Wedding of the Lamb

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Introduction

Revelation 19:7-8: "Let us be glad and rejoice and give honor to Him (referring to God the Father), for the wedding of the Lamb (referring to Jesus Christ) has come and his wife (obvious reference to the church) has made herself ready. And to her was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white, for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints" (reference to God's people).



The marriage of the Lamb (KJV) is a well-discussed topic, and it has become the subject of debate and speculation among Bible readers.



The usual questions are:

- 1. What is it all about?
- 2. When will this event happen? Or, did it happen already?
- 3. Where will it happen? Will the marriage take place in heaven or somewhere else?



Many people have made erroneous interpretations of the wedding of the lamb mentioned in Revelation 19.



When John wrote about it, it was not an isolated comment. In fact, John and the readers of the Book of Revelation knew about the reference to the wedding of the Lamb that the angel was showing to Apostle John.



John knew its context and for this reason he did not elaborate on it any further in the Book.



You ask: How did John know about the context of the 'Wedding of the Lamb?'



The answer is because the gospel account starts and ends with the wedding feast.



Today, we shall explore the spiritual insights of the wedding narratives.



In the past, you might have heard and read messages about the wedding feast of the Lamb.



But, this afternoon we shall take this precious time to truly understand the spiritual context of the Wedding of the Lamb and hopefully be inspired by it.



The Start of the Story

The New Testament gospel starts with the story of Jesus and the disciples attending a wedding feast in Cana.



In the middle of the wedding feast, the host ran out of wine. Jesus, upon the prodding of his mother, performed his first recorded miracle of making water into wine.



In the course of Jesus ministry, Jesus spoke of two wedding-related parables – the parable of the 10 virgins and the parable of the wedding banquet. All the wedding parables are related to the Wedding Feast of the Lamb.



John 2:1-11 records the Wedding Feast at Cana. This is an extremely interesting account.



John 2:1-11

- 1 On the third day a wedding took place at Cana in Galilee. Jesus' mother was there,
- 2 and Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding.



It is interesting to note that the disciples were invited to the wedding feast. This means the host was well acquainted with the disciples and together, they were at the wedding feast with Jesus.



John 2:1-11

3 When the wine was gone, Jesus' mother said to him, "They have no more wine."



In spite of careful preparation, they ran out of wine. Running out of wine simply means there was a great feasting.



Questions:

- 1. Why do you think Mary, the mother of Jesus, told Jesus that the wine ran out?
- 2. Who do you think is responsible for the provision of food and wine? Obviously, it is the host of the party. It might have been the wedding of one of Jesus' sisters.



John 2:1-11

4 "Woman, why do you involve me?" Jesus replied. "My hour has not yet come."



"Woman" was a respectful word in the time of Jesus. The word 'woman' refers to the Genesis account of Eve who is the mother of all living things. (Genesis 3:20)



Therefore, the word "woman" means the "the mother who gave birth." It is a very endearing term.



Jesus knew the request of His mother. He said: "My hour has not yet come." What was the request? To go buy more wines or to perform a miracle?



John 2:1-11

5 His mother said to the servants, "Do whatever he tells you."



Interesting comment from Mary! Mary requested for a miracle and she got it.

This was the first miracle Jesus performed in public.



Mary's request indicated that she knew Jesus could perform miracles. Turning water into wine was an easy job for Jesus. Thus, she said to the servants: do as you are told. Do not ask questions, just do it.



John 2:1-11

- 6 Nearby stood six stone water jars, the kind used by the Jews for ceremonial washing, each holding from twenty to thirty gallons.
- 7 Jesus said to the servants, "Fill the jars with water"; so they filled them to the brim.
- 8 Then he told them, "Now draw some out and take it to the master of the banquet." They did so,



The servants did as they were told. The mother was right. There was wine. She knew Jesus could do it.



John 2:1-11

- 9 and the master of the banquet tasted the water that had been turned into wine. He did not realize where it had come from, though the servants who had drawn the water knew. Then he called the bridegroom aside
- 10 and said, "Everyone brings out the choice wine first and then the cheaper wine after the guests have had too much to drink; but you have saved the best till now."



John 2:1-11

11 What Jesus did here in Cana of Galilee was the first of the signs through which he revealed his glory; and his disciples believed in him.



This was Jesus' first public miracle. His disciples saw it and they believed in Him.



Marriage Story

The gospel account of John starts with the Wedding at Cana story and ends with the Wedding of the Lamb in the Book of Revelation.



The work of God is basically the story of a family, from start to finish, from Genesis to Revelation.



It is the story of a loving Father expanding His divine family by bringing many sons to glory.



Hebrews 2:10

10 In bringing many sons and daughters to glory, it was fitting that God, for whom and through whom everything exists, should make the pioneer of their salvation perfect through what he suffered.



The plan of God is best illustrated in the setting of a human family. Thus, it is easy for us to relate to it and understand its spiritual implication.



In the human family setting, the wedding is the most joyous of all occasions. It is the start of a new family and bringing forth of many children.



The wedding narratives of the Bible are anchored in the basic marriage structure of ancient Israel.



The basic marriage structure comprises of three (3) characters and two (2) groups of people.

3 Characters

- Father of the groom
- Bridegroom
- Bride

2 Groups of People

- Attendants of the bride and groom
- Guests



The traditional marriage ceremony has two (2) stages: the betrothal and the wedding ceremony. The entire marriage process can take a few months to a few years.



The Betrothal

The betrothal stage is the engagement stage. It is the start of the marriage process.



Unlike today's engagement, the betrothal was a done deal and was legally binding. There was no changing of minds or backing out, except through divorce.



The betrothal stage has three (3) steps:

- 1. Dowry
- 2. The Acceptance
- 3. The Preparation



Step 1: The Dowry

- The bridegroom goes to the home of his potential Bride. He carries with him three things:
- 1. A large sum of money or expensive items to pay the price of the bride,
- 2. A betrothal contract with promises to the bride,
- 3. A skin of wine.



The bridegroom is to impress the father of the bride with his offering. The contract is then negotiated between the parties.



Step 2: The Acceptance

If the Father approves of the marriage, he calls the daughter for her response. The wine is now poured into a goblet to be shared between the bride-to-be and the groom-to-be.



Then, if the groom is acceptable to her, the bride-to-be shares the wine as the sign of her acceptance. Immediately a trumpet is blown to announce the betrothal.



Once the contract is approved and the wine shared between them, they would move onto the third step.



At this point, the two are considered husband and wife. Their union can only be dissolved by divorce.



Step 3: The Preparation

For the duration of the betrothal period, the betrothed would rarely meet until the day of the wedding.



Messages are carried by emissary and/or by arranged short personal meeting with a chaperon.



The groom now returns to his father's house to prepare a place for them to live in.



Only after the completion of the new living quarter with his father's permission would he return to fetch the bride.



This preparation step has many spiritual implications:



1. This is where Jesus said in John 14:2-3: "In My Father's house are many rooms. I go to prepare a place for you. And, if I go to prepare and place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself, that where I am, there you may be also".



2. Thus, no one actually knows the exact wedding date except the father. The father only gives the approval when all preparations have been completed to his liking.



Therefore, when the bridegroom is asked about the wedding date his reply is: "no one knows except the father."



Matthew 24

36 But of the day and hour knows no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but My Father only.

44 Therefore, be also ready: for in such an hour as you think not, the Son of man comes.



Meanwhile, back at the bride's house, the bride would be preparing to be a wife and mother.



The bride does not know when the wedding would take place. All she knew was that he would come sometime in the night to claim her to be his bride.



Therefore, the bride is in a state of constant readiness in waiting for her husband.

She keeps a light burning by the window and an extra jar of oil on hand, just to be prepared.



Each night she and some of her close girl friends, the bridesmaids would keep watch in anticipation of the groom's arrival.



The Parable of the Ten Virgins

- 1 At that time the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom.
- 2 Five of them were foolish and five were wise.



- 3 The foolish ones took their lamps but did not take any oil with them.
- 4 The wise ones, however, took oil in jars along with their lamps.
- 5 The bridegroom was a long time in coming, and they all became drowsy and fell asleep.



- 6 "At midnight the cry rang out: 'Here's the bridegroom! Come out to meet him!'
- 7 "Then all the virgins woke up and trimmed their lamps.
- 8 The foolish ones said to the wise, 'Give us some of your oil; our lamps are going out.'



- 9 "No,' they replied, 'there may not be enough for both us and you. Instead, go to those who sell oil and buy some for yourselves.'
- 10 "But while they were on their way to buy the oil, the bridegroom arrived. The virgins who were ready went in with him to the wedding banquet. And the door was shut.



- 11 "Later the others also came. 'Lord, Lord,' they said, 'open the door for us!'
- 12 "But he replied, 'Truly I tell you, I don't know you.'
- 13 "Therefore keep watch, because you do not know the day or the hour.



The parable is not about the bride but the 10 virgins referring to the bride's maids. Five (5) were wise and (5) were foolish.



The bridesmaids are the close friends of the bride who belong to the inner circle. They wait with the bride for the arrival of the groom.



They are the privileged few who get to meet the groom and assist the bride in the preparation of the wedding ceremony.



The bride makes herself ready with the help of the bridesmaids. The brides maids have to be in a state of constant readiness, so they would not be caught unaware.



Mark 13: 32-37

32 "But about that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.

33 Be on guard! Be alert! You do not know when that time will come.



Mark 13: 32-37

- 34 It's like a man going away: He leaves his house and puts his servants in charge, each with their assigned task, and tells the one at the door to keep watch.
- 35 "Therefore keep watch because you do not know when the owner of the house will come back—whether in the evening, or at midnight, or when the rooster crows, or at dawn.



Mark 13: 32-37

36 If he comes suddenly, do not let him find you sleeping.

37 What I say to you, I say to everyone: 'Watch!'"



Knowing that the bridegroom will arrive at night, the most basic preparation is to ready a jar of extra oil.



The parable of the 10 virgins is not about the wise and the foolish or the oil.



The simple message of Christ is 'will He find faith when He returns?' It is a lesson on faithfulness, patience and endurance until the end.



It is also apparent in the parable that some who are called at this time will not make it into the wedding supper – some will lose their salvation.



Therefore, the warning is not to be foolish. The object of our Christian duty is to stay faithful until Christ returns; just as the bride and the bridesmaid fully prepare for the arrival of the groom.



The Wedding Ceremony

This is the stage of the marriage process wherein the groom returns for the bride to bring her to his father's house.



The wedding stage consists of another four (4) steps; they are:

- 4. The Groom's Coming
- 5. The Preparation
- 6. The Banquet Feast
- 7. The Reveal



Step 4: The Groom's Coming

When the father decides that everything is in place, he orders the son to go fetch the bride, and a second trumpet blows.



This trumpet, called the 'last trump', is to announce the groom's coming.



The groom designates some (two) close friends to assist him and to assist the bride during the ceremony. They are called "witnesses".



Scripturally, they are referenced to the two witnesses of Revelation 11 in announcing the coming of Christ.



The bridegroom comes for his bride with great fanfare, trumpets, and an entourage of friends and family. There is music and dancing and rejoicing in the coming.



Upon arrival, the bridegroom would shout and the bride who has made herself ready would join him with her bridesmaids (who were virgins) and walk back to groom's house, where the wedding ceremony was to be held.



The small group of best men and bridesmaid form the inner circle of the wedding entourage. They are the first to rejoice and assist in the wedding celebration.



Step 5: The Presentation

Then the groom's father would wait for the arrival of his son and the bride. Upon arrival, the father would take the hand of the bride and place it in the hand of his son.



At that moment, she becomes his wife. This act was called the 'presentation.'



Then, he would introduce her to all the people who have come to the wedding feast.



After the presentation, the bridegroom would bring his bride to the bridal chamber for 7 days. During this time, the new couple does not participate in the festivities and is, "hidden".



The bride and groom would fast on the wedding day. To them, it is a day of new beginning when old sins are forgotten.

The wedding day is a day of personal Yom Kippur – a day of at-one-ment.



Step 6: The Banquet Feast

Relatives, friends, neighbors, and even strangers who knew and heard the trumpet sound would come to join the celebration.



The wedding feast would last seven (7) days. These seven (7) days would be a time of great rejoicing and much celebration. There is much noise, music, loud shouting and feasting.



In Biblical times all the men attending the wedding must wear a kittel – the wedding garment.



The Kittel is a white robe, it looks somewhat like a bathrobe. It is a garment worn by the Jews at Passover. It is also the garment worn by the Groom at a wedding. The word Kittel is rooted in the Hebrew word Katal - To Slay. It is the same garment worn by priests during sacrifices such as Passover or Yom Kippur sacrifice. The wedding garment is a symbol of purity and righteousness.



Matthew 22:8-14 narrates the parable of the wedding banquet.



Matthew 22: 8-14

- 8 "Then he said to his servants, 'The wedding banquet is ready, but those I invited did not deserve to come.
- 9 So go to the street corners and invite to the banquet anyone you find.'



Matthew 22: 8-14

- 10 So the servants went out into the streets and gathered all the people they could find, the bad as well as the good, and the wedding hall was filled with guests.
- 11 "But when the king came in to see the guests, he noticed a man there who was not wearing wedding clothes.



Matthew 22: 8-14

- 12 He asked, 'How did you get in here without wedding clothes, friend?' The man was speechless.
- 13 "Then the king told the attendants, 'Tie him hand and foot, and throw him outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'
- 14 "For many are invited, but few are chosen."



This is the story of the great gathering of the guests. Everyone small and great is invited to the great wedding feast.



But, whoever chooses to come must have on him the proper "wedding garment".

The wedding garment is "righteousness of the saved".



The message of the wedding banquet is simple. God is calling everyone to repentance and salvation. Accept the invitation. Come in righteousness and God will richly welcome you into this banquet.



Step 7: The Reveal

The reveal is the culmination of the marriage process. At the end of the 7 days of festivities, the groom's friends and the bridesmaids wait at the chamber door.



This is the time when the bride and the groom come out to meet, greet and welcome the guests.



When the groom is ready, he knocks from the inside of the door of the chamber, indicating that they are ready to make their public appearance before everyone.



The friends open the door, and the guests cheer. The bride and groom now come forth to greet and meet all the guests.



After the marriage the bride and the groom go to live happily ever after in the father's house with the blessing of the father.



Church as Bride

Beautiful isn't it? So, what is the spiritual insight of the marriage narratives?



The church is pictured as the bride of Christ.

The reason for the metaphor is for people to easily understand the lessons by using everyday example to emphasize a spiritual point.



The family, husband and wife relationship and the marriage ceremony are common things and events which ordinary people can easily appreciate.



What is a church? The church is the congregation or the assembly of the saints and the faithful. The church is the community of believers where the Holy Spirit works.



Jesus Christ and the church are "metaphorized" as one body doing the work of salvation for humanity.



This is evident in the Epistle of Paul to the Ephesians 5:22-28 - symbolizing the perfect union of Christ and the church, represented by the wedding ceremony, bringing forth the spiritual children of God – born of the spirit.



Ephesians 5:22-28

- 22 Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands as you do to the Lord.
- 23 For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior.



Ephesians 5:22-28

- 24 Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything.
- 25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her
- 26 to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word,



Ephesians 5:22-28

- 27 and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless.
- 28 In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself.



The imagery of the bride as the body of believers known as the church is not a New Testament concept.



Even in Old Testament times, God has characterized Himself as the husband of Israel with the imagery of Israelites as the chosen people of God and the nation Israel as the spouse of God.



Jeremiah 3:8, for example, states: "I gave faithless Israel her certificate of divorce and sent her away because of all her adulteries."



Hosea 2:16 refers specifically to the people of Israel as God's "betrothed" or "wife" of God, and prophecies God's reconciliation with his estranged people, declaring: "In that day, you will call me 'my husband;' you will no longer call me 'my master' or Ba'al.'



Again, most particularly in Isaiah 54:4-10.

4 Do not fear disgrace; you will not be humiliated. You will forget the shame of your youth and remember no more the reproach of your widowhood.



Isaiah 54:4-10

- 5 For your Maker is your husband—the Lord Almighty is his name...
- 7 For a brief moment I abandoned you, but with deep compassion I will bring you back.



Isaiah 54:4-10

- 8 In a surge of anger I hid my face from you for a moment, but with everlasting kindness I will have compassion on you," says the Lord your Redeemer...
- 10 Though the mountains be shaken and the hills be removed, yet my unfailing love for you will not be shaken nor my covenant of peace be removed."



The Song of Songs - a romantic book - was supposedly included by Ezra as part of the Old Testament canon, on account of its metaphor reflecting the love of God for His church.



In the New Testament, Jesus Christ is referred to as the bridegroom.



In 2 Corinthians 11:2 Paul wrote: "I, Paul have betrothed you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to the Messiah."



Marriage Process

The two (2) stages of the marriage process of the betrothal and the wedding are matched to the spring and fall festivals of God.



The small group of bridal entourage is a type of the church of the firstborn.



The larger group of guests typifies the great harvest of souls at the millennial reign of Christ.



The seven (7) steps of the marriage process perfectly match with the seven (7) annual festivals of God.



The First Coming	The Betrothal	The Spring Festival	Dowry	Passover
			Acceptance	Unleavened Bread
			Preparation	Pentecost
The Second Coming	The Wedding	The Fall Festival	Coming	Trumpets
			Presentation	Atonement
			Banquet Feast	Tabernacles
			Reveal	Last Great Day



Dowry

Passover

Jesus is the bridegroom who purchased the church with His life.

1 Corinthians 6:20 says: "we were bought at a price." Jesus paid the ultimate price for the church – the symbol of the Passover.



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Acceptance

Days of Unleavened Bread

The partaking of the unleavened bread and wine signifies our acceptance of Christ's sacrificial offer as a bride who accepts the wedding proposal of the groom.



This is a representation of the Days of Unleavened Bread – our commitment, dedication, sincerity, loyalty to the Lord and keeping ourselves pure from sin.



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Preparation

Pentecost

During the period of betrothal, Christ goes to prepare a place for the church.



John 14: 1-3

- 1 Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me.
- 2 My Father's house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you?
- 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.



In the meantime, the Father sends the Holy Spirit as a chaperon, a guide, to act in the stead of the son.



John 14: 15-20

- 15 "If you love me, keep my commands.
- 16 And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever—
- 17 the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you.



John 14: 15-20

- 18 I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.
- 19 Before long, the world will not see me anymore, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live.
- 20 On that day you will realize that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you.



The preparation signifies the Day of Pentecost when Jesus instructed the disciples to wait for the Holy Spirit.



Acts 1: 6-10

- 6 Then they gathered around him and asked him, "Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?"
- 7 He said to them: "It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority.



Acts 1: 6-10

- 8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."
- 9 After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight.



Acts 1: 6-10

10 They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them.



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The Coming Day of Trumpets

When the time is right and all preparations ready, the Father sends the Son to return for the bride.



The arrival of the son is accompanied with trumpet sounds and much rejoicing.



The groom comes with his friends and the bride with her maidens.



This signifies the Feast of Trumpets when Christ returns for the saints and to rule the world.



At this stage, the bride and the bridesmaids are fetched by the groom. The bridesmaids are the first but small group of people to share, rejoice and assist in the marriage ceremony.



This represents the resurrection of the first fruits at the return of Jesus Christ.



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Presentation Day of Atonement

The church is now united with Christ as One Body to do the greatest work on earth – the saving of the rest of humanity – the greatest wedding ever to happen. This is portrait by the Day of Atonement.



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The Banquet Feast

Feast of Tabernacles

The greatest calling of all mankind during the millennial period is represented by the wedding banquet when all people come to feast upon God's grace and truth.

Implying the Millennial reign of Christ when the earth shall be filled with the knowledge and spirit of the Lamb.



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The Reveal

Last and Greatest Day of the Feast

Then, finally, the revealing of the children of God as Paul fondly described in

Hebrews 2: 12-13.



Hebrews 2: 12-13

- 12 He says, "I will declare your name to my brothers and sisters; in the assembly I will sing your praises."
- 13 And again, "I will put my trust in him." And again he says, "Here am I, and the children God has given me."



What a glorious day it will be when we sit at the table of the Marriage Supper of the Lamb! And, the saints shall eternally dwell in the New Jerusalem, the home of the righteous, forevermore.



Summation

The Wedding of the Lamb is a metaphor for God's plan of salvation. The symbolic lesson of the Marriage of the Lamb is to bring forth spiritual children of God. In a similar breath, it is God's divine plan of salvation for mankind.



The Wedding of the Lamb is not a one-time event. Rather, it is a process, one that brings many sons unto glory.



The betrothal stage represents the first coming of Christ and the wedding ceremony represents the second coming.



The great wedding feast of the Lamb is the glorious day of our revealing as Paul said in Romans 8:19: "The entire creation waits with eager expectation for God to reveal His sons."



That wedding day will come. Christ will come again at the least expected time – a time when everything has been made ready by the Father. Therefore, let us make ourselves ready with faithfulness.



Revelation 19: 7-10

- 7 Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready.
- 8 Fine linen, bright and clean, was given her to wear." (Fine linen stands for the righteous acts of God's holy people.)



Revelation 19: 7-10

9 Then the angel said to me, "Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb!" And he added, "These are the true words of God."



Revelation 19: 7-10

10 At this I fell at his feet to worship him. But he said to me, "Don't do that! I am a fellow servant with you and with your brothers and sisters who hold to the testimony of Jesus. Worship God! For it is the Spirit of prophecy who bears testimony to Jesus."



Let this be a pact. Let's see each other at the great wedding feast of the Lamb.

