

Session 5 The Consummation: The Bridegroom's Splendor

INTRODUCTION

This week in Session 5, and then after the break in Session 6, we'll talk about the consummation of the marriage. In the first session we'll talk about the Bridegroom's splendor. In the second session we'll talk about our partnership, the fact that in His warfare against evil, He wants His people to be with Him. This is the first fact He reveals after the wedding, that He brings His bride with Him as He goes to destroy everything that destroys love. Everything that has stood in the way of the saints He wants to remove.

There are two ways that you can view Revelation 19:11-16, these verses that we're looking at tonight. You can view them through the lens of the bride, and you see a Bridegroom working through love. Or you can look at them through the lens of the judged, and you can see what the lost see: the destruction of everything that's sinful. One view causes us to say, "I love You. I love You. I love You." The other view causes the unbelievers to tremble in fear and be terrified. It depends on the view with which you read this.

Remember, this passage is revealed right after the wedding is revealed. The Son of God is revealed. He's being revealed in the context of His wedding. He's being revealed in the context of His bride being presented before Him. The reason I say that is that I've read a lot of commentaries on this. There are a few exceptions, but most of them don't relate anything that happens in verses 11-21 to what happened in verses 1-10. Maybe they went on a trip and came home and started a new day of study or something, and they don't link verse 11 to verse 10 at all.

I believe the opening of heaven in verse 11 and the revealing of the Son of God are in the context of the bride. In chapter 20 what happens is that the judgment on Satan is revealed. Chapter 20 is like a parenthesis. Chapter 19 is the wedding being revealed. Then the Bridegroom is revealed. Then everything that stood in the way is removed. That's like a parenthesis. It's like the Lord is saying, "Yes, I want to put that in there, but that's really not the fullness of what I'm revealing." Revelation 21 and 22 goes back to the theme of the bride herself in the form of a city being revealed. Of course, that's what we'll look at, Lord willing, next week.

PSALM 45: THE BRIDEGROOM, THE KING, AND THE JUDGE ARE ONE

A few more introductory comments are that Psalm 45 is "the psalm of love." That's what it's called. If you want to read something that sounds like Song of Solomon and Revelation 19, but it's in the book of Psalms, the premier psalm is Psalm 45, the psalm of love. This psalm puts together a few of the themes of Revelation 19. It marries them together so there's no question that the Judge and the King with the sword who is smiting is the Bridegroom who's seeking His bride. It's all brought together in Psalm 45. The first half of Revelation 19 and the second half of Revelation 19 are brought together clearly in Psalm 45.

Again, the reason I say that is because so many commentaries separate the two halves of this chapter into two totally unrelated themes. Psalm 45 combines the idea of the King with the idea of the Bridegroom. The King is the Bridegroom in Psalm 45 as well. The King is the Bridegroom.

Here's another introductory thought, Revelation 1 is the first revelation of Jesus in the book of Revelation. Revelation 19 is the last one, but there are only really two intimate descriptions of Jesus: Revelation 1 and Revelation 19. It's interesting to look at the contrast between those two.

Of course, that would be a whole study in itself, but you can write some of this on the back page if you want. I was just meditating on this and enjoying it and didn't make it a part of the notes. In Revelation 1, He's revealed as the Son of Man. In Revelation 19, He's the heavenly Bridegroom. In Revelation 1, He's the Priest with white hair and a robe. Revelation 19, He's the King with a sword. In Revelation 1, He's on earth walking in the midst of the candlesticks, or walking in the midst of the churches. In Revelation 19, He's in heaven in the midst of the army. In Revelation 1, He's on foot, walking or standing. In Revelation 19, He's seated, mounted on a horse. In Revelation 1, He's alone, prophesying to the Church. In Revelation 19, He's with all the saints making war against Satan.

There are actually quite a few; there are a handful I've just skipped here. I encourage you to compare those two descriptions together. It's really quite fascinating, because the descriptions reveal the mission that He wants to accomplish. The descriptions are very specific to reveal the mission that's on His heart at that time. He's alone in chapter 1, again, prophesying to the churches. In Revelation 19, He's together with His people, His bride, making war against Satan. The thing that touches my heart is to feel, just a little, the zeal that He feels when He's carrying out His vengeance against the people who tried to wipe out the Bride of Christ and tried to seduce her and make her a harlot. It's what He does in light of this seduction against His people. He's really full of vengeance in His heart, because there's full rebellion. The cup of iniquity is full. Now the cup of wrath is coming out to meet them.

Let's read page one here. I'm just going to read the text here: Revelation 19:11-13, 16. We'll examine verses 14 and 15 in the next session. "Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. His eyes were like a flame of fire"—that's the part we'll start with—"and on His head were many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself. He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God . . . He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS" (Rev. 19:11-13, 16).

THE CONSUMMATION OF THE MARRIAGE IS THE FULL DISCLOSURE OF HIS HEART

We'll start by giving a very brief definition of what I mean when I use the phrase, "The consummation of the marriage." First, the relationship of the Church to the Lord Jesus on earth is described as betrothed. That's what Paul says there in 2 Corinthians 11:3. As we talked about in earlier sessions, to be betrothed means to be espoused. Another term is "legally engaged," or, "promised to be married." Those are all the same concepts. We're legally married to the Lord, but the consummation of the marriage doesn't take place until Revelation 19:11.

I understand it like this: the consummation of the marriage is the full disclosure of His heart. That full consummation takes place in heaven, not on the earth. It's when He unveils the full splendor of His heart to His people. In that unveiling He empowers us to give our hearts fully back to Him. That's what I understand as the consummation.

The consummation happens here in verse 11 when John says, "I saw the heavens opened" (Rev. 19:11, paraphrased). The heavens are opening to the unbelievers on the earth. That's one view. The heavens are also opening because the spirit of revelation is opening to the bride, which is the theme of verse 10. Remember, "The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy" (v. 10, NKJV), as we saw in the last session. It's the unveiling

of His heart and His passion and His splendor, and it's no accident that the spirit of prophecy is defined in verse 10. The very next sentence is the manifestation of the spirit of prophecy: the heavens open. There it is, and the Son of God is revealed in the context of the wedding ceremony.

“FOR NOW WE SEE IN A MIRROR DIMLY, BUT THEN FACE TO FACE”

Paul says in 1 Corinthians 13:12, “In this age we only know in part” (1 Cor. 13:12, paraphrased). It says, “In this age we see dimly, as in a mirror” (ibid). The mirror of the ancient world wasn't like the mirror of today. Today when you look in a mirror, what you see is what you get. I'm not always so happy about that, but anyway, the mirror of the ancient world was like a piece of roughly polished metal. You would have to look in it a long time, and you weren't sure what exactly you saw. A mirror in the ancient world gave a very dim view. That's what it says: “In this age we look dimly as in a mirror.” It's like trying to see your reflection in a dull piece of metal with the sun reflecting on it.

In this age, we know only in part. Face-to-face intimacy doesn't begin until the age to come. We like to talk about it now; we long for it, but it simply won't happen. The heavens won't fully open until that day, because it's part of the grand plan of God. It's the consummation of the marriage, when we're face to face and we behold Him as He is and He beholds us as we are. That's a very, very glorious thing.

OBEDIENCE IS MANDATORY, BUT LOVE IS VOLUNTARY

Down here under number one I have written: “Physical, earthly intimacy is holy, but it's a very, very dim picture.” There's no really clear picture of the intimacy of the age to come, when He unveils by the spirit of revelation the fullness the depth of joining with Him and what that does to our spirit. It's so far beyond the realm of our physical bodies. In this age we're called to walk by faith. We don't have a full vision of God in this age. Here's the plan of God in the age of faith, in this age; here's how voluntary love is best developed. He's giving us a chance to choose without perfectly seeing. He wants it that way, because it's like there are fiery trials of voluntary love. There are dimensions of choice and of giving ourselves without faith or without seeing that really touch the heart of God.

Voluntary love, of course, is the whole goal of God in the unfolding of His plan on earth. As I said last week, obedience is mandatory, but love will be voluntary. He hides so many things. We only see dimly; We don't see face to face. We only know in part, and in that context we give ourselves fully to the best that we know in the grace of God.

The Lord, far more than we even esteem, says, “Wow!”

We look at ourselves and say, “Oh, our obedience is so weak.” He esteems it far more highly than we do, because He knows we're walking by faith more than we really understand. He knows how dim the view is. He knows how history works. I don't think He's been very impressed by the ability of people in the flesh to give themselves to Him. He gives a small amount of view there and the heart responds and He says, “Wow! I like that.” That's the whole genius of the age of faith. The whole point of it is voluntary love. That's the reason for it. It's only a few moments compared to our eternal life, but He wants to give us a chance. He wants to give us a time where we say yes because His Word says to do this and that.

Paragraph A. We're betrothed on the earth. Paragraph B. There's full disclosure of His splendor in heaven. We will never have to walk by faith again. When those heavens are opened up to us, we will never, ever know in

part. We will see face to face the splendor of His glory, and that's where the marriage is consummated. The curtains are pulled back for the bride and all the earth to see. Again, there are two views. One view is through the lens of the bride, and the other is through the lens of the lost. The bride sees the Bridegroom in this passage. The unbeliever sees the Judge in this passage, because both of them go together. He judges that which hinders love. That's really what's happening. He's the Judge only insofar as things have stood in the way of love and the inheritance that God has given Him. In the age to come we will see face to face.

“WE ONLY KNOW THAT WE SHALL BE LIKE HIM, FOR WE SHALL SEE HIM AS HE IS”

John the apostle develops this in 1 John 3:2. He says, “In that day, we will be like Him, because we will see Him as He is” (1 Jn. 3:2, paraphrased). That's an awesome statement! “We will see Him as He is.” The heavens will be opened in that day.

Let's read this sentence. To know His beauty is to understand how He feels about us, thus giving us a new image of ourselves. When we see His beauty, that's awesome. That's a point in and of itself. We will say, “Wow!” It will overwhelm us, but secondly, we will see ourselves like He sees us because we will see His heart. We won't just see His power, where He can speak and create the heavens and the earth and the stars with His majesty. That's one thing that will transform us for sure, but we will see the passion of His heart, and in that passion we will see ourselves in the way that He feels about us. In that day we will have such a radically new sense of identity and image. That alone will be—well, it's hard to say *alone*, but that will be a significant dimension of our transformation, right there.

I believe when I see His heart I'll look at Him and I'll say, “Wow! You're so lovely.” The second thing I'll say is, “Wow! How You feel about me!”

Then He'll look at me and say, “Wow, what a cool dude you are.” It will do something to us so dramatic. I don't think it's an accident that John said we're transformed by seeing Him. It's not just how much power He has, but seeing the splendor of His personality—seeing what He thinks and what He feels. When we see that, we'll reinterpret our lives so radically differently in that day. It's the seeing Him that John the apostle says transforms us into His likeness. Then we will experience the fullness of Ephesians 1:17, in which Paul says, “We need the spirit of revelation that we could see that we're His inheritance” (Eph. 1:17, paraphrased). In that day we will see the fullness of being His inheritance.

FULL SPLENDOR, FULL TRANSFORMATION, FULL PARTNERSHIP

The consummation starts with a betrothal on earth, A, and then, B, with a full disclosure of who He is. Then, C, we will be fully transformed into His likeness. We looked at some of those in the other sessions, but I just put them there again. The consummation is the full disclosure, the full transformation. It's full bridal partnership. That's what the consummation is in my understanding: His full splendor, our full transformation, and the beginning of full partnership. When those three things take place, the marriage is consummated and things really start getting exciting.

I'm under paragraph D here. The first focus of Jesus after the revelation of the wedding ceremony is that He wants to destroy that which destroys His bride. That's the first thing He does. He goes in full vengeance against that which is allowed to take place for all the ages of the human race on earth. He has allowed it, He has tolerated it, but once the marriage is consummated, Abba says, “You don't have to tolerate evil anymore, because she has voluntarily said yes. She's Yours.”

He goes, and the first thing He does is to destroy everything He allowed through the whole history of the human race on the earth. Because now that the marriage is consummated, there's no more purpose for evil to try our hearts; we've already said yes to Him. So His first act is to destroy evil instantly. Then, of equal significance, His other first act after the wedding is to bring His bride with Him. This is the first trip that she goes on with Him, and He destroys everything that's troubled her and that's harassed her in the history of the human race. During the first trip we go on, He judges everything evil in the earth.

SATAN WANTS TO SEDUCE THE BRIDE INTO LIVING LIKE A HARLOT

This is really key, and I want to emphasize it. Satan has a plan. God has a plan to bring us to a marriage celebration, but Satan has one, too. It's to make the whole human race a harlot. That's Satan's plan in Revelation 17 and 18. The false Christ has a false plan. He wants to seduce the bride into living like a harlot. That's what Satan's plan is, and He's accusing God night and day in our hearts. He's blinding us to the truth of the glory of who we are. He's blinding the glory of who God is because he wants us to say yes to Satan's plan to end up living like a harlot at the end of the age.

Yet the Lord is coming to destroy the harlot of chapter 17 and 18. He's going to bring the bride on this first mission with Him. Because now that we've said yes, there's no reason for sin to be allowed anymore.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE FIRE IN GOD'S EYES

The significance of God's fire. I've got a few pages on this, although we're just going to look at it briefly because the fire shows up here in verse 12: "His eyes were like a flame of fire" (Rev. 19:12). It's such an important thing to really feel the impact of this passage, to understand the place of fire and the eyes of fire, and what they are on the wedding day. Because almost every commentary I've read, without fail, reads the opening of the heavens through the lens of the lost who's looking at a judge. Rarely was there any perspective of a bride's eyes on the wedding day, looking at her Bridegroom. That's by far the most prophetic thing happening, and that's the reason this thing is revealed to the church. The book of Revelation was given to the Church so that we could see Jesus first as our Bridegroom. It's given as a warning to the lost second, but it's given to the Church first (Rev. 1:1-3). I'm sad to see an absence of looking at this through the heart and through the eyes of one that loved, the Bride of Christ.

"OUR GOD IS A CONSUMING FIRE"

His eyes are like a flame of fire. It's an expression of God's personality. Look at Deuteronomy 4:24. This is one of the first revelations of God in the Bible. God calls Himself a consuming, jealous fire (Deut. 4:24). One of the very first revelations of the Godhead that God reveals of Himself is that He is a consuming fire. To give definition to it, He describes His emotions as hot emotion. He says, "I have hot emotion. I'm jealous. My passion is kindled within Me. I am an emotional God."

That's one of the first revelations God gives of Himself. He's an emotional God. He's not just a God of accurate doctrine who looks and judges things. He feels deeply in His personality. His jealousy is kindled like fire within Him for His people.

I gave three messages last year at our conference on the fire of God. Most of it I put in the context of God's passion. There are so many verses about God's fire being good. Of course, the one I appreciate the most is Song of Solomon 8:6, where He says the love that He puts as a seal on the heart is like a fire, the very fire of God that

nothing can quench. The love that God imparts to us is pictured in the language of fire, like God is. God is pictured as a fire. It's a fire that can't be stopped by anything in the natural arena.

A JUDGMENT THAT REMOVES WHAT HINDERS LOVE

There are so many dimensions of fire related to love, but there are other dimensions of fire that are related to judgment. It's two sides of one coin, because the judgment part of fire destroys that which hinders love. The reason there's judgment is because there's love. Some people imagine God judging out of a vacuum. He looks down callously at the human race and says, "You know what? They irritate Me." He just sort of smacks them and knocks them off the back of their chair like some irate, angry dad or something. He's not judging in a vacuum; He's judging as an expression of fiery love. He removes that which hinders love. That's what judgment is about: it's about love. It's not judgment in a vacuum; it's not judgment out of irritation. It's judgment that removes what hinders love.

GOD'S JEALOUSY: THE PURE FIRE OF HOLY GOODNESS AND KINDNESS

It's a consuming love with intense emotion. It's called *jealousy*. It's pure jealousy. God's jealousy isn't like human jealousy. There's nothing perverse or selfish about it. It's the pure fire of holy goodness and kindness. It's absolutely undefiled kindness and goodness beyond anything that we can imagine. That's His jealousy. It's fantastic. By the way, this is your Bridegroom. This is your partner, your family forever. I just want to keep reminding you. This isn't a doctrinal class; I'm just telling you your story in advance. I'm telling you my story. Fire speaks of the intensity of His passion.

HIS THRONE IS ABLAZE WITH THE FIRE THAT MANIFESTS HIS PASSION

The second meaning of fire is this: it destroys that which hinders love. Again, judgment doesn't occur in a vacuum. Judgment is an expression of this fiery kindness, this benevolent, undefiled goodness. He wants to protect it for all of eternity. Therefore, He removes everything that threatens it. Isn't that awesome? It can never be threatened, ever again. Never! Once it's there, it's there forever. Someone give me a "Hallelujah!" Anyway, I always wanted to try that once.

In Daniel 7:9, the prophet Daniel looks at the throne of God, and the throne of God is ablaze with flaming fire. I'm convinced that it's ablaze with love. Because God declares over and over, "I am love." He didn't just say, "I have it." The very essence of who He is, is this pure, eternal, infinite, kindness and goodness towards His people. His very throne is ablaze with the fire that manifests His jealous passion and the passion of His heart—His intense, fiery passion. Can you imagine? His throne indicates it and reveals it.

Daniel is seeing a vision of the throne. There's a river of fire proceeding out of the throne (Dan. 7:10). I'm convinced that it speaks of the Holy Spirit, because the Spirit proceeds out of the throne from God Himself. This river is going forth out of God, and I think it's none other than the communicator of all the love of God. "He pours love into the human heart" (Rom. 5:5, paraphrased). His name is called the Holy Spirit. He's the river of fire. Yes, He convicts of sin, but again, why does He convict of sin? Because He just doesn't like bad things? No, He wants to bring forth love. He's not convicting in a vacuum. He's convicting as an expression of who He is. He says, "Oh! That will hinder things. Come and be like Him."

THE GOD WHO IS ENTIRELY, INFINITELY UNIQUE

I want to take a bunny trail for a second, because this comes to mind. In essence, the word *holy* means *unique*. We think of the word *holy* and its etymology, or the derivative of the word *holiness*, or however you say that.

The fancy word is etymology. Someone define where the word comes from. There you go. The word *holy* means “totally separate from.” We’ve come up with the idea that it’s totally separate from everything bad. God says, “That’s true, but that’s not all the truth. I’m not just separate from everything bad; I’m separate from everything good. I’m separate from everything.” In other words, He’s so entire, infinitely unique. There’s nothing like Him, nothing. He’s completely separate from everything, and He defines His separateness in the language of love. To understand holiness apart from love is to misunderstand holiness. Why? Because it means His infinite uniqueness and otherness. That’s what holiness means—His otherness. It very powerfully includes being separate from things that are defiled, but limiting holiness to mean just separation from things defiled is a real minimizing of the word *holiness*. It’s the infinite otherness of God.

The thing that describes His otherness, His total uniqueness, is the fact that He’s the blazing fire of love. The reason I’m saying that is because some of you can’t disconnect from the idea that God’s fire is His holiness. I say a thousand times yes, exactly right, but His holiness is His infinite otherness. It makes Him so different than any other passion in creation. Of course, He’s the uncreated God.

Jesus is standing here on His wedding day. He’s looking at His bride and He’s looking at planet earth as well and He has eyes of fire. First, those eyes are for the bride. That’s the source of the fire: how He feels about His bride. It’s what He’s going to do about that which hinders bridal love. Here’s the real point: His gaze imparts His love to the heart of His bride. Because the love of God in our hearts, even in eternity, will be supernatural; and when we gaze into His eyes, our heart will be quickened with divine fire. He will seal our hearts progressively throughout this age. He will constantly increase the measure of the seal that is on us.

THE GAZE OF JESUS IS THE SEAL OF HOLY PASSION

He seals us unto eternal life; that’s one thing. That same seal releases love in us, but there’s going to be a time in eternity, I believe, when we look into His eyes and we walk away so absolutely red-hot in love with Him. Because the very gaze into His eyes imparts the fire into us. That’s my theory. In Revelation 1, when He looked at John, He was gazing into John’s very heart. There are only two qualities in Revelation 1 that show up in Revelation 19: the fiery eyes and the sword. All the other qualities are different in Revelation 1 and 19. The eyes are number one, how He feels, and the sword is number two. It’s what He’s going to do about that which gets in the way. Those are the only two qualities that are in both revelations of Jesus, the first one and the last one, in the book of Revelation.

Oh, I tell you, His eyes gaze at us. The Church was born on the day of Pentecost in the sense that the Spirit of God was released. He looked down with such zeal that fire appeared on all of them. According to Acts 2:3, “Each one of them saw the fire, and it rested on every one of them” (Acts 2:3, paraphrased). That wasn’t about judgment at all. It was turning these cowardly, broken, shame-ridden people who denied the Lord into bold, unwavering witnesses, glad to lose their life for Him. I believe He looked down and said, “That’s My bride.”

They said, “Whoa! Let’s go.” I think that was the gaze of God upon His bride in the beginning. The gaze of Jesus is the source of holy passion.

I realize I’m spending quite a bit of time on this subject of fire, and it’s only one verse here, but you don’t want to miss the fire part of this passage. It’s one of the key things. When I look at those eyes of fire, I say, “Yes, look at me, O Son of God.”

THE FINAL WEDDING INVITATION IS THE END-TIME REVIVAL

This is a bit of theory, here in letter C. I like it. I can't prove it from the Bible, but it's my theory and if I'm wrong I'm sure He doesn't mind. I believe that the final wedding invitation, if I can use bridal language, is the great end-time revival with the baptism of fire on it. The whole world is going to know that the Lord wants planet earth. He wants the people of planet earth for His Son.

In the next session, we'll discover that this is the inheritance the Father promised His Son. Psalm 2:8 reveals that the Father promised an inheritance to His Son, and what is it? It's that He would possess the people in all the nations of the earth. He won't possess all the people in all the nations, because many will say no, because He won't violate the boundary lines of redemption, which is voluntary love. We have to say yes ourselves but He will fully possess the people who are His in all the nations.

In the next session, we'll look at the whole conflict between Satan and God at the end of the age that we find in the book of Revelation. It's the conflict of passion. He wants the full possession of a people. I believe He's going to give one final bid to planet earth. He's going to release the great end-time harvest with the full baptism of fire on it. It's everything that Acts 2 had times a lot more: the fire of God convicting the unbelievers of sin, but warming the Church with the love of God, making the first commandment first. It's the Lord saying to the planet earth, "The wedding invitation is sent. A billion have come into the wedding; there are phenomenal signs and wonders, the dead raised, greater works than these, angels visiting." It's the Lord preparing the grand event of creation, the presenting of the bride to His Son. He's giving one last chance, and it's an invitation filled with holy fire.

"THE SUN WILL BE TURNED INTO DARKNESS, AND THE MOON INTO BLOOD"

Then there's the wedding announcement. I've got a few little parts of this. I'll just tell you this. What happens right before Jesus comes? This is my theory: it's the announcement. It's the cry, "The wedding is beginning."

What it shows us here in D is that immediately prior to the Lord's coming, the sun and the moon stop giving light. That's going to be some trouble, right? There are a number of verses, even more than the eight or ten or fourteen I have listed here. There are a number of them. Over and over in the Word of God, God verifies the fact that this is His intention. It's not symbolic. When it happens, He's going to say, "I told you over and over, from Genesis to Revelation, that there would come a time when I turn the lights out, because I don't want anyone to miss what's going to happen next." He's going to turn the lights out on all creation. The sun will stop shining. The stars will fall from heaven. The moon will no longer give its light. Planet earth will be in such a radical panic.

DEEP, DEEP DARKNESS WILL COVER THE EARTH

People have different theories on the believers that will remain. Some will be up; some will be down. I don't want to get into all that stuff. Everyone agrees that there will be some believers. They just disagree about how many and who they are, and I don't really care at this point and time. The believers on the earth are going to know exactly, because when the sun goes out, it's a reminder that there's only a little more time. The earth will be panicking in a major way. I don't know if I included Isaiah 60. Right before the coming of the Lord, "Deep darkness will cover the earth" (Isa. 60:2, paraphrased). That's a moral darkness and a physical darkness. There's a great earthquake. The stars will fall. There are a number more verses than just those two.

In the midst of this, Jesus Christ comes, and when He comes, He steps into this void of absolute pitch darkness, with no stars or light. He comes with flaming fire (2 Thess. 1:8), and the entire atmosphere is filled with fire. It's filled with all the angels and all the saints in heaven. And maybe this fire lasts for a day; maybe it lasts for a week; maybe it lasts for a month. I have no idea. I don't mean the fire, I mean the darkness; but whether this darkness is hours, days, weeks, or months, we don't know.

Into the contrast of this darkness He steps out of eternity into time, and suddenly flaming fire encircles the entire earth. I have 2 Thessalonians 1:8, which says He'll come with flaming fire. 2 Thessalonians 2:8 says this: "He will come and destroy the wicked by the breath of His mouth, and by the brightness of His appearing" (2 Thess. 2:8). When He appears with all the saints, it will be such a major contrast to the days, weeks, and months of darkness

What I think is happening is this. The next event is the marriage ceremony. It's as though they're up in heaven planning, saying, "OK, when He gets His bride and walks her down the aisle, are they going to start on earth and go to heaven, or in heaven and come to earth?"

The Father says, "Neither."

The angels in the wedding committee are saying, "Neither? This is the great event of all the ages."

He says, "They are going to start in the air." He will catch her up in the air in flaming fire.

The fire in which He catches her up will be, in my opinion, two things. It will be the fire of His passion for her. She has been crying out (Rev. 22:17). That's the very last prayer recorded. The Spirit and the bride are saying, "Come! O, come! O, come" (paraphrased)!

Finally, in the fullness of time Abba is going to shake His head and say, "Yes." He's going to go, and the first thing He's going to release is the fire that fills His eyes. He's going to say, "I love you!" He comes in flaming fire in the air. All the rest of creation is going to see the way He embraces His bride in the air and marches her down the aisle to the altar before God the Father.

Maybe I'm a little romantic. I hope so. I think it's true, because the next thing that happens after the fire is the wedding. The Son of God is the ultimate romantic. Again, I'm not talking about a gender-based, male and female romance. I'm talking about the fire in God's heart to bring His people into the deepest partnership, and the disclosure of His splendor beyond anything humanly possible. It's a supernatural impartation of God to the human spirit, bringing us into full partnership with Him. That's what's going on.

I tell you, there's an earthquake. The stars are falling. First, the wedding invitation is the great end-time revival and the baptism of fire in its finest day. Then, secondly, the wedding announcement announces the beginning of this. He comes in fire before all the saints. The world sees it and says, "Oh no! We chose the wrong one!"

Then, three, right in mid-air before God the Father and all the host of heaven He walks His bride right down the aisle to the throne of God. The flaming fire is an expression of the jealousy of our God. He's a consuming fire. That's what's going on here. I can't prove this; I can't prove it's a wedding march. I just think it is. I just think the love of God is beyond anything we dream. He cares enough about us to become a man and take the wrath of

God on Him. This is the big event He's waiting for. There's nothing too grand for Him. He has all power. He can speak and turn off the sun. Think what His wedding is going to be like. We just get this idea that He's going to be and say, "Oh yeah, Me. It's My wedding day. Oh My goodness, I've been so busy." No! That's not what's happening. The mission statement of all creation is this day, Revelation 19.

Look at the wedding songs in Revelation 15:1-3. This is at the end of the age. "Then I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvelous: seven angels having the seven last plagues, for in them the wrath of God is complete. And I saw something like a sea of glass mingled with fire, and those who have the victory over the beast, over his image and over his mark and over the number of his name, standing on the sea of glass, having harps of God" (Rev. 15:1-2).

They're singing. We know it's people and we know it's saints—not just the saints in the Old Testament, but clear up to and including the saints at the end. I don't think it's only the saints at the end, but it includes the saints clear to the very end.

This scene takes place in eternity, after time as we know it is over. These are the saints who have come up victorious from the mark of the Beast, the Antichrist. By the way, coming up victorious doesn't mean they didn't die. Many of them are martyred. I don't think the majority is martyred, but I think enough are martyred until we know it's a real issue. I don't think the percentage is high, but it's enough to know that this is for real.

Nowhere in the book of Revelation does it indicate that most will be martyred.

Someone says, "That's good. Who wants to hang around in a tin can, if you know what I mean. If the things happen, let's go. Let's get the thing moving."

Martyrdom is a great gift of God. That's how John and James saw it. It was the gift of God to be able to receive persecution for His name's sake, but when they come up victorious, I don't believe it means they didn't die. It means they didn't lose their love. In the presence of the Beast they said, "Hey, we've already won. He loves us. We love Him. There's nothing you can do," and they came off victorious. That's what it means. It didn't mean they were perfectly mature; it just means they didn't say no to love. They said yes to love. They died with love in their hearts. That's what I think *victorious* means: they didn't refuse Him.

THE SAINTS ARE STANDING IN PERFECT REFLECTION OF THE GLORY OF GOD

They're standing here on the sea of glass. The sea of glass is right before the throne. This sea of glass is mingled with flaming fire. Where do you suppose the fire is coming from? Remember Daniel 7:10: there's a river coming out of the throne. Where's this river going? I believe the river of fire, the Holy Spirit, fills this massive sea. It's not a pond; it's not a lake. The Scripture calls it a sea of glass. It's before the throne of God.

The reason I think it's a sea of glass is because it reflects, it mirrors the very majesty of the scene right before the throne of God—all the color and the fragrances and the angels and the rainbow, all of which is described in Revelation 4. It's all magnified and reflected. The saints are standing in perfect reflection of the glory of God. Here we are in the sea of glass, reflecting the throne. There's fire all around. We're worshipping mingled with holy fire. This isn't judgment. How many of you know this isn't judgment? The saints came out victorious. This is the love of God. They're saying, "Oh, I love You! I love to love You! I love You! I love You! I love You!"

We're singing with the power of divine fire on our hearts on the sea of glass on the last day. This isn't the beginning; it's the end.

“I REMEMBER YOU, THE KINDNESS OF YOUR YOUTH. . .”

Notice the two things they're singing. They're singing two songs on that day: the song of Moses and the song of the Lamb (Rev. 15:3). There are two songs that they're singing. You find the song of Moses in Exodus 15 and Deuteronomy 32. Moses had a song recorded in the Old Testament. I don't have Jeremiah 2 written down here, but this is what it says, and we'll look at it when we look at the prophets. It's very interesting. God spoke to Jeremiah and said, “Go and tell Israel that they lost the love they had for Me when I first betrothed them in the time of Moses” (Jer. 2:1-2).

It's the betrothal, the sense of a people belonging to God in a covenant on Mount Sinai. Remember the fiery mountain and the covenant? God was betrothing a people to Himself. Jeremiah 2:1 and, actually, Jeremiah 3:1, both talk about this event. They talk about the beginning of the betrothal, as in the days of Moses, the first leader who was a type of Christ when the betrothal begins. His song is sung first. The redeemed sang this first love song when they were first engaged.

That's not the only love song they sing. They sing a second love song. They sing the song of the Lamb. Those of you who took the Song of Solomon course, you know what I think the song of the Lamb is, but I can't prove it. It's the Lamb's song. The bride is called the Lamb's wife. Whenever you see the designation of the bride, it's linked to the Lamb and not to the Lion. The Lion is what He does when He removes things that are wrong. The Lamb is how He shows Himself when He's showing Himself to His bride. There's something about the meekness of the Lamb wooing the bride to maturity that's different than the Lion who roars against the enemies of God. She's always called the Lamb's wife, the bride of the Lamb. It's not an accident that they're calling it “the song of the Lamb” and not “the song of the lion.” He's the lion and the Lamb, He's both, but there are two songs that they're singing. I don't want to make a big case about that being Song of Solomon, but I think it's because Song of Solomon is called “the Song of all Songs” (Song 1:1, paraphrased). I can't imagine the Holy Spirit naming a song “the Song of all Songs,” and Jesus' song being second place. I can't imagine them saying, “Well, the Lamb's song is the second best song of all songs.”

Anyway, next fall we'll do Song of Solomon again. We really will. Half of you were in it last time, but the reason we're doing it again because I felt like I'm still grappling, and it's kind of fuzzy and confusing. I'm just really getting a grasp on it, and having taught it for twenty weeks, it's clearer to my spirit than ever. I think I can give it more clearly and concisely. I just want to keep sowing this, really for my own sake, and if you want to listen to it that's your business. I really want this thing to permeate my spirit, and so I get paid to do this.

GOD WILL IMPART THE FULL LIKENESS OF HIS SON TO US

There are two songs: the Lamb's song and Moses' song. The Lamb's song— can you imagine? Can you imagine this? We're singing, standing on the sea of glass in that reflected glory of God, because it's all ours. He's going to impart the full likeness of His Son to us. We're sitting there and worshiping, not just singing some old, dead choruses. We're worshiping, mingled with the fire of God on us. I like to pray this. Kathy Ryan, you pay attention to this, because you'll like this one. I like to pray this, that we would worship mingled with flaming fire, because of the language here. In other words, it's anointed, holy, passionate, loving worship. It takes God to love God. We want to ask God to cause us to worship mingled with flaming fire.

The Bridegroom's splendor. I'll just give you a few verses here. "Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. His eyes were like a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself. He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God . . . He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS" (Rev. 19:11-13, 16).

Again, there are two levels on which you can read this. The heavens open. They open for the bride. She's standing right there in verses 1-10. We interpret it through the lens of love. However, we can also interpret all these things as the unbeliever sees it from the earth through the lens of wrath and judgment. Those are both ways in which we can interpret this passage.

The heavens open. Again, it's the prophetic spirit of verse 10, the verse right before this. What's happening is that the Father is speaking to the bride to enrich her on her wedding day, and to tell her what she can expect. He's going to say, "You've studied the Word of God x amount of years on the earth. Let Me tell you what I think about My Son." Jesus is receiving the blessing of His Father in front of all creation.

This revelation is so deep, far deeper than I understand. My point is, every phrase here's strategic. There are probably volumes of revelation behind why each phrase is chosen for God to speak over His Son on His wedding day. I tell you, I can't imagine what all these things mean, but I know like we said last week: each phrase is the title of a book. These phrases aren't meant to be comprehensive; they're meant to be seed thoughts that say, "Meditate on this. Meditate on this. Meditate on this. I have a lot more to give you on this." They're just little titles of complete volumes. It's a large book written by the Father about His Son.

I like looking at verses 11-16 and saying, "Lord, what a passage of Scripture to ask the Lord to give you revelation of." Imagine spending maybe a few days during your time on the earth praying and fasting, looking at this passage saying, "Give me the spirit of revelation. Open up how You will reveal Your Son to us on His wedding day."

The Lord is saying, "I want you to know what you can expect."

A RIDER ON A WHITE HORSE, GOING FORTH CONQUERING AND TO CONQUER

We'll look at this in a second, but He reveals four different names. That's actually the next page, but He reveals four names of Jesus on His wedding day.

First, He comes out on a white horse. The color white speaks of divine victory. It's especially identified with Jesus in the book of Revelation. There's a great white throne that God sits on (Rev. 20:11). There's the white cloud that He sits on in Revelation 14:14. There's the white horse on which He rides. He gives His people a white stone (Rev. 2:17—I just remembered that at the last moment here.

He's riding on this horse. He began to ride on this horse, and most the commentaries agree with this. Occasionally there's disagreement, but if you remember, Revelation 1 reveals Jesus. Chapters 2 and 3 reveal the Church. Chapters 4 and 5 reveal the throne, and then His plan begins in chapter 6. We looked at that last week. The very first thing revealed in chapter 6 is One going forth on a white, conquering and to conquer (Rev. 6:2). You can't know for sure, but almost all the commentaries agree that that's the introduction of Jesus on His

white horse throughout history, bringing some victory in the gospel to different generations and to different ages. There are moments of revival. He's going forth to conquer. It culminates with Him in Revelation 19 on the same white horse.

White is always the color of God in the book of Revelation. I looked at quite a few commentaries, and a few of them think it's negative, but probably 85-90 percent of them believe the white horse that begins the revelation, after the throne and the Church are revealed, is Jesus. He's got one crown on His head. He's got a bow in His hand, not a sword. He's got a bow. A bow is a weapon that you use at a distance. Here in Revelation 19, He has a sword. That's a weapon you use in close combat. It's almost like He's saying, "It's still at a distance. There's still quite a season before this thing is over." He's alone on a horse with one crown. Now He's with all the saints, with many crowns, with a sword. There's definitely a progression going on.

Psalm 45 is the love song I've talked about. The psalmist prays, "Ride on majestically on that great horse, with Your sword upon Your thigh" (Ps. 45:3, paraphrased). They're asking the Lord Jesus in meekness and in truth, "Draw Your sword and let the enemies of God fall before You." That's fantastic, Psalm 45.

"IN RIGHTEOUSNESS HE JUDGES AND MAKES WAR"

"In righteousness He judges and makes war." First He comes on the donkey. I'll put B and C together. He comes on the donkey riding in lowliness in John 12:14, but here He comes on a horse as Judge. First He came as a servant. Now He's coming back as a judge. He's going to set the record straight. The messianic reign always depicts the Messiah judging in righteousness. He's the only One who perfectly judges in righteousness in history, with a perfect record and no wrong judgments. He has perfect knowledge, perfect love, perfect insight, perfect timing. He's perfect in His judgments, with total rightness.

"In righteousness He . . . makes war." It's impossible for Him to wage an unjust war. It's impossible for Him to abuse His power. He judges war in righteousness. Here's what the bride can hear. The Father is saying, "He wars against sin. He's not like an earthly husband. He doesn't yield to sin. He wars against it every time. He never, ever says yes to it. You'll never have to worry this time around that there's any compromise. He has declared war on everything that's impure."

Ladies, imagine being married to a man like that. You're married to a man like that. One time I told my wife that and she thought I meant me. I said, "No, sweetheart, Revelation 19. Open your Bible! My goodness!" She thought I was bragging again.

He doesn't yield. The great thing I love about this war is that He excels in war. There's no experimentation. He's not a novice. He's so excellent in war. When He makes war, it's effective. There's no hit-and-miss.

JESUS, LORD OF EARTH AND HEAVEN, IS CROWNED KING

"On His head were many crowns." In Revelation 6:2, He had one crown. In other words, He had victory. When He paid the price for sin, Satan tried to rip Him off and He came off victorious, but now as a man He's being crowned. See, as God He always had all authority, but here's there a slightly different thing going on. He's being coronated as One who is fully God and fully Man. He has never been crowned King before creation as Man. That's what's going on, on His wedding day.

Song of Solomon talks about that. Song of Solomon 3:11 talks about the wedding day on which He's crowned and made King. He's actually crowned by His mother. In other words, He's crowned by the voluntary love of His people. They've made Him King in their life, but He's King over heaven. He's King over the angels. He's King over eternity. He's King over the past. It's like the Father is saying, "He has a trophy case. He has victories He's never, ever told you about. He has crowns you've never seen Him wear in human history before. He has never manifested His rule in many of these areas in the human arena yet, but I will put the crown on His head, as fully God and fully Man, before the whole human race, that all may see exactly who He is."

THE MEASURE OF HIS FAITHFULNESS IS INFINITE; ITS DURATION, ETERNAL

These are the four prominent names revealed on His wedding day. These are the four prominent names. The first name He's called is "Faithful and True." The Father tells the bride the words that a bride most cherishes on her wedding day. "This One will be faithful and true to the end."

That's the very first name He has, and she says, "Yes, I like that!"

Here's what the Father is saying. He's giving Him His blessing before the bride and all creation and the host of angels and the lamenting demonic forces that can't participate. He says, "Believe His Words. They are permanent. They are genuine. There's no hype in Him. There will be no divorce. There will be no adultery. There are no false promises of love. Everything He says is true, infinitely true, in measure and duration." The measure is infinite and the length is eternal. The Father is telling the bride, "He's not like the false prophet and the Antichrist"—who have been wreaking havoc on the earth just prior to this. "He's faithful and true. He keeps all of His promises. His love is permanent. It's genuine, with no hype."

The bride looks at Abba and says, "Yes!"

Abba says, "I know Him. I've been with Him from eternity past. He's faithful and true."

Yes, go ahead and scream! Go ahead! Go ahead!

AUDIENCE MEMBER:

Ahhhhhhhh!

OK, there you go. For those on the tape, that was a good scream. No one is stealing her purse. The Lord is stealing her heart.

A NAME THAT NO ONE KNOWS EXCEPT HIMSELF

Here's the second name. It's a name that no one knows except Himself (Rev. 19:12). It's an unknown name. This isn't an issue of privacy; it's an issue of capacity. When He has a name that no one knows, the Father isn't saying, "He has secrets He's going to keep from you." He's saying this to the bride: "There's a vast ocean of understanding concerning your Bridegroom that you can't grasp. It's beyond your ability to comprehend right now." That's what He's saying to her.

There's endless splendor. I'll give you a few verses really quickly, and you can look them up later. 1 Corinthians 2:9 we looked at last week. "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him" (1 Cor. 2:9). In Ephesians 3:18, Paul talks about

the length and breadth and height and depth of the love of God. He says, "It can't be comprehended," because of the limited capacity of the human spirit (Eph. 3:18, paraphrased).. It's beyond our capacity to comprehend the vast ocean of the being of God. Philippians 4:7 talks about the "peace of God" that what? "Surpasses all human understanding in this age" (Phil. 4:7, paraphrased). It's an unknown name. It's an issue of capacity.

JESUS, THE WORD OF GOD

His third name is called the "Word of God." John the apostle loves this. John loves this "Word of God" thing. He's the only one who introduces Him as the Word of God. He starts the gospel of John, John 1:1-3, with what? Jesus the Word made flesh. He calls Him the Word of God when he opens his gospel. That's not enough. He calls Him the Word of God when he opens his first epistle, in 1 John 1:1-3. So in John 1:1-3 and 1 John 1:1-3, both of them, he speaks and reveals Jesus as the Word of God.

Here's one very limited thing that this means. It talks about His ability and intention and power to fulfill the plans of God comprehensively. Every single intention and movement, every transcript of the heart of God recorded in the Word of God will be totally fulfilled. Every plan and every passion will be fulfilled in Him. He's the comprehensive plan and purpose and passion of God in total fulfillment. He's called the Word of God. Not one jot or tittle will fall to the ground in His personality or in His mission. John loves that.

JESUS, THE KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS

He's called the "King of kings and Lord of lords." We'll look at this in the next session a little. He's not King over the kings of the earth. The kings of the earth are no longer kings after the Lord appears. They're now the lost. That's who they are. That's their identity. They're the damned and the lost. The kings are those who He makes kings over ten cities. It's those who He makes kings and priests with Him. It's those who share in the hierarchy. It's part of the bride.

The kings and priests are the Bride of Christ. There are many verses about how we reign. He says, "I give My sphere. I give ten cities to various ones. I give nations and countries."

He told the twelve apostles in Matthew 19, "You twelve specifically"—minus Judas—"will rule the actual country of Israel in the regeneration in the age to come" (Mt. 19:28, paraphrased). They'll actually be kings with Him, sub-kings. He's the King over those in partnership with Him. Right here on His wedding day He's calling forth His bride will royal terms, *King* and *Lord*. He's the King and the Lord of all of those with delegated authority.

Lest we're afraid that we'll lose out, the bride is finally revealed in chapter 22:4-5. That's the final revelation of the bride. We will look at that next week. He ends it with this sentence: "By the way, His names are going to be written on your minds." The Holy Spirit told John that the nature of God will be supernaturally revealed to the minds of all the bride. That's how it ends.

We don't ever think, "Oh no! We'll lose out with Him." No, He will supernaturally reveal it write it upon the minds of the bride. It's the final statement about the bride in the Word of God.

Amen.

