

The Marriage and Marriage Supper of the Lamb

By Pastor Kelly Sensenig

The Bible teaches that a wedding ceremony will occur following the Rapture of the Church.

Revelation 19:7-8 says:

“Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints.”

This will be the consummation of the marriage of Christ with His New Testament bride (Church). In many New Testament passages the relationship between Christ and the Church is revealed by the use of the figures of a bridegroom and bride (Rom. 7:4; Eph. 5:25-27; 2 Cor. 11:2). When Paul spoke of the husband and wife relationship he placed the relationship, which the Church had with Christ, in the context of a husband and bride (wife) relationship.

Ephesians 5:32

“This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.”

The Church without question is pictured as Christ's bride. She is a virgin bride (2 Cor. 11:2) and not a divorced wife returning to her husband. The latter is the image of Israel (Jer. 3:8-20). Israel is pictured as an adulterous and repudiated wife that is yet to be restored to God (Isa. 54:1-10; Hos. 2:1-17). God divorced Israel, but not permanently (Isa. 50:1; 54:6-8; Jer. 3:12). He did not regard the divorce as a termination of His marriage with the nation (Jer. 3:14). God is not finished with national Israel. Nevertheless, Israel is never pictured as a virgin bride and she can never be a virgin again (Lev. 21:13-14). So the Church and Israel remain distinct as different entities of people. We know that God's future restoration with this adulterous wife is identified with the earth (Hos. 2:23 – “And I will sow her unto me in the earth”). However, the Church is pictured as the present virgin bride of Christ who has a heavenly destination (Phil. 3:20) and city named after her in Heaven. It must also be

remembered that Israel was sovereignly chosen as the Father's wife, not the Son's wife. In fact, Zechariah 12:10 reveals that Israel, officially and corporately will one day see Jesus as its Son, not its husband.

“And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for *his* only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for *his* firstborn.”

So the Church and Israel have two different grooms. The Church has God the Son as her bridegroom whereas Israel has God the Father as her bridegroom. This tells us that God has two different programs for the Church and Israel. They cannot be confused as the same entity or group of people. Since these marriages have two different brides and grooms, it must be concluded that the future marriage of God to Israel and the marriage of the Lamb are two different marriages. Israel will have a future marriage with God the Father on earth (Hosea, 2:23; Jer. 3:14) whereas the Church will have a future marriage with God the Son in Heaven (Rev. 19:7). However, when Jesus returns to earth with His bride (Church) He will enter the earthly marriage feast with this New Testament bride while God the Father restores His wife relationship with the nation of Israel through the salvation of the Messiah.

It is the conclusion of this author that both marriages will occur at separate places due to the dispensational distinctives between the Church and Israel but the wedding feasts associated with the wedding days of the Church and Israel will occur together within the Millennial Kingdom. The earthly kingdom will be the scene of one great wedding feast that will bring together God's dispensational purposes for the Church and Israel into one final goal.

Ephesians 1:10

“That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; *even* in him.”

The Bible Knowledge Commentary gives a good summary of this verse when saying: “This dispensation is the millennial kingdom when ‘the times’ in God’s purposes will be completed (fulfilled), and all things both spiritual and material will be under Christ and His rule (cf. 1 Cor. 15:27; Col. 1:20).”

I agree with this and conclude that the earthly Millennial Kingdom is where God’s purposes regarding Israel and the Church will be brought together in one joyous celebration. This will be seen in the earthly feast. The bride of Christ (Church) will return with her bridegroom and enter the joyous wedding feast on earth. The bride of Jehovah (Israel) will enter into her wedding day with Jehovah God, through the Messiah, and together both the Church and Israel will experience God’s “dispensation of the fulness of times” when He will bring together His purposes for the Church and Israel in the feast of the Millennial Kingdom.

The earthly kingdom is seen as the focal point for God’s purposes and during this time all of God’s working plans will be brought together in one great finale and one joyous feast. Thus, it’s appropriate to conclude that the 1,000 year kingdom reign of Christ, which eventually gives way to the eternal kingdom (Rev. 11:15; Luke 1:33), is a time when both groups (the Church and Israel) will share in a glorious festivity of joy and feasting on planet earth. Israel will experience her earthly promises of a kingdom when she will be restored to her Bridegroom relationship with God the Father through the salvation of the Messiah. This will occur during the millennial feast (2 Sam. 7:11-17). The Church will share her unique relationship with God the Son, as her Bridegroom, during the wedding feast, while she rules and reigns with Him over earth (Rev. 5:10).

One must remember that the Church is also promised rulership responsibilities and blessings associated with the earthly kingdom (James 2:5; 1 Thess. 2:12; 2 Thess. 1:5; Col. 4:11; 2 Pet. 1:11; Rev 2:25-27; 1 Cor. 6:1-2). The Church is promised part of Christ’s earthly reign in the coming kingdom (Rev. 3:21) so she definitely is associated with the millennial blessings to come. The fact that an earthly feast is mentioned in Revelation 19:9 should not be surprising. Furthermore, it has been suggested, and rightly so, that the supper of Revelation 3:20 (“sup with me”) may represent the millennial supper

or earthly feast that the Church will enter someday when she returns to earth with the Lord. This invitation is set in an eschatological kingdom context (Rev. 3:21) and may very well be an invitation for the Laodicean Christians to enter the earthly feast with the King. Both the Church and Israel will bring their marriage relationships with God to a zenith of joy and blessing in this glorious kingdom feast. In the end God's dispensational purposes will be brought together in a final joyous celebration and occasion in this earthly marriage feast.

We do know that at the Rapture Christ will appear as the bridegroom to take His bride (the Church) unto Himself so that His marriage with the Church (virgin bride of Christ) can be consummated in Heaven. To understand the significance of this marriage ceremony we must recall the Jewish custom of marriage. This marriage custom is the backdrop and analogy that the writers of the New Testament were applying to the relationship that the Church has with Christ.

The Betrothal Stage

The Jewish betrothal stage was a contract of marriage that was initiated by the groom's father. In some cases it was done even before the birth of the children. The father would sign a legal document before the proper judge and pledge his son to a chosen girl. Even if the bride would not see the groom she was still betrothed or espoused to the groom. The betrothal stage of marriage was considered binding since the two had a legal status of husband and wife (Lev. 19:20; Deut. 20:7; 22:23). The marriage between a man and woman was always done by an official legal covenant (Malachi 2:14) and this means that even during the betrothal stage the marriage was legally binding in God's eyes. Marriage by covenant was God's plan from the beginning since Adam and Eve were joined together as husband and wife in the presence of God (Gen. 2:21-23). A New Testament example of two in the covenant period of betrothal would be Mary and Joseph (Matt. 1:18). Both Mary and Joseph had come from Bethlehem and had been betrothed together. If a betrothal occurred between adults there was a waiting period before the bride was officially presented to the husband. In biblical times there was a separation before the consummation of the marriage took place with the sexual union. Such was the case with Mary and Joseph (Matt. 1:18, 25). This betrothal stage consisted of two steps. The first stage

was the selection of the bride for the man. The second stage involved the father offering the proper dowry payment (Gen. 34:11; Ex. 22:16-17; 1 Sam. 18:25; Hos. 3:2). He had to pay for the bride.

With this Jewish betrothal stage in mind let us see if it fits the New Testament imagery that Christ has with the Church. First, the bride (New Testament Church) has been selected (Eph. 1:3-4). This selection occurred before her birth! This fits well with the Jewish practice of the Father's selection of a bride for the husband. Second, the dowry has been paid (1 Cor. 6:19-20). In this case, Jesus paid the necessary dowry price for our marriage relationship by shedding His own blood upon the cross. The price for this marriage relationship was the precious blood of Jesus Christ (1 Pet. 1:18-19). *It was Christ's blood that paid the necessary price to free his bride from the penalty of her sins and bring her into a betrothal relationship with Him.* Christ's blood has bought His bride. This is why she is called the pearl of great price (Matt. 13:46). Oh the grace that sought me! Oh the blood that bought me! Because the selection has already been made and the price has already been paid for this New Testament bride she (the Church) is pictured as being betrothed to Christ at this present time (2 Cor. 11:2). The betrothal period of legal marriage was always ratified by a covenant. It would then be proper to conclude that the marriage betrothal covenant between Christ and the Church was ratified with the New Covenant (Luke 22:20). The ratification of the New Covenant assures the bride of her cleansing from sin. Christ also gave the Holy Spirit as an "earnest" or pledge of her marriage covenant (Eph. 1:13-14). The Holy Spirit is the downpayment and security deposit that our marriage with Christ will one day be consummated in Heaven.

The Presentation Stage

The next stage in the Jewish marriage consisted of the presentation stage. At the proper time the father would send to the house of the bride his servants. They would carry the proper legal contract to prove the marriage was legal. The bride and the groom would then be led to the home of the groom's father in a wedding procession. This was known as the "taking of a wife." In Bible times the marriage was a joyous, festive occasion. The taking of the bride by the groom was characterized by joy and gladness (Jer. 7:34; 16:9; 25:10; 33:11).

We must remember that the woman was already the man's legal wife by covenant and contract of marriage (Matt. 19:4-5) but now he was taking her into the bridal chamber (huppah) to consummate or complete the marriage relationship through sexual union. What was only a *legal union* of marriage for twelve months, or some other stated period of time, was now going to become a *sexual union* (Gen. 2:26). When all was ready, the father of the bride would place her hand in the hand of the groom's father. He would then place her hand in his son's hand. The consummation of the marriage would then occur. The groom would take the bride into the bridal chamber and have physical relations with her and this would complete the marriage relationship by bringing the two together in a God-ordained, approved, and binding one-flesh relationship (Gen. 2:24). The only physical relationship that God ordains is that of two who have already covenanted together in marriage. When the two would come together they would possess a special intimacy together as husband and wife in the physical act of marriage (Gen. 24:67). This presentation of the bride to the groom and the physical relationship that followed is referred to as the consummating part of the marriage, when the two come to actually live together, and experience their one-flesh unity as husband and wife. The sexual union and intimacy was then the consummation of the legal marriage. It was when the two became physically tied to one another for life.

Dr. Renald Showers summarized the second phase of the Jewish marriage:

"The second step was the taking of the bride or wife by the groom from her house to his father's house (Mt. 25:1-8). The essence of the marriage ceremony or festivities was the taking of the bride from her father's house and bringing her to the house of the bridegroom or his father. This taking of the bride was usually done at night approximately one year after the betrothal. It involved the consummation of the marriage through physical union of the bride and groom on the first night at the groom's father's house. Since this second step was the essence of the marriage ceremony, it was regarded as the wedding or marriage (Mt. 22:2-13; 25:10). Thus, it is this second step that corresponds to the expression 'marriage of the Lamb' in Revelation 19:7."

Knowing these background details of the Jewish ceremony, we can now apply them to the marriage of the Church with Christ. The following events will comprise this second stage of the marriage between Christ and the Church. First, the heavenly Father will send for the bride (John 14:1-3). This will occur in the Rapture of the Church to which Jesus was referring when speaking to His disciples. The picture or imagery behind the John 14:1-3 text is that of a bridegroom coming for his bride to be escorted back the Father's house for the consummation of the marriage. The Groom (Jesus Christ) has prepared a place for us in the Father's house. At the end of the betrothal period (2 Cor. 11:2) Jesus Christ is going to come back for his bride (1 Thess. 4:13-17) and "take" His bride or escort her all the way back to Heaven.

Second, at the time of the Rapture the proper legal papers will be shown to prove that this is the bride of Jesus Christ (2 Tim. 2:19). Only the bride will be escorted back to the Father's house. Third, the Father of the Groom (Jesus Christ) is going to take our hands and place them in the hand of His Son and we will be forever and eternally joined to Christ. This will be the consummation of the marriage with Christ. The Church, following the Rapture, will be brought into the actual presence of Jesus Christ and experience a wonderful intimate relationship with Him that will last for eternity. We will see our husband (Jesus Christ) and actually live with Him in the Father's house. What a day it will be! If our fellowship with Christ is wonderful before we see Him how much greater will it be when we see Him face to face and enjoy His presence.

Today the Church still waits for this second phase (the presentation stage) when the bride will be presented to the groom face-to-face and dwell with Him for eternity.

Revelation 21:1-2

"And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband."

This reference is to the bride's city (the New Jerusalem) where the bride dwells. This city is built specifically for the Church (the bride of

Christ) and this is why it is represented as a bride being prepared for her husband. This is significant. *The name of the city stands for the community that dwells within the city.* This tells us that the occupants of this city (the Church) will have an eternal intimate relationship with Christ. *The literal city portrays the bride relationship that the Church has with Christ.* Revelation 21:9, “Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife.” Since the bride dwells in the city it's appropriate to call the city the “Lamb's wife.”

The descent of the city reflects what has previously occurred when the Church was presented to Christ to consummate the marriage relationship (Rev. 19:7). The bride's city reflects how Christ and His Church will dwell together throughout the ages of time. Christ will live with His bride and fellowship with her in a joyous relationship within the city that He has built for her (Rev. 21:3-4). What a beautiful way to express our eternal relationship with Christ. The beauty of the city coming down out of heaven for the commencement of the eternal state reflects how the Church, the occupants of this city, has prepared herself to be Christ's wife for the eternal state. This future scene depicts that the consummation of the marriage has already occurred at a previous point of time (Rev. 19:7) and how this consummation of the marriage is reflected in the eternal state. The Church will experience the nearness of God's fellowship throughout eternity. The city of the bride reflects the eternal relationship that Christ has with His bride – the Church.

The point is this. The consummation of the marriage is when we will see Christ and be joined together with Him for all eternity. The actual presentation of the bride to Christ will occur following the Rapture (Eph. 5:25, 27 – “note the word “present”). Jude may also be looking forward to this day when he says that the Church will be presented faultless “before the presence of his glory” (Jude 24). Someday the Church, which is presently betrothed to Christ (2 Cor. 11:2), is going to be officially presented to the Son and we will be united together to enjoy each other's fellowship throughout the eternal ages of time. This will be the consummation of our marriage to Christ comparable to the physical union in the marriage relationship.

This presentation stage is clearly anticipated in Revelation 19:7-8. "Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints." This text reveals that the marriage ("the marriage of the Lamb is come") is going to take place following the Rapture. The "Lamb" is a personification of Jesus Christ (John 1:29). The marriage of the Lamb refers to the time when the Lamb (Jesus Christ) will be married to His bride the New Testament Church.

There will be a private ceremony conducted in heaven and the entire bride will be there! To teach that there is only a partial rapture of believers who are in right relationship with the Lord is to overlook the marriage ceremony. How can there be a marriage ceremony in Heaven when part of the bride is left on earth? It seems that the Judgment Seat of Christ (Bema) will take place in the atmospheric heaven for believers will be rewarded on the very day of Christ's return (2 Tim. 4:8; 1 Cor. 4:5) but the consummation of the marriage will occur in Heaven sometime prior to Christ's return to earth. This is clearly outlined for us in Revelation 19:7 where the bride (Church) is seen in Heaven following the Rapture. She is not seen on earth during the Tribulation Period but in Heaven (pretribulationism). The marriage ceremony will then take place in Heaven. It will occur after the Judgment Seat of Christ since the bride (the Church) is already seen rewarded and awaiting the wedding ceremony. She has already been rewarded with her lovely gown and is now prepared for the wedding ceremony.

The presentation stage of the marriage is once again in view since the text says that "his wife hath made herself ready" (Rev. 19:7). In other words, the Church, which is presented as the bride of Christ (Eph. 5:25-27), has now been brought back to the Father's house as Jesus promised (John 14:1-3). *She is prepared for the consummation of the wedding ceremony since she has been given her eternal reward.* She is seen arrayed in her beautiful wedding garment (her eternal reward) and ready to be officially presented as Christ's beloved bride. This is the consummation of the marriage relationship with Christ, when we will Him face to face, and enjoy His actual presence. Christ's bride, the New Testament Church, is arrayed in

her beautiful garments for this blessed occasion (Rev. 19:8). When she is presented to the Son and joined to Him for eternity she will be arrayed in her beautiful wedding garment (“clean and white”). This garment is linked to the brides “righteous deeds” and may very well consist of a beautiful shining of white radiance that will never fade away (1 Pet. 5:4). It reminds us that the Church will be rewarded in direct proportion to the way she has served Christ prior to the wedding day. Christ will be glorified by the reward of the church in that she will radiate the glory of Christ in direct proportion to how she has served Christ while living on earth. Shining is associated with reward (Dan. 12:3; Matt. 13:43) and it may very well be that our eternal glorified body that we receive at the Rapture will be the capacity of this body to reflect the glory of Christ throughout eternity (1 Cor. 15:40-41, 49). The “glory” speaks of an exalted and blessed condition that will be reflected in its superiority. Part of this glory will undoubtedly be seen in the radiance and shining that our bodies will bring forth much like the moon and the stars (vs. 41). This glory or radiance will reflect the amount of reward that we receive in this day.

Our eternal reward will never fade away (1 Pet. 5:4) because it will consist of how much we can glorify Christ. We will have different capacities to radiate God’s glory in the same way the moon differs from the stars and how the stars, such as the sun, radiate different amounts of glory. Thus, the “clean and white” (Rev. 19:8) garments of Christ’s Church may very reflect the radiant brightness of her eternal reward. The greater our reward the greater capacity we will be able to glorify God throughout eternity. The bride (New Testament Church) is then seen to be prepared with her reward, which she has received at the Bema (Judgment Seat of Christ – 2 Cor. 5:10). This reward is presented as previously occurring and now her reward is reflected in her wedding garment and the amount of radiance she will shine forth. This presentation day is coming. At some point following the Judgment Seat of Christ we will be officially joined to Christ in Heaven. There will be an official time of presentation in Heaven when the Father will present the Church to Christ as His bride and together we will consummate the marriage in a wonderful fellowship and intimacy that will go on throughout eternity. The best is yet to come!

The Celebration Stage

Revelation 19:9

“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.”

After the private marriage ceremony was completed the public marriage feast would begin. After the marriage had been consummated by the bride and groom in sexual relations, the wedding guests would feast and make merry for seven days. Many guests would be invited to this celebration. It was during such a supper (wedding supper) that the Lord performed His first miracle (John 2:1-11). This celebration or supper stage is seen in various passages of the Bible (Matt. 22:2-3; 25:10; Luke 14:16-17). This marriage feast or supper lasted for one week (Gen. 29:21-23, 27-28; Jud. 14:1-2, 10-12, 17), and it corresponds to the expression "marriage supper of the Lamb" in Revelation 19:9.

This wedding supper or feast is described *following* the marriage ceremony, which takes place in Heaven (Rev. 19:7). For this reason some expositors have taken the position that the marriage supper or feast will also occur in Heaven. It's also assumed that since the marriage feast was celebrated seven days that this must correspond to the seven years of the Tribulation Period. Thus, it's surmised that the marriage supper must take place in Heaven throughout the seven years that the Tribulation Period is occurring on earth. However, this conclusion seems to be based upon inconclusive evidence. The text nowhere states that the feast or supper will last for seven years. The exact details are not mentioned. Furthermore, seven days and seven years are not the same length of time. To assume that the seven days must correspond to the seven years of the Tribulation Period is a forced analogy. Days and years are two different lengths of time. We also know that there is an undetermined amount of time before the Tribulation Period begins and before the Antichrist signs his covenant with the Jews. There may very well be several months or years before the Tribulation Period actually begins. So turning seven days of celebration into seven years to fit the Tribulation Period seems to be a forced conclusion that is not relevant to the text.

Other dispensational expositors realize that a wedding feast is often placed on earth following the Tribulation Period and during the Millennium. Because of this they see the necessity to argue that the supper and feast are two different dinners – one in Heaven and one on earth. It's assumed that the *supper* takes place in Heaven during the Tribulation Period while a separate *feast* occurs on earth after the Tribulation Period. However, the Greek text does not make any distinction between the words “supper” and “feast.” Therefore, it's likely that the same dinner or supper is in view. To try and distinguish between the supper and feast and create two separate dinners seems to stretch the simple conclusions of Scripture regarding one wedding supper or feast. The idea of one wedding, along with one supper or feast following the wedding, agrees with the Jewish wedding ceremony, which is the backdrop or teaching concerning the marriage and feast. It also creates less confusion and sends a clearer picture of these two prophetic events, which are going to occur in succession, the wedding and then the wedding supper or feast.

If one takes the position that the wedding supper or feast occurs in Heaven, then they must ignore the overall teaching of the Bible, which portrays the marriage feast as taking place on earth during the Millennial Kingdom (Matthew 22:1-14; 25:1-13). The feast is linked with Israel's earthly millennial promises in Messiah's kingdom parables and this is why the earth is the appropriate scene for the wedding feast.

Dwight Pentecost states:

“The marriage of the Lamb is an event that has particular reference to the church and takes place in heaven. The marriage supper is an event that involves Israel and takes place on the earth. In Israel Matthew 22:1-14; Luke 14:16-24; and Matthew 25:1-13, where Israel is awaiting the return of the bridegroom and the bride, the wedding feast or supper is located on the earth and has particular reference to Israel.”

This is an accurate assessment of the prophetic details found in all the Scriptures. The bride (Church) will come back with Christ and she will be displayed as His beloved bride to all who are the invited guests at the wedding feast (John 3:29; Matt. 22:9). The invited guests, to whom the announcement is directed (Rev. 19:9), will be

resurrected and rewarded Israel (Rev. 11:18; Dan. 12:2; Isa. 26:9; Matt. 24:32-51; 25:1-30), the resurrected tribulational martyrs (Rev. 20:4), those Jews who enter the kingdom alive and inherit the kingdom promises (Matt. 8:11), and to the surviving Gentiles of the Tribulation Period who are saved (Matt. 25:31-46; 13:43).

Arnold Fruchtenbaum states:

“Since many are bidden or invited to come to the marriage feast, this passage indicates that it will be at a different place than the marriage ceremony.”

This makes good sense and fits all the prophetic pictures of an earthly marriage feast. We have already stated that some expositors have suggested that there will be two suppers, one in heaven prior to the Second Advent of Christ to earth, and one on the earth during the Millennial Kingdom. However, it seems better to take the announcement of the marriage supper or feast in Revelation 19:9 as anticipatory or an announcement that is made prior to Christ's Second Coming to earth. Other announcements were made in a proleptic fashion similar to this one (Rev. 11:18). The announcement of Revelation 19:9 is no doubt anticipating what is about to take place on earth following the heavenly wedding ceremony. This is a very probable interpretation since in Revelation 19:11-16 a clear presentation of Christ's return to earth is addressed. So the marriage of the Lamb takes place in Heaven in which the Church is eternally united to Christ (Rev. 19:7). The marriage feast takes place on earth during which the bridegroom is honored as He displays His beloved bride (the Church) to all the millennial earth (Rev. 19:9). With the announcement of the wedding feast and the anticipation of Christ's Second Coming to earth there is reason to believe that the actual wedding ceremony may occur just prior to Christ's Second Advent to earth.

Paul Benware agrees with this conclusion when speaking of the wedding: “The time event is clearly right before the Lord Jesus descends from heaven to conquer the world as King of kings and Lord of lords.” This may very well be true since in the Jewish marriage ceremony the marriage ceremony (taking of a bride) occurred in connection with the marriage feast. There was not a delay of time between the two events. The marriage supper actually began

on the same night that the groom took his bride to his father's house and consummated their marriage through physical union. After the marriage was consummated the groom announced the consummation to his friend standing outside the bridal chamber (Ps. 19:5; Jn. 3:29), and the announcement was then delivered to the wedding guests who were already assembled at the groom's father's house. Upon receiving this news, the guests began to feast and make merry. Thus, the marriage supper began very shortly after the groom consummated the marriage with his bride in his father's house. In harmony with this custom we can conclude that after the wedding ceremony takes place in Heaven Christ will then return to earth and we will enter the marriage feast with the Lord and all the invited guests.

Robert Thomas suggests:

“So the initiation of the union happened in heaven, but the celebration of that union with a grand wedding feast ensues on earth for the span of the millennial and eternal kingdoms.”

Some suggest that the return to earth in His Second Advent would not mark a joyous occasion. It's true that there will be judgment and bloodshed associated with Christ's return (Rev. 19:15) but at the same time the feast that follows in the Millennial Kingdom is clearly portrayed as a time of joy and blessing. Although we must follow the general analogy of the Jewish marriage and feast in order to understand the significance of the Rapture of the Church, the wedding, and the wedding feast, we must also be careful to not force too many details. The same is true in regards to the parabolic teaching of Christ. The application of minute details can cause us to miss the overall truths trying to be conveyed. The general truth being taught is that there will be a wedding in the Father's house (Heaven) following the Rapture of the Church. The actual Scriptures within their appropriate contexts must give us the details regarding the time and placement of this wedding and the subsequent supper.

According to the contextual flow of Revelation 19:7-9 we can conclude that the marriage ceremony occurs just prior to Christ's Second Advent. This wedding ceremony only involves the Church, which has already been rewarded and arrayed in her wedding gown at the Bema Seat (Judgment Seat of Christ). Soon after this

ceremony Christ will return with His Church, who is wearing this same linen (Rev. 19:14), in order to rule over the earth. This is clearly depicted in the book of Revelation (Rev. 2:26-27; 3:21; 5:10) and the immediate context (Rev. 19:11-16). When Christ returns with the Church on white horses He will enter the earthly marriage feast with His beloved bride and will sup with them (Rev. 3:20). At this time Christ will display her before the world as His beloved bride (Rom. 8:19). This will be a day of great joy and blessing. Isaiah likened the millennial earth to a time of feasting and enjoyment as he anticipated Israel's millennial promises and joyous time in this earthly feast.

Isaiah 25:6

“And in this mountain shall the LORD of hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined.”

The wedding feast is then seen to take place on earth following the wedding ceremony, which takes place in Heaven. Revelation 19:7 speaks of the wedding ceremony that will occur in conjunction with Christ's Second Advent to earth (Rev. 19:11-16). Revelation 19:9 then records the announcement of the wedding feast anticipating the joyous celebration that is about to take place on earth. Christ will then return to earth (Rev. 19:11), Satan will be confined (Rev. 20:1-3), and the wedding feast will begin.

Arnold Fruchtenbaum has stated:

“In fact, it would seem that the marriage feast is what begins the Millennium or Messianic Age; the Church's co-reigning with the Messiah will start with a tremendous marriage feast!”

Again, this will be a joyous occasion!

Isaiah 55:12

“For ye shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace: the mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap *their* hands.”

In the Millennial Kingdom both Israel, as seen in this millennial verse, and the Church, as seen in the epistles and apocalyptic Scripture (Rom. 14:7; Rev. 3:20; 19:9) will be like newlyweds rejoicing with

their Bridegroom. There will be great joy, blessing, feasting, abundance, and the privilege of reigning with Christ so “That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; *even in him*” (Ephesians 1:10). What a glorious time it will be!