

The Marriage of the Lamb

“Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready.”
—Revelation 19:7

THE “LAMB” SYMBOLISM

is very prominent in the Bible. It is introduced in Genesis 3:4 where we are told of a lamb sacrifice which Abel offered to the Lord. His acceptance of Abel’s sacrifice prefigured the sacrifice of “the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.” (John 1:29) Later, Abraham was provided with a lamb to offer in sacrifice to the Lord as a substitute on the altar for Isaac.—Gen. 22:11-13

In Exodus chapter 12 is recorded the account of the Passover lamb which was offered in connection with the deliverance of Israel from bondage in Egypt. This pointed forward to the deliverance of all mankind from bondage to sin and death. In this picture, the firstborn of Israel were the first to benefit from the shed blood of the lamb.

In Isaiah 53:7, we read prophetically of Jesus, the antitypical Lamb, “He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is

brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.”

In the New Testament, the Apostle Paul refers to “Christ our passover [lamb]” who is “sacrificed for us,” and the Apostle Peter explains that we are redeemed “with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.”—I Cor. 5:7; I Pet. 1:19

This wonderful Lamb of God is also mentioned in the Book of Revelation in the fifth chapter. Verse 6 reads, “I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth.” Notice that here we are informed that the Lamb “had been” slain—past tense. The personal sacrificial aspect of Jesus’ ministry was now over and he was the highly exalted Lamb.

The ultimate objective of Jesus’ sacrifice as the Lamb of God was that all mankind might be reconciled to God through the agencies of the Messianic kingdom which he would establish. This, in part, is the foretold glory which was to follow the suffering of Jesus. A prophetic description of this glory is given in Revelation 5:11-13: “I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands: Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing. And every creature which

is in heaven, and on the earth, . . . and such as are in the sea, . . . heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.”

WASHED IN THE BLOOD

Revelation 7:14, speaking of a “great multitude,” says, “These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.” While here the reference is specifically to the “great multitude” class, the purpose of the blood on behalf of all who benefit from it is to cleanse from sin and to make the beneficiary acceptable to God.

In Revelation 13:8, Jesus is again referred to as a Lamb—“the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.” In Revelation 14:1, we find the Lamb standing on mount Sion, “and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father’s name written in their foreheads.” In verse 4, we are informed that “these are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb.”

We read, “I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God. And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints. Who shall not

fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? For thou only art holy: for all nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy judgments are made manifest.”—Rev. 15:2-4

THE LAMB OVERCOMES

The Book of Revelation refers repeatedly to evil forces opposed to the Lamb and the work that God is accomplishing. These opponents are referred to as “beasts,” “dragons,” and other symbolic names. Revelation 17:14 says these evil forces “make war with the Lamb,” and the Lamb overcomes them. This denotes progress in the plan of God, progress to the point where evil is no longer triumphant. By the time this becomes true, according to this verse, the “called, and chosen, and faithful” are with the Lamb, participating in his glorious victory.

The last reference to the Lamb in the Bible is in Revelation 22:1, which reads, “He shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.” Here the Lamb is enthroned and the promised blessings of the kingdom are flowing out to the people. However, as previously noted, this cannot become a reality until the marriage of the Lamb takes place and he is united in glory with the “called, and chosen, and faithful.”

WORK OF AN AGE

The work of the “bride” in making herself ready to become the Lamb’s “wife” requires an entire age in the divine plan. It began at Pentecost, with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, and still continues. It is the work of the Holy Spirit within the hearts and lives of the consecrated followers of the Master,

who in their present relationship with him are spoken of as espoused virgins.

While it is the power of the Holy Spirit which accomplishes the making ready of the “bride,” it is not without the earnest co-operation of each individual who will make up that honored company which will share the glory and the riches of the heavenly “Bridegroom.” First, there is required the full submission of the mind to be governed by the mind of Christ. This mind of Christ is in reality the mind or will of the Heavenly Father. The Holy Spirit cannot work in a heart that is rebellious to the will of God.

The prospective members of the Lamb’s wife must be thoroughly loyal to him and fully set apart to the task of being developed into his character image. This means a complete separation from the world, a resolute warring against the flesh and its interests, and a complete opposition to Satan and all his godless influences. These things can be accomplished in our lives only through the power of the Holy Spirit. The Scriptures warn us, though, that we can negate that power by showing sympathy for our fleshly, fallen tendencies. The great objective of being made ready for marriage with the Lamb is absolute loyalty to him and for all for which he stands. Thus we realize that those who participate in that marriage will not do so on a trial basis, but must first be proven fully faithful.

THE BRIDE’S CLOTHING

The bride of the Lamb is described in Psalm 45:13 as “the King’s daughter,” the “King” being the Heavenly Father. We are told by the *King James*

Version that the King's daughter is "all glorious within," and that "her clothing is of wrought gold." *Rotherham Translation* reads, "All glorious—the daughter of a king sitteth within, Brocades, wrought with gold, are her clothing!" Verse 14, *Rotherham Translation*, reads, "In embroidered raiment, shall she be brought unto the king."

How glorious indeed will the bride appear within the palace of the king. Her clothing will be "brocades wrought with gold," symbolic of the divine nature. She shall also be brought into the king's palace "in raiment of needlework." This suggests the adornment of character, the "fruit of the Spirit" which is "love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance." (Gal. 5:22,23) How wonderful indeed will be the characters of those who fully develop this fruitage of the Holy Spirit. All of the bride class must be thus adorned before the marriage of the Lamb can take place.

God's work through the Holy Spirit, and our work in connection therewith, are beautifully set forth by the Apostle Paul. Writing to the church at Philippi, he said, "Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure."—Phil. 2:12,13

IMPORTANT STEP

What an important juncture in the divine plan it will be when finally the "marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready." There

have been many important developments in God's great plan for the deliverance of the human race from sin and death. His promise to Abraham that through his seed he would bless all the families of the earth was one of these. The coming of Jesus at his First Advent was a vital and wonderful step forward in the divine plan. For centuries, God had promised the coming of Jesus to be the Redeemer, Messiah, and King, and now he had come: "Unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord."—Luke 2:11

The coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost was another step forward in the outworking of the divine plan of salvation. However, this marked only the beginning of the work of making ready the "bride, the Lamb's wife." Long centuries were to elapse while this preparatory work was to continue. During this time, Satan was permitted to try the individual members in all sorts of ways. The Book of Revelation portrays his beastly organization, the false kingdom arrangement made up of the union of an unholy "woman" with the kings of the earth, through which he has persecuted the saints.

This apostate system is eventually destroyed when the time comes in the plan of God for the marriage of the Lamb to take place. When these things occur, and the bride and the Bridegroom are made one before the great white throne, Satan will be bound that he should deceive the nations no more. (Rev. 20:1-3) With the marriage of the Lamb, the "first resurrection" will have been accomplished. Those who have been thus exalted will "live and reign with Christ a thousand years."—Rev. 20:4,6

These events having then all taken place, the judgment day for all individuals of the human family will then begin. Then “the dead, small and great” will “stand before God” and the “books” will be opened, “which is the book of life,” and the dead will be “judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.” (Rev. 20:12) All truly enlightened Christians have longingly waited for the time to come when mankind would be educated with the Truth, and tried upon the basis of their progress as written in these symbolic books. This will not become a reality until after “the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready.”

GOD’S CITY

In Hebrews 11:10, we read that Abraham “looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.” A city, in the Bible, symbolizes a government or kingdom. The people of God in all ages have looked for this “city,” his promised kingdom to come. In vision, the Apostle John saw the coming of this city. “I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.” (Rev. 21:2) In verses 9 and 10, John further writes: “There came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb’s wife. And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God.”

This “holy city,” these verses say, is the “bride, the Lamb’s wife,” and comes into being when the marriage of the Lamb takes place. This symbolic city, which will be God’s agent in blessing all families of the earth, cannot come until the bride has made herself ready. We believe that even at this present hour there are some of the bride class still engaged in the blessed work of preparing themselves.

When the espoused virgins become the bride of Christ and the “city” comes down from God, then will be poured out to mankind all the wonderful blessings which are described by John. Then “God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful.”—Rev. 21:4,5

We know that the words of him who sitteth on the “throne” are always true and faithful, although the time may seem long while we wait for their fulfillment. God has a complete and precise timetable for every detail and major event in his plan. Just as it was in his due time that he sent his Son to be the Savior of the world, so it will be in his due time that “the marriage of the Lamb” will come. God knows how much time is required for the bride to make herself ready. At that due time, the great marriage event will take place. Then the Holy City will be complete and ready to come from God to rule and bless the people. We may at times ask, “How long, O Lord?” (Rev. 6:10) We can be confident that

God's Word is sure. The due time for the marriage of the Lamb and the resulting promised blessings to all the families of the earth will come exactly at God's appointed hour.

THE THRONE AND THE LAMB

The final chapter of the Bible tells us further of events to follow the marriage of the Lamb. Revelation 22:1 reads, "He shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb." The throne of God here symbolizes divine authority operating throughout the earth. The Lamb symbolism reminds us that the blessings of that wonderful government have been provided by the shed blood of Jesus Christ, "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."—John 1:29

We read in verse 2 (*Revised Standard Version*), "Through the middle of the street of the city; also, on either side of the river, the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month; and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations." Here is another reference to the "city" with the added information that a river of life runs through the midst of it and that on either side of this river there are the trees of life.

This "river" of life is clear as crystal. No more will men's minds be polluted with all sorts of traditions and theories as to how to obtain salvation, for he who deceived all nations will then be bound. The water of life then flowing from "the throne of God and of the Lamb" will be wholesome and will provide life eternal for all who will humbly and obediently partake of it.

The opportunity to partake of the water of life will be extended to all. In Rev. 22:17, we read, "The Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." What a prospect this is for the sin-sick and suffering world of mankind. It is a prospect which will begin its fulfillment once the bride has made herself ready and the marriage of the Lamb takes place, for it is "the Spirit and the bride" who initiate the invitation to "Come" and partake of the water of life.

Thus we see that this and other wonderful prophecies of the kingdom await fulfillment until the last members of the bride of Christ complete the embroidery on their garments. These garments will appear glorious and beautiful when at long last the bride is ushered into the palace of the king. Through diligence and faith we should endeavor continually to make ourselves ready for the marriage to the Lamb.

In Revelation 7:1-3, we are reminded of God's great interest in the last members of the bride class. The closing period of the great "time of trouble" which brings this present evil world fully to an end is here symbolically described as "four winds." Four angels standing on the four "corners" of the earth are instructed to hold back these winds "till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads." So may this sealing work go on in our foreheads and in our hearts also until the work is complete and the last member of the bride has passed beyond the veil. Then the "marriage of the Lamb" will come. Then there will be a Holy City, and the bride will then say "Come" and partake of the water of life. ■