

**“The Marriage of the Lamb and the Marriage Supper of the Lamb in
Revelation 19:6-9: When and Where?”**

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INTRODUCTION

One of the greatest of all life events is a wedding. The groom and his best men stand together in the front of the church. A song is played as the bridesmaids walk down the aisle. Then the mother of the bride stands up and all the relatives and friends stand up. All eyes are on the bride as she comes down the aisle toward the groom. After the groom and bride exchange their vows they are pronounced husband and wife. After the recession the newly married couple celebrate their union with family and friends with a dinner.

The book of Revelation tells us about two future events that the Church will be a part of: the Marriage of the Lamb and the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. As Christians we look forward to these exciting events. But when and where will these events happen in the future? Christians differ in their views on the time and place of these two events.

This afternoon I want to explain the relationship of the ancient Jewish wedding customs to the Rapture, the Marriage of the Lamb and the Marriage Supper of the Lamb.

THE MARRIAGE ARRANGEMENT AND PURCHASE OF THE BRIDE

The Marriage Arrangement in the Jewish Wedding System

Dr. Fruchtenbaum writes: “The first step in the Jewish wedding system was the arrangement, during which the father of the groom made the arrangements with the father of the bride for the marriage and paid the bride price. The timing of the arrangement varied. Sometimes, it occurred when both the bride and groom were

still children. Other times, it occurred at least one year before the marriage itself. Often the bride and groom did not even meet until their wedding day.”¹

Abraham sent his servant to find a bride for his son Isaac (Genesis 24). The servant took ten camels and went to Mesopotamia. The servant prayed that God would lead him and when he stopped at a well a virgin named Rebekah came and gave him a drink of water. She also watered his camels. The servant gave Rachel gold and silver jewelry. He also gave “precious things to her brother and to her mother” (Genesis 24:53). This was the *mohar* (bridal price). Rebekah chose to return with Abraham’s servant and she became Isaac’s wife (Genesis 24:67).

The Election of the Church by God the Father in Eternity Past and the Purchase of the Church by Christ on the Cross

Before time began, the Father chose us to be the Bride of Christ. Ephesians 1:3-4 says “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love.”

Jesus purchased his Bride (the Church) at the cross by shedding his blood for her. Ephesians 1:7 says “In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sin, according to the riches of His grace.” The word “redeemed” means to buy or purchase. The purchase price for our salvation is the shed blood of Christ on the cross. Jesus died to buy us out of slavery to sin.

Paul wrote: “And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling aroma” (Eph.5:2). Paul also wrote: “Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave himself for her” (Eph.5:25). Paul wrote: “For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God’s” (1 Cor. 6:20).

¹ Dr. Arnold Fruchtenbaum, “The Jewish Wedding System and the Bride of Messiah” in *Ariel Magazine* (Spring 2022. Volume 1), p.22.

THE BETROTHAL STAGE

Betrothal in the Jewish Wedding System

Fruchtenbaum writes: “The second step in the Jewish wedding system was known as the preparation. This was the period of the betrothal. It lasted for at least a year but could also have lasted many years, especially if the arrangement was made when the bride and groom were only children. During this time, the bride was prepared to take on the role of a wife. Furthermore, she was observed for her purity. The betrothal had to last a minimum of a year because this time span allowed for at least a full nine months to pass to make sure that the bride was a virgin at the time of the betrothal. If she gave birth before the year was up, it demonstrated that she was in a state of immorality.”²

The Betrothal of Joseph and Mary

Luke 1 and Matthew 1 tell us the Christmas story about what happened to Joseph and Mary during their betrothal stage. The angel Gabriel came to the virgin Mary and announced to her that she would give birth to the Messiah and call his name Jesus (Luke 1:26-33). When Mary asked how it could happen since she was a virgin, Gabriel told her that the Holy Spirit would bring about this miraculous conception of Jesus in her womb (Luke 1:35). During their betrothal Joseph discovered that Mary was pregnant and he knew that he was not the father of her child (Matt.1:18). Joseph was going to divorce Mary privately because he loved her (Matt.1:19). But then the angel of the Lord told Joseph to take Mary as his wife (Matt.1:20-21). So Joseph broke social custom and brought Mary into his home. Joseph kept her a virgin until the birth of Jesus (Matt.1:24-25).

The Preparation of the Church During the Betrothal Stage

On his second missionary journey Paul helped start the church in Corinth. On his third missionary journey Paul wrote to the church in Corinth: “For I am jealous for you with godly jealousy. For I have betrothed you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ” (2 Cor.11:2).

Paul had a godly jealousy for the Corinthian Christians. The reason is that he betrothed the church at Corinth to one husband (Christ). His purpose in ministry was to present the church of Corinth to Christ as a “chaste virgin.” Paul was

² Ibid.

concerned about the Christians in Corinth. He did not want their minds to be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ (2 Cor.11:3) Paul did not want them to be deceived by the false teachers in Corinth who were preaching another Jesus, a different spirit and a different gospel (2 Cor.11:4).

The Church is the Bride of Christ. We are betrothed to one Husband – the Lord Jesus Christ. We need to prepare ourselves for the Rapture. John challenges us to purify ourselves as we wait for the coming of Christ for us. 1 John 3:2-3 says: “Beloved, now we are the children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.” The pre-tribulation Rapture of the Church is a purifying hope. As the Bride of Christ we should be looking every day for the soon coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The Sanctification of the Church by Christ

During this period of time when the Church is on earth and Christ is in heaven, Christ is setting His Church apart from the world. Paul wrote in Ephesians that the relationship between a husband and wife should reflect the relationship of Christ and His church: “Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave Himself for her, that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish” (Eph. 5:25-27).

The purpose for Christ loving the Church and giving Himself for her by his death on the cross was in order that He might sanctify her by the washing of water of the word (ἵνα αὐτήν ἀγιάσῃ, καθάρισας τῷ λουτρῷ τοῦ ὕδατος ἐν ῥήματι.). The word “sanctify” (ἀγιάσῃ) means to set apart. Christ has set apart the Church to be his holy Bride.

How is Christ setting apart His Church today? Christ is cleansing the Church by the washing with water through the word. The cleansing (καθάρισας) refers to sanctification by the preaching and teaching of the word of God and not to water baptism (cf. Titus 3:5; Ezek. 16:9; 36:25-29).

The purpose of the sanctification is so that Christ might present the Church to himself a glorious church not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing but that she should be holy and without blemish (ἵνα παραστήσῃ αὐτήν ἑαυτῷ ἕνδοξον τὴν

ἐκκλησίαν, μὴ ἔχουσαν σπίλον, ἢ ῥυτίδα, ἢ τι τῶν τοιούτων, ἀλλ' ἵνα ἡ ἅγια καὶ ἄμωμος.). The presentation of the Church to Christ will happen at the Marriage of the Lamb in heaven (Rev.19:6-8).

The Preparation of the Home by the Groom in the Father's House

During the betrothal stage while the groom and bride were separated from each other for a year, the groom prepared the home for his bride in his father's house. Jesus told his disciples in the upper room that he was going to go away and prepare a place for them in the Father's house.

Jesus said, "Let not your heart be troubled, you believe in God, believe also in Me. In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also" (John 14:1-4).

Jesus is preparing a home for us in heaven – the city of New Jerusalem. John described the city of New Jerusalem in Revelation 21-22. He wrote: "Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband" (Revelation 21:2).

Jesus predicted here in the Upper Room Discourse (John 14-16) that he would come again and receive us to himself that where He is we may be also. This is the first prediction of the Rapture in the New Testament and it is given by Jesus to his disciples before his death and resurrection.

THE COMING OF THE GROOM FOR HIS BRIDE

The Fetching of the Bride in the Jewish Wedding System

Dr. Fruchtenbaum writes: "The third step in the Jewish wedding system was known as the fetching of the bride. This event occurred a year or more after the marriage had been arranged and the bride price had been paid. It ended the period of preparation. The bridegroom would go to the home of his soon to be wife in order to pick her up and bring her to his own home. It was the father of the groom who would determine the timing of the fetching of the bride. Prior to the groom's leaving, he had to already have a place prepared for her as their abode."³

³ Ibid., p.23.

The Coming of Christ for His Bride in the Pre-Tribulation Rapture of the Church

Paul wrote: “But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus. For this we say to you by the word of the Lord that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. Therefore, comfort one another with these words” (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18).

The Return of Christ for His Church. Jesus Christ is personally coming back for His Church. He will not send an angel to come and get us. Jesus thinks enough of us to come Himself. Three sounds will announce his coming. A shout of triumph. The voice of the archangel (we are not told who). The trumpet of God will sound.

The Resurrection of Christians who have Died. When a Christian dies he or she goes to be with Jesus in heaven (2 Corinthians 5:6-8; Philippians 1:23). When Jesus returns in the air at the Rapture He will bring with him “those who sleep in Jesus.” This expression does not refer to soul sleep (the view that the soul sleeps in the body while in the grave). Paul uses sleep here as a metaphor for death. The souls of the Christians who have died (from Pentecost until the Rapture) will return with Jesus at the Rapture and they will be joined to their physical bodies and “the dead in Christ will rise first.”

The Glorification of Christians who are Alive. Not all Christians will have to die before the Rapture. Christians who are alive at the time of the Rapture will experience instant glorification. They will receive glorified bodies without sinful natures. Paul wrote: “Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall be changed- in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality” (1 Corinthians 15:51-53).

The Rapture of the Church to Christ in the Air. Paul wrote: “Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air.” The word “rapture” does not occur in the Bible. It comes from the

Latin word for “caught up.” The same word is used in Acts 8:39 to describe how the Spirit caught up Philip near Gaza and physically transported him to Caesarea. The word is also used in 2 Corinthians 12:4 to describe how the apostle Paul was caught up to the third heaven. At the Rapture the Church will be caught up to meet Christ in the clouds.

Paul believed in the imminent return of Christ. He believed that Jesus could come at any moment for his Bride – the Church. Notice that I said could and not would. The words “we who are alive and remain” show that Paul believed in the imminent return of Christ.

What does the word imminency mean? Dr. Mark Hitchcock writes: “When pre-tribulationists use this word we have three ideas in mind. First, imminency means that, from the human perspective, the Rapture could occur at any moment. Other events may take place before the Rapture, but no event must precede it. After all, if some event must happen before the Rapture, then the Rapture could not happen at any moment. It could not be imminent...Second, imminency means that the Rapture is a signless event. Since our Lord’s call for believers to meet Him in the clouds is an any-moment event, then it follows that one must be ready for it at any time, without any signs or warning. If signs have to precede it, then it can’t occur at any moment. The signs of Christ’s coming in the New Testament, such as those in Matthew 24, are signs of the Second Coming of Christ, not signs of the Rapture. Third, imminency means that the Rapture is certain to happen, but not necessary soon...An imminent event is one that is certain to occur, but its actual timing is uncertain. For these reasons, those who believe in the pre-Tribulation Rapture should carefully avoid saying things like “Jesus is coming soon” or “The Rapture is going to happen very soon.” It may happen soon, but it may not. We simply don’t know for sure.”⁴

The Reunion in the Sky. The Church will be caught up to meet the Lord in the air. Together we will see the Lord Jesus Christ in our glorified bodies. We will also be reunited with Christian loved ones who have died and gone to be with Christ in heaven.

The Return to Heaven after the Rapture. After the Rapture – Christ and His Church will return to the Father’s house in heaven (John 14:1-6).

⁴ Mark Hitchcock, *Could The Rapture Happen Today?* (Sisters, Oregon: Multnomay Publishers, 2005), p. 119-120.

THE WEDDING CEREMONY

The Wedding Ceremony in the Jewish Wedding System

Dr. Fruchtenbaum writes: “The fourth step of the Jewish wedding system was the ceremony. It was conducted in the home of the groom. Only a few, usually the immediate family and two witnesses, were invited to come in and observe the wedding ceremony.”⁵

The Context of Revelation 19:6-9

Before we examine our key text of Revelation 19:6-9 we need to study the context.

The key verse which unlocks the outline of the book is Revelation 1:19: “Write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after this.” John writes about the things which he has seen on the island of Patmos in Revelation chapter 1 as he describes the glorified Jesus Christ. John writes about the things which are in Revelation chapters 2 and 3 as he records the seven letters to the seven churches of Asia. John writes about the things which will take place “after this” (Μετὰ ταῦτα) in Revelation chapters 4-22. After recording Christ’s seven letters to the seven churches of Asia in Revelation chapters 2 and 3 John writes in Revelation 4:1 “After these (Μετὰ ταῦτα) things I looked and behold a door standing open in heaven.” Revelation 4:1 begins the future events that John saw and heard and recorded in the book of Revelation.

Dispensational premillennialists hold to a futurist interpretation of the book of Revelation rather than a preterist, idealist or historicist interpretation of the book. Revelation 4-22 refer to future events (they will happen in the future after the Rapture of the Church). Here are the future events described in Revelation 4-22.

The Worship of God as Creator (4:1-11)
 The Worship of the Lamb as Redeemer (5:1-14)
 Seven Seal Judgments (6:1-8:1)
 Seven Trumpet Judgments (8:2-11:19)
 Parenthesis: Seven Signs (12:1-14:20)
 Seven Bowl Judgments (15:1-16:21)
 Destruction of Babylon (17:1-18:24)

⁵ Ibid., p.24.

Seven Last Things (19:1-22:5)

The Marriage of the Lamb (19:1-10)

The Second Coming of Christ (19:11-21)

The Binding of Satan (20:1-3)

The Millennial Kingdom (20:4-6)

The Final Rebellion Led by Satan (20:7-10)

The Great White Throne Judgment (20:11-15)

The New Heaven and New Earth and New Jerusalem (21:1-22:5)

Revelation 19:1-6 gives the context for the Marriage of the Lamb recorded by John in Revelation 19:7-8. John writes: “After these things (Μετὰ ταῦτα) I heard a loud voice of a great multitude in heaven.” The words “after these things” (Μετὰ ταῦτα) is a key temporal structural marker in the book of Revelation. John has just recorded the destruction of the great harlot – the apostate church in the tribulation period (Rev. 17) and the rebuilt city of Babylon (Rev. 18). What will happen after the destruction of the great harlot and the city of Babylon? John will record the three alleluias of the great multitude and the Marriage of the Lamb (Rev. 19:1-9).

John heard in heaven the voice of a great multitude (μεγάλην ὄχλου) praising God (Rev. 19:1). Who is this great multitude?

The great multitude is first listed in Revelation 7:9-10: “After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands and crying out with a loud voice saying “Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne and to the Lamb.”

The great multitude refers to the tribulation martyrs in heaven. They are distinguished from the angels, the elders and the four living creatures (Rev. 7:11).

Three times in Revelation 19:1-6 we find the great multitude shouting “Alleluia” (Ἀλληλουϊά)(Rev. 19:1, 3, 6). The 24 elders (representing the Church) and the 4 living creatures (angels) will cry out “Amen. Alleluia” (Rev. 19:4).

Dr. Ed Hindson makes this observation: “This is the only place in the New Testament where hallelujah occurs. It is a Hebrew word (‘Praise Yah’). It was transliterated from the Hebrew into Greek and passed on into English.”⁶

⁶ Ed Hindson, *Revelation: Unlocking the Future* (Chattanooga, Tennessee: AMG Publishers, 2002), p.191.

The great multitude first praises God for the judgment of the great harlot. Revelation 19:1-2 “After these things I heard a loud voice of a great multitude in heaven saying, ‘Alleluia. Salvation and glory and honor and power belong to the Lord our God. For true and righteous are His judgments, because He has judged the great harlot who corrupted the earth with her fornication and He has avenged on her the blood of His servants shed by her.’”

The great harlot refers to Babylon the Great – the false apostate church in the tribulation period. Revelation 17 tells us that the great harlot rides the Beast (the Antichrist) in the first half of the tribulation period. John wrote, “I saw the woman, drunk with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus” (Rev.17:6).

The great harlot will persecute and kill many tribulation saints in the first half of the tribulation period. The fifth seal judgment revealed the tribulation martyrs of the first half of the tribulation period who cry out with a loud voice, “How long, O Lord, holy and true, until You judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?” (Rev.6:10).

The destruction of the great harlot happens in the middle of the tribulation period when the 10 kings destroy the apostate church to give their power and authority to the Antichrist (Rev. 17:16).

The great multitude praises God for the destruction of the city of Babylon by fire. The multitude cried, “Alleluia. Her smoke rises up forever and ever” (Rev. 19:3). The destruction of the rebuilt city of Babylon is described in Revelation 18. The city of Babylon is destroyed by God with fire at the end of the tribulation period (Rev.18:18).

The great multitude cried out a third time: “Alleluia. For the Lord God Almighty reigns” (Rev.19:6). The title “Lord God Almighty” (κύριος ὁ θεὸς ὁ παντοκράτωρ) is used in Revelation 4:8; 11:17; 15:3; 16:7; 21:22.

The multitude cried “Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come and His wife has made herself ready” (Revelation 19:7). Two reasons are given for the rejoicing: (1) The Marriage of the Lamb has come and (2) His wife has made herself ready.

So who will attend the Marriage of the Lamb in heaven? Here we see in Revelation 19:1-8 that the great multitude (the tribulation martyrs) will be in attendance. They are the ones who cry “Let us be glad and rejoice and give God glory.” The reason for their happiness is the Marriage of the Lamb. The multitude are not part of the wife of the Lamb (which is the Church). The reference of “His wife” in the third person shows that the great multitude is a separate group.

The Marriage of the Lamb

The Greek Text of Revelation 19:6-9

19:6 καὶ ἤκουσα ὡς φωνὴν ὄχλου πολλοῦ καὶ ὡς φωνὴν ὑδάτων πολλῶν καὶ ὡς φωνὴν βροντῶν ἰσχυρῶν λεγόντων, Ἀλληλουϊά, ὅτι ἐβασίλευσεν κύριος ὁ θεὸς [ἡμῶν] ὁ παντοκράτωρ.

19:7 χαίρωμεν καὶ ἀγαλλιῶμεν, ³⁸⁵ καὶ δώσωμεν τὴν δόξαν αὐτῷ, ὅτι ἦλθεν ὁ γάμος τοῦ ἀρνίου, καὶ ἡ γυνὴ αὐτοῦ ἠτοίμασεν ἑαυτήν·

19:8 καὶ ἐδόθη αὐτῇ ἵνα περιβάληται βύσσινον λαμπρὸν καθαρὸν, τὸ γὰρ βύσσινον τὰ δικαιώματα τῶν ἁγίων ἐστίν.

19:9 Καὶ λέγει μοι, Γράψον· Μακάριοι οἱ εἰς τὸ δεῖπνον τοῦ γάμου τοῦ ἀρνίου κεκλημένοι. καὶ λέγει μοι, Οὗτοι οἱ λόγοι ἀληθινοὶ τοῦ θεοῦ εἰσιν.

The New King James Version of Revelation 19:6-9

John wrote, “And I heard, as it were, the voice of a great multitude, as the sound of many waters and as the sound of mighty thunder saying, “Alleluia. For the Lord God Omnipotent reigns. Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready. And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints. Then he said to me, “Write: Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!” And he said to me, “These are the true sayings of God” (Revelation 19:6-9).

The Identity of the Lamb = Jesus

Who is the Lamb? John uses the metaphor of the Lamb to describe Jesus in his books. John wrote that John the Baptist “saw Jesus coming toward him, and said: ‘Behold. The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world’” (John 1:29).

John was transported to heaven and wrote: “And I looked, and behold, in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as though it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent out into all the earth” (Revelation 4:6). Jesus is the Lamb of God who was sacrificed for our sins. He was slain on the cross. But John saw him standing (which is proof of His resurrection from the dead).

The four living creatures and the 24 elders fell down before the Lamb in worship (Revelation 4:8). John heard the voice of many angels around the throne, the living creatures and the elders saying with a loud voice, “Worthy is the Lamb who was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and blessing.” Every creature on earth and under the earth and in the sea respond “Blessing and honor and glory and power be to Him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb forever and ever.”

The Lamb opens the seven sealed scroll (which is the title deed to the universe) (Revelation 6:1). The seal, trumpet and bowl judgments follow in the book of Revelation. These judgments reveal the “wrath of the Lamb” on unbelievers (Revelation 6:16).

The Identity of “His Wife” = the Church

Dr. Fruchtenbaum writes: “The reason the bride will now be fully ready for the marriage ceremony is because she will have her entire bridal gown on (verse 8). This bridal gown is said to be the righteous acts of the saints. This teaches two things. First, it shows that process of sanctification will indeed be completed, for all that will be showing on the bride are her righteous acts. Secondly, this also shows that the marriage ceremony takes place after the Judgment Seat of Christ when the saints are rewarded for their deeds on earth (1 Corinthians 3:10-15). All the wood, hay, and stubble has been burned away and all the gold, silver, and precious stones have been purified. The ones present at the marriage ceremony are the “few” that is only those in heaven at that time.”⁷

The Clothes of the Lamb’s Wife

John wrote “And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints” (Rev.19:8). The wife of the Lamb has been granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright. The garments

⁷ Dr. Arnold Fruchtenbaum, *The Footsteps of the Messiah*, p.407.

that Christians will wear in heaven will reflect the righteous works that we have done here on earth for the Lord. This statement seems to indicate that the Marriage of the Lamb must happen after the Judgment Seat of Christ (1 Cor.3:9-15; 2 Cor.5:10). At the Judgment Seat of Christ Christians will be given crowns for faithful service. The only reason Christians will be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright is because of God's grace.

Jesus promised the believers in the church of Sardis "You have a few names even in Sardis who have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white, for they are worthy. He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments and I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life; but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels" (Revelation 3:4-5). All Christians will wear "white garments" in heaven.

Who are the overcomers? The overcomers are mentioned in Revelation 2-3. The overcomers are all Christians. They are not just a class of spiritual Christians in contrast to carnal Christians. John wrote: "And this is the victory that has overcome the world- our faith. Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?" (1 John 5:4b-5). Believers are overcomes because they have put their faith in Jesus for salvation.

The Marriage of the Lamb in Heaven as an Argument for the Pre-Tribulation Rapture of the Church

The fact that the "wife" (the Church) is in heaven before the second coming of Jesus Christ to earth is an for the pre-tribulation Rapture of the Church. The Rapture of the church could not happen at the second coming of Christ to earth as the post-tribulation Rapture view claims because the Church (his wife) is already in heaven before the second coming of Christ to earth.

The Invitation to the Wedding Supper of the Lamb is given before the Second Coming of Christ to earth

"Then he said to me: 'Write: Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!' And he said to me: 'These are the true sayings of God'" (Revelation 19:9). The angel instructed John to write.

Notice the chronological sequence of events here in Revelation 19:6-9. The Marriage Supper of the Lamb happens after the Marriage of the Lamb. A blessing

is given to those who are called to the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. The scripture text does not say that the Marriage of the Supper of the Lamb has occurred.

Revelation 19:9 is a blessing on those who are called to the Marriage Supper of the Lamb (which is yet to occur on earth after the second coming of Christ to earth and during the millennium).

Different Views on the Time of the Marriage of the Lamb

View 1: The Marriage of the Lamb happens after the Rapture of the Church and before the Tribulation period. Dr. Renald Showers believes that the marriage will occur in heaven when the Church is raptured before the 70th week (Tribulation period) and the marriage supper will take place in heaven before the 70th week.

My Critique: The major problem with Dr. Showers view that the Marriage of the Lamb will happen before the Tribulation period is that John places the Marriage of the Lamb in Revelation 19:6-8 after the destruction of Babylon in Revelation 17-18 and before the second coming of Christ to earth and the battle of Armageddon (Revelation 19:11-21).

View 2: The Marriage of the Lamb happens after the destruction of Babylon in Revelation 17-18 and before the second coming of Christ to earth described in Revelation 19:11-21. This is the view that I have just explained above.

FUTURE EVENTS BETWEEN THE MARRIAGE OF THE LAMB AND THE MARRIAGE SUPPER OF THE LAMB

The Premillennial Second Coming of Jesus Christ to Earth with the Armies of Heaven (Revelation 19:11-16)

Revelation 19:11-16 gives a picture of the premillennial second coming of King Jesus to earth along with the armies of heaven. He will sit on a white horse. He is called Faithful and True. In righteousness He judges and makes war.

John writes, “And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses” (Revelation 19:14). Who are included in the armies of heaven? John previously wrote that the wife of Jesus (the Church) was arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright (Revelation 19:8). The correlation of these verses would seem to indicate that the Church will return with Christ to the earth at His second coming riding on white horses.

Revelation 15:6 indicates that the seven angels who have the seven bowls also wear linen (notice that the scripture does not say white linen). “And out of the temple came the seven angels having the seven last plagues, clothed in pure bright linen, and having their chests girded with golden bands.”

The Supper of the Great God – One Supper You Do Not Want to Attend (Revelation 20:17-18)

John wrote: Then I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the birds that fly in the midst of heaven, ‘Come and gather together for the supper of the great God, that you may eat the flesh of kings, the flesh of captains, the flesh of mighty men, the flesh of horses and of those who sit on them, and the flesh of all people, free and slave, both small and great.

The invitation to the Supper of the Great God is not given to people but to birds (like vultures, hawks, eagles). These birds are summoned to Armageddon to gorge on the dead bodies of those who fight against King Jesus. King Jesus will slay the armies of the Antichrist at the battle of Armageddon. Revelation 19:21 says “And all the birds were filled with their flesh.”

The Battle of Armageddon and Judgment of the Antichrist and False Prophet to the Lake of Fire (Revelation 19:19-21)

“And I saw the beast, the kings of the earth, and their armies gathered together to make war against Him who sat on the horse and against His army. Then the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who worked signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image. These two were cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone. And the rest were killed with the sword which proceeded from the mouth of Him who sat on the horse. And all the birds were filled with their flesh.”

The Binding of Satan (Revelation 20:1-3)

“Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; and he cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal on him, so that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years were finished. But after these things he must be released for a little while”

The Resurrection of the Tribulation Martyrs and the Millennial Kingdom (Revelation 20:4-6)

“And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. Then I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received his mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.”

THE MARRIAGE SUPPER

The Marriage Feast in the Jewish Wedding System

Dr. Fruchtenbaum writes: “The marriage feast is the fifth step in the Jewish wedding system. Often, this feast lasted for seven days. While only a few people were invited to the wedding ceremony, many more were invited to celebrate the marriage of the son.”⁸

Around the time of the patriarchs, the custom was apparently for a feast to be given by the bride’s father at which time the bride was given to the groom and the union consummated. Laban gathered his men and they had a feast for Jacob. But Laban tricked Jacob and gave him Leah instead of Rachel. After seven days Laban gave Jacob his daughter Rachel as his wife. So Jacob had two wives: Leah and Rachel (Gen.29:2-22).

Jesus attended a wedding and a wedding feast in Cana of Galilee with his mother Mary and his disciples (John 2:1-11). A major problem happened at the wedding feast: they ran out of wine (John 2:3). Jesus told them to fill the six stone waterpots with water (John 2:6-7). Jesus performed his first miracle when he turned water into wine at the wedding feast. The master of the feast told the bridegroom (who attended the wedding feast): “You have kept the good wine until now.” He didn’t realize that Jesus had turned the water into wine. But Jesus “manifested his glory and His disciples believed in Him” (John 2:11).

⁸ Arnold Fruchtenbaum, “The Jewish Wedding System and the Bride of the Messiah” in *Ariel Magazine* (Spring 2022. Volume 1), p. 24.

Different Views on the Time of the Marriage Supper of the Lamb

John does not specifically state the time of the Marriage Supper of the Lamb in the book of Revelation. As a result different dispensational premillennialists have come up with different possible times for the celebration of the Marriage Supper of the Lamb.

View 1: The Marriage Supper takes place in heaven during the tribulation period (Renald Showers)

Dr. Showers writes: “there are good reasons for believing that the marriage of the Lamb will occur in heaven when the Church is raptured before the 70th week (Tribulation period) and that the marriage supper of the Lamb will take place in heaven during the seven years of the 70th week.”⁹

Showers gives the following reasons for his view:

(1)The bridegroom fetches the bride and brings her to his house, where the bridal table and chamber are ready. In harmony with the custom Christ indicated that after preparing living accommodations for His bride in the Father’s house in heaven, He would come from there again and receive His bride unto Himself so that His bride could be where He is (in His Father’s house in Heaven) (John 14:2-3).

(2) In Bible times, the marriage was a joyous, festive occasion...the mood at the Second Coming will be just the opposite of the joyous, festive mood of the marriage...The marriage customs of Bible times provided a festive supper for wedding guests, but the Second Coming will provide a radically different kind of supper- a funeral supper of dead flesh for the fowl of the earth (Rev.19:17-18, 21).

(3) It was customary for the marriage supper to be held at the home of the groom or his parents, not at the home of the bride...The wedding feast was normally given by the father of the groom...In harmony with this custom, the marriage supper of the Lamb should take place at Christ’s Father’s house in Heaven, and not at His bride’s dwelling place on earth. This militates against an earthly marriage supper of the Lamb.

⁹ Renald Showers, “The Marriage and Marriage Supper of the Lamb” in *Israel My Glory* (June-July, 1991).

(4) The marriage supper 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 (Psalm 19:5; John 3:29) and the announcement was then delivered to the wedding guests who had already assembled at the groom's father's house.

(5) The Old Testament teaches that during the Millennium there will be another marriage supper, different from the marriage supper of the Lamb. This millennial marriage supper will be associated with the second marriage of God and the nation of Israel. At the beginning of Isaiah 25:6ff, a passage describing the blessings of the future Millennium, Isaiah declared: "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." The word for "feast" in verse 6 is the same as that used for the wedding feast in Judges 14:10, 12, 17, Isaiah's statement indicates that the wedding guests at this millennial marriage supper for God and Israel will be all the other people living in the world at that time....

(6) As noted earlier, it was customary for the wedding supper of Bible times to last for one week, or seven days. It is the conviction of this writer that, in relationship to the marriage supper of the Lamb, the seven years of the 70th week of Daniel 9 will correlate to that time period. According to this view, then, the Rapture of the Church and marriage of the Lamb will occur before the 70th week (Tribulation period), and the marriage supper of the Lamb will take place in Heaven during the 70th week.

My Critique: Dr. Showers believes that the Marriage of the Lamb happens before the tribulation period and that the Marriage Supper is in heaven during the seven years of the tribulation. The main problem with his view is the fact that the Marriage of the Lamb is specifically stated in Revelation 19:6-8 to occur after the judgment of Babylon (Revelation 17-18) and just before the second coming of Christ to earth at the end of the tribulation period (Revelation 19:11-21).

The announcement about the Marriage Supper of the Lamb is given after the Marriage of the Lamb and just before the second coming of Christ to earth at the end of the tribulation period (Rev. 19:9). I believe that the Marriage Supper of the Lamb must happen then on the earth after the second coming of Christ.

The OT saints and tribulation martyrs would be in heaven during the tribulation period but they will not be resurrected until the second coming of Christ to earth.

How could these two groups eat and drink at the Marriage Supper of the Lamb without their resurrected glorified bodies? Also, the Jewish believers and Gentile believers who physically survive the tribulation period and who will enter the millennial kingdom in their physical bodies would not be at the Marriage Supper of the Lamb if it happened in heaven before the second coming of Christ.

View 2: The Marriage Supper takes place in heaven and lasts throughout all eternity (Mounce)

Mounce writes: “In Biblical times a marriage involved two major events: the betrothal and the wedding. These were normally separated by a period of time during which the two individuals were considered husband and wife and as such were under the obligations of faithfulness. The wedding began with a procession to the bride’s house, which was followed by a return to the house of the groom for the marriage feast. By analogy, the church, espoused to Christ by faith, now awaits the parousia when the heavenly groom will come for his bride and return to heaven for the marriage feast which lasts throughout eternity. John is not saying that the eternal festivities have in fact arrived, but is speaking proleptically of that period of blessedness which follows the millennium (cf. the declaration in 14:8 with the actual fall of Babylon in chapters 17 and 18).”¹⁰

My Critique: There are several problems with Mounce’s view. First, Mounce has the wedding beginning with a procession to the bride’s house. This is problematical since the Rapture will be instantaneous and the Church will not have experienced the Bema (the Judgment Seat of Christ) to be rewarded for their works on earth.

Second, Mounce claims that the marriage feast will be in heaven and last for eternity. But what about the second coming of Christ to earth in Revelation 19 which John records after the announcement of the marriage supper?

Third, Mounce relates the marriage feast to the eternal state which follows the millennium. But there are many verses that I am showing today that link the Marriage Supper of the Lamb to the millennial kingdom and not the eternal state.

¹⁰ Mounce, *The Book of Revelation*, p. 340.

View 3: The Marriage Supper is in heaven for the Church and celebrated before the second coming of Christ and the Marriage Feast is on earth for Israel after Christ's return (Lewis Sperry Chafer)

Dr. Lewis Sperry Chafer wrote: “Like an interlude between the record of the judgments that are recounted in Revelation chapters 17 and 18 and the description of the glorious coming of Christ set forth in chapter 19, is the statement that the marriage of the Lamb has come, which event is accompanied by the marriage supper (19:7-9). There is a chronological order being observed, since the marriage and the supper occur in heaven before the King returns...Distinction is called for at this point between the marriage supper which is in heaven and celebrated before Christ returns and the marriage feast (Matthew 25:10; Luke 12:37) which is on earth after His return.”¹¹

My Critique: Chafer correctly recognizes a chronological order here in Revelation 19. The Marriage of the Lamb happens after the judgments of Babylon recorded in Revelation 17-18. The problem with Chafer's view is that John does not say that the Marriage Supper of the Lamb happens before the second coming of Christ to earth. An announcement is given about the coming Marriage Supper of the Lamb but nothing is said about the event happening just before the second coming of Christ to earth.

Chafer makes a distinction between the marriage supper in heaven (for the church) and the marriage feast on earth (for Israel) after Christ's second coming. Rather than two suppers, it is best to see one marriage supper for the Church and Israel during the millennial kingdom.

View 4: The Marriage Supper of the Lamb is a feast on earth that includes the millennial kingdom and the new heaven and the new earth (Robert Thomas)

Dr. Robert Thomas writes: “The time and place of this marriage feast have been somewhat controversial...A decision on this issue depends in part on a decision later in v.7 regarding the identity of the bride. If she represents the church –i.e., the people of God between Pentecost and the Rapture—it is quite conceivable that the marriage takes place in heaven after the catching up of the saints to be with Christ, but before Christ returns to earth...This fixes the place of the feast as on earth and the time during the Millennium. Yet it cannot transpire on earth as in a completed sense until after the Millennium when the rest of the faithful from the thousand

¹¹ Lewis Sperry Chafer, *Systematic Theology IV*: 396.

year period combine with the martyrs and other saints to complete the body of the redeemed (Charles). The language of 21:2, 9 is quite explicit regarding the bride in the new heaven and the new earth (Lee). The better part of wisdom is to include both the Millennium and the new heaven and the new earth as the prolonged wedding feast of the Lamb and His bride (cf.19:9). It will commence with Christ's glorious appearance to initiate His kingdom on this present earth. One further matter of reconciliation requires a separation of the wedding itself (19:7) from the wedding feast (19:9). It is necessary to have the marriage initiated in heaven after the Rapture of the saints, because when Christ's army of saints return with Him to earth, they will have already put on their wedding apparel (19:8, 14). So the initiation of the union happens in heaven but the celebration of that union with a grand wedding feast ensues on earth for the spans of the millennial and eternal kingdoms."¹²

My Critique: There is one major problem with Thomas's view that the Marriage Supper of the Lamb includes both the millennial kingdom and the future eternal state: There is no animal death in the eternal kingdom on the new earth. Revelation 21:4 says "And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; **there shall be no more death**, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away." In Revelation 22:2 John states that the tree of life which will yield its fruit every month. No other food is listed in Revelation 21-22 for believers to eat in New Jerusalem besides fruit. The fact that there is no temple in the city of New Jerusalem also shows that there will be no need for animal sacrifice in the eternal state (cf. Rev.21:22).

View 5: The Marriage Supper of the Lamb is a feast on earth that will happen during the Millennial kingdom (Pentecost, Walvoord, Fruchtenbaum, Robert Gromacki)

J. Dwight Pentecost wrote: "It seems necessary to distinguish between the marriage of the Lamb and the marriage supper. 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 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. The wedding supper, then, becomes the parabolic picture of the entire millennial age to which Israel will be invited during the tribulation period, which invitation many will reject and so they

¹² Robert Thomas, *Revelation 8-22: An Exegetical Commentary*, p.366.

will be cast out, and many will accept and they will be received in. Because of the rejection the invitation will likewise go to the Gentiles so that many of them will be included. Israel, at the second advent will be waiting for the Bridegroom to come from the wedding ceremony and invite them to that supper, at which the Bridegroom will introduce His bride to His friends (Matthew 25:1-13).”¹³

Dr. John Walvoord wrote: “A third aspect of an Oriental wedding was the marriage feast held for the benefit of guests. The ten virgins of Matthew 25 were such guests as well as others. There has been some difference of opinion as to whether the symbolism of the marriage feast is fulfilled in heaven following the rapture or whether it will be on earth in connection with the second coming of Christ. According to Revelation 19:7-9 the wedding feast is announced at the close of the tribulation and is related to the second coming of Christ to the earth. For this reason, the wedding feast may have its fulfillment spiritually in the millennium itself when saints of all ages will be present to join the festivities with Christ the Bridegroom and the church as the bride. The fact that the wedding feast is announced in Revelation 19 prior to the second coming of Christ is another indication that the rapture itself must have already occurred as the Bridegroom goes for His bride before the wedding feast. The two illustrations in Matthew (22:1-14; 25:1-13) both picture the wedding feast on earth and lead to the conclusion that the wedding feast is related to Christ’s second coming to the earth and the millennial kingdom which will follow. In both of these instances in Matthew, the bride is not mentioned. According to Oriental custom the bride does not necessarily attend the wedding feast although, as a matter of fact, the church as the bride will be present in the millennial scene.”¹⁴

Dr. Arnold Fruchtenbaum writes: “While the marriage ceremony will take place in heaven just before the second coming of Christ, the marriage feast will take place on earth after the second coming of Christ. In fact, it would seem that the marriage feast is what begins the millennium or messianic age; the church’s co-reigning with Christ will start with a tremendous marriage feast.”¹⁵

Dr. Ed Hindson writes: “The marriage is completed in heaven (Rev.19:7), but the marriage supper probably takes place later on earth where Israel is awaiting the return of Christ and the Church. This is the only clear way to distinguish the Bridegroom (Christ), the Bride (Church) and the ten virgins (Israel) in the passage in Matthew 25:1-13. There is no way that He is coming to marry all ten (or five) of

¹³ J. Dwight Pentecost, *Things to Come* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1958), p.227-228.

¹⁴ John Walvoord, *Jesus Christ our Lord* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1969), p. 273-274.

¹⁵ Arnold Fruchtenbaum, *The Footsteps of the Messiah* (Ariel Ministries Press, 1983), p.407.

these girls. They are the attendants (Old Testament saints and Tribulation saints) at the wedding. Only the Church is the Bride.”¹⁶

Dr. Robert Gromacki writes: “The marriage between Christ and the church will occur in Heaven (Revelation 19:7). On the other hand, the marriage supper of the Lamb will take place on earth after Christ and His Wife descend. All believers from the other ages (Old Testament era and the Tribulation) will be invited to share the spiritual festivities (Revelation 19:9).”¹⁷

The Attendees: The Different Groups of People Who Will Attend the Marriage Supper of the Lamb along with Christ and His Church in the Millennial Kingdom

Old Testament Saints will be resurrected at the second coming of Christ to earth and will attend the marriage supper of the Lamb (Isaiah 26:19; Daniel 12:2-3).

Isaiah predicted the resurrection of OT saints: “Your dead shall live; Together with my dead body they shall arise. Awake and sing, you who dwell in dust; For your dew is like the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead” (Isaiah 26:19).

Daniel predicted the resurrection of OT saints: “And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, some to shame and everlasting contempt. Those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the firmament, and those who turn many to righteousness like the stars forever and ever” (Daniel 12:2-3).

John the Baptist referred to himself as the friend of the bridegroom. He will be resurrected to attend the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. John the Baptist said: “You yourselves bear me witness, that I said, I am not the Christ, but I have been sent before Him. He who has the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly because of the bridegroom’s voice. Therefore this joy of mine is fulfilled. He must increase, but I must decrease” (John 3:28-30).

The Old Testament saints that will be resurrected include Jews who had faith in the God of Israel. The Jewish men and women of faith are listed in Hebrews 11: Abel, Noah, Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, Samuel, the OT prophets (like Elijah, Elisha, Isaiah, Jeremiah,

¹⁶ Ed Hindson, *The Book of Revelation: Unlocking the Future*, p. 192.

¹⁷ Robert Gromacki, *Revelation: Future Events. Present Hope*, p.104.

Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi).

Enoch was a man of faith who walked with God for 300 years and was taken to heaven and did not die. He will probably be given a glorified body at the time of the resurrection of the OT saints (since he is not a member of the Church).

The Old Testament saints that will be resurrected include Gentiles who were saved before Pentecost like Rahab (Heb.11:31). After Jesus healed the Roman centurion's servant, He praised this Gentile's faith in him and said to those who followed: "Assuredly, I say to you, I have not found such great faith, not even in Israel. **And I say to you that many will come from east and west, and sit down with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven.** But the sons of the kingdom will be cast out into outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth" (Matthew 8:10b-12).

Tribulation martyrs will be resurrected at the second coming of Christ to earth and will attend the marriage supper of the Lamb. John wrote: "And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. Then I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received his mark on their foreheads or on their hands. **And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.** But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but **they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years**" (Revelation 20:4-6).

The regenerated nation of Israel (Jews who physically survive the tribulation period and put their faith in Yeshua as their Messiah) will enter the millennial kingdom and participate in the marriage supper of the Lamb.

Jesus told the Parable of the Ten Virgins in the Olivet Discourse (Matthew 25:1-13). All ten virgins slumbered and slept "while the bridegroom was delayed." At midnight the bridegroom came and they were told to go out to meet him. The five foolish virgins asked the five wise virgins for oil since their lamps were going out. The bridegroom came and they went with him to the wedding (the feast) and the door was shut. When the foolish virgins asked to come into the wedding feast, the Lord told them "Assuredly, I say to you, I do not know you." Jesus then gave this

admonition: “Watch, therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour in which the Son of man is coming” (Matthew 25:13).

In the Olivet Discourse Jesus explained the events that will happen during the seven year tribulation period. The ten virgins do not refer to the Church but to Israel. The ten virgins refer to the Jews living on earth during the tribulation period. Some Jews in the tribulation period will be wise (they will believe that Jesus is the Messiah and they will wait for his coming at the end of the tribulation period). Other Jews in the tribulation period will be foolish. They will not trust in Jesus as their Messiah. They will not be prepared for the second coming of Jesus Christ. Only those Jews in the tribulation period who believe that Jesus is Messiah will be saved and enter the kingdom. The unprepared Jews (the foolish virgins) will want to go into the kingdom but the Lord will tell them at their judgment: “I do not know you.”

Dr. Tommy Ice writes: “The parable of the ten virgins provides a picture of living Israel brought back to the land at the end of days for a judgment to see who is prepared and who is unprepared the second time for the coming of Messiah since the nation was not prepared at Christ’s first coming. The focus is on Israel in the last days (i.e. the tribulation period just described in Matthew 24:4-28). The prepared Israelites enter the millennial kingdom while the unprepared are excluded. To be excluded refers to unsaved Israel.”¹⁸

Gentile believers who physically survive the tribulation period (the sheep in Matthew 25:31-46) will enter the millennial kingdom and participate in the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. The Son of Man (Jesus) will separate the sheep from the goats after his second coming to earth (Matthew 25:31-46).

Matthew wrote: “When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory. All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats. Then the King will say to those on His right hand, ‘Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world’” (Matthew 25:31-34).

The sheep will be the Gentile believers who physically survive the tribulation period. They will inherit the kingdom because they demonstrated their faith in

¹⁸ Thomas Ice, *Understanding the Olivet Discourse* (Middletown, RI: Stone Tower Press, 2021), p. 279.

Yeshua the Messiah by their ministry to “the least of these My brothers” (the Jews) in the tribulation period (Matthew 25:37-40).

Dr. Tommy Ice writes: “There are three different groups at this judgment of the nations to determine who goes into the millennium. The unsaved followers of Antichrist left at the end of the tribulation He calls goats. The believers who survive the martyrdom of the tribulation He calls sheep, who demonstrated their gift of righteousness through the blood of the Lamb. The third category is the ‘brethren’ whom the sheep befriend. Those whom Jesus calls ‘my brethren,’ are the Jews who go into the millennium in belief. Thus, we see that only believers will enter the millennium – Gentile believers and Jewish believers from the whole house of Israel.”¹⁹

The Parable of the Marriage Feast (Matthew 22:1-14)

Before we look at the Parable of the Marriage Feast, we need to see the context and the ones to whom Jesus told the parable. Jesus was in the temple on Tuesday of Passion week. Jesus was being confronted by the chief priests (Annas and Caiaphas) along with the Pharisees and Sadducees. Jesus told them the Parable of the Landowner and Vinedressers and predicted that the kingdom of God would be taken away from that generation of Israel because they had rejected him (Jesus is the stone which the builders rejected in Matthew 21:42).

Matthew 21:45-22:1 says “Now when the chief priests and Pharisees heard His parables, they perceived that He was speaking of them. But when they sought to lay hands on Him, they feared the multitudes because they took Him for a prophet. And Jesus answered and spoke to them again by parables and said.” Jesus told the Parable of the Marriage Feast to the chief priests (Annas and Caiaphas) and the Pharisees.

“And Jesus answered and spoke to them again by parables and said: The kingdom of heaven is like a certain king who arranged a marriage for his son, and sent out his servants to call those who were invited to the wedding; and they were not willing to come. Again, he sent out other servants saying, ‘Tell those who are invited, ‘See, I have prepared my dinner; my oxen and fatted cattle are killed, and all things are ready. Come to the wedding.’ But they made light of it and went their ways, one to his own farm, another to his business. And the rest seized his servants, treated them spitefully and killed them. But when the king heard about it,

¹⁹ Thomas Ice, *Understanding the Olivet Discourse*, p. 299.

he was furious. And he sent out his armies, destroyed these murderers, and burned up their city. Then he said to his servants: 'The wedding is ready, but those who were invited were not worthy. Therefore, go to the highways and as many as you find, invite to the wedding.' So those servants went out into the highways and gathered together all whom they found, both bad and good. And the wedding hall was filled with guests. But when the king came in to see the guests, he saw a man there who did not have on a wedding garment. So he said to him, 'Friend, how did you come in here without a wedding garment? And he was speechless. Then the king said to the servants, 'Bind him hand and foot, take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. For many are called, but few are chosen" (Matthew 22:1-14).

In this parable the king refers to God the Father and King's son is Jesus. The King sent servants to announce the wedding of his son. On more than one occasion servants were sent out to announce the wedding but the people rejected the wedding invitations. They mistreated the servants and killed them. God sent the prophets to Israel and they rejected them and killed them.

The king was furious and sent his armies to destroy the murderers and burn their city. In A.D. 70 Titus and the Romans came and destroyed Jerusalem. This was a judgment of God upon Israel for their rejection of Jesus as their Messiah.

So the king sent out his servants into the highways to invite all to the wedding. During the inter-advent period between the first and second coming of Christ Christians are the servants who are going into all the world to preach the gospel.

When the king came and saw a man who did not have a wedding garment on he questioned him on how he could come to the wedding. Then the king had the servants bind the man and take him away to outer darkness. The servants here in the parable refer to angels who at the second coming of Christ to earth will separate the wicked and the righteous.

Jesus explained the same truth in the parable of the wheat and tares (Matthew 13:24-30; 13:37-42). Jesus said, "The Son of Man will send out His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and those who practice lawlessness and will cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears to hear; let him hear" (Matthew 13:40-43).

The Connection of the Passover, the Last Supper, the Lord's Supper and the Marriage Supper of the Lamb (Matthew 26:26-29)

Jesus observed the Passover in his last supper with his apostles before he was crucified. Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper at the last supper in the upper room.

Matthew writes: "And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to the disciples and said, "Take eat; this is my body." Then He took the cup and gave thanks and gave it to them, saying: Drink from it, all of you. For this is my blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. **But I say to you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom"** (Matthew 26:26-29).

Jesus said that he would not drink wine (the fruit of the vine) from that moment on until the day He would drink it new with them in the Father's kingdom. This statement of Jesus is a strong argument for the view that the Marriage Supper of the Lamb will be on earth during the millennial kingdom and not in heaven before the second coming of Christ to earth. During the present Church age Jesus is not drinking any wine. The Marriage of the Lamb happens in heaven before the second coming of Christ to establish the millennial kingdom (Rev.19:7-8). The Marriage Supper of the Lamb will happen on earth during the millennial kingdom. It is at that time that Christ will drink wine and there will be a feast.

Jesus' Promise to the Apostles and the Link to the Marriage Supper of the Lamb (Luke 22:24-30)

The disciples were upset in the Upper Room. Jesus had just predicted that one of his disciples would betray them. Luke writes: "Then they began to question among themselves, which of them it was who would do this thing. Now there was also a dispute among them, as to which of them should be considered the greatest. And he said to them, 'The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them, and those who exercise authority over them are called benefactors. But not so among you; on the contrary, he who is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he who governs as he who serves. For who is greater, he who sits at the table, or he who serves? Is it not he who sits at the table? Yet I am among you as the One who serves. But you are those who have continued with Me in My trials. And I bestow upon you a kingdom, just as My Father bestowed one upon Me, **that you may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel"** (Luke 22:24-30)

These verses link the Marriage Supper of the Lamb with the future millennial kingdom. Jesus promised that He would give the kingdom to his apostles just as the Father had given the kingdom to Jesus. Jesus predicted that the apostles would eat and drink at his table in His kingdom. Jesus also promised his apostles that they would sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel. The apostles will rule over the twelve tribes of Israel in the future millennial kingdom. This promise made by Jesus is a strong argument for traditional dispensationalism. Israel is not made a part of the church in the future kingdom. Rather Israel consists of twelve tribes and the apostles will rule over these twelve tribes in the millennium. Jesus promised his apostles on another occasion: “Assuredly I say to you, that in the regeneration, when the Son of Man sits on the throne of His glory, you who have followed Me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel” (Matthew 19:28).

CONCLUSION

Christians differ on their views of the time and location of these two future events mentioned in the book of Revelation: The Marriage of the Lamb and the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. The focus of these two events is not on us (the Church which is the Bride of Christ). The focus of these two future events is on the Lamb of God who came to take away the sins of the world (John 1:29).

An old hymn called The Sands of Time tells us what to do at the Marriage of the Lamb:

The Bride eyes not her garment,
But her dear Bridegroom's face;
I will not gaze at glory
But on my King of Grace.
Not at the crown He giveth
But on His pierced hand;
The Lamb is all the glory
Of Immanuel's Land.