

Revelation 19:8-10 – A Bride: The Dress and the Food

TSK, Chilton, HebrewLexicon, GreekLexicon, INT,

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ: We have a wedding coming up in our family and I have been stunned 打晕 to see the time, money, and talk that have gone into discussing what people would wear...their dresses and their shoes...and I am not even talking about the Bride. The Bride has been shopping for a dress for over a year. And yet, there is a part of me that does understand, knowing that marriage is the greatest celebration in this world. I talked with another young lady on Tuesday night and she bought her Bridesmaid's dress for a wedding that will take place next year...next year!

So it is not surprising when I look at the text and see Christ preparing his Bride for his own wedding to her. After saving her and cleaning her up, he then dresses her for marriage. And we will take some time to examine more the dress and the food at the wedding. My guess is women will get this message more easily than men, so men should pay special attention.

Our headings are: The Dressing of the Bride, and the Blessing of the Bride.

Our goals are: That seeing the beauty of your spiritual dressing and blessing you will draw closer to Jesus -the one who paid for your freedom and for your dress.

The Dressing of the Bride

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.

1. Let's talk about the dress first. The nature of the dress...what was it?

- a. The dress was made of fine linen. This clothing showed that the Bride was of a high position. It was quite distinct from the dress of the prostitute. It was not sackcloth as mourners would wear. It was not cheaper fabrics as people of lower positions would wear...nor was it ordinary linen. No, the Bride of Christ was given the right to wear fine linen as the priests of the Old Testament. She did this to show her high position with the Bridegroom.
- b. The dress was bright...reflecting the light of her Bridegroom.
- c. The dress was clean...for she was purified by her Bridegroom.

2. The Bride did not get this dress from her own labors, but it was "granted" to her. This means the Bride was a recipient of the dress. She did not work for it. This means your sanctification, you daily being made more and more like the image of Jesus Christ, was given to you as a gift.

1Corinthians 6: 9 Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, 10 nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers 漫骂者, nor extortioners 敲诈者 will inherit the kingdom of God. 11 And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.

Jesus Christ covered you with the righteousness of his good action and calls them yours.

Romans 5:18 Therefore, as through one man's offense *judgment came* to all men, resulting in condemnation, even so through one Man's righteous act *the free gift came* to all men, resulting in justification of life.

Your righteousness is like filthy rags...wholly unacceptable to the Lord.

3. But there is another side here. While Christians are receivers of the gift of justification, because you are believers you will act like your nature and do good works.

Leviticus 20:7 'Consecrate yourselves therefore, and be holy, for I am the LORD your God. 8 'And you shall keep My statutes, and perform them: I am the LORD who sanctifies you.

God said he sanctified Israel, but in V7, you see also that he commanded Israel to sanctify themselves. (Consecrate and sanctify are the exact same word in the Hebrew (Qadash). The reason it is translated differently is to show that there is a different quality of work. But both you and God are involved in your sanctification. See how the Apostle Paul emphasized the same thing.

Philippians 2:12 Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling;

13 for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.

On one hand Paul said that you must work out your salvation – meaning, live in a way that you are more and more purified by godly living, and then at the same time he puts the credit where it rightly belongs – on God. So your sanctification is all of God, but it is always accompanied with good actions. You can't say you are a Christian and not show any good works. Read the Epistle of James as he explains the importance of proof of your good actions.

The Blessing of the Bride

9 Then he said to me, "Write: 'Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!'" And he said to me, "These are the true sayings of God."

1. The old Bride was obliterated 除去 for her sins, and the new Bride is the "Beloved of the Begotten."

And she is called to feast at her Bridegroom's table.

2. This marriage supper shows unity, trust, love, friendship, and dependence of the Bride on the Bridegroom.

3. Based on this text, it bothers me much that our churches so infrequently celebrate the Lord's Supper.

The Lord's Supper is a first reality of this Great Marriage Supper that you read of here. The Lord's Supper reminds you how you are purified from sin, how you are united with Christ and united as the Bride of Christ, how much he loves you, how he is your friend, and how you continually depend upon him for provision. The Lord's Supper was properly called the Holy Eucharist 圣餐 – the holy thanksgiving meal – thanks for God's glorious work for you through Jesus Christ. How often do you think we must thank God in this most glorious way for what he has gloriously done for you? Think of your answer. And yet, many churches celebrate the Lord's Supper only 5 times per year...or even less. Some only celebrate the Lord's Supper once per year, as they did the Passover.

Biblical Testimony:

1Corinthians 10: 16 The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? 17 For we, though many, are one bread and one body; for we all partake of that one bread.

Is Paul suggesting that the communion of the body of Christ something to be done on a quarterly basis? How often must we show that unity and our communion with Christ? Quarterly? This text does not seem to suggest that.

Acts 20:7 Now on the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul, ready to depart the next day, spoke to them and continued his message until midnight.

You can't see this as clearly in English as it is in Greek, but this text states that the disciples came together to break bread (a euphemism for the Lord's Supper). Luke made this clear.

Every time the brethren gathered together in Acts for worship they celebrated the Lord's Supper.

Early church history: The Didache (didakey) - early church writings: "But every Lord's Day do ye gather yourselves together, and break bread, and give thanksgiving...Justin Martyr also confirmed the weekly celebrating of the Lord's Supper.

Reformation: During the time of the Reformation worship was described as "word and sacrament" because the Lord's Supper...this picture of Christ's blessings his church...was expected weekly. The Reformers charged the Roman Catholic of only offering the Lord's Supper once per year and now Rome allows it more than many Reformed Churches. What a sad turn of events!

Logically: If the greatest ceremony in this world is a marriage ceremony, and God used it to illustrate the relationship between Christ and his church, should we then not desire to celebrate this as often as we could?

Theologically: This Lord's Supper was a picture of food for the restoration of the spiritual strength of man so that he can go about doing the work that he was commissioned to do from the beginning of the world: Have dominion for Christ. Shouldn't you eat more often?

4. Look at the assurance of the text: "These are the true sayings of God." And this is a certifiable 可确认的 truth.

10 And I fell at his feet to worship him. But he said to me, "See that you do not do that! I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren who have the testimony of Jesus. Worship God! For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy."

5. Now here is an interesting situation in verse 10 that we must deal with before closing. The Apostle John is told not to bow down to the angel. Of course John knew that idolatry was wrong, so why was he still doing that? Answer: John was not worshipping the angel like you worship Jehovah. This was not idolatry but honor. Ancient Israel and in many Middle Eastern countries there was the custom of prostrating oneself before a person and kissing his feet, his clothes, or the ground for homage敬意. And this was called "worship." Consider 3 examples but there are many others in the Scriptures.

Genesis 19:1 Now the two angels came to Sodom in the evening, and Lot was sitting in the gate of Sodom. When Lot saw them, he rose to meet them, and he bowed himself with his face toward the ground.

Genesis 23:7 Then Abraham stood up and bowed himself to the people of the land, the sons of Heth.

Genesis 27:29 Let peoples serve you, And nations bow down to you. Be master over your brethren, And let your mother's sons bow down to you. Cursed be everyone who curses you, And blessed be those who bless you!"

John even used similar language here in Revelation.

Revelation 3:9 - "Indeed I will make those of the synagogue of Satan, who say they are Jews and are not, but lie—indeed I will make them come and worship before your feet, and to know that I have loved you.

So this was not literal worship but symbolic submission. John was being taught that men were at the same level of angels and that kind of honoring respect was not necessary – maybe even a waste of time. So the angel urged John to do like he did and continue to worship the Lord...as we do.

6. And the last phrase "the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy" means that this is certifiably true. Indeed, based on the context, the truth is that the Bride now begins to eat at the Lord's Table and in will eat in fullness when we join him in heaven.

Conclusion:

The Bride is dressed in regal 帝王的 clothing. She reflects to whom she belongs. She is not the trashy 垃圾似的 prostitute, nor a destitute 困穷的 widow. She is the Bride of Christ, properly dressed with his righteousness...but a righteousness that is counted as hers... And then she is blessed with being in the presence of the Bridegroom, sitting down at the marriage supper.

Brothers and Sisters: 1. Do not think for a minute that you can get by with simply saying you believe in Jesus Christ. The Bible says that without holiness (holy living) no man shall see the Lord. You show you believe by living a holy life. 2. One man said: "You are what you eat." This is a real motivation to eat the Lord's Supper more often. When you eat Christ's body and drink his blood, it strengthens you to do the work of the Lord. You need good food to live and work. And the Lord's Supper is good food. It is the best food of all. Further, who goes to a banquet and refuse to eat? 3. Those who argue that if you celebrate the Lord's Supper more often you it will not be as special miss the point. They would not argue about preaching that way. Who would put preaching to every 3 months? You must be careful or this can lead to idolatry of the sacraments. 4. Praise God for the privilege to being part of this Bride – for his dressing you and his blessing you.

Finally, as a non-Christian you are neither dressed nor blessed for the greatest wedding of all time...your own wedding with the Prince of Peace. If you are not part of that Bride you are lost forever and will be shut out of God's kingdom. My call today is that you respond to Christ's invitation to come into the Bride. There is always room for more.