The Marriage of the Lamb in Revelation 19:7-9

and

The Jewish Wedding Customs



JUDGMENT SEAT
OF CHRIST



MARRIAGE OF
THE LAMB

Manfred E. Kober, Th.D.

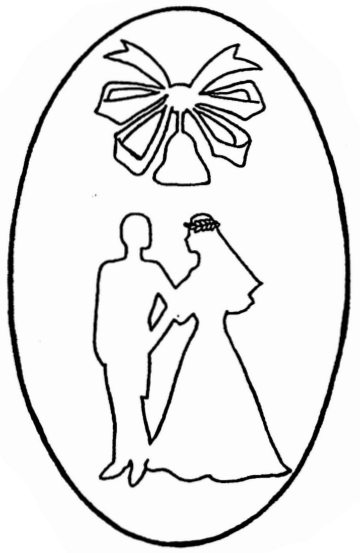
The Marriage of the Lamb in Revelation 19:7-9

and

The Jewish Wedding Customs



JUDGMENT SEAT
OF CHRIST



MARRIAGE OF
THE LAMB

Manfred E. Kober, Th.D.

The Marriage of the Lamb Mentioned in Revelation 19:7-9 and the Jewish Wedding Customs

Manfred E. Kober, Th.D.

This event in Revelation 19 involves Christ and believers just prior to the second advent of Christ. The event is introduced with the exhortation, "Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife has made herself ready" (v. 7).

1. The Identity of the Bride.

The encouragement to rejoice involves the fact that God the Father has prepared a bride for His Son. The Lamb is undoubtedly the Lord Jesus Christ, who frequently refers to Himself as a bridegroom (Mt. 9:15: 22:2-14: Lk. 5:34-35 et al.). The bride of the Lamb is evidently the church (v. 9: 3:20: 21:2, 9:22:17) which was joined to Christ at the time of the rapture, prior to the tribulation period. It is true that in the Old Testament God refers to Himself as Israel's husband (Is.54:6; 62:5; Ez. 16:7-14 et al.). However, Israel is almost always pictured as the unfaithful wife of Jehovah rather than a chaste bride.

2. The Stages of a Jewish Wedding.

The time and place of the marriage can be clarified by comparing the ceremony with marriage customs in ancient Israel. Its ceremony involved three major events.

First, the parents chose a bride for the groom. This takes place during the church age, as the Holy Spirit selects believers through redemption who comprise the bride of Christ.

Second, when the time for marriage had come, the groom, joined by his friends, would go to the home of the bride and escort her to his home. This event will occur when Christ comes to take His bride to heaven at the time of the rapture. He is presently preparing the bride's eternal home.

Third, the groom prepared a feast for his bride and his friends lasting for one week.

3. The Procedure Relating to a Jewish Marriage

A thorough examination of the Jewish wedding custom that was applicable during the time of the First Advent of Jesus comes in handy when believers are faced with Scriptures that refer to Christ as the heavenly Bridegroom and the Church as his bride. It is in particular the different phases of this ancient wedding system that can help us today in gaining a better understanding of our special relationship with Christ as his bride, as well as the times in which we find ourselves presently.

a. The Arrangement

The first stage of the Jewish wedding system is the arrangement. The father of the bridegroom and the father of the bride arrange the wedding. A bride price is paid and, in the case of the bride of Christ, the price was the blood of the Son: "Christ also loved the church, and gave himself up for it" (Ephesians 5:25b; cf. John 3:16). The arrangement was thus sealed with blood.

b. The Preparation

The second stage is the preparation. It covers the period of betrothal which could last for a minimum of a year or a longer time. During this time, the bride is prepared and trained to take on the role of a wife and her purity is observed. Paul writes: "For I am jealous over you with a godly jealousy: for I espoused you to one husband, that I might present you as a pure virgin to Christ" (2 Corinthians 11:2).

Through the Word of God, the bride is set apart for her future Husband so "that He might sanctify it, having washed it by the washing of water with the word, that he might present the church to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish" (Ephesians 5:26-27). In the future the bride will be glorified. In her glorious state, the bride will have no spot or wrinkle, meaning she will have no outward or inward defilement of any sort and there will not be any evidence of aging.

During the preparation or betrothal stage, what security does the bride have that the Bridegroom will come to fetch her? During the *Church* age (from Pentecost until the rapture), every believer is baptized and therefore united or placed "in Christ" (1 Corinthians 12:13). Further, the bride is given gifts (1 Corinthians 12-14; Ephesians

4) and sealed with the Holy Spirit, which certifies ownership and protection (Eph. 4:30).

What does the Bridegroom do during the betrothal period? He prepares a place for his bride: "In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I come again, and will receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also" (John 14:2-3).

c. The Fetching of the Bride

The third stage of the Jewish wedding system is the fetching of the bride: "The groom would go to the house of the bride on the wedding day to fetch her to his home." God will announce this event with a shout and a trumpet blast and Christ will appear in the atmospheric heavens to fetch the universal Church (1 Thessalonians 4:15-16). All believers from Pentecost until the rapture and baptized "in Christ" and they will be fetched. At the time of the rapture, only the dead "in Christ" will be resurrected, meaning their spirits will be unite with their resurrected, glorified bodies. Church age believers "in Christ" that are still physically alive will be changed: without experiencing physical death and, in the twinkling of an eye, they will exchange their mortal bodies for glorified bodies (1 Corinthians 15:50-54; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18).

d. The Marriage Ceremony

Stage four takes place privately in the home of the Bridegroom and is not the wedding feast, but rather the marriage ceremony (Fruchtenbaum 2005:6). Perhaps one can add that believers who died prior to Pentecost will likely attend this wedding ceremony as "friends of the Bridegroom" (cf. John 3:29). Just before the wedding ceremony takes place in heaven, Church age believers will appear before the judgment seat of Christ (Romans 14:10-12; 1 Corinthians 3:10-15; 2 Corinthians 5:10). This judgment is not to punish or to condemn—"There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ" (Romans 8:1)—but to reward Church age believers for worthy works done subsequent to their salvation. Revelation 19:7-8 describes the wedding ceremony where a glorified bride marries her Bridegroom: "For the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife has made herself ready. And it was given unto her that she should array herself in fine

linen, bright and pure: for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints."

e. The Marriage Feast

After the private wedding ceremony comes the public marriage feast (stage five). The Father invites many to attend the marriage feast of his Son, but only believers can attend (cf. Matthew 22:1-14). Whereas the wedding ceremony will take place in heaven, the marriage feast will take place on earth. Once the Father has made all Christ's enemies his footstool during the seven-year Tribulation period (cf. Matthew 22:44; Hebrews 2:8), Christ will return to the earth to establish the Messianic kingdom in terms of the Davidic kingdom. Old Testament saints and Tribulation saints will also attend the wedding feast (cf. Isaiah 25:6; 26:19; Daniel 12:2; Revelation 19:9; 20:4-6). The marriage feast will begin the Messianic kingdom.

f. The Home of the Wife of the Lamb

The Messianic kingdom will exist for a thousand years, then the final rebellion will occur, Christ will then judge all unbelievers of all time at the great white throne judgment and then the Messianic kingdom will merge into the Eternal order (1 Corinthians 15:20-28; Revelation 20:1-15). The final abode of the Wife of the Lamb will be the New Jerusalem which will descend to the new earth immediately after the final judgment (Revelation 21:1-22:5).

Conclusion

As the Bridegroom, Christ shows the unfathomable depths of his love for his bride by dying for her on the cross. He has betrothed her and she is being sanctified by the washing of the Word. At the moment the Church is still called the bride of Christ. But soon the marriage ceremony will take place in heaven and the glorified bride will become the Wife of the Lamb. The marriage feast will follow thereafter on earth after the commencement of the kingdom.

To Christ be the glory, great things He has done, great things He is doing—and great things He will yet do!

Some information based on https://faithequip.org/the-jewish-wedding-system-and-the-bride-of-christ