit of revelation, a spirit of boldness; that You would give her clarity in her spirit even now and release the manifest presence of God as she shares Your heart tonight in the name of Jesus. Amen and amen.

OK. Top of page 23: "Jesus the Bridegroom King: Hosting a Wedding," from Revelation 19. Then we'll take a break and come back and do the second part of Revelation 19: "Jesus Waging a War."

Now both halves of this chapter are very, very important and they must be read together to understand the full picture. Revelation 19 is a must-know chapter. Now just make note of that. You must know Revelation 19: the exciting part, the wedding, and the terrifying part, the war. You have to understand both together. Natural history ends with a glorious wedding and a global war. That's how natural history ends, and Jesus returns to begin the age to come.

Now both of these subjects point to the same reality. It's Jesus' desire to fill the earth with love, to fill the earth with righteousness and love. He goes to war for the sake of a wedding. He wants to remove everything that hinders love. That's what's on His mind. The judgment of God is because of love. It's not in contradiction to love; it's because of love. He wants to remove everything that hinders love. That's what judgment is about. The final battle of natural history, as we'll see in the next session, results in Jesus ruling the earth in partnership with His bride.

WE CAN'T UNDERSTAND THE WAR WITHOUT SEEING THE WEDDING

Paragraph B. Again, I want to say, we have to read both halves of Revelation 19 together. Because the way to understand the glory of the wedding is to see how extreme the war is, and the way to understand the violence of the war is the passion He has for the wedding. Both of them are necessary to understand the other. We won't understand His motive for the war without seeing His desire for the wedding.

Now the war is shocking. You might not catch some of the details on a casual reading. But when we bring what the rest of Scripture says to bear upon the second half of Revelation 19, the war is shocking. Jesus confronts rebellion openly on a global level. It's shocking. He kills all the kings of the earth in one day. Now many believers have never read that verse, or they've never registered it. Did you know that the day is coming where Jesus is going to gather every king of the earth to one city, Jerusalem, and slay them?

You think, "What? Where is that in the Bible?" Well, I'm glad you asked, because I have notes on it. We'll look at it. It's shocking, but even more shocking is that He's doing this for a wedding. He's going to bind Himself forever to people like us. That's more shocking than the war. Why would the uncreated God, Jesus, who was God from eternity past, bind Himself to us forever in a wedding?

THE JESUS OF CHRISTMAS IS THE JESUS OF ARMAGEDDON

Paragraph C. Now there is no contradiction, no contradiction at all between Jesus the Bridegroom who loves us and Jesus the King who wages a war to rule the nations. There is no contradiction in that at all.

Paragraph D. Revelation 19:7. We'll look at the key verse of the first half of this chapter. The marriage of the Lamb has come. Jesus is the Lamb, obviously. The praise is going forth in the courts of heaven. Finally, the marriage of Jesus has come and the wife, the Bride of Christ, the Church throughout the ages, throughout all the generations, from the very beginning, from Adam all the way down, all the redeemed, have made themselves ready. There will be a generation that prepares itself in radical obedience. There will be a generation that responds beyond any other generation in history. And that's the generation being described here. Natural history will end with the Bride of Christ, the Church, saying yes to Jesus in such radical abandonment that she will be ready for the wedding day.

THE MARRIAGE OF THE LAMB: GOD'S MISSION STATEMENT FOR CREATION

Now I call the marriage of the Lamb "God's mission statement for creation."

If we would interview God and say, "What is Your mission statement?" I think He would say something like, "The marriage of My Son to His people." That's the guiding principle for which God has led human history. In all that He's doing, He's preparing a bride. He's raising up a prepared bride for a worthy Son. Throughout all the generations, He has kept this in focus: to raise up a prepared bride for a worthy Son.

Now often that's not what we have in our minds. We're trying to release pressure, make life easier, make our ministry work, make our relationships work, and get enough money. The Lord cares about those things, but He has a bigger picture, a bigger plan. He's raising you up to be a prepared bride for a worthy Son. He says, "Yes, I care about those things in your life, but there's a bigger vision that You have to know about. You have a bigger role in history than just having your life work out in practical ways in this age."

So there it is. Revelation 19:7. God's ultimate purpose for creation—to provide an eternal companion for His Son, a bride.

THE STRUGGLE MAKES SENSE IF WE KNOW WHERE WE'RE GOING

Paragraph E. Now natural history will end at the second coming. Human history continues past the second coming, of course, but history just in the natural sense ends at that time and the age to come begins. And natural history ends with a bride made ready for her Bridegroom. God is creating the optimum environment for us to get prepared, that we would love Jesus in a voluntary way. I want to say that again: the Father is creating the optimum environment for us to obey and respond in wholeheartedness.

Now that optimum environment includes pressure. It includes persecution. It includes the outpouring of the Spirit. It includes standing before temptation and saying no. All of these work together to prepare us in mature love for the Son in that day. My point is this: there is a big drama that you're a part of. If you keep this vision before you that there is something bigger going on, life isn't just aimless; it's not about just making some things work and getting rid of pressure. Our struggle makes sense if we know where we're going. We're on our way to our own wedding. That's where we're going. That's what is happening right now.

THE FATHER PROMISED THE NATIONS AS AN INHERITANCE TO JESUS

Look at paragraph G. Or let's look at Psalm 2:8: the Father promised to give the nations as an inheritance to Jesus. Jesus' inheritance is His people. Did you know that you're the inheritance of the Lord Jesus? You're what He wants. You're what He wants. You're the inheritance that the Father has given Him.

In Ephesians 1, Paul prayed that we would know the riches of the glory of being Jesus' inheritance (Eph. 1:18). Beloved, we need to know who we are to Him. We're not just people whose passports He stamped: "Saved. Rescued from hell. Next! Saved. Go on in the city. Rescued from hell." He did so much more than stamp our passport. We're His inheritance. We're His eternal companion.

And look at what Paul prayed. He said, "Oh Father, let them see the riches of the glory of being the inheritance of Jesus" (Eph. 1:18, paraphrased). So the issue that we care about understanding is the riches of the worth of Jesus, His worthiness. Beloved, He's worth so much to us. He is worthy of all of our adoration. But that's not the end of the story. It's not only that He's worth so much to us. That's reasonable. What's shocking is how much you're worth to Him. You're worth so much to Him. This is what Paul prayed, that we would know the riches of the glory of how much we're worth to Him as His inheritance.

Turn to the top of page 24. Now Jesus is very committed to His wedding. This has been on His mind from the beginning. All of history centers around the drama of this wedding which ends natural history. Let's look at the very beginning. Paragraph A. History began with Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden, joined as bride and bridegroom. At first glance, it seems to be just the story of Adam and Eve. But many years later, Paul the apostle came along. By the anointing of the Holy Spirit, God told him, "There's more than meets the eye. Adam and Eve as bride and bridegroom was a prophetic picture of Jesus and His church as bride and Bridegroom."

Paul the apostle was the one that made that known to us. In the relationship of Adam and Eve, we see a prophetic picture of Jesus joined to His church (Eph. 5:27-32). But the picture didn't just begin in the garden of Eden; it ends in the garden of Eden.

THE WASTED PLACES WILL BECOME LIKE EDEN'S GARDEN

Look at paragraph B. Natural history ends in an Eden-like city called the New Jerusalem. It's a heavenly city with all the elements of the garden of Eden and the glorious temple of God coming together in this glorious city. But in this city, Jesus and His people are joined fully in an open way as Bridegroom and bride.

Let's look at paragraph C. I want to show you the importance of this, of Jesus' wedding to Him. Paragraph C. Jesus began His ministry at a wedding. He ended His ministry by describing the kingdom as the Father preparing a wedding for Him. Then He began His ministry to the apostles. When He first gathered the apostles to Himself, He revealed Himself to them as a bridegroom. He said, "I'm the Bridegroom" (Mt. 9:15, paraphrased). And then at the end of His ministry to the apostles, He called them again to the reality of Himself as the Bridegroom God. History ends with the Church crying out right before the second coming, globally in her bridal identity (Rev. 22:17). The Church is crying out, the Spirit and the Bride, saying, "Come, Lord Jesus! Come, Lord Jesus!" So the Church ends in her bridal identity as well.

FOREVER HE IS THE GOD WITH BURNING DESIRE FOR HIS PEOPLE

Look at Roman numeral III. God's nature, His eternal personality, is love. Here's my point: Jesus is a bridegroom king; that's the nature of His heart. He isn't like a bridegroom. At the core of His being, He actually is a bridegroom. Being King is what He does; it's His function. He demonstrates His power to exert His rule. But at the core of His being, He's One who loves His people. At the core of His being, He's a bridegroom God.

It's not symbolic. It's not something He does for a moment. Forever He is the God with burning desire for His people. It says here in 1 John 4:16, "God is love" (1 Jn. 4:16). Now love isn't something that He does; it's

something that He is. He is the overflowing fountain of desire for His people. He desires to share the joy of His love with His people. That's who He is at His core. God is love.

Now love by definition is relational. Love isn't just something God does; it's who He is. At the core of Jesus' being, He is relational. He wants to be deeply involved with us in partnership forever. The reason I'm saying this is that we can only understand God's purposes when we understand this relational paradigm of who He is.

JESUS WANTS TO BE PRAISED IN THE CONTEXT OF A RELATIONSHIP OF LOVE

Sometimes—paragraph B—we think of Jesus as a great king. And surely He is. But He is a distant king to many people. And we think of Him as this powerful, mighty king who at a distance is reigning. And we think His main interest in us is to save us so we'll worship Him and we'll work for Him.

Beloved, Jesus is looking for something more than affirmation and a free workforce. He has more on His heart than getting affirmation and raising up a workforce. Now His great worth, His great glory demands that we praise Him. But it's important that we understand: He wants to be praised in the context of a relationship of love.

THE BRIDEGROOM MESSAGE IS THE REVELATION OF JESUS' EMOTIONS

Let's look at paragraph C. The bridegroom message is about Jesus' emotions for us. Someone will ask, "What is the bridegroom message?" It's the revelation of His emotions for us, and it's the revelation of His commitments to us. And the bridegroom message also involves our radical commitment back to Him.

People have said, "I want to preach the bridegroom message. What is it?" We want to focus on His emotions. Beloved, Jesus has more than power; He's a God of deep emotions. He's moved by the way that we love Him. He not only moves us but we move Him. It's almost scandalous to our minds that weak and broken people could respond in a way that moves Him so deeply. We're committed to preaching the bridegroom message in the context of the larger story of salvation. I mean, our message is the salvation story; but it's not just the Savior who forgives—it's the Bridegroom who deeply engages with the people He forgives.

Turn to the top of page 25. Let's go down to paragraph G. Now in the Old Testament, Israel understood that the Messiah was a king. They understood that God was a king with power. That's clear. That's easy for most people to grasp who love God: He's a king with power. But the prophets came along. Isaiah was the first, and he said, "He's more than a king with power; He's a bridegroom with desire. He wants relationship. He doesn't just want to rule you; He wants to relate with you. Even more, He wants to rule with you over the nations, over the nations in a deep relationship, even the relationship of marriage."

This was a very difficult idea for the Old Testament covenant people, undoubtedly. Isaiah and Hosea were contemporaries; they were the first two prophets to give this message. He's more than a king with power; He's a bridegroom with desire. That must have really thrown off the covenant people. "What do you mean? God is so transcendent. He's so powerful; He's so high. How could He ever stoop so low to be in relationship, even a marriage relationship? This is unthinkable."

THERE IS NOTHING SENSUAL ABOUT OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH JESUS

Now when we talk about the Bridegroom God and the Bride of Christ, His redeemed, His church, it's important that you don't bring any sensual or romantic dimensions into this. Now some people do that and that's not

biblical. When I say Jesus is our Bridegroom, it means He opens His heart and shares His emotions with us and brings us close to Him in intimate interaction in relationship in terms of sharing His heart. There is no sensual, romantic dimension to it. Every now and then, one of the young ladies in the Bible school says, “I’m going on a date night with Jesus!”

I say, “No, Jesus doesn’t go on date nights! He isn’t your boyfriend! You’re watching too many movies! That’s not what we’re talking about!” Jesus being a bridegroom means He has fully opened His heart to us. That’s what it means. And He invites us into partnership with Him in the deepest way. It has no connotations of romance; you don’t hold hands with Jesus in the park. You don’t kiss Jesus. You don’t sing Him romantic love songs.

Now I know 99 percent of you get that, but there’s always that 1 percent that has funny ideas. Just forget those ideas. Jesus isn’t married to the girls any more than He’s married to the boys because it’s not about that dimension.

As a king, He shares His power with us. As a bridegroom, He shares His heart with us.

AS A BRIDEGROOM, HE WANTS TO RULE ALONGSIDE US FOREVER

Let’s look at paragraph G. Number two. As a king, He wants service. As a bridegroom, He wants partnership. He wants us to be involved with Him as we serve Him. As a king, He gives us mandates; as a bridegroom, He wants conversation with us.

Now when a king gives an order, he doesn’t want conversation. But a bridegroom wants conversation. He really wants to partner with us at this level. As a king, He wants to rule over us. As a bridegroom, He wants to rule with us. Obviously, He’s the leader. But He said, “I want you to sit with Me in My government because that’s how dear you are to Me.” As a king, He wants obedience; as a bridegroom, He wants loyal love. But Jesus said that our love is expressed through our obedience. As a king, He is worshiped by us; as a bridegroom, our worship moves Him deeply. He doesn’t just receive the affirmation and adulation of the nations, saying, “Thank You, thank You. I know. I deserve it.” It moves Him because He cares so much about us.

REVELATION 19: THE BRIDE’S RESPONSE ON THE WEDDING DAY

Now let’s look at Roman numeral IV. Revelation 19. The bride’s response on the wedding day. Now I wanted to give the background a little to make sense of Revelation 19, the great wedding. That’s where we’re going. And again, when you understand that, it makes sense of how God is leading our lives. Because if it was all about just making us happy for now, giving us more money now, giving us more anointing now, giving us a bigger ministry and making things work better, then we would be confused about why it’s not happening more.

But He says, “No, all of those things will happen even in this age to some degree, but I have a bigger plan. I’m preparing you for a wedding in which You’ll be equally yoked to My Son in love. And it will make sense fully in that day, My leadership over your life in this age.”

THE BRIDE’S RESPONSE TO JESUS ON HER WEDDING DAY

Let’s look at the bride’s response on the great wedding day. Verse 1. Let’s read it through; then we’ll go back and break it down a little. It says in verse 1, “After these things” (Rev. 19:1). After what things? After He demonstrated His judgments in Revelation 17 and 18, some of His most severe judgments in history. “I heard a

loud voice of a great multitude in heaven” (ibid)—the redeemed of all history responding to the Lord. Now the great multitude in verse 1 is the bride in verse 7. It’s the same group.

They say, “Hallelujah!” They say to Jesus, “We agree with Your leadership in judging the nations in their rebellion against You. We agree. Salvation and glory and honor and power, they belong to You” (Rev. 19:1b, paraphrased). What they’re saying is, “We agree with Your leadership, Jesus.”

“TRUE AND RIGHTEOUS ARE HIS JUDGMENTS”

Look at verse 2. He breaks down what it is they’re agreeing with. Because when they say, “Hallelujah,” they’re saying, “We agree.” That is, “We agree with rejoicing. We finally understand and we fully agree with what You have done.”

They say, “For true and righteous are His judgments, because He has judged the great harlot” (Rev. 19:2)—in chapters 17 and 18. She has corrupted the earth with her fornication, her immorality. And the Lord has avenged on her the blood of His servants shed by her (ibid).

In verse 3, the bride says, “Alleluia! Her smoke rises up forever and ever” (Rev. 19:3)! Then the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures are overwhelmed by what they’re witnessing; and they fall down and worship God. And they cry out, “Alleluia!”

And then a voice comes from the throne saying, “Praise our God, all you His servants . . . both small and great” (Rev. 19:5). So what is going on? Again, much more is happening here than meets the eye at a casual reading. John is having an open vision of the bride responding to Jesus on her wedding day. Because in the next verse or two it’s clear that the wedding of the Lamb has come and they’re all assembled; all the angelic hosts of heaven are witnessing Jesus receiving His redeemed as His bride openly before all. That’s what’s happening in this context.

Now this is in essence what the Father is saying. Let me add a little to it so you can get the picture. He’s saying, “OK, people of God, before the wedding is fully consummated, before the wedding is brought to its fullness, what do you think about My Son’s leadership over history?”

And for the first time 100 percent of God’s people are in 100 percent agreement with God. For the first time, all of God’s people agree with Jesus’ leadership over the nations, because the most offensive thing about Jesus’ leadership is His judgments. That’s why her agreement with His judgments is highlighted. When Jesus’ judgments go forth, the devil whispers and says, “That’s a contradiction to love.” And even the people of God get offended at Jesus when His judgments go forth. The devil knows this. Because we can’t grow in love if we’re offended at Jesus’ leadership. If you’re angry or if you don’t trust His leadership in your life, you can’t grow in love towards Him. The enemy knows this, so he constantly accuses us in our mind, accusing the Lord, saying what He’s doing isn’t right.

So here we are on the wedding day and the Father says, “Let’s settle the issue. Now that all the information is out; now that you see it all; what do you think of My Son’s leadership over history?”

The great multitude, the Bride of Christ, cries out, “Hallelujah! We agree. You did right. Now we fully understand. There was no contradiction between Your judgments and Your claim to be a God of love. For You did everything in Your judgments to remove all that hinders love.”

Imagine several billion believers all with resurrected bodies now with full understanding, standing before Jesus on the wedding day, declaring their agreement with Him, even in the most difficult issue of His leadership: the issue of His judgments. Because again, the devil wants to keep us confused about the judgments of God, so he keeps us offended at Jesus because of them, because we can’t grow in love if we’re offended.

Paragraph B. Well, the most severe judgments in history have just been poured out. And here are all the saints around the throne. And here is their first statement: “Hallelujah! Salvation belongs to the Lord.” They’re saying this: “We now see that Your judgments ended in causing more people to be saved. Your salvation didn’t decrease; it increased. The devil told us a lie that if Your judgments were in the earth, Your salvation would be minimized. Salvation belongs to You. We can see Your salvation purposes have increased.”

They go to the next point: “Hallelujah! Glory belongs to You. We can see now that there are more people who love You and live for Your glory because of Your judgments. Your judgments were wise. They were effective. They worked. They actually produced more love for God in the earth. Honor belongs to You.” The measure of obedience of God’s people in the nations increases. It doesn’t decrease when God’s wise judgments are administered.

And then they go on to say, “Power belongs to You.” And they can see what’s coming, that Jesus through His judgments has removed, at the time of the second coming, all the evil authority structures on the earth. And all the governmental power over all the nations now belongs to this Jewish man. Power! All the governmental power of the nations is now His. In other words, His judgments were wise.

Now the point is not only about judgment. Here’s the real point: on the wedding day, we’ll express our full agreement with His leadership. And the reason His judgments are being emphasized is because that’s the most difficult area to agree with. The point is, if we agree with the most difficult area of His leadership, how much more will we agree with all the other areas of His leadership? So it’s a bigger subject going on than just the judgment of God.

THE HARLOT RELIGION WILL FILL THE EARTH WITH CORRUPTION AND BLOODSHED

Look at page 26. Now notice back in verse 2 on the page before, they said, “Hallelujah! Salvation, glory, and power are Yours, because true and righteous are Your judgments. Your most difficult area of leadership proved to be good, not bad. The devil lied to us. Your judgments proved effective. How much more all of Your other dimensions of leadership!”

Now back in verse 2, it says this. There’s a false religion, called “the harlot,” that will emerge in the end times. We can see its beginnings right now. We can see it emerging, but it hasn’t fully emerged yet. Its two main sins are corruption—immorality—and oppression: she kills and oppresses the saints.

Now the harlot, this harlot religion, does more than that. But those are the two main areas of sin that are increasing in the world—corruption and oppression. Both of them are related to attacking the bride’s love for Jesus.

The devil's system is to use this false religion to fill the earth with immorality. Because beloved, to the degree that you touch and are engaged in immorality, your love for Jesus is diminished. And the devil knows that. It's not an accident that through all the Internet technology, immorality is exploding in the earth. That's an absolute satanic strategy. The point is to cut off and diminish your love for Jesus. Because you can't be engaged in immorality and grow strongly in love for Jesus. You can still be genuine and say no to the immorality, but your love will never grow strong. It will always stay weak and defiled.

So the saints say, "We understand that You're bringing the immorality into judgment."

But the harlot does more than bring corruption and immorality. She kills the saints. And the Lord stands up and removes all that oppresses His church. Beloved, the day is coming: the oppression will be removed. Now here in the Western world, we don't have much oppression, but the days are coming when we will. We will understand this more.

THE ELDERS AND THE FOUR LIVING CREATURES FALL DOWN BEFORE JESUS

Paragraph E. Then all the elders and all the living creatures fall down before Jesus. The top governmental leaders in heaven are overwhelmed when they see the Church in unity with Jesus. The elders and the four living creatures say, "God, it's happening. The thing You promised Your Son, that He would have an inheritance, that He would have a people who love Him: it's happening right in front of our eyes. We're witnessing the promises of God to Jesus actually taking place."

So they fall down, overwhelmed. Everything that God promised Jesus is happening right in front of their eyes. Because when the saints come into full agreement with Jesus' leadership, then they're functioning as His inheritance that He fully possesses.

Let's look at paragraph G. Now imagine billions of believers, awestruck, watching the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fall down before Jesus. They're stunned. They're silenced. They're thinking, "How awesome that the governmental ministries of heaven are so overwhelmed at the fact that the bride is perfectly unified with her Bridegroom."

Then a voice comes from the throne. And he says, "Praise our God, all you servants" (Rev. 19:5)!

This voice cries out from the throne and says, in essence, "I know you're all overwhelmed, but the elders are falling overwhelmed before God. But let's change the focus. Let's cry out to God in thanksgiving to Him for all the things that He has done in bringing forth a prepared bride this day to be joined to His worthy Son."

"THE VOICE OF A GREAT MULTITUDE, AS THE SOUND OF MANY WATERS"

Look at Roman numeral V. Revelation 19:6: "I heard . . . the voice of a great multitude, as the sound of many waters" (Rev. 19:6). This is the bride again, like the sound of mighty thunderings. And she's crying, "Hallelujah, we agree, for the Lord God Omnipotent reigns. Let us be glad, and rejoice, for the marriage of the Lamb has come" (v. 6b, paraphrased).

Paragraph A. The bride is rejoicing. All of heaven is rejoicing because of God's reign. Jesus is finally being seen as King over all the nations. The day has come where Jesus is being manifest as King on the earth and His wedding is taking place. These two things are happening, causing all of heaven to rejoice.

Now notice the sound of the multitude, the bride. She sounds like many waters and like mighty thunderings. Wait a second. In the book of Revelation, the voice of many waters is the voice of God. The voice of thunder, that's God's voice (Rev. 1:15). The bride sounds like God. She isn't God, but she has His authority. When she worships in unity on that day, she will have the same sound; she will have the very authority of God. Her voice, not just the voice of Jesus, is like thunder. She will sound like her Bridegroom.

THE DAY OF THE GLADNESS OF HIS HEART

Paragraph C. They cry out, "The Lord God Omnipotent reigns" (Rev. 19:6b, NKJV)! Now God always reigns in heaven. Jesus is reigning right now in heaven. And the angels and the saints in heaven, they worship God in His power now. But there's a bigger message. They're talking about God's power being manifest on the earth to reign over the nations through a Jewish man. That's what it's talking about here. The day of His world government has come and it has happened on the day of His wedding.

Top of page 27. All of heaven is rejoicing. All of heaven is glad. There are no more tears, no more sorrow, no more pain. The time of eternal gladness has begun. There's no fear; there's no condemnation; there's no shame. All the saints are worshiping, worshiping with a full spirit, no defilement, no sorrow, no shame, in full confidence, face to face with the Bridegroom God.

They give glory to the Lord. All of God's people will be God-centered. From the very depth of their being, everyone will be God-centered. God Himself, Jesus will be the main thing on their heart and the main compulsion of their life. He will be the magnificent obsession of all the saints together on that day.

GOD WON'T DO OUR PART, AND WE CAN'T DO HIS PART

They're rejoicing because she made herself ready. Now that's an interesting statement, that the bride has made herself ready.

"Well I thought that the grace of God is what made us ready!"

"It is."

"Well then how can it say that the bride has made herself ready?"

Because there's cooperation in the grace of God. God does His part: God provides the inspiration and the power and the forgiveness and many other things. But we must respond. God won't do our part and we can't do His part. Here's what's happening: the emphasis isn't that she's so awesome, she had the ability to do it. What's being emphasized is that she wanted to respond. Then on the wedding day, the bride is saying, "We're here because we want to love Him." Jesus doesn't want an unwilling partner on that day. The bride is there because she has responded from her own free will through history. Beloved, this isn't a shotgun wedding. None of us will be there on that day because we were forced to be there; we're there because we wanted to be. That's the emphasis of that phrase. It's not undermining the grace of God, but it's emphasizing the responsiveness of the bride as a key part of that wedding day, because Jesus glories in a people who want to be with Him.

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

Paragraph G. Very significant is the bride's garments on that day. "And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints" (Rev. 19:8). Every one of you

will receive the garments of salvation as a free gift because of what Jesus did for you, not because of what you did. But in addition to the free garments of salvation, there are additional garments that are given to you based on your responsiveness.

YOU WILL WEAR IN YOUR ATTIRE THE LOVE THAT YOU HAVE FOR HIM NOW

Don't think that in the age to come, you'll only have one white gown, one big, white T-shirt and that's it. Some people imagine Jesus has this glorious New Jerusalem city with phenomenal food and the power of God and music and sound and light and color and diamonds and precious jewels, and... oh no, He forgot about the dress code. All we have is one big, white T-shirt for billions of years. And Jesus says, "Oh no, I forgot about dress! How could I have overlooked that?"

Well, that's not the case. You'll have many garments in the age to come. Your wardrobe in the age to come will be far more sophisticated than your wardrobe is now. There will be many occasions and they'll all have garments that are appropriate to those occasions. You won't just be in a one million-year worship setting with a white T-shirt on. You'll be at many, many, many different settings forever. And you'll receive the gift of salvation and the corresponding garments, but in addition you'll receive garments that are in response to the way you loved Him on the earth. All of you will have different garments according to your dedication to Him in this age.

The garments, it says, are for the righteous acts the saints do now. He is so moved by the way you love Him; He'll openly declare the way He feels about the way you loved Him by the garments He gives you. Beloved, you'll actually wear in your clothing the love that you have for Him in this age. Eternal rewards aren't about us getting a reward so that we boast in front of another believer. Like we walk by and say, "Hey, look at these garments! Look at this crown! Boy, you should have been dedicated. I told you back then, you should have."

Eternal rewards aren't about superiority to other believers. Eternal rewards are Jesus expressing openly the way He feels about the way you loved Him. Eternal rewards are about your proximity to Him in the age to come, not your superiority to other saints. We'll all have different rewards in that day; and the rewards will be according to the way we loved Him in this age.

It really matters what we do. On those mundane, routine days that are boring when you don't feel good and you feel lonely, when nothing is working and you feel sad, it really matters what you do in those days because there are so many days like that. And we love Him. We don't feel a lot sometimes, but we seek Him. We choose to obey instead of yielding. We choose to stay steady instead of drawing back. I tell you on that day, He'll give you garments that reflect the way you loved Him in this age. Because He won't ever overlook even one day of devotion you have shown Him.

Well, let's end with that. Let's stand. I'm going to ask the Lord to touch you.