



# THE WEDDING DAY

*Revelation 21-22*

**Intro:** from the beginning of this study we stated that the theme of Revelation was the victory of Christ and His people. Our last lesson covering chapters 19-20 revealed Christ's final victory over all of His foes culminating with both Satan and death being thrown into the lake of fire (20.10-15). And since Christ is victorious, so are those who love Him. Unsurprisingly then, Revelation ends with a celebration, a wedding. For this is the true victory of Christ and His people: their union together.

The imagery of the church being Christ's bride is significant in the New Testament and in Revelation. We remember that our Lord would use the imagery of a wedding feast to depict various lessons about His return (see Matthew 25.1-13). We remember how Paul compares the relationship between husband and wife to the love between Christ and His church (Ephesians 5.25-27). But we must remember that while we in the church are already betrothed to Christ (see 2Corinthians 11.2), the wedding has not yet taken place. But we can be sure that it will!

Turning our attention again to Revelation we recall that after the destruction of Babylon (i.e. Rome) was depicted (chapter 18) the multitude of heaven proclaimed, "Let us rejoice and be glad and give the glory to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb has come and His bride has made herself ready" (19.7). The question during the persecution of God's people was would the church remain faithful to Christ, her husband? She had (19.8) and the marriage was assured! But as we noted in chapter 19, the wedding didn't take place yet. Christ must first defeat the remainder of His foes, but once that had taken place the wedding would take place, the union between Christ and His people would be perfect and everlasting. That's what chapters 21-22 depict, the wedding of Christ and His bride.

## **The Wedding Day Has Come (21.1-8)**

1. The imagery of a "new heaven and a new earth" is taken from the Old Testament where the brand new order of things which would take place at the first coming of the Christ is depicted (see Isaiah 65.17; 66.22). Fittingly, the new order of things which will take place when Christ has defeated all of His enemies is also described as "a new heaven and a new earth" (vs. 1; see 2Peter 3.10-13). It is only when all things are new that the wedding can take place!
2. John then sees the bride ready for her husband (vs. 2). Fittingly, she is called the

"new Jerusalem" for just as God had caused His name to dwell in Jerusalem in the Old Testament, the bride of Christ which shall wear His name is the new Jerusalem.

3. I understand that we are blending images in this passage. A city doesn't get married, but just as a marriage is where a husband and wife lawfully dwell together, so the new Jerusalem is where God finally and ultimately dwells with His people. No wonder this city, this marriage relationship, has been the goal of all those who love the Lord (see Hebrews 11.10, 13-16; 12.22).
4. And when the wedding occurs, when God dwells in His city the following is assured:
  - a. There will be no more tears, death or pain, for the former order where those things existed will have ceased (vs. 4).
  - b. Those who overcome (see 2.7,11,17,26; 3.5,12,21; 5.5; 12.11) will have their inheritance (vs. 7). They can know this because the One on the throne promised it! (vs. 5-6).
  - c. But those who followed the ways of Satan and this world share his punishment (vs. 8; 20.15). They are not part of the wedding feast (see Matthew 22.1-14).

### **The Bride (21.9-27)**

1. Revelation 21.10-27 is often read and understood as describing a destination, a place we want to be, i.e. Heaven. However, note how this section begins: "Come here, I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb" (vs. 9). So, what's described isn't a destination that God's people hope to reach, but the people themselves! This is how the bride of Christ will be when the wedding takes place. When God's people are perfect and with Him, this will be heaven!
2. Rather than proceed verse by verse, here are what I believe are the main points conveyed in the passage:
  - a. The beauty of the bride/city is because she has "the glory of God" (vs. 11). The lengthy description found in vss. 18-21 is only an attempt to describe our beauty once we are with God in His glory.
  - b. The city is well protected. Angels are stationed at each of her gates (vs.12), it's walls are some 1500 miles high and 72 yards wide (vss. 16-17). No harm can come to God's people when we are united with Him.
  - c. The city is comprised of all kinds of people. The faithful of the old and new covenants are there (vss. 12,14). It is comprised of not one nationality, but of all the nations (vss. 24-26). But it is comprised of only those found in the book of life (vs. 27).
  - d. There is no separation between God and His people (vss. 22-23). The wedding has taken place, now the bride can be with the groom.

## **The Blessings Of The Union (22.1-5)**

1. With these verses we find the completion of the Bible story, a story no man could possibly invent. In the beginning of Genesis there was a tree of life (Genesis 2.9), a river (Genesis 2.10), the absence of sin and the presence of God (Genesis 3.8). But when man sinned a curse came into effect (Genesis 3.14-19), man was separated from God and the tree of life (Genesis 3.24).
2. But once the wedding of Christ and His bride have taken place, all of these blessings come about again!
  - a. The river of water of life flows through the city (vs. 1; see also John 4.10; 7.38).
  - b. The tree of life continually bears fruit (vs. 2).
  - c. The curse is over (vs. 3). Christ took this curse away for those that would believe and obey Him, Gal. 3.13; Zech. 14.11. In heaven there can be no more threat of the curse because the tempter has been cast down (20.10).
  - d. The throne of God and Christ will be there (vs. 3). Because they are there, there can be no more curse, for "nothing accursed can abide in the presence of that throne and its occupants," (Hailey). Because they are there all will be glorious (vs. 5)
  - e. And now we see another image applied to God's people. We are His bride, His city and His servants (vs. 3). But it will be a happy service for we will see His face (1John 3.2) and bear His name (vs. 4).

## **He Is Coming Quickly (22.6-21)**

1. As the letter concludes we are reminded that the revelation speaks of things which "must soon take place" (vs. 6, cf. 1.1,3). We have emphasized throughout that the message of Revelation was for a First Century audience, and while 20.11-22.5 reveal things that have still not taken place in our time, they were still a vital part of Christ's message to His people at that time. "Though Revelation's message about the final judgment and the eternal destinies of mankind are yet to be fulfilled, the book indeed gave comfort to the early saints, encouraging them in the face of the imminent threat of the Roman Empire's paganistic god-Caesar worship. The fulfillment of those prophecies continues to bring forth comfort to all saints in any era, for regardless of what tactics Satan may use, victory will always be with the army of Christ," (Harkrider).
2. The immediacy of Christ's message is why John is instructed to "not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is near" (vs. 10). Compare this with Daniel 8.26; 10.14; 12.4,9. "Daniel was instructed to shut up the vision he had seen and the words he had heard, for they pertained to the end of Hebrew history. But John's prophecy was not to be sealed up, 'for the time is at hand'; the events of its revelation were not in the distant future but were for the

immediate period,” (Hailey).

3. The importance of the message is why a curse was threatened to any who would alter it (vss. 18-19). While this is referring specifically to Revelation, it is a principle that should be applied to all of Scripture (see Galatians 1.6-8; Deut. 4.2; 12.32).
4. The surety of the message is emphasized by the Lord Himself (vss. 12-13, 16, 20). He has promised to come quickly. From the standpoint of the first century church, the Lord did come quickly in avenging them and defeating His foes. And since He kept that promise, we have the assurance that the wedding described in chapters 21-22 will take place. Let us come to Him (vs. 17) for He will come again.

Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.