**what is the marriage supper of the lamb?**

(Revelation 19:1-10)

Please turn to Revelation 19. You will remember from last week that Revelation 18 is all about God’s future judgment of the “great harlot” (the city of Rome) for her horrible sins against humanity as well as God (Rev 17:16; 18:3, 23-24):

**Revelation 18:23–24**-----"…for by your sorcery all the nations were deceived. 24 And in her was found the blood of prophets and saints, and of all who were slain on the earth.”

Rome will be judged by God a short time before the Christ returns to earth and unsaved mankind will be devastated. But, as we saw in chapter 18, the inhabitants of heaven are called to rejoice over God’s judgment of Rome:

**Revelation 18:20**-----20 “Rejoice over her, O heaven, and you holy apostles and prophets,
 for God has avenged you on her!”

And when we turn to Revelation 19, we see the response. Gigantic crowds of people around God’s throne see Rome’s judgment and have what may be the greatest worship service of God Almighty in history. When Handel penned his famous oratorio entitled *Messiah*, the famous “Hallelujah Chorus” came from our text here in Revelation 19. And believe it or not, the four uses of the word “alleluia” here (which means “Praise the Lord”) are the only uses of it in the entire New Testament.

This morning, we will read about this amazing worship celebration taking place in heaven, but I would like to focus primarily on vv. 7-10 in regard to the future marriage supper of the Lamb. So why is there such an amazing celebration going on in heaven here in Revelation 19? Well, first of all, there is celebration…

**1. Because God has judged Rome for her corruption of the earth and the murder of His people (19:1-4).**

**Revelation 19:1–14**-----1 After these things I heard a loud voice of a great multitude in heaven, saying, “Alleluia! Salvation and glory and honor and power *belong* to the Lord our God! 2 For true and righteous *are* His judgments, **because He has judged the great harlot who corrupted the earth with her fornication; and He has avenged on her the blood of His servants shed by her.**” 3 Again they said, “Alleluia! Her smoke rises up forever and ever!” 4 And the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshiped God who sat on the throne, saying, “Amen! Alleluia!”

If people shudder at the idea of heaven celebrating Rome’s destruction, it is because, as we said last week, of a mistaken view of God Himself. The Bible is clear here: “true and righteous are His judgments.”

There is celebration in heaven because God has judged Rome for her corruption of the earth and the murder of His people. But there is also celebration in heaven…

**2. Because Christ has completely removed human government and rules over the entire earth (19:5-6).**

**Revelation 19:5-6**-----5 Then a voice came from the throne, saying, “Praise our God, all you His servants and those who fear Him, both small and great!” 6 And I heard, as it were, the voice of a great multitude, as the sound of many waters and as the sound of mighty thunderings, saying, “Alleluia! **For the Lord God Omnipotent reigns!**

Now, obviously, Jesus has not returned to earth and set up His kingdom yet. But heaven is celebrating because they know His wonderful 1000-year kingdom of peace and prosperity is just around the corner.

This “pre-kingdom” celebration is like the celebrating football fans do when their team is winning 27-3 at halftime in the Super Bowl. They start singing: “We are the champions of the world!” Wait, they haven’t won yet. True. But the Super Bowl trophy is only 30 minutes of football away! The sound of this celebration---a mixture of a loud and massive crowd, the roar of the ocean, and an ear-splitting thunderstorm---is taking place because Jesus is about to become King over the entire earth!

So there is celebration in heaven because…

1. God has judged Rome for her corruption of the earth
and the murder of His people.
2. Because Christ has completely removed human government
and is about to rule over the entire earth.

But there is also celebration in heaven…

**3. Because the marriage supper of the Lamb has come and the bride of
Christ has made herself ready (19:7-10).**

**Revelation 19:7-9**----- 7 Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, **for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready**.” 8 And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints. 9 Then he said to me, “Write: ‘**Blessed *are* those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!**’ ”

There is a gigantic heavenly celebration in these verses of the future marriage supper of the Lamb.

Question: What is the marriage supper of the lamb?

At one time, I held the view that the marriage supper symbolized the entire millennial kingdom---in other words---the 1000-year rule of Christ on earth. The Old Testament speaks over and over about what a peaceful and joyous and prosperous time the kingdom of Christ will be for everyone. So it is easy to think that the marriage supper of the Lamb will be the entire kingdom itself. But there is a better answer to this question, and we find that answer with the help of the gospel of Matthew. Look at Matthew 22:

**Matthew 22:1–14**-----1 And Jesus answered and spoke to them again by parables and said: 2 “The kingdom of heaven is like a certain king who arranged a marriage for his son, 3 and sent out his servants to call those who were invited to the wedding; and they were not willing to come.

Ok, so Jesus is telling a parable about a king who arranges a wedding for his son and sends out invitations, and many do not want to attend this wedding for one reason or another. So more invitations are sent out and v. 10 says:

And the wedding *hall* was filled with guests. 11 “But when the king came in to see the guests, he saw a man there who did not have on a wedding garment. 12 So he said to him, ‘**Friend, how did you come in here without a wedding garment**?’ And he was speechless. 13 Then the king said to the servants, ‘Bind him hand and foot, take him away, and cast *him* into outer darkness [lit. *the darkness outside*]; there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’ 14 “For many are called [invited], but few *are* chosen.”

First of all, we need to understand that this is a parable. And the wedding celebration in this parable is **in** the kingdom of God but it is not the kingdom of God itself. If it was, what you would have here is a man who was **invited** to the kingdom, and he is **in** the kingdom, but he gets **kicked out of** the kingdom. (Do any of us believe that people who receive God’s invitation to **enter** the kingdom and actually get **in** the kingdom get kicked **out of** the kingdom?)

No. This banqueting hall of the king **DOES** represent something that exists in the kingdom, but it is not the kingdom itself.

In Revelation 19, we are told that the bride of Christ prepared herself to see her groom, the Lord Jesus, and we are told:

**Revelation 19:8**-----8 And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, **for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints**.

The proper wedding garment is “the righteous acts of the saints.” You have to prepare to receive this garment through doing “righteous acts.” This wedding garment is not a free gift from the groom’s father. It is something that is given based on good works.

So, when the man in Jesus’s parable in Matthew 22 is asked how he got into the banquet hall without properly preparing himself, he is speechless. This man does not picture an unsaved person. He pictures a saved person who did not honor God with his life. He didn’t prepare for the judgment seat of Christ or take seriously God’s invitation to rule with Christ in His kingdom.

So the king has his servants bind the man in the reception hall “hand and foot” (very humiliating) and he is taken outside the lighted hall into the darkness outside the hall. He is excluded from the celebration, not the vast kingdom of the king.

This man pictures a believer who is excluded from ruling with Christ. He did not prepare himself for **that** honor through good works. And the man mourns with tears and by grinding his teeth.

So what is the marriage supper of the Lamb? I would like to suggest it is a picture of those who will rule with Christ in His 1000-year kingdom. (There will also be a literal banquet in the kingdom where his co-rulers will sit down with Christ and eat with Him (Luke 22:28-30), but this parable does not address that.)

In this parable, a man is examined by the king, has not prepared for this examination, and is consequently removed from this special group. This is a picture of the judgment seat of Christ, and the loss of the highest reward in eternity---being a co-ruler with Christ.

**Application**

* We should look forward to the day when corrupt human government will be a thing of the past and Jesus will justly and compassionately reign over mankind.
* We should carefully prepare ourselves for our time of judgment before Christ.