

**THE FIRST THING ON YOUR SECOND WEDDING DAY**  
**REVELATION 19:6-9**

Weddings were always exciting in our home. So many things made weddings attractive and desirable: the wedding dress, the bridesmaid's dresses, the flowers, the music, the food and friends after the wedding, the music and dancing, and (most of all?) the cake! We *always* had to stay for the cake. (I don't remember anyone looking forward to seeing the groom's tux...)

The couple getting married is also anticipating the wedding day — the celebration, the gifts, the consummation of the wedding, and the privilege of being with one another day after day.

Weddings are joyous and happy days — full of excitement, expectations, and anticipation.

And do you notice that no one *ever* looks forward to a second wedding day? No one says on his/her wedding day, "I'm happy about today, but I *really* can't wait for my next wedding."

Well — having just celebrated our 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary, I'm here to publicly declare that I am anticipating more and more, every day, my next wedding day. And that doesn't mean I'm about to make an announcement about Raye Jeanne and me. It *does* mean that the older I get the more I anticipate Glory and my union, with the rest of the bride of Christ, to our Savior at the wedding feast of the Lamb.

John's prophecy in the Revelation of Jesus Christ gives us ample reason to anticipate our next wedding — the heavenly wedding — because,

**THE MARRIAGE SUPPER IS THE CULMINATION OF THE LAMB'S REDEMPTIVE WORK.**

This prophecy provides us with four reasons to anticipate the wedding feast with the Savior:

- 1. Our Heavenly Wedding is the Culmination of CHRIST'S Victory (19:6)**
- 2. Our Heavenly Wedding is the Culmination of GOD'S Redemptive Plan (19:7a)**
- 3. Our Heavenly Wedding Affords Us an Opportunity to PREPARE (19:7b-8)**
- 4. Our Heavenly Wedding is About the LAMB (19:9)**

## 1. Our Heavenly Wedding is the Culmination of CHRIST'S Victory (19:6)

- Some background to this passage is helpful.
  - ✓ Revelation 19 is obviously near the end of the book of Revelation, the book that explains the coming events in the history of the world.
  - ✓ Starting in ch. 6, John reveals the judgments that will come on the earth in the form of seal, trumpet, and bowl judgments. Those judgments culminated in Christ's victory over the nations in the battle at Armageddon (16:13-16) and over the city of Babylon — the symbol of all religious and political opposition to God (17:1ff; 18:1ff). The Tribulation judgment is now over.
  - ✓ And not only is the Tribulation over, but Christ's victory culminates in His second coming (19:11ff).
  - ✓ The majority of the book of Revelation has been filled with wrath and judgment and sorrow, but in 19:1 that changes to what one writer has called the "Hallelujah Chorus" of the NT. Four times in the opening verses, the word "Hallelujah" (which means "Praise the Lord") is used — the only 4x it appears in the NT — and these are declarations of Christ's victory (vv. 1, 3, 4, 6).
- The four **Hallelujahs** in this passage seem to build to a crescendo: there is an unnamed multitude singing in vv. 1, 3 — it is possible that these are the martyrs from the Tribulation (the same term, **great multitude** is used of them in 7:9); then the church and the four living creatures sing in v. 4.
  - ✓ Now in v. 6 there is another **great multitude**, but this is different than the one in v. 1 because in v. 5 a **voice from the throne** (either an angel or perhaps God Himself) called **all bondservants...the small and the great** to praise God. Whatever a man's intellectual ability, social standing, spiritual maturity, or cultural achievements all alike will sing this one song. So the great multitude in v. 6 is therefore probably all the voices of all the redeemed in Heaven rejoicing with one song and voice for the victory of Christ.
  - ✓ And John is overwhelmed with the power of that song when he says it is **like the sound of many waters and like the sound of mighty peals of thunder...** These descriptions emphasize the dramatic forcefulness of the song — this is the most impressive song John has ever heard.
  - ✓ But its drama is not just in the numbers of singers, but also in the words they sing:
    - **Hallelujah** = "Praise the Lord" — praise of God is always becoming, even for His judgments (2-3)
    - **for** — there is a specific reason they are to sing to God's praise. He is always praiseworthy, but there is a particular reason that draws out all of Heaven in this one song.
    - **The Lord our God, the Almighty, reigns.** Here are three descriptions of God:
      - ... The Lord is **our God**. The sovereign of the universe is the God of His redeemed people. He is Lord, but He is **our** Lord, our Master, our Guide, our King. (He is kindly toward us!)
      - ... The Lord is **Almighty**. This is a word of power and strength. The word denotes the omnipotence of God and is only used of God (cf. 1:8; 4:8).

... The Lord **reigns**. Again, Armageddon has been won, Babylon has been defeated, the Tribulation has poured out its judgments, the King is coming to rule His kingdom, and Satan is about to be vanquished (20:1ff). There has been rebellion against God since Genesis 3 and God's kingdom has now vanquished the world forces of darkness and is eternally replacing Satan's world system and kingdom. God reigns for all-time and forevermore. No one else rules over Him. The...Lord...reigns.

- So when John begins the account of the wedding between the Lamb and His bride, it is with the background of Christ's victory.
  - ✓ These four Hallelujahs celebrate Christ's victory and anticipate the Lamb's marriage supper (v. 7).
  - ✓ As one writer has said, "The somber gives way to song. The transfer is from darkness to light, from black to white, from dreary days of judgment to bright days of blessing." [J. Vernon McGee]
  - ✓ There are many songs of praise in this book (4:8, 11; 5:9-10, 12-14; 7:10, 12, 15-17; 11:15, 17-18; 15:3-4; 16:5-7), but this is the final and climactic song.
  - ✓ And this final song is the culmination of Christ's victorious work. As you anticipate your union with Christ as part of His redeemed church, meditate on His power and victory not only over your sin, but over all the powers and forces that are against Him (which He will defeat with a word, v. 15).

## 2. Our Heavenly Wedding is the Culmination of GOD'S Redemptive Plan (19:7a)

- The song that began in verse 6 continues into verse 7. The singers exhort, ***Let us rejoice and be glad and give glory*** — these are three ways of saying essentially the same thing: declare the greatness of God. Because of who He is and what He's done, He is worthy of receiving the praise of Heaven (which was the declaration in the beginning of the book, 4:11). But the praise is also very focused in this verse — ***for*** (reason) ***the marriage of the Lamb has come...***
- Marriage in the time of John and the NT had three primary components:
  - ✓ The betrothal: this was a contract written by two sets of parents, often when the marriage partners were still children, binding them to each other (often with payment of a dowry).
  - ✓ The presentation: at a suitable age, the groom would go the home of the bride and escort her back to his home (the background to the parable of the 10 waiting virgins in Mt. 25:1-13).
    - The groom would go with his friends to her home, accompanied by a band and tambourines
    - The bride was dressed exquisitely, and adorned with jewels and a veil.
    - This whole new procession would then go back to the groom's home for the final component:
  - ✓ The ceremony (and feast):
    - The exchange of vows would include the singing of songs and speeches made in their honor
    - After the vows there would be a feast at the home of the groom that might last for up to a week (this is the background of Christ's first miracle, Jn. 2:1-10).

- After the feast, her parents would escort the bride to the nuptial chamber, where the marriage would be consummated (Jg. 15:1); she would typically only remove the veil in this chamber (which led to Jacob's dilemma, Gen. 29:23-25).
- The marriage of the Lamb to His bride, the church, had the same three components:
  - ✓ The betrothal: the promise of the Father to the Son in eternity to give Him a redeemed people (Jn. 6:37ff; Tt. 1:1-3; 2 Tim. 1:9)
  - ✓ The presentation: the redeemed church of God is fully glorified and restored to their physical bodies at the Rapture; here the Bridegroom, Jesus, takes His bride to His Father's house (Jn. 14:2-3). He has been preparing the home, and now it is ready for the Bride.
  - ✓ The ceremony (and feast): the union of the glorified bride to the Lamb of Heaven (Rev. 19:7-9). This is the event for which every believer is longing and living.
  - ✓ The singers of Heaven rejoice because the culmination of the eternal plan of God to unite Christ to a redeemed people has come to fruition! "Betrothed in eternity past, presented in the Father's house since the Rapture, the church is now ready for the wedding ceremony to begin." [MacArthur]
- Notice that Christ is here called **the Lamb**. He is not "Christ," "Jesus," the "Son of Man," "Messiah," or even "the Bridegroom." He is the Lamb. Isn't that unusual in a wedding story? Why does John only refer to Him by name in this passage as **the Lamb** (vv. 7, 9)?
  - ✓ Because it was as the sacrificial Lamb that He made it possible for you to be joined and united to Him. If He was not the Lamb on the cross atoning for sin, you could not be the Bride and He would not be the Groom. It was essential that He be the Lamb so that you could be part of the Bride.
  - ✓ As you read of this Heavenly wedding, don't read it as some unimportant ceremony — a ritual that is only a ritual. It is not just part of the redemptive plan; it is the *culmination* of the plan of God.

### 3. Our Heavenly Wedding Affords Us an Opportunity to PREPARE (19:7b-8)

- The Lamb has prepared the house for His bride and the time for the marriage between Lamb and bride is ready; and notice that the bride also **has made herself ready** (7b).
  - ✓ Who is this bride? It is a reference to the church, which is called His bride (2 Cor. 11:2; Eph. 5:32).
  - ✓ Like the bride of ancient days, she has prepared herself with clothing appropriate to the day of the wedding — she is dressed in ***fine linen, bright and clean***. She has not appeared at the wedding in her everyday clothing, but with clothing that has been specially prepared for that one day. And the cleanliness and brightness of the garments reflect the purity of the bride, prepared for her Groom.
  - ✓ And the singers are clear that the bride has done this herself — she made herself ready. This was not something someone else did for her. She did it. She fulfilled her responsibilities.
  - ✓ And the singers also tell us these garments represent ***the righteous acts of the saints***. These are sanctifying works done by the believer in obedience to Christ and as a result of our justification.

- It is true that at justification we are imputed with the righteousness of Christ (**Rom. 3:21ff**), but it is also true that the believer works out His salvation to become like Christ (**Rom. 6:12-14**).
  - And on the day of our glorification and union with Christ, our sanctification, which is imperfect on earth will be made fully righteous (**1 Jn. 3:2**). Imperfect robes will be made spotless, by the work of our heavenly Groom. Christ is working in and through us to sanctify us, which is what Paul pictures in Eph. 5:25-27. But we cannot dismiss our responsibility as followers of Christ. We must work at our salvation (**Phil. 2:12**), knowing that it is God who is working it in us and through us (**Phil. 2:13**).
  - Sanctification is dependent on God, but it also requires the labors of the believer. He equips, but we must obey.
- This is a reminder of our responsibility not to neglect our salvation.

“Has it ever occurred to you, my Christian friend, that at the marriage of the Bride to the Lamb, each of us will be wearing the wedding garment of our own making? We must confess to our shame that the Bride is not now ready for the wedding....Christian, what are we putting in the bridal chest for that day? Of what will your wedding garment and mine be made? The fruit of a good and godly life will make a lovely garment for that glorious occasion. The white linen of the holy and useful life of Christ’s dedicated followers stands out in bold contrast to the purple and scarlet, the gold, precious stones, and pearls of the harlot (cf. 17:4).” [L. Strauss, *Revelation*, 320-1.]

- ✓ Friend, if you are a Christian, are you living like a little Christ? Are your desires the desires of Christ? Are your actions worthy of the Father who redeemed you? Are you living like a Son of the King? Are your words exemplary of Christ? Are you working hard at mortifying the flesh and putting on Christ? Does your life demonstrate that you are preparing to meet your Groom and that you are diligent to be all that He has made you to be? Or have you settled into a kind of malaise, content that you are better than you were and not concerned to keep maintaining the disciplines of a godly life? The life of godliness is one we pursue to the end; and it is all about preparing ourselves to meet our Groom and to be radiant expressions of what He has worked in us.
- ✓ If you don’t look particularly righteous today, it might also be that you don’t look righteous because you haven’t been declared righteous by Christ — that is, you might not be a Christian who has been imputed (accounted) with Christ’s righteousness.
  - If you are not a follower of Jesus Christ, you do well to be reminded that you are a sinner and He will judge you for your sin, if you don’t repent (see 20:12-15). That is a reality.
  - The way to escape that wrath and to be enfolded into His kingdom is to turn away from your sin, and trust Christ for salvation, believing that He satisfied God’s wrath when you could not (Rom. 3:24-26). If you are not a believer, will you repent and believe even today?

There is one last reason to anticipate this heavenly wedding:

#### 4. Our Heavenly Wedding is About the **LAMB** (19:9)

- Commenting about this wedding ceremony and feast, someone speaks to John: **He said to me, “Write...”** We don’t know with certainty who this is, but because an angel also commanded John to write in 14:13, it seems most likely that this is an angel here. It could be the same angel who began speaking to him in 17:1 about the judgments of Babylon, but we can’t be certain.
- What is important in this verse is what the speaker commands John to write:
  - ✓ **Blessed are those who are invited...** Who are those who are invited? It seems highly unlikely that it is the redeemed church, because the church is the Bride of Christ (vv. 7-8). So it seems most likely that it is the other inhabitants of Heaven. These saints include those like Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Mt. 8:11; Lk. 13:28), the prophets (Lk. 13:28); Moses and Elijah (Mt. 17:1-3), the OT heroes of the faith (Heb. 11), John the Baptist (Mt. 11:11), who described himself as a friend of the Bridegroom (Jn. 3:29), and all the saints who anticipated the coming Messiah in the OT, who were unnamed in the OT or named (e.g., in the chronologies) without description of their faith.
    - And there is blessing for those who are called to the feast. The blessing is not just a temporal joy that lasts for the duration of the feast, but is an eternal joy!
    - Christ Himself offers a preview of His care for His bride in His first miracle (Jn. 2:1ff). If He will provide the finest of wines at an earthly wedding (that is not His own), how much will He do for those who belong to Him in Heaven and for His own wedding?
    - This is a reminder that even those in Heaven who aren’t part of the Bride of Christ (the church), are still **blessed** — they receive the blessings of Glory and there are no “second-class citizens” in Heaven.
  - ✓ John also writes that this invitation is **to the marriage supper of the Lamb**. I’ve been to many weddings and the wedding is always about the bride — no one ever comments about how radiant the Groom looked. But at this marriage supper it is the Lamb who is pre-eminent. Christ is pre-eminent, because as His title **Lamb** denotes, He made everything about this wedding come to pass — from the eternal plan with the Father, through the incarnation, death, resurrection, ascension, and advocacy for the bride. The ceremony is about His exaltation (as was evident even in the songs that have been sung throughout this chapter).
- Why should we anticipate our wedding in Heaven? Because it is all about the Lamb who redeemed us, who took away our sin and united us to the Father as sons and gave us access to Him.

**CONCLUSION:**

Last week we talked about the first thing in your marriage — to be satisfied in marriage find your greatest satisfaction in God. And there is a similar reality about your second marriage — your second marriage, as a member of the bride of Christ, is not about you (the bride) but about the Groom, the Lamb who has planned your redemption, become incarnate to accomplish your redemption through the cross, and is ascended, sitting at the right hand of the Father, interceding on your behalf, and preparing your eternal home in His presence.

Think much on and anticipate your next wedding day and be pre-occupied with the Lamb of God.

**BENEDICTION:** Jude 24-25