

# LECTURES ON THE BOOK OF REVELATION

By

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## CHAPTER TWENTY

### THE TWO SUPPERS

(Lecture 19:6-21)

WE are to be occupied with two opposite scenes on this occasion; one of which is to take place very shortly in heaven, and the other on earth. Both are called Suppers. The one is the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. The other is the Great Supper of God. The first is all joy and gladness. The second is a scene of deepest gloom and anguish. The Marriage Supper of the Lamb ushers in the fulness of glory for the heavenly saints. The Great Supper of God concludes the series of judgments that are to fall upon the prophetic earth, and opens the way for the establishment of the long-awaited-for kingdom of God.

When I use the term “the prophetic earth,” I refer to the Roman earth; that is, to that portion of the world which lies within what were once the confines of the Roman Empire, and in addition to this, that part of the world where Babylon will hold sway at the time of the end. As I understand it, the heathen nations that have not yet taken professedly Christian ground will not be included in the scene upon which God’s heaviest judgments will fall, though necessarily all the world will suffer in measure when Christendom and Judaism are visited by the fires of His wrath. “The day of God’s red heavens” will be world-wide, but its intensity will be upon the prophetic earth.

After the harlot Babylon has passed out of the vision of the apostle, his attention is transferred to heaven, and he tells us:

**“I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia! for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to Him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready”** (vers. 6, 7).

The hour for the heavenly nuptials will then have struck.

Who is the bride, or the wife of the Lamb, thus mentioned for the first time? Is this special dignity the portion of Israel, or is it that of the church of the present dispensation? Both views have been advocated by godly and able teachers, and one should perhaps speak with diffidence when dwelling on a theme concerning which there has been so much controversy.

In the Old Testament Israel certainly is the wife of The Lord; but is this the same thing as “**the bride, the Lamb’s wife**”? Are there not revealed in these two expressions two different glories - the one to be manifested on earth, the other in heaven? It seems very plain to me that the Marriage Supper of the Lamb takes place in heaven just before the Lamb descends with all His saints to take His great power and reign. When He reigns His Bride will reign with Him. And this is certainly the church, which He has called out of the world for that very purpose. There will be other heavenly saints, as we know, but these are distinguished for us from the Bride.

It also seems clear that there is a very real difference between the wife of The Lord (now put away for her sins, but to be owned by God as His own in the day of her repentance) and the heavenly bride of the Lamb, the incarnate Son, now espoused as a chaste virgin unto her absent Lord, and waiting for her marriage nuptials till He calls her home.

But some have objected to this, to use their own words, as a kind of spiritual polygamy. My answer would be that where we are only speaking in figures the objection does not apply, and the church which is His body is distinctly identified with His wife, in Ephesians 5:30-32, otherwise the figures there used become meaningless. So it seems plain that we are warranted in viewing Israel as the earthly bride, and the church as the heavenly bride, both alike dear to His heart who purchased them with His precious blood, but each having a special character of her own.

The Marriage Supper of the Lamb is the time of displayed glory, when the results of the judgment seat of Christ will be fully manifest in the saints. That event itself, as we have seen, takes place immediately after the rapture of the church, for the Lord’s word is clear as to this, “**Behold, I come quickly, and my reward is with Me, to give every man according as his work shall be.**”

But the full manifestation of the saints in the same glory with their Head and Lord, their heavenly Bridegroom, can only be after the false church has been exposed and judged; then the Lamb’s marriage day shall come. And so we are told, concerning the Bride, that “**to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints**” (ver. 8).

It is well known to students of the language that the word rendered “**righteousness**” in this verse is in the plural, and should therefore be understood as “*righteousnesses,*” or “*righteous acts.*”

It is not imputed righteousness that is here in view, nor the believer being made the righteousness of God in Christ. It is that which we have already seen in connection with the elders: the fine linen sets forth the righteous acts of the saints themselves, right-doing while here on earth, which the judgment-seat of Christ will make manifest, and which will form the wedding-garment of the bride on her nuptial day.

In the light of this Scripture we may well be exercised as to our own ways. Are you, dear fellow-believer, preparing any fine linen for that coming day? You are familiar with the thought of the prospective bride's hope-chest. How interested the engaged damsel is in preparing beautiful and spotless articles of wearing apparel in view of her wedding day. May I say that we too have a spiritual hope chest to fill? Everything that is really done for Christ is something added to that bridal chest. Some of us, I am afraid, will have rather a poor supply.

The wedding garments are to be prepared here on earth, as the Spirit of God Himself works in us to will and to do of His good pleasure. Let us not be neglectful of this, for the time is short, and the night cometh when no man can work. It is true that even our very best deeds, our most devoted service, all need to be washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb; but He will not fail to value aright and to richly reward everything that was for His own glory in our poor straitened lives. But all that is done for self, all that springs from unholy motives, will disappear in that day; while that which was the result of His Spirit working within us will abide forever to His praise and glory, and for our own eternal joy, as we see what pleasure we have given Him.

But we must now pass on to verse 9.

**“And He saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they that are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And He saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God.”**

Here we have a class who are certainly to be distinguished from the Bride.

These are all friends of the Bridegroom, who rejoice in His joy and share in His gladness.

I understand them to be the Old Testament saints and the tribulation saints, who, though they form no part of the church, are sharers in the heavenly glory; and these are pictured as the guests at the wedding who participate in the general gladness of the occasion, and whose presence, too, adds to the happiness of the Bride and Groom. Thus we have a scene of unalloyed delight and holy mirth, a mirth that shall never have an ending, for sin shall never enter there to destroy that hallowed joy.

So ravished and enraptured was John's heart as this vision passed before him that he tells us he fell down to worship at the feet of the angel who showed him these things, only to be rebuked for his grave mistake by the glorious messenger, who cried, **“See thou do it not; I am a fellow-servant with thyself and thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.”**

Our Lord Himself, because He was God, received worship and blessed the worshiper in the case of Thomas when convinced of His resurrection; but the angel scrupulously refuses what belongs to Deity alone.

But the rapidly changing prophetic pictures hurry us on, and time too does not stay. So we ask. What will follow the Marriage Supper of the Lamb? What will be the next great event? Verses 11 to 16, which I must quote in full, will give the answer.

**“And I saw heaven opened”** (and this is the last of those wondrous ‘openings’ to which I drew attention in a previous lecture), **“and behold a white horse; and He that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns (or, diadems); and He had a name written, that no man knew, but He Himself. And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God. And the armies which were in heaven followed Him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it He should smite the nations: and He shall rule them with a rod of iron: and He treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And He hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.”**

How the heart thrills and the pulses bound as we read this description of the descending Christ of God and His saints! It is the coming of the Lord to the earth with His redeemed, as before we have been occupied with His coming to the air to rapture them to Himself.

You will remember that we read of a rider on a white horse when the first seal was broken: but that one did not come from heaven. He went forth on the earth and was of the earth; and his plans were doomed to disappointment.

This rider comes from heaven and His plans shall never miscarry. And right here is the safety of the Christian. He knows that no future earth-born man can ever be the Christ for whom the Word has taught him to wait. Jesus came once in lowly guise, born of a woman, albeit a virgin; He comes again, descending from heaven, and all who come in any other way saying “I am Christ” are but deceivers and antichrists.

**“As it is appointed unto men once to die and after this the judgment, so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many, and unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time, without sin (or, apart from sin, having nothing to do with the sin-question), unto salvation.”**

This is the appearing that is depicted here. It is the manifestation of the Son of God, to take vengeance on His enemies and to deliver His earthly people, who will be looking for Him with longing hearts and eager, anxious eyes.

The description of the descending Lord is most striking.

- He rides a white horse as the Prince of Peace.
- He is called Faithful and True, as in the message to the church in Laodicea.
- He comes to execute righteous judgment and thus to establish the divine authority over all the earth.
- His eyes as a flame of fire, tell, as in the vision of the Son of Man in the midst of the lampstands, of His readiness to detect and deal with all iniquity.
- The many diadems upon His head proclaim His authority over all the kingdoms of the earth.
- The reign of misrule is to end when He takes the sceptre, and all the crowns are given to Him.

**“A Name written that no man knew but He Himself”** speaks of His essential glory as the Eternal Son, concerning which He declared that **“no man knoweth the Son but the Father.”** The mystery of His glorious person is beyond all human ken. We sing, and rightly,

“The Father only Thy blest name  
Of Son can comprehend.”

His garments are to be reddened with the blood of His enemies, as we are told by the prophet Isaiah, but the vesture dipped in blood with which He is here seen clothed, is, I take it, like the rams’ skins, dyed red, in the tabernacle, the sign of His consecration unto death. It is His own blood that is here in view, the price of our redemption.

It is noteworthy that He is said to have three names.

- One, we have already seen, is beyond man’s comprehension.
- The second name is **“The Word of God.”** And we know what is involved in that: for it is as **“the Word was made flesh”** that He has revealed God to us.

That Word was spoken in time, of which we read: **“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God”** (John 1:1, 2).

Here we have eternity of Being, one Substance with the Father, but distinct Personality - true Deity, and eternal Sonship. This was the Word unspoken; but when the Son became incarnate, God spoke in Him, according to the first chapter of Hebrews, and so we read, **“No man hath seen God at any time, the only begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father He hath revealed Him,”** or, *“told Him out.”* This is just a little of what is involved in this second glorious name.

In order not to break the connection we might look now at the third name or title that He bears. In verse 16 we are told that **“He hath on His vesture and on His thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.”**

This is His official title, and it belongs to Him as Son of Man, the rightful Heir of all things. Earth would not recognize His claims when He was here the first time, and in derision they crowned Him with thorns and gave Him a cross instead of a throne; but God is going to reverse all this soon. He is to **“be exalted and extolled and be very high.”**

All the kingdoms of earth are to be His and He will rule the nations with the iron rod of unswerving justice.

It will be noticed, then, that in these three names we have set forth:

- First, our Lord’s dignity as the Eternal Son.
- Second, His incarnation - the Word become flesh.
- And, lastly, His second advent to reign as King of kings and Lord of lords.

The armies in heaven who follow Him comprise:

- (1) the church, which we have just seen as the Bride,
- (2) the saints of former dispensations, and
- (3) the tribulation saints who had been slain under the Beast and the Antichrist.

All ride forth with Him, their now triumphant Lord, when He comes to take His great power and reign.

*The sharp sword that proceeds from His mouth is His Word.*

This we have already seen in the first chapter, and we remember His warning to the church in Thyatira, that if there were no repentance He would fight against them with the sword of His mouth.

We are told that He treads the winepress of the wrath of God.

The winepress is the figure of unsparing judgment. This we have also become familiar with in chapter 14. In Isaiah 63:1-6 we have a remarkable passage that bears on what we have here:

**“Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? This that is glorious in His apparel, travelling in the greatness of His strength? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save. Wherefore art Thou red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth in the wine fat? I have trodden the winepress alone, and of the people there was none with Me: for I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury; and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment. For the day of vengeance is in my heart, and the year of my redeemed is come. And I looked, and there was none to help; and I wondered that there was none to uphold: therefore mine own arm brought salvation unto me; and my fury, it upheld me. And I will tread down the people in mine anger, and make them drunk in my fury, and I will bring down their strength to the earth.”**

This marvelous prophecy, which had a partial fulfilment in judgments meted out to Israel’s foes in the past, will have its complete fulfilment when the Lord comes the second time to tread the winepress of wrath, and to destroy all who are His own and His people’s foes, as depicted in the last part of our chapter.

From verse 17 to the end we have a graphic portrayal by the Master-Artist of the closing scene of judgment, **“the supper of the great God.”**

An angel standing in the sun (for the source of light which seemed to be blotted out under the bowls of wrath is now seen resplendent in glory) summons the fowls of the air that fly in the midst of heaven to feast upon the flesh of the great ones of earth and their vast armies who are seen gathering together for the Armageddon conflict, the location of which we previously noticed.

The Beast is seen marshalling his hosts, and with him his blasphemous ally and satellite, the false prophet - that is, the Antichrist.

The kings of the earth, with all their hordes, are hurrying to the fray, all combining in one last desperate effort to make successful war against the Lord Jesus Christ and everything that is of God. But like the hosts of Sennacherib of old, they are palsied and stricken by the blast of His mouth, and their armies become food for the birds of prey.

It is an awful picture - the climax of man's audacious resistance to God; a picture too that may fill the heart with gladness as it tells of the end of unrighteous rule on this planet, and the ushering in of the Golden Age for which all nations have sighed.

Two men, be it noted, are taken alive.

They are the two arch-conspirators who have bulked so largely in this book - the Beast and the false prophet, the civil and religious leaders of the last league of nations, which will be Satan-inspired in its origin, and Satan-directed until its doom.

These two men are "**cast alive into the lake burning with fire and brimstone,**" where a thousand years later they are still said to be "**suffering the vengeance of eternal fire,**" thus incidentally proving that the lake of fire is not annihilation, and that it is not purgatorial either, for it neither annihilates nor purifies these two fallen foes of God and man after a thousand years under judgment.

In the Old Testament we read of two men who went to heaven without passing through death.

Enoch and Elijah were translated that they should not see death. And here, ere we come to the close of the New Testament, we have two men brought before us who are cast into hell-fire without undergoing physical death. Their awful doom is for the warning of all who turn away from Him that speaks from heaven, whose indignation is soon to fall upon all who refuse the message of His grace.

"Lamb of God, when Thou in glory  
Shalt to this sad earth return,  
All Thy foes shall quake before Thee,  
All that now despise Thee, mourn;  
Then shall we, at Thine appearing,  
With Thee in Thy kingdom reign:  
Thine the praise and Thine the glory,  
Lamb of God, for sinners slain."

And now as I close, I would seek solemnly to impress upon each one of my hearers that you may have a part in one or the other of these two Suppers which we have been considering.

If saved, I know you will have a place at the Marriage Supper of the Lamb, for every blood-redeemed one of this dispensation will be there.

Not one will be missing, because our blessed Lord, in grace, became the Lamb of God to die for your sins upon the cross, and you will share in that scene of bliss with Him. But you who refuse His grace, what will you do when the things of which we have been speaking take place.

You may be among those deceived by Satan, accepting the leadership of the Beast, and own the claims of the Antichrist. In that case you would have part in “**the Supper of the great God!**”

May God draw you to Himself now. Resist not the pleadings of the Holy Spirit, but flee at once for refuge to Him who said, “**Him that cometh unto Me, I will in no wise cast out.**”

~ end of chapter 20 ~

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