

Living Word Fellowship Church

An Expository Explanation of Revelation Chapter 19

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I. Background Information in Chapter 19

Part III

A. Introduction:

The scene shifts immediately from mourning on earth to rejoicing in heaven; the martyrs have been vindicated at last. Although the reference is particularly to Rome, it looks beyond Rome to the oppressive elements of the world system that carry on Rome's role until the return of Christ. (According to some commentators, chap. 19 applies only to Rome's fall, whereas chap. 20 presents the rest of human history until Christ's return. This view is also defensible; one's conclusion will depend on how figuratively one reads the language of chap. 19.)^[1]

B. Background Information:

1. The Second Coming of Christ (19:7-19):

a) The Old Testament context of 19:3 is Isaiah 34:10. Many biblical texts describe the relationship between God and his people under the metaphor of marriage (19:9; cf. Isa. 62:4; Hos. 2:19; 2 Cor. 11:2; Eph. 5:25–33; Rev. 21:2). Here, John describes the marriage of the Lamb and the marriage supper. The wedding feast (19:7–9) is a reference to the end of the long and sometimes painful engagement between Christ and his saints. It marks the beginning of the eternal unbroken marriage relationship of perfect fellowship and love. This

vision is here to encourage the readers through their tribulations with the vision of their ultimate entrance into God's glory.^[2]

I. The wedding is a familiar metaphor used in Scripture to describe God's relationship with his people. God likened Israel to a bride in the Prophets (Isa. 49:18; Jer. 2:2). In the Gospels, John the Baptist compared Jesus to a bridegroom (John 3:29) as does Jesus himself (Luke 5:35).^[3]

II. In the eschatological parable of the ten virgins, the bridegroom (unnamed but surely Jesus) found only five virgins prepared to attend the wedding banquet (Matt. 25:1–13). Paul explicitly identified the church as the bride (2 Cor. 11:2).^[4]

III. Revelation's four references to the church as the bride of Christ are the most in the New Testament (cf. Rev. 21:2, 9; 22:17).^[5]

b) A wedding normally included these stages:

I. The legal consummation of the marriage by the parents of the bride and of the groom, with the payment of the dowry.

II. The bridegroom coming to claim his bride (as illustrated in Matt. 25:1–13 in the familiar Parable of the 10 Virgins).

III. The wedding supper (as illustrated in John 2:1–11) which was a several-day feast following the previous phase of the wedding.^[6]

c) In Revelation 19:9 "the wedding supper" is phase 3. And the announcement coincides with the second coming of Christ. It would seem, therefore, that the wedding supper has not yet been observed. In fulfilling the symbol, Christ is completing phase 1 in the Church Age as individuals are

saved. **Phase 2** will be accomplished at the Rapture of the church, when Christ takes His bride to heaven, the Father's house (John 14:1–3).

Accordingly it would seem that the beginning of the Millennium itself will fulfill the symbolism of the wedding supper (*gamos*). It is also significant that the use of the word "bride" in 19:7 (*gynē*, lit., "wife,") implies that **phase 2** of the wedding will have been completed and that all that remains is the feast itself. (The word commonly used for "bride" is *nymphē*; cf. John 3:29; Rev. 18:23; 21:2, 9; 22:17.)^[7]

d) ***The bride is ready (vv. 7–10).*** The bride, of course, is the church (2 Cor. 11:2; Eph. 5:22–33); and Jesus Christ, the Lamb, is the Bridegroom (John 3:29). At a wedding, it is customary to focus attention on the bride; but in this case, it is the *Bridegroom* who receives the honor! "Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to Him."^[8]

e) "What did the bride wear?" is the usual question asked after a wedding. The Lamb's bride is dressed "in the righteous acts of the saints" (literal translation). When the bride arrived in heaven at the Judgment Seat of Christ, she was not at all beautiful (in fact, she was covered with spots, wrinkles, and blemishes according to Paul in Eph. 5:27); but now she is radiant in her glory. She has "made herself ready" for the public ceremony.^[9]

i) Fine linen, bright and clean, was given her to wear (19:8). The bride's garment, which she receives for her wedding with the Lamb, is clean shining linen. Her apparel contrasts with the purple and scarlet linen in which the harlot was dressed (17:4; 18:16). The victors are likewise promised to be dressed in white if they were worthy (3:4–5). John adds an explanatory note interpreting the spiritual meaning of fine linen: It represents the righteous acts of the saints. The plural "acts" suggests that those who overcame had a lifestyle of worthy deeds. These worthy deeds flow out of justification, that is, washing one's robes in the blood of the Lamb (7:14).^[10]

j) The fine linen with which the bride will be adorned is explained as representing the righteous acts of the saints (Rev. 19:8). (In the OT the high priest's clothing included linen: Ex. 28:42; Lev. 6:10; 16:4, 23, 32.) While some think this refers to the fact that the saints are justified by faith, the plural expression "the righteous acts" seems to refer to the righteous deeds wrought by the saints through the grace of God.

f) Today, the church is “engaged” to Jesus Christ; and we love Him even though we have not seen Him (1 Peter 1:8). One day, He will return and take His bride to heaven (John 14:1–6; 1 Thes. 4:13–18). At the Judgment Seat of Christ, her works will be judged and all her spots and blemishes removed. This being completed, the church will be ready to return to earth with her Bridegroom at the close of the Tribulation to reign with Him in glory (see Luke 13:29; Matt. 8:11). Some students believe that the entire Kingdom Age will be the “marriage supper.”^[11]

[1] Keener, C. S. (1993). [The IVP Bible background commentary: New Testament](#) (Re 19:1–10). InterVarsity Press.

[2] Hughes, R. B., & Laney, J. C. (2001). [Tyndale concise Bible commentary](#) (p. 747). Tyndale House Publishers.

[3] Arnold, C. E. (2002). [Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary: Hebrews to Revelation](#). (Vol. 4, p. 354). Zondervan.

[4] Arnold, C. E. (2002). [Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary: Hebrews to Revelation](#). (Vol. 4, p. 354). Zondervan.

[5] Arnold, C. E. (2002). [Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary: Hebrews to Revelation](#). (Vol. 4, p. 354). Zondervan.

[6] Walvoord, J. F. (1985). [Revelation](#). In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 975). Victor Books.

[7] Walvoord, J. F. (1985). [Revelation](#). In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 975). Victor Books.

[8] Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). [The Bible exposition commentary](#) (Vol. 2, p. 617). Victor Books.

[9] Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). [The Bible exposition commentary](#) (Vol. 2, p. 617). Victor Books.

[10] Arnold, C. E. (2002). [Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary: Hebrews to Revelation](#). (Vol. 4, p. 354). Zondervan.

[11] Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). [The Bible exposition commentary](#) (Vol. 2, p. 617). Victor Books.