

Jesus, the Bridegroom King: Hosting a Wedding (Rev. 19:1-10)

I. THE WEDDING AND THE WAR (REV. 19)

- A. Revelation 19 describes Jesus as a Bridegroom King. Natural history ends with a glorious wedding and a global war. They both point to the same reality of Jesus' desire to fill the earth with love and righteousness. In the first half (19:1-10), we see Jesus as a **Bridegroom hosting a wedding**; in the second half (19:11-21), Jesus as a **King waging a war**. He will go to war for the sake of His wedding, to remove all that hinders love. The final battle of natural history will result in Jesus ruling the earth in partnership with His Bride (Rev. 20:4-6). (Jesus "hosts" a wedding, in the sense that He paid for it with His blood and presents the Bride to Himself; Eph. 5:27).
- B. We must read both halves of Revelation 19 together to understand the wedding and the war. We will not understand the glory of the wedding without seeing how extreme the war is. We will not understand His motive for the war without seeing His desire for a wedding leading to ruling the earth with His Bride. The war is shocking in that He openly confronts rebellion on a global level (Rev. 19:21). The wedding is even more shocking, in that the uncreated God binds Himself in marriage to human beings forever. We must allow this truth to deeply touch our hearts.
- C. There is no contradiction between Jesus as Bridegroom and Jesus as King. The wedding-war combination is at the heart of many of the great stories that are told in all cultures. The oppressed and helpless maiden is rescued from a powerful villain by a much more powerful warrior king, who marries her and makes her a queen and shares the glory of his kingdom with her.
- D. God's ultimate purpose for His creation is to provide a family for Himself and a Bride for His Son as His eternal companion to reign with Him forever (Rev. 19:7). God's mission statement for creation is the marriage of the Lamb. The guiding principle of God's activity throughout history has been to raise up a prepared Bride for His worthy Son, to rule the earth with Him.
- ⁷The marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready... (Rev. 19:7)*
- E. Natural history will end with the Bride being made ready for her marriage to Jesus (Rev. 19). God is creating the optimum context in which people will voluntarily love Jesus. This vision keeps us from living aimlessly. Our struggle makes sense as we understand what Jesus is after.
- F. Jesus' inheritance includes the mandatory obedience of all creation and the voluntary love of His Bride. The inheritance that the Father promised Jesus is a people who He fully possesses.
- ⁸I will give You the nations for Your inheritance...for Your possession. (Ps. 2:8)*
- G. Paul prayed that we would know the riches of the glory we receive in being God's inheritance. We see a twofold revelation—the riches of His worth to us and the riches of our worth to Him.
- ¹⁷That the Father of glory may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation...¹⁸that you may know...what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints...(Eph. 1:17-18)*

II. JESUS' COMMITMENT TO HIS WEDDING: ALL OF HISTORY CENTERS AROUND IT

- A. History began in Eden with Adam and Eve joined as bridegroom and bride (Gen. 2:18-24). Paul interprets Genesis 2:18-24 as speaking of Jesus and the Church. In Adam and Eve's relationship, we see a prophetic picture of Jesus joined to His Church as His Bride.
- ³¹A man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall be one flesh. ³²This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church. (Eph. 5:31-32)*
- B. Natural history ends in an Eden-like city with Jesus and His people joined as a bridegroom and bride (Rev. 21-22). The New Jerusalem is called the Bride because it was prepared for the Bride and is where she experiences a face-to-face relationship with the Bridegroom God (Rev. 22:3-4). The description of this city is given in relational terms, or by our nearness to God (Rev. 21:1-8), and then in functional terms as the ultimate garden of Eden and Holy of Holies (Rev. 21:9-22:5).
- ⁹I will show you the Bride...¹⁰showed me the great city, the holy Jerusalem... (Rev. 21:9-10)*
- C. Jesus began His ministry at a wedding (Jn. 2:1-12), and ended it by describing the kingdom as the Father preparing a wedding for Him (Mt. 22:1-14). He began His ministry to the apostles by revealing Himself as bridegroom (Mt. 9:15) and ended it by calling them to cultivate intimacy with Him as the Bridegroom God (Mt. 25:8). His ministry was introduced by John, a friend of the Bridegroom (Jn. 3:29). History ends with the Church in her bridal identity (Rev. 22:17).

III. GOD'S NATURE AND ETERNAL PERSONALITY IS LOVE

- A. God's nature and eternal personality is love. Love is not something He does; it is something He is. ***He is an eternal overflowing fountain of desire for His people.*** Desire implies want, but not lack. God desires to share the joy of His love. Love, by definition, is relational. We can only understand God's purposes and how He views us in the context of a relational paradigm of God.
- ¹⁶God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God... (1 Jn. 4:16)*
- B. Some see Jesus as if He were a great, yet distant king, whose main interest in us is to save us so that we will praise Him and work for Him, but without relating to Him.
- ²⁴Father, I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am... (Jn. 17:24)*
- C. The Bridegroom message is about Jesus' emotions for us, His commitments to us (to share His heart, home, throne, secrets, and beauty), and our response of wholehearted love and obedience to Him. This message starts with experiencing Jesus' heart, emotions, and affections for us. He delights in us, enjoys us, values our work, and is committed to our greatness in God's will.
- D. Jesus desires to make us ***feel loved*** and desires that we would ***celebrate*** the dignity and value that He gives to us. He finds ***pleasure*** in us—in ***relating*** to us. He wants to ***partner*** with us in the work that His Father has entrusted to Him. What we do moves His heart. Our ***love*** for Him ***has a real impact on Him***. The very existence of a Bride, equally yoked in voluntary love, filling the earth, is a significant part of His story and His glory that will be manifest before all nations.

- E. A good man wants his wife and children to have everything he has. He is filled with joy in seeing his family observe his extravagant love for them. Jesus does not want us to walk in false humility that minimizes how He loves loving us and how He loves us enjoying His love. Peter with false humility, resisted Jesus serving him when Jesus washed the disciples' feet (Jn. 13:8)
- F. Jesus is magnified in us when we fully receive Him as the God of love and not just as the God of power. He enjoys us delighting in His love for us. He is magnified when we boldly receive it.
- G. Israel understood God as a King with power, not as a Bridegroom with desire for relationship.
 - 1. As King, He manifests His power—as Bridegroom, He shares His heart
 - 2. As King, He wants service—as Bridegroom, He wants partnership
 - 3. As King, He gives mandates—as Bridegroom, He wants conversation
 - 4. As King, He rules over us—as Bridegroom, He rules with us
 - 5. As King, He wants obedience—as Bridegroom, He wants loyal love
 - 6. As King, He is worshiped by His people—as Bridegroom, He is moved by His people

IV. THE BRIDE'S RESPONSE ON THE GREAT WEDDING DAY (REV. 19:1-5)

¹After these things I heard a loud voice of a great multitude in heaven, saying, "Alleluia! Salvation and glory and honor and power belong to the Lord our God! ²For true and righteous are His judgments, because He has judged the great harlot who corrupted the earth with her fornication; and He has avenged on her the blood of His servants shed by her." ³Again they said, "Alleluia! Her smoke rises up forever and ever!" ⁴And the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshiped God who sat on the throne, saying, "Amen! Alleluia!" ⁵Then a voice came from the throne, saying, "Praise our God, all you His servants...both small and great!" (Rev. 19:1-5)

- A. John describes the Bride's response on her wedding day. The first thing recorded is the Bride's agreement with Jesus' leadership. The most offensive part of Jesus' leadership is His judgments. Imagine several billion believers from all history with resurrected bodies and full understanding of Jesus' leadership praising Him together. Satan's strategy is to deceive us into accusing Jesus' leadership of our life. He knows that we cannot love Jesus if we are accusing His leadership.
- B. We see the Bride, referred to as the great multitude (v. 1), on her wedding day responding to Jesus' leadership after the most severe judgments in history are poured out on the Antichrist and the harlot Babylon (Rev. 6-18). The Bride is the great multitude from the nations (Rev. 7:9-10).
 - 2. Salvation: Jesus' judgments lead to more people receiving His salvation.
 - 3. Glory: Jesus' judgments lead to more people praising and loving Him
 - 4. Honor: Jesus' judgments lead to more people honoring Him with their obedience
 - 5. Power: Jesus' judgments lead to Him taking leadership over all national governments

- A. The two main reasons for God's judgments are corruption and oppression or immorality, and martyrdom (v. 2). Both are related to attacking the Bride's love for Jesus.
- B. The Bride will also agree with Jesus' eternal judgments (v. 3). It will be the first time in history that 100% of God's people are in 100% agreement with God.
- C. Those in top governmental positions in heaven (v. 4) are overwhelmed at seeing all the redeemed throughout history standing in voluntary love and obedience to Jesus. They understand that the Father kept His promise and gave Jesus His eternal inheritance from every nation (Ps. 2:8).
- D. Four facets of the mystery of God, as defined by Paul: to have a new heart (Col. 1:27), a new body (1 Cor. 15:51), deep unity in the Church (Eph. 3:3-6), and intimacy with Jesus as His Bride (Eph. 5:30-32). God's original purpose will be fully restored as people live this way on the earth.
⁷...the mystery of God would be finished, as He declared to His...prophets. (Rev. 10:7)
- E. Imagine the drama of billions of believers being silenced with awe as they watch the elders and living creatures fall down before God (v. 5). A voice cries out, signaling the time to shift the focus from the prostrate elders to praising God. It is time to let the celebration begin. Imagine them all worshiping without shame, condemnation, dullness, or defilement.
⁵A voice came from the throne, saying, "Praise our God, all you His servants..." (Rev. 19:5)

V. **REJOICING OVER GOD'S REIGN AND JESUS' WEDDING (REV. 19:6-10)**

⁶I heard...the voice of a great multitude, as the sound of many waters and as the sound of mighty thunderings, saying, "Alleluia! For the Lord God Omnipotent reigns! ⁷Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready." (Rev 19:6-7)

- A. The Bride as a great multitude will rejoice over God's reign being openly manifest on the earth (through Jesus) and over Jesus' marriage to a prepared Bride (v. 6-7).
- B. **Many waters and mighty thunder:** The Bride's voice will sound like God's (Rev. 1:15; 4:5)
- C. **Omnipotent:** God reigns in heaven now but Jesus will reign as King on the earth (Rev. 19:16).
There were loud voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever!" (Rev. 11:15)
 - 2. **Alleluia:** They are in full agreement with Jesus' leadership over all the earth (Rev. 5:12).
 - 3. **Reigns:** Our faith confession is that God reigns now and works everything to our good (Rom. 8:28). He never neglects us or mistreats us as He prepares us for our marriage.

- A. ***Be glad and rejoice:*** We will never experience tears, death, sorrow, crying, or pain (Rev. 21:4). The time of eternal gladness begins without fear or shame. All our costly obedience is worth it!
⁴God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away. (Rev. 21:4)
- B. ***Give glory:*** God’s people will be God-centered from the depth of their being without any compromising desires. The first commandment will be established as first place in their lives.
- C. ***She made herself ready:*** This is not emphasizing her abilities, but her voluntary responsiveness. It’s a statement of her desire, not a statement of her spiritual power and maturity. Jesus does not want any unwilling partners in the marriage. She responds from her own free will under the influence of the Spirit. She will fully acknowledge that it was granted by God’s grace.
- D. ***The Bride’s garments:*** Eternal rewards express how Jesus feels about our love for Him. He is so moved by the way that we love Him. He will openly declare the way that He feels about the way that you loved Him. Paul said that as one star differs from another star in glory, so also does the glory of resurrection (1 Cor 15:41-42). We will all differ in our capacity to receive God’s glory.
⁸To 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)

VI. THE MARRIAGE SUPPER OF THE LAMB

⁹Then he said to me, “Write: ‘Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!’” (Rev. 19:9)

- A. The marriage supper is a millennial event that includes all the redeemed from all history. This glorious supper will occur soon after Jesus’ return to earth to inaugurate the Millennium. Isaiah describes a kingdom banquet for all the nations on Mt. Zion (Isa. 24:23; 25:6-9), where Jesus will reign from in the Millennium. Jesus will destroy the veil and remove death (Isa. 25:7).
⁶And in this mountain [Mt. Zion] the LORD of hosts will make for all people a feast of choice pieces...⁷And He will destroy on this mountain the surface of the covering cast over all people, and the veil that is spread over all nations. ⁸He will swallow up death forever... (Isa. 25:6-8)
- B. ***Blessed are those:*** The blessing is for all who respond to God’s call to salvation and, thus, who will participate in the wedding supper. Many refuse to accept this call (Mt. 22:3). Those who respond are called blessed. This blessing was pronounced on believers who were still alive and enduring trials in John’s generation. The hope of that day purifies us now (1 Jn. 3:3)
¹⁵Blessed is he who shall eat bread in the kingdom of God! (Lk. 14:15)
- C. In verses 7-9, the Bride is the corporate Church or the redeemed from all history. Individual believers are referred to as those “called” to the supper. Thus, the Church is the great multitude (v. 1, 6), the wife (v. 7), those called to the supper (v. 9) and the army (v. 14). Similar fluidity of metaphorical language is seen in Jesus being the Lamb and the Shepherd (Rev. 7:17).