

**Where and When  
is the  
Marriage Supper  
of the  
Lamb?**

by

**John R Ecob D.D.**

# The Marriage Supper of the Lamb

**T**here is confusion among Christians as to when the marriage supper of the Lamb will occur. Some believe it will be held in heaven after the Rapture of the Church while others hold that it will not occur until after the Lord returns to the earth at the end of the Tribulation. There is no need for confusion because the Scripture is very clear.

## *John the Baptist's Testimony*

First let us define who are the participants in this wonderful event. The Bridegroom is the Lord Jesus Christ and we know that because John the Baptist expressly indicated this when he spoke of himself as a friend of the Bridegroom and stated that Jesus Christ was the Bridegroom. John said,

*"Ye yourselves bear me witness, that I said, I am not the Christ, but that I am sent before him. **He that hath the bride is the bridegroom: but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice: this my joy therefore is fulfilled. He must increase, but I must decrease**" (John 3:28-30).*

John identified three parties; the Bridegroom, the Bride and the friends of the Bridegroom.

## *Jesus' Testimony*

Jesus also identified Himself as the Bridegroom:

*"Then came to him the disciples of John, saying, Why do we and the Pharisees fast oft, but thy disciples fast not? And Jesus said unto them, Can the **children of the bridechamber** mourn, as long as the bridegroom is with them? but the days will come, **when the bridegroom shall be taken from them, and then shall they fast**" (Matt.9:14-15).*

In this statement Jesus referred to Himself as the Bridegroom and the disciples as the "*children of the bridechamber*", or, friends of the Bridegroom. He also indicated that He would be departing from the friends of the Bridegroom for a season. The disciples at this stage were Old Testament saints, saved under the Old Covenant.

## *The Parable of the Ten Virgins*

The parable of the five wise and five foolish virgins described the return of the Bridegroom to receive His bride but the parable makes

no mention of the Bride. Only the virgins who are the guests at the wedding are mentioned. The presence of the bride is inferred but the parable is directed to the “friends” who would attend the marriage supper. The entire application of this parable is to the virgins some of whom were ready and some were not ready to attend the marriage supper. The virgins are sometimes interpreted as the Church but the Church is not the friend of the Bridegroom but His wife.

Why wasn’t the Bride mentioned in the parable? Because the Church did not exist at that time and the Lord’s ministry was to “*the lost sheep of the house of Israel*” (Matt.10:6).

According to Jewish custom, the virgins could not attend the marriage for that was in secret. They could enter the house to witness the ceremony but after a short ceremony the Bridegroom took his Bride to the Bridechamber which he had prepared for His Bride and they were then in seclusion for seven days. At the end of the seven days the Bridegroom came forth with His Bride and rejoiced in a feast where the friends of the Bridegroom were in attendance.

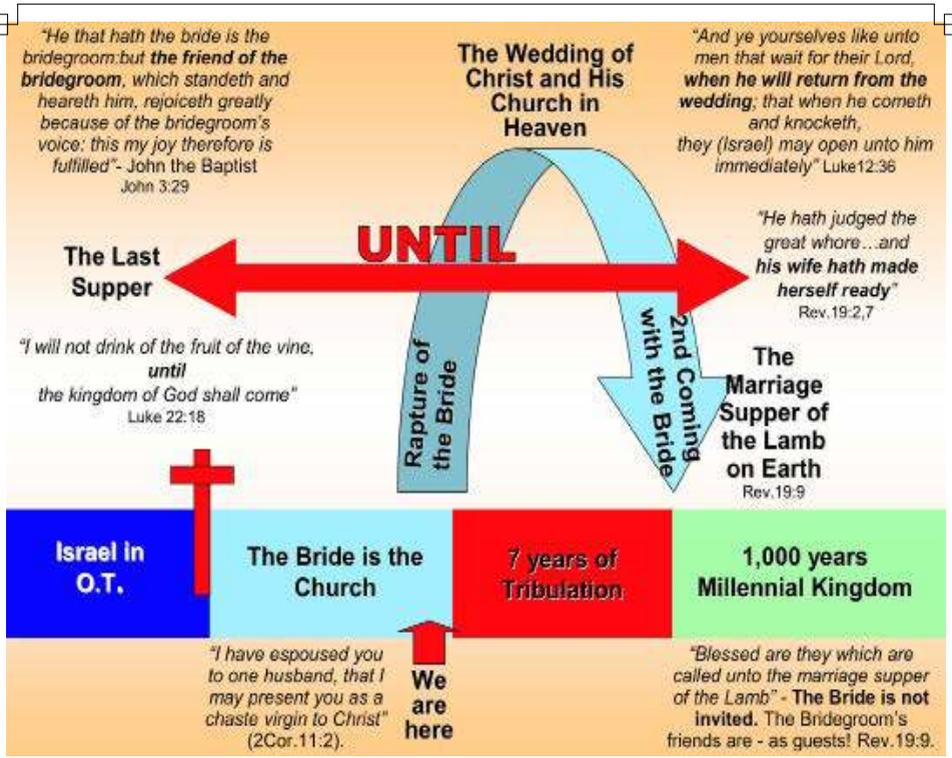
We therefore need to distinguish between the two companies; the Bride and the friends of the Bridegroom. The Bride is the Church and the friends of the Bridegroom represent Israel some were saved and some were not saved; some took oil, some took no oil.

John the Baptist was the last of the Old Testament prophets and the parable of the ten virgins was spoken before the Church was formed; it was spoken to Old Testament saints in Israel. John died before the Church was formed so he was not among the disciples who transferred from the old covenant to the new covenant. He was never baptized with the Spirit at Pentecost, nor was he baptized by the Spirit into the body of Christ (1Cor.12:13), and Jesus said that though there was none greater than John “*he that is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he*” (Luke 7:28). The kingdom of God is based on the New Covenant.

### *The Last Supper*

At the last supper Jesus told His disciples that He would not partake of the fruit of the vine until He drank with them in His kingdom.

*“And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, Take this, and divide it among yourselves: For I say unto you, **I will not drink of the fruit of***



*the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come. If there is a Bride and bridegroom there there must of necessity be a wedding" (Luke 22:17-18).*

We know that His kingdom will only be established when He returns in glory and power. The Pharisees once asked Jesus when the "kingdom would appear" and Jesus said it would only come when He returned :

*"As the lightning, that lighteneth out of the one part under heaven, shineth unto the other part under heaven; so shall also the Son of man be in his day" (Luke 17:24).*

The kingdom would come after the Great Tribulation for Jesus said, "When ye see **THESE THINGS come to pass**, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand" (Luke 21:31).

The "these things" to which Jesus referred, were the awful Tribulation judgments culminating in the return of the Lord in glory (Luke 21:10-19; 25-27). So the Lord will not drink of the fruit of the vine until after He returns in glory and power.

*The Marriage Supper is AFTER the Lord Returns from the Wedding*  
*Luke 12:31-40*

Jesus stated that the kingdom would be given to His “*little flock*”, which in the context of His pre-Calvary ministry, was saved Israel. He then went on to speak about when the kingdom would be given AFTER His return and of the supper that He would then prepare when He would serve them (His servants).

Christ’s return would be **AFTER the wedding** so the Bride must be taken to heaven before His return to give Israel the kingdom and only when He returns He will feast with Israel:

*“Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father’s good pleasure **TO GIVE YOU THE KINGDOM...** Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning; And ye yourselves like unto men **that wait for their Lord, when he will RETURN FROM THE WEDDING**; that when he cometh and knocketh, they may open unto him immediately. Blessed are those servants, whom the Lord when he cometh shall find watching: verily I say unto you, **that he shall gird himself, and MAKE THEM TO SIT DOWN TO MEAT, AND WILL COME FORTH AND SERVE THEM.** And if he shall come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find them so, blessed are those servants” (Luke 12:32-38).*

*The Invitation to the Marriage Supper of the Lamb*

The description of the Lord’s return in glory in Revelation chapter 19 is accompanied by an invitation to come to the “*marriage supper of the Lamb*”.

*“Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is (has) come, and his wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness(es - plural) of saints. And he saith unto me, Write, **Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb**” (Rev.19:7-9).*

The marriage of the Lamb has already come and has taken place in heaven while the seven years of tribulation have been on earth and during that time “the bride has made herself ready”; she has received her rewards for service to Christ during the years of her espousals and she is now arrayed in fine garments, white and clean which are the “*righteousnesses of the saints*”. It is the righteous acts of the Church that are on display and for which she is rewarded.

Paul spoke of this glorious day when the Lord will come

*"In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power; **When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe** (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day" (2Thess.1:8-10).*

It is a measure of the grace of Christ that when He comes in His glory His Bride will already be rewarded for every service rendered in His name and these will be displayed to His glory and praise.

Thus when He returns with His Bride from the wedding He will sit down with His Bride and the servants of the King of Israel and He will serve them. Only then will the Lord partake of the fruit of the vine again in His kingdom.

The problem is therefore resolved:

1) Christ comes FOR His Bride before the 7-year Tribulation

2) The marriage of the Lamb takes place in heaven and the Bride and Bridegroom are together for 7 years during which time she receives her rewards at the Bema Seat for every righteous act.

3) After the 7-year wedding Christ comes WITH His bride and Christ is glorified in His saints as the Bride is displayed, clothed in white to show her every act of devotion to Christ.

4) Heaven rejoices that the FALSE BRIDE, apostate Christendom, is burned and the true bride is exalted.

5) The saved from the Tribulation are invited to attend the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. These are those who are the "blessed" to whom the Lord will say,

*"Come, **ye blessed of my Father**, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world" (Matt.25:34).*

It is those who are found watching (saved) when the Lord returns in glory who share in the supper according to Luke 12:37:

*"Blessed are **THOSE SERVANTS, whom the Lord WHEN HE COMETH SHALL FIND WATCHING: verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them.**"*