

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES

"Teaching the things concerning the kingdom of God..."

FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE

Part 208

THE MARRIAGE OF THE LAMB

(continued)

“And he saith unto me, Write, ***Blessed are they which are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb***” (Rev. 19:9).

Who are those blessed, truly happy, and abidingly fortunate, who have been invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb? I turn to the only possible authority, that is, to the Lamb Himself. When Jesus told the parable of the king who gave a marriage feast for his son, and of the invited guests who gave various excuses as to why they couldn't attend, while others made light of the invitation, and some even abused his messengers, he continued, “The wedding is ready, but those who were invited are not worthy. Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in the poor, and the disabled, and the lame, and the blind. As many as you can find, invite them to come to the marriage feast.” And the servant said, “Lord, it is done just as you have commanded, and there is still room.” So the king said to the servant, “Go out into the highways and the hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled.”

The question follows — who *are* those who are invited to the marriage supper? One thing is quite certain — they are *not the bride!* The bride is never “invited” or “called” to her own wedding, for it is *her wedding* and the bridegroom himself escorts her there at his side. And if for some reason the bride “made excuse” not to be at her own wedding feast, she certainly wouldn't be *replaced* by a vast crowd of unfortunate folk! The “blessed” ones are the invited guests. As a rule, in most any culture, a wedding consists of a number of guests which are friends and relatives of the bridegroom and bride. Every marriage feast is filled with guests! In its spiritual meaning, they are redeemed ones no less than the wife, but they have not attained to the same degree of relationship, intimacy, glory, or honor. Certainly that vast throng that sings, “Let *us be glad* and rejoice, and give honor unto Him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come and *His wife* hath made *herself* ready,” are not themselves the wife, for they sing *of* the wife, and they rejoice *with* the Lamb and His wife!

The bride, on the other hand, is composed of those elect saints who live in most intimate communion and union with the Bridegroom. Who can deny that there are vast multitudes of believers who know Christ as Saviour and rejoice in the blessed knowledge that they are forgiven

and are redeemed children of God, but have never themselves matured into that true godly submission in the love of a woman that is so pure and intense that she wants to yield herself completely to the high desires of her husband — a woman so in love with her man that it transcends friendship or even infatuation — her submission becomes a willing and loving laying down of her own life until she no longer has a life because HER LIFE IS SURRENDERED TOTALLY TO ANOTHER! Her cry becomes, “I don’t want my life...I want to share yours.” Oh! Most Christians know so little of HOW TO BE A BRIDE! They know how to be “sinners saved by grace,” and many know how to be “servants” of God, but only the blessed Holy Spirit can teach us how to truly *BE a bride!*

The question is just this — Do we really love Christ, or are we merely using Him? When we are mere children, we love Him out of a childish, immature love. We love Him primarily for what He *gives us* and *does for us*. When you hear someone testify, “I love the Lord *because* He saved me,” or “I love the Lord *because* He healed me.” or “I love the Lord *because* He answers my prayers and supplies all my needs,” you know you listen to the testimony of a *child*, imperfect in love. That kind of talk is like the girl who married a rich man and confessed, “I love John because he provides me with a fabulous beach house, a new Mercedes, a mink coat, and a \$5000.00 weekly allowance!” Obviously, she loves John ONLY FOR HIS MONEY! Should John lose his wealth her love would soon die away like grass upon a lawn. And untold millions of immature Christians, the “little children” of God, profess to love God basically out of those same selfish and self-centered motives!

Do we know what it means to come into His sweet presence, asking nothing for ourselves, but only reaching out to HIM with gratitude and thanksgiving for loving us so completely? Haven’t we been most selfish and ego-centric in our prayers? We will pray for God to save America from judgment. “Spare us — don’t judge us,” we cry. “Give us, meet us, help us, bless us, strengthen us, deliver us, heal us, prosper us, use us, protect us,” on and on goes the list of our petitions! That is all good in its place, but the focus is still on US. IT IS NOT THE CRY OF THE BRIDE! Even in our work for Him we have become selfish and self-centered. We want Him to bless our service to Him to prove that our faith is genuine. We seek to be considered diligent, capable, successful — as a sign of His blessing upon us. The focus is always on the benefit derived, rather than the pure adoration of love. But the claims of the Bridegroom are paramount upon the bride — she is to love Him, not for His gifts, not for what He can do for her or make of her, but for HIMSELF! The true heart of a wife loves her husband FOR WHO AND WHAT **HE IS!** It’s not about the bride, it’s about the Bridegroom! “Let us be glad and rejoice, and *give honor unto HIM...*” When a wife really, deeply, fully loves her husband, she loves him just as much if they are poor and have nothing. As God brings forth a people into brideship to Christ, this people is coming to love our Lord Jesus Christ out of a pure heart *for who He is* and not because of the blessings and benefits received. Children are always excited about the GIFT, but the bride is excited about the GIVER!

I feel assured that the foregoing truths will aid us in understanding that there are many guests at the marriage of the Lamb who are not the bride, but are very dear friends and relatives of the Bridegroom and the bride. There are many saints who shall enter into realms of glory in God’s great and eternal kingdom, but they will not be of that elect company which makes up the bride of the Lamb. They know the Lamb, they love Him and have a relationship with Him on some level, but are not drawn by that irresistible love which craves ultimate union with Him. These will indeed inherit heavenly glory and its bliss as servants, attendants, and guests at the wedding of the Lamb! They shall have a part: but that part is not the higher part of the perfected and beautified bride. Still, they are invited to share with the Bridegroom and the bride the joy and gladness and bountiful provision of the marriage supper! This may include all those Christians now in the church systems. The church systems are ill prepared for that glorious union to come! But they

will most certainly be prepared by the Spirit to have a share in its glory, by being cleansed from their corrupt and unholy affiliation with the Babylonish systems of man, and of all their many false doctrines, by the fiery purgings of the Spirit of the Lord! They will receive their call, their “invitation” to the wedding, and they will wear a wedding garment provided by the Lord of the wedding feast, but it will not be the fine linen, clean and white, of the bride. It is a lesser glory!

Americans often have a false sense of “equality” and this view carries over into their understanding of the kingdom of God. Our ideas of equality have their origins in Thomas Jefferson’s claim that *all men are created equal*. Obviously there is an important truth there — yet it is sometimes mis-applied. We all know that none of us is “equal” in our aptitudes, in our abilities, potentialities, opportunities, or life experiences. There are striking differences between individuals that make some stronger, smarter, and better than others. Some are brighter, more talented, and more beautiful than others. Some of us could never become CEO of a large corporation or president of the United States no matter how hard we tried! We are just not “equal” to the tasks. I do not believe that the Bible teaches anywhere that all men are created equal. That is a Jeffersonian concept, but not a biblical one. Is that child created equal who is born in the slums; the child of a harlot and a whoremonger; a child without a name, who grows up in a wicked and dysfunctional atmosphere, and never knows virtue until it is steeped in vice? Is that child created equal and endowed with the same inalienable rights who grows up amidst falsehood, and never knows what truth is until it is steeped in lies; and never knows what honesty is until it is steeped in crime? Is that child created equal who is born in a communist land and in a godless home; who is told by its government and taught by its teachers that there is no God in heaven, and never knows even a verse of scripture until it is steeped in unbelief and infidelity? Is that child created equal with all the more privileged children born into homes of love, purity, faith, and blessings? It is a sham, a delusion, and a snare to say it. It is not true. All are not born into this world on an equal footing! They are perhaps “equal under the law” but they certainly are not created equal in their state of birth, their opportunities, their growth and development, or their life experiences.

How sad my heart often gets when I hear someone trying to explain how we are all “equal” in Christ. How often we have heard the remarks that they who have received Christ as Saviour are all the “bride of Christ,” or are all “sons of God,” or that irrespective of denomination or spiritual experience we are all “going to the same place.” Such statements indicate a lack of both spiritual perception and scriptural understanding. Beloved, nowhere within the pages of God’s holy Book is it taught that all believers have the same gifts, the same ministry, the same degree of maturity and spiritual stature, the same calling, the same position, the same rank, the same order, or even the same goal or destination. Yet most Christians and almost all preachers entertain the mistaken notion that all any child of God needs to do is just be faithful and “hold out till the end” and we’ll all go to the same heaven, walk the same golden streets, strum the same kinds of harps, sing and shout the same praises to God — and that will be IT. They seem to associate “going to heaven” as the ultimate reward. “We’re all going to the same place,” they croon. OH, NO, WE’RE NOT! In the visions of John we see clearly that some are *in* the throne, others are *before* the throne, and multitudes of the “nations of them that are saved” are *outside* the city — walking in the light of it! Does not even nature itself teach us that the “babe” in Christ, or the “carnal Christian,” or the spiritually dilatory, the reluctant, the sluggish, the dawdling, the procrastinator, the spiritually lazy, the one weak in faith, the idolater, would not receive the same reward as the consecrated saint who diligently seeks God with a pure, undivided heart, who draws nigh to God, takes up his cross, lays down his life, seeks the Lord with all His heart, and walks in the Spirit of the Lord?

In the poetry of the Psalms the Lamb’s wife, the virgin bride, is referred to as “the daughter of the king,” that is, the daughter of the king of Tyre, or Egypt, or any other country which became the bride of King Solomon (Ps. 45:10-13) who pre-figured Christ. But the bride does not come to

the wedding alone! She is accompanied by a train of followers, called her “companions.” “The *king’s daughter* is all glorious within: her clothing is of wrought gold. She shall be brought unto the king in raiment of needlework: the *virgins her companions that follow her* shall be brought unto thee. With gladness and rejoicing shall they be brought: they shall enter into the king’s palace” (Ps. 45:13-15). Ah, how those words resonate with the song John heard in the spirit: “Let us be glad and rejoice...for the marriage of the Lamb is come!”

The 45th Psalm speaks of the King, who comes forth from the ivory palaces, whose qualities are described so graphically, with great vigor and animation. But there is also the Queen, the King’s Bride, standing on his right hand, adorned with gold of Ophir, clothed in wonderfully wrought garments of beauty and glory, and inwardly she is all glorious. But besides the Queen, the King’s Bride, there is another blessed company, who are also to enter with gladness and rejoicing into the King’s palace, and to share his favor and the light of his countenance. They are called “the virgins,” the “companions,” associates, and bosom friends of the Queen, but plainly distinct from the Queen herself. They do not go with her when she is “taken,” but “follow her,” — come after her — and are “brought unto the King” at a subsequent time, and in quite another capacity from that of the Queen and Bride. All of them are citizens of the kingdom, members of the congregation of the Lord. All of them find their joy in association with the King and Queen, but they do not share that one thing — total intimacy and ultimate union. The Queen is related to the King on a deeper and higher plane than any of “the virgins the companions” that follow her.

Throughout the scriptures we see great diversities in the attainments of the saints and the rewards apportioned to them. Our Lord Himself frequently spoke of those who would be *greatest* in the kingdom of heaven as well as those who would be *least*. He also revealed that some would be *first*, while others would be *last*. It should be obvious that there would be many levels in between! There are some who get crowns, and there are others who get none. As we have pointed out earlier, in the Revelation there are those blessed overcomers who are granted to sit with the Lord in His throne, while others are positioned “before” the throne, and besides these there are vast multitudes of those who are characterized as “the nations of them which are saved” who are completely outside the city but who “walk in the light of it.” That there is no equality of rewards in the kingdom of God is revealed plainly in the words of the Lord of the kingdom Himself: “And, behold, I come quickly: and my reward is with me, to give every man *according as his work shall be*” (Rev. 22:12). The Lord also stated that in the kingdom there are some who are assigned dominion over ten cities, some over five, and some who lose all reward, and are saved only “so as by fire.”

These are truths that vitally concern all of God’s elect who have received the call to brideship and sonship — the *high calling* of God in Christ Jesus! Even in the church of this age there are *diversities of gifts* and *differences of administrations*. And Paul tells the saints, “Now ye are the body of Christ, and *members in particular*. And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues. Are all apostles? are all prophets? are all teachers? are all workers of miracles? have all the gifts of healing? do all speak with tongues? do all interpret? But covet earnestly the best gifts...” (I Cor. 12:27-31).

Our blessed Lord and Elder Brother has opened up the way into a realm of ministry that transcends all that we have hitherto known or experienced. “That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, that we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to *lay hold upon the hope set before us*: which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which *entereth into that within the veil; whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the ORDER OF MELCHIZEDEK*” (Heb. 6:18-20).

The word “order” in the phrase “order of Melchizedek” is something like the word “order” we use when we speak of certain religious orders, such as the Franciscans or the Dominicans, or the orders of various secret societies or lodges. The Bible says that Jesus Christ is a high priest after the “Melchizedekian Order.” And that was a startling statement when it was made! It was startling because the people who heard it first, knew only one order of priests. They were the Levitical priests of Israel and they were of the Aaronic order. When the new age of the church was inaugurated, the priesthood of Aaron was terminated and Christ ascended to become a high priest in the ORDER OF THE MELCHIZEDEK PRIESTHOOD. This is why Jesus had to be a special kind of priest. He had to have the Melchizedek Connection.

Never under the Aaronic order of priesthood, apart from one example, do we find where a king exercised the office or ministry of a priest. In the Levitical order the offices of king and priest were separated, there were those who reigned as kings, and there were those who were the Lord’s priests. Kings could not intrude into the priest’s office, and priests were not permitted to sit on the throne. The tribe of Judah produced the kings, and the tribe of Levi supplied the priests. On one occasion Uzziah, king of Judah, tried to assume the role of priest and “went into the temple of the Lord to burn incense upon the altar of incense” and for this infringement upon God’s due order was smitten with leprosy in his forehead (II Chron. 27:16-20). God had separated the two offices for that time, and the one was not to intrude into the other.

God is a God of order, and not of confusion! Truth has an order for all things that God made by Jesus Christ, who upholds all things by His word and power. So, with His word and power He keeps all things in their places, and in their proper order, and in their times, and in their seasons; the summer and the winter, the night and the day, the sun, moon, and stars, as also billions of galaxies with their untold trillions of stars and suns and planets and moons, all things are kept in order by the word of God and his power; and the earth is the Lord’s, and the fullness thereof. “The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent,” speaking of the Christ, “thou art a priest for ever, *after the order of Melchizedek*” (Ps. 110:4). And Christ is not called after the order of Aaron (Heb. 7:11-22). Here you may see, the priesthood of Melchizedek was not made WITHOUT AN ORDER, just as Aaron’s priesthood was made by an order of God, according to his rod’s budding in the Tabernacle. And Jesus Christ is not a priest made without an order, but it is a *priesthood of many sons called to share His fullest glory and His highest order*, and is after the order of Melchizedek; and His royal priesthood, that is, His kingly priesthood, who offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God, are in His spiritual order, which is the order of the Son of God, which is the order of SONSHIP.

Now, I have said all that just to say this: Melchizedek is a priesthood of ORDER! Jesus Christ is made a priest for ever after the ORDER of Melchizedek! How important it is that every member of God’s elect who is taught by the spirit of wisdom and revelation from God should understand and comprehend the great truth and the deep mystery of all the “orders” that exist in the vast and eternal kingdom of God! We find that in the resurrection, every man comes up in his OWN ORDER. “But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the *firstfruits* of them that slept. For as in Adam *all die*, even so in Christ shall *all be made alive*. But EVERY MAN IN HIS O-W-N O-R-D-E-R: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ’s at His coming. Then cometh the end (of the resurrection)...all things subdued...God all in all” (I Cor. 15:20,22-24,28). But what does this mean? The Greek word translated “order” is *tagma* and means “a group,” or “rank,” or “band,” or “company.” *Tagma* actually comes from a root word meaning to appoint, determine, or set in array, as used in Acts 13:38, “and as many as were *ordained* (appointed, set in array) to eternal life believed.” The thought is of soldiers marching in bands, companies, regiments, or battalions. As in times of war the country calls age groups and forms them into companies of men, so in like manner the Spirit of God shall call to life every man who has ever lived on planet earth in his own time, order, and rank. Some glad morning, when the ever

unfolding plan of God is complete, every man will behold with endless joy the reality that his rank in the resurrection is determined not by what he became on earth, but by the pre-ordination of God *before* he was lowered into this realm!

You came into this realm out of the bosom of the Father! Before the Creator formed you, He knew you. He didn't know you in your present physical form as Joe Smith or Sally Brown, but He knew you *as spirit*. God spoke to you about His plan for your life before ever you were formed as an embryo in the womb of your mother. Paul states it so clearly when he says, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ, according as He hath *chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world*, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love" (Eph. 1:3-4). The Amplified Bible reads, "Even as He chose us (actually picked us out for Himself as His own) in Christ *before the foundation of the world*." Never doubt this reality for a moment — the only way God could have loved you, chose you in Christ, and picked you out for His special and highest purpose *before the foundation of the world* is that you truly existed in and with Him before the appearing of the worlds. Nothing can be plainer than that! Yet we have supposed that we were just recently, in this life, apprehended of God to His purpose for us. I thought the work of God began in my life eighty years ago. Now I find that the thing God is doing with humanity began in eternity! It didn't begin in time. It began before the ages were framed! God knew me, God loved me, counseled with me, and picked me out for a particular purpose, a specific ordination, work, company, rank, and order, and assigned me to that order, placed me in that order, before the foundation of the world! And that, my beloved, is what it means to come up in the resurrection IN YOUR OWN ORDER. Resurrection is the work of raising men up and bringing them back into the order they came out of when they were lowered into this gross material realm. You are raised up into the order you came from, not merely an order that was attained to on earth. Oh, the mystery of it!

Oh! How many realms of glory there are in God's vast, illimitable, inexhaustible, and eternal kingdom! "But some man will say, How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come? All flesh is not the same flesh: but there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of beasts, another of fishes, and another of birds. There are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial: but the *glory* of the celestial is *one*, and the *glory* of the terrestrial is *another*. And there is *one glory* of the sun, and *another glory* of the moon, and *another glory* of the stars: for *one star differeth from another star in glory*. **SO ALSO IS THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD**" (I Cor. 15:35,39-42). Let us not then lightly lay aside this truth of the MORE EXCELLENT GLORY, which the Holy Spirit has illumined and to which the word of God points the way. We may want to settle for just any degree of glory, but let us all who *value the glory of God* lay hold on the prize that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and the finisher of our faith.

Now let us return to our thought of the bride of the Lamb and the companies of saints which surround her. Princesses and queens, above all on occasions of their marriage, always have their associates, companions, maids of honor, attendants, and friends, who, in a general way, are counted with them as making one and the same company, but who in fact are very distinct in honor and privilege from those on whom they find it their joy to attend. Just as the Bridegroom comes not alone, but with attendants, companions, and a long train of rejoicing ones who make up his party, the whole of whom together are called "the Bridegroom's coming," while in reality there is a vast difference between Him and those with Him; so it is on the side of the bride. The great crowd that gathers at any marriage, attendants or guests, are indeed *blessed* and *honored* to be "called to the marriage feast," but they do not share that most sacred *relationship* and *union* of the bridegroom and the bride! And so it is also in the kingdom of God!

Throughout the beautiful Song of Solomon, from time to time the “daughters of Jerusalem” are addressed by the bride, or they address the bride. On one occasion they ask this question: “Whither is thy beloved gone, O thou fairest among women? whither is thy beloved turned aside? *that we may seek him with thee*” (S. of S. 6:1). The “daughters of Jerusalem” are the old-order church system Christians who love the Lord but are not “bride-like” in their relationship with Him. The Shulamite always addresses them as those who are looking on and are not enemies, although they are not seeking the most intimate fellowship and vital union with Christ. But here we meet the beautiful truth that because of the exquisite beauty of the Bride and because of the bride’s fervent love for her Beloved, a real hunger is *aroused in their own hearts to seek after Him with her*. From an attitude of indifference and detachment, they are at last brought to a place of hunger and desire, to a longing to seek Him with the bride. Oh, how wonderful are these things! For these are *spiritual realities*, and when one is dealt with by the Lord and responds to His dealing, that one can ascend in Him from one company to another — from being a “companion” of the bride to becoming a bride within himself or herself!

A little later in the same chapter we are shown even more “companies” of the bride’s companions. “There are threescore queens, and fourscore concubines, and virgins without number. My dove, my undefiled is but *one*; she is the *only one* of her mother, she is the *choice one* of her that bare her. The *daughters* (of Jerusalem) saw her, and blessed her; yea, the queens and the concubines, and they praised her” (S. of S. 6:8-9). Though there are beautiful and highly honored “daughters of Jerusalem” without number, the Bridegroom declares that His dove is but one. In the second chapter, we are told that all the daughters are as thorns when compared to His love, who is the only lily! The expressions, “but one,” and “only one,” in the passage above are both translated from the same word in the Hebrew language. Their meaning throws much light upon our oneness and union with Christ. “But one” means “the united one; to unify or make one.” This reveals the great truth that there are many in the bride of the Lamb, but they are so united or unified in mind, heart, devotion, and will as to make “but one.” The bride is one; the companions are many. The bride is *from among* the daughters, but is singled out from them. From this moment of separation, a difference is made. The bride is that *special one* out of many! We can know by this that those who are truly the bride of the Lamb share a common understanding, revelation, submission, and purpose, being brought together in such perfect unity of spirit as will make her one. They are one among themselves, but even more importantly they are one in mind, heart, love, and devotion with their Beloved!

“The daughters saw her, and called her blessed; yea, the queens and the concubines, and they praised her.” All the precious children of God on earth, all of those who could have been in the bride of the Lamb and are not, all the hosts of heaven, every creature in heaven and upon earth, shall behold her, even as they shall look upon the Christ when He is revealed through His “many brethren” in all of His glory. Those who love God will rejoice in her brightness, those who could have been in this blessed company, will rejoice that she has attained to that which they have missed. In the wonderful glory of that day there will be no regret, bitterness, or resentment in any heart of God’s people, and they will call her blessed, they will praise her; not because of herself, but because she shows forth the purpose and handiwork of God and is to His praise and glory as she bears the image of His Son.

The Lord Himself has told us, “*Many* are called, but *few* are chosen.” Ah, “Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb!” Oh, how bountifully blessed they are! Yet — can we not see that these are the “called” ones? “*Many* are called...” May I say it this way — in our present application, the multitudes attending the marriage of the Lamb *are the called ones*. The bride, however, is the *chosen one*! And the mystery is just this: “...*few* are chosen.” There is a little company today, who have come out of all the defilement around about us, who have forsaken man-made churches with their fears and fables, to be married to their Lord,

and to Him alone. These are they who rule over His household, and who are now in travail to bring forth (Isa. 65:8). And there is a great feast spread, a feast wherein the wife and a portion of the “daughters,” the “virgins,” will attend (Mat. 25:10). It is the third feast of the Israelite year: not Passover, for that was fulfilled at Calvary; and not Pentecost, for that has been fulfilled throughout the church age. This third feast of the year is the feast of Tabernacles! It is “the feast of ingathering, which is in the end of the year” (Ex. 23:16, 34:22; Deut. 16:13-15). And this feast IS THE MARRIAGE SUPPER OF THE LAMB! “**Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb!**”

God is calling many in this hour and He is also choosing a few. We are now in this place where God is choosing, just as He chose Moses, David, the prophets, Peter, Paul, Andrew, James, John, Martin Luther and others who have been His instruments in every great move of God throughout the ages to be used by Him specially; we are now in an hour of divine choice. God is again choosing men! We are not choosing Him, He is choosing us. We are just responding to His choosing! God is making choice of those through whom there will come the complete, the full, the total revelation and manifestation of Jesus Christ in all of its glory, all of its power, all of its authority, and all of its salvation, so that all flesh shall *see* the salvation of God and all the ends of the earth the glory of the Lord upon the Lamb and His wife and His many brethren!

Behold — I show you a mystery! While we speak of the bride, and what a glorious and illustrious company she is, and those called, what a blessed company they are, let us not lose sight of the fact that the marriage is the “marriage of the Lamb.” It is the Lamb and His wife. It is the celebration of their joy, of their love, of their union, of their lives. The deep mystery which the Holy Spirit would now make precious to our hearts is just this — there is a corporate body of overcomers having a masculine character identified with the Lamb and they share His holy mount of Zion, they sit with Him in His throne, they ride white horses with Him in His conquest — for just as the bride is a corporate body of beloved ones, so also the GROOM is a corporate body of sons. Paul by inspiration wrote of those mature ones who “grow up *into Him in all things WHICH IS THE HEAD, EVEN CHRIST*” (Eph. 4:15). Can we not see that this signifies those who *grow up into HIS HEADSHIP*. These are also designated as a MANCHILD and as KINGS AND PRIESTS unto God, indicating that they grow up into HIS KINGSHIP, into HIS PRIESTHOOD, and into HIS SONSHIP. It should be obvious that a *son* cannot be a *bride* anymore than a *king* can be a *queen*. The bride of Christ has a joint rulership as a queen — but she is not the king! Christ is *King of kings* — signifying a KINGSHIP COMPANY.

George Hawtin has so ably written of this, “This is none other than Jesus Christ, the first begotten Son of God, together with all those other precious sons that have come into His image and likeness throughout the ages. This is in truth the FULLNESS OF THE BODY of the BRIDEGROOM, for the Bridegroom is more than Jesus of Nazareth. He is JESUS CHRIST AND ALL THE SONS whom God has given Him now joined together as one glorious BODY OF SONS, the Bridegroom of whom it was said, ‘Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet Him.’ Christ together with ALL THE SONS OF GOD is the completeness of the BODY OF THE BRIDEGROOM. The long awaited time has come to take the bride, for the marriage of the Lamb is come and His wife hath made herself ready. The marriage of the Bridegroom, the male company of sons, to the bride, the female company, will be the signal for the beginning of that age of all ages in which everything in heaven and earth will be gathered into Christ (Eph. 1:10)” — end quote.

This spiritually masculine company of overcomers are those sons of God, the manchild out of the virgin bride, of whom it is written by the prophet, “For as a young man marrieth a virgin, so shall **thy sons marry thee:** and as the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice

over thee” (Isa. 62:5). In this ONENESS WITH HIM in His headship there are positions and qualifications which denote a mature, spiritually masculine state of being in Him, with strength, authority, wisdom, and power. There are likewise positions and qualifications which denote a mature, spiritually feminine state of being in Him, with tenderness, compassion, mercy, succor, and love. The Father is *choosing* His GROOM COMPANY just as Christ is *choosing* His BRIDE COMPANY. The *rest* of God’s people are *called* to the marriage! That is the mystery.

THE MARRIAGE SUPPER OF THE LAMB

“And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto *the marriage supper of the Lamb*. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God” (Rev. 19:9).

God is an incredible host. He throws parties with the things we love: great food, great people, warmth, and laughter. God’s parties are lavish, extraordinary. Traveling through the desert, God’s people Israel pictured a promised wonderland “flowing with milk and honey” (Ex. 13:5). And Joel 2:24 says, “The threshing floors will be filled with grain; the vats will overflow with new wine and oil.” It’s no surprise, then, that Jesus describes the kingdom of God as a joyful banquet (Luke 14:15). And in our present text John describes the time of the ultimate union of Christ and His bride as “the marriage supper (wedding feast) of the Lamb.”

Just the sound of the words “the wedding feast of the Lamb” brings great joy, excitement, and anticipation to our hearts! Weddings are a time of celebration, which usually includes a meal of one kind or another. Because of tradition we have visualized the bride of Christ whisked away into the sky, where millions of Christians sit down at a physical table set high in the atmosphere upon a brilliant white cloud, the table stretching to infinity with Jesus seated at the head and the saints of all the ages are with Him enjoying a meal of heavenly filet mignon; the angels standing at attention, refilling our glasses with living water and celestial wine. Many say this feast lasts for seven years, while the great tribulation is wreaking havoc on earth. Then, these stuffed saints come back and watch while God destroys the world system in the Battle of Armageddon. After that, Satan is bound up in chains and cast into a bottomless pit, and all the saints reign with Christ for precisely one thousand years. When the one thousand years are over, for some inexplicable reason, Satan will be let loose again to deceive all those people the saints have reigned over for the past thousand years. Eventually, fire will come down from heaven and destroy all those people and Satan will be thrown back into the lake of fire, and the saints will rule and reign with Christ forever — over something, somewhere!

A number of weddings are described in the Bible. The first wedding was performed by a very special guest minister. Whatever ceremony He may have chosen, it did not include those familiar words, “If man can show just cause why these two should not be lawfully joined together, let him now speak, or else forever hold his peace.” This statement was unnecessary, for the minister was God Himself, and the couple was Adam and Eve. Then there was a very unusual wedding in which the bridegroom found out the next morning, by light of day, that he had married the wrong girl (Gen. 29:21-25). One of the most beautiful wedding stories began in the barley field outside the little town of Bethlehem (Ruth 2). Perhaps the most tragic wedding was that between Ahab, king of Israel, and Jezebel, a godless Baal worshipper. This marriage would result in much sorrow and suffering for God’s people (I Kings 16:29-31). Finally, the Saviour of men chose a wedding in the city of Cana of Galilee to perform His first miracle and show forth His glory (Jn. 2:1-11). However, the most fantastic and wonderful wedding of all time is recorded in the book of Revelation — the marriage of the Lamb and His bride!

Much has been said about the proceedings involved in the marriage of Christ and His bride, and it is rather natural that Bible students speculate about what actually occurs in the marriage. Some are prone to view the marriage of Christ in a rather literal way, after the pattern of a wedding in our modern society, in which there is a ceremony with the bride being given away and nuptial vows taken. Of course this is absolutely foreign to the scriptures! If we are to understand what the Bible means by a marriage or a wedding, we must view it as it is portrayed in scripture itself. There are some Bible examples of marriage which will, to this writer's thinking, adequately depict the marriage of Christ to His bride, and will show what constitutes that marriage.

The first is the marriage of Isaac and Rebekah. The beautiful story is related in Genesis chapter twenty-four of how, when Abraham was old, he sent his eldest and most trusted servant, the steward of his house, into his own country from whence he had come, and among his own kindred to select a bride for his son Isaac. When the servant came to the city of Nahor, by the guiding hand of God he was brought into contact with Rebekah, the daughter of Bethuel. Through his conversations with Rebekah it was clearly evidenced that she was the one God had chosen to be the bride of Isaac. After Rebekah consented to go and become Isaac's wife, and after the servant had given some special gifts to her, he began the long journey to deliver Rebekah to Isaac. The scripture relates that "...Isaac came from the way of the well Lahairoi; for he dwelt in the south country. And Isaac went out to meditate in the field at eventide: and he lifted up his eyes, and saw, and, behold, the camels were coming. And Rebekah lifted up her eyes, and when she saw Isaac, she lighted off the camel. For she had said unto the servant, What man is this that walketh in the field to meet us? And the servant had said, It is my master: therefore she took a veil, and covered herself. And the servant told Isaac all things that he had done. **AND ISAAC BROUGHT HER INTO HIS MOTHER SARAH'S TENT, AND **TOOK REBEKAH**, AND SHE **BECAME HIS WIFE****; and he loved her: and Isaac was comforted after his mother's death" (Gen. 24:62-67).

There was no ceremony, no giving away of the bride, and no nuptial vows exchanged as we see in formal weddings in our society. The marriage simply consisted in their personal agreement and in Isaac's taking Rebekah unto himself. There is no evidence in scripture that there were any special religious forms in the ancient weddings, no priest or clergyman officiated or validated the marriage. The essence of the marriage ceremony consisted in the removal of the bride from her father's house to that of the bridegroom. That event had previously been arranged, of course, by the mutual consent of the families involved; the matter was publicly known and acknowledged and the marriage was binding.

Another beautiful example is presented in the book of Ruth. When Boaz, the kinsman-redeemer, redeemed both Ruth and the estate of Naomi according to the law of the kinsman-redeemer, he redeemed Ruth to be his wife. When the marriage occurred, there was no ceremony. The record simply states, "So Boaz **took Ruth, and she was his wife...**" The marriage consisted simply in the bridegroom taking his bride to himself. It is my deep conviction that, in keeping with these analogies, the marriage of Christ and His bride consists simply in **CHRIST TAKING HIS BRIDE UNTO HIMSELF**. The spirit of inspiration has stated it this way: "Christ loved the church, and gave Himself for it...that He might **PRESENT IT TO HIMSELF** a glorious church..." (Eph. 5:27). The Emphatic Diaglott expresses the thought beautifully and correctly: "...that he might **PLACE THE CONGREGATION BY HIS OWN SIDE**, glorious..." Ah, He draws us to Himself, to His side, He takes us unto Himself, into union, and that, my friend, **IS THE MARRIAGE OF THE LAMB!**

The marriage of the Lamb is the revelation of Christ that causes you to know that you are united to Him; it is the conscious knowledge and the experiential reality. It is not a ceremony nor merely an assent or agreement. You cannot understand the marriage of the Lamb until you know

UNION. You cannot be in that particular concert with Christ which the name of bride expresses until, forsaking all others, you yield yourself to be made ONE IN HIM. When I know that I am united to Christ I am so identified with His interests that they are paramount with me. Few know it! A wife to Christ is one who has reached full maturity in the spiritually feminine characteristics of her spiritual life, one who has given herself unreservedly for her Lover, one who has lost her own name and identity to take His. She has left all to follow Him! In mind, will, emotion, desire, hopes, plans, and actions the two become one.

In later times it became a custom in the Israelite wedding to have a feast after the bridegroom had taken his bride to his house and consummated their union. To this feast, all the family, friends, and neighbors were invited. Such a feast was celebrated when the marriage of Jacob occurred, when he had worked seven years for Laban in order to obtain Rachel, but on the night of the wedding, was given Leah instead (Gen. 29:18-31). In the days of Christ this “marriage feast” was arranged by the bridegroom at his parent’s home, his own home, or some other suitable place. When the night arrived for the wedding festivities to begin, the bridegroom, attended by friends and accompanied by musicians and singers, set out to claim the bride at the house of her father. The bride would be waiting at her house with her maid-servants stationed along the road to alert her when they saw him approaching. The first one to see the bridegroom would shout to the next, “Behold, the bridegroom!” and the shout would be passed along from maid to maid until it reached the bride. She would hasten to put the final touches to her wedding attire and stand ready for his knock on the door. At his knocking the door would open and there would stand his bride, in beauty and splendor, all adorned and prepared to go with him to the marriage feast. It was this wonderful scene, applied to Christ and His bride on the spiritual plane, that John beheld in his awe-inspiring vision on Patmos!

After receiving the bride from her parents with their blessing the bridegroom conducted the whole party back to his own house. There were demonstrations of joy all along the road to the destination. On the way other friends of the bride and bridegroom joined the party and there was much music and dancing. When approaching the bridegroom’s house, the bridegroom took his bride into the nuptial chamber. They were then left alone and the bridegroom took his bride and the marriage was consummated. At last, there was UNION! Following their union they both went out to join the festivities of the marriage feast.

Now, lest you get the idea from this typology that Christ is coming to take His bride away, to leave this earth and take a flight to some other planet for a big supper of steak, baked potatoes, and apple pie a-la-mode, let me set things straight. For long centuries the church world has been telling us of a day in the sweet bye and bye, a time when we would be “caught up” in the air and find ourselves feasting and dining at a huge banqueting table in the sky. It would be a wonderful time indeed, this meeting in the air, and we would all feast lavishly on the richest dainties, while all the poor souls on earth who didn’t make this “rapture” would be suffering the hellish torments of the “great tribulation.”

Most Christians, unfortunately, are busily preparing themselves to go “up” to meet the Bridegroom. Not knowing who or what the Bridegroom is, they therefore cannot know how to go forth to meet Him. As we have previously pointed out, there is not one scripture in the whole Bible that speaks of being “caught up” to meet the Bridegroom, or to eat the marriage supper in the sky. This “marriage supper in the sky” business is naught but an ignorant invention and senseless delusion of the carnal church systems of man — Mystery Babylon. Most Christians today are not preparing to meet the Bridegroom, but are trying to fix themselves up so that they will be ready to be whisked away into the clouds instead. All their fuss and stir is in vain. I tell you plainly — THERE WILL BE NO MARRIAGE SUPPER IN THE SKY! In order to meet the

Bridegroom one must go “out.” “Go ye O-U-T to meet Him” (Mat. 25:6). The marriage supper is not “up.” It is OUT!

Great harm is done to God’s children in teaching the coming of the Bridegroom and the marriage supper according to the wisdom of man. The natural mind does not receive the things of the Spirit of God and therefore does not receive the spirit of wisdom and understanding which illuminates the precise wording of scripture as given by the Spirit. There are not words in the English language adequate to express how important it is to make the proper preparation for the right event. Suppose that I am invited to a special work day at a church and am instructed to wear old clothes and bring along a broom, a mop, a bucket, some rags and cleaners. Let us further suppose that I get the date confused, and upon arrival at the church discover that a very formal wedding is in progress to which I have also been invited, but have confused the date with the work day, and which I feel obligated to attend, and many of my friends are in fact there. How unspeakably embarrassed I would be standing there before my well-dressed friends at this lavish event attired in ragged clothes, with mop and bucket in hand! Ah, one must be very certain about where he is going, and what the nature of the event is, and precisely how to prepare for it. And should someone find my illustration too crude or inappropriate, let me hastily add that it is a great fact that one does not prepare in the same way for going UP as he does for going OUT! Is it not a delusion that men are preparing themselves for a literal trip through the tangible air to feast on some kind of natural food in these last days?

This speaks to the heart. Our Lord prophesied of this, our day, “Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and *went forth to meet the bridegroom*...and at midnight there was a cry made, *Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye OUT to meet him!*” (Mat. 25:1,5). May our hearts be seized, my beloved, by this one compulsion — to detach ourselves from the world and its pressures and values, from self and its demands, from present things, from religion with its carnality, from ALL — to *go forth*, in the spirit of our minds, in the affections of our hearts, to meet CHRIST THE BRIDEGROOM! It is not a question of going forth from one physical or astral location to another; it is not a matter of soaring away into the skies to join Jesus on a cloud; it is not geographical at all, but deeply **spiritual**. It is the outgoing of the heart to be uniquely joined in union with our Head and Lord. It bespeaks such a detachment from *this world system* that our one goal, our sole aim, is Christ; we are going forth to meet HIM!

The preachers have the coming of the Lord all muddled because they cannot with their carnal minds and static creeds distinguish the difference between the facets of His coming. They know nothing of the distinction between His coming as King and His coming as Bridegroom, and His coming in many other ways and forms. Therefore they know not how to prepare for His comings. This much is clear — in order to meet the Bridegroom, one must go “out.” And “out” does not in any way indicate UP! The great truth the Holy Spirit would now make real to our hearts is just this: the only way one may go “out” to meet the Bridegroom is to “come out” from among the world and the flesh and the harlot church systems with their idolatries and miserable distortions of truth, to be JOINED UNTO THE LORD in intimacy of fellowship and vital union!

One cry in the book of Revelation is for us to “*Come up hither*” into a higher realm of life and glory. The important truth for us to understand now is that in the Revelation there is both a coming **out** and a coming **up**. Pay attention to the Holy Spirit’s use of terms! “And I heard another voice from heaven saying, *Come out of her my people*, that ye be not partaker of her sins,

and that ye receive not of her plagues” (Rev. 18:4). That very word came to us in great power by the Spirit many years ago during the time of a most sovereign move of God in our midst. We were obedient to the word we heard from heaven and hasted to come out of the carnal confusion of Mystery Babylon, the old-order church system, and out of the whole religious order of man. God began in us a process of complete and total restoration of His truth, His ways, His will, His purpose, His mind, His heart, and the things of His spirit and His kingdom! The reason we must go “out” to meet the Bridegroom is because He is Himself “out.” The message of the Gospels is very clear — all things related to Christ are OUTSIDE of organized, man-made religion!

The natural mind is very dark and without understanding. Only the Holy Spirit can awaken it! May Christ who is the power of God open the eyes of all who read these lines, even as the scales fell from the vision of Saul of tarsus when Jesus purged them away. In Matthew 22:1-14 we are informed in the solemnest of tones about the marriage supper of the Lamb. Jesus compared the kingdom of heaven to a king who invited different ones to a marriage feast for his son. A great number of people were invited and the wedding feast was filled with guests. Among the Eastern peoples, noblemen kept in their wardrobes a great number of garments which are called caftans. They are given at such occasions as this to be worn by the guests. It is a great affront for anyone to come and not be appropriately costumed for the occasion.

Since they were giving out wedding garments at the door, we can only assume that when this fellow Jesus told about came to the door, and the servant inquired, “What size are you — small, medium, or large — you look like a medium,” the man replied, “I don’t need one.” “Well,” the servant insisted, “The King expects you to use this.” “I don’t have to do that, don’t worry about it, the King knows me very well,” and with his heart full of neglect or rebellion he entered into the hall. Soon the King entered into the wedding chamber to welcome his guests. But immediately he noticed a man who was not wearing the wedding garment. “My friend,” he said, “how did you come in here without putting on the required wedding garment?” The king was simply enquiring whether he had an excuse, if there was a valid reason why he had no garment. “Did we run out of garments at the door? Did we have no garment that would fit? Did the garment not look good on you? Did you not like our color schemes? Were you allergic to something in the material? Friend, give account of your conduct!” The scripture says he was speechless — not because he could not speak, but because he was without excuse!

Brethren! Are we not told by the preachers that the marriage supper is celebrated someplace far away in the sky, and sometime *after* the “rapture” of the church? Were we not fervently taught that we are going to be in the air for seven years and have a wedding feast with the Lord? The question follows — If the wedding feast is after we are raptured, and somewhere in the sky, HOW DID THIS MAN WITHOUT THE WEDDING GARMENT GET IN THERE? WAS HE SOMEHOW “RAPTURED” BY MISTAKE? Did the Lord Jesus commit a terrible error and accidentally “translate” a man who was not adequately prepared or properly invested for the marriage supper in the sky? How preposterous! This parable proves beyond any possibility of contradiction that a so-called “rapture” has absolutely nothing whatever to do with the marriage supper of the Lamb!

This parable shows that the wedding feast takes place right down here on this earth, and there are people who are feasting on the riches of present truth and the depth of God’s revelatory word just as you are, and are standing right in the midst of those who are experientially entering into union with Christ, but they have not had a change of garment; they have not been clothed in the transforming righteousness of Christ; they have not put on that precious mind that was in Christ Jesus; they have not put off the old man with his works and put on the new; they have not

died to sin and self and religion; they are neither living nor walking in the Spirit of the Lord! But they have come into the marriage hall of the Lamb!

These have presumptuously “jumped on the bandwagon” of the message of the hour. With unsanctified minds and fleshly zeal they grasp after the deep things of God; they are along for the ride; they mingle with those elect saints who have been apprehended of God to the high calling in Christ Jesus. They show up at every meeting and attend every convention; with unwashed hands they eat from the table so bountifully prepared by the Holy Spirit for those who forsake all to follow the Lamb; they parrot all the right words, and mouth the sacred secrets revealed by the spirit of truth, and may, with feigned piety appear as one of the choice vessels of the kingdom; but beneath the cloak of pretense there is no true consecration in their lives, no inworking of the holiness of God, no conformation to the image of Christ, no transformation of mind or heart or nature; they are clearly imposters, deceivers, usurpers, pretenders, hypocrites, and cheats.

They have no wedding garment! And now, exposed to the penetrating gaze of the King’s presence, the man of nice words and spiritual-sounding expressions no longer could conceal his true condition. In due time, prior to the event of the marriage of His son, the King dealt swiftly and effectively with the usurper. “Then the King said to the attendants, Tie him hand and foot, and throw him into outer darkness (the darkness outside the hall); there will be weeping and grinding of teeth” (Mat. 22:13). No, the poor fellow is not cast into hell fire, nor into Hades, nor into Gehenna, nor into eternal damnation — he is simply excluded from the marriage feast, outside the blessings and benefits of this realm of glory, devoid of true understanding and revelation, denied for that time the privilege of fellowship in the higher light of the kingdom of God and the glory of union with Christ. What a word!

To be continued ...

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