

Text: Rev. 19:6-10

Title: "The marriage supper of the Lamb" – Part Two

Time: 7/22/2018 am

Place: NBBC

Intro: I mentioned last week that we have come in our study of the Book of Revelation to a point at which "The Saint's Everlasting Rest" is described in some detail. Richard Baxter, a 17th century Puritan, wrote a book by that title, and he began it with some advice about how to approach this subject. I would like to begin there again this week:

"Reader, whatever thou art, young or old, rich or poor, I entreat thee, and charge thee, in the name of thy Lord, who will shortly call thee to a reckoning, and judge thee to thy everlasting unchangeable state, that thou give not these things the reading only, and so dismiss them with a bare approbation [approval]; but that thou set upon this work, and take God in Christ for thy only rest, and fix thy heart upon Him above all. – May the living God, who is the rest of his saints, make these our carnal minds so spiritual and heavenly, that loving Him, and delighting in Him, may be the work of our lives; and that neither I that write, nor thou that readest this book, may ever be turned from this path of life; lest, *a promise being left us of entering into this rest, we should come short of it, through our own unbelief or negligence*" (1).

The Bible's prophecy about the future is both a prediction of great judgment on a rebellious world of sin and a prediction of great hope for those who have been saved by the Lamb from their sins. One of those two outcomes will be our future. Baxter called them our "everlasting unchangeable state."

We have spent some time learning about the outcome of judgment that culminates in the fall of Babylon, and now we begin to see the outcome of the believer's hope, the saints' everlasting rest. That hope-fulfilled rest begins with a wedding celebration. Last week we noticed:

## I. The glory of the marriage supper of the Lamb (vv. 6-7a).

1. There is the glory of a loud *Hallelujah*, meaning *Praise the Lord!* (v. 6a). We want our *Hallelujah* for the Lord to be as loud and as unified as it can be.

2. There is the glory of an omnipotent and divine King (v. 6b). He called this victory back in the Garden of Eden. It happens because he reigns as the Almighty God, and we should recognize His authority in our lives now.

3. There is the glory of marital happiness and joy (v. 7a). Our salvation is a marriage to Christ. We must forsake the idolatry that competes with our love for Him, and we must abide in His love and grow to know Him better each day.

Now this week, we will notice two other wonderful details about this coming wedding celebration with the Lamb.

## II. The garments of the marriage supper of the Lamb (vv. 7b-8).

Illustration: On August 20th, 1988, Maureen and I were married at Bible Community Church in Mentor, OH. She and I dressed for that occasion in a way we had never dressed before and have never dressed since. A wedding day is a day for a special kind of dress, especially when it comes to the bride. We actually had a rainbow theme in our wedding, in part because God had given us friends from a number of different nations around the world to be in our wedding party. We had Americans, an Indian, a Native

American Indian, an African, and a Korean. So Maureen's wedding party all wore the colors of the rainbow.

But as special as those dresses were, and as spiffy as the guys looked in their tuxedos, Maureen's dress was the centerpiece of the special garments of that day. It was a white and very beautiful dress. I am told that the tradition of white for the bride was begun by Queen Victoria at her wedding in 1840. Well, I actually think our passage tells us that the idea is much older even than that.

Application: Our passage describes the garment of the bride at the marriage supper of the Lamb: "that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white." The word translated *white* in this passage is actually a word that means *bright*. The garment of the bride is clean and bright.

We have a description of the opposite of this kind of garment in Zechariah 3:1-4. Note that Joshua's garments are "filthy garments" and that these were symbols of Joshua's iniquity (v. 4). Sometimes our sinful condition is described as nakedness that needs to be covered with clean, white garments (Rev. 3:17-18). Even when we try to clothe our lives in the good things we do, God sees only filthy rags of sin on us (Isa. 64:6, "But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away."). We are born into this world spiritually naked, and as we try to clothe ourselves with good works, all we accomplish is to clothe ourselves in filthy garments and rags.

So how did it happen that this bride is adorned in fine-linen, clean and bright? Our passage mentions two answers to that question:

1. The garment of the bride is the righteous deeds of the saints. The word *righteous* in v. 8 is the same word translated *judgments* in 15:4. It is a plural word that means *righteous acts* or *righteous deeds*. In verse 8, it is the righteous acts of the saints, and in 15:4 it is the righteous acts of the King of the saints (v. 3). Jesus is the King of the saints. So the King's righteous acts in 15:4 helps us to understand what the saints' righteous acts are in 19:8.

Remember that in our study of the righteous acts of the King of the saints in chapter 15, we saw that they were the focus of two songs, the song of Moses and the song of the Lamb (15:3). The song of the righteous acts of Jesus are a song of Moses because He obeyed perfectly the law of Moses to save us from our sins – something we call His active obedience. That is the first righteous act that atones for our sin.

And then also the song of the righteous acts of Jesus are a song of the Lamb, because He willingly suffered the law's penalty for our sins. That is the passive obedience of the Savior that atones for our sin, the second righteous act that saves the sinner. This obedience and willingness to suffer are the righteous acts of the King of the saints in chapter 15.

Now in chapter 19 we see that these same righteous acts of the King of the saints now belong to the saints. The obedience of Christ to the law and the suffering of Christ for sinners are the clean and bright garments of the bride. As God's people who have repented of our sins and placed our faith in our King, we are clothed in His righteous deeds. They have been imputed to us.

And so the prophet rejoices, "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with

the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels." The salvation and righteousness with which we are clothed is the garment put on us by the Lord. Our salvation was earned by the sufferings of Christ and the righteousness achieved by the obedience of Christ. It is in this sense alone that the garments of the bride are the righteous deeds of the saints. So how can I be clothed in them?

2. The garment of the bride is a gracious gift (v. 8; "it was granted"). This is how the bright garments of the bride become our garments—they are given to us and we simply receive them by faith. One commentator (Swete, p. 247) insightfully remarked that the phrase, "it was given," is a "keynote" of the Book of Revelation occurring some twenty times throughout the book. God gives judgment, and God gives blessing. Here God gives these garments. They are a gracious gift, because our salvation from sin in the atoning work of Christ is a gracious gift that we receive by simple faith (Rom. 6:23, "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.").

Are you clothed with this fine linen, clean and bright, this morning? Have you received the gift of salvation through what Jesus did for you in obeying God's law and dying under its penalty in your place? Understand, that in order to be a part of the bright future prophesied in the Book of Revelation, you must have this garment. You must be saved by grace, through faith, in Christ alone.

If you are still naked or clothed in the filthy rags of your own sense of worthiness and righteousness, rejecting the garments of salvation that Christ worked to offer you, you will be without excuse when this wedding celebration comes. Jesus told us what that will be like for you some day (Matt. 22:10-14).

III. The invitation to the marriage supper of the Lamb (v. 9-10).

Illustration: I have a wedding invitation from my nephew and his fiancé on my desk. It tells me it is from Michaela and Luke's parents. It gives me the wedding's date, the time, the place, and information about the reception to follow.

Application: The Lord has sent out some invitations for this great marriage celebration for His Son and His Son's bride. His invitations to the marriage supper depend on two things:

(1) The invitation depends on a very powerful message: "the true sayings of God"; "the testimony of Jesus"; "the spirit of prophecy." This is the gospel, the good news that Jesus died for sinners and rose again, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved. It is a gospel revealed to us from heaven by the Holy Spirit. It is a gospel that is true because it is the very sayings or words of God.

Note how the testimony of Jesus is linked to the word of God in Revelation:

1:2, "Who [John] bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw."

1:9, "I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ."

6:9, "And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held:"

12:17, "And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ."

20:4, "And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God."

The gospel of the Scriptures is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believes. We need to share that with others. Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.

(2) The invitation depends on very weak messengers. We are John's brothers, those "that have the testimony of Jesus." The gospel is in our hands. John, the last remaining apostle, falls down and worships the angel, and the angel had to explain to John that it was God whom he needed to worship. I am sure that John must have felt overwhelmed and very much inadequate to be the one counted on to give this invitation to others to come to the wedding celebration. We can expect to feel the same way, but it is in our hands to do the job anyway. God help us if we fail!

Conclusion: On the back of my nephew's wedding invitation, it says this: "RSVP: the favor of a reply is requested by July 16, 2018." I invite you to salvation in Christ. Repent and believe. I do not know by when you need to reply, but

I do know there is a deadline, and today is the day of salvation. It may be your final day.

“A man came – I think it was actually in Philadelphia – on one occasion to the great George Whitefield and asked if he might print his sermons. Whitefield gave this reply; he said, ‘Well, I have no inherent objection, if you like, but you will never be able to put on the printed page the lightning and the thunder.’ That is the distinction – the sermon, and the ‘lightning and the thunder.’ To Whitefield this was of very great importance, and it should be of very great importance to all preachers, as I hope to show. You can put the sermon into print, but not the lightning and the thunder. That comes into the act of preaching and cannot be conveyed by cold print. Indeed it almost baffles the descriptive powers of the best reporters.”

– David Martin Lloyd-Jones,

*Preachers and Preaching*