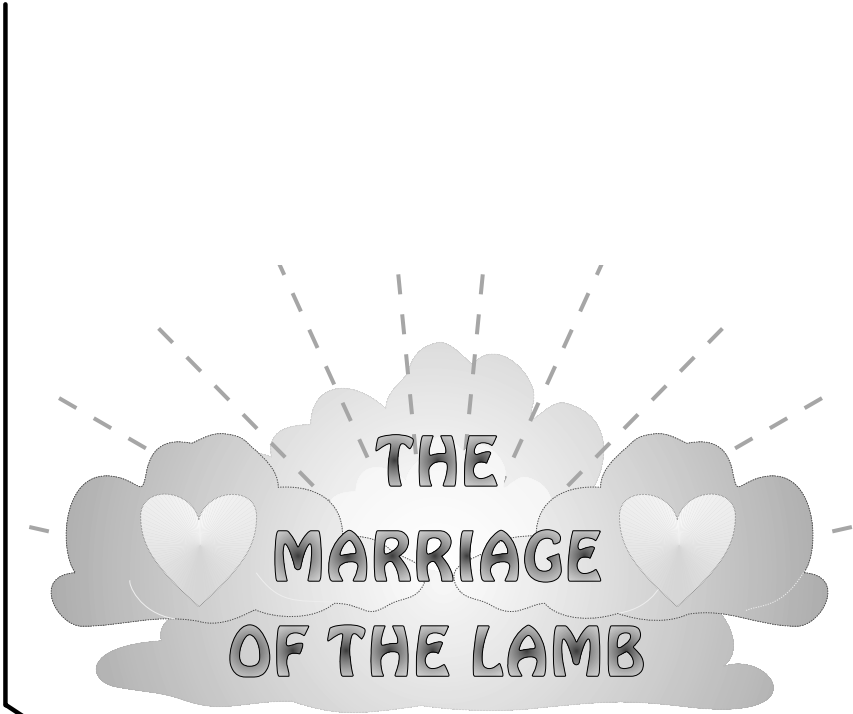
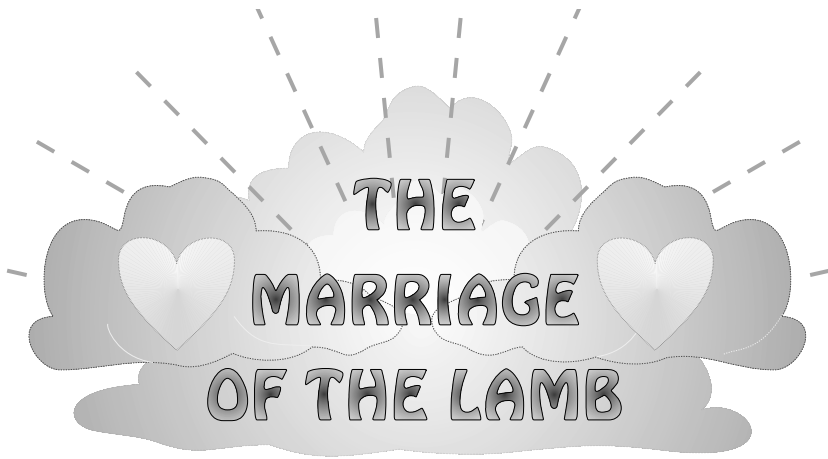


PROPHETIC REVELATION



**A
Typological
Study reflected
by the Ancient
Oriental Marriage
Customs and Traditions.**

He that hath an ear, *let him hear!*



THE MARRIAGE OF THE LAMB

A Message by Bro. Richard I. s. Gan



“For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I **have espoused you** to one husband, that I may present you as **a chaste virgin to Christ.**” – 2 Corinthians 11:2

*“And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. 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.** And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints.”*

– Revelation 19:6-8

INSTITUTION OF MARRIAGE

Marriage is the *first* and *only* institution established by God before the Fall. The Sacred Word clearly states that God intended humanity to show the male and female expressions according to the dictates of God’s Word. (Read Gen.1:26-27; 2:21-25; Lev.20:10; Matt.5:27-28.) Marriage is an intimate union of two persons — a man and a woman. It is a permanent relationship (Matt.19:6).

The marriage *customs* and *traditions* of every race and nationality are different from one another. Therefore, in order to have a correct

understanding of the mystery concerning the Marriage of the Lamb of God, we must approach this subject with a picture of **an oriental marriage** setting because the Bible is an *oriental* Book. I expect some Christians to disagree with me on many finer points which are presented in this message. But the Holy Scriptures is the authority.

Genesis chapter 2

21 And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof;

22 And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man.

23 And Adam said, *This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.*

24 *Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.*

25 And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.

The marriage in Biblical time was centred on two events — the **ESPOUSAL** (or **BETROTHAL**) and the **WEDDING**. The Jewish terms for the two events are **KIDDUSHIN** and **CHUPPAH** respectively. These two events may be separated by a certain number of days or years.

The **etrothal** is equally as binding as the **marriage** itself. In the Orient, after the man's proposal of marriage has been accepted by the bride's family, the dates for the betrothal and

wedding ceremonies are **chosen** and **fixed**. On the day of the betrothal, the engaged couple is made to drink from the **same cup** over which the **betrothal benediction** is **pronounced** after they have taken an **oath** to **seal** their betrothal to each other. This vow is ceremoniously **repeated** on the day of the wedding (cf. Matt.26:27-29).

Though the woman is *sometimes* called **wife** and the man **husband**, they **do not** live together as yet. It is **only during** the **WEDDING ceremonies**, that the couple could come together in sexual union to consummate the marriage. Hence, between the betrothal and the wedding the affianced parties must stay true to each other. (Read Gen.29:21; Deut.22:23-24; Matt. 1:18-20; Joel 1:8; Mal.2:14; Ezek.16:8.)

Genesis 24 is the most well-known chapter in the Scriptures which shows how **a father chooses a wife for his son**. In the **Ancient Orient**, it was a common practice for the father to choose the wife for his son, though sometimes the son might indicate his preference. The father or mother, or even the eldest brother, would normally carry out the negotiation. Dowry and marriage gifts for the bride were the main things in the negotiation. (See Gen.24:53,59,61; 29:18, 24; 34:12; Ex.22:17; 1 Sam.18:25; Jdg.1:15; 1 Kg.9:16; Esth.2:9.) Only under certain circumstances would the young man make the arrangements himself. (See Gen.21:21; 24; 38:6; 34:4,8,11; Jdg.14: 1-10.) In the case of Isaac, the choice of his wife was clearly spelt out by his father who appointed

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his steward, Eliezer, to seek out a wife for the son and to carry out the negotiation on his behalf.

It was **customary** for the groom to get someone to act as a **spokesman** between himself and the bride. Such a spokesman is known today as the **BEST MAN**. In Biblical times, he was known as the **COMPANION** or **FRIEND OF THE GROOM**. There might be more than one such companion or friend. (See Jdg.14:11,20; 15:2; Jhn.3:29.) [Note: The governor of the wedding feast in John 2:8-9 was also a companion or friend of the groom.]

According to the visions which St. John had seen in the Isle of Patmos, our Heavenly Father, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, had **Seven Spirits** which He gave into the right hand of His **Glorified Son** (Rev.1:4,16,20). The Seven Spirits (**Stewards**) were the inheritance of the Son. **Typologically**, they were the Best Men, Companions and Friends of Jesus Christ. They were **sent** by Jesus Christ to **communicate** with His **Gentile Bride**, from the time of the **ESPOUSAL** to the **WEDDING**, to get her ready for the forthcoming **Grand Marriage Supper**. They were the **Seven Messengers** of the **Seven Church Ages**. [Note: When the Jewish nation rejected the Gospel, God directed St. Paul to preach to the Gentile nations. The Seven Churches of Revelation are Gentile churches, and each of them reflects certain characteristics in a particular age. The Seven Church Ages are the dispensation of the Gospel of Christ to the Gentiles to graft them into the 'olive tree'. This period of time was prophetically made known to the Old Testament prophets as the **Mystery of God**. In the New Testament, it is often referred to as the **Kingdom of Heaven**. (Read Rev.10:7; Rom.11:17-25; 16:25-26; Eph.3:6; Gal.3:16-18; Gen.12,15,17; Isa.42:6; 49:6; 60:3.)]

From 2 Corinthians 11:2, it is clear that the Church of Christ has been **espoused** to Jesus Christ. **Paul was one of the Seven Friends of THE WORD OF GOD**. He was sent to the Gentiles to get a Bride for Him. And having done that he **had also espoused** her to Christ as a chaste virgin until the day of her **WEDDING** (cf. Gen.29:21; Joel 1:8). But, knowing that the **Mystery of Iniquity** had started to work some two or three years before (2 Thess.2:7), he warned the Church not to be led astray from her chaste state (2 Cor.11:3-4).

If the Early Church had stayed true to her **Saviour-Husband** during her **BETROTHAL** (Mk. 14:23-25), she would have been **perfected** with the **full revelation of Christ the Word**, and be in **UNION** with Christ as her Husband. Then she would have gone to the **Marriage Supper of the Lamb**. (Yes, if only she had let the **Morning Star** dawn in her heart.) But as was reflected prophetically in the seduction of Eve in the Garden of Eden, this could not be so. After Eve was **espoused** to Adam (Gen.2:18,21-24), before her husband could come in unto her in **wedlock**, she was **beguiled** by the Serpent and was **defiled**. Similarly, **before Christ could get to know His Church intimately as His wife**,

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she was defiled by another spirit bearing another gospel. She became corrupted shortly after Paul had given her the warning.

LOVE

Oh, it would have been different if the Early Church had her mind focused on her loved One just as Rebekah had on Isaac. Having heard so much from Eliezer about the characters and personalities of Isaac and Abraham, and the love they had for God and people, Rebekah could not help falling in love with Isaac. Certainly, it was not the expensive gifts or the wealth and status of Abraham that had caused Rebekah to be *bought* over, but rather it was the **love** of Isaac's father which had attracted her (cf. Gen.29:20-21). Just one day was all she needed to hear and to accept the 'gospel'. She had decided to be Isaac's wife. It was a simple choice. However, the way back to Hebron, in Canaan, from the town of Nahor, in Paddan Aram, was not an easy one; it was a long journey. And it was natural for a woman on such a journey to have many thoughts flooding her mind. So, until she entered into wedlock with Isaac, Rebekah could only find **consolation** in the words of Eliezer.

Were the saints of the Early Church like Rebekah? Alas! No! They did not heed the words of Paul as they journeyed through this wicked world. Paul had warned them: *"But I am afraid that just as Eve was deceived by the serpent's cunning, your minds may somehow be led astray from your sincere and pure devotion to Christ. For if someone comes to you and preaches a Jesus other than the Jesus we preached, or if you receive a different spirit from the one you received, or a different gospel from the one you accepted, you put with it easily enough"* (2 Cor.11:3-4, NIV). Yet, they were **seduced** and **destroyed** by the cunning craftiness and deceitful schemes of the Serpent seeds.

Hence, the **espoused** Bride of Christ was **defiled** even before she was **married** to Him. The **WEDDING** had to be **postponed** because the Bride was **not ready** for it. Her **Wedding Garments of Salvation** were **spotted** and **blemished**. But God got her out of that state of defilement and put her through a *period of purging* to restore her to her original position.

WEDDING CEREMONIES

The weddings of many of the different **Oriental** races, such as the Arabs, the Indians and the Chinese, are **very elaborate**. Many of them date from the **Biblical** times. There are **many ceremonial events** but not all are necessarily observed at all weddings. An **important** feature of many of these ceremonies is the **public pro- nouncement** of the **marital relationship**. The spiritual relationship between Christ and His Bride is reflected in the whole wedding process. Yes, the love affair of the **espoused** couple must be made known publicly. It is in the **WEDDING** that the couple is **presented** to the world as **man and wife**.

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'Cleanliness is next to godliness', so the saying goes. People bathe practically everyday and especially when they are dirty or when they smell. No sane person will put on a clean garment, much less a wedding garment, if one's body is filthy and smelly. In the Orient, there are *certain baths* which are taken on *certain special occasions* only. They are usually taken as *rites of purification*. And one such occasion is the wedding.

Just before the wedding, the groom and the bride will take a *special bath* in their respective homes. (The Jews have what they call a *mikvah* — a bath in running water.) They do not just want their bodies to be thoroughly **clean** but also to *smell* and *feel* clean because bad body *odours* and sour *perspiration* are very *offensive*. Odour can very easily permeate the garment. Hence, perfumes and aromatic herbs are added to the bath. After the bath they will *anoint* their bodies with **special precious ointments (oils)** before they put on their **wedding garments**.

The Lord Jesus Christ took His *special bath* before He started His ministry to seek out a Bride for Himself. He was 'cleansed' by the *running water* of the River Jordan and subsequently *anointed* with the *sweet smelling* Spirit of God upon Him (Matt.3: 16-17). And His personality exuded a *heavenly sweet savour*.

But what kind of a **garment** did Jesus wear after His bath? **The Word of God**, of course. The Scriptures records that when Jesus was tempted of the devil, in the wilderness, He defeated him with the Word of God. He was so clothed with the **GARMENT OF GOD'S WORD** that He defeated His enemy with the Written Word. He used It three times — "*It is written! It is written! It is written!*" (Matt.4:1-11). Amen! (By **speaking the Word** backed by the *revelation* of the Sacred Word, the Son of God, Jesus Christ, overcame the adversary of God.) Christ Jesus Himself is the Word of God made manifest. The Word with which Jesus Christ was so clothed is the very **vesture** that has been **given** to His chosen Bride. It is given to her as a **covering** for her spiritual soul as well as a **Wedding Dress** — **Garments of Salvation** (cf. Isa.61:10; Eph.6:11-18).

The *special bath* of the Bride of Christ comprises of three stages. And it is the same Holy Spirit that leads her through all the stages. The first stage is her **BLOOD BATH**. She must be **cleansed** by the Blood of the Lamb of God, her Saviour - *Husband*, Christ Jesus, Who purchased her with the price of His Blood at Calvary. Hence, this is the **most important and solemn step**. Without **justification** by His Blood, her sins will remain and she will not be clean (Rom.5:9; Heb.9:22; 10:14). It is the same Blood that takes care of the nature of the **original sin** which she *inherited* from the Fall (Heb.10:15-18). The Bride of Christ is not purchased with the

Matthew chapter 3

16 And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him:

17 And lo a voice from heaven, saying, *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.*

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Precious Gifts which the Father has given to Christ. She is “**purchased with His own Blood**” (Acts 20:28), **which is His dowry. His LOVE did it. Amen!**

WATER BAPTISM is the next bath in which the **sins** that she had committed are **remitted**. The **one and only** right way for her to take this bath is to do it according to **Acts 2:38**. This is the way directed by the Heavenly Father. The bath **identifies** who she is. She has to take it, by immersion, in water in the precious Name of the Lord Jesus Christ (her *Husband*). No other name or way is acceptable. If she truly loves Him with all her heart, mind, body and spirit, and is truly converted by the Spirit, she will have put on Christ as Paul has said: “*For those who have been baptized in the Name of Christ have been clothed with Christ*” (Gal.3:27, Lamsa). That is right! **Every bride must bear the name of her husband!**

“Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that He might present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish”
- Ephesians 5:25-27

This is the third phase of the special bath, “*the washing of water by the word*” of God. This *completes* the whole ceremonial cleansing for the Bride. Unlike the first two phases of the bath which cleanse her of the **original sin** and the **attributes of sin**, the **WORD BATH** is a *continuous cleansing process* for the spirit of the Bride (to keep her free from her erroneous thoughts and teachings, deceitful nature and carnality — contentions, presumptions, selfishness, jealousy, anger, fear, indifference, pomposity, pride, etc.) that she might be “**made ready**” for the “*Marriage Supper of the Lamb*”. Then, and only then, would she be **granted** to be arrayed in **FINE LINEN, PURE AND WHITE**, which is her **Robe of Righteousness**. To array her in that white raiment before she has made herself ready is certainly unthinkable, because putting on **that dress is a testimony** to all witnesses at the Marriage Supper that she is **POSITIONALLY PLACED AS THE WOMAN WHOM CHRIST KNEW intimately as His wife on His Wedding Day. Hence, that dress could not be worn until she has proven herself worthy to be His Wife.**

WEDDING GARMENTS

Christians always associate the *wedding dress* of the bride with the colour *white*. This is because *white* is associated with *holiness and purity* in the Scriptures. Thus, a bride in a *white gown* is pictured as a *clean and pure lady* who is ready to be presented to the man on the wedding day. However, in many *actual* oriental weddings, *bright coloured garments* are rather more common. Most treasured are those of *fine needlework on fine linen*. (See Psalm 45:13-14.) Surprisingly, Christians

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are hardly aware that in most ancient oriental marriages, the bride is *provided* with **TWO TYPES OF WEDDING GARMENTS**. Spiritually, they may be typed as the “**GARMENTS OF SALVATION**” and the “**ROBE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS**”. This is spoken of by the prophet Isaiah (chapter 61 verse 10):

*I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the **garments of salvation**, he hath covered me with the **robe of righteousness**, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels.*

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When Abraham’s servant went to Nahor in Mesopotamia to **get a bride** for Isaac, he took along with him *gold* and *silver* jewellery and *articles of clothing* for the bride. Those were *bridal gifts* which Rebekah must accept if she desired to be Isaac’s bride. Among the precious gifts, the **bridal raiment** was probably beautifully woven and embroidered **but not made of superior material**. The Hebrew word used (for *raiment* in Genesis 24:53) is *beqed*. The same word is translated as *garments* in Isaiah 61:10 — “**garments of salvation**”. It is a word which denotes any clothing other than one which is made of **superior material**. The word used for the latter is *me’il*. *Me’il* is translated *robe* in Isaiah 61:10 — “**robe of righteousness**”. According to the Book of Revelation, the **Faithful Jews** and the “**Tribulation’ Saints**” (Rev.6:11; 7:9-14) both wear **stately white robes** (Grk: *stole*). However, the **Bride of Christ** (Rev.19:7-8) is given a **fine linen apparel** which is **clean and white**. **This apparel is not only costly and stately, but dazzling** (cf. Lk.9:29). The Greek word which describes such **gorgeous vesture or raiment** is *himatismos*. The Twenty-four Elders (in Rev.4:4) wear vestures of such material. [Have you noticed the description of the royal apparel and adornment of the Bride-WIFE of Jehovah and also that of the Devil? Ezekiel 16 records how Jehovah God had married Israel and made her His queen and lavished upon her every precious and beautiful thing. “*Mystery, Babylon the Great*”, who sits as a queen, is the Devil’s wife with many harlot daughters. She, too, is decked with precious things and arrayed in fine linen. But her **fine linen dress** is certainly *not* a *clean and white* one. Hers is **purple and scarlet** which reveals that she is a **bloody** queen and wife of the Devil (Rev.17:4; 18:16).]

Again, I would like to draw your attention to the wedding *customs* and *traditions* of the Orient. As we know, the weddings of the Westerners or Occidental people are usually done without much pomp. On the day

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of the wedding, the couple will take their bath and don their wedding garments. The bridegroom will then proceed either to the house of the bride to take her to the church or to the church directly and wait for his bride there. Then they will be married by the minister. After that, a reception or a small feast is held for the invited guests. This usually lasts only a short time before the couple is whisked away in a car for their honeymoon.

You will notice that the whole wedding event is usually completed within a short time, beginning from the morning to just before the evening, and the bride has only one wedding garment which is her white wedding gown. But **an Oriental wedding lasts at least the whole day**, beginning from the morning till the late night. Depending on social standing, those who are rich **may celebrate the wedding for several days or even up to a fortnight**.

Therefore, as mentioned before, the Oriental bride has at least **two sets of wedding garments**. **One is worn** (after her 'purification' bath) **throughout the various ceremonial rituals** — *wedding procession, solemnization, feasting, nuptial chamber, and more feasting*. **The other is worn during the grand and final marriage supper**. Therefore, it is important that we recognize the fact that **every born again child of God has a (set of) white 'garments of salvation'** (cf. Eph.6:11-18). It testifies that he/she is justified by his/her faith in the Redemptive Work of God according to the Divine Revelation of the Word of God. (See Rev.7:9, 13,14; cf. 6:11.) **But not everyone will be arrayed in white 'robe of righteousness' until he/she has proven himself/herself worthy of it.** (See Rev.3:5,18; cf. 4:4.)

[Note: **Righteousness** is not the basis of our salvation (Rom.5:6-9) but the **natural consequence** of our salvation. A man who is *born again* of the Word and Spirit is **justified** and **imputed righteousness** by the Saviour (Rom.4:1-5). But righteousness means what is **fundamentally right**. Thus, when a Christian is in the faith relationship with Christ, he **must turn from being a slave of sin to be a slave of righteousness** (Rom.6:16-22; Matt.3:15). He **must have the faith that works and which shows its righteousness** (Jam.2:14-26). He **must live righteously to prove that he has obtained justification by faith in Christ**. Hence, he **who is saved must live as if he is**. A saint who is found to **'be living'** the **Word** and not merely **believing It** is a joy to the Lord.]

MYSTERY

The **Mystery of Christ and His Church** (Eph.5:32) can be fully understood by looking at the *Ancient Oriental Wedding Rituals*, much of which are still being practised today. Most Jews set aside *seven days* for

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the *wedding* (even as many days for the *betrothal*). This ‘*seven days*’ wedding has been a practice since the Old Testament times. (Read Gen.29; Jdg.14.) Prophetically, the ‘*seven days*’ types the ‘*Seven Church Ages*’.

Almost two thousand years ago, the Son of God came from His far away home in glory to seek out a **wife** from among His own chosen people, **Israel**. But they did not recognize Him as their *Lover*, and they rejected Him and crucified Him. Even His *Forerunner* and *Friend*, John the Baptist, was also ridiculed and beheaded. Consequently, the Glorified Son of God, who now sits on the right hand of His Father, turned to the **Gentiles** for a Wife. He did this not very long after He put His Spirit upon the few thousands of those *born again* Jews who had accepted the Gospel. And **St. Paul**, as we know, was the **first** of His **Seven Friends** whom He had sent to communicate with that **Gentile Bride**.

Well, instead of keeping her mind on the Word and be thoroughly washed by It, the **espoused** Bride of Christ got her **Wedding GARMENTS of Salvation spotted** by *false doctrines* of Satan and his evil horde of demons. Therefore, her Saviour-*Husband* had to post-poned the marriage because she had left her first love and must then go through a purging. Until she was fully ready as a Bride there would be no marriage. So the *first day* (*First Church Age* – Rev.2:1-7) came and was gone. Though she remained patient, the *second day* (*Second Church Age* – Rev.2:8-11) was the beginning of her tribulations and trials. It was a period of bitterness. **Ireneus** was the **second Steward-Messenger** sent of Christ unto her. His message enabled her to withstand the *persecutions* from those of the synagogues of Satan.

On the *third day* (*Third Church Age* – Rev.2:12-17), her **GARMENTS** were more soiled than before. By this time, those of the **Serpent’s Seed** had formed much *creeds* and *dogmas* in the church, and the Bride joined in that *fornication* and *idolatry*. She became a stumbling block to the people of the world. There were much *spots*, *blemishes* and *wrinkles* all over her **GARMENTS**. Yet, the Lord still loved His Bride and He proved it by sending **St. Martin**, who was one of the **Seven Best Men** in Christ’s right hand, to get her to repent. She repented. But on the *following day* (*Fourth Church Age* – Rev.2:18-29), she was found guilty of allowing “*that woman Jezebel*” to seduce the servants of her Lord. The Devil, like a roaring lion, had begun to maul at her, tearing away her **GARMENTS** which she so treasured. “*That woman Jezebel*” was none other than that “**Mystery, Babylon the Great, The Mother of Harlots and Abominations of the Earth**” called the ‘**Church of Rome**’ (Rev.17:5). She was the *Dominating Female* (*Thyatira*) of that age. She was the very seducing agent of the Devil after having been seduced by him. A space of time was given for her to repent but she did not. And for some nine

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hundred years that evil *Woman* plundered and destroyed everything that was Light and Truth, good and moral, arts, sciences, and anything that was of benefit to mankind. But with a man of faith such as **St. Columba**, the **Star-Messenger** and **Companion** whom Christ had sent to the Bride, the **Oil** (Spirit) and the **Wine** (Stimulation of Revelation) were kept flowing for that small number of believers (who formed the elected Bride). They were told to hold fast until the coming of Christ (Rev.2:25). Except for that small group, who had neither held to the doctrine of Jezebel nor lain in the same bed with her, the rest were judged of God.

The *fifth day* (*Fifth Church Age* - Rev.3:1-6) was a dark day for the Bride. It was in this age that she was *almost disrobed* of her **GARMENTS** which had become *torn* and *tattered*. And having been in darkness for a long time, she could hardly walk in the Light. Everything had become so *organized*. And like a blind woman, she went along with the whole system of *human hierarchy, church orders, creeds, dogmas, liturgy, pagan idolatrous feasts, Maryolatry, and all sorts of devilish things* which "*that woman Jezebel*" had set up. The **little Bride** (then only a few who were not defiled) had not fulfilled her works before God. She was warned, by the Message which her Word-Groom had sent through His **Messenger, Martin Luther**, to hold fast to the truth that she had received and to safeguard it, and to repent that she might be clothed in "*White Raiment*" (of right- eousness). Yes, she would soon be clothed in fine linen, clean and white, as the last few grains of sand in the hourglass of God trickled toward that *seventh day* — *the age of consummation*.

Yes, that day was fast approaching. The Son of God had not only cried out "*Behold, I come quickly*", He had also set an **open door** in the *sixth day* (*Six Church Age* - Rev.3:7-13). He would soon come for His Bride who, even with a little strength, had kept His Word and Name till that day. She was promised that she would not enter into that "*hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth*" (Rev.3:10). She knew then that their marriage would be consummated the following day and, soon after that, she would be presented as His **Wife** at the **Grand Marriage Supper of the Lamb** (Rev.19:6-8). Yes, her **GARMENTS** were getting cleaner. But besides this little Bride, who else in the religious world had given heed to that cry? Who else had **esteemed The Personality of God, His Name, His Word** or even **His Redemptive Work**?

The *denominations* thought that the "*open door*" existed only in their *organisations* whereby sinners might enter in for spiritual refuge. But **the only OPEN DOOR was (and still is) JESUS CHRIST** (cf. Jhn.10:7,9). He had revealed this precious Truth through His **Steward, John Wesley**. Christ is the Revelation of God which *illuminates* the *Way of Life* for the little Bride and which enables her to keep God's Word and glorify His Name.

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Amen. Truly strength is fast returning to every **true** child of God. God is going to do a *quick work*. He will *shorten* the day that is just ahead. He has seen the faith of every elect for He has tried every one who would dare receive His promise till the **Promised Word** came (Psm.105:19). The saints have learned the patience of Christ and have received the strength of life. The **Wedding GARMENTS** (of Salvation) of the Bride have become of better shape when she *pulls herself away* from the *systems of man* and *gets herself ready* in the revelation of the Word for the coming of the Word-Groom.

Saints, we are living in the *last of the Seven Days* (*Seventh Church Age* - Rev.3:14-22). It is going to be the *shortest one* as God shall cut it short by a *quick work*. This is the '**evening time**' and **the Heavenly Bridegroom, the WORD of God, has come to claim His W Bride** (1 Thess.4:16; Rev.10:1-7). His **presence** (Grk: *parousia*) was heralded by **William Branham**, who was not only His **seventh** and **final Star-Messenger** but also His **Steward** and **Com-panion**. He was sent to get His Bride ready for the marriage. **The arrival of the Groom has been announced to the Bride when the Messenger cried out, "Behold, the Bridegroom cometh! Come ye out to meet Him!"** (Matt.25:6, cf. Song 5:2). **THE SHOUT** penetrates the door that the religious world has blindly set up to keep out Christ, *the Word*, as He comes to marry His Bride (Rev.3:20). When the religious *church* world rejected the **OPEN DOOR of Christ**, they set up *their own* door to keep the people **in** as they entered into an *ecumenical pact* to build an *Image* to that Roman Beast (Rev.13; 18:4). They became *lukewarm*, reaping not the souls of men but the riches of this world. They do not know that they are *wretched, miserable, poor, blind and naked* in the sight of God. **Only the Bride will hear THE VOICE of her Beloved ARCHANGEL. She will get out of that condition and go**

Simple Gift

with Him, Who is THE WORD OF GOD. She is buying gold that is tried in the fire and her desire to be arrayed in the special white raiment will be granted.

1) Tis a gift to be simple

Tis a gift to be mild,

INVISIBLE UNION

Beloved, this is the **UNITING TIME**. It is the **INVISIBLE UNION** of the Bride and the Bridegroom. **THE LORD IS HERE! THE KING IS HERE! THE WORD IS HERE! Enter ye into His Tent of Love! Get intimate with Him! Get into Holy Wedlock with Him and consum- mate the marriage vow!** You are either going to be His wife **now** or never!

WEDDING PROCESSION

PROPHETIC*REVELATION

In the Oriental wedding **procession**, the bridegroom, arrayed in his best attire and ornaments, with a handsome headdress garlanded on his head like a king (Song 3:11; Isa.61:10b; cf. Rev.10:1), would set off from his home to the bride's home. The friend(s) of the bridegroom, accompanied by musicians and singers, would go before the bridegroom (Gen.31:27; Psm.45:15; cf. Jer.7:34). The procession would usually reach the bride's home late in the **evening** which was why light was needed (Matt.25:1). There were two reasons for this: one was the great distance between the two homes of the couple, and the other was the afternoon heat. [Note: There is the assumption that both parties would set off from their respective homes to meet each other mid way. This was hardly practised, if at all.]

When the bridegroom reached the bride's home, the bride would have already dressed up in her wedding garments (Psm.45:13-14; Jer.2:32) and heavily veiled (Gen.24:65; cf. 29:21-25). After receiving the bride together with the blessings from her parents as well as good wishes from relatives and friends (Gen.24:59-60; Ruth 4:10-12), amidst gaiety of singing, dancing, shouting and rejoicing, the bride- groom and his whole party would travel back to his own home or his father's house for the **marriage feast**. However, if the bridegroom lived far away, a feast, usually held at night, would first be spread in the house of the bride's parents at the expense of either the bridegroom or the bride's parents (Gen.29:22; Jdg.14:10). Wine is normally served as a stimulant during the feasting (see Jhn.2:3). (*Remember* the feast may last for many days – Gen.29:27; Jdg.14:12.) This was a *testimony* to the people who lived in the vicinity that the damsel had now been married to her beloved. (If the couple lived within the same village, the feast would be held at the bridegroom's or his father's house.)

NUPTIAL CHAMBER

The bridegroom and his bride being brought together for the first time (Jhn.3:29), would *renew* their marriage vow, which they had made on their *betrothal*, before the assembly of people. For the Jews today, it is conducted under a canopy called **chuppah** in the Hebrew language. **It represents the actual ceremony of bringing home the bride.** The **chuppah** actually evolved from the tent which, in ancient times, was also used as the **nuptial chamber**. (See Gen.24:67: Isaac's mother's tent.) The word '**chuppah**' means '**covering, protection, and defence**'. (See Psm.19:5; Joel 2:16; Isa.4:5, cf. Mal.2:14; Ezek. 16:8; Matt.23:37-38.)

As the **feasting** and **gaiety** continued, the bride and the bride- groom would be escorted to the **nuptial chamber** in the **late evening** either by their parents or companions (Gen.29:23; Jdg.15:1). It was in this '**tent of love**' that the couple would **consummate** their marriage. They would know each other **intimately** as husband and wife (Matt.25:12). The **woman's virginity** would be **uncovered** here and a **proof** (token) obtained (Deut.22:13-21).

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Now, as far as the groom was concerned, this was the **most important** part of the **marriage ceremony**. It was here that he would know the *real identity of the bride*. This may seem strange to most people. But, notice how Jacob was deceived by Laban, his father-in-law, who substituted Rachel with Leah on the wedding day. (See Gen.29:21-25.) Now, how could this come about? Though not so much practised in modern days, ancient oriental brides were *heavily veiled* on their wedding day. The veil would *not* be removed from her face throughout the day and evening. It would *only* be *unveiled* by her husband in the **chuppah** after the **feasting**. While unveiling his bride, Jacob must have been persuaded not to **'turn on the light'**. And, when the morning came, he found to his dismay that he had been tricked.

THE MARRIAGE OF THE LAMB

Now, our **'Isaac'** in **WORD** form **has come** a long way from His home **to get His Bride**. He is arrayed in His BEST attire and ornaments (Full Word Garment and Revelation), with a handsome headdress upon His head (Rev.10:1). He is King! And He has come for His Queen! Hallelujah!

There had been a **great revival**, in the early 20th Century, **when the Seventh 'Church Age' Messenger came with a SHOUT to herald the procession of the Word-Groom** (1 Thess.4:16, cf. Zech.4:7b). It was the **'evening time'**. The messenger came with a **Message** (Light) of God crying out, **"Behold, the Bridegroom cometh! Come ye out to meet Him! Come out of Babylon, and go in and feast with the Groom!"** (cf. Matt.25:6; Rev.18:4; 3:20). **Christ had come to claim His Word-Bride!** It was a time of gaiety, shouting, singing, dancing and rejoicing in the spiritual realm. This **'revival' procession** was witnessed by a great mass of people of the world.

[Note: In **TYPOLGY**, the study of *types*, we should *not* simply take any Scripture text or verse and go overboard with it. Otherwise, we would find ourselves straining at a gnat and swallowing a camel. Now, based on Genesis 24:63, some extremists believe that the *Marriage of the Word-Bride and the Word-Groom* does *not* take place on earth but in Heaven. They assert that just as Isaac met Rebekah halfway, Christ Jesus will also meet His Bride halfway between Heaven and Earth to take her to His Father's Home and marry her there. But let me remind them that the *Marriage of the Lamb of God* is a *spiritual* one and *not* a *natural* one between a man and a woman. I would advise them to read again the words of Genesis 24:63 in the proper context. Isaac had **not** gone out to the field to meet Rebekah. He had gone out there to meditate while taking a stroll. He had no idea that Eliezer had found a bride for him and that he would come back at that particular time. In fact, the *main character* in the story was **Eliezer**. **Abraham** had sent him to Nahor in Mesopotamia to get a bride for his son, **Isaac**. And after Eliezer had found **Rebekah**, he brought her to Isaac who married her.]

PROPHETIC*REVELATION

Beloved, let us not be like the nominal Christians who *only* think about, and look for, the **Literal Appearing** (Grk: **Epiphaneia**) of the Lord Jesus Christ for His Church. The Holy Scriptures show that, like **Christ's First Advent** to reveal Himself as Messiah to His people, the children of Israel, His **Second Advent** also consists of **several events** which will lead to His **Glorious Appearing** in a **space of time**. His **Revelation** (Grk: **Apokalupsis**) is, therefore, in **phases**.

The First Advent of the Lord Jesus Christ spanned a period of about 30 years. The **PRESENCE** (Grk: **PAROUSIA**) of Christ (**the Anointed Word**) was on the scene *when* the Word of the Lord came to the virgin Mary to **announce the supernatural conception**. Then Prophet John the Baptist came to prepare the Way by **heralding THE MESSAGE OF HIS SOON APPEARING**. And *finally* when the **FULLNESS of God came to dwell in that body of Jesus at His Water Baptism**, there was the **Literal Coming** (Grk: **Eisodos** - an entering in, [see Acts 13:24]) of God Incarnate.

Likewise, His **Second Advent** began when His **Seventh and last Star-Messenger** came with the (SHOUT) Message, **"Behold, the Bridegroom cometh! Come ye out to meet Him!"** The **Presence of Christ, the Anointed WORD, came with that announcement. His Presence is in His WORD.** Like the children of Israel in the wilderness, the saints in this 20th Century have not only seen the Pillar of Fire and the Glorious Smoke (Cloud), which **vindicated the parousia** of the Lord among His people, but also **THE SIGN OF HIS PRESENCE** itself in the ministry of Prophet William Branham (cf. Matt.24:3,27-28,37-39). The **parousia** of the Lord Jesus Christ in the WORD brings the **apokalupsis (revelation, that is the unveiling, the uncovering, the disclosure, or the bringing to light) of God in Christ and of His Truth hidden in the Scriptures, especially 'The Book of Revelation'.** This then **lays bare or manifests** (Grk: **phaneroo**) one's true character and standing in the Lord. And those who are worthy of His Name will be caught up (or raptured, translated) to meet the Lord Jesus Christ in His **epiphaneia (literal glorious appearing in Body Form)** in the air.

[Because of the general lack of understanding of the *orientalism* of the Bible and the *customs and traditions* of the East, many people find it difficult to understand the *Marriage of the Lamb*. But I pray that God will grant you spiritual wisdom to understand the types in this study, bearing in mind that the natural types the spiritual.]

Yes, the Marriage of the Lamb is taking place now! It's wedding time! The Bride is now ready for the marriage which she has been waiting for a long time. She is now properly attired in her **Wedding Garments of Salvation** and **fully veiled**, for she belongs to only one particular Person Who shall unveil and uncover her in the **'CHUPPAH'**. **This is the Uniting Time! The Invisible Union between the Bride and the Groom is now taking place!** Blessed be the Name of the Lord!

TABLE OF MANNA SPREAD

The first thing the Word-Groom does, upon claiming His Bride, is to spread a **marriage feast** for the saints of God. The stimulating **'wine'** of the **Spirit of Revelation** gives them **strength** and **joy**. **The Word of God, the Groom, is the LIGHT**. He is the **DAYSTAR** whose **LIGHT** is mellowing the lives of the saints. **Outside of this wedding feast, there is spiritual darkness and death** (Matt.22:13; 25:6). As long as the **wedding** lasts in the home (earth) of the Bride, the **wedding feast** will continue. And those without the **proper Wedding Garment provided by the Lord** will *not* be allowed in to attend the **feast** (Matt.22:11-12). Their own garment will *not* be acceptable (cf. Isa.4:1).

'CHUPPAH'

However, it is one thing for the saints to **sup** with the Lord, but another for them to be **identified** as members of the true Bride. Like the oriental bride, the identity of the true Bride of Christ is **only revealed in the 'CHUPPAH'** which is the **WORD OF GOD**. Yes, the **WORD OF GOD** is our **'COVERING, PROTECTION and DEFENCE'**. **IT** is our **HOME**, our **TABERNACLE**, in this 'wilderness' world (cf. Matt.23: 37; Phil.1:3-21; Eph.6:17). [Remember the **CHUPPAH** represents the **BRINGING HOME of the bride**.]

IT'S EVENING TIME!

IT'S WEDDING TIME!

IT'S UNITING TIME!

IT'S THE INVISIBLE UNION
BETWEEN CHRIST AND HIS BRIDE!

CHRIST IS **BRINGING HOME**
HIS BRIDE TO THE FATHER!

Countless nominal Christians *claim* to be members of the true Bride of Christ. They may claim that they are married to Christ and are supping with Him. However, **the final and ultimate test is whether Christ Jesus knows them**. And it is in the **'CHUPPAH'** of the **WORD OF GOD** that the **true worshippers** of the One True God will be identified. Everyone will hear either one of these pronouncements: *"I know thee"* or *"I know thee not"* (cf. Matt.7:23; 25:12). **"For many are called, but few are chosen"** (Matt.22:14). Truly, He is now sifting to separate the elects, who will make up His Bride, from the rest.

UNVEILING AND UNCOVERING

In the **'CHUPPAH'**, the **Word-Groom** will **unveil** His Bride to see her real identity. Jacob might not have enough sense to **'turn on the light'** to see if his bride was Rachel, but our **'ISAAC'** will certainly **'turn on the LIGHT'** in the **'CHUPPAH'** as He **unveils** His Bride. He will make sure that she is His **'REBEKAH'** and not some other woman (*Independent Church*) or any of the harlots (*Denominational Churches*) impersonating His Bride (cf. Rev.17:1-6). Now, this is only His *first step* in getting to **know** her. Next, He will approach her and say, *"I am come into my garden,*

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my sister, my spouse... Open to me, my sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled" (cf. Song 5:1,2). When He **uncovers** her, He will know whether she is a **Virgin Word Bride**, whether she has **kept His Word** and has been **faithful** unto Him. If she had *fornicated* with some other (words of) men, her *unfaithfulness* will be *exposed*. (That's right, no worshipper of God who fornicates with man-made doctrines can stand in His Divine presence.) However, if she has kept His Word, then she will show her true colour as the *true* Word-Bride of the Word-Groom. As He had given her the **Blood token** almost 2000 years ago, He wants to **see the evidence of the Life of His Blood in her as He uncovers her**. She has to **produce** her **IDENTIFICATION**, the **SEAL**, or the **TOKEN of the Holy Spirit** in her life (Eph.1:13,14). Amen!

Yes, our Word-Groom will **'turn on the (Morning) LIGHT'** as He **unveils** and **uncovers** His Bride in His **'CHUPPAH'**. (Oh, my! It's the hour of the 'Rising of the Sun'!) The *shouting, singing, dancing* and *rejoicing* among the nominal church-goers will continue. Most of them are not interested in **feasting** at the **Table of Manna** spread by the Groom. They are only interested in the **WEDDING PROCESSION — Worldwide Pentecostal and Charismatic gaiety**. But the Bride has gone to **THE FEAST** and is escorted to the **'CHUPPAH'** to meet her Word-Groom. With the gaiety of the activities of the day behind them, **the Bride and the Groom are now IN THE 'CHUPPAH'** where there is *peace, quiet, rest* and *strength*. Here the Bride lies upon the bosom of her loved One, whispering, *"Let Him kiss me with the kisses of His mouth: for Your love is better than wine"* (Song 1:2).

O, what a fellowship! What a joy divine! The Word-Groom and the Word-Bride are locked together in sweet embrace. The Bride is just leaning upon those Everlasting Arms of Christ and hearing His sweet lovely Voice with Words flowing like a **fountain of waters** to cleanse her spirit of undesirable traits, such as carnality, indifference, erroneous thought, and so on. Yes, to be known of Him is joy unspeakable and full of glory!

The statement **"His wife hath made herself ready"** in Revelation 19:7 tells us that **THE BRIDE OF CHRIST must have BECOME THE WIFE at a certain point of time during the wedding. It is in the 'CHUPPAH' that THE BRIDE BECOMES THE WIFE.** The Bride cannot become the Wife if *no* consummation has taken place.

Moreover, it is clear from the statement that **THE WIFE HAS MADE HERSELF READY for something. What is it?**

Up to this day, the bride of some Oriental Weddings is **presented as wife during the last and final marriage feast which is held at the man's home. THE GRAND MARRIAGE SUPPER IS THE CULMINATION OF THE WHOLE MARRIAGE AFFAIR.** The wife is **attired** in a totally

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different Wedding Garment from the one that she wore for the preceding events. This Wedding *Garment*, which is usually sewn of **finer materials**, **shows that she is no longer just a bride, but a WIFE**, to the man. Instead of a veil, she now **wears an ornamental headband or a tiara** which signifies that she is a **'queen'** as she sits with her **'king'** at the head of the table or on a dais (cf. Esth.2). Similarly, many Scripture verses show that the saints of God will be positionally placed to sit together with Christ on His Throne.

Saints of God, if we are truly members of His Bride who are looking forward to wearing that FINE LINEN, CLEAN and WHITE 'ROBE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS' we would make ourselves ready as His WIFE (Rev.19:7,8) *even as we have made ourselves ready as His Bride through the Message of the Seventh Angel and entered into the present marriage.* And the Lord has given unto us the **Ascension Gifts** ministry of Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Pastors and Teachers to perfect us by His WORD. It is a ministry that the world will not notice. As Brother Branham had said, it is a humble ministry. It is the **Ministry of the VOICE OF THE ARCHANGEL** (1 Thess.4:16) Who is ministering His Word to His Beloved in the **'CHUPPAH'** to get her ready for the **GRAND MARRIAGE FEAST** in Heaven, her Husband's Home. Amen! (So, *Endtime Message* believers, it is not just knowing the *voice of the angel* (messenger) to the *Seventh Church Age*; it is knowing the *Voice of the Archangel* [Chief Messenger, *Mighty Messenger* - cf. Rev.10:1] Who is now speaking to His Bride.)

[Have you noticed that, like the natural wedding, the **MARRIAGE PROCESSION** of the Lamb was conducted **openly**, but the **UNION** of the couple, which is taking place now, is in the **privacy** of the **'CHUPPAH'**? **The vindication of the Spiritual Word-Bride by the WORD takes place in the 'NUPTIAL CHAMBER' OF THE WORD, where the Groom and the Bride get to know each other intimately.** The *revelation* of this Mystery is hidden from the world. They will never know it. Neither will they know the Mystery of the *Translation*

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of the saints at the **last TRUMP OF GOD** (1 Thess.4:16). For the hour of the **Homegoing of the Bride** to the **Final Grand Feast** in Heaven will be revealed to her there. She will be told when and how her natural body will be changed. The *Seven Thunders* under that *Seventh Seal* hold the secret; it is a secret that the world will never know.]

Therefore, as long as the **Marriage Ceremony** of the earthly Word-Bride and the Heavenly Word-Groom is scheduled, the **marriage feast** will continue until the Elect Lady "**HATH MADE HERSELF READY**". Then the Bride-Wife will be taken home to the Heavenly Abode of her Husband and **be presented** as His **WIFE** at the **last** and **final Marriage Supper of the Lamb** which will be the **culmination** of the long marriage affair between the Lamb and His Wife.

"Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to Him: for the marriage (feast, or supper) of the Lamb is 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 of saints" (Rev.19:7,8).

Hallelujah! Amen! The Bride-Wife of the Lamb **will definitely** make herself ready by that hour and fulfill Revelation 3:21 - "*To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in My Throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with My Father in His Throne*". She will no longer wear her **Wedding 'Garments of Salvation'**. She will be arrayed in another wedding attire — the **FINE LINEN 'Robe of Righteousness'**. Amen! **She will then be presented as the true righteous Wife of the Lamb.** Blessed Be the Name of the Lord! And with a **Crown of Life** upon her head, and other ornaments and gifts on her body (rewards given to her at the *Judgment Seat of Christ* - Rom.14:10-12) she will sit as a **Queen** beside her **King**, in the presence of the heavenly host of angelic beings, at the **Final Grand Marriage Feast of the Lamb**. Yet, while she blissfully feasts with her King, there will be *wailing* and *gnashing* of teeth upon the earth.

'HONEYMOON'

When the **Grand Marriage Supper of the Lamb** in Heaven is over and the *Great Tribulation* upon the earth approaches the end, the King and the Queen will come riding on white horses to take vengeance upon the wicked and to judge the world (Zech.14:4; Rev.19:11-18; 20:4). And, just as she will manifest herself in the spiritual realm of Heaven, the Queen will also manifest herself in the natural realm of Earth (Rom.8:18-23). The earth will be cleansed of all sins and wickedness. As the near-Edenic condition is restored, the earth will be a paradise again (Isa.65:18-25). That is the beginning of the *Age of Regeneration* (Matt.19:28), and the *Millennial Reign of the King and His Queen*. It is the **'honeymoon'** period for the newly married couple. All these are

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prophecies recorded in the Sacred Scriptures of our Lord Jesus Christ. But, in the meantime, let these words, which John the Beloved was admonished to write, ring in your heart as an invitation: "**Blessed are they which are called unto the Marriage Supper of the Lamb**" (Rev. 19:9).

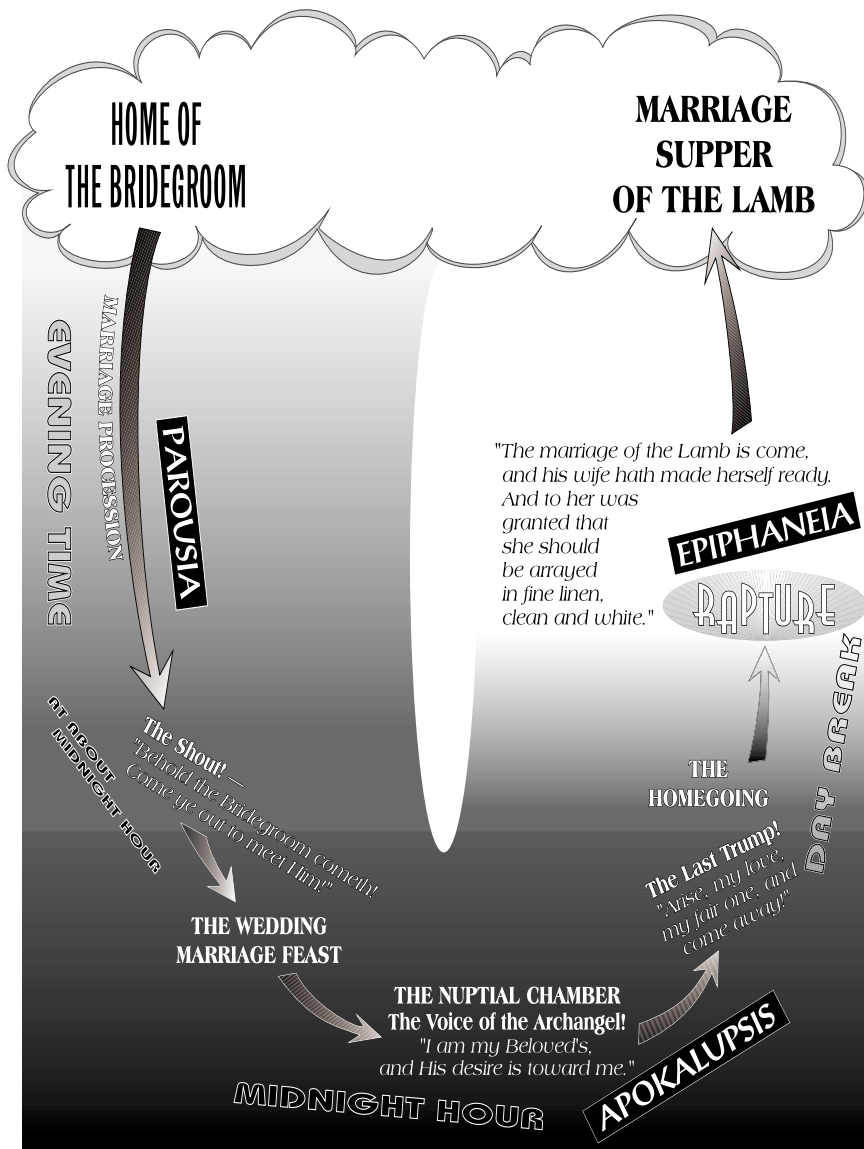
Will you accept **The Invitation**, and be ready for the **Marriage Supper of the Lamb**?

Into Thy Chamber, be free Holy Spirit;
Speak to me gently as You close the door.
Heavenly Lover, let Thy Presence cover;
Shekinah unending is all I long for.

Come my Beloved, be my Lord, my Master;
As I yield myself, unite me to Thee.
Let Thy Holy Word wrap 'round me I plead;
My Defence, Protection and Covering be.



THE COMING OF CHRIST FOR HIS CHURCH OR THE MARRIAGE OF THE LAMB



SUPPLEMENT

Many Bible believers have difficulties in understanding the '**Mystery of the Marriage of the Lamb**' when they study three particular passages in the Bible regarding the subject.

The most common passage is **Revelation 19:9**. This verse has been interpreted by some theologians as *an invitation* which is extended to a group of guests who are *not* members of the Bride. They state that the Son of God and His Bride will only marry upon their return to earth after the *Great Tribulation* and that this group of guests will be invited to feast at the *Marriage Supper of the Lamb*.

They would use **Matthew 22:1-14** and **25:1-13**, which are the parables of the *marriage feast* and the *ten virgins* respectively, to support their interpretation. They would point to the **king's son**, the **bride** (implied in the parable) and the **guests** in the former parable. They also believe that the **ten virgins**, who are maids in attendance to the bride, are yet another group of people in the wedding.

The error arises from their wrong interpretation of the texts. Read Revelation 19:6-9 carefully and note that John the Beloved, who was caught up in the spirit, saw many wonderful visions. Among other things, he also heard a great voice thundering forth, saying,

"Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is 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 of saints."

Then, after that announcement, the angel who accompanied John admonished him to record the following invitation:

"Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb."

The two announcements must be treated *separately* and viewed in their proper contexts. Those who are called to the *marriage supper* are blessed people. They are the same group (the Gentiles) who accepted the *invitation* to the *marriage feast* after the original group (the Jews who were first bidden) rejected it, according to Matthew 22:1-14. And we know that Matthew 22:1-14 is a **parable**. A Biblical parable is a narrative used to present a certain truth. To understand it correctly, it must be interpreted within the framework of its specific theme. Hence, in reading the parable of Matthew 22:1-14, we notice that the theme is about **THE KING who prepared a marriage feast for his son**. It is **not about** his son or the bride. Just as the saints of God are **allegorically** described as 'lively stones' or as 'different members of a body', they are likewise described as the 'guests' in this parable.

When we recognize the use of allegories throughout the Scriptures, we can then understand that the saints, who collectively form the **One True Church**, are called the **Bride of Christ**. And when we describe the saints as the **Bride of Christ**, they are *no longer* the **Guests**. Why? The reason is obvious. The **Bride relates to** the **Bride-groom**, whereas the **Guests relate to** the **Marriage Feast**.

By now, we should realize that, **prophetically**, the **invitation of Revelation 19:9** is extended to a certain group of **blessed** guests at the **Grand Marriage Supper of the Lamb**. Notice that (in the parable of Matthew 22:1-14) a certain man at the *Marriage Feast* is thrown out "into outer darkness" because he does not have the proper *Wedding Garment* on. He is certainly not a blessed 'guest'.

Now, Revelation 19:6b-8 is an announcement that the *Marriage Supper of the Lamb* will soon take place. Some may wonder why I use the term "**MARRIAGE SUPPER of the Lamb**" instead of "**MARRIAGE of the Lamb**" as printed in the KJV Bible. The Greek word is **gamos**. This word can be translated as 'a marriage, wedding or wedding feast'. [In certain Bible versions, it is translated as 'Marriage Supper' or 'Marriage Feast'.] However, the word **wife** (Grk: **gune**) points to the *accomplished* fact that the Beloved *Bride* (Grk: *Numphe*) has **truly** become the **Lamb's wife** (cf. Rev.21:2,9). There are two other statements which support this fact — "*His Wife HATH MADE HERSELF READY*" and "*to her*

WAS GRANTED THAT SHE SHOULD BE ARRAYED IN FINE LINEN...” In ancient oriental wedding, the bride was presented as **wife** and **queen only** at the **grand marriage supper** and **never before that**. When a woman is *betrothed* to a man, she is *only potentially* his wife. She becomes his wife *in fact* only after the ceremony of the **nuptial chamber**.

The Ten Virgins in the parable of Matthew 25:1-13 are *maids in attendance* to the bride. They are called ‘virgins’ in the parable because, in the oriental wedding, the maidens in attendance were supposed to be unmarried and younger than the bride. They were usually chosen by the bride herself to be her *companions* during the wedding. At an appointed time, these maidens would go forth to greet and receive the bridegroom during his *procession* to the bride’s home. They would guide the company of people to the place where the *marriage* and the *feast* were conducted. (In this parable, the *marriage feast* was spread by the bride’s parents.) As it was usually conducted in the *evening*, lights were needed. Oil lamps were used in this parable although burning torches were more common.

Our Lord used this *Virgin Maids* to represent *Spirit-born* children of God. This parable shows their yearning to meet the Bridegroom and to usher Him to the *Marriage* where they will have a *part* at the banqueting table. They are ‘pure’ in their faith of Christ. They are the ‘wheat’ group in the parable of the **wheat** and the **tares** in Matthew 13:24-30. According to the parable, there were five wise and five foolish virgins who went forth to meet the bridegroom. When the bridegroom was somehow delayed, they all fell into a slumber and slept (within **church-ism**) until a **cry** (the **voice** of the *Seventh Church Age Messenger*) woke them up at **midnight** (about the year 1956). Then they all began to trim the *wicks* of their lamps (their *understanding* or *revelation* of the Word). However, only the wise virgins, who had *extra oil* (Spirit) in their vessels, were able to meet the bridegroom and enter the banqueting hall where the *marriage ceremony* was conducted. Hence, the true saints of God are portrayed in the parable as **Virgins** in relation to their Saviour, the **Virgin Word**.

