

The Marriage Supper of the Lamb

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- [0 : 0 0] Revelation chapter 19, verses 6 to 21. Then I heard what seemed to be the voice of a great multitude, like the roar of many waters, and like the sound of mighty peals of thunder, crying out, Hallelujah!
- For the Lord our God, the Almighty, reigns. Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory. For the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready.
- It was granted her to clothe herself with fine linen, bright and pure. For the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints.
- And the angel said to me, Write this. Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he said to me, These are the true words of God.
- Then I fell down at his feet to worship him. But he said to me, You must not do that. I am a fellow servant with you, and your brothers who hold to the testimony of Jesus.
- [1 : 2 4] Worship God. For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy. Then I saw heaven opened, And behold, a white horse.
- The one sitting on it is called Faithful and True, And in righteousness he judges and makes war. His eyes are like a flame of fire, And on his head are many diadems, And he has a name written that no one knows but himself.
- He is clothed in a robe dipped in blood, And the name by which he is called is the Word of God. And the armies of heaven, Arrayed in fine linen, White and pure, Were following him on white horses.
- From his mouth comes a sharp sword, With which to strike down the nations, And he will rule them with a rod of iron. He will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty.
- On his robe and on his thigh he has a name written, King of kings and Lord of lords. Then I saw an angel standing in the sun, And with a loud voice he called to all the birds that fly directly overhead, Come, gather for the great supper of God, To eat the flesh of kings, The flesh of captains, The flesh of mighty men, The flesh of horses and their riders, And the flesh of all men, Both free and slave, Both small and great.
- [3 : 1 2] And I saw the beast, And the kings of the earth with their armies, Gathered to make war against him, Who was sitting on the horse, Who in its presence, Had done the signs by which he deceived, Those who had received the mark of the beast, And those who worshipped its image.
- These two were thrown alive into the lake of fire, That burns with sulphur, And the rest were slain by the sword, That came from the mouth of him, Who was sitting on the horse, And all the birds were gorged with their flesh.
- Well let me add my welcome to Marcus, It's great to see us here this morning. You are cordially invited to the wedding, Between Rosanna Townsend, And Oliver Bennett.

Now I received an invitation, To my twin sister's wedding last year, And I was extremely excited, We've been wedding a long time, And everyone was over the moon. And I'm sure most of us know, That weddings have a big build up, There's an endless list of things to do, Flowers, dress, cape, venue, Song sermon, seating plan, Speeches, photography, Table decorations, The list goes on.

Although I must confess, That my list was significantly shorter, Than my wife's. Now engaged couples, They need to persevere, Through the endless jobs to do. And this was especially true, For my twin sister, As her wedding was delayed twice to COVID.

[4 : 45] Rosanna, They needed to fix their eyes, On that wedding day to come. And all those jobs would be worth it, When they make their vows, Till death do us apart. And they did finally get married, On the 3rd of July, And this is their order of service here.

And Christians, We need to persevere too, Because we are in the midst, Of a spiritual battle. Revelation has reminded us, That we will suffer, And we will be persecuted.

You might remember, In chapter 13, We met the beast, And the false prophet, Who formed an unholy alliance, To persecute God's people. And in chapter 17, We met the great prostitute, Whose name is Babylon, Which represents any human institution, That is opposed to God.

Persecution shouldn't surprise us. And last week, You might remember, That we saw that Babylon will be judged, And utterly destroyed, When Jesus returns. And actually, Us as Christians, We can rejoice, Because Jesus wins.

We need to persevere, Because one day, Christians win. And we need to keep going, Just like those seven churches, In Revelation chapter 2 and 3. And they're repeatedly reminded, To patiently endure, To hold fast, To keep going, Until Jesus comes back.

[6 : 04] Like those churches in Revelation, We'll face trials of various kinds. But we need to keep going, In the midst of suffering, And persecution. Now that destruction of Babylon, Last week, Is a drum roll, For this amazing marriage, That Christians will have.

And that's our first point, And then we'll focus on Jesus' return. So first of all, Persevere, Because we're engaged, To Jesus. So that's verses 6 to 10.

So our marriage to Jesus, Hasn't yet come, But it's been announced, That we are engaged, To Jesus. And this great multitude of believers, They cry out, Verse 7, Let us rejoice, And exult, And give him the glory, For the marriage of the Lamb has come, And his bride, Has made herself ready.

Now this is pointing to, Jesus, Jesus' return, The end of time, Where there'll be a new heaven, And a new earth. And at this point, The Lamb, That's Jesus, We're married to his bride.

That's the church of God. That's all of us. But we're not there yet. Just like my sister had to wait for years, To get married to Ollie, We must wait for our wedding day, With Jesus.

[7 : 14] We're engaged to Jesus. And unlike human engagements, Which might be cancelled, Or postponed due to COVID, It will happen. Now how do we know, This is referring to Jesus and the church?

Well this image is repeated, Throughout the Old, Throughout the New Testament. In Ephesians 5, The Apostle Paul, Says Christian marriage is a model, Of Jesus' marriage to the church.

Husbands that are sacrificially, Love their wives, As Christ, Sacrificially loves the church. And Paul finishes Ephesians 5, In verse 32, By saying, This mystery is profound, And I'm saying, That it refers to Christ, And the church.

So Paul describes, Our future marriage, To Jesus, As a profound mystery. But what exactly, Is so exciting, About being married to Jesus? Well I think, Human marriage gives us a few clues, About our marriage to Jesus.

And admittedly, Human marriages, They don't always last, And not all of them, Reflect these qualities. But some do. The best human marriages, They're intimate.

[8 : 23] And the same will be, When we are married to Jesus. We'll be able to confide in him, About anything. We will see him face to face. And it will be deeper, Than any human relationship, We have on this earth.

So it will be intimate. Secondly, The best human marriages are permanent. Our marriage with Jesus, Will be for eternity. We can be 100% ourselves, As Jesus will never, Leave our side.

There's no need to doubt, No need to worry about the future. Jesus will be our bridegroom, Forever. Now I think at this stage, The apostle John, Who wrote this book, He wants us to compare and contrast, This wonderful invitation, To the wedding.

With the invitation we have, From Babylon in chapter 17. Now you might remember, The Babylon, The great prostitute, Promised so much. Beautiful scarlet clothing, Gold, Jewels, Drunken fun, Sex.

And remember Babylon, Represents any human culture, That is opposed to God. But Babylon is the fake bride, Jesus is the real deal. And which side are you on?

[9 : 34] Do you want Babylon's fake, Shallow, Glitzy beauty, That's sort of rotten on the inside? Or do we persevere, And wait patiently, For an intimate, Permanent, Relationship with Jesus?

Do we see how special, Our relationship with Jesus will be? Now I wonder if we spotted the joy, At that magnificent wedding, In chapter 19. Verse 7 says, Let us rejoice, And exult.

Now weddings, They're always happy occasions, But I wonder, Can we join, With the rejoicing in verse 6? Hallelujah, For the Lord our God, The almighty reigns.

And if not, We might need to take a closer look. Do you not want an intimate, And permanent relationship with Jesus? Just have a look at what he gives us.

Verse 8, It was granted her, To clothe herself with fine linen, Bright and pure, For the fine linen, Is the righteous deeds of the saints.

[10 : 40] So the saints, That's the church, They're given Jesus' righteousness. We're no longer filled, We're no longer clothed in filthy rags, Stained by sin, But we're given fresh, Washed linen, Bright and pure.

And we might be wondering, Well hang on, What on earth's happening after this? What's happening in verses 9 and 10? Well in verse 9, John is told to take his jaw off the floor, And write these things down.

And verse 10, John gets so excited, He starts to worship the angel. But the angel cries out, No, no, no, stop it. Don't worship me. I'm just the messenger. Worship God.

The point being, We're on a level footing with angels. We are fellow servants. So our marriage to Jesus, This is great news, For all believers.

Whatever your marital status, If you are trusting in Jesus, You are spiritually engaged to him. Just like my sister had to wait patiently, For her wedding day, We have to wait patiently, For our wedding day, With Jesus.

[11 : 45] We can rejoice now, Because it will happen, We will marry, The creator and sustainer, Of the whole universe. Now next, We're told that what else will simultaneously happen, At the end of history, When Jesus returns.

So secondly, Persevere, Because Jesus will return, As conquering king. That's verse 11 to 16. Now let me ask you a question, How do you picture, Jesus?

Meek, Mild, Gentle, Well that's not the picture, From Revelation 19. This is a picture, Of Jesus returning, And it's a terrifying picture, And there's lots of different, Pictures from the Old Testament, To show us, Who Jesus is.

So in verses 11 to 16, John gives us a glimpse, Into the future, To tell us what Jesus' return, Will be like. And Jesus, Well he's depicted, As this warrior king, An unstoppable, Conquering king.

And we'll just stop, And pick out a few of those details. So have a look with me, At verse 11. Then I saw heaven opened, And behold a white horse, The one sitting on it, Is called faithful and true, And in righteousness, He judges, And makes war.

[13 : 03] So Jesus, He judges in righteousness, There'll be no mistakes, No injustices, No collateral damage, On that day, All wrongs will be righted, There'll be no more injustice, Jesus will be the perfect judge, Who is 100% fair, And we can trust him, Because he is the one, Who is called faithful and true.

Let's have a look at verse 12, His eyes are like a flame of fire, And judgments are perfect, As he knows everything, About everybody, And he's crowned with diadems, He's wearing these royal crowns, And John, He wants us to know, That Jesus is the real deal, He's the real conquering king, He's got a genuine royal crown, Unlike that beast in chapter 17, Who just had 10 horns, And Jesus, Well he judges by the word of God, Verse 13, And then in verse 15, This word is described as a sharp sword, And we'll see what happens, Verse 15, From his mouth comes a sharp sword, With which he will tread the winepress, Of the fury of the wrath of God, The almighty, Now Jesus ruling with a rod of iron, That might well be ringing a few bells, For some of us, Now in Psalm 2, God speaks about his response, To those who rage, And plot against him, And,

We won't turn there, But if we have a look at Psalm 2, The outcome is that, God laughs at them, He laughs at those who plot against him, And in verse 9 of Psalm 2, It says, You, That's Jesus, Shall break them with a rod of iron, And dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel, So Jesus is the fulfillment of Psalm 2, He's God's chosen king, Who will administer justice and judgment, And no one will stand against him, And similarly in verse 15, We have this image of treading the winepress of fury, Now that's from Isaiah 63, And that's just up on the screen there, We'll just have a look at that, So why is your apparel red, And your garments like his who treads in the winepress?

I've trodden the winepress alone, And from the peoples, No one was with me, I trod them in my anger, And trampled them in my wrath, Their lifeblood splattered on my garments, And stained all my apparel, Now in the first century, If you were going to make wine, You'd have to tread the grapes yourself, And it was a messy process, And the point is here that, Jesus' judgment will be bloody, It will be destructive, And meanwhile, God's people, Well they're in the background, Firmly in the background, Jesus is accompanied by a majestic army, Made up of the church, Verse 14, Glance down with me, And the armies of heaven, Arrayed in fine linen, White and pure, Were following him on white horses, Now I wonder if we spotted, How does Jesus bring us into his army?

Well verse 13 gives us a clue, He is clothed in a robe, Dipped in blood, So before even going into battle, Jesus' robe is dipped in blood, So he is the lamb, Who was slain on the cross, Jesus has gone to incredible lengths, So that we don't have to pay, For our sin, We don't have to face the judgment, As Jesus took it upon himself, He took all our sin upon himself, And gave us his perfection, Remember what we were described like, Fine linen, Bright and pure, We have Jesus' righteousness, So if we're trusting in Jesus, And we're part of Jesus' army, We don't have anything to fear, However, If we continue to ignore God, And rebel against him, We'll face the full force, Of his just judgment, Now all of us who are trusting Jesus, We can draw great confidence, That Jesus will return, As conquering king, And to apply the book of Revelation,

[17:18] It's helpful to go back to the beginning, Chapters 2 and 3, To the 7, That was written to the 7 churches, And the church in Philadelphia, They are commended, By Jesus for keeping his word, And patiently enduring, So Jesus says to them, In Revelation chapter 2 verse 11, I am coming soon, Hold fast what you have, So that no one may seize your crown, So Jesus says to everyone, Who is faithful in keeping his word, Keep going, Persevere, I'm coming back, So when Jesus returns, As conquering king, All believers will be given, An imperishable crown, Will be welcomed into the new creation, And it will be incomparable, To this earth, And Revelation 21, Gives us a little glimpse, Of what it will be like, He will wipe every tear, From their eyes, There will be no more death, Or mourning, Or crying, Or pain, Now John Calvin, The 16th century Protestant reformer,

He patiently endured, A life through suffering, He experienced chronic, Ill health, He was despised, By most of Geneva, And he lived through the death, Of his baby son, And his wife died, After only nine years of marriage, Well how did Calvin keep going, How did he persevere, Well he had his eyes fixed, On the return of Jesus, This is what he says, In his institute, We may patiently pass through this life, In afflictions, Hunger, Cold, Contempt, Reproaches, And other disagreeable circumstances, Contented with this single assurance, That our king will never desert us, But will give what we need, Until having finished our warfare, We shall be called, To the triumph, So we've seen, That Jesus will return, As conquering king, But what will happen, When he returns, What will it be like, Well that's our third point, Persevere, Because Jesus will judge the world,

With justice, That's from 17 to 21, So an angel announces, What will happen, When Jesus returns, Verse 17, Then I saw an angel, Standing in the sun, And with a loud voice, He called to all the birds, That fly directly overhead, Come gather, For the great supper of God, So the angel announces, That there's a victory feast, And invites all the birds, To eat the flesh, Of God's enemy, Now this is a picture of judgment, But it's a judgment, Announced with confidence, It's inevitable, And verse 21, Tells us what the judgment is like, Jesus will judge by his word, The sword, Verse 21, And the rest were slain, By the sword, That came from the mouth, Of him who was sitting on the horse, And all the birds, Were gorged with their flesh, So at the end of time, All those who oppose Jesus, Will be utterly destroyed, And it will be a universal judgment, Verse 18,

To eat the flesh of kings, The flesh of captains, The flesh of mighty men, The flesh of horses, And their riders, And the flesh of all men, Both free and slave, Both small and great, All people will be judged, The smallest, The greatest, Kings, Nobodies, No one will escape, And you might be wondering, Well hang on, Why are they being judged?

Well verse 19 gives us a hint, And I saw the beast, And the kings of the earth, With their armies, Gathered, To make war against him, Who was sitting on the horse, And against his army, So the beast and the kings, They line up for war, Against Jesus, And the world, By its very nature, It hates Jesus, And I think this is underlining, Their hatred and antagonism, And they openly defy Jesus, They want him dead, And this is true today, And it was true, 2000 years ago, Jesus became a man, Like us, And he was the most loving, Kind, Beautiful, And good man, Who ever walked this earth, But, The world hated him, They snuffed Jesus out, By crying, Crucify him, Crucify him, And we're all naturally like this, Everyone naturally hates Jesus, And everyone who opposes Jesus, They will be destroyed, They'll be cut off from God forever, In a terrible place,

[21 : 48] That the Bible describes as hell, And all good things will be taken away, And they will have to face God's wrath, Themselves, Now, The best boxing fights, They're the ones that tend to last the longest, The full 12 rounds, Until the bell, But when Jesus returns, It will not last long, It will not even last the first round, It will be a knockout victory for Jesus, In the first second, Of the first minute of the first round, Verse 20, And the beast was captured, And with it the false prophet, Who in its presence, Had done the signs by which he deceived, Those who had received the mark of the beast, And those who worshipped its image, These two were thrown alive, Into the lake of fire, That burns with sulfur, What's a massive anticlimax, The beast, That's the antichrist, And the false prophet, That was the person who led people away from Jesus, Deceived them, Well, they're swiftly defeated, Satan and all evil will be defeated,

In an instant, Christians win, And at this stage, We might well be feeling a little bit unnerved, By this picture of Jesus, And perhaps might I suggest, That our view of sin, Might be too small, We might think that our sin is serious, But not that serious, And if Jesus seems a bit OTT, Here, Well we might need to re-evaluate, Remember our sin is serious, Because of who it is against, It is against a perfectly holy God, Who created all things, Sustains all things, Gives us all things, Or perhaps we might be feeling a bit unnerved, By this picture of Jesus, Because we've never thought of him like this, Maybe our view of Jesus is a little tame, Yes of course Jesus is gentle and humble, But he is also, The all conquering king, Who will return to judge, And can I ask us,

If Jesus was to return tomorrow, Well which side would you, Are you on, And if you wouldn't call yourself, A follower of Jesus, Are you aware of the reality, In front of you, Now if I was lining up, In opposition against Jesus, I'd be absolutely petrified, And there's no sitting on the fence here, Either you're with Jesus, Or you're against him, And it won't be a case, Of just taking your chances by yourself, Jesus will judge, With justice, It will be a knockout, In the first second, The first minute, Of the first round, But there is an escape route, Jesus has died on the cross for us, He's taken the punishment, That we deserve, And we're invited to become part of Jesus' army, So do come have a chat with me afterwards, If you'd like to discuss this further, Now if we would call ourselves, A follower of Jesus, We could be confident, In Jesus' return, Like the church in Philadelphia, But I think there is a warning for us here,

As Christians as well, In Revelation chapter 3, Jesus warns the church in Sardis, And he rebukes them, For being dead, And he calls them to wake up, And we don't know exactly, What was going on in Sardis, But we do know, That they weren't living for Jesus wholeheartedly, Perhaps they were indulging in sexual sin, Or perhaps they loved the world, More than they loved Jesus, What is clear, Is that they were just going through the motions, In King, Revelation chapter 3, Verse 3 says this, Remember then, What you received and heard, Keep it, And repent, If you will not wake up, I will come like a thief, And you will not know, At what hour I will come against you, So this might be a warning, That some of us need to hear, Repent, Turn back to Jesus, Live wholeheartedly for him, Because, He's coming back, Like a thief in the night, As the conquering king, Make sure you're on the right side,

Make sure you're on Jesus' army, So you all, Are cordially invited, To the wedding, Between Jesus Christ, And his bride, The church, Date, An unknown date in the future, When Jesus returns, While whatever we are struggling, With in Christian life, However we are feeling, We can eagerly look forward, To our marriage, With Jesus on the final day, Whatever trials we face now, They'll be incomparable, To the joy we have, On our marriage day to Jesus, We'll see him face to face, We'll have an intimate, And permanent relationship, With God, Who created, And controls all things, Now if we fix our eyes, On the future, We will be able to persevere, And we can have great confidence, 100% confidence, That Jesus will return, As conquering king, And we will win, He will judge the world justly, No one will be able to say,

[26 : 59] That's not fair, All wrongs will be righted, All evil will be defeated, In the first second, Of the first minute, Of the first round, Let's pray, Heavenly Father, We thank you so much, That we are engaged to Jesus, And one day, We'll be married to him, Father it's a wonderful privilege, Considering how we naturally, Hate you, Father please help us, To rejoice in this wonderful truth, Help us to look forward to it, And Father thanks so much, To that you will return, As the conquering king, To bring justice, And you will judge, With righteousness, Thanks so much, That we can trust, That one day, Justice will be done, Please would we heed, The warning here too, And make sure we are part, Of Jesus' army, In his precious name we pray, Amen.