

The Marriage of the Lamb

God's most sacred covenant, the one with which He blessed mankind from the very beginning with the first man and woman, was the covenant of marriage. This was ordained in Genesis 2:2, where God said, "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife, and they shall be one flesh." There probably was more to this conversation than Scripture tells us, because with this alone, it is difficult to see how Adam could have understood the full meaning of this blessed covenant. There was no father or mother for Adam or for Eve to leave. But, nevertheless, it is evident that Adam did understand what "cleave," meant. While the word "love" is not found in Scripture until Genesis 22:2, when it refers to Abraham's love for Isaac, it is evident that Adam loved Eve with a genuine God-given love, as God intends it to be in all men for their wives.

Many who read the verses, which follow verse 24, may fail to see the incredible significance of this love, and how Adam loved his bride as Jesus loves His bride, the church. One could say that both Adam and Jesus were made sin out of love for their wives. Adam wasn't deceived. He could have remained sinless, but if he had, the marriage could not have continued, given the great disparity of condition that would have existed between them. He knowingly followed Eve into sin so that the marriage would be continued. Had he not, the "seed of the woman," that is our Christ Jesus, would not have become Man as God had foretold that He would.

Thus we see the institution of marriage between a man and a woman established in the very beginning of God's Book of Instructions by which we are called to live. Throughout Scripture, marriage is used as an idiom or an analogy through which to illustrate and help us to understand major precepts. Sadly, the world through Satan's incessant prodding and perverting along with man's inherent sinful nature has, in these end times, made a mockery of this sacred institution, just as prophesied.

However, the purpose of this paper is not to expound on this, but to deal solely with the "marriage of the lamb" as referred to in Revelation 19:7. Of course, we know that this is

the marriage between Christ Jesus and a portion of the “church” that is, I believe a select portion of the body of redeemed Christians, that composite of all of those who will have been born-again, up to the time of the rapture (John 3:3). But now let us look at the “marriage analogy from an individual prospective, that is between Jesus and a person who considers himself or herself to be within the corporate body of the church and who is therefore seeking to be part of the “collective’ bride. In a marriage, the groom as well as the bride is supposed to agree to that binding covenant until death parts them. Sadly in today’s society, even among “Christians,” over half of these sacred vows are renounced through divorce. Vows have become meaningless rituals, which are honored only as long as it is easy, comfortable and convenient to do so. But between Christ Jesus and His bride it is inviolate, and for eternity.

In modern evangelical “match making,” between a person and Jesus, it has become simply a matter of asking the prospective “bride” whether he or she “believes” in Jesus and the cross, and is willing to accept Him in this union. If the person says, “I do” and repeats what is called the “sinners’ prayer”, and perhaps some other bit of confirming utterances, the cry goes up “hallelujah!” Chalk us up with another saved soul! For, as the modern reasoning goes, didn’t Jesus simply say in John 6:47, “He that believeth in me hath everlasting life”? Therefore, if you believe or “feel” you are saved, end of story! But is it? Perhaps, but it depends on what He meant by “believeth,” and how the “believers” belief corresponds to God’s definition! Have the purveyors of salvation asked Him or sought, or the whole answer in His Word? In their currently fashionable gathering of souls, do they teach or even know of such prerequisite essentials as a contrite heart, conviction, repentance, commitment, and obedience? Will Christ Jesus even accept into the Body of Christ, let alone a bride absent of these attributes? Without these qualities present in His betrothed is He willing to say, “I Do.” Revelation 19:8 tells what He expects of His bride “...that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white, for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints.” Who is a saint? By definition, it is one who is blameless, and thereby righteous (Philippians 4:21). It takes more than an “I believe” and an “I do” to be righteous! One can only become righteous by having one’s sins forgiven and washed away by the blood of Christ, and thus being born-again. The Holy

Spirit dwells in all who are borne again and only those who are born-again! But Acts 5:13, 32 tells us “Him has God exalted with His right hand to be Prince and Savior, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins. And we are witnesses of these things, and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God has given to them that obey Him.” That’s it! Here we have the fine print regarding both salvation and the wedding contract! It is the prerequisite to Jesus’ saying His “I do! The bride must be clothed in the white linen of righteousness, which comes only from the forgiveness of sins! First John 1:19 tells us that “if we confess our sin, He is faithful and just to forgive our sins and to cleanse us from unrighteousness.” One is forgiven by grace through a true and saving faith, which is always accomplished by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Now we have also determined that the giving of Holy Spirit is limited to those who obey Him! Therefore obedience is an essential part of both the entry into the Body of Christ and of course, the bride’s premarital condition. Furthermore, in John 14:15 Jesus says, “If you love me, keep my commandments.” And in John 14:23, “...if a man loves me, he will keep my words...” “Keep my Word.” That means also means obedience. Notice that these things are necessary conditions without which “love” is not God’s kind of love! Would you marry someone who didn’t love you? It’s likely that if you did, it would not be a good marriage. Surely we know that our omniscient God Jesus would never take a bride that did not love Him. Because to love is to obey, obedience as well as love are prerequisites, to salvation, and to becoming the Body of Christ.

Jesus said the greatest commandment is to love God (Him) with all of your heart, soul and mind (Matthew 22:37). All of us fall short of that command. But I believe that those who come the closest, are those who leave here with the greatest number of golden crowns and are the one who become the Bride of Christ.

We have seen that these prerequisites do not derive from anything less than a contrite, convicted, obedient and repentant heart fully dedicated to service to our Lord and Savior. Anyone who seeks to bring souls to God, without making sure that all of these prerequisites are fully understood, is perpetuating a fraud, a very evil disservice to those who unwittingly go on their way believing that they are saved, and destined for an

expected future they will never know. I pray for God's mercy for such a "witness", for one day he or she must face the seat of judgment on which will be sitting the deprived "groom."

I pray even more and grieve for those deprived of membership in the Body of Christ as well as for the would-be "brides," who pass through life falsely believing themselves to be His because they had put their trust in those false witnesses, never having sought or understood the whole Truth as provided by Scriptures.