

Message Six

The Preparation of the Bride

Scripture Reading: Rev. 19:7-9, 11-21; 21:2

- I. The marriage of the Lamb is the issue of the completion of God's New Testament economy, which is to obtain for Christ a bride, the church, through His judicial redemption and by His organic salvation in His divine life—Gen. 2:22; Rom. 5:10; Rev. 19:7-9; 21:2, 9-11.**
- II. The Lord's recovery is for the preparation of the bride of Christ, who is composed of all His overcomers—19:7-9; cf. Gen. 2:22; Matt. 16:18:**
 - A. All the overcomers will be the New Jerusalem as the bride of Christ for one thousand years in its initial and fresh stage—Rev. 19:7.
 - B. Eventually, all the believers will join the overcomers to consummate and complete the New Jerusalem in full as the wife of Christ in the new heaven and new earth for eternity—21:2, 9-11.
- III. The readiness of the corporate bride depends on the maturity in life of the overcomers—19:7-9; Heb. 6:1; Phil. 3:12-15; Eph. 4:13-15:**
 - A. In the New Testament the word *perfect* is used to refer to the believers' being full-grown, mature, and perfected in the life of God, indicating that we need to grow and mature unto perfection in the divine life—Matt. 5:48.
 - B. We need to continue to grow until we are matured in the divine life to become a full-grown man, arriving at the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ—Eph. 4:13.
 - C. In order for the bride to be mature, her faith and love need to be fully developed—Titus 3:15:
 1. Faith and love are two inseparable, excellent virtues of the believers in Christ—1 Tim. 1:14; 2 Tim. 1:13; Gal. 5:6.
 2. Through faith we receive the Lord, and through love we enjoy the Lord whom we have received—John 1:12; 14:21; 21:15-17:
 - a. Faith is given to us by God that by it we may receive Christ, the embodiment of the Triune God, and thereby enter into the Triune God and be joined to Him as one, having Him as our life, life supply, and everything—2 Pet. 1:1.
 - b. Love issues out of faith and enables us to live out all the riches of the Triune God with those who have believed into Christ with us in order that the Triune God may have a glorious corporate expression—Eph. 3:19-21.
- IV. In addition to being mature in life, the bride must be built up as a corporate person—Matt. 16:18; Eph. 2:21-22; 4:15-16; Rev. 19:7; 21:2:**
 - A. God's building is the desire of God's heart and the goal of God's salvation—Eph. 1:5, 9; Exo. 25:8; 1:11; 40:2-3, 34-35.
 - B. God intends to have a building in which God and man, man and God, can be a mutual abode to each other—John 15:4a; Rev. 21:2-3, 22.
 - C. The principle of God's building is that God builds Himself into man and builds man into Himself—John 14:20; 1 John 4:15:

1. God's mingling Himself with man is God's building Himself into man.
2. Man's mingling with God is man's being built into God—Eph. 3:17.
- D. To be built up with fellow believers is the Lord's supreme and highest requirement of His faithful seekers—4:15-16.
- E. Being built up with the fellow partakers of the divine life is the highest virtue of one who pursues Christ in God's eternal economy—1 Tim. 1:4.

V. The bride's wedding garment is of "fine linen, bright and clean"—Rev. 19:7-8:

- A. *Clean* refers to the nature, and *bright* refers to the expression.
- B. The fine linen with which the bride is clothed is "the righteousnesses of the saints"—v. 8:
 1. Christ is the righteousness by which we have been justified by God so that we may be reborn in our spirit to receive the divine life—1 Cor. 1:30; Rom. 8:10:
 - a. As our objective righteousness, Christ is the One in whom we are justified by God—3:24, 28; 5:1, 9; 4:25; 5:16, 18.
 - b. As our subjective righteousness, Christ is the One dwelling in us to live for us a life that can be justified by God and that is always acceptable to God—Matt. 5:6, 20.
 2. If we are to be found in Christ, we must fulfill the condition of not having our own righteousness but instead having a righteousness which is not our own—a righteousness which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is out of God and based on faith—Phil. 3:9.
 3. Christ lived out of the saints as their subjective righteousness becomes their wedding garment—Rev. 19:8:
 - a. The righteousness we received for our salvation is objective and enables us to meet the requirement of the righteous God, whereas the righteousnesses of the overcoming saints are subjective and enable them to meet the requirement of the overcoming Christ—1 Cor. 1:30; Phil. 3:9.
 - b. The wedding garment in Matthew 22:11-13 signifies the Christ whom we live out and who is expressed through us in our daily living as our surpassing righteousness—5:20; Rev. 3:4-5, 18.

VI. For the presentation of the bride to the Bridegroom, the bride needs beauty—S. S. 1:15-16; 4:1, 7:

- A. In Song of Songs the lover and the Beloved both have beauty, and they appreciate the beauty in each other—1:15-16; 4:1-5, 7.
- B. Ephesians 5:27 speaks of the beauty of the bride, revealing that Christ will "present the church to Himself glorious, not having spot or wrinkle or any such things, but that she would be holy and without blemish."
- C. The beauty of the bride comes from the Christ who is wrought into the church and who is then expressed through the church—3:17a.
- D. Our only beauty is the shining out of Christ from within us; what Christ appreciates in us is the expression of Himself—Psa. 50:2.
- E. "Your eyes will see the King in His beauty" (Isa. 33:17a); "the King will desire your beauty" (Psa. 45:11a).
- F. "You are as beautiful, my love, as Tirzah, / As lovely as Jerusalem, / As terrible as an army with banners"—S. S. 6:4.

VII. The bride must also be a warrior for the defeating of God's enemy—Eph. 6:10:

- A. In Ephesians 5:25-27 and 6:10-20 we see the church as the bride and the warrior; in Revelation 19 we also have these two aspects of the church.
- B. On the day of His wedding, Christ will marry those who have been fighting the battle against God's enemy for years; that is, Christ will marry the overcomers, who have already overcome the evil one—vv. 7-9; 1 John 2:14.
- C. Christ will come as a fighting General with His bride as His army to fight against Antichrist at Armageddon—Rev. 19:11-21:
 - 1. When Christ comes with His army, He will come as the Son of Man—Matt. 26:64; Rev. 14:14.
 - 2. As the Son of Man, He will need a counterpart to match and complete Him; this counterpart will be His bride—John 3:29.
 - 3. Because the Lord is the Word, His fighting will be the speaking of the word of God—Rev. 19:13:
 - a. As the Lord fights, He speaks for God and expresses God.
 - b. The Lord's fighting at Armageddon will be a powerful speaking.
 - 4. The wedding garment—Christ lived out of us as our daily righteousness—qualifies us not only to attend the wedding but also to join the army to fight with Christ against Antichrist in the war at Armageddon—Matt. 22:11-12; Rev. 19:7-8, 14.

VIII. The corporate Christ, Christ with His overcoming bride, will come as a stone to crush the aggregate of human government to bring in God's kingdom—Dan. 2:34-35; Joel 3:11; Rev. 19:11-21; cf. Gen. 1:26:

- A. Whereas Daniel 2 speaks of Christ coming as a stone cut out without hands, Revelation 19 speaks of Christ coming as the One who has His bride as His army.
- B. Before Christ descends to earth to deal with Antichrist and the totality of human government, He will have a wedding, uniting His overcomers to Himself as one entity—vv. 7-9.
- C. After His wedding, the Lord will come with His newly married bride to destroy Antichrist, who with his army will fight against God directly—vv. 11, 13-15; 2 Thes. 2:2-8:
 - 1. The Lord Jesus, the Word of God, will slay Antichrist, the man of lawlessness, by the breath of His mouth—Rev. 19:13-15; 2 Thes. 2:2-8.
 - 2. Out of Christ's mouth proceeds a sharp sword, that with it He might smite the nations—Rev. 19:15a; cf. 1:16; 2:12, 16.
- D. After crushing the human government, God will have cleared up the entire universe; then the corporate Christ, Christ with His overcomers, will become a great mountain to fill the whole earth, making the whole earth God's kingdom—Dan. 2:35, 44; 7:22, 27; Rev. 11:15.