

The Wedding of the Lamb

“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. Fine linen, bright and clean, was given her to wear. (Fine linen stands for the righteous acts of the saints.)”

Revelation 19:7-8

What do you imagine when you read about ‘The Wedding of the Lamb’? It is a very odd expression unless you understand the symbolism. **The Lamb:** When John the Baptist saw Jesus approaching, he pointed at him and said, “Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!” (John 1:29). The Lord Jesus is this Lamb. But why use the word Lamb? Why not the wedding of the Good Shepherd? Or of the Son of God? Or of the King of Kings? Because the term Lamb points to His sacrificial death. At this future happy wedding celebration, the sufferings of our Saviour remain central. **The bride:** We Christians collectively are the bride, and the only reason we are there is because the Lamb has taken away our sin.

The wedding: What is so special about the wedding? In Scripture a wedding is a covenant. It binds man and wife together in a unique way. Marriage brings a good loving relationship to a new level. It changes that relationship. We enjoy our walk with Jesus today. He is present when two or three meet in His name (Mat 18:20). He is the head of His church. But then, at the wedding of the Lamb, our relationship with Him will reach a new level. Are you looking forward to this event? Will you be there?

The way you imagine this wedding of the Lamb will probably depend on the weddings you have gone to. Weddings in Europe, India and China can be very different. When John wrote the book of Revelation, he most likely had a Jewish wedding protocol in mind. A few months ago, I read about a Jewish marriage tradition which warmed my heart. It goes like this:

A young man would share with his father his desire to marry a particular girl. The father would visit the father of the girl and discuss the matter. If they approved of the relationship, they would both drink out of a cup. The father would then take the cup home and give it to his son. The son then knew that he had the blessing his and her parents.

He would then look for an appropriate moment to visit the girl and he would take the cup with him. He would then say to her something like: *“I have eagerly desired to drink from this cup with you because I love you and I would like to marry you. This cup is a symbol of my life that I would like to share with you. You can trust me. I shall always be there for you”* (cp Luke 22:15). By drinking from the cup, the girl agreed. With joy in his heart, the young man would add, *“Now I shall go and prepare a house for us! And when I am ready, I will come back and take you to be with me. Then we shall always be together!”* (cp John 14:3). He then takes her back to her home. On leaving, he gives her the cup and says something like *“Whenever you drink of this cup, think about me. Think about my love for you, that I have not forgotten you, that I am preparing a place for you and that I shall soon come back for you and then we shall always be together”* (cp 1 Cor 11:25).

Can you imagine her waiting? That is *our* current situation! The Bridegroom says “Yes, I am coming soon” and we as bride can respond “Amen. Come, Lord Jesus” (Rev 22:20). The expectation of Christ’s return was alive in the heart of early Christians. On meeting and departing, many greeted each other with the Aramaic expression Maranatha! (‘Come, O Lord’ 1 Cor 16:22). While waiting she was not passive. She was busy getting herself ready. At the wedding she will be dressed with fine linen, bright and clean, which stands for the righteous acts of the saints (Rev 19:8). And every time she drank of that cup, her heart rejoiced!

When ready, the young man would send some of his friends ahead of him with the happy message: *Here comes the bridegroom! Come out to meet him!* (cp Mat 25:6). The girl would take the cup along to the week-long feast. At the height of the celebrations, the young man and the young woman would together drink out of the cup and then break it. None else would now drink of it. This act sealed their marriage covenant.

Does your heart rejoice? Next time you celebrate the Lord’s supper, drink consciously from that cup, a symbol of His blood, of His sacrificial love... and rejoice in the fact that He has not forgotten us, that we shall soon be part of ‘The Wedding of the Lamb.’ Maranatha! Come, Lord Jesus!

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