***Prophecy

The Marriage of the Lamb

PR08-02***

Now we take up the subject of the marriage of the lamb. We're going to look at a wedding which is always a cause for some excitement. Heaven has a great wedding day which is ahead for it, for the son of God. However the marriage customs of the Bible are not the same as our customs. Therefore, it is going to be necessary for us to take a look at weddings in New Testament times, particularly as they related to the Old Testament era. There were three stages to two people coming together to be married.

**Engagement**

Number one was engagement, or sometimes called the betrothal. When I was a boy, taking a course of study in the church, I was taught that when a person is engaged to a girl, it is tantamount in God's sight to be married to that person. I was horrified and recoiled from the idea, and wondered where such a notion ever came from. What the instructor did not bother to explain was that in the Old Testament, this was indeed the case. Marriage in the Old Testament took this first step of engagement or betrothal, and it was a legal act. It was a contract. It was not entered into by the marriage partners, but by their fathers--by the girl's father and by the boy's father. It was often done even when the children were little, or maybe before they were even born.

Two parents would get together and visit one day, and both mothers were expecting. While they were visiting they say, "Listen, if you have a boy and we have a girl, why don't we get together and have a marriage? We'll get the families together. We like each other." So the families drew up a legal contract. Then the children were born, and usually the couple had nothing to say about the deal at all.

A boy might go to his father and say, "I've seen a girl down the street around the corner here, and she has caught my heart. How about going and talking to her father, and see if we can make a deal for her?" So the daddy would go and see if he could make an arrangement for the two to get married. Strangely enough, this seems to have created some good marriages, however, because parents have mature judgment, and they know, very often better than their own children do, who are suitable people for their children to marry and who are not. But this contract, in any case, was legally binding, and it was called a betrothal and was actually signed before an authority of the government. The contract could only be broken by a divorce. It took a bill of divorcement to undo an engagement. And that explains the remark to me as a boy that engagement is just the same as being married.

Mary and Joseph had this kind of a contract. This was the stage of their relationship when it was discovered that Mary was pregnant. They were engaged. They were, however, viewed as being already married. In Matthew 1:20, Mary is referred to as "thy wife" as God is speaking to Joseph and explaining to him what has happened and what role Mary is to play in producing the humanity of the Messiah, and that the pregnancy, that Joseph was shocked to discover in his fiancée, was a supernatural act fulfilling the virgin birth promise of Genesis 3:15. So Mary's pregnancy before the union actually gave Joseph ground to do two things. One was that he could have had her stoned to death to fulfill the legal punishment. Or he could have put her away privately with a bill of divorcement. Matthew 1:18-19 tell us that because of the kind of a man he was, he did not choose to have her executed. Instead he chose to give her a bill of divorcement, which is what he was about to do until God came to him, explained what happened, and said, "Don't do it."

So Christians are in a similar position to the Son of God. We want to use this form of marriage in the Old Testament as an analogy to what the Bible calls the marriage of the lamb. Christians are betrothed to the Son of God. Paul says in 2 Corinthians 11:2 that we are espoused to Jesus Christ. Luke 2:5 speaks about being espoused. 2 Corinthians 11:3 uses the translation "betrothed," but it's the same idea. These have a relationship which has been established. In Luke 2:5, the word "espoused" is in the perfect passive participle "mnesteuo." It means, because it is perfect, that it was done in the past; it continues; and, it will go on forever. That it was passive indicates that somebody came in and did it for us. It is God who took you with me, as members of the body of Christ which constitute the bride, and it was God who decided to relate us by engagement to this one who is to be our bridegroom. So we are espoused to Him.

It is a permanent contract. So the Corinthian Christians here were not to drift off after false teachers, and thus to be found unfaithful. In 2 Corinthians, this word is in the aorist middle indicative. Aorist is a point action, and middle means for our personal benefit. We have been espoused or engaged to Jesus Christ once and for all as an act of God for our benefit. It will be a tremendous benefit. The saints of the Old Testament are not espoused to Jesus Christ. This is only for those of you who lived between the day of Pentecost and the rapture of the church. That will constitute a unique group of believers. You and you alone are in this relationship to the second person of the Trinity.

The betrothal of Christians and the Lord took place in eternity past. We're told in Ephesians 1:3 that we were chosen by the Father as the Son's bride. Every Christian who forms part of this body during this age of grace is part of His bride. The church is a living organism. It's not just an organization. The Greek word is "ekklesia." "Ekklesia" is the word for assembly or church. The preposition "ek" means out of, and "klesia" comes from the word which means "to call." So the word means "the called out ones." Out of this world, God is calling from among Jew and gentile the bride of Christ. This is a group of people who are to be deeply related to the Lord Jesus Christ. So this is more than an organization. It is not just one church denomination or just one church organization. It is believers all over the world from all races; from all creeds; from all churches; and, from all denominations, who are genuinely born again. Ephesians 1:22 and Ephesians 5:23 tell you about this church as a living organism.

So the bride anticipates her wedding day, very naturally. In Revelation 22:20, we have the phrase by the apostle John, "Even so, come Lord Jesus." Anybody who is destined to get married looks forward to that wedding day. If you do not look forward to your wedding day, I would suggest that you give the ring back. If you don't look forward to it, forget it. If you're not looking forward to the day when Jesus Christ returns to come for you as His bride then something is wrong. We are betrothed to the Son of God. Alright, that's step number one--the engagement or betrothal.

**The Presentation**

Then the pattern had a second series and that was the presentation. Sometimes this is referred to as the engagement. There are little variations of this as we read about the historical records of this. But in general it took this pattern. This presentation was the consummation of the marriage contract. Here are two people, and their fathers have entered into a contract. Maybe years before they had agreed that at a certain stage, this son and the daughter are going to get together in marriage.

So the couple arrive at a marriageable age. Now the contract, which has been signed, and it's legal, can be claimed. So, the bridegroom's father makes the arrangements. He sends a committee to the father of the bride, with the contract in hand that has been previously signed, in order to claim this daughter for his son. It's usually a group of servants. They move out, and they're called, in Scripture, the friends of the bridegroom. These friends of the parents of the bridegroom go over to the bride's house. They present the contract, and say, "Now our master has sent us here to ask that your daughter accompany us to his home in order to consummate this contract.

So the bride packs up, and she moves with the committee back to her fiancé's home, and the wedding ceremony takes place. The bride's father places her hand into the hand of the groom, and the contract is thus honored. The groom's father places the bride's hand into his son's hand, and the contract is thus honored. At that point they are legally married and they become husband and wife. The Bible refers either to this engagement stage or to this presentation stage by the word "marriage." You can't always tell just from reading the word. You have to tell from the context at which point the two were. Well Mary and Joseph, by the context, we can determine were at this engagement stage. Joseph had not yet made the formal claim of the legal contract that existed between them.

Again, comparing this to the Christian and Christ, we have this picture. The Christian is presented in Christ in marriage. This presentation is what we read about in Ephesians 5:25 where we have the word "present." Husbands, love your wives even as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for it, that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word, (verse 27) that He might *present* it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish." Jude 24 also uses the same word "present." This is referring to the second stage, the presentation. Jude 24: "Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling and to *present* you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy." Ephesians tells us how the church is going to be presented as a beautiful perfect bride to the Son. Jude tells us again. She will be presented faultless to the Son. This is the presentation stage.

Now obviously, something is going to have to happen to change you and me to this condition. We are not faultless now. We are not without spot and without wrinkle. We are not a perfect bride. Instead we are more comparable to a bride walking down the aisle in a pure white dress with a great big ink splotch right here in the middle--black, which is about as horrifying as anything you can contemplate. Something is going to have to take place. Well, the presentation is officially activated at the rapture. That's the presentation. Right now you are engaged or betrothed to Jesus Christ. At the rapture, the presentation will take place. The Son will come to claim his bride. Then the church will enter heaven, and her hand will be placed into Christ by God the Father. And you and I, as the body of Christ, will be eternally married to Jesus Christ, the Son of God. That will be our relationship to Him.

Now you are going to be, as the church, a transformed beauty. You will have no imperfection, as Ephesians 5:27 says. You will have none of the moral blemishes. When the Lord looks at His bride, he's going to be very satisfied. In the Old Testament, when they came to this presentation stage, the bride wore a veil, and the veil usually covered the women entirely. So you could not even see her face. All you could see was two hands sticking out from under this veil. After the ceremony and the putting of the hands into one another, then the veil was lifted. The groom often did not see the bride at all until that point. All of his contracting may have gone on before the parents, and the two may not have ever met.

So here's the point. Can imagine being in a situation like that? Now you're married. Here is this moment. You're ready to lift the veil. We kind of do that for the kiss in our day. So the bridegroom lifts the veil, and the expression could come in two directions. The groom could look at the bride that he now sees for the first time, and he could say, "Heaven is good." Or he could lift the veil and say, "Good heavens." And it happened both ways, because when you use this system, you're going to get those two reactions.

Now when the Lord lifts the veil on the church, it's not going to be "Good heavens." It's going to be "Heaven is good." My Father has treated Me with extreme grace. The church will be a perfect beauty, and the Lord delights in her and to see her. Now this is the goal of the spiritual maturity structure of the soul which you and I build through doctrine. That's the point of taking in doctrine on a daily basis. It is bearing up this structure of inner beauty. That's why 1 Peter says that a woman should pursue not a beauty in outward accoutrements. The worst battle-ax in the world can be an outward beauty, especially if she keeps her mouth closed. A woman's beauty is to be an inner quality of beauty, so that when she gets wrinkled and flabby on the outside, she gets to be a more magnificent beauty all the time. That's God's direction. You can get away with things when you're young and smooth, and a battle-ax, but not when you're older. That's the point of the spiritual maturity structure. We are moving toward that beauty that will be ours as the bride of Christ in full perfection.

**The Marriage Supper**

Now comes number three, the third stage. The engagement has taken place. The contract has been signed. The groom has claimed the contract. The presentation has been made. The marriage ceremony has taken place, which for us believers will take place in heaven. Then comes stage number three, and that is the marriage supper. This again is simply referred to by the word "marriage" sometimes in your translation. You have to have that corrected. After the wedding, the bride is introduced to her new surroundings of her husband's home. She meets the new friends. She meets the new circle in which she'll move. She leaves the old circle. The duration of the marriage banquet which now takes place, this marriage supper, depends on the economic status of the groom. The more money he has, the longer the wedding goes on. It is at an occasion such as this that Jesus performed the first miracle in Cana of Galilee that you read in John 2:1-11. This was at this third stage of the marriage relationship between two people (that is, the supper, the banquet stage) that Jesus performed the miracle of changing the water into wine.

You and I, as Christians, are going to celebrate this marriage, and this is what we are zeroing our attention in on now. Revelation 19:7: "Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to him, for the marriage of the lamb is come, and his wife has made herself ready. Let us be glad and rejoice and give honor to Him." The marriage feast is what the text means here by marriage. The marriage supper of the lamb is come. His wife has made herself ready. This marriage, that has now taken place in heaven, is to honor the groom. The bride has prepared herself for this moment. She is now ready to be related to the Son of God in this eternal relationship. The Holy Spirit has called the bride out during the age of grace, and the bride's garments have been prepared. What she wears is very important.

Revelation 19:8: "And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white, for the fine linen is the righteousnesses of the saints." Your text may have a singular "righteousness." That is wrong. It should be plural. The Greek is plural. It is "righteousnesses of the saints." This is what we had last time when we looked at the bema, the Judgment Seat of Christ, at which our works were evaluated. These righteousnesses that the church adorns herself in, which becomes her garment, are the divine good that you and I produce in the days of our temporal service under the direction of God the Holy Spirit. We have all of those garments that are in our spiritual trousseau which do not honor the Son of God, and all of those human good garments that look so very attractive that you and I like to keep stuffing in our trousseau box, our hope chest. God is going to open that hope chest at the bema, at the Judgment Seat of Christ. He is going to go through that, and every bit of human garment, He's going to flick out.

What you're going to have left in that hope chest will be strictly divine good garments. This is what you are going to put on, and this is how you are going to appear at the marriage supper. The bride's garments are the righteousnesses of the saints. This is not the righteousness that Jesus Christ gives us through justification. In 1 Corinthians 3:11-15 and 2 Corinthians 5:10 we read about the Judgment Seat of Christ. It is our old sin nature that makes our garments ugly. It is our old sin nature that will cause us to come before our Savior, our Bridegroom, which is not suited to this marriage event.

Ephesians 2:10 gives us a little more insight on the kind of garments we are to wear. Ephesians 2:10 says, "For we are His workmanship created in Christ Jesus unto good works (unto divine good) which God has before ordained that we should walk in them." Do you know the plan of God for your service? Do you know how to go about creating divine good service? It starts with understanding the subject of spiritual gifts, and that's on the docket for another session. We are going to have to stop and discuss the subject of spiritual gifts so that we can lay out in clear perspective for you to understand what spiritual gifts are possible. You cannot create one iota of divine good except through your spiritual gifts.

Now some of you are very talented people. You are tempted to make the great mistake of thinking that your natural talents are going to create divine good. It is possible, as we shall see, to use natural talents under a certain one of the spiritual gifts. With that natural ability, you can provide and create divine good, but you have to understand the relationship between them. Then Ephesians 2:10 says that God has ordained a plan. There are all kinds of good things you can do, but God is calling you to a specific plan of good. So just because something is good or just because something needs to be done is no indication that God wants you to do it. It is up to you to be so indoctrinated in the Word of God, and so in phase with God the Holy Spirit that He can lead you, and you can respond in your mentality to where you should put your money; where you should put your time; or, where you should exercise your spiritual gifts. Then you are filling your hope chest with something you can wear here at your marriage.

The millennial saints are going to be invited to what we have next here in Revelation 19:9: "And he said unto me, 'Write, Blessed are they who are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb.' And he said unto me, 'These are the true sayings of God.'" So we have some people who are not part of the bride. There are a group of saints who are friends of the bridegroom who are going to be invited to the marriage supper. The marriage supper is going to be on earth. The marriage supper of the Lamb takes place during the period of the millennium. It refers to the millennial era. Jesus Christ will be on earth as King of Kings and Lord of Lords. The church will be on earth as His bride. The Old Testament saints will be here as friends of the bridegroom. They will be celebrating during the millennial age what the Bible calls here the marriage supper of the Lamb. This banquet is going to go on a long time.

Let's summarize it this way. There is a marriage relationship between Jesus Christ and the church. The New Testament frequently uses the figure of bride and bridegroom in referring to Jesus Christ and the believers of this age. For example, in John 3:29, John the Baptist is described as a friend of the groom, Jesus Christ. In Romans 7:4, the Old Testament law relationship is dead to the believers. This is just as when a woman's husband dies, she is no longer attached to him in any way. She is free to remarry. So the Old Testament system is dead, and we are no longer bound by it. These Jews were no longer bound by it, and they could now enter the new relationship as the bride of Jesus Christ.

2 Corinthians 11:2 speaks of the church as the virgin bride of Jesus Christ. Ephesians 5:25-33 compares human marriage, and says that earthly marriage is to reflect the intimacy, the concern, and the joy that Jesus Christ finds in his bride. At the rapture, Jesus Christ appears as the groom. He takes us as His bride to heaven. In heaven, the marriage takes place. When is the time? Well, the time is between the rapture and the Second Advent. Jesus Christ comes. The rapture occurs and the saints are taken up. There is this seven-year period. Then there is the end of the tribulation period, and the second coming. Somewhere between the rapture and the second coming is when the marriage takes place.

Obviously something has to take place first. You can see immediately that before the marriage, something has to take place. That is that the hope chest has to be opened, and all the garments of human good have to be removed. So we know that first in heaven, the bema takes place, the judgment of the believers' works. Then, with that out of the way, the marriage is consummated. Revelation 19:7 uses the word "is come." "Let us be glad and rejoice and give honor to Him for the marriage of the Lamb is come." In the Greek, this is in the aorist tense, and it means a completed action, so it's completed before we come here to this Second Advent. After the Judgment Seat of Christ, we find that the wife is wearing her righteousnesses (Revelation 19:8). When she comes back, she's wearing these righteousnesses. Therefore, we know that the marriage has taken place. She has put on her wedding dress before the return of Christ to this earth, and the church with Him.

Where is the place? The place is in marriage since it's after the Judgment Seat of Christ, and the saints who are returning with Jesus Christ include His bride. Who is involved in the marriage? This involves Jesus Christ and the church only. That is for this reason: At this point in earth's history, who alone is resurrected? Who alone has resurrected bodies? Where are physical human beings only with resurrected bodies? That is in heaven. That can only be the church because the Old Testament Christians are resurrected at the second coming, as also are the tribulation saints. They're resurrected at the end of the tribulation.

Only the church is resurrected at the rapture. Therefore, it is only the church which is in heaven. That's the only body of saints in heaven in physical bodies who can be part of this marriage. They are there alone. The Old Testament saints are not raised until after the Second Advent. Daniel 12:1-3 indicates this. Isaiah 26:19-21 indicates this. Revelation 20:4-6 tells us that the tribulation saints (that is, those who die during the tribulation period) also are raised here at the second coming of Christ. So only the church is resurrected during the tribulation period. Only the church can be present at the marriage in heaven.

There is a difference between the marriage and the marriage supper. The marriage of the Lamb is spoken of in Revelation 19:7. That's the marriage itself. However, when you come to Revelation 19:9, we have the term "marriage supper." It's totally different. The marriage of the lamb refers to the church in heaven. However, the marriage supper includes Israel as friends of the groom, and it takes place here on earth during the millennium. Israel is viewed as being on earth during the tribulation. What is she doing? Israel is waiting for the return of Jesus Christ.

**Matthew 22:1-14**

I want to read some Scriptures that are often confused. People don't quite know where to fit these Scripture in. We are at the point where the church is in heaven. It is going through the marriage stage. Israel is in the tribulation. What are they doing? They're waiting for the point where Christ returns with his bride, and then the 1,000-year period of the millennium begins which is the period of the marriage supper of the Lamb. Matthew 22:1-14: "And Jesus answered and spoke unto them again by parables, and said, 'The kingdom of heaven is like a certain king who made a marriage for his son, and sent his servants to call them that had been invited to the wedding, and they would not come.'" It is during the period of the tribulation that God is calling to the Israelites to come to the marriage supper of His Son. In other words, He is calling them to come and live in the millennium. How can they do that? Only as they become believers.

Matthew 22:4: "Again he sent another servant saying, 'Tell them that have been invited, Behold, I have prepared my dinner; my oxen and my fattened livestock are killed, and all things are ready. Come unto the marriage (that is, the marriage supper).' And they made light of it, and they went their ways: one to his farm; another to his merchandise; and, the remnant took his servants and treated them shamefully and slew them. And when the king heard of it, he was angry. He sent his armies and destroyed those murderers and burned up their city. Then he said to his servants, 'The wedding is ready, but they who were invited were not worthy.'" Millions of Jews in the tribulation period will reject this invitation to the marriage supper of Jesus Christ and us, His body.

Matthew 22:9: "Go therefore unto the highways, and as many as you shall find, invite to the marriage." What is God going to do? God is going to turn from Israelites, and He is going to appeal to millions of gentiles who will become believers in the tribulation. And they shall be invited to the millennium blessing. "So those servants went out into the highways and gathered together all, as many as they found, both bad and good, and the wedding was furnished with guests. And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man who was not wearing a wedding garment (an unbeliever) and he said to him, 'Friend, how did you come in here not having a wedding garment?' And he was speechless. Then said the king to the servants, 'Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, cast him into outer darkness, there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. For many are called, but few are chosen.'"

**Luke 14:16-24**

Another scripture that speaks of this invitation to the marriage supper is in Luke 14:16: "Then said he unto him, 'A certain man gave a great supper and invited many. And he sent his servants at supper time to say to them that were invited, 'Come, for all things are now ready.' And they with one consent began to make excuse. The first said unto them, 'I bought a piece of ground. I need to go and see it. I pray to have myself excused.' Another said, 'I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them. I pray to have myself excused.' And another said, 'I have married a wife and therefore I cannot come.'" You'd think he'd want to come and show her off. But he says, "No, I just got married. I can't come to your supper."

Verse 21: "So that servant came and showed his lord these things. Then the master of the house being angry said to his servant, 'Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in here the poor, and the maimed, and the lame, and the blind.' And the servant said, 'Lord it is done as you have commanded, and yet there is room.' And the Lord said unto the servant, 'Go out into the highways and hedges and compel them to come in that my house may be filled. For I say unto you that none of those men (Israel) which were invited shall taste of my supper.'" And those who were not invited, of the gentiles, were brought in.

**Matthew 25:1-13**

There is one more passage that you may have wondered where this fits in to the plan and program of God. Matthew 25 is the story, the parable, of the ten virgins beginning at verse one. This too fits right in here. What's wrong with some of these virgins? They're saying, "No" to the invitation to come to the marriage supper; that is, to the millennial celebration: "Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins who took their lamps and went forth to meet the bridegroom. And five of them were wise, and five were foolish. They that were foolish took their lamps and took no oil with them. But the wise took their oil in their vessels with their lamps. While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept." Some were believers. Some were unbelievers. Some had the oil of God the Holy Spirit, and some did not. Some were saying a positive response, "Yes, I'll come to the marriage supper. I want to be in the millennial blessing. I want to be a believer. I accept the Savior." Others said "No."

Matthew 25:6: "And at midnight there was a cry made, "Behold, the bridegroom comes. Go out to meet him." Where do you think that fits in? Right here at the second coming of Christ. That's midnight. That's the time when the sound comes that the bridegroom is coming. "Then all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said unto the wise, 'Give us of your oil for our lamps have gone out.' But the wise answered saying, 'Not so, lest there be not enough for us and you. But go rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves.'" You have to make your own decision for salvation. You have to make your own provision. You can't ride in on someone else's coattails into heaven.

Matthew 25:10: "And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came, and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage, and the door was shut. Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, 'Lord, Lord, open to us.' But he answered and said, 'Verily I say unto you, I don't know you. Watch, therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man comes.'" And you know that Israel is to be taken out into the wilderness, and these who rejected are to be put to death, and they are not allowed to enter into the millennial kingdom, even as gentiles are judged as sheep and goats. And those who are goats are put to death as individuals out of various nations, and they are not permitted to enter into the marriage supper of the Lamb which is the millennial age.

So many Israelites are going to reject this invitation to the Marriage Supper. They will be cast out, and many gentiles will come in. The marriage supper invitation is a picture of a whole age of the millennium. So Israel, at the Second Advent, will be waiting for the bridegroom Jesus Christ to come with His church from the wedding ceremony in heaven. The bridegroom then introduces His bride to his friends.

There are certain personalities that you should now distinguish if you have a clear picture of what we have been saying. Right now, you and I are at the engagement stage. We have been betrothed to Jesus Christ. We are now His body. We will someday be His bride. That marriage will take place in heaven. The time will come for the presentation, and that is the rapture of the church. In heaven we will be the only believers in glorified physical bodies, resurrected bodies. We shall then be married to Jesus Christ. Then at the end of the seven-year tribulation period, the marriage supper will begin. During that period, Jews and gentiles will have been invited through the preaching of the 144,000 evangelists who attend the marriage supper of the Lamb who is coming. That marriage supper feast is to extend throughout the millennium, when the bride is on display as the proud possession of the second person of the Trinity. Some will accept. Some will not. Those who accept will enter the millennium and enter this feast of joy. Those who reject will be put to death.

**The Great Harlot**

In Revelation 17:1, there is another woman that I think you will understand, not to be confused with the bride. Revelation 17:1 says, "And there came one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls, and talked with me, saying unto me, 'Come here. I will show you the judgment of the great harlot that sits upon many waters.'" The great harlot is the false ecumenical super church of the antichrist during this tribulation period. While believing Jews and gentiles are looking to heaven for the Bridegroom and the bride to return, there will be on this earth this magnificent religious organization, the super church. This is the result of today's ecumenical movement no doubt, under the antichrist, and this God calls the harlot church because she is spiritually adulterous and unfaithful--negative to true doctrine. This is not the bride.

**The Wife of God**

However, there is another person who we must distinguish the bride from. In the Old Testament, the Jewish people were viewed as the wife of Jehovah. They were viewed as the Lord's wife. However, they too, like this harlot church, were unfaithful to Him spiritually. They consistently went negative to sound doctrine. They consistently rejected the commandments of God. The whole nation was epitomized in the character of King Saul. Finally, the time came when God put Israel aside as his unfaithful wife. That's why, in this age, the Jew no longer represents God on earth. That's why you and I, the virgin bride of Christ, now represent God. This is the only place people can find out about God. It is here in the local church assembly, through the Word of God, and through the expository preaching and explanation of the Word of God. There is no other source. The Jew has nothing to offer any more concerning the knowledge of God. He is completely cut off. Why? Because God looks upon the Jewish nation and says, "There is my unfaithful wife. There she is, and I have cut myself loose from her. I have rejected her." This obviously is not the bride that God is preparing to bring to His Son.

However, Isaiah 54:1-10 and Hosea 2:1-17 tell us that the time is coming when God is going to restore Israel as his wife. So in eternity, you will have the relationship where Israel, the earthly people, is in the position of being the wife of Jehovah, and Jesus Christ will be related to the church as its bridegroom. All saints do not belong to the same group. There are Old Testament saints which include the tribulation saints, and there are New Testament saints which include only the church. If you mix these two groups, the Bible becomes a very confusing book.

So there is the picture of the marriage of the Lamb. It takes place in heaven. That's what we're headed for now. First we will face the Judgment Seat of Christ. We will be stripped, by the judgment of God, of our human good garments. They will be burned. They will be thrown out as the filthy rags that they are, stemming from our old sin nature. Then we will be dressed in the divine good garments, the righteousnesses is that we have produced in our time of service. We will be then married to Jesus Christ. Then, at the end of the Tribulation, we will return with Him as His bride--absolutely perfect in every way. Not only the church corporately, but you as an individual will be absolutely perfect, and a brilliant trophy of the grace of God. Then those who responded as the friends of the bridegroom to the invitation to come to the marriage supper will enjoy with us the banquet feast of a 1,000-year reign upon this earth when God is celebrating the marriage of His Son. Now that's going to be some social event. I feel that that will be even bigger than Berean banquets in its magnificence and in its tremendous impact. It is going to be something really to be at.

And you don't even have to buy a ticket. All you have to do is have positive response to the gospel. All you have to do is believe what God has offered in the finished work of His Son. Once you receive that, you are headed for that marriage relationship. If you are a believer right now, like any bride, you can look forward to a very exciting stage in your life when you move from that single status to union on a new dimension with, of all persons, the living Son of God. I wish I could describe it to you. Words seem to me to be helpless to picture for you what that involves. But it will include everything that you can imagine of the finest, deepest, most desirable relationship between a man and a woman in marriage on this earth. It will be all of the joys; all the admiration; all the intimacy; all the excitement; all the expanding development; all the sense of fulfillment; and, everything you could anticipate in your fondest dreams. It will be all that and much more. You're going to be part of that bride. Our wedding feast is before us. I hope you'll be part of it.

Father we want to thank thee for our time together, and we ask thee to bless thy words to our heart. Use it for our understanding. Help us again to see this highlight of prophecy that is before us, and to understand what the marriage supper is; where it will be celebrated; and, what our relationship will be to Jesus Christ forever through all eternity. What an intimacy we shall share with the Son of God. And what fantastic joys and satisfactions shall flow from this. We thank thee for this. We pray that all who have studied this session will have accepted thy Son, and will therefore be part of that body to whom He should be joined. We pray in Christ name, in the name of our head, the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1971

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